Expressivism, Minimalism and Moral Doctrines

Christine Tiefensee

Trinity College
University of Cambridge

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except where specifically indicated in the text.

At 77,872 words, this dissertation is within the word limit.

ABSTRACT

Quasi-realist expressivists, most notably Simon Blackburn, have developed a growing liking for minimalism about truth. This affection comes as no surprise. Although minimalism cannot exempt expressivists from the task of providing a convincing account of moral judgement, it arguably removes from them the additional burden of having to present conceptions of moral truth and fact *in addition to* their account of moral judgement. However, the stability of expressivism's partnership with minimalism has also been hotly contested, in light not only of minimalism's semantic implications for expressivism but also its psychological repercussions in terms of belief.

The first part of my thesis will touch on some of these better known discussions surrounding the expressivist-minimalist liaison. My main objective, though, will be to direct our focus to a potential crack in this marriage which has so far gone almost totally unnoticed. More precisely, I will argue that minimalism drives a certain campaign which launches a direct attack on expressivists' external, non-moral self-image. This 'anti-Archimedean movement', most prominently championed by Dworkin and Kramer, proclaims that rather than investigating moral thinking from non-moral standpoints, all metaethical positions are built on moral grounds—they are moral doctrines. Given minimalism's intricate link to the anti-Archimedean movement, one could even go so far as to think that minimalism leaves expressivists no choice but to accept that expressivism is a moral position. Minimalism and the expressivist non-moral self-image appear incompatible and the expressivist-minimalist marriage destined to end in divorce.

Scrutiny of this potential crack in the expressivist-minimalist marriage and the general interplay between expressivism, minimalism and the anti-Archimedean movement will stand at the centre of my thesis. This will include assessment of anti-Archimedean arguments for the moral interpretation of expressivism, development of my own version of the anti-Archimedean challenge and examination of possible expressivist attempts to repel anti-Archimedean attacks. Although this anti-Archimedean challenge is very serious, I will conclude that expressivists can meet it without having to abandon minimalism about truth. The crack in the expressivist-minimalist marriage can be sealed; the marriage 'lives to fight another day'.

Yet, I will argue that even if the anti-Archimedean movement is ultimately unsuccessful, engagement with its arguments proves beneficial beyond the traditional boundaries of the expressivism-minimalism debate. It forces us to sharpen our understanding of expressivist theses, unearths new views about their foundation and opens up different perspectives on classic metaethical debates, such as the contest between expressivism and moral realism.

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

Ever since quasi-realist expressivists set themselves the task of accounting for the propositional surface features of moral discourse, explaining the phenomenon that we freely talk of truths and facts within moral contexts has formed a major item on their agenda. However, dealing with this item was never going to be easy. Whereas moral realists base their metaethical position on those notions which are commonly summarised under the heading of moral objectivity—truth, fact, belief, description, representation—quasi-realist expressivists (henceforth: expressivists) carefully eschew any such representational vocabulary when construing their own metaethical account. The notions they prefer are those of function, conative attitudes and practical needs, declaring that to make a moral judgement is to voice a conative attitude, the expression of which is couched in propositional clothing in order to serve as a focus for practical thought. In light of this deliberately non-representational approach to moral judgement, it was always hard to see how expressivists could convincingly account for talk about moral truth and fact. For, do these notions not entail exactly those metaphysical consequences which compromise the expressivist approach and which expressivists, therefore, so warily aim to shun? Given this metaphysical hazard, is not establishing that our moral judgements are '*quasi*-true', or that they state '*quasi*-facts', the best that expressivists could hope to achieve?

Against this background, minimalist conceptions of truth and fact exude great allure for expressivists. According to minimalism, truth is not a mysterious, metaphysically heavyweight property. Instead, all we need to know about truth are two things. Firstly, the key to truth is found in the equivalence between calling a statement true and asserting this very statement: if someone who is in possession of the truth-concept is willing to assert a certain proposition, she will be disposed to call it true, and vice versa. Secondly, the reason why our language contains the truth-predicate at all lies in the function that it fulfils: it allows us to talk about statements and not just about the world. These two observations, the minimalist insists, exhaust our enquiry into truth—no appeal to truth's allegedly metaphysical nature is called for. Similarly, facts are no puzzling, metaphysical entities either. Instead, facts and truth come in a handy double pack, where stating that something is a fact is simply another way of saying that a certain statement is true. Interestingly for expressivists, the same demystifying insights now apply to the moral case. If someone who possesses the truth-concept is willing to assert that helping children flourish is good, say, he will be disposed to call it true, or a fact, that the promotion of children's flourishing is good. This equivalence, together with the function that the truth-predicate fulfils in moral discourse as it does in other domains, is all there is to know about moral truth—nothing more mysterious goes on and no metaphysically robust lands are reached. Hence, minimalism arguably leads to a certain shift away from focus on truth and fact towards focus on judgement: What we need to worry about, minimalists suggest, is not what talking in terms of moral truth and fact could possibly amount to; rather, what we need to understand is moral judgement. Once we have a solid grasp of what it is to make a moral assertion, we also understand what it is to speak of moral truths and facts. This shift is now music to expressivists' ears. For, as long as they can bring moral judgement under their control—as long as they can account for the assertion 'Helping children flourish is good'—minimalism provides them with all

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the tools required to account for talk about moral truths and facts—namely, that it is true, or a fact, that helping children flourish is good iff helping children flourish is good. No '*quasis*' are required and no additional metaphysical costs are incurred which would compromise the expressivist approach. Of course, whether or not helping children flourish is indeed good constitutes a different, substantive moral question which is not for minimalism to answer. What minimalism does achieve, though, is to merge what has been two items on the expressivist agenda into one: account for moral judgement and you account for talk about moral truth and fact. No additional, specific conceptions of moral truth and fact are needed.

It is no surprise, then, that expressivists have developed a growing liking for minimalism over the last twenty years. Although stopping short of embracing it unconditionally, Blackburn (1998a) in particular quickly sensed and pounced on the advantages that minimalism offers to expressivism. However, as is also well known, the stability of expressivism's coupling with minimalism, and indeed minimalism's general metaethical implications, have been hotly debated in literature. Some philosophers tried to open a fast-track route to cognitivism which others set out to block; there are those who suggested that expressivists should love minimalism about truth whilst their opponents claimed the exact opposite; others again believed that minimalism could solve all of expressivists' worries at a stroke, whereas their more cautious adversaries contested minimalism's ability to function as expressivism's panacea; some voiced the concern that creeping minimalism would level the metaethical landscape altogether, prompting others to seek solutions which would rebuild this scenery against a minimalist background.[1]

This thesis will touch on some of these better known discussions surrounding the combination of expressivism and minimalism. However, I will deal only briefly with minimalism's semantic implications, concentrating mainly on truth-aptitude, and minimalism's psychological repercussions in terms of belief, expanding on ideas which distinguish between robust and minimal conceptions of belief. This is so because my main objective will be to direct our focus to a potential crack in the expressivist-minimalist marriage which has so far gone almost totally unnoticed. More precisely, I will argue that minimalism drives a certain campaign which pushes for the conclusion that, contrary to expressivists' own perception, expressivism is not a morally neutral, metaethical account that investigates moral thinking from the outside. Instead, it is itself morally infused and operates from within ethics—it is a moral doctrine. To elaborate, expressivists have traditionally understood their own position as an external, non-moral, metaethical account which examines internal, moral judgements from a standpoint outside of ethics. As Gibbard (2003a: 185, 95) puts it, "[e]xpressivism … is not a substantive theory of what's right and wrong, what's good and bad, and what makes it that way. It leaves us to treat substantive matters in their own terms and explain them in their own terms. … [It examines moral] judgements rather than making and propounding them". However, the 'anti-Archimedean movement', as I will call it, launches a direct attack on this expressivist self-image by proclaiming that rather than investigating moral thinking from the outside,

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1 As a sample, see Blackburn (1998a, 2005, 2006c, 2010) for the combination of expressivism and minimalism. See Wright (1992, 1994), Boghossian (1990), Stoljar (1993), Blackburn (1998b) and O'Leary-Hawthorne/Price (1996) for discussions of the fast-track route to cognitivism. For issues surrounding truth-aptitude and belief, see Jackson/Oppy/Smith (1994), Smith (1994a+b), Jackson (1994), Wright (1994), Divers/Miller (1994, 1995), Sinclair (2006, 2007) and Lenman (2003). For minimalism as the panacea for expressivism, see Horwich (1993, 1994), Dreier (1996) and Gibbard (2003a). For creeping minimalism, see Dreier (2004), Chrisman (2008), Harcourt (2005) and Ridge (2006b).

metaethical positions are themselves built on moral grounds. In this vein, Dworkin (1996) most famously put pressure on the claim that there are truly external, metaethical positions, arguing that 'Archimedeans', i.e. those who intend to make claims *about* morality, rather than *within* it, never succeed in transcending the internal realm of moral judgement. Kramer (2009), in turn, presented very comprehensive and sophisticated arguments to demonstrate that contrary to philosophical lore, theses about morality's objectivity are not based on general ontological or epistemological considerations, but are moral in nature. Borrowing Kramer's dictum, the slogan of this anti-Archimedean movement is thus: Metaethical positions are moral doctrines; to think otherwise is an illusion.

The combination of expressivism and minimalism on the one hand and minimalism's link with the anti-Archimedean movement on the other now makes for a very interesting encounter. Indeed, as I will show in this thesis, one could even go so far as to think that once expressivism is coupled with minimalism, expressivists have no choice but to accept that expressivism is a moral position. This conclusion would come with significant consequences. To start with, expressivists would have to give up on their self-declared aim of understanding moral discourse on non-moral grounds: They would not *avoid* moral material when accounting for moral thought, but *presuppose* it; they would not look at ethics from the *outside*, but operate from *within* ethics. However, it is not only the understanding of the expressivist project that would have to be modified if expressivism was a moral doctrine; our ways of assessing its success and powers of persuasion would also change. That is, if expressivism was a position grounded on certain moral values, then acceptance of expressivism as a convincing account of ethics would crucially depend on endorsement of these particular moral values. The scope of expressivism's 'persuasive reach' would thus be far more limited than originally thought, in that it would engulf those who share its basic moral evaluations, but leave unmoved those who diverge from its moral outlook. As the other side of the same coin, reading expressivism as a moral doctrine would open up a new line of attack, enabling critics to dismiss expressivism not only on grounds of mistaken non-moral premises, but on the basis of misguided moral assumptions. Importantly, this dismissal would now not just amount to the verdict that expressivism is *morally reprehensible*; it would imply that expressivism is *false*.

Whether or not minimalism entails that expressivism is a moral doctrine and the interplay between expressivism, minimalism and the anti-Archimedean movement more generally will be the main focus of this thesis. This will include scrutiny of anti-Archimedean arguments for the moral interpretation of expressivism, development of my own version of the anti-Archimedean challenge to expressivism and examination of possible expressivist attempts to meet this challenge. Moreover, I will show that engagement with the anti-Archimedean movement forces us to sharpen our understanding of expressivism and its limits, opens up new perspectives on the grounding of key expressivist theses and sheds new light on the familiar objection that quasi-realist expressivism 'bites its own tail'. Moreover, it demonstrates that a very popular attempt to stop minimalism from creeping is unsuccessful and unearths interesting—and, indeed, from an expressivist perspective welcome—results about the competition between expressivist and realist explanations of moral discourse. Hence, in light of these considerations, it is worthwhile looking into the interplay between quasi-realist expressivism, minimalism and the anti-Archimedean movement in greater detail.

Two preliminary remarks are called for at this point. Firstly, when examining the contest between expressivists and anti-Archimedeans, I will not consider the rejection of minimalism about truth. As hinted above, I believe that the advantages for expressivism provided by the application of

a minimalist conception of truth within ethics are not to be dismissed easily. Indeed, not just expressivists, but metaethicists in general should take seriously minimalism's offer to provide a universal conception of truth which applies seamlessly across non-normative and normative discourses alike. This, in turn, reduces the pitfall of trying to base truth on notions which may be widely employed within the sciences (such as causation) but which raise all kinds of problems when applied to other discourses. Moreover, minimalism and expressivism are very close relatives, in that both belong to the wider pragmatist family which proclaims the primacy of use and 'doings' over semantic values and 'sayings'. That is, just as expressivists approach moral vocabulary by enquiring into what we are doing when expressing moral judgements, rather than by asking how to define moral concepts or for which properties these concepts stand, minimalist thinking about the truth-predicate is characterised by questioning what employment of this predicate allows us to do and not to which property it refers. Although expressivism and minimalism do not necessarily rise and fall together, they are thus natural bedfellows. Consequently, I will assume in this study that expressivists have great interest in defending the expressivist-minimalist combination against potential objections and consider how expressivists could meet the anti-Archimedean challenge without relinquishing minimalism. As a second preliminary remark, my understanding of the anti-Archimedean position need not necessarily be identical to the way in which individual anti-Archimedeans, such as Dworkin (1996) or Kramer (2009), construe their own accounts. Rather than carbon copying their approaches, I am more intrigued by their general idea that metaethical positions must be regarded as moral doctrines, how this claim can be spelled out most plausibly, which support minimalism provides for this thesis and in which way it applies to expressivism.

To address these questions, I will look at the way in which anti-Archimedeans could put forward their case for the moral interpretation of expressivism and proceed as follows: Part I will lay the foundations for my study, beginning with chapter 2 which presents an account of minimalist semantics. The aim of this chapter will be to clarify our comprehension of minimalism's key theses and the relations between truth, reference, meaning and representation in order to be in a better position to assess their combination with expressivism and their link to the anti-Archimedean movement. This will also include discussion of some general semantic implications for expressivism following from minimalist semantics and their impact on the definition of the expressivist position. Moreover, gaining a better grasp of minimalism will also allow us to develop a better understanding of expressivism in the second part of this thesis. Chapter 3, in turn, will move from minimalism's semantic impact to its psychological ramifications. More precisely, it will deal with the concern that minimalism straightforwardly entails that moral judgements express beliefs and thus clashes with expressivism's key psychological thesis that moral judgements voice conative attitudes. I will examine and further develop a response to this charge which distinguishes between minimal and robust belief, considering how expressivists could possibly integrate minimal belief within their account. I will argue that such an integration offers a great opportunity to expressivists insofar as it helps them smooth out their way to representational features of moral discourse even further, although it also confronts expressivists with serious challenges. With these foundations having been laid, the second part of this thesis will move on to my main focus, the anti-Archimedean movement. In chapter 4, I will tackle two tasks. Firstly, I will clarify some basic points about the anti-Archimedean movement and its link to minimalism. Secondly, I will show how expressivists can profitably team up with anti-Archimedeans and use certain anti-Archimedean insights to their advantage. Chapter 5 will

leave these co-operative efforts behind and turn instead to divisive issues. More precisely, I will examine a first anti-Archimedean attempt to show that expressivism is a moral doctrine and scrutinise possible expressivist countermoves to this anti-Archimedean attack. Expressivist theses standing at the centre of attention in this chapter will be those which concern the function, or purpose, of moral vocabulary and form the main bone of contention between anti-Archimedeans and expressivists, with the latter insisting on their non-moral status and the former on their moral nature. After concluding that expressivists emerge unharmed from this first encounter with anti-Archimedeans, chapter 6 will look at further expressivist theses and their interpretation as non-moral or moral. This will include claims about debunking and judgement-internalism as well as a reprise of moral semantics and psychology. Yet again, I will suggest that expressivists come out on top of this second contest with anti-Archimedeans. Chapter 7 will then turn to the most promising anti-Archimedean attempt to demonstrate that expressivism must be a moral doctrine, which aims to establish direct derivations of moral conclusions from expressivist premises. I will argue that this anti-Archimedean challenge has to be taken very seriously; yet, I will demonstrate that it can nevertheless be met by expressivists without having to abandon minimalism about truth. Hence, although it may seem as if minimalism leaves expressivists no choice but to accept that their account is a moral doctrine, I will argue that this impression is false. Expressivists' non-moral self-image and minimalism are compatible and the crack in the expressivist-minimalist marriage can be sealed. Chapter 8 will conclude my study by summarising its findings.

Part I—Foundations

2. MINIMALIST SEMANTICS—A BOON FOR EXPRESSIVISM

In order to assess expressivism's combination with minimalism and its connection to the anti-Archimedean movement, we need to gain a better understanding of what exactly minimalism comprises. The purpose of this chapter is to achieve exactly this by presenting an overview of key minimalist theses about truth and reference as well as their link with theories of meaning and representation. This outline is not intended to address all the details, let alone solve technical worries, surrounding minimalism. Rather, I will have to rely on a general confidence that these challenges can be met and only touch upon minimalism's most important points to provide a solid basis from which to launch my enquiry into its combination with expressivism. At the same time, this exposition is intended to be detailed enough to demonstrate that minimalism is a consistent and, I believe, a very attractive theory of truth which deserves to be taken seriously by metaethicists in general. Moreover, a clearer understanding of minimalism is conducive to a better grasp of expressivism, which will prove important in the second part of my study. The account presented here will be synthesised in that it will not represent the view of one specific minimalist, but 'cherry-pick' from different proposals to construe a plausible, accessible account of minimalist semantics. The chapter will close with considerations about minimalism's semantic implications for expressivism.

2.1 TRUTH

In this study, theories which promote the following three claims will classify as minimal. Firstly, the *equivalence* between asserting a statement and calling it true is in some sense conceptually fundamental to our notion of truth. Secondly, the truth-predicate earns its raison d'être in view of its particular *functions*, enabling us to make statements we could not have asserted without it. Thirdly, these two theses *exhaust* our analysis of truth; no appeal to truth's metaphysical nature is called for.

In order to understand the drive behind these claims, it is helpful to start with minimalists' observation that there appear to be two general contexts of truth-ascriptions. The first is direct. In this case, we apply the truth-predicate to an explicitly mentioned claim, as in 'It is true that snow is white' or 'It is true that grass is green'. Importantly, in this context, truth-attributions do not seem to add anything significant to what we could have said by simply asserting the original statement itself. Roughly put, when removing the truth-ascription 'it is true that ...' from the statements under consideration, we do not appear to lose anything of importance, but are simply left with the original claims themselves—namely 'Snow is white' or 'Grass is green'. In examples like these, truth is transparent; it is a device of disquotation or denominalisation (Quine 1970: 12; Horwich 1998b: 5). Accordingly, if our discourse was such that we would always directly display the claims to which we attribute truth, we could easily manage without possessing a truth-predicate at all; we could just as well keep asserting the original statement itself (Soames 1997: 3).

However, there are many examples of truth-attributions in which the claims said to be true are not explicitly stated. This is the second, indirect context of truth-ascriptions. For instance, we might

want to declare that Einstein's equation is true, not really knowing what this equation comprises, or summarise John's statements by declaring that most of what he said is true without listing all the different claims he made. Likewise, in order to eschew the impossible task of giving an infinite list of disjunctions such as 'Snow is or is not white, and grass is or is not green, and John does or does not travel to London, and …', we are happy to help ourselves to the generalising assertion that every statement or its negation is true. Contrary to instances of direct truth-attributions, in cases such as 'Einstein's equation is true', removal of the truth-predicate does not leave a formulation of that particular statement which we wish to call true, but only a noun phrase. In contexts of indirect truth-ascriptions, then, the truth-predicate is not eliminable; instead, it enables us to say something which we could not have said without it.

This differentiation between direct and indirect truth-ascriptions underlies the first two theses of minimalism. That is, contexts in which we apply the truth-predicate to claims that are explicitly stated reveal the core of the truth-concept as captured in the first thesis. For, according to minimalists, transparency is no accidental or peripheral feature of truth. Instead, its source is found in a very tight *a priori* link between some arbitrary claim S and a statement T which predicates truth to S. It is this equivalence, commonly captured in the truth-schemata 'X is true (in L) iff p' or 'The proposition that p is true iff p', which lies at the very heart of the truth-concept. As explained above, though, in these direct contexts we could just as well dispense with the truth-predicate without any significant loss, which means that these cases cannot explain why our language should contain such a predicate in the first place. In order to tackle this issue, we must turn to contexts of indirect truth-ascriptions which disclose the usefulness, or the function, of the truth-predicate as stated in minimalism's second thesis. In other words, by allowing us to make statements which we could not have asserted otherwise, the truth-predicate earns its raison d'être. As Soames (1997: 3) succinctly summarises: "Environments of [indirect truth-attributions] are important because they provide a reason for having a truth-predicate … Environments of [direct truth-attributions] are important because they play a privileged role in explaining what such a notion of truth consists in".

Importantly, minimalists do not stop here. Instead, they insist in their third thesis that reference to the truth-schemata and the function of the truth-predicate exhausts our analysis of truth. All features associated with truth, minimalists promise, can be accounted for on the basis of these two theses. Correspondingly, enquiries trying to reveal truth's metaphysically robust, heavyweight nature are not only fundamentally mistaken but also utterly hopeless, for "there simply is no such thing" as truth's underlying metaphysical nature, as Horwich (1998b: 5) bluntly states. Importantly, though, this is not to imply that truth is not a predicate or does not express a property. In contrast to redundancy theorists, minimalists gladly agree that 'is true' is a genuine predicate and that truth and falsity are properties of statements, as long as the term 'property' is given a minimal reading (e.g. as the shadow of a predicate). Similarly, the notion of 'fact' suffers the same minimal fate in that facts and truths are, according to minimalists, two sides of the same coin: calling it a fact that snow is white simply amounts to declaring it true that snow is white which, in turn, boils down to stating that snow is white. Accordingly, when calling a claim S true, minimalists fully agree that we make a new, genuine statement in which we describe S as possessing the property of truth. However, what minimalists do emphasise is that truth is not a complex or naturalistic property. Instead, it is best described as a logical property.

Up to this point, I understand there to be agreement amongst minimalists. However, different minimalists spell out the facets of these general theses in different ways. In the following section, I will briefly outline two major versions of minimalism, one identifying sentences as the primary truth-bearers, the other assigning this role to propositions. However, I will not portray the former account in any depth, but rather quickly side with propositional minimalists after locating the reason for my partiality in several defects of sentential minimalism. Subsequently, I will portray in greater detail the specific claims of propositional minimalism. This portrayal will conceive of minimalism as an interpretation of our ordinary notion of truth, rather than as a replacement or substitute thereof. In this vein, I join Scott Soames (2003: 370) in his belief that even without offering one precise minimal theory, we can clarify our notion of truth on minimal grounds "in a way that gives us most of what we need for ordinary philosophical purposes". We should, therefore, not be too disappointed when realising that we cannot define the concept of truth or our grasp thereof in non-circular terms. What we can do, nevertheless, is to identify many essential features of truth which will help us shed light and develop a firm grip on this concept. When doing so, I will predominantly rely on the work of Paul Horwich (1998b, 2004) and Scott Soames (1999), two of the best-known advocates of minimalism, 'cherry-picking' and slightly modifying those of their views which I regard as the most convincing. However, let me explain first why I believe that we should adopt propositional, rather than sentential, minimalism.

2.1.1 AGAINST SENTENTIAL MINIMALISM

Before deciding what should count as the primary bearers of truth, we must be clear that minimalism gets off the ground only when truth is primarily ascribed to entities which are already linguistic—such as sentences, words or utterances of our language, propositions and the like. Huw Price (1997: 111) rightly points out that if "we allow that semantic properties attach in the first instance to [physical objects such as] ink patches and the like, minimalism is already a lost cause". This is so because it is highly implausible to deny that it is something substantial, some further fact about the world, that explains why certain ink patches or sounds can be true or false, whereas other physical objects—stones, spilled ink, the sound of falling raindrops and the like—do not possess this property. If we wanted to argue that the ink patch *Snow is white* is true, we could not simply and exclusively refer to snow's being white. Instead, we would have to offer a substantial explanation, probably invoking our *use* of and responses to particular ink patches, of how it comes to pass that English speakers read an ink patch in a certain way and count it as a token of an English sentence. Accordingly, minimalism "depends on a distinction between [linguistic entities] ... and the physical objects of which they are composed" (Price 1997: 111). Whereas the truth of the former can be interpreted in a minimal way, the truth of the latter requires us to tell a substantively explanatory story about how certain physical entities can be capable of truth and falsity, whilst others cannot. With this distinction in place, we can now turn to the question of which linguistic entities we should regard as primary truth bearers.

Sentential minimalists prefer sentences (or utterances of sentences) to take up this role and typically employ the sentential truth-schema

    (ST)   *X* is true (in *L*) iff *p*,

where *X* stands for a sentence of the object language *L* and *p* for a translation of *X* in our metalanguage. The idea behind (ST) "seems to be that if some subject S understands a range of sentences Γ, then S will understand a truth-predicate whose domain is Γ just if S is disposed to assent to each instance of [ST] for the members of Γ" (Collins 2002: 500). In Field's (1994: 250) words, asserting a sentence and attributing truth to it are cognitively equivalent. As a result, sentential minimalists hold that we can meaningfully apply the truth-predicate only to sentences which we understand—if we did not understand a certain sentence, then, in light of cognitive equivalence, we would not understand the attribution of truth to this sentence either. Moreover, as the sentential truth-schema indicates, the truth-predicate here is language-relative, i.e. it is confined to particular languages such as German or English, but does not range over all languages. Importantly, reference to a certain language on (ST)'s left-hand side also turns instances of (ST) into contingent truths when we move away from formal, artificial languages to the languages we actually speak since it is an empirical matter how we use and what we mean by certain words (Putnam 1988: 63; Soames 2003: 370-372). To elaborate, if German, say, had developed in such a way that speakers referred to rainbows, rather than snow, when using the word 'Schnee', the statement 'Schnee ist weiß' would not have been true in German. Accordingly, the truth of the claim 'Schnee ist weiß' relies on two things: (i) on the sentence meaning that snow is white and (ii) on snow's being white. As the first of these conditions is a contingent, empirical matter, instances of (ST) must also be contingent. As such, (ST) cannot help us with the first minimalist task, namely to reveal and extract the conceptual core of truth. Since we accept (ST)-instances only under the condition that *X* and *p* mean the same, it appears that this caveat is somehow included in our ordinary conception of truth which must, therefore, be prior to and not fully captured by (ST), since (ST) itself does not incorporate this very requirement. But we can go even one step further. For, what a sentence or a word means in a given language is not only a contingent matter, but also a robust, substantive question. As I will explain in section 2.2, we must enquire into the use of sentences and words in order to determine their meaning. Accordingly, the finding that the truth of the sentence 'Schnee ist weiß' does not just rely on snow's being white, but also on its meaning that snow is white, shows that 'is true (in *L*)' relies on substantive meaning-attributions and can, therefore, *not* be minimal.

In light of this damning result, I suggest that we should reject the view that truth attaches primarily to sentences.[2] Since I believe that shifting our focus towards propositions as primary truth-bearers can remedy these flaws, let us turn next to propositional minimalism and see in greater detail what this comprises.

2.1.2 PROPOSITIONAL MINIMALISM

Minimalists of the second kind adopt the propositional truth-schema

> (PT)   The proposition that *p* is true iff *p*.

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2   Further objections to sentential minimalism are, for instance, that it cannot cope with "cognitive opacity", namely that "trivially, we can predicate truth to sentences we do not understand" (Collins 2002: 503). Moreover, making truth relative to a certain language becomes precarious if this implies that speakers of different languages cannot share the same concept of truth (Blackburn 2006b).

In line with Blackburn and Soames, I will understand "propositions in a minimal and uncontentious way", namely as "nothing more than what is said or believed in" (Soames 2003: 379), as "something capable of being believed but equally capable of being merely supposed or entertained" (Blackburn 1998a: 71, 1993a: 123).[3] The view that truth is predicated primarily of propositions gives us the advantage of rendering unnecessary the intermediary step mentioned above which referred to the meaning of sentences and thus turned instances of (ST) into contingent truths and 'is true (in *L*)' into a robust predicate. Concentrating on propositions—in contrast to the sentential vehicles which are contingently chosen to articulate what we wish to say—guarantees that the right-hand side and the left-hand side of (PT)-instances correctly relate; that is, that the substitutes for *p* mean the same. As a consequence, this implies that the proviso inherent in our ordinary concept of truth, demanding that both sides of (PT) mean the same in order for (PT)-instances to strike us as right, is built into (PT) itself. Accordingly, appeal to propositions in the sense of that which has been said is fully in line with our ordinary concept of truth. Once this is secured, we can argue that the two sides of (PT) are necessarily and *a priori* equivalent.[4] Accordingly, I will assume for the remainder of this study that truth is primarily attributed to propositions and only derivatively to the sentences (or utterances) selected to express these propositions.

FIRST DEFINITIONAL CRITERION: EQUIVALENCE

Having argued that we should adopt propositional, rather than sentential minimalism, let us look more closely at the first minimal thesis, namely the claim that the propositions that *p* and that *p* is true are *a priori* and necessarily equivalent. What exactly does this equivalence involve and in what way is it conceptually fundamental?

To start with, it is not to be understood in terms of synonymy, that is, '*p*' and '*p* is true' do not share the same meaning and are not identical. To understand why, recall contexts of indirect truth-ascriptions, in which we attribute truth of propositions which are not explicitly stated, such as in 'Einstein's equation is true'. To account for such indirect truth-ascriptions where we cannot simply drop 'is true', we must treat 'is true' as expressing a genuine predicate. Once we have established as much, though, 'is true' must also be a genuine predicate in direct contexts of truth-ascriptions (Soames 1999: 234). Hence, the truth-predicate does not inherit its meaning from that to which it applies, but possesses its own meaning (Collins 2002: 504). In Horwich's (1998b: 38) terms, we associate "a definite propositional constituent to the truth-predicate—a constituent which is part of [the proposition that *p* is true], but not of … [the proposition that *p*]". However, the meaning of the truth-predicate is not susceptible to reductive analysis; we cannot break it down into more basic

3   For other conceptions of propositions, see Horwich (1998b) who proposes that pure Fregean, pure Russellian and mixed propositions exist, and Soames (1988, 1989, 2002, 2008) who favours a Russellian conception.

4   Furthermore, this approach is compatible with cognitive opacity. To elaborate, consider the situation in which we give a name to a certain proposition; say, we name the proposition that $E=mc^2$ 'Einstein's equation'. Since we can use a name to talk about its referent even if, for some reason or other, we do not know exactly what this entity is, we "should be able to use the sentence [Einstein's equation is true] to predicate truth of the proposition [$E=mc^2$] even in cases in which [we are] not in a position to state or assert that proposition" (Soames 1999: 234). It also neatly accommodates the intuitively very plausible assumption that users of different languages share the same concept of truth, simply because different sentences—'Snow is white, 'Schnee ist weiß, 'La neige est blanche' etc.—can be used to express the very same proposition.

concepts and define it in non-circular terms.[5] Truth is a primitive concept. Now, learning that a concept is primitive is always relatively unsatisfying; it leaves too many questions unanswered. Fortunately, though, this is not the end of the story—we can do better. Although we cannot give a non-circular definition of 'is true', we can illuminate its content when adopting a more indirect approach, examining what it means for us to understand this concept and to know in which cases we should apply it to statements.[6]

With regard to conditions of concept possession, minimalists often place great emphasis on our dispositions to accept instantiations of the truth-schema. In this vein, Horwich (1998b: 35) clarifies that "our knowledge of [the meaning of 'is true'] consists in the fact that the explanatorily basic regularity in our use of it is the inclination to accept instantiations of the schema [(PT)]" *a priori*, that is, without further enquiries. However, although acceptance-dispositions play a key role in the conditions of concept possession, in that someone who rejected all (PT)-instances with which he was confronted could simply not be interpreted as sharing our concept of truth, these acceptance-dispositions cannot be the whole story. For, as Soames (1999: 247) suggests, grasp of the truth-predicate must, firstly, also include complex (PT)-instances about propositions which themselves contain the truth-predicate and, secondly, it must guide our categorisation of some (PT)-instances as fully acceptable, though of others as puzzling or pathological. For instance, if our competence with the truth-predicate was exhausted by acceptance-dispositions, it would remain arcane as to why we are happy to embrace (PT)-instances such as 'The proposition that snow is white is true iff snow is white', yet stumble over cases such as 'The proposition that this very proposition is false is true iff this proposition is false'. If our grasp of truth is to explain these differences in our attitudes towards (PT)-instances, as Soames rightly demands that it should, then it needs to surpass acceptance-dispositions themselves. We thus must dig a little deeper to unearth the root of the truth-concept.

Doing so arguably leads to the application-conditions of the truth-predicate. To elaborate, these application-conditions demand that we apply the truth-predicate only to those propositions which possess the property of truth, where truth is, in turn, exactly that property "whose conditions for application are given, for [any arbitrary proposition], by [this very proposition] itself" (Collins 2002: 502). Hence, someone who is familiar with the concept of truth knows implicitly that she should ascribe truth to the claim 'Snow is white' if and only if the conditions described by this claim hold—that is, if and only if snow is white. This might sound trivial. On the one hand, the conditions stated by some arbitrary assertion which must obtain for the truth-predicate to be applied correctly are, of course, exactly truth-conditions. On the other hand, though, these application-conditions are uniquely connected with truth. Compare, say, the application of the predicate 'is true' with that of the predicate 'is complex' to the proposition '*p*'. Whilst the standard for application of the former is given internally by '*p*' itself, that of the latter is given externally, say by the rule which tells us to call a proposition complex if it consists of at least two atomic propositions. Accordingly, I suggest that someone who knows how to apply the truth-predicate—that is, someone who knows (implicitly) that the application-condition of 'is true' to an arbitrary proposition '*p*'

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5   Consequently, we cannot define truth in terms of correspondence, coherence, utility and the like.

6   Notice here the similarity to the expressivist approach which was mentioned in the introduction and will prove important later: minimalists do not define what 'true' means, but see how this concept is used. This also links with a used-based theory of meaning which will be introduced in the next section.

is provided by '*p*' itself—fulfils the possession-conditions of the concept of truth. This also helps to explain the following issues.

Firstly, someone who implicitly knows about these application-conditions will be disposed to accept unproblematic (PT)-instances *a priori*. After all, (PT) can be read as a formalised statement thereof. Secondly, our linguistic conventions governing the use of 'is true' can also explain why someone who is competent with the concept of truth will treat certain (PT)-instances as normal and be puzzled by others, since our application-rules are silent about certain troublesome cases (Soames 1999: 163-181). To elaborate, our linguistic rules instruct us to apply truth to the proposition that *p* iff *p* obtains and then to proceed recursively from this point onwards: the proposition that *p* is true iff *p*; the proposition that *p* is true is true iff *p* is true, and so on. These conventions thus rely on some basic *p* which does not contain the truth-predicate itself and forms the first rung of the truth-ascriptions ladder.[7] However, if this prerequisite is not fulfilled, our conventions are quiet as to whether or not we should apply 'is true', which implies that any such attribution of truth or falsity would, in Soames (1999: 172) terms, be "ungrounded". Put differently, if the first rung is missing, we cannot start moving on the ladder of truth-ascriptions. To be fully explicit, this train of thought suggests interpreting truth as a 'gappy' predicate, that is, as undefined for a certain class of statements. This class not only involves paradoxical Liar cases which cannot be traced back to propositions which do not themselves comprise truth-ascriptions, but also propositions which invoke other gappy, partially defined predicates, such as 'bald' or 'is a heap'. Since our linguistic rules neither tell us to apply nor not to apply 'is a heap' to a collection of exactly 1,403 grains of sand, we cannot ascertain whether or not the condition stated in 'This is a heap of sand' obtains when confronted with the 1,403 grains. As a consequence of the basic proposition's undetermined status, 'This is a heap of sand is true' and 'This is heap of sand is false' are equally ungrounded; we have to abstain from both. Accordingly, the underlying reason for feeling ill at ease with truth-attributions to Liar statements and statements falling into the gap of partially defined predicates must be backtracked to application-rules which do not provide us with exhaustive instructions on how to assess their very content. Since the truth-predicate is thus undefined for certain cases but not others, we can explain why someone who masters the concept of truth will distinguish between normal and puzzling examples of (PT)-instances. Finally, it also follows, epistemologically speaking, that whenever asserting a proposition is warranted, asserting that this proposition is true is also warranted and vice versa. More precisely, "any warrant for asserting, believing, denying, doubting, assuming, (or taking any of a variety of related attitudes) toward one of those propositions is a warrant for asserting, believing, denying, doubting, assuming, (or taking the relevant related attitude) toward the other" (Soames 2003: 372). Once more, these explanations neither try to give a non-circular definition of truth nor of what it is to understand the truth-predicate. However, they help us to tighten our grip on truth considerably by showing how the linguistic conventions surrounding this primitive concept help us to explain various features of truth.

So far, I have argued that the equivalence between '*p*' and '*p* is true' should not be understood in terms of identity or synonymy, that the truth-predicate possesses its own meaning and that we can improve our understanding of the truth-predicate by looking at acceptance-dispositions and

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7   This metaphor is not to imply that the ladder is standing vertically. Instead, the minimalist ladder "is lying on the ground, horizontal" (Blackburn 1998a: 78). What exactly this means will be explained later.

application-conditions. But, how exactly are we to understand the equivalence between calling a statement true and asserting this very statement? Soames (2003: 372) suggests the following. He starts by explaining "that p and the proposition that p is true are trivial, necessary and apriori consequences of one another". The expression '*a priori* consequence' should be understood in the sense that "there is a way of apprehending the proposition that p is true (which also involves apprehending p) such that when the proposition that p is true is apprehended in this way, the agent is able, apriori, to infer p" (Soames 2003, fn. 4: 382). Accordingly, someone who knows what 'is true' means—someone who follows the correct application-conditions and shows corresponding acceptance-dispositions—can infer from '*p* is true', solely on basis of this knowledge, that *p*, and vice versa. Again, this cannot guarantee that someone who is not familiar with the concept of truth will, after listening to these explanations, come to understand this predicate. Soames is the first to admit this. However, someone who is being told about these features of predicate application, concept possession and necessary *a priori* inference which are intimately linked with the notion and property of truth is nonetheless being told "something decidedly non-trivial … After all, many other properties of propositions don't have these characteristics" (Soames 2003: 372).

To sum up, '*p*' and '*p* is true' are *a priori* and necessarily equivalent in the sense that they trivially follow from one another. Whenever we grasp that *p* is true, we can infer on solely *a priori* grounds that *p*, and vice versa. Moreover, truth is a primitive concept the content of which cannot be reductively defined, yet can be illuminated by appeal to its application-conditions which, for each proposition *p*, are given by *p* itself. This also entails that those who are in possession of the truth-concept are disposed to accept (PT)-instances *a priori* and that when asserting a proposition is warranted, asserting that this proposition is true is also warranted and vice versa. Since each of these components relies heavily on the truth-schema, (PT) can be regarded as forming the very core of our concept of truth.

SECOND DEFINITIONALCRITERION: FUNCTION

As indicated above, minimalists do not deny that 'is true' is a genuine predicate or that truth is a property of propositions as long as this is understood as a 'logical' property. Horwich (1998b: 37) explains that the idea behind this jargon is that "different kinds of property correspond to different roles that predicates play in our language". Let us now have a slightly briefer look at the specific role that the truth-predicate assumes in our language which suggests the interpretation of truth as a logical property.

Following my earlier explanations, minimalists appeal to the function of truth in order to explain why it is useful for us to employ such a concept at all. This function is normally subsumed under the heading of 'semantic ascent'; that is, the truth-predicate enables us to ascend from talk about the world to talk about propositions (Collins 2002: 502; Horwich 1998b: 2-3). We have already seen that in cases of direct truth-ascriptions, this ascent is not necessarily required. Rather than making the detour of speaking about linguistic entities which, in turn, speak about extra-linguistic reality, we could just as easily speak directly about the world itself. However, there are situations in which we are forced to take this detour, namely predominantly in those "where we are seeking generality, and seeking it along certain oblique planes that we cannot sweep out by general-

izing over objects" (Quine 1970: 11).[8] Whilst it is possible to generalise over objects without appeal to truth or propositions—consider, for instance, the case of 'All men are mortal'—this is not so when we want to generalise over propositions themselves—such as over the propositions 'Snow is or is not white', 'Grass is or is not green', 'John does or does not travel to London' and so on. The truth-predicate now enables us to quantify over linguistic entities themselves by forming a new proposition, namely in this instance, that every proposition of the form '*p* or not *p*' is true (Horwich 1998b: 3-4, 31-33). Accordingly, the truth-predicate proves its usefulness when we have to talk about propositions and only indirectly about the world, putting us in position to make new propositions which we could not have asserted otherwise.[9] Hence, the truth-predicate owes its value to the function which it fulfils in our language and which stems from these logical needs of generalisation and indirect reference—it helps us to do something which we could not do without it (Brandom 1997: 142-143). Since truth is thus a logical predicate, the corresponding truth-property is also best interpreted as logical.

THIRD DEFINITIONAL CRITERION: EXHAUSTIVENESS

Vitally, to support this conclusion, minimalists have to argue that truth's logical function is not just one amongst many. Rather, its logical role must *exhaust* the functions of truth—truth must not possess any further explanatory or causal roles which would transcend its mere usefulness in expressing certain propositions. Consequently, minimalists reject the claim that in order to explain certain phenomena we must assume that truth is robust and instead state that truth's role within all of these explanations can be demystified on solely minimal grounds. Of course, boldly declaring this and proving it are two very different matters. It is to Horwich's credit, though, that he has provided the groundwork to show how minimalism can tackle this challenging task and protect against the threat of re-inflation. However, I cannot assess here minimalism's explanations of all these phenomena but will have to take it on trust that minimalism succeeds in coping with these cases. Hence, next I will give just a few examples of how minimalism deals with certain explananda to give a rough idea of how the minimalist response works in principle (Horwich 1998b).

These examples concern the common belief that the *truth* of our beliefs promotes and explains the success of our actions, that we should aim for the *truth* and that the *truth* of our scientific theories explains why they can provide us with correct prognoses. Although these formulations seem to suggest that truth plays some substantial, explanatory role in these explanations, it becomes clear after some reflection that they can be unpacked in a way which does not refer to truth any more. Take the case of truth's link to behavioural success and compare the conjunction '*S* believes that if *S* drinks some water, *S*'s thirst will be assuaged and if *S* drinks some water, *S*'s thirst will be assuaged' with the conjunction '*S* believes that if *S* drinks some water, *S*'s thirst will be assuaged and it is not the case that if *S* drinks some water, *S*'s thirst will be assuaged'. The more often the first conjunction and the less often the second conjunction is satisfied, the more successful *S*'s actions will be. Note that this explanation has eliminated any appeal to truth; no reference to any substantial notion of truth is required. Similarly, this explanation, coupled with the plausible thesis that it is normally

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8   Quine, of course, is an advocate of sentential minimalism.

9   Or, to be precise, which we could not have asserted without the truth-predicate or "some complex, higher-order quantification in terms of which a truth-predicate could be defined" (Soames 1999: 256 fn. 4). For a discussion of objectual and substitutional quantification, see Horwich 1998b: 31-33.

beneficial to find ourselves in the first sort of circumstances, also helps account for the fact that we aim for the truth. That is, the "value of truth is, very roughly speaking, to wish for satisfaction of the schema '*p* iff I believe *p*'" (Horwich 1998b: 62).[10] Finally, consider a scientific theory, say, the theory that nothing goes faster than light. How could we account for its empirical success, that is, explain why this theory works so well? We can simply state that the theory that nothing goes faster than light works so well because nothing goes faster than light. Once more, we have not invoked any notion of truth—and what better explanation could we give?

Of course, we could reformulate all these explanations in terms of truth, curtailing them with the help of (PT) and generalising over the propositions in question. Horwich (1998b: 49) rightly observes that truth gives us "a certain economy of expression, and the capacity to make … explanatory claims even when we don't explicitly know what the [explanandum] is, or when we generalise". But, and this is the important moral of these exercises, these functions "are precisely the features of truth which are central to the [minimal] conception" (Horwich 1998b: 49). Accordingly, more economical explanations make use of the truth-schema and truth's exclusively *logical* functions only; they do not require us to assume anything which would go beyond minimalism.

To sum up, minimalists proclaim that the truth-predicate fulfils a role in our language which is exhausted by its logical functions resulting from certain logical needs. It plays no explanatory-causal role which would surpass minimalism's theses. Granting that every genuine predicate goes hand in hand with a corresponding property, the nature of which is determined by the function of that predicate, minimalists can happily agree that there is a property of truth possessed by propositions. This property is, in turn, best described as logical; in light of truth's exclusively logical functions, there simply is no reason for our trying to find truth as a metaphysical, heavyweight property in a natural world.

2.2 MEANING

So far, minimalists have deflated truth by arguing that the truth-predicate is an extremely useful, yet metaphysically lightweight, device which enables us to *do* certain things, thus removing the temptation to conceive of truth as some kind of robust, natural property. However, a dangerous suspicion developing at this point is that these minimal results can be enjoyed only because there is a considerable inflationary input in another place, namely in the context of *meaning* or propositional content. To elaborate, I have argued that truth is predicated primarily of propositions and only derivatively of sentences. At the same time, it is clear that sentences are prime vehicles for judgement, they

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10   Interestingly, Huw Price (1988, 2007, 2008a+b+c), who describes himself as a minimalist, argues that truth has an additional, normative function which allows us to apply an 'heterological', rather than 'autological', standard to our discourses (Price 2006). According to him, traditional minimalism does not reflect the difference between these two. However, he states that truth understood as an external, heterological standard enables us to improve our commitments by aligning them with those of our community, requiring people to assert that *p* only when *p* holds and blaming them if they do not adhere to this principle. It is not clear to me, though, that we should accept this argument, mainly because I believe that traditional minimalism does indeed reflect the difference between autological and heterological standards. After all, the propositions involved in (PT)-instances are not of the form 'I believe that *p*', but simply: '*p*'. At the same time, Price's version of minimalism, which places more weight on disagreement, may be useful with regard to conceptions of truth-aptitude, as I will explain in sections 2.5 and 6.2. How exactly Price's minimalism is to be understood is not to be discussed here.

are used to express these very propositions. But, and this is now the worry, is it not the case that understanding the meaning of a sentence is grasping its truth-conditions?[11] And if this is so, then do minimalists not heap two overburdening responsibilities onto the truth-schema, demanding that on the one hand, grasping that 'Snow is white' is true iff snow is white delivers us the meaning of this sentence, yet requiring on the other hand that this grasp also constitute our understanding of the truth-concept? As Horwich (1998b: 69) puts it, does minimalism not confront us, therefore, with an equation with two unknowns? More dangerously even, can this equation be solved only by re-inflating the conception of truth so as to make it robust enough to be able to carry meaning? To cut a long story short, minimalism about truth needs a theory of meaning—and so far, no account of meaning has been given.

How minimalists can discharge this task will be the concern of this section. On pains of re-inflation, then, it is clear that minimalists must start looking for some concept other than truth upon which to rest meaning. In keeping with other minimalists, I believe that the place where this search will prove successful is in the realm of use. In the following section, concentrating exclusively on the case of assertions in the indicative mood, I will adumbrate how a use-based theory of meaning complements minimal truth and which stance I believe minimalists have to take up towards meaning and its link to truth, reference, representation and the world. As announced at the beginning of this chapter, though, the following exposition cannot trace all twists and turns of a use theory of meaning and has to neglect important general issues usually discussed within this context. My major interest does not concern the specific construal of use-theories, but the general framework in which minimalists can embed truth, meaning, reference and representation. Accordingly, nothing here hinges on the precise formulation of use-based meaning. All that matters is that some use-theory, the details of which might be spelled out in different ways, is tenable. Having said this, in order to give us some better idea of how a use-based theory of meaning may be designed, I will adopt Horwich's (1998a, 2005) position as a model case, the big advantage—and simultaneously greatest potential for weakness—of which is its sharp, crisp and concise formulation. Mainly for the sake of simplicity, I will mostly overlook other, more complicated theories of conceptual role semantics, such as Brandom's (1994, 2000, 2008) inferentialism, and also neglect controversial and disputable aspects of Horwich's position. However, I will not stick too closely to Horwich so as to emphasise general issues which directly impact on the bigger picture of this study.

2.2.1 THE REALM OF USE

In order to provide an account of meaning complementary to, yet independent from, truth, the theory we need must in some way take on Wittgenstein's dictum that words mean what they do in virtue of their use. The wider thought behind this approach is that the meanings of words are not determined by their referents or referential links; instead, they derive their meanings from the pat-

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11 The worry can also be expressed with regard to propositions. It is clear that minimalism presupposes the concept of proposition in its formulation of (PT). This means that minimalists are debarred from defining 'proposition' in terms of truth—otherwise, they would rely on the concept of truth when explaining the concept of proposition, rely on the concept of proposition when explaining the concept of truth and thus be trapped in a circle. Since I have introduced the minimal understanding of proposition as that which has been said and thus avoided any reference of truth, I have already guarded against this circularity and will not go into any more detail here.

tern of use which we implicitly follow when deploying them. Hence, the first step which minimalists must take when tackling meaning is to break through the boundaries of semantics into the territory of use, leaving behind the truth-concept which is too insubstantial to bear the weight of meaning and setting their eyes on the notion of use which does not suffer the same deflationary fate. The second step is, of course, to explain what such a use-based account of meaning involves. This is where Horwich (2005: 26-62) tries to render Wittgenstein's idea more precise by postulating that *meaning-properties*—such as the word 'dog' meaning DOG or the word 'bark' meaning BARK, where expressions in capitals designate concepts—are constituted by non-semantic *use-properties*. In his (2005: 28) words:

> The meaning of a word, w, is engendered by the non-semantic feature of w that explains w's overall deployment. And this will be an acceptance-property of the following form:—'that such-and-such w-sentences are regularly accepted in such-and-such circumstances' is the idealized law governing w's use (by the relevant 'experts', given certain meanings attached to various other words).[12]

Let us make sure that we understand the very core of this definition without discussing all of its details. To start with, Horwich is interested in the literal, semantic meaning of word types and argues that the most important—and more or less only substantial—constraint on a theory of meaning is that it be able to account for the relationship between the meaning of an expression and its use (Horwich 1998a: 13). Elucidating how this task can be accomplished, he posits that for each word *w*, there exists a non-semantic property which explains *w*'s overall deployment. This particular property takes, in turn, the shape of an acceptance-property, stating which sentences that contain *w* competent speakers—more precisely, 'experts' to whom other speakers defer in order to adjust their own, potentially deviant usage—regularly accept under which circumstances. For instance, the law-like pattern which we follow when using the word 'red' might be, roughly, that we are prepared to accept 'This is red' when faced with red objects, the use-regularity of 'bachelor' is our acceptance of the sentence 'Bachelors are unmarried men', that of 'true' is our disposition to accept that *p* is true if and only if we also accept *p*, and so on. Crucially, though, what engenders the meaning of a word *w* is neither our mere acceptance of *w*-sentences nor that our use of *w* is law-like. Instead, only law-like regularities which are non-derived and *explanatorily basic* for the word's deployment constitute meaning-properties.[13] Accordingly, what grounds the meaning of 'true' is not some law which cap-

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12   I have omitted an additional, yet superfluous 'is' just before the bracket which has wrongly crept into this definition every time it occurs in Horwich (2005). Talking of an idealised law is to be understood as invoking "a purely factual *law-like regularity* of usage", operating within speakers partly as a result of corrective reinforcement by the community, and "not a *norm* concerning what usage ought to be displayed" (Horwich 2005: 49, original emphasis). Idealisation is, in turn, to be modelled analogously with idealisations in the sciences as absence of distorting factors. These few words obviously contain strong explosives, some of which—particularly with regard to normative accounts of thought and meaning—will be addressed in chapter 3. However, I will neglect these issues here in order not to lose sight of the main elements which compose Horwich's overall picture of meaning.

13   This limitation of the reduction-basis of meaning-properties to explanatorily basic acceptance-properties is necessary in light of Horwich's account of synonymy. If we omitted this requirement, we could imagine two distinct words *w* and *v*, where the former possesses acceptance-property 'α' and the latter acceptance-property 'α and β'. Since both *w* and *v* share α, it could then wrongly be argued that *w* and *v* possess the same meaning. Limitation to explanatorily basic acceptance-properties is meant to prevent such results. For greater detail, see Horwich (1998a: 140-142, 2005: 51).

tures that we accept the sentence 'The proposition that *p* is true' only in the case that *p* holds and 2+2=4, say, but the particular law-like pattern of accepting this very statement if and only if we also accept *p*—*full stop*. This basic, meaning-constituting acceptance-property of *w*, together with other factors such as the speaker's psychology and context, is meant to be the explanatory foundation of all the phenomena considering a person's linguistic and relevant non-linguistic behaviour— utterances, responses, inferences, and the like—with regard to *w*. One consequence of this position is that two words count as synonymous only if they share the same basic acceptance-property. Another is that meaning-properties come in multifarious shapes. There is not one analysis of '*x* means *F*' which would equally apply to all words; meaning is not reduced to one particular non-semantic property. Instead, together with plentiful meaning-properties come just as plentiful non-semantic use-properties.

So far, this analysis pertains to words only.[14] But what about the meanings of whole sentences and the central feature of language, compositionality? With regard to sentence-meaning, Horwich departs from reductions of meaning-properties to use-properties and argues that the meaning of a complex expression consists in what he calls its *construction-property*. That is, what we need in order to understand a complex expression is, firstly, knowledge of the meanings of its atomic elements as engendered by their basic acceptance-properties and, secondly, knowledge of this complex's structure. Accordingly, the meaning-property '*X* means DOGS BARK' of sentence *X* is constituted, roughly, by the word's 'dog' meaning DOG, the word's 'bark' meaning BARK, and the structure in which these two elements are arranged within the complex expression. Once we grasp the meaning of these elements and appreciate how they are combined, we understand the whole sentence and as a consequence know which proposition it expresses—and there is nothing more to compositionality than this. In short, "the meaning of a complex structure just *is* its compositional structure—the way it is composed from elementary words with certain meanings", as Gibbard (2008: 151) succinctly summarises. In light of its simplicity and, indeed, its being on the brink of triviality, Horwich (1998a: 158) once more labels this view minimal, "for it shows that the compositionality of meaning is much easier to explain than we have often been led to believe". This comment is clearly directed towards truth-conditional semantics, the great appeal of which consists to a great extent in its very ability to elucidate how the meanings of sentences are composed by those of their atomic elements. However, if Horwich's minimal approach proves successful in taking the sting out of compositionality as an extremely difficult condition for theories of meaning to meet, then there is no reason to believe that only truth-conditional theories of meaning can succeed in the accomplishment of this task. Compositionality neither debars us from adopting a use-theory of meaning nor dictates the employment of inflationary semantic notions such as truth or reference which would be strong enough to shoulder meaning.

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14   Horwich's focus on words, rather than whole sentences, makes me somewhat sceptical about his version of a use-theory as I believe, for reasons which will become clear below when discussing the link between language and the world, that minimalists should insist on the primacy of sentences over words (Brandom 1994: 79). To weaken Horwich's focus on words, it is important to emphasise his commitment to holism and the specification of the acceptance-properties which always include whole sentences. Although Brandom's account is preferable in this respect, I have chosen not to base my presentation on his position, firstly, for reasons of simplicity and, secondly, because Brandom's account is normative. It raises questions, therefore, about the 'globalisation' of previously local expressivism and about the normativity of meaning and thought which will resurface in chapter 3.2.

Although Horwich's position strongly focuses on the meaning of words, rather than of whole sentences, it is crucial to realise that his position nevertheless implies holism of meaning. For, acceptance of a *w*-sentence which constitutes *w*'s meaning presupposes that we somehow understand this very sentence and all the other words comprised in it. Here, Horwich (1998a: 165-166) argues that "even though assertion requires understanding, it is none the less possible that the direction of explanation be from (1) asserting certain sentences containing a word, to (2) understanding that word, to (3) understanding those sentences". This holism will prove to be very important and will be examined in greater detail a little later in this chapter when I address the link between language and the world.

So let us assume that word-meanings are constituted by their use-properties—that is, basic acceptance-properties—and that sentence-meanings are constituted by their construction-properties—the arrangement of atomic meanings within certain structures. The pivotal step in this proposal which guarantees compatibility with minimal truth is that meaning-properties are explained, not by appeal to other semantic notions, but to *pragmatic* use-properties. In Horwich's case, these use-properties are, in turn, further explained by appeal to basic acceptance-properties which ultimately refer to *psychological* states. In one of his different definitions of 'acceptance', Horwich (2005: 31, fn. 7, original emphasis) declares that a "public sentence is *accepted* by a person if his disposition to utter it is correlated with his being in a mental/neural state that grounds one of his premises in theoretical practical reasoning". Other use-theorists, such as Brandom (1994), specify use-properties by appeal to inferential roles and argue that semantic content is conferred by our linguistic practice of deontic scorekeeping, tracking speakers' doxastic commitments which are, in turn, creatures of our *practical attitudes*. Accordingly, the all important component of use-theories, in whichever way they are fleshed out, is not to ground meaning on semantic concepts, but on pragmatic notions. As such, they replace traditional attempts which take truth as the starting point of investigations into meaning and which, in minimalist eyes, wrongly assume that truth is robust enough a notion to shoulder meaning. Instead, we have to ground semantics in pragmatics, letting non-semantic use take centre-stage and adding lightweight truth only when semantic content has already been established. It is use itself which functions as the theoretical concept, doing all the work in our theory of meaning. Semantic notions such as truth or reference play no explanatory role therein.

2.2.2 MEANING AND TRUTH RECONSIDERED

Up to now, I have emphasised that when explaining semantic content, minimalists must make sure that they do not base meaning on truth; otherwise they would be caught up in a circle. This restriction does not entail, though, that minimalists must deny a conceptual link between our ordinary notion of truth and meaning. This tight connection is commonly captured in the following platitude (Soames 1999: 238):

(MTP)   If a sentence *S* means (in *L*) that *p*, then *S* is true (in *L*) iff *p*.

This Meaning-Truth-Platitude (MTP) relies on a certain proviso built into our concept of truth which was the basis of objections put forward against sentential minimalism, namely the requirement that the left-hand side and the right-hand side of (ST)-instances must mean the same.

(MTP)'s antecedent responds to this requirement by making explicit which proposition S express-es.[15] The conditional's consequent, in turn, represents a shortened version of (PT) which in its fuller form explains that the proposition that p, which is expressed by S (in L), is true if and only if p. Hence, our ordinary notions of meaning and truth are linked via the notion of a proposition: mean-ings of sentences, engendered by the way in which words with certain use-properties are arranged, tell us which propositions are expressed. Propositions, in turn, feature in (PT)-instances which form the basis of the concept of truth. Truth and meaning, though being distinct concepts, are thus close relatives. In light of this, advocates of truth-conditional semantics have indeed been right in stating that we can express, or specify, the meaning of expressions in terms of their truth-conditions. Once we know about the meanings involved, we can calculate on the basis of (MTP) for each sentence its truth-conditions and in this way even elucidate the meaning of unfamiliar sentences. Nevertheless, these advocates were wrong to think that this entails that we *explain* propositional content by appeal to truth-conditions—this remains the task of a use-based theory of meaning (Brandom 1997; Wil-liams 1999). Accordingly, the hard, substantial work of explaining wherein meaning consists, is done with appeal to use. Following Dummett's (1975) terminology, use-theories are thus necessari-ly *immodest* or *full-blooded* (Price 2004). Meanings are not explained by appeal to other contents already known by speakers, but by pragmatics. Only when this has been established can we move on and capitalise on (MTP), developing a truth-conditional meaning-calculus that generates the truth-conditions for every meaningful sentence which we plug into the (MTP)-schema. Important-ly, since this calculus is based on (PT), it requires nothing more than minimal truth. It is, therefore, necessarily modest; it invokes the deflated semantic notion of truth to match the meaning of one unknown expression with that of another which is already understood. Hence, this calculus is not in conflict with minimalism about truth; we do not equate meaning with truth-conditions, but only specify meaning with the help thereof.[16]

2.3 REPRESENTATION

Up to now, I have concentrated only on the use of language, the acceptance of certain sentences, the pattern we follow when deploying words. The biggest challenge which such use-based theories encounter is how they can cope with the representational character of language. For, is it not true that our sentences somehow *represent* the world, that they tell us how things stand? If the meaning

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15 See Soames (1999: 16-18, 168) for more details, including more sophisticated thoughts on the relation between—and distinctness of—meaning and propositions.

16 Williams (1999) convincingly argues that Davidson's theory of meaning should be interpreted along these lines, where his method of radical interpretation is located on the level of a meaning-theory and the truth-conditional component on the level of a meaning-calculus. Horwich (1998a: 72) agrees and explains that the principle of charity implicitly contains the following ideas: "(1) that what a person holds true is determined by various factors, including the observable circumstances, background beliefs, inferential propensities, and basic regularities of use of words—regularities that specify, as a function of the other factors, which sentences are held true; and (2) that a good assignment of truth-conditions should 'optimize agreement' in the sense of preserving these basic regularities. Thus, once its precise content is elaborated, Davidson's principle of charity arguably boils down to the use theory of mean-ing". The principle of charity will prove important for this study in two further respects: firstly, in the next section on the link between language and the world and, secondly, in chapter 3.2 when I discuss theses about the normativity of thought.

of the word 'teacup' was really constituted exclusively by the way we use it, how come that this word is *true of* certain objects in the world and not others? In short, how does the *world* fit into this *use*-dominated picture? These are the questions with which I will deal next.

2.3.1 LANGUAGE AND THE WORLD

Against a minimal background, it is clear that language-world relations cannot be established via semantic notions, say by appeal to a robust notion of truth which would be based on the notion of causation. Importantly, though, this does not imply that there are no correlations between language and world at all. In order to see how this is so, three points need emphasising (McDowell 1980; Davidson 1980a).

Firstly, we must remember that use-properties are specified by appeal to the regular acceptance of *whole sentences* in which certain target words occur. For instance, the meaning of the individual word 'red' is explained by appeal to acceptance of sentences such as 'This is red'. Hence, minimalists can use this stress on whole sentences, rather than atomic words, to explain that the interface between language and the world is not situated on the subsentential, but on the sentential level. In Brandom's (1994: 82) words,

> sentences are the only expressions whose utterance 'makes a move in the language game'. Sentences are expressions whose unembedded utterance performs a speech act such as making a claim, asking a question, or giving a command. That is why even when such a speech act is performed by an utterance that does not manifest the syntactic complexity typical of sentences (a shout of 'Rabbit!' or 'Fire!' for instance), the utterance should nonetheless be interpreted as a one-word sentences, as meaning what we might express by 'Look at the rabbit!' or 'There is a fire!'.

Moreover, these meaning-constituting regularities are not just of the form 'that such-and-such *w*-sentences are regularly accepted', but that they are accepted '*in such-and-such circumstances'.* Hence, when trying to find out how meaning-properties are engendered, it is not enough for us to remain immersed within a tightly interwoven network constructed out of the different use-patterns of various words. What we have to do instead is to look out into the world to establish in which situations sentences are uttered and accepted. In certain instances, this is obvious. Recall, for example, that what grounds the word's 'red' meaning RED might well be our regular acceptance of the sentence 'This is red' when we are confronted with something red. With regard to other words, even in the case of natural kind terms but plainly when dealing with non-empirical notions, the explanatorily basic link between the utterance of a sentence and its acceptance-conditions will be far less straightforward. Nevertheless, the first important step within the minimalist explanation of the link between language and the world thus highlights that intelligible, successful communication relies on the use of *whole sentences*, whilst the meaning-constituting use-regularities refer to the *circumstances* within which whole sentences are accepted.

The second point, in turn, reminds us that although minimalists deflate concepts such as truth, they do not want to deflate the world nor our place as natural creatures within it. That is, interactions with our natural and social environment, the way in which we engage with it and in which it impinges on our psychological states, remain untouched by minimal considerations about truth. Hence, minimalists should not and do not deny that something substantial is going on when,

looking at a teacup right in front of her, Mary forms the belief that there is a teacup within reach or that, given her intention to have a warm beverage, she lifts the cup and drinks some tea. The way in which we are causally sensitive to our environment, how we act in order to achieve our goals and how our actions co-vary with the circumstances in which we find ourselves, are thus unaffected by minimalist deflations.

Finally, minimalists can now combine these two insights to account for language-world relations in the following way. Although the meaning of sentences and words is not engendered by some sort of causal relation between them and the environment, but by the way in which they are used, there is still plenty of room within use-based accounts of meaning to account for the relation between language and the world. More precisely, we utter and accept sentences as true in certain circumstances, circumstances to which we are causally sensitive and which lead to the formation of empirical beliefs, but also circumstances in which we pursue our goals, interact with and change our environment. The use of language is thus not floating free in a void, but part of an intricate interplay between psychological states, intentional actions and situational contexts. Placing these different notions—such as meaning, belief and intention, action—within one framework is a complex enterprise. Indeed, this enterprise can quickly resemble an attempt to solve an equation with two unknowns (meaning and psychological states) whilst having only one piece of data (actions within our environment) at hand. For, on the one hand, we look at the contents of speakers' psychological states—their desires and beliefs—in order to establish language-world relations. On the other hand, it seems that we cannot know about the psychological states of speakers unless we understand the sentences which express these mental states. Meaning and psychological states thus resemble an equation containing two unknowns (Williams 1999: 561).

Yet, as is well-known, suggestions have been made to overcome such obstacles. The most prominent of these is certainly Davidson's (1984a: 137) proposal to break into this equation by employing the 'principle of charity', which holds psychological states constant whilst tackling the problem of meaning (McDowell 1977, 1998). In its diluted and, as a result, more plausible form, this principle—now better called the 'principle of humanity'—declares that "any set of thoughts we attribute to a subject must be … something with which we can to some degree sympathize, in that we see it as the outcome of … cognitive competence in a broad sense, trying to get to grips with this world" (Heal 1997: 190). Accordingly, the principle of charity requires that we observe three points when interpreting speakers. Firstly, we have to consider them as wanting to communicate something about the world, where this is given the widest possible reading. Secondly, charity demands that we assume that they want to do so truthfully—that is, that they standardly aim to assert that p only if p. Finally, this entails that the mental states which we attribute to speakers and regard as being voiced by their utterances must be intelligible against the situational background which includes our own beliefs—in other words, it demands that we attribute a belief that p only if we believe that p holds. In a nutshell, then, this more refined procedure proposes that we determine correlations between assertions of sentences and the circumstances in which they are uttered and accepted by attributing mental states to speakers which are most intelligible against our given background. Hence, the relation in which the use of sentences, mental states and circumstances of acceptance stand is no doubt complex. However, this does not change the fact that use is not detached from the world, but firmly anchored within it.

2.3.2 REPRESENTATION

These explanations also help minimalists to tackle, and finally deflate, the representational character of language. Representation, though, is a devilishly ambiguous term. Sometimes it is used as a synonym for meaning; sometimes it is equated with correlation; sometimes it is associated with causation; sometimes it is read very broadly along the lines of 'being about'.[17] This sense of 'being about' is the one in which I am interested here, but first some more unpacking is required.

> 'About' … has both an extensional and an intensional-with-an-*s* reading. In one sense (intensional-with-an-*s*), the statement or belief that the King of France is bald is about the King of France, but in that sense it does not follow that there is some object which they are about. In another sense (the extensional) there is no object which they are about because there is no King of France (Searle, cited in Brandom 1994: 70).

I suggest that we concentrate primarily on the intensional reading here. For, if we want to say that any meaningful sentence or contentful mental state is in some sense *about* something—that it *represents* something—then the extensional reading is too strict. Consequently, I will assume that a sentence or mental state can be said to represent even if nothing exists to be represented according to the extensional reading. In addition, if a sentence represents something which does indeed exist, we can agree to call this 'successful representing' (Brandom 1994: 71). The following explanations will focus on the representational character of language only. However, bearing in mind the interconnection of psychological states and utterances mentioned above, they could also be extended to psychological states since they apply to the content of those states just as much as to the content of our sentences.

So, what can minimalists say about this particular, representational feature of language? How shall we understand that sentences are *about* something? What I think they should say is that a sentence which is deemed to represent something as being a certain way "implicitly imposes conditions that must be satisfied if the world is to conform to the way it is represented to be. Thus, the semantic information encoded by a sentence determines the conditions under which it is true" (Soames 1989: 575-576). However, this link between the meaning of a sentence and its truth-conditions has already been covered by (MTP)—if a sentence *S* means (in *L*) that *p*, then *S* is true (in *L*) iff *p*. Accordingly, any meaningful expression wears on its sleeves the conditions under which it is true and thus automatically represents how the world has to be in order for it to comply with the sentence. Representation is thus no mysterious, let alone robust, characteristic of our language. Once the meaning of an arbitrary sentence is established, its representational character is guaranteed by (MTP) which links meaning and truth by conceptual means alone.

But what about more specific instances which look like word-object relations? Why, for example, is the word 'teacup' true of teacups and not of other objects? Again, the same train of thought applies here; we just have to modify (MTP) so as to make it applicable to subsentential parts. With Horwich (2005: 71), we can state that

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17   Compare also Price's (2008c: 1) distinction between i-representation, which "emphasises position in inferential or functional network", and e-representation which "stresses correlation with an aspect of an external environment". The present section then talks about i-representations, not necessarily e-representations.

(MTP*)   If word w means F, then (x) (w is true of x iff Fx).

Accordingly, if 'teacup' means TEACUP, then this word is true only of teacups. If teacups actually do exist, we can also say that 'teacup' refers or represents successfully.[18] No substantial link between word and object has been assumed in order to explain why terms apply only to certain objects. Instead, both in the case of whole sentences and in that of atomic words, the minimalist response to the representational character of language capitalises on the conceptual relation between meaning and truth. With regard to the former, a sentence's representing something is equated with its possessing truth-conditions. This requirement is, though, trivially fulfilled through (MTP). Concerning the latter, we can employ (MTP*) to make explicit the link between a word's meaning and the object to which it applies. Representation thus becomes another victim of deflation. It is not a non-semantic feature of language that needs substantial explanation, but trivially follows from the interrelation of our concepts of meaning and truth alone.

In addition, minimalists often examine representational locutions such as 'about' or 'of' from a different angle. In line with their minimal approach to truth, they are interested in the question of why it is useful for our language to possess such terms. For instance, what are the benefits of being able to state that Mary thought *of* John that he was a generous person, or that George said *about* cake that it is not particularly healthy? As Horwich (1998a: 121, original emphasis) puts it, why "is it valuable for there to be a practice of characterizing the contents of thoughts and statements, *not* [*de dicto*] by alluding to how they are articulated by their subjects, but rather [*de re*] by alluding to the objects they are about?" The answer that both Horwich (1998a) and, in a somewhat different way, Brandom (1994)[19] give is that *de re* ascriptions of propositional attitudes enable us to pick up

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18   At this point, Huw Price (1997) scents another danger of re-inflation for minimalism. He argues that if we grant that 'w means F' and 'Fx' are substantial matters—claims to which the position sketched here is committed—we can define reference in the following way:

(Robust Reference RR) $R(x, y) \leftrightarrow$ For some F, x means F and Fy.

However, as the right-hand side of this biconditional reduces to something substantial and non-semantic, the left-hand side too must be understood in the very same way. Since this definition of reference thus turns out to be substantial, re-inflation is passed on through the recursive procedure to truth itself:

(Robust Truth TR) S is true $\leftrightarrow$ S means that p and p.

How should minimalists react to this charge? Firstly, they could try to refute Price's reasoning by declaring that reference understood in this way is still not prior to semantic considerations, but indeed depends on them. For, as Horwich is always keen to stress, reference cannot be 'read off' from use-properties, but only from the engendered *semantic* meaning-properties. The link between w's use-property and the object of which it is true is thus necessarily mediated by w's meaning. Consequently, the semantic element of (RR)'s right-hand side cannot be cancelled out from our understanding of reference. Secondly, they could adopt Price's own solution to this problem and deny that we should reduce meaning-properties to substantial use-properties. As I have emphasised above, Horwich's specific use-based theory is just one amongst many and has been chosen here not because it is the most convincing, but because it is the easiest to understand and portray. Adopting a more complex use-based theory, such as Brandom's inferentialism, might well be the way to go. Thirdly, they could accept Price's conclusion that reference is robust, yet deny that this leads to the re-inflation of truth, as I will explain shortly. Given these different moves, I believe that Price's worry can be dispelled.

19   Brandom (1994) develops a much more complicated answer than the one given here, explaining how the representational dimension of language is constructed by inferential relations in the context of 'deontic scorekeeping'. He (1997:151) argues that locutions such as 'about' or 'of' "have the expressive role

useful beliefs from other people and to bridge differences in context and knowledge about our environment. For instance, if Mary and John shared the same *de dicto* beliefs about Queen Elizabeth II and the monarch of the United Kingdom, Mary could still teach John something new when stating *of* Elizabeth II that she is the monarch of the United Kingdom. Consequently, minimalists can supplement their minimal account of representation with an explanation of why it is advantageous for our language to contain representational terms by appealing solely to their usefulness, the role they play in our language and the ability which they give us to *do* certain things.

2.4 REFERENCE

So far, I have addressed concerns about the relation between truth, meaning and representation. The only notion I have not explicitly examined yet is that of reference. It is widely thought that reference contains a great danger of re-inflation for the truth-predicate. For, Tarski's great achievement was to show how truth in formalised languages can be defined recursively in terms of reference and satisfaction. Take the claim 'Alice is a child', for instance. When considering the constituents of that claim, we can state that the singular name 'Alice' refers to Alice and that the predicate 'is a child' refers to the class of objects which satisfy it, so that 'Alice is a child' is true if and only if Alice satisfies this predicate. Tarski thus managed to demonstrate how the truth of a statement depends on its structure and constituents. The precarious question which we have to face now is, of course, how this relation of reference has to be understood. The threat is clear: Following these definitions, we can rewrite the traditional (ST)-instance

> (ST) 'Alice is a child' is true iff Alice is a child.

as the statement

> (ST*) 'Alice is a child' is true iff the object referred to by 'Alice' satisfies the predicate 'is a child'.

Consequently, it is thought that if reference and satisfaction were robust, possibly causal relations between words and the world, then the right-hand side of (ST*) would express a non-semantic property and, via the biconditional, re-inflate our notion of truth on (ST*)'s left-hand side. Put differently, since reference, satisfaction and truth are interdefinable concepts, either all of them are inflationary or all of them are minimal. A combination of minimalism with any robust account of reference is, therefore, blocked.

How should minimalists react to this argument? I believe that there are two routes open to them. The first is to reject the view that a robust conception of reference must lead to the re-inflation of truth. At first sight, this may be astounding. However, it is less so when we remember my explanations in the context of sentential minimalism, which concluded that 'is true (in *L*)' must be a robust predicate. Since meaning remains robust according to minimalist semantics and since

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they do—making representational relations explicit—in virtue of the way they figure in de re ascriptions of propositional attitudes". Representation is explained as a consequence "of the essentially *social*, perspectival character of inferential practice" (Brandom 1997: 151).

the truth of a sentence '*X* is *F*' depends (i) on its meaning that *X* is *F* and (ii) *X*'s being *F*, 'is true (in *L*)' cannot be a minimal predicate. Given that reference concerns the specific words used in these sentences, the same thought applies: Since it is also a robust question how words are used and, therefore, how they refer (just as it is a substantial question what sentences mean), reference must be robust. Since it has already been admitted that 'is true (in *L*)' is a robust predicate, it does not come as a surprise that 'refers (in *L*)' is also a robust predicate. At the same time, this need not entail the re-inflation of truth. For, thoughts on meaning and reference are pressing when we consider sentences, whilst truth is primarily predicated of propositions. Hence, just as the robust predicate 'is true (in *L*)' does not re-inflate truth, the robust predicate 'refers (in *L*)' does not re-inflate truth either, once we appreciate the difference between (derivative) sentential truth and (primary) propositional truth. In other words, although (MTP)'s left-hand side is robust, this does not entail that its right-hand side is also robust.

The second route for minimalists to react to thoughts on reference is to embrace the conclusion that reference must also be deflated, declaring that 'refers' does not refer to any non-semantic relation between our words and the world. This is normally the route preferred by minimalists. One possibility to spell out this idea would be to fall back on Tarski's method of list definitions. Accordingly, minimalists could adopt a reference scheme for a certain language *L* in the shape of a function that assigns "one or no object to each name of L, a set of objects to each atomic predicate, and a range of values to the variables" (Leeds 1978: 111). This function attributes, for instance, Alice to 'Alice', Elizabeth II to 'Elizabeth II', and so on. However, hardly anyone is satisfied with such list definitions. The reason for this is not only their unfeasibility in natural languages which contain a huge number of names and predicates, but also that they fail to throw any light on the semantic terms in which we are interested.

Rather than relying only on these trivial lists, reference can be approached from a different minimal angle, focusing once more on the role that it plays within our language. This approach, championed by Davidson (1980a, 1984b) and McDowell (1977, 1980), does not take the shape of a 'building-block theory' which tries to analyse the basic reference of singular names and simple predicates in non-linguistic terms and then takes this to form the foundation for its characterisation of complex terms' reference and, finally, truth (Davidson 1980a: 135). In contrast, it inverts this picture and places its focus on whole sentences: For, words "have no function save as they play a role in sentences: their semantic features are abstracted from the semantic features of sentences, just as the semantic features of sentences are abstracted from *their* part in helping people achieve goals and realize intentions" (Davidson 1980a: 135). Since we thus have to consider first which functions terms possess in various sentences when explaining reference, there is no hope of cutting this linguistic exploration short and analysing reference directly in non-linguistic terms.

But, how exactly do we treat reference and satisfaction on the basis of this holistic approach? We can explain that introduction of these notions is required to enable us to formulate the truth-conditions of sentences in the recursive manner introduced above. Talking about the reference of 'Alice' to Alice and of 'is a child' to all children is thus useful in the sense that it enables us to state the truth-conditions of the claim 'Alice is a child' as those of Alice's satisfying the predicate. Hence, reference and satisfaction are "theoretical constructs whose function is exhausted in stating the truth-conditions for sentences" (Davidson 1980a: 138). The particular reference of the name 'Alice' is, in turn, abstracted from its role in those sentences where it features and is constituted solely by

its role in making these statements come out true. In this sense, reference has "no life of its own, independent of the truth of sentences" (Williams 1999: 559).

However, we might stop at this point and wonder: are minimalists not going round in circles? On the one hand, they emphasise that reference and satisfaction are theoretical constructs, the function of which consists solely in enabling us to formulate the truth-conditions of our claims in a recursive fashion. On the other hand, this holistic approach suggests that the reference of a particular term is abstracted from the totality of sentences where it occurs in such a way as to make those sentences come out true. Hence, it seems that in this latter case, the truth of certain statements determines a particular assignment of reference which is in accordance with their truth, whilst the former suggests that their very truth is recursively determined by reference. In order to disentangle these issues, we have to differentiate between a standpoint external to the theory of truth and a standpoint which remains within it. In order to do so, we must refer once more to the theory of meaning.

Turning to the external standpoint first, we should, in light of (MTP) and the principle of charity, expect that issues concerning meaning and truth are closely interlinked. In simplified terms, what we try to do when following the principle of charity is to determine correlations between utterances and contexts of acceptance—some of which will form meaning-constituting acceptance-properties—via the attribution of psychological states based on the maxim that a speaker aims to believe and assert that p only if p. In other words, we aim to interpret speakers so as to make their utterances come out true—which boils down to an assignment of truth-conditions to sentences which is most intelligible taking all circumstances into consideration. And this is exactly the external perspective we are looking for: an assignment of truth-conditions which does not appeal at all to the notion of reference. Instead, it is exclusively focused on whole sentences. Just as in my explanations about the link between language and the world, connections between subsentential elements and objects do not feature in this assignment at all.

Once this is established, we can move on to the internal standpoint and abstract the reference of a word w from the totality of w-sentences so as to make w's reference blend in with our overall, external assignment of truth-conditions.[20] This also means that the way in which w's reference contributes to a sentence's truth-conditions will match the way in which w's meaning contributes to the sentence's propositional content. This constructed reference-assignment can then serve its purpose of enabling us to spell out the truth-conditions of whole sentences recursively by appeal to the reference of their subsentential parts. This explains why "reference in one way determines truth"—it helps us to formulate truth-conditions from an internal perspective—"while at the same time, in another way, it is determined by it"—it is parasitic on our external assignment of truth-conditions which has been determined solely on the sentential level (Williams 1999: 558). As a result, our explanations of language-world relations are fully compatible with minimalism: we did not presuppose any causal links between words and objects prior to our theory of meaning and the assignment of truth-conditions. Reference remains a fully theoretical construct. In Davidson's (1980a: 138)

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20   Here, I obviously omit the threat of indeterminacy which results from this approach. With Horwich (1998a, 2005), I will once more take it on trust that indeterminacy can be brought under control if we adopt wide enough a view on the significant way in which speakers use language, not simply concentrating on sheer acceptance and rejection, but on dispositions, inferential reasoning, non-linguistic responses, actions etc.

words: We assign "no empirical content directly to relations between names or predicates and objects. These relations are given a content *indirectly* when the T-sentences are".

Hence, minimalists can declare that reference and satisfaction are not independently existing properties of linguistic terms which establish a link between words and the world. Against a common view, reference of a singular name thus does not consist in a causal relation which this name is said to bear to its referent. Instead, reference and satisfaction are purely theoretical constructs needed in order to give recursive statements of truth-conditions. The holistic feature of this theory declares, in turn, that the particular reference of terms is abstracted from the sentences in which they occur. Once we reveal this exclusively theoretical role of reference and satisfaction, we know everything there is to know about them.

MINIMALIST SEMANTICS—SUMMARY

Let me quickly summarise the results of this excursion through the maze of semantics and make clear exactly what minimalists have deflated and what remains robust. Starting with those parts which remain substantial, minimalists do not want to deflate the world nor our role as natural creatures within it. Causal interactions between us and our social and natural environment as well as our actions within it thus remain untouched by minimalism. A theory of meaning which employs 'use' as its key theoretical notion is fully in accordance with this position and does, therefore, not float free in a void, but is anchored in a causal, natural world. Consequently, neither use and engendered meaning nor the world suffer the fate of deflation. 'Minimal semantics' is, therefore, not quite as minimal as it may seem. How exactly we should understand use, though, is open to debate. For purely expository reasons and to give us a sense of how use might be fleshed out, I have presented Horwich's theory of meaning. The most important aspect of use-based theories of meaning is, from the perspective of minimalists, that they offer an alternative to, in 'minimal' eyes deeply misguided, attempts to base meaning on inflationary truth. Since use-theories ground semantics in pragmatics, entailing that semantic notions drop out of our theory of meaning altogether, they offer us the self-standing conception of meaning which minimalists need as a supplement to their minimal theory of truth.

Truth, (linguistic, intensional) representation and (possibly) reference are, in turn, deflated. The minimalist key thesis states that there is nothing more to the truth of a statement that p than p. Since our ordinary conception of truth contains the caveat that both ps mean the same—more precisely, that they express the same proposition—I have argued that we should adopt propositional minimalism which incorporates this very requirement and extracts (PT) as the conceptual core of truth. The reason why it is useful for us to employ a truth-predicate is given by the truth-predicate's functional role. Since this role fulfils exclusively logical purposes, truth must be interpreted as a logical property. No assumptions about truth's allegedly metaphysical, heavyweight nature are called for. In light of this function, though, minimalists do not hold that the truth-predicate is redundant. Although they deflate the allegedly causal-explanatory role of the truth-predicate, they do not deflate its logical functions (Brandom 1997: 149).

Since the concepts of meaning and truth are closely related via the notion of a proposition as expressed in (MTP), any meaningful declarative sentence specifies its own truth-conditions. If assuming that a sentence's representing something should be understood in terms of the information

it provides about how the world has to be in order to conform to it, representation follows trivially from (MTP). This explanation can both be broken down to the subsentential level as well as supplemented by elucidations about the usefulness of representational locutions. As a result, representation so understood is no substantial property of sentences or mental states; it has also been deflated. Finally, from the truth-conditions gained via (MTP) which are partly based on the principle of charity, we can abstract reference-assignments that blend in with the overall attribution of truth-conditions so as to make sentences in which the relevant words appear come out true. Accordingly, deflated reference has no life of its own, it has no robust nature that would consist in substantial word-world relations. Instead, it is a theoretical construct, the only purpose of which is the recursive formulation of truth-conditions.

Consequently, truth is not the basis of meaning, whilst reference is not the basis of an empirical theory of language (Price 2004; Davidson 1980a). Indeed, the deflated nature of truth and reference precisely disqualifies them from playing an explanatory role in our theory of meaning and the connection between language and the world (Brandom 1997). This concludes my synthesised account of minimalist semantics.

2.5 CONCLUSION—MINIMALISM'S SEMANTIC IMPLICATIONS

Despite the somewhat sketchy character of these explanations, we now have a more or less rounded picture of minimal semantics, depicting the relations in which truth, reference, meaning and representation stand. This allows us to turn to the question of which implications this semantic position entails for expressivism. As is well known, it has been thought in the past that these implications do not give expressivists much reason for joy, arguing that minimalist semantics and expressivism are incompatible and that the expressivist-minimalist marriage collapses.[21] However, I do not believe that these objections stand. Rather, I will outline next how expressivists can incorporate minimalist insights within their position and turn them to their advantage.

To start with, it is helpful to point out that minimalism is blind with regard to the content of the claims which enter (PT) or the discourse from which they stem. For instance, if we apply minimalism to ethics and plug a moral proposition into (PT), we attain the following result:

> (PT$_{moral}$) The proposition that helping children flourish is good is true iff helping children flourish is good.

Once (PT$_{moral}$) is in place, the same battery of consequences follows as listed above: Firstly, entering moral propositions into (PT) straightforwardly delivers the truth-conditions of the moral claim in question. That is, the condition which must be fulfilled in order for it to be true is that helping children flourish is good. Moreover, truth and reference in ethics fulfil the same functions as they do in other discourses: they make semantic ascent possible and allow us to formulate recursive truth-conditions respectively. Secondly, if we hold that at least some moral judgements are true, the minimalist reading of 'fact' entails that there are moral facts. Thirdly, the minimally representational character of moral language follows as trivially from (MTP) as that of empirical language. Since

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21 Boghossian's (1990) argument can be read along these lines although it focuses on non-factualism about content, not ethics. Wright's (1992) position can be read similarly.

moral judgements are meaningful and thus automatically generate their own truth-conditions, they represent those conditions which must be fulfilled in order for the judgement to be true. Finally, the meaning of moral terms is to be determined on the basis of their use, in whichever way 'use' is spelled out.

The first three implications in particular have been thought to cause expressivists a serious headache. I believe that there are two reasons for this, one being more troublesome than the other. The first, rather innocuous concern is that minimalism's stance on moral propositions, truths, facts and representation stands in direct conflict with traditional expressivist theses which would want to reject the application of these notions within ethics. However, whilst this may be true with regard to classic versions of expressivism, it is quite clear that it certainly does not apply to quasi-realist expressivism, the focus of my study. Firstly, this is so because it is the defining feature of quasi-realism that its proponents do not rebut talk of moral truths and facts, but rather aim to account for this on an expressivist basis. Secondly, since notions such as truth, fact, reference and representation have been deflated, they pose no danger to expressivism as they do not lead to a slide from semantics and words into metaphysics and the world (Price 2004). Quite the opposite. Thanks to these deflations, expressivists can now fully subscribe to notions such as moral truths, facts and properties without having to fear that they thereby enter any starkly metaphysical commitments which would undermine their expressivist approach. Similarly, minimalism's focus on propositions, rather than sentences, need not worry expressivists. Since I have adopted an uncontentious reading of 'proposition', simply understanding it as that what has been said rather than forming it from any metaphysical components, nothing prevents expressivists from picking up this terminology. Blackburn (1998a: 78, 296) appositely illustrates this lack of metaphysical consequences by use of a picture which he calls Ramsey's ladder:

> Because of minimalism we can have for free what look[s] like a ladder of philosophical ascent: 'p', 'it is true that p', 'it is really and truly a fact that p' …, for none of these terms, in Ramsey's view, marks an addition to the original judgement. You can as easily make the last judgement as the first—Ramsey's ladder is lying on the ground, horizontal. … From its top there is no different philosophical view than from the bottom, and the view in each case is just, p.

I take it, then, that although this first concern about the expressivist-minimalist marriage may seem valid at first sight, this impression does not hold up once the minimal nature of the notions in question is taken into consideration.

In contrast, the second apprehension about minimalism's semantic implications for expressivism is far more bothersome. This is based on the observation that although expressivism may not be threatened by the sheer notions of the moral proposition, moral truths, facts, even moral representation, it is at the same time essential for its success that this moral proposition is in some sense special, that it requires some kind of special—expressivist—treatment. Understanding why this insistence on the particular nature of the moral proposition is thought to stand in conflict with minimalism requires me to do a bit more background work.

To start with, it is often thought that minimalism has a certain tendency to look no further than the surface features of a discourse-specific language when examining a particular domain. This

perceived tendency finds its clearest crystallisation in the discussion about truth-aptitude.[22] That is, it is often thought that minimalism about truth must be coupled with a minimal conception of truth-aptitude. The best known formulation thereof is so-called "disciplined syntacticism" (Jackson/Oppy/Smith 1994: 293). According to this conception, in order to qualify as truth-apt, a statement must fulfil the following two requirements:

> first, [it] must be significant, and second, it must be declarative in form. Unpacking somewhat, the requirements are that the [statement] possess a role within the language: its use must be appropriately disciplined by norms of correct utterance; and that it possess an appropriate syntax: it must admit of coherent embedding within negation, the conditional, and other connectives, and within contexts of propositional attitude (Boghossian 1990: 163).

In short, minimalism about truth-aptitude declares that what has all the overt trappings of assertion or proposition, as Wright (1992: 11)[23] puts it, *is* an assertion. Since moral statements do show these assertoric trappings—they are syntactically disciplined—they *are* propositions which can then enter (PT). Hence, moral statements cannot be denied the rather trivial, "comparatively promiscuous property" of being truth-apt (Wright 2003: 275). All we have to do in order to determine whether or not moral judgements are truth-apt propositions, is to look at the surface features of moral discourse and find all our answers there. But—and this is now the worry for expressivists—if all of this is so crystal clear, if all there is to know about moral statements is their propositional clothing which they share with all other propositions, then the expressivist claim that the ethical[24] proposition is somehow *different* from other propositions in that it needs to be synthesised, rather than taken for granted, seems to be nipped in the bud.

How are expressivists to react to this charge? Two separate issues need to be addressed here: firstly, the motivation and space to develop expressivism in the first place and, secondly, the expressivist stance on truth-aptitude. I will go into greater detail about the former issue in chapter 5. Here, let me simply make two points. Firstly, minimalists can, of course, always dig in their heels and insist that we go as far as a domain's surface features, but not one single step further—call this the 'short-sighted stance'. However, I take it as fairly obvious and will argue later that this is not a particularly satisfactory position, as it unnecessarily curtails our thirst for illumination. Secondly, we must remember that although minimalists *may* take up this short-sighted stance, they *need not* do so. After all, although minimalists are correctly reported as saying that thanks to their propositional clothing, plugging moral propositions into the truth-schema provides perfectly fine instances of (PT), minimalism about truth can*not* prescribe in which terms these moral propositions are to be analysed. Put differently, minimalists hold no sway over analyses of (PT)'s right-hand-side and should, therefore, be wary about making any stark claims about potential metaethical analyses. But,

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22   See as a small sample: Horwich (1993, 1998a+b); Boghossian (1990); Holton (1993, 2000); Jackson/Oppy/Smith (1994); Wright (1992, 1994, 2003); O'Leary-Hawthorne/Price (1996); Blackburn (1998b); Divers/Miller (1994, 1995); Smith (1994a, 1994b); Kraut (1993); Jackson (1994); Dreier (1996); Lenman (2003); Sinclair (2006).

23   A quick word of caution is required here. Wright, though calling his pluralist theory of truth 'minimalism', does not qualify as minimalist according to my classification criteria. However, his accounts of truth-aptitude and belief are indeed minimal.

24   I will use the terms 'ethical' and 'moral' interchangeably in this study.

it is not just the case that minimalists *need not* adopt the short-sighted stance; instead, many pragmatist minimalists *do not* adopt it and, indeed, actively discourage anyone from doing so. Rather than leading us to believe that all discourses are the same because their surface features look the same, they urge us to find the differences between those domains by ploughing underneath this propositional clothing. Brandom (2000) and Price (2004) repeatedly stress that the space required to account for discourse diversity is even created by minimalist semantics itself: namely, by the fourth implication mentioned at the beginning of this conclusion, in the form of the use-theory of meaning. To elaborate, although propositions are united with regard to the semantic notions of assertoric content, truth, reference and representation, this does *not* entail that they are also united as far as their pragmatic use is concerned. Quite the opposite. Hence, looking for this "diverse unity of [propositions]", as Price (2008c: 3, 1988, 2004, 2008a+b) puts it, is not merely tolerated by pragmatist use-theories, but actively promoted. In his (2008b: 10) words, the common propositional clothing of commitments that stem from different discourses

> is thoroughly compatible with underlying pluralism, so long as we also maintain that the various different kinds of commitments answer to different needs and purposes—have different origins in our complex natures and relations to our physical and social environments.

By emphasising this 'diverse unity of propositions', pragmatist minimalism thus creates two tasks: One task is concerned with the explanation of the unity of propositions,[25] whilst the second requires us to dig deeper than propositional surface features and to enquire into the specific functions and uses of different vocabularies to uncover their diversity. The use-based account of semantic content thus provides all the flexibility required to carve out what distinguishes ethics, physics, mathematics or aesthetics from one another. As long as expressivists can convincingly argue that the use of moral language differs from that of non-moral language and that moral propositions require an analysis which differs from that of non-moral propositions, expressivism is back in the race. Hence, the short-sighted view often attributed to minimalists which would level all differences between discourses is by no means an essential feature of minimalism. This first point about the motivation and space to develop expressivism, then, does not stand in the way of the expressivist-minimalist marriage.

Having dealt with the first issue regarding the motivation to develop expressivism, what about the second issue concerning the expressivist stance on the minimalist conception of truth-aptitude, say in the form of disciplined syntacticism? Here, expressivists have two ways to go. The first is to accept it. Even in this case, I believe that expressivists can fight their corner and I suggest that they do so on the basis of a distinction between 'embedding-aptitude' and 'truth-aptitude'.[26] To elaborate and as explained in the previous paragraph, once we realise that pragmatist use-theories emphasise, rather than level, differences between discourses, we must also appreciate that this raises the question of why these diverse discourses nevertheless share the same propositional clothing. This now gives new impetus to the expressivist project of explaining why moral judgements which voice

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25   Brandom (1997: 150), for instance, suggests that the uniting features of propositions, or assertions, is that they "are inferentially articulated in the basic sense of both standing in need of reasons and being fit to serve as reasons".

26   See Tiefensee (2007) for a more comprehensive presentation of these thoughts.

conative attitudes nevertheless wear propositional clothing and are embeddable in indirect contexts, rather than being expressed in a form which is normally associated with this kind of mental state—a boo/hooray language, say, or imperatives. Expressivists discharge this task by explaining that this propositional form is required for us to be able to engage in public moral debate which aims at the coordination of our lives, whilst they analyse moral inferences in commitment-theoretic terms.[27] Notice that only when all this background work is done—that is, only after earning the right to propositional form and, most importantly, embedding—does minimalism about truth-aptitude enter the stage. Put differently, minimalist truth-aptitude can lock into place only now that expressivists have established and explained the syntax of moral statements which enables them to be embedded in larger complexes. Importantly, minimalism itself does not, therefore, help with the solution to the embedding problem since forming instances of the (PT) already *presupposes* that these moral statements can be embedded in the particular biconditionals (Dreier 1996; Gibbard 2003a). Accordingly, the embedding problem must be solved *prior* to the employment of minimalism.[28] This difference between 'embedding-aptitude' and 'truth-aptitude' now implies that, contrary to first impressions, expressivism need not be undone by a minimal conception of truth-aptitude. To elaborate, the emerging picture is the following. Expressivists must put forward substantial explanations to establish the embedding-aptitude of moral judgements. That is, it is not enough simply to state that moral judgements are declarative in form and are, therefore, embeddable in indirect contexts. Instead, appeal to the practical function of these judgements is required to account for their embedding-aptitude. Once this substantive embedding-aptitude is secured, though, expressivists can declare that all it takes for moral judgements to be truth-apt is to be syntactically disciplined. In a nutshell, why moral judgements are truth-apt can be answered by giving the minimalist response which explains that they are syntactically disciplined; why they are syntactically disciplined, though, can be answered only by giving the substantive response which refers to our practical needs. The conception of truth-aptitude adopted by expressivists could, therefore, remain minimal as long as moral judgements' 'embedding-aptitude' remains robust.

The second possible response to a minimal conception of truth-aptitude is to reject it—at least in the form of disciplined syntacticism which declares all syntactically disciplined statements truth-apt.[29] For, it is essential to realise that contrary to appearances,[30] minimalism about truth does not

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27 These explanations are very complex and cannot be discussed here. For more details, see Blackburn (1984, 1992, 1993a, 1998a), Gibbard (1990, 2003a), Sinnott-Armstrong (1993, 2000), Binderup (2003), Hale (1993), Unwin (2001), Wedgwood (1997), Geach (1965).

28 Horwich (1993, 1994) disagrees and argues against the idea that embedding poses a real problem for expressivism.

29 It has been thought that truth-aptitude must be enriched so as to include the requirement that a statement be not only propositional, but also expressive of belief in order to qualify as truth-apt (Jackson/Oppy/Smith 1994). This suggestion has been put forward as a non-minimalist conception of truth-aptitude. First impressions to the contrary, though, neither expressivism nor minimalism need be in conflict with this suggestion. As I will explain in chapter 3, expressivists can hold that moral judgements express conative attitudes which are also moral beliefs, as long as 'belief' is minimally understood. Since I think that the link between truth-aptitude and belief holds only between truth-aptitude and minimal belief, the statement that truth-apt statements must express beliefs need, therefore, not do any harm. Indeed, this enrichment of truth-aptitude in terms of belief could even be made congruent with the conception that I prefer and which relies on disagreement. Since we can clearly disagree with beliefs, it is no wonder that expressions of beliefs (understood minimally or non-minimally) are truth-apt.

30 As displayed in Boghossian (1990: 165).

necessitate minimalism about truth-aptitude. Saying that nothing substantial divides truths from falsehoods does not entail that nothing substantial divides truths and falsehoods from everything else (Holton 1993: 13). On the other hand, though, minimal truth does not seem to blend in too well with an inflationary notion of truth-aptitude. After all, minimalists stress that the exclusive function of the truth-predicate consists in generalisations and indirect references. Accordingly, if we resort to those logical functions in any given discourse, it seems natural to assume that the truth-predicate has earned its place within it, irrespective of any further considerations about the nature of this discipline (Holton 2000: 20). However, there may be a middle way which is neither as thin as disciplined syntacticism nor so robust as to clash with minimalism about truth. This feat could possibly be pulled off by providing a certain link between the truth-predicate's function on the one hand and the propositional form of truth-apt statements on the other. Gibbard (2003a) suggests that disagreement over time is the key to truth-aptitude and the tool to distinguish between syntactically disciplined sentences which are and which are not truth-apt. More precisely, he explains that what separates Dreier's (1996) infamous creation 'Bob is hiyo', an act of accosting expressed by a syntactically disciplined sentence, from a statement such as 'Snow is white' or 'Helping children flourish is good', is that you can disagree over time with the latter two, but not the former. Whilst it is impossible to disagree with an act of accosting, it is possible to disagree in plan or in attitude, depending on which expressivist account is adopted. If the discourses within which disagreement is key are now also those within which truth primarily applies, minimalism about truth and a conception of truth-aptitude enriched by the notion of disagreement are compatible.[31] One advantage of this route is that it avoids objections often brought forward against disciplined syntacticism;[32] a second advantage will be presented in chapter 6.2. At this point, though, we can conclude that expressivists need not accept disciplined syntacticism when adopting minimalism about truth. Other conceptions of truth-aptitude which are compatible with minimalism are available.

To be clear, these are not the last words said about truth-aptitude in this study. Rather, the next chapter will examine an alleged link between truth-aptitude and belief, whilst I will discuss a moral interpretation of truth-aptitude in section 6.2. Here, let me summarise the findings about minimalism's semantic implications for expressivism. I have declared that a minimalist stance which insists that the only relevant aspects of a domain are its surface features can reasonably be rejected by expressivists and is, furthermore, not essential to minimalism. Instead, minimalist semantics, by focusing on the different use and function of vocabulary, opens up plenty of space to accommodate discourse-diversity and emphasises, rather than levels, the differences between these domains despite their shared propositional clothing. This enables expressivists to develop their position which re-

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31   Needless to say, these issues require far more detail and thought than I can provide here. One question which arises in this context is, for instance, if the functions of truth should be augmented so as to include the function to encourage to resolve disagreements (Price 1988: 15). However, I cannot pursue these questions here.

32   To elaborate, disciplined syntacticism is often attacked on the basis of counterexamples. The first kind of counterexamples contains sentences which satisfy disciplined syntacticism, yet are commonly regarded as incapable of being true or false (Blackburn 1998b), second kind comprises statements which are widely held to be truth-apt, yet are not embeddable into standard propositional contexts and thus fail the syntax requirement (Dreier 1996: 33). As indicated in footnote 29, Smith (1994a+b) and Jackson/Oppy/Smith (1994) attack this minimal conception of truth-aptitude on grounds that it does not observe the tie between truth-aptitude and belief, nor employ an adequate notion of belief.

volves around the synthesis of the ethical proposition. This account can, I believe, be coupled both with 'thin' disciplined syntacticism and with a somewhat enriched conception of truth-aptitude. Once propositional form is established, the ethical proposition can enter (PT), which then entails moral truth-conditions, reference and representation. Since these notions have been deprived of any starkly metaphysical content which would lead to a slide from words into the world, expressivists can subscribe to these notions without taking any metaphysical ballast on board. Calling a moral judgement true, or holding that it expresses a fact, or describing it as truly representing moral reality, remains equivalent to asserting this very judgement. As a result, the application of these semantic notions within ethics need no longer set off any 'metaphysical alarm bells' which would signal a fundamental conflict between these notions and expressivism. Rather, expressivists appear to have the best of both worlds—on the one hand, concerns about the metaphysical ballast of notions such as truth and fact have been dispelled by minimalism; on the other hand, the use-based theory of meaning enables expressivists to retain all the flexibility needed to lay out their expressivist background story which centres on the function of moral judgements and their traditional psychological thesis that these judgements express some kind of conative attitudes.

I take it, therefore, that expressivism is not only compatible with, but receives a real boon from minimalism's semantic implications. In chapter 4, I will return to this 'minimalist present' of being able to talk about moral truths, facts, properties and representation without worrying about any starkly metaphysical consequences. One implication which does follow for expressivism from minimalist semantics, though, is that expressivism cannot base discourse-diversity, and thus the special treatment of ethics, on semantic notions. These semantic notions are too thin to carry the weight of discourse-diversity. Instead, the distinctive position of expressivism must be captured in terms of the specific function of moral language and discourse. In other words, expressivists must now (and, I believe, already do) distinguish themselves from other metaethical positions by characterising "a linguistic *function*, or *category*, in terms of which [they] may claim that [moral statements] serve a *different function from*, or *belong to a different category to*, other parts of language" (O'Leary-Hawthorne/Price 1996: 276, original emphasis). This endeavour now opens up all the possibilities and depths expressivists need in order to develop their particular story about ethics.

3. MINIMAL BELIEF—CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY

I suggested in the previous chapter that expressivists are happy to employ minimalism with regard to truth, fact, reference and possibly truth-aptitude, exploiting its potential to provide a conception of truth which expands seamlessly across normative and non-normative discourses alike and does not incur any metaphysical costs. However, having been called on with regard to semantics, it has been thought that minimalism soon risks slipping out of control and developing a life of its own. More precisely, several philosophers have argued that minimalism does not simply grind to a halt at the borders of the semantic field of truth and fact; instead, its tentacles also reach into the psychological realm.[33] The threat for expressivism emanating from minimalism's psychological tentacles has found its clearest expression in an argument for the so-called "fast-track route to cognitivism" (O'Leary-Hawthorne/Price 1996) or the "moral belief problem" (Sinclair 2006). In an abbreviated and slightly modified form, this moral belief problem is as follows: Firstly, moral judgements are, according to minimalism, truth-apt statements. Secondly, as most notably Wright (1992: 14) has stressed, there is an *analytical tie* between assertion and belief in that someone who sincerely asserts a truth-apt statement thereby expresses a belief. Applied to the moral case, taken together these first two claims thus imply that moral statements express beliefs when sincerely asserted. Finally, this result clearly contradicts expressivism's traditional thesis that moral judgements do not express beliefs but some form of conative attitudes. Minimalism's psychological implications thus appear to stand in direct conflict with expressivism's key psychological thesis; one of them has to give way. The expressivist-minimalist marriage must be dissolved.

How could expressivists deal with this moral belief problem? One promising attempt to salvage the expressivist-minimalist marriage points out that different senses of 'belief' might be at work in this inference which, once distinguished, make the alleged incompatibility evaporate. Put in my words, the expressivist strategy should be the following (Sinclair 2006, 2007).[34] Firstly, expressivists should introduce a certain minimal/robust distinction with regard to belief, distinguishing between minimal beliefs, robust beliefs and conative attitudes by appeal to some property *R*. In line with

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33   For example, see Dreier (2004), Blackburn (1998a), Wright (1992, 1994), Divers/Miller (1994, 1995) or Sinclair (2006).

34   I amend Sinclair's suggestion in certain ways. Most notably, whilst Sinclair focuses mainly on the distinction between minimal and robust beliefs, I rather emphasise the role of conative attitudes within this minimal/robust picture. This is because I do not think that appeal to minimal belief can replace appeal to conative attitudes since minimal beliefs cannot fulfil the role played by conative attitudes in the expressivist account. This becomes most clear when we look at the synthesis of the moral proposition. In a nutshell, the content of minimal moral belief can be captured within a moral proposition only after this proposition has been synthesised. Minimal belief can, therefore, not feature within this synthesis; instead, this synthesis must be prior to any mentioning of minimal belief and must rely on mental states other than beliefs. This is where appeal to conative attitudes is indispensable. Consequently, I will explain in this chapter that minimal belief does not supplant conative attitudes, but that conative attitudes must somehow qualify as minimal beliefs for this solution of the moral belief problem to be successful. I take it that Sinclair would not disagree with my interpretation of his suggestion but probably already had in mind something along these lines.

minimalism, a mental state qualifies as a minimal belief if it is expressible by the sincere assertion of a truth-apt statement. A robust belief, in turn, is defined as a mental state which is a minimal belief, yet in addition has some property *R* which is not possessed by merely minimal beliefs (Sinclair 2006: 253). For instance, if robust beliefs were caused in a particular way by our environment whilst neither merely minimal beliefs nor conative attitudes were so caused, then this particular causal relation to our environment might be the property which distinguishes robust beliefs from minimal beliefs and conative attitudes. Secondly, expressivists should argue that not only robust beliefs, but also conative attitudes qualify as minimal beliefs. The idea behind this move is the hope that the notion of minimal belief proves to be so insubstantial, or in Blackburn's (1993b: 367) words so inclusive, that conative attitudes too can be subsumed under it. Finally, their modified psychological thesis should be that moral judgements express minimal beliefs which are also conative attitudes and not robust beliefs. Since conative attitudes too are thought to fall within the extension of 'minimal belief', it does expressivists no harm to admit that moral judgements express minimal beliefs as long as they can maintain that these minimal beliefs are also conative attitudes rather than robust beliefs.[35]

Although the minimalist context sharply focuses issues revolving around moral belief, the concern standing behind the moral belief problem, and indeed its suggested solution, are not new. Ever since expressivists set themselves the task of accounting for the propositional surface features of moral discourse, explaining the phenomenon that we think of our moral commitments as beliefs must have been on their agenda anyway. Moreover, already back in the 1990s expressivists were happy to refer to moral commitments as beliefs if understood in a certain way, thus implicitly hinting at the possibility that there may be different senses of 'belief' available which expressivists could exploit to their advantage (Gibbard 1990; Blackburn 1993a, 1998a).[36] The moral belief problem in its more general form is, therefore, how expressivists can account for everyday classifications of moral judgements as beliefs whilst holding on to their thesis that these judgements express conative attitudes. Hence, the wider concern of this chapter is how this general moral belief problem can be solved together with the role of the minimal/robust distinction within this endeavour. More precisely, I will pursue two aims. Firstly, amplifying the thoughts presented in this paragraph, I will argue that contrary to appearances, minimalism does not possess the psychological implications which are often attributed to it and that the moral belief problem does not arise as a result of the adoption of minimalist semantics, but is caused by everyday classifications of moral judgements as beliefs. Secondly, I will show that the hurdles which expressivists have to overcome when accounting for moral belief are not specific problems for expressivism when combined with minimalism, but for expressivism in general.

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35 The claim that moral judgements express minimal beliefs which are also conative attitudes is not to be confused with the claim that moral judgements express beliefs *and* conative attitudes, where these mental states are distinct, as an 'ecumenical' position such as Ridge's (2006a, 2009) or Copp's (2001) would proclaim.

36 What would give the moral belief problem a new dimension is the claim that the minimal conception of belief captures *all* that can be said about belief. However, just as I dismissed in the previous chapter the claim that surface features provide the *final* word on a practice, it is highly questionable that the minimal conception of belief exhausts the analysis of belief (see footnote 38), which throws us back to the more general problem of how to account for certain features of moral practice on expressivist grounds.

Generally speaking, I believe that the basic suggestion of searching for different readings of belief is the direction expressivists should take. However, here I will not be interested in the precise way in which minimal and robust beliefs could be distinguished although this distinction raises some very hard questions about the nature of the property R which is supposed to differentiate between minimal beliefs, robust beliefs and conative attitudes. For instance, appeal to truth and possibly even truth-tracking mechanisms cannot do the trick, as minimalism has already drained them of the strength to shoulder this weight. Yet, I am confident that some such distinction can be made and will not, therefore, go into any more detail here.[37] Instead, the focus of this chapter will solely be placed on the question of whether or not conative attitudes do qualify as minimal beliefs. My answer will be cautiously positive. This caution is called for because although I will argue that the notion of minimal belief smoothes out the expressivists' path to the surface features of moral discourse, I will at the same time point out two stumbling blocks on the way. Both these snags stem from the insight that even the minimal notion of belief is not quite as minimal as is often thought. To demonstrate why this is so, I will proceed as follows. Firstly, I will spell out in greater detail how we should understand minimal belief. This will lead to a formulation of the requirement that in order to qualify as minimal beliefs, conative attitudes must be able to be seen as aiming at truth. Although conative attitudes are obviously not normally associated with the truth-aim, I will then examine in which way conative attitudes could still be regarded as aiming at truth, arguing that reinterpreting the truth-aim as a practical stance towards our conative attitudes is the most promising path to pursue. I will then flag two obstacles for this expressivist reconstruction, the first pertaining to the expressivist account of moral fallibility and the second to the normativity of thought. However, my aim will not be to discuss in great detail how these challenges could be met. Instead, my objective will be to point out that these obstacles have not been erected by minimalism about truth as such, but that they are hurdles which expressivists must traverse anyway, irrespective of their adopting minimalist semantics. Hence, I will conclude that these hurdles are challenges for expressivism as such and not directly for the expressivist-minimalist marriage.

3.1 MINIMAL BELIEF AND THE TRUTH-AIM

One suggested definition of minimal belief classifies any mental state as a belief which is expressible by the sincere assertoric use of a syntactically disciplined sentence (Sinclair 2006: 253). The drive behind this rather narrow definition is clearly the minimal conception of truth-aptitude along the lines of disciplined syntacticism.[38] For, if we define a truth-apt statement as one which is syntacti-

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37 Causation or Price's (2008b) two different senses of representation could feature here. Yet, given the internal turn which will be discussed in the second part of this thesis, even causal co-variation may not be able to provide the property R. I will not discuss these matters in this study.

38 Asking about the drive behind or source of this notion of minimal belief is important because we have to remember that before this term came into vogue, we used to speak, in a very 'old-fashioned' way, simply about desires, beliefs, disapprovals, wishes and the like. So, now that we employ this new nomenclature, we have to explain where its source lies. In this context, different options come to mind. Firstly, we could think that the deflation of belief is based on the same motivation as that of the deflation of truth. However, it quickly becomes clear that there does not seem to be a parallel between these two deflations. In contrast to the case of truth, we do not dispute that belief has a metaphysical nature or that it may make sense to adopt a concept of belief going beyond that of minimal belief when introducing the term

cally disciplined and proclaim in the analytical tie stated above that assertion of a truth-apt—i.e. syntactically disciplined—sentence implies the expression of belief, then it seems natural to define minimal belief as a mental state which is expressible by sincere assertoric use of a syntactically disciplined sentence. However, I do not believe that we should adopt this understanding of minimal belief. To see why, assume first that we accept Wright's analytical tie between assertion and belief. In this case, we should reject this narrow definition because it renders this alleged tie vacuous. For, when employing this particular understanding, Wright's analytical tie

> (Analytical tie)   If we sincerely assert the syntactically disciplined sentence *S*, we voice a belief.

now simply states the following:

> (Analytical tie*)   If we sincerely assert the syntactically disciplined sentence *S*, we voice a mental state which is expressible by the sincere assertion of the syntactically disciplined sentence *S*.

The vacuity of this claim is obvious, so employment of this narrow understanding cannot be in the interest of those who subscribe to Wright's analytical tie. Secondly, assume that we reject Wright's analytical tie (this proclaimed tie is, after all, by no means as uncontroversial as Wright suggests) and base the moral belief problem not on an alleged link between assertion and belief, but on the phenomenon that in everyday life, we are more than happy to classify our moral judgements as expressions of belief. In this case, this narrow understanding of minimal belief cannot satisfy our concerns either. For, now we are not just interested in some form of linguistic expression of the mental states in question, but are intrigued by the way in which we apply the concept of belief in day-to-day life. In other words, our concern expands to the platitudes about belief, i.e. to the way in which we use the term 'belief' in everyday contexts. One such platitude is, for instance, that beliefs are expressible by sincere assertions of truth-apt statements. Another platitude, though, is that beliefs 'aim at truth', which relates to further platitudes such as those that beliefs should be formed in truth-conducive ways, revised if shown to be somehow wanting and eliminated if proved to be false.[39] Hence, no matter whether we choose to set up the moral belief problem in terms of Wright's analytical tie or by appeal to the everyday classification of moral judgements as expressions of belief, the narrow definition of minimal belief will not suffice. In light of this insufficiency, I will thus adopt the following, wider understanding of minimal belief: A mental state qualifies as a minimal belief if it satisfies the platitudes about belief.

Two points are now worth noting about this wider definition. On the one hand, it is no longer driven by minimalism about truth or truth-aptitude, but exclusively based on the way in which we

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'minimal belief'. Nor are we claiming that the minimal notion of belief exhausts our analysis of 'belief' in that it can explain all phenomena connected with belief. Accordingly, the development of minimalism about truth and talk about minimal belief do not seem to share the same motivation. Secondly, we could conjecture that the source of minimal belief talk lies in Wright's (1992) analytical tie linking assertion and belief. This proposal is discussed and dismissed above. Finally, since both these motivations fail, I suggest above that the everyday sense of belief should be the basis of the minimal conception of belief.

39   Sinclair (2006: 256) fully agrees that minimal beliefs aim at truth if this is read in a minimal way. In light of this, I assume that his understanding of minimal belief is wider than his definition suggests.

use the term 'belief' in everyday life. This already indicates that minimalism about truth may not possess the psychological tentacles which it is often said to have. On the other hand, this wider understanding confronts expressivists with a more difficult task when trying to solve the moral belief problem. For, in order to establish that conative attitudes qualify as minimal beliefs, it is no longer sufficient simply to demonstrate that conative attitudes are expressible by sincere assertoric use of syntactically disciplined sentences. Instead, they must be shown to satisfy the platitudes about belief. Whether or not this can be achieved will be my focus in the remainder of this chapter.

The only platitude on which I will concentrate, though, is what philosophers, rather unfortunately, have christened the 'truth-aim' of beliefs. In keeping with the focus of my study, this is naturally to be read along the following minimalist lines: when forming the belief that p, we aim to believe that p if only if p.[40] The expression that beliefs aim at truth is certainly not one which we would find in everyday discourses—it is clearly philosophical jargon. Nevertheless, the jargon picks up on a phenomenon which seems to be tacitly present in everyday uses of the term 'belief'. To elaborate, our use of the notion 'belief' appears to be linked with certain kinds of expectations and norms about 'epistemic behaviour' which implicitly invoke the truth-aim. For instance, if Mary believed a certain proposition, say that John is a footballer, but then learned that he does not engage in this sport, we would expect her to revise her belief that has been revealed as false. If she refused to do so, we would be quite bamboozled, possibly questioning her true understanding of the matter or trying, on the basis of Davidson's principle of charity as explained above, to re-interpret her beliefs or statements. Maybe she does not really know what football is, or she meant rugby rather than football, or we had different people in mind. If all these attempts at re-interpretation failed, though, we may regard her case more as an instance of wishful thinking—maybe she would love to know a footballer and this wish is so strong that she persistently ignores or distorts all evidence counting against the claim that John plays football. However, if Mary explicitly agreed that John does not play football, yet kept believing at the same time that he is a footballer, our reaction may be even worse: we may simply regard her as somehow deranged, maybe as having lost track of what she is saying and believing, and could no longer make much sense of her 'mental housekeeping'. Importantly, none of these reactions would occur if this was not a case of believing but, say, one of imagining or desiring. The fact that John does not play football would not speak at all against Mary's imagining that he does or her wanting him to do so. In contexts of belief, though, the actuality or falsity of John's playing football assumes an all-important role.

Switching back to philosophical language, we often try to capture these observations within the thesis that someone who severed all links between belief and truth would not be intelligibly participating in the practice of believing; he would simply not understand what believing is all about. Put differently, what seems to be at the heart of belief talk—what seems to be part of our very *concept* of belief—is that we aim to believe that p only if p obtains; this is what *makes* a belief a belief.[41] Let us

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40 Matt Kramer suggested in private correspondence that the truth-aim should be formulated as a biconditional that is itself the consequent of a conditional. This is supposed to prevent the possibility of realising the aim of avoiding the acquisition of false beliefs by avoiding the formation of any beliefs. The precise formulation of the truth-aim shall not be my concern here, as it does not affect my arguments in this chapter. My basic point is that when forming beliefs, we aim to form true beliefs and avoid false beliefs.

41 For further reading, see Velleman (2000), Williams (1973), Shah (2003), Shah/Velleman (2005), Unwin (2003), Wedgwood (2002), Vahid (2006) or Steglich-Petersen (2006). It has recently been argued

conclude, therefore, that minimal beliefs, *qua* that kind of mental state, aim at truth in the following way: we aim to believe that *p* only if *p*.

To sum up, to qualify as a minimal belief, a mental state must possess all those features which our everyday practice attributes to beliefs, most notably that of aiming at truth. As a corollary, expressivists can exploit the minimal/robust distinction only if conative attitudes possess the truth-aim.

3.2 CONATIVE ATTITUDES AND THE TRUTH-AIM

Do conative attitudes aim at truth? It is clear that we would not normally associate the truth-aim with conative attitudes. However, it is tempting to think that given the deflation of truth and truth-aptitude, deflation of the truth-aim cannot be far behind so that conative attitudes may aim at truth after all. Yet, this first hunch is actually false. This is because minimalism's deflation of truth and truth-aptitude does not straightforwardly entail the deflation of the truth-*aim*. Although minimalism about truth dictates that we unpack *truth* into 'The proposition that *p* is true iff *p*', this has no impact whatsoever on a mental state's *aiming* at the truth—in whichever non-metaphorical way this is spelled out. This is important, as not every mental state that is capable of being true or false also aims at the truth. For example, if I assume as part of a hypothetical argument that snow is green, this assumption is certainly truth-apt and indeed false. Yet, it has never aimed at truth in the first place but was put forward simply to see what follows from it. Truth-aptitude and the truth-aim thus do not necessarily go hand in hand. The deflation of truth and truth-aptitude is not directly followed by deflation of the truth-*aim*.

However, even though there is no such quick short cut, there may be a more hidden path which we can follow to establish that conative attitudes do in some sense aim at the truth. Indeed, expressivists accept that it is part of moral discourse that, to use Blackburn's (1998a: 317) example, "we aspire to say or believe that teasing politicians is wrong only if it is true that teasing politicians is wrong, which means only if teasing politicians is wrong". In other words, they accept the truth-aim of moral belief as one element of the set of features which they want to explain on expressivist grounds. How can they do that? Blackburn (1998a: 318) gives us some useful clues here. He elucidates that one part of our moral sensitivity is that we are aware of the possibility that others are mistaken in certain of their moral judgements, maybe in the wake of false empirical information, or defects such as immaturity, prejudice or lack of empathy, or flaws in deliberation, when being inconsistent or incoherent. According to expressivists, looking at these qualities as defects or flaws is making another value judgement: I admire sympathy and disapprove of immaturity, I endorse empathy and reject prejudice, I prefer to agree with those people to whom I attribute moral authority in my moral judgements and am unsettled when no such agreement is achieved. Since I know that other people are sometimes guilty of these flaws and thus led to making bad moral judgements, and since I cannot exempt myself from the possibility that I too may in some cases suffer from these defects, I am very much aware of my potential for moral error. Given these explanations, we can now try to translate this awareness into talk about the truth-aim: whenever I aim to believe that

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that belief does not aim at truth, but at knowledge (Owens 2003). If this understanding was adopted, further considerations about conative attitudes and moral knowledge would be required, yet I believe that the basic thrust of my argument would remain the same.

teasing politicians is wrong only if it is indeed wrong, I try to avoid making false moral judgements on some kind of defective basis—I aim to guard against my own moral fallibility.

Hence, this explanation in effect interprets the truth-aim as a practical stance which we take up towards our own moral commitments: We aim to make true moral judgements, intend not to make false moral judgements and, knowing that we can be mistaken, try to avoid succumbing to the latter. So far, this does not sound particularly expressivist. However, expressivists will still stress that the mental states which underlie moral judgements and to which this stance is applied are, of course, conative attitudes: Stating that it is true that *X* is good equals calling *X* good which, in turn, equals endorsing *X*. Consequently, the practical stance which forms the basis of the truth-aim applies straightforwardly to further practical attitudes. As a last step, we can thus conclude that when understood in a certain way, conative attitudes do possess the truth-aim after all. And since, following the minimalist motto, everything that behaves like a belief *is* a belief, conative attitudes thus qualify as minimal beliefs.

Why we would adopt this practical stance must be explained in greater detail within the expressivist account of ethics. Maybe, we do so because taking up such a stance facilitates coordination or makes moral practices more reliable and predictable. There are thus certainly many gaps yet to be filled within the expressivist account of the truth-aim, a task which I cannot discharge in this study. Instead, I want to emphasise that just as with the minimal notions of truth, reference and representation, the major result of these considerations about the truth-aim appears to be that the minimal conception of belief is yet another helpful tool to smooth out the expressivist path to the representational surface features of moral discourse. For, agreeing that moral judgements express beliefs no longer entails any metaphysical consequences which endanger the expressivist project. Rather, it reaffirms the thought that expressivists can have the best of both worlds: the notion of minimal belief makes it easier for expressivists to account for the surface features of moral discourse, yet is inclusive enough to allow expressivists to hold on to their key psychological thesis that moral judgements express conative attitudes.

3.2.1 FIRST CHALLENGE: MORAL FALLIBILITY

This expressivist reconstruction of the truth-aim faces at least two stumbling blocks. The first concerns the expressivist account of moral fallibility. The second and less obvious sticking point is a potential alignment with normative accounts of thought.

Starting with the former, the expressivist account of the truth-aim obviously presupposes that expressivists can convincingly account for moral fallibility. However, it is exactly this ability which has been contested by some philosophers. Egan (2007), for instance, argues that although expressivism can deal with most cases of moral fallibility, it cannot account for the phenomenon of our believing that moral views can be fundamentally mistaken. More precisely, his argument assumes that an expressivist account of moral fallibility must be based on a difference between the moral judgements which we actually hold and some kind of idealised, stable set of moral beliefs in order to account for the apparent gap between what we endorse and what is right:

> On Blackburn's account, when I'm concerned about whether or not my present moral beliefs are correct, I'm concerned about whether or not some improving change would lead me to revise them. … So what we're concerned about when we're concerned about

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> moral error is whether or not our system of moral beliefs … or some particular belief …, would survive a course of improving changes—whether our present attitudes match up with the ones that we would have after some improvement (Egan 2007: 211).

However, once this reliance on an idealised set of endorsements is factored in, Egan continues his argument, we must realise that the expressivist account of moral fallibility fails. The reason why becomes clear when we look at the case of fundamental moral error:

> For me to be fundamentally in error, I need to have some moral view that's (a) stable, and (b) mistaken. But given Blackburn's account of moral error, this can't happen. For my moral belief that P to be stable is for it to be such that it would survive any improving change (or course of improving changes). For my moral belief that P to be mistaken is for there to be some improving change (or course of improving changes) that would lead me to abandon P. So on Blackburn's account of moral error, a moral belief is mistaken only if it's not stable. So for me to be fundamentally in error, I'd need to have some moral view that was (a) stable, and (b) not stable, which I pretty clearly can't have (Egan 2007: 214).

If Egan was right, this result would obviously have a direct knock-on effect on the discussion about moral belief and the truth-aim. For, if expressivists cannot deal with fundamental moral error, they cannot satisfactorily account for moral fallibility and as a result, their reconstruction of conative attitudes' truth-aim collapses. So, is Egan's argument correct?

I do not think so. The mistake which Egan commits is crystallised in the following quote: After explaining that, according to Blackburn, we are worried about possible improving changes when being concerned about the correctness of our present moral beliefs, he goes on to say that this

> sounds like the right sort of thing to be worried about when we're worried about the accuracy of our present moral beliefs. In fact, it seems like the only thing to say, if one wants to be a quasi-realist (or any kind of expressivist, for that matter) (Egan 2007: 211).

However, both these statements are wrong. Firstly, Blackburn (2009) would subscribe to the claim that improving revisions are the correct thing to worry about only if 'improvement' is understood as *actual* improvement, rather than improvement-*as-judged-by-me*.[42] Actual improvements are those that bring us closer to the moral truth, which also implies that once we have reached a stage at which moral beliefs are no longer open to such improving revisions, they must be true. Improvements-*as-judged-by-me* hold no such truth-conducive promise. Yet, if there is this link between immunity to actual improvements and truth, then being concerned about possible actual improvements of my moral beliefs boils down to being concerned about their truth—and we return to the point at which we started. If, in turn, 'improvement' is read as improvement-*as-judged-by-me*, an expressivist like Blackburn would adamantly deny that improving changes are the right thing to worry about when being concerned about the correctness of one's moral beliefs. When wondering

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42   More precisely, Blackburn (2009: 205-206) draws a difference between "(M) If something is entrenched in my outlook, in such a way that nothing I could recognize as an improvement would undermine it, then it is true" and "(I) If something is entrenched in my outlook, in such a way that nothing that is an improvement would undermine it, then it is true". Egan's problem is created only if we assume (M); however, Blackburn would subscribe only to (I).

whether or not my belief that we ought not to grow genetically modified crops is correct, the object of my concern is not my stance towards this belief of mine, but whether or not growing these crops really is as bad as I believe it to be. This includes, for instance, considerations about potential health dangers, its impact on world food supplies, man tampering with nature, etc. As Blackburn (1998a: 255) put it, it "is the world that we contemplate, not our own psychologies". Hence, if Egan's first statement is understood in terms of actual improvement, it is innocuous and does not endanger the expressivist account of moral fallibility; if it is read along the lines of improvement-*as-judged-by-me*, it is false.

This conflation between actual improvement and improvement-*as-judged-by-me* also hints to the second mistake in the quoted passage. For, it is wrong to believe that appeal to improving changes is the only thing a quasi-realist expressivist can offer. To see why, it is helpful to dismantle the expressivist reconstruction of the truth-aim a little further. Let us start with our initial ex-planandum, the truth-aim (TA):
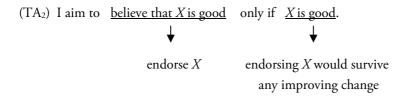
(TA)   I aim to believe that X is good only if X is good.

Next, the crucial question is how expressivists deal with two particular aspects of (TA). This is, firstly, what it means to believe that X is good and, secondly, what it is for X to be good. Their treatment of this first aspect is clear: According to Blackburn, to believe that X is good is to endorse X.
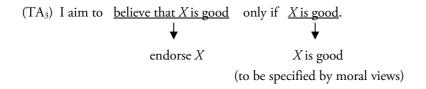
(TA$_1$) I aim to <u>believe that X is good</u>   only if   <u>X is good</u>.
                              ↓   ↓
                        endorse X (?)

The crucial question now is how expressivists fill in (?). Egan assumes the following response:

(TA$_2$) I aim to   <u>believe that X is good</u>   only if   <u>X is good</u>.
                              ↓   ↓
                        endorse X endorsing X would survive
                                                 any improving change

However, the answer which expressivists will give is this: We do not fill in (?) at all. For, what it is for X to be good is a first-order moral question and expressivism is not in the business of giving substantively moral answers to these questions. X being good may have to do with X's consequences, or ideas of justice, or intentions and virtues. (?) will thus be filled in by specific moral theories or views, but we do not prescribe the adoption of one such theory or view. All you will hear from expressivists is this: To call X is good is to endorse it, whilst it is true to call X good iff X is good. Hence, the emerging picture is the following:

(TA$_3$) I aim to   <u>believe that X is good</u>   only if   <u>X is good</u>.
                              ↓   ↓
                        endorse X X is good
                                            (to be specified by moral views)

Accordingly, contrary to Egan's pronouncement, expressivists need not refer to improving revisions, but can declare that what we are concerned about when wondering about the correctness of our moral beliefs is whether or not they represent moral reality correctly—*full stop*.[43] Since Egan is, therefore, wrong to proclaim that according to expressivists, concerns about the correctness of moral beliefs must boil down to concerns about possible improving changes, his objection to the expressivist account of moral fallibility collapses. The expressivist reconstruction of the truth-aim relying on moral fallibility is, therefore, in contention again.

Yet, following on from thoughts underlying (TA$_2$), Egan makes out a further alleged unwelcome consequence of the expressivist reconstruction of moral fallibility. For, once we accept (TA$_2$), it is just a small step to conclude that the expressivist account of moral fallibility entitles us to the following claim:

> (T$_1$) The feature that a moral belief has to have in order to be correct is: being such that I'd stably believe it after some improving change (Egan 2007: 217).

Although I have already explained that (TA$_2$) is either innocuous or false, it is interesting to look at the reasons why Egan thinks that (T$_1$) is unwelcome. The first is that (T$_1$) looks suspiciously like a subjectivist account. The second reason which is more intriguing against the background of this study is that Egan believes that a claim such as (T$_1$) forces us to give up either expressivism or minimalism, as the following theses are inconsistent (Egan 2007: 218, in slightly modified form):

> (E) When I say that stealing is bad, I'm simply expressing my disapproval of stealing.

> (M) When I say that it is *true* that stealing is bad, I'm doing exactly the same thing as when I just say that stealing is bad.

> (T$_2$) When I say that it's true that stealing is bad, I'm saying that I would stably believe that stealing is bad after some improving change.

However, again both conclusions drawn from (T$_1$) are mistaken. The first concern about (T$_1$) and the entailment of subjectivism can be addressed by distinguishing between the two senses of improvement as introduced above. The inconsistency between expressivism (E), minimalism (M) and the specific thesis about moral truth as ideal belief (T$_2$) is also only apparent, rather than genuine. To see why, we must realise that (T$_2$) consists of two separable claims, namely:

> (T$_2$) (a) When I say that it's true that stealing is bad, I'm saying that stealing is bad.
>
> (b) Stealing is bad iff I would stably believe that stealing is bad after some improving change.

Once we disentangle these two claims, the inconsistency between, (E), (M) and (T$_2$) vanishes. For, minimalism concerns only (T$_2$(a)) but is silent on what makes stealing bad, a question to which (T$_2$(b)) gives one possible answer. Expressivism, in turn, deals with the second part of (T$_2$(a)) and declares that to say that stealing is bad is to express one's disapproval of stealing. Following the

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43 As argued above, minimal notions of moral facts, representation and moral reality are fully compatible with expressivism. Egan (2007: 211) briefly considers this response, yet prematurely dismisses it.

adoption of minimalism, expressivists further hold, as stated in (M), that saying that it is true that stealing is bad also amounts to the expression of one's negative stance towards stealing. Yet, expressivism does not take a stance on what constitutes the badness of stealing. For all that minimalists and expressivists say, the badness of stealing could consist in the fact that it causes upset, or entails unfairness, or violates rights, or indeed that we react negatively to it. Which one of these positions is correct constitutes a substantive moral question which neither minimalism nor expressivism sets out to answer. No matter in what way (T$_2$(b)) is filled in, though, expressivists will insist that it is a further moral judgement—after all, it specifies what makes stealing bad—and is, therefore, once more to be analysed in terms of approval and disapproval. Accordingly, after separation of the claims involved in (T$_2$), we can see that (T$_2$) conflicts neither with minimalism nor with expressivism: (T$_2$(b)) is a moral judgement and, therefore, open to expressivist analysis in terms of conative attitudes; the second part of (T$_2$(a)) is a paradigm target for expressivist analysis and (T$_2$(a)) is in full accordance both with minimalism and expressivism. Accordingly, Egan's charge that the expressivist account of moral fallibility entails subjectivism and the divorce of the expressivist-minimalist marriage collapses.

To sum up, I do not believe that Egan's rejection of Blackburn's account of moral fallibility, and thus the reconstruction of conative attitudes' truth-aim, is successful. However, even if Egan's objections were successful, I would like to emphasise that they are not consequences of expressivism's employment of minimalist semantics, but rather of expressivism as such, irrespective of its combination with minimalism.[44] Hence, if moral fallibility posed any problem for expressivism at all, the blame would not lie with the expressivist-minimalist marriage, but with expressivism itself.

3.2.2 SECOND CHALLENGE: NORMATIVITY OF THOUGHT

However, there is a further, more hidden danger for the expressivist reconstruction of the truth-aim. For, it has been argued that the truth-aim of belief should not be interpreted as a certain aim or intention of ours, but as a norm which we apply to mental states.[45] Whilst the former, descriptive or teleological account holds as described above that we *aim* to believe that *p* only if *p*, the latter, normative account declares that we *ought to* believe that *p* only if *p*. The general idea behind this normative account of thought is that our classification and attribution of mental states is carried out on the basis of various norms. For instance, the norm which we apply to those mental states which we count as imaginings will not be primarily concerned about truth, but maybe focus on usefulness or enjoyment, whilst that towards desires may be crucially to do with what someone ought to do if he has a certain desire. The norm about belief, though, is characterised by the link between belief and truth: we classify a mental state as belief only if we apply the norm to it that we *ought* to have this mental state with the content that *p* only if *p* obtains. One core influence behind this account is a

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44   If anything, its combination with minimalism makes it easier for expressivists to respond to Egan's charge, as the inclusion of minimalist insights (such as 'It is true that stealing is bad iff stealing is bad') within this response shows.

45   For proponents of normative accounts of thought, see for instance Shah (2003), Shah/Velleman (2005), Wedgwood (2002, 2008), Zangwill (1998), Brandom (1994, 2001) and Davidson (2004). For a critical assessment, see Steglich-Petersen (2006, 2008), Hattiangadi (2007) or Schroeder (2003), for the teleological account see Velleman (2000). The normativity of thought is often discussed together with the normativity of meaning (Kripke 1982). I mostly ignore this latter issue here.

thought which we have already encountered above and which has been championed by Davidson (1980b, 2004) in particular. As I explained in the context of minimalist semantics, Davidson argues that meaning and intentional states such as belief come in a 'package deal'. We can break into this package only by applying the principle of charity, the core of which is that we aim to attribute only those mental states to an individual which are *intelligible*, or *make* the most *sense*, against the background of our own mental states. Accordingly, this requires that we apply *norms of rationality* to our own mental states and assume that other people who we encounter are *rational* too. Judging an action as making sense or someone as being rational, though, is making a normative evaluation—it enters the space of reasons, as Sellars (1956/1997) put it. Importantly, this applies not to one particular mental state only; it extends equally to beliefs, desires, wishes and any other intentional state. Hence, whenever we ascribe or classify mental states, the normative assumption of rationality and the application of norms are implicitly at work. Ascriptions such as 'Mary believes that *p*' or 'Mary desires that *p*' are thus normative because they imply what Mary ought to do: If she desires to drink and believes that the way in which to assuage her thirst is to lift the cup of tea to her lips, then it *makes sense* that she lifts that cup; this is what she *ought* to do.

Indeed, this normative account of thought seems quite congenial to expressivism. For, remembering Blackburn's account of moral fallibility which referred to the *admiration*, or we might say approval, of certain characteristics such as maturity, imagination or impartiality, maybe expressivists would not be too averse to the statement that we admire or approve of holding true moral judgements, spurn or disapprove of false moral judgements and demand, therefore, that everyone *ought to* endorse *X* only if *X* is indeed good. Adding a normative element to the expressivist reconstruction of the truth-aim does, therefore, not seem extremely far-fetched. Expressivists could then declare in line with advocates of normative accounts of thought that it is exactly the application of this norm which makes us classify mental states as beliefs. Finally, they could explain that since we apply this norm to that particular kind of mental state which underlies our moral judgements just as we apply it to that underlying our judgements about middle-sized dry goods, say, we refer to both these kinds of mental state as beliefs even though the former are conative attitudes and the latter robust beliefs. This is why both conative attitudes and robust beliefs aim at truth and thus qualify as minimal beliefs. The moral belief problem is solved.

However, this potential proximity to normative accounts of thought also holds a major risk for expressivism. To see why, we must be aware of two possible interpretations of accounts of thought which revolve around the application of norms. The first reads them as rightly emphasising the key role that norms play within the classification and attribution of mental states, yet holds that thought is not essentially normative. Although attributions and classifications of mental states are closely intertwined with norms in that *ought*s follow from thought, they are nonetheless separable. Expressivism, I take it, is fully compatible with this interpretation. However, normative accounts of thought normally make a much stronger claim, namely that the mental contains an essentially and irreducibly normative element. Hence, on this second interpretation, *ought*s are *constitutive* of thought; thought is essentially infused with normativity. It is this second reading of normative accounts of thought which poses a danger to expressivism. To elaborate, we have to remember that the expressivist strategy is to explain normativity on the basis of mental states; expressivists try to explain what we are doing when making normative judgements not by giving semantic analyses, but by explaining which mental states underlie these judgements and how these give rise to normative

discourse. Accordingly, this explanatory order proceeds from mental states to normativity. For this to succeed, it is crucial that the basic assumption be fulfilled that mental states such as conative attitudes are *non*-normative—otherwise, normativity would already be built into the material from which expressivists wanted to construct it. Yet, this explanatory order is exactly what the normative account of thought reveals as misconceived as it concludes that the expressivist attempt to explain normativity on the basis of expressing conative attitudes is misguided because the mental is already normative. Reference to mental states thus cannot provide the non-normative basis of normativity which the expressivist genealogy requires. Instead, the normative account of thought traps expressivists in an explanatory circle.

Yet, even if this second, more common interpretation of normative accounts of thought is adopted, there may be ways for expressivists to cope with it. One approach could be based on a distinction between normativity on the one hand and the moral on the other. In this case, expressivists could argue that we can give illuminating explanations of the moral by appeal to a more basic notion of normativity, which means that the expressivist endeavour to illuminate moral thinking on the basis of the mental states expressed by moral judgements remains a going concern. A further strategy, pursued in particular by Gibbard (1994, 1996, 2003b, 2005, forthcoming), is to specify the invoked meaning of 'ought' and demonstrate how his expressivism can be expanded so as to engulf the normativity of thought, rather than be undermined by it.[46] Scrutiny of whether or not thought is normative and how expressivists could possibly deal with this result cannot be carried out in this thesis, but is the subject of another study. Hence, rather than taking a stance on this difficult matter, what I would like to emphasise is that expressivism's combination with minimalist semantics does not play any direct part within that debate. To be honest, the non-involvement of minimalist semantics is less clear-cut in this present case than it was in the context of moral fallibility. For, certain use-based theories of meaning which could be employed within minimalist semantics, such as Brandom's (1994, 2000) inferentialism which entails that it is 'norms all the way down', do indeed proclaim that meaning and thought are normative. However, other use-theories, such as Horwich's (1998a, 2005), are explicitly non-normative. Consequently, although the adoption of certain use-based theories within minimalist semantics would turn the spotlight on the expressivists' ability to deal with normative accounts of thought, this does not hold true for minimalist semantics as such. Rather, debates about the normativity of thought (and indeed meaning) need not be initiated by minimalism about truth, but by issues inherent to the philosophy of mind (and language), as the discussion between teleological and normative accounts of the truth-aim and indeed Blackburn's and Gibbard's reactions to these discussions show. The challenges raised by these particular independent debates will thus have to be met by expressivism anyway, irrespective of its marriage to minimalism.

As a final comment on this topic, we might wonder whether the *ought* involved in the possible normative interpretation of the expressivist reconstruction of the truth-aim could be a moral *ought*, rather than a moral generally normative *ought*. For, it is quite a natural idea to suggest that we ought to endorse X only if X is good because it would be morally bad not to do so—after all, it is a bad thing to endorse something which one knows is bad. The source of the truth-aim of conative attitudes would then be at least partly a moral concern or value and, as such, fall within the domain

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46   In my eyes less convincing attempts to deal with the normativity of thought are put forward by Blackburn (1998a) and Dreier (2002b).

of ethics, rather than metaethics. This thought already leads to the main concern of this thesis: the anti-Archimedean movement which reads metaethical theses as internal, moral judgements. Before moving to this anti-Archimedean movement, though, let me quickly summarise the results of this chapter.

3.3 CONCLUSION—MINIMALISM'S PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

In this chapter, I looked at minimalism's alleged psychological implications. My first aim was to show that it is not minimalism about truth which urges expressivists to address the moral belief problem, but rather the phenomenon that in everyday moral discourse we happily classify our moral judgements as beliefs. I did so by arguing, firstly, that the moral belief problem arises irrespective of Wright's proclaimed analytical tie between assertion and belief and, secondly, that the notion of minimal belief should not be based on minimalism about truth, but on the platitudes about belief. I suggested further that as long as conative attitudes can fulfil these platitudes and thus qualify as minimal beliefs, the minimal conception of belief proves to be very beneficial for expressivists in that it allows them to embrace everyday categorisations of moral judgements, yet maintain at the same time that moral judgements express conative attitudes. My second aim was to demonstrate that although expressivists encounter several obstacles when trying to account for moral belief—I discussed moral fallibility and the normativity of thought—these hurdles are not raised by expressivism's combination with minimalism, but are challenges for expressivism in general. As a result, I conclude that minimalism does not possess any psychological tentacles which would suffocate expressivism. The expressivist-minimalist marriage remains untouched.

Part II—Expressivism and the anti-Archimedean Challenge

4. THE ANTI-ARCHIMEDEAN MOVEMENT

The first part of my thesis dealt with discussions about the semantic and psychological aspects of expressivism's combination with minimalism. This second part now shifts focus away from these better-known discussions towards an apparent crack in the expressivist-minimalist marriage which is far less acknowledged. As explained in my introduction, this is the phenomenon of minimalism driving what I call the 'anti-Archimedean movement', a movement which declares that metaethics is not a morally neutral, external enterprise, but a moral discipline operating from within ethics.

I will not engage with this anti-Archimedean movement by assessing its general weaknesses and strengths. As I will explain shortly, since expressivists agree with many moral, anti-Archimedean interpretations of allegedly metaethical phenomena, such as of mind-independence or dogmatism, any general controversies about this shared ground between expressivists and anti-Archimedeans will not be entered into here. Instead, I will present the main thrust behind the anti-Archimedean movement in this chapter and focus on more hotly contested battlegrounds between expressivists and anti-Archimedeans in the next. More precisely, this current chapter will deal with some basic aspects of the anti-Archimedean movement. Included will be the presentation of a 'Moral Doctrine Test' which will help us determine whether or not a position is moral, clarification of the term 'metaethics' along with its place within the anti-Archimedean movement and important structural remarks about the anti-Archimedean movement's link to minimalism. It will close with some comments on how expressivists can exploit anti-Archimedean insights to their advantage.

As hinted in the introduction, my understanding of the anti-Archimedean position need not be identical to the way in which individual anti-Archimedeans construe their own accounts. Rather, I am interested in the general claim that metaethical positions are moral doctrines and how this thesis applies to expressivism. Moreover, neither Dworkin's nor Kramer's main focus is directed towards expressivism. Although their considerations touch on expressivism, their main objective is to establish, firstly, that morality is objective and, secondly, that theses about morality's objectivity are moral. The way in which I formulate the anti-Archimedean challenge to expressivism might, therefore, not cohere with Dworkin's or Kramer's approach. Having said this, my explanations will nevertheless often rely on what I regard as the most convincing, comprehensive and sophisticated anti-Archimedean position, namely Kramer's (2009) account of moral realism. Although my study may give the impression that Kramer is an ardent adversary of expressivism, this impression would be very wrong.[47] I will simply use his explanations as a foil for discussion without intending to imply that his moral realism is in fundamental conflict with expressivism. Moreover, I will be interested in the moral or non-moral status of paradigmatic expressivist theses and not primarily in their correctness. In other words, I will not ask, for example, 'Is it true that moral judgements have a certain practical function?', but rather 'Is the claim that moral judgements have a certain practical function moral?'. In addition, I will assume that expressivism can account for the 'embedding-aptitude' of moral statements, since the debate about expressivism's combination with minimalism

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[47]   Kramer (2009: 201, fn. 6) himself emphasises how close quasi-realist expressivism and his own version of moral realism really are.

and its ensuing encounter with anti-Archimedeans can gather momentum only if this condition is fulfilled.

4.1 PRELIMINARIES

4.1.1 THE MORAL DOCTRINE TEST

As has been implicit in the preceding paragraphs, a thesis or position which is moral will also count as internal (to moral thinking); a thesis or position which is non-moral will qualify as external (to moral thinking).[48] More precisely, a position qualifies as internal, or as a moral doctrine, if it is inconsistent with at least one substantive, first-order ethical view (Kramer 2009: 6); otherwise, it is classified as external.[49] This understanding has the benefit of providing more or less concrete instructions as to how one should determine the moral or non-moral status of a thesis. These are: check if the claim in question clashes with some substantive moral view; if the answer is yes, attribute the status 'internal' to it; if the answer is no, treat it as external. I inserted 'more or less concrete' because this 'Moral Doctrine Test', as I will call it, is, of course, not quite so straightforward.

Firstly, it is not entirely clear which views qualify as substantive moral verdicts. To make life easier, though, I will not even attempt to give a definition here, but instead appeal to paradigm cases of substantive moral judgements. This is the class of unequivocally moral verdicts which explicitly attribute thin or thick moral predicates to acts, characters or states of affairs (Dreier 2002a: 246; Fantl 2006: 25). Accordingly, 'John is generous', 'The strongest ought to support the weakest' and 'Helping children flourish is good' are all examples thereof.

Turning to the second lack of clarity regarding the Moral Doctrine Test, it is not perfectly obvious what 'being inconsistent with a substantive ethical view' means. The general idea behind the test is certainly clear enough: if a thesis that aspires to external status is inconsistent with at least one

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48 There are several other, albeit related, ways in which the terms 'internal' and 'external' can be understood. For instance, we could interpret them along the lines of the fact/value distinction, declaring that internal questions concern the realm of reason and value, whereas external questions concern that of fact or even nature. Or we could focus on the degree to which claims depend on particular perspectives or positions from which these statements are made. A claim is internal, we could say, if it is highly local or perspectival and external if it abstracts from or unites such perspectives. Alternatively, we could shift our focus to explanatory matters. A question would then count as internal if it enquires into the truth of a substantive discourse-specific judgement and external if it asks about the purpose, evolution, explanation or status of this very discourse. Stating that 2+3=5, for instance, would then be an assertion within mathematics and thus an internal claim; asking why we are thinking in mathematical terms would be an external query. However, the broader, less specific understanding which equates internal positions with moral positions and external positions with non-moral positions is most fruitful for my purposes as it fits best with the overall context of my study, which focuses on the anti-Archimedean strategy of exposing as internal (or moral) those phenomena and positions which appear external (or non-moral and metaethical).

49 Categorising a thesis as moral need not exclude that this thesis is also conceptual. To elaborate, Kramer (2009: 304, fn. 1) employs a wider understanding of the term 'conceptual' in that he applies it to all those propositions which are "true in all possible worlds and knowable *a-priori*". According to him, these propositions do not only include logical and analytic truths, but also basic moral truths. Here, I will go along with this usage and grant that a proposition can be conceptual and moral (without having to be analytic).

substantive moral verdict, then it must itself be moral although it may not contain any paradigmatically moral predicates. For, in which other way could a position be inconsistent with a moral view, if not by taking moral sides itself?[50] However, it is also plain that a position's inconsistency with substantive moral views cannot merely boil down to its being morally objectionable. The reason why this would be far too weak a test becomes particularly clear when we look at analogous evaluations of other objects. Although we can certainly evaluate the moral status of GM crops, say, by stating that they are bad, this does not transform GM crops themselves into moral entities. Similarly, a metaethical position is not automatically turned into a moral doctrine if it is morally appalling. For example, if moral nihilism led to social unrest and was judged on the basis of its consequences to be morally objectionable, this need not imply that moral nihilism itself is a moral doctrine. Hence, to give the Moral Doctrine Test any grip, there must be a much tighter and more intimate connection between metaethical positions and moral verdicts than sheer moral assessments of these metaethical accounts can provide. At least three possibilities of such links come to mind, all of which have a role to play in the anti-Archimedean account.

The first of these concerns logical entailment: Metaethical accounts could straightforwardly entail moral judgements. The most telling way in which such entailment relations reveal the moral nature of these metaethical views is the following: One corollary of Hume's Law, or the is/ought gap, is that the logical entailment of a normative conclusion from a set of premises presupposes that at least one of these premises must be normative. Consequently, as Dreier (2002a)[51] explains, if we could straightforwardly deduce moral judgements from metaethical positions and assume that Hume's Law holds, then metaethical accounts themselves would be moral. To elaborate, take the following example:

> (P₁) φ-ing is wrong iff our society agreed to refrain from φ-ing.
> (P₂) Our society agreed to refrain from φ-ing.
> (C₁) Hence, φ-ing is wrong.

Since (C₁) is undoubtedly a moral statement and (P₂) clearly a non-moral premise, Hume tells us that (P₁), stating a very rough version of a metaethical social contract theory, must be a moral premise because otherwise (C₁) could not validly be deduced from (P₁) and (P₂). Accordingly, the Moral Doctrine Test spelled out along the lines of logical entailment is a powerful tool to expose the moral nature of metaethical theses. Since expressivists have traditionally been strong supporters of Hume's claim that moral conclusions cannot be derived from sets of exclusively non-moral premises, I will assume in this study that Hume's Law holds.[52]

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50 Importantly, this test's reliance on inconsistency does not favour cognitivism over expressivism. Since both cognitivists and expressivists want to be able to account for inconsistencies between moral views, this test does not take sides in the cognitivism-expressivism debate.

51 Kramer (2009: 6) also endorses this strategy, explicitly stating that he is "supposing that some version of what has come to be known as 'Hume's Law' is correct".

52 Dreier (2002a) argues that the categorisation of positions as moral should not be based on the notion of entailment, but of commitment. In Fantl's (2006: 28) words, a metaethical position *P* commits one to a moral judgement *Q* if one's "willingness to assert P means that you must believe Q in order to remain … rational". Yet, since this is, in my view, a somewhat 'woolly' check—because examples of this kind of commitment are, firstly, quite hard to come by, secondly, might boil down to instances of entailment as

A second contender for fleshing out potential inconsistencies between metaethical and moral views is re-interpretation: Although metaethical theses do not wear their moral status on their sleeves, once we understand these theses correctly their moral nature comes to light. The case of mind-independence is a good example of this re-interpretive strategy. To elaborate, some moral realists are eager to point out that moral truths are mind-independent. For instance, they claim that the truth or fact that helping children flourish is good is independent from our own moral and non-moral views. However, once we dig deeper and ask what exactly this means, anti-Archimedeans and expressivists alike maintain that the only intelligible interpretation we can come up with is something along the lines of the following conditional: [53]

> (A)   It would be good to help children flourish even if I did not think that it was good.

Once we examine mind-independence along the lines of fairly modest conditionals such as (A), though, we can see that standing behind this grandiose-sounding, metaphysic-inducing title is once more a moral judgement. More precisely, (A) captures the following stance: If you invited me to imagine a scenario in which I thought that hampering children's progress was the greatest pastime and asked me whether or not in this case, helping children flourish was still good, I would, of course, answer in the positive—it would be good even if I was so depraved as to think that it was most enjoyable to do exactly the opposite. This, though, is clearly a moral evaluation, the truth of which must be supported by appeal to moral principles and moral considerations. Being uncovered as a moral thesis itself, mind-independence can, of course, clash with other moral positions, most clearly with its own negation. Accordingly, the Moral Doctrine Test understood in terms of this re-interpretive strategy exposes metaethical theses themselves as moral claims which can then naturally conflict with other moral views.

Closely related to this re-interpretive method of metaethical disenchantment is the third way in which the potential for inconsistencies between metaethical and moral positions can be spelled out. This looks at justifications of metaethical accounts: Metaethical views are moral because they are based on and supported by moral reflections. In other words, contrary to how metaethics has been understood so far, the pivotal factors speaking for or against metaethical views are not general epistemological, ontological or semantic arguments; they are moral considerations.[54] To give an

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discussed above and, thirdly, rely heavily on possibly contested judgements of rationality—I will not consider it here.

53   The way in which I present the moral interpretation of mind-independence here is somewhat closer to Blackburn's focus, which lies on the general claim that when declaring that moral truths are or are not mind-independent, we are expressing a moral stance of ours, than to Kramer's, which aims at a detailed moral justification of mind-independence. Kramer distinguishes between weak and strong forms of mind-independence as well as between existential and observational mind-independence, arguing that the correct basic principles of morality are strongly existentially and observationally mind-independent (see Kramer 2009, chap. 2). Nonetheless, expressivists and anti-Archimedeans agree that it is a moral matter whether or not moral truths are mind-independent.

54   This strategy often features in Kramer's (2009) campaign for the objectivity of morality. When discussing determinate correctness, I borrow heavily from his ideas. However, my presentation concentrates only on a certain 'bottom-up' approach to (in)determinacy and ignores a second strand of arguments found in Kramer's work which are somewhat 'top-down'. To elaborate, I emphasise that in each individual case, it is a moral question whether or not only one answer to a certain moral problem is correct, which implies that those theses which generalise over these cases by declaring that most moral cruxes

example, take the claim that most moral questions have determinately correct answers. How could we argue for this thesis? We can*not* do so, anti-Archimedeans urge us, by explaining that moral judgements are determinately true or false because the world is simply carved up in this manner or because moral semantics would settle the matter once and for all. Instead, the only way in which we can make a case for moral determinacy is by looking at conflicting responses to moral problems and their respective moral merit. More precisely, moral indeterminacy "obtains only when the competing factors on each side of an issue are evenly balanced or are insusceptible to any comparisons that would rank their strength" (Kramer 2009: 102). Whether or not rival factors are so counterpoised or incommensurable, though, is a moral question.[55] It requires us to engage in moral deliberation, to attribute moral weight to various factors and assess the moral soundness of different reflections. Hence, someone who proclaims that a particular moral crux does not have one determinately correct answer declares that all conflicting considerations are of equal moral weight or cannot be ranked; someone who holds the opposite view claims that one of the responses is morally superior to all others. Hence, those disagreeing about moral determinacy do not clash on some external basis, but on a moral level: they disagree in their judgements about the weight, soundness and persuasiveness of moral considerations, which must itself surely be a moral dispute. Although metaethical claims, such as those about moral (in)determinacy, may look as if they were external theses built on general metaphysical or epistemological reflections, they are based on moral judgements which can conflict with other moral positions and, according to the Moral Doctrine Test, thus have to count as moral themselves.

This focus on the justification of metaethical positions can further be supplemented with an instrument which was imported by Bloomfield (2009: 295) from Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* (1973) to the current discussion and may be a helpful indicator for moral status, albeit not a watertight test. This 'veil of moral ignorance', as I will call it, asks us the simple question: If we were blocked from knowing all or at least certain of our substantive moral views, could we still meaningfully engage in metaethical debate? Although the question sounds simple, finding the response to it will, of course, be much more difficult. However, if we answered in the negative, then this could back up the anti-Archimedean claim that metaethical theses are moral doctrines; if we answered in the positive, Archimedeans may have a bit more breathing space.

To sum up these explanations about the Moral Doctrine Test, a metaethical position will count as internal, or as a moral doctrine, if there is at least one substantive moral view with which it is inconsistent. The methods which will be central to bringing out this inconsistency are those rely-

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have determinately correct answers must also be moral. In addition to this approach, though, Kramer (2009: 109, 94) also presents a 'top-down' approach by making us "ask whether the existence of a determinately correct way of handling [a moral] issue would be morally superior to the inexistence of any such way", also declaring that the limited scope of indeterminacy is a matter of moral necessity because "indeterminacy would be profoundly problematic morally if it obtained on a large scale". However, enquiring into the moral superiority of the existence of determinately correct answers is quite different from enquiring into the moral superiority of one moral answer over all others. Since I believe that the 'top-down' approach is problematic for reasons which the scope of this thesis does not allow me to present here, I concentrate only on the bottom-up approach.

55   Why it is a moral issue whether or not an answer to a moral question is correct or true and the role which minimalism plays within this context will be explained in section 4.2.

ing on Hume's Law, the notion of commitment, re-interpretation, justification and the 'veil of moral ignorance'.[56]

For the remainder of this study, I will grant that the Moral Doctrine Test is a good test for moral status and will not question its pedigree. Rather, I will examine the possibility of expressivists' meeting the anti-Archimedean challenge even if accepting its key instrument in the form of the Moral Doctrine Test.

4.1.2 METAETHICS AND THE ANTI-ARCHIMEDEAN MOVEMENT

To make sure that anti-Archimedeans and their opponents are not talking past one another when disagreeing about the moral or non-moral status of metaethical theses, we need to know not only what counts as a clash with substantively moral views, but also what we are to understand by metaethics. This question will be addressed next.

To start with, anti-Archimedeans could interpret the scope of metaethics very narrowly and include only those theses within metaethical research which concern the objectivity of morality—the existence of moral facts and truths, mind-independence, determinate correctness, etc.[57] In this case, expressivists and anti-Archimedeans would have nothing to quarrel about. As I will explain shortly, expressivists would gladly agree that metaethics understood in such a narrow sense is built on moral grounds but insist that expressivism, though incorporating claims about morality's objectivity, also goes far beyond these theses. Since this 'going beyond' is the crucial part of expressivism and now lies outside of the anti-Archimedean understanding of metaethics, anti-Archimedeans would hold no sway over expressivism. All expressivists would have to do is find a new label to describe the nature of their research since the title 'metaethical' would already be taken. Yet, this narrow understanding of metaethics is not particularly satisfactory as it seems to be artificially restricted. Bearing in mind the wide range of issues which have historically been grouped under this heading, it seems more fruitful to understand 'metaethics' along more traditional lines, i.e. as including not only theses about morality's objectivity, but also about its practicality. Accordingly, if the distinctively expressivist theses going beyond morality's objectivity concerned its practicality, expressivism would again fall within metaethics. This wider reading now makes for a spicier encounter between anti-Archimedeans and expressivists. For, whilst expressivists are happy to agree that all theses about morality's objectivity are moral, it is more than doubtful that they would also concur that claims about its practicality are moral. However, we must be careful here, as this broader sense of metaethics must be distinguished from empirical ethics which engages in empirical studies about moral views that are actually entertained within and across societies or some aetiology about how

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56 The Moral Doctrine Test gives the impression that the internal/external distinction is a strict dichotomy: either a claim is moral and thus internal, or it is non-moral and thus external. Whether or not this is indeed so depends on the status of the underlying distinction between the moral and the non-moral. If there was no clear demarcation line between the moral and the non-moral, there would be no clear delineation between the internal and the external either. Wondering about this dichotomous nature is a valid concern. However, these questions would take me too far afield, so I will not pursue any of them here.

57 Kramer (2009: 12) sometimes gives the impression that this is his understanding of metaethics. However, since he also spends considerable time discussing positions such as judgement-internalism, I assume that he would agree with my broader reading of metaethics.

these views and moral discourse came about. Importantly, this area of empirical ethics is not targeted by anti-Archimedeans. As Kramer (2009: 12) explicitly clarifies, nobody claims that empirical ethics is in any way a moral enterprise. Accordingly, if those expressivist theses which went beyond morality's objectivity fell within empirical ethics, there would again be no clash between expressivism and anti-Archimedeans. In this case, anti-Archimedeans would never dream of classifying distinctively expressivist theses as moral (though metaethical), but instead locate them within anthropology or maybe evolutionary biology. The expressivist claims which are most susceptible to this empirical interpretation are naturally those revolving around the purpose, or function, of morality and the need of ours which it is said to fulfil. The status of these claims—whether or not they fall within the range of metaethics and should count as moral or non-moral—will be subject to detailed examination in the next chapter. To sum up these considerations, henceforth I will understand metaethics in the broad sense as comprising claims about morality's objectivity and practicality. Put roughly, those claims will be regarded as metaethical candidates which have traditionally been regarded as such. 'Moral judgements are intrinsically motivating', 'Moral and natural terms are not interdefinable' and 'Most moral questions have determinate answers' are classic examples thereof. Although these metaethical candidates are united by their appearance of being in some sense *about* ethics without directly attributing moral predicates themselves, it is these claims which find themselves in the anti-Archimedean firing line.

What about the place of metaethics in the anti-Archimedean movement, though? It is quite tempting to think that the exposure of metaethics as a moral enterprise leads anti-Archimedeans to the conclusion that we can do away with metaethics altogether. However, although this may possibly be a fair description of the view of some anti-Archimedeans (e.g. Dworkin), it certainly does not hold for others (e.g. Kramer). To elaborate, the anti-Archimedean movement need not nullify all differences between metaethical and substantive moral views. Instead, it can and does allow different grades of abstraction[58] and moral permeation within the internal realm, as Kramer (2009: 5) repeatedly emphasises. With regard to levels of abstraction, it can easily acknowledge that metaethical views are normally far more abstract than substantive moral verdicts. After all, 'Most moral questions have determinate answers' is undoubtedly far less concrete than the particular verdict 'Helping children flourish is good'. With regard to moral permeation, anti-Archimedeans can and do appreciate that despite being moral doctrines, most metaethical views will be neutral with regard to a large range of moral views. For instance, realist metaethical theses as such may not arbitrate between the verdicts that helping children flourish is good or that it is wrong; they could be consistent with either of these judgements. However, the important point is that, according to anti-Archimedeans, they will conflict with *at least one* moral judgement. In light of this possible appreciation of differences between metaethical and moral views, I will interpret the anti-Archimedean stance on metaethics in the following way. Anti-Archimedeans do not deny that metaethical thought is intelligible or that metaethics is a worthwhile enterprise. Instead, their stance on metaethics is tersely summarised by Kramer (2009: 5):

> [T]here is no fundamental divide between the meta-ethical and the ethical. Meta-ethical theses are distinctive in the specific issues that they address, and many of those theses are distinctive in their levels of abstraction, but we should not make the mistake of thinking

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58   See Kramer (2009: 9-10) for a more detailed discussion of 'abstraction'.

that their distinctiveness places them outside the domain of substantive ethical princi-
ples.

Hence, metaethical questions neither lose their raison d'être against an anti-Archimedean back-
ground nor cease to be categorised as metaethical, as long as we do not equate 'metaethical' with
'external'.

As a last comment on this topic, does the anti-Archimedean movement entail that literally all
theses employed within metaethics must be moral? I do not think so. Even though the central
metaethical questions must certainly be moral for the anti-Archimedean movement to succeed, this
does not imply that metaethical accounts must never enlist any general philosophical and non-
philosophical theories. One example of such 'external recruitments' is the adoption of minimalism
about truth. For, minimalism's application to moral statements does not turn minimalism itself into
a moral view, yet metaethicists should clearly be allowed to fall back on such general theories of
truth.[59] This being said, we must still be on our guard, as general philosophical theses may still take
on a moral hue when applied within ethics.

4.2 THE CATALYST—MINIMALISM

4.2.1 MINIMALISM AS THE DRIVING FORCE

Minimalism about truth, I have claimed, is the catalyst for the anti-Archimedean movement. As
explained above, minimalism deflates notions such as truth, reference, possibly even representation
and belief, thus stripping them of metaphysical implications. We have already encountered Black-
burn's (1998a: 78, 296) illustration of this lack of metaphysical consequences in the form of Ram-
sey's ladder:

> Because of minimalism we can have for free what look[s] like a ladder of philosophical
> ascent: '*p*', 'it is true that *p*', 'it is really and truly a fact that *p*' …, for none of these
> terms, in Ramsey's view, marks an addition to the original judgement. You can as easily
> make the last judgement as the first—Ramsey's ladder is lying on the ground, horizontal.
> … From its top there is no different philosophical view than from the bottom, and the
> view in each case is just, *p*.

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59 A different matter altogether is whether or not the decision to employ minimalism, rather than an alter-
native theory of truth, is a moral call. Kramer answers this question in the positive, as he has suggested
in conversation. As a very brief comment, let me say here that the way in which Kramer's position relies
on minimalism about truth holds massive risks for his position. For, the availability of minimalism as a
tenable theory of truth is by no means a moral matter; instead, it depends on general, mostly very tech-
nical considerations in the philosophy of logic. Kramer's version of moral realism is thus dangerously
exposed to the tenability of minimalism about truth in that it has no 'moral spell' over it, yet stands or
falls with it. (Declaring that it would be morally desirable to have minimalism at our disposal or that we
are morally committed to meeting technical objections mounted against minimalism is all well and
good, but obviously cannot help dispel the worries I expressed in the previous sentences.) However,
since my study focuses on minimalism's implications for expressivism and not on the strengths and
weaknesses of the anti-Archimedean movement, I will not pursue these issues here.

The relevance of Ramsey's ladder's horizontal positioning for the present discussion is now fairly obvious. If calling the statement S true or describing it as depicting a fact boils down to asserting this very statement S, then talk about truths and facts cannot transcend the realm to which S belongs. Applied to ethics, this means that when Mary asserts that it is true, or a fact, that helping children flourish is good, she is not adding anything on top of, or external to, this moral verdict; she simply expresses the same moral view in different ways, thus never leaving the moral sphere itself. On the other side of the same coin, the thesis that moral facts exist amounts to the claim that at least some moral judgements are true which, in turn, boils down to the endorsement of concrete moral judgements—that some things are good and others bad, that some are just and others unjust, and so on. Consequently, although theses about the existence or non-existence of moral facts sound like external, starkly metaphysical positions, minimalism about truth reveals that they are internal, moral claims: Asking whether or not to hold that moral facts exist amounts to asking whether or not some things are good, just, right, virtuous, etc.—and these are clearly moral questions. Indeed, even if one holds that metaphysical considerations *are* relevant for the existence or nature of moral properties—such as reflections on causal efficacy or queerness—one is still putting forward a *moral* view: Stating that there would be no moral properties if they were causally inert, amounts to saying that nothing would ever be right or wrong, good or bad, just or unjust if being good or bad was not part of the causal nexus. Ironically, then, the thesis that the existence of moral properties is a metaphysical matter is itself a moral position.

Importantly, these insights are not just limited to the existence of moral facts; they also extend to questions about moral belief and knowledge. There is a fast-track and a slow-track route to this conclusion. The fast-track route picks up the finding that the existence of moral facts is a purely moral matter and points out that against this backcloth, it would be utterly perplexing if epistemological questions of how to find out about these facts relied on general philosophical or metaphysical, rather than moral considerations. The more thorough, slow-track route is particularly easy to follow when we consider different versions of moral scepticism. Given minimalism, 'metaphysical scepticism', rejecting that there are moral truths and facts, boils down to the view that nothing is ever right or wrong, which is clearly a moral verdict. Of particular interest here, though, is 'epistemological scepticism', which may allow that there are moral truths and facts, but maintains that we can never gain knowledge about these facts. If this includes the claim that all our moral judgements are morally mistaken, the moral status of epistemological scepticism is plain for all to see. If it includes the assumption that our moral verdicts may indeed be right, but that we can never be sure whether or not they are, or that we lack facilities which would yield reliable moral verdicts, or that moral judgements are never justified, it must also fall back on moral considerations. For, when answering questions about moral epistemology and assessing the credentials of moral beliefs and belief-forming processes, we must always take up some stance on the existence of moral facts, which minimalism has already revealed as moral. More precisely, we can assess the status of our moral beliefs as true or false, or of belief-forming procedures as reliable or unreliable, only by considering which moral truths and falsehoods obtain and then checking whether or not these truths and falsehoods are correctly reflected in our moral beliefs. Questions of moral truths and falsehoods obtaining, though, have already been exposed as moral. Accordingly, the following picture emerges. For instance, assume that I discard the process of forming moral judgements on the basis of our five senses or gut feelings because I find that the vast majority of verdicts 'generated' on this basis is

false. Careful reflection and the achievement of reflective equilibrium, in turn, do a much better job in reliably yielding true moral judgements. However, this conclusion can be reached only by engaging in moral deliberation which allows me to classify the moral verdicts formed on the basis of these different methods as true or false, better or worse, on the basis of which moral truths and falsehoods obtain—which minimalism reveals as a moral question. Assessments of moral judgements and judgement-forming processes as good, correct, reliable or justified must thus be conducted on moral grounds. Hence, an epistemological sceptic who wants to reject any such judgement-forming mechanisms, positing that none of them ever yields correct moral judgements, puts forward a moral verdict. If the sceptic wants to supplement these thoughts by drawing further attention to the difference between our *thinking* that X is right or wrong on the one hand and X's *being* right or wrong on the other, what she must have in mind is first and foremost the mind-independence of moral truths—the moral nature of which has been briefly mentioned above—and possibly combine it with an aversion to moral dogmatism—which is also a moral attitude. We can thus conclude that moral scepticism, no matter whether it is spelled out in its metaphysical or epistemological form, is an internal, moral position. As such, any rejection of moral scepticism must, consequently, also be moral. Hence, since Ramsey's horizontal ladder of minimalism reveals that calling something a moral truth or fact never leaves the moral realm, questions pertaining to the existence of moral facts and how to find out about these facts are moral.

This insight is, of course, particularly precarious for classic, external interpretations of moral realism. Moral realism has traditionally been defined as the view that there are mind-independent moral truths and facts (Brink 1989; Boyd 1991; Sayre-McCord 1991). For instance, moral realists have been heard to say that it is a fact that helping children flourish is good. This truth or fact is independent from whatever attitudes or views we possess; it is objectively and categorically true, it is part of the fabric of the universe, part of the independently existing realm of moral facts, etc. However, having exposed questions about the existence and our knowledge of moral facts as moral, minimalism now tells us that when adding all of these remarks about truths and facts to our original claim, we are not climbing up a ladder into metaphysically robust spheres. What we are doing instead is sliding between different rungs of Ramsey's horizontal ladder without ever leaving the ground from which we started initially, namely, the verdict that helping children flourish is good. Most importantly for our purposes, this ground is, of course, moral; it belongs to the class of paradigmatic moral judgements. Accordingly, given minimalism, none of the realist addenda about truth, fact or the independent moral realm succeed in moving beyond the internal space of moral judgement, but forever fall back on the original moral verdict itself. Consequently, moral realism as understood in its traditional definitions does not transcend moral discourse, but is built on moral grounds. Hence, if moral realists wanted to maintain that their account is a non-moral, external position, they would have to find theses other than those about moral facts and truths in order to back up this external status. After being devoured by minimalism, truth and fact can be of no help to them in this endeavour.

Of course, this conclusion does not just apply to moral realism. After the deflation of truth, fact, reference and certain readings of representation, none of these notions can form the basis of a position's categorisation as external. Any attempt to defend external interpretations of metaethical positions will thus have to rely on notions other than those of fact and truth. Hence, by removing crucial notions from the Archimedeans' traditional arsenal of 'pegs' on which the external status of

their metaethical views could be hung, minimalism provides a strong engine for the anti-Archimedean movement. Hence, anti-Archimedeans can rejoice that what has previously been thought to give metaethics robust groundings outside of ethics, minimalism reveals as alternative expressions of internal moral judgements.

4.2.2 TEAMING UP

Indeed, at this point expressivists are more than happy to join anti-Archimedeans in their celebrations. For, the minimalist, anti-Archimedean move to expose seemingly external metaethical questions as internal moral questions is, of course, no stranger to expressivists. Instead, it forms the core of their strategy to deal with certain objections against their own position, such as the claim that expressivism entails mind-dependence. This strategy relies on a distinction between those internal features of moral practice which expressivists aim to explain on the one hand and the allegedly external, metaethical part of expressivism which is meant to do the explaining on the other. The objective is then to achieve internal adequacy[60] by showing that the expressivist position, which critically impresses with the deliberate omission of any appeal to moral facts and properties and instead focuses on conative attitudes and practical functions, can do justice to the internal features of moral practice. Traditionally, the major stumbling blocks in expressivism's path to success were those internal features which are commonly grouped under the heading of moral objectivity—talk about moral truths and facts is one of them, mind-independence and fallibility are others. Yet, many of these stumbling blocks crumble the moment they are placed in anti-Archimedean, minimalist hands.

As indicated in the previous section and when discussing minimalism's semantic implications for expressivism, minimalism combined with the internal turn reveals that theses pertaining to morality's objectivity are moral. Declaring that moral truths and facts exist amounts to endorsing substantive moral judgements; mind-independence boils down to the denial that moral properties are dependent on our own sentiments or views; to acknowledge moral fallibility is to pursue our aversion to dogmatism and false moral judgements; categoricity of moral verdicts lends a title to our moral conviction that everyone is placed under the same moral demands irrespective of moral views, desires or preferences; determinate correctness of moral questions comes down to one response being morally superior to all others and so on for other objective characteristics of morality. Yet, by turning theses about the objectivity of morality into straightforward internal moral judgements, minimalism and the internal/external move open them up to the expressivist treatment in terms of disapproval, norm-acceptance or planning. In other words, since they make claims pertaining to morality's objectivity part of that particular class of judgements which is already within the ambit of expressivist understanding, they have the very welcome result that expressivism can fully incorporate morality's objectivity without running the risk of having to include any metaphysically troublesome commitments. Since, in contrast to moral realists, expressivists never intended moral objectivity to shoulder any 'external weight' within the expressivist background story anyway, minimalism and the internal interpretation of moral objectivity thus not only do *not* pose a threat to expressivists, but also very much play into their hands. What is one metaethicist's sorrow thus turns out to be another's joy.

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60   In chapters 5 and 6, I will specify this internal adequacy constraint in greater detail.

4.3 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have established the basis for the second part of my study. I presented the Moral Doctrine Test which classifies a claim as moral if it is inconsistent with at least one substantive moral view and which will feature heavily in the assessment of the moral or non-moral status of expressivism's theses in the next three chapters. Furthermore, I have adopted a broad understanding of metaethics including theses about morality's objectivity and practicality, contrasted it with empirical ethics and located its place within the anti-Archimedean movement. Finally, I have explained how minimalism fuels the anti-Archimedean movement and how expressivists can exploit minimalist, anti-Archimedean insights to their advantage with regard to features of moral objectivity. Despite kick-starting the anti-Archimedean movement, though, minimalism cannot drive it all the way. For, although its deflations impact on the status of theses about the objectivity of morality, they do not appear to hold any direct sway over other metaethical claims, most notably over those pertaining to morality's practicality and purpose. The internal or external status of these theses is thus still undecided and will be analysed next.

5. MORALITY'S PURPOSE—FIRST ENCOUNTER

Expressivists, I explained in the previous chapter, are more than happy to join forces with minimalists and anti-Archimedeans with regard to internal interpretations of theses about morality's objectivity. However, it is also very clear that they do not want internal readings 'to have it all'. Gibbard (2003a: 186, 185, 95, 195) unequivocally states that "the hypothesis of [his] book [*Thinking How to Live*] ... counts as external" and that "[e]xpressivism … is not a substantive theory of what's right and wrong, what's good and bad, and what makes it that way. It leaves us to treat substantive matters in their own terms and explain them in their own terms"; it "[examines moral] judgements rather than making and propounding them", it attempts "to see [normative concepts] 'from the outside'". Blackburn (1998a: 295), invoking Hume's picture of the anatomist and the painter, is just as explicit:

> When Hume, or Hare, or Gibbard, or I myself gives a story about our natures as beings who make decisions, who adopt attitudes, who have needs and desires and values, we are not on the face of it *moralizing*. We are doing the anatomy of philosophical psychology, and following Hume we distinguish the role of the anatomist from that of the painter.

Everyone, including anti-Archimedeans, will agree that expressivism does not appear to be a moral doctrine 'on the face of it'. Nonetheless, anti-Archimedeans will insist that these appearances are misleading. This chapter will examine a first attempt to make this claim stick.

This first encounter between expressivists and anti-Archimedeans will focus on expressivist purpose-attributions to morality. In this context, at least at first sight, expressivism appears to have better chances of retaining its external status than moral realism, constructivism or error-theories. For, in contrast to these metaethical opponents, expressivism's decisive theses do not pertain to moral objectivity, which expressivists agree should be read internally. Instead, its key claims concern the practicality of morality and centre on notions such as 'purpose', 'practical role' and 'function'. Since minimalism does not appear to wield any direct influence over these claims, I believe that they show the best prospect for an external interpretation. Whether or not this external prospect materialises will be the subject of this chapter. More precisely, my objectives will be the following. To start with, I will establish that expressivism's theses about the purpose of morality fall within metaethics. This is very important, as debates about the moral or non-moral status of these claims get off the ground only if these theses qualify as metaethical. To elaborate, as briefly hinted above, there is the possibility that these claims are located within empirical ethics, rather than metaethics, in which case their non-moral, external status would be a foregone conclusion, something that anti-Archimedeans would never dream of rejecting. For, although anti-Archimedeans hold that *metaethical* positions are moral doctrines, they never intended to suggest that *empirical* ethics is in any way moral. Hence, in light of this categorisation's importance for subsequent discussions, establishing the metaethical nature of distinctively expressivist theses will be my first aim. I will then examine whether or not expressivist purpose-attributions are moral, attempting to make the strongest case possible for the expressivist non-moral self-image. This will also reveal interesting new perspectives

on expressivism's traditional contest with moral realism. I will conclude by taking stock of the arguments and results presented so far.

5.1 PURPOSE-ATTRIBUTIONS—METAETHICS OR EMPIRICAL ETHICS?

What drives expressivism is a certain puzzlement or curiosity about moral concepts. As Gibbard (2003a: 196) says, it is the question of why we do not simply talk in naturalistic language about the world, but also conceive of it in moral terms. Expressivists aim to assuage this curiosity by appealing to the purpose of moral language and the need it satisfies. More precisely, their distinctively expressivist thesis is the following: We employ moral language because it allows us to do certain things—it allows us to discuss, question, hypothesise and reflect about our decisions, actions and life choices; it enables us to deliberate our way into actions (Blackburn 1998a: 69, 1993a: 55, 2006a: 148; Gibbard 2003a: 5). Importantly, serving this need to deliberate about our decisions is not just *one* function of moral language.[61] Rather, it is its *primary* function; it is what distinguishes normative, and thus moral, concepts from non-normative concepts (Gibbard 2003a: 142). This section will ask if this thesis about the function, or purpose, of moral vocabulary should be read empirically, and thus as part of empirical ethics, or non-empirically which would allow it to be classified as metaethical.

5.1.1 A CASE FOR EMPIRICAL ETHICS

I believe that there are two factors in particular which have lent support to an empirical interpretation of expressivist purpose-attributions. The first is found in a certain reconstruction of expressivism, the second in expressivist writings. Starting with the former, it has become popular to understand expressivism as providing a genealogy of moral discourse. More precisely, following the tripartite structure of genealogies, expressivism is understood as envisaging how moral practice and language ('end state') developed in the wake of our need to discuss choices and actions ('transformation') out of a state in which no such practice and language existed ('original position'). It is now quite tempting to read this genealogy as an empirical account of how moral discourse actually developed, i.e. as an exercise in anthropology. For, is this not what genealogies or aetiologies are all about?[62] Talking about the function of moral language could then be understood in the way that this term is employed in evolutionary biology, anthropology or the philosophy of mind. To elaborate, philosophers of mind often declare that "the function of *X* is what *X* is designed to do, and what *X* is designed to do is that for which *X* was selected" (Kitcher 1993: 383). For example, take the case of vision. Everyone agrees that visual capacities evolved or were designed through the process of natural selection because vision delivers representations of the world around us which were imperative for our survival.[63] Since visual capacities have thus been selected by evolution because

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61   If this was the case, nothing distinctively expressivist would have been established, as moral realists, for instance, could happily agree that this is *one* function of moral language.

62   Of course, that 'genealogy' should be so understood is not as clear as portrayed here. Indeed, I will argue later that if expressivism is phrased in genealogical terms, this must be interpreted as a heuristic device.

63   'Design' is naturally to be understood along evolutionary lines. Moreover, I suppress considerations about correctness here, i.e. the thought that vision 'survived' evolutionary pressures only because it delivers *correct*, rather than false, representations. Although this possibly opens the door to normativity, no

they provide us with input about how the world is, this is also their function. Returning to morality, expressivists could be read as telling a similar story. The reason why moral practices and language developed, why they were selected through evolutionary pressures, is that they fostered our chances of survival by allowing us to discuss what to do; consequently, we can conclude that this is also morality's function. This being an empirical claim, it can naturally be contested on empirical grounds. For instance, moral talk may have evolved not because it allowed us to discuss our choices as such, but because it allowed the strongest to suppress the weakest and advanced the survival of the fittest in this way. In sum, conceiving of expressivism as a genealogical account of moral discourse invites an empirical interpretation of expressivist purpose-attributions to moral discourse.

Turning to the second aspect which further boosts this temptation, a lot of passages in expressivist writings speak for this empirical, anthropological reading. For instance, the first two parts of Gibbard's *Wise Choices, Apt Feelings* (1990), which are to a great extent an exercise in exploratory evolutionary theory, give strong support to this interpretation. Chapter 4, aptly entitled 'Normative Psychology', speaks of 'biological adaptations', 'evolutionary bargaining situations' and the 'biology of coordination', putting great effort into speculations about the evolutionary advantages which the development of moral discourse had. Blackburn's (1998a) chapter on 'Naturalizing Norms' is written in the same tenor, whilst his ideas about the transformation of a boo/hooray language into propositional language could further fuel this interpretation (Blackburn 1984, 1993a). Hence, there is a lot of textual support for the claim that expressivists engage in some kind of anthropological enterprise when assigning a certain function to moral language. Nevertheless, I do not believe that we should adopt this empirical reading of expressivism, as I will explain next.[64]

5.1.2 A CASE FOR METAETHICS

Although I have no doubts that expressivists do indeed embrace the empirical thesis that moral practices and concepts would not have evolved, had they not possessed a certain practical function, I am not convinced that the empirical reading is the best interpretation of expressivism. A first hint towards the non-empirical nature of expressivist purpose-attributions is given by the approach adopted in Gibbard's *Thinking How to Live* (2003) which followed his *Wise Choices, Apt Feelings* (1990). This second book is not so much concerned with 'armchair anthropology' as with a 'possibility proof', which aims to show that a language is possible which is propositional in form, yet serves the particular function of allowing us to deliberate our way into decisions.[65] Interestingly,

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such correctness caveats play a role in thoughts about the evolution of morality, so I will ignore them here.

64 There are, of course, also more and more empirical studies which examine the links between moral judgement making and brain activities. Of course, these empirical studies are left untouched by anti-Archimedeans.

65 The striking quotes from Gibbard are: "… I conduct a thought experiment and fashion my possibility proof: it is possible to have concepts that work as expressivists say our normative concepts work. To establish this, I appropriate the phrase 'the thing to do' to serve as an expressive term—ignoring all question [sic!] of what this phrase means in normal English" (2003a: 7); "English may have such a predicate: 'ought' on certain readings, perhaps, or 'is the thing to do'. But whether English does or does not, for crystal-clear thought about what to do we need such a predicate. If such language does not exist, we have to invent it" (2003a: 13); "Mostly I ask not whether an expressivistic treatment of normative concepts is true, but whether it *could* be true" (2003a: 20); "In this work, I have been looking at ideally coherent

Gibbard's arguments do not proceed along diachronic, tripartite genealogical lines, but look at the function of moral language without paying much attention to any genealogical questions. Once we move away from such reconstructions of expressivism in genealogical terms, though, a new perspective opens up on the way in which the expressivist approach should be understood. That is, rather than regarding 'How did moral *discourse develop*?' as expressivism's guiding question, we should attribute this status to the query 'What could we *not do* if we did not employ moral *vocabulary*?' Shifting focus away from development towards 'doings' and from discourse to vocabulary now allows us to gain the following, in my eyes correct, understanding of expressivism: Expressivist purpose-attributions are not based on empirical enquiries into the evolution of moral discourse; they are grounded on linguistic analyses about the role of moral concepts. A parallel to the interpretation of minimalism about truth helps understand why.

Minimalism about truth, just as the correspondence or coherence theory, is not an empirical account. The arguments put forward in chapter 2 in support of propositional minimalism were not empirical arguments; minimalism's claim that the truth-predicate is a device for semantic ascent and does not refer to a robust, causal property, is not based on any empirical enquiries into truth's nature, nor is it based on any speculations about how the truth-predicate actually entered our language. Minimalism, just as any other theory of truth, is not an exercise in anthropology; it belongs to philosophical logic and the philosophy of language. Having said this, minimalism does undoubtedly rely on certain empirical findings. To start with, minimalists register the way in which we use the truth-predicate in everyday life. Moreover, they declare that beings like us have a certain need, namely the need to talk not just about the world, but also about our statements. The interplay between these empirical statements and minimalism's non-empirical core is quite complex, but I believe that we can start to make sense of it by distinguishing between two tasks which any philosophical account of language faces (Price 2004: 9).[66] The first concerns the construal of an abstract, formal or idealised model of language which, in light of minimalists' pragmatist focus on use, contains users and use-patterns as explicit components. It is in this model-theoretic part, I suggest, that minimalism's philosophical work, explicating the conceptual core and function of truth, is conducted. This includes, firstly, extraction of the basic use-regularity of the truth-predicate which forms the basis of the *conceptual* claim that (PT)-instances are conceptually fundamental to the notion of truth.[67] Secondly, it comprises identification of indirect contexts of truth-ascriptions as providing the key to the function of the truth-predicate by revealing the need that it fulfils, which grounds minimalists' *logical* claim that truth is a device for semantic ascent. The crucial consideration in this context is what we would *not* be able to do, were we not in possession of the truth-predicate. Finally, it includes demonstration that all phenomena associated with truth can be explained on the basis of a minimal conception of truth, which supports minimalists' claim that truth does not possess any

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planners and exploring concepts that such planners are committed to. Only at the point we have reached do I ask what all this might have to do with our own, human concepts and the human psyche" (2003a: 181, fn. 3).

66 Macarthur/Price (2007) seem to disagree with my assessment of minimalism as a non-empirical account, as they always emphasise that their position of minimalist semantics is based on an empirical, "anthropological pragmatism". However, these apparent differences between Macarthur/Price and myself can, I believe, be settled by use of Price's own understanding of the tasks faced by philosophical accounts of language as presented here.

67 Identifying conceptual roles is not to be confused with giving definitions, as I explained in chapter 2.

robust causal-explanatory functions beyond its logical functions. Importantly, none of these claims is empirically falsifiable; if any one of them is to be dismissed, it must be rejected on philosophical grounds. These objections must either reveal that minimalist explanations cannot account for the whole range of contexts in which truth features, implying that minimalism does, after all, not exhaust our analyses of truth and needs to be supplemented with further theses about the function of the truth-predicate (Williams 1996). Or they must point out that minimalism runs into insurmountable technical and logical problems, say with regard to its relation to meaning or the generalising potential of the truth-schema, and must thus be dismissed because this predicate cannot be based on (PT)-instances or fulfil the function it is said to serve (Gupta 2001).

The second task of any philosophical account of language, in turn, addresses the question of what it takes for this model to fit our actual use of language. This second part comprises, of course, an empirical exercise which must determine whether linguistic activities in our everyday lives are correctly represented by the linguistic model. Moreover, this empirical part arguably constrains the first in that we must always have an eye on the way in which we actually use language and the characteristics of language users when constructing our language models. For, if the model did not pay any heed to day-to-day language use and the way in which language users and the world actually are—for instance, if the model assumed a need for semantic ascent which actual language users did not possess—the model could be rejected as useless (though not false). Against this background, it is understandable why minimalism makes certain empirical assumptions and would be subject to criticism if it turned a blind eye to actual language use. Yet, this does not imply that minimalism is itself an empirical account.

In the introduction, I briefly hinted that expressivism and minimalism are close relatives in that both belong to the wider pragmatist family. In light of this proximity, I would like to suggest now that the distinctively expressivist theses should be read in direct parallel to the interpretation of minimalism.[68] That is, expressivism certainly relies on certain empirical insights, particularly about our need to discuss our choices and actions. However, expressivist theses should nonetheless not be understood as a response to the empirical question of why or how moral discourse developed, but as a linguistic-pragmatist thesis about the function of moral vocabulary. More precisely, I believe that expressivist theses about the function of moral concepts should be located on the model-theoretic level of philosophical accounts of language which contains agents (or in Gibbard's terms, planners) as key components.[69] Although expressivists do not normally examine what concrete moral terms mean and thus do not follow minimalism's example with regard to conceptual analyses, they do follow its pragmatist drive. More precisely, they identify contexts of deliberation and public discussion as providing the key to the function of moral vocabulary by revealing the need that it fulfils, which grounds expressivists' *linguistic-pragmatist* claim that moral concepts allow us to discuss practical questions. Importantly, this step cannot simply appeal to observations of actual language use, but must go beyond such observations in order to extract the *primary* function of moral vocabulary. Again, the crucial consideration in this context is what we would *not* be able to do, were we not in possession of moral concepts. Moreover, just as in the case of minimalism, this model-theoretic

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68   In his 'Truth, Beauty and Goodness', Blackburn (2010) draws an even closer parallel by modelling an expressivist account of moral predicates directly on the minimalist account of the truth-predicate.

69   This also coheres with the nature of Gibbard's (2003a) *Thinking How to Live*, which constructs the model revolving around planners first and then considers how this model relates to actual language use.

work must demonstrate that all phenomena associated with moral practices can be explained on the basis of an expressivist construction of moral language, which supports expressivists' claim that this practical function is the primary role of moral language. Once more, these claims are not empirically falsifiable; if any one of them is to be dismissed, it must be rejected on philosophical grounds. Critical thrusts must either aim to show that contrary to expressivist claims, the function attributed to moral language cannot account for all features of moral practices (Zangwill 1994; Egan 2007), or that a language such as the one devised by expressivists faces insurmountable technical problems and thus cannot fulfil the function which expressivists themselves attribute to it (Hale 1993; Schroeder 2008). Turning to the second task of linguistic theories, this model must, of course, be empirically informed to be in any way fruitful and illuminating. As explained before, if there was no connection between the expressivist language model and actual language use—for instance, if expressivists attributed a certain need to model agents which we do not share—the model would pretty much lose its whole point; it would be a purely intellectual exercise without any informative value about the way in which moral language is in fact used. Yet, this does not entail that expressivism is itself an empirical account.

All this, I believe, points towards a non-empirical interpretation of expressivist purpose-attributions. More precisely, I believe that they are part of the wider pragmatist project as presented in chapter 2. There, I spoke about the 'diverse unity of propositions' which emphasises that although all propositions share the same surface features, they need not share the same function, use or purpose. As a consequence, minimalists encourage us to look for differences below a shared surface. Expressivist theses about the function of moral vocabulary now speak exactly to this point of diversity by digging below the propositional clothing of moral statements to uncover their discourse-specific function. Expressivism thus executes a certain assignment which was commissioned by minimalist semantics and is, therefore, part of the general linguistic, pragmatist project.

SUMMARY

To summarise, I believe that expressivist purpose-attributions to moral vocabulary are not empirical, anthropological theses which would be part of empirical ethics. Instead, they discharge a certain task generated by minimalist semantics and are, therefore, part of the wider linguistic, pragmatist project.[70] Just as minimalism about truth is not an empirical, anthropological position, its close relative expressivism is not an empirical theory either although it must take certain empirical findings into account. Of course, expressivism could still be constructed along genealogical lines (just as minimalism could). Yet, it is crucial that in this case, the genealogical method must be read as a purely optional, heuristic device which helps to extract the key function of moral thought and language by presenting an imaginary account of why moral practices would emerge as a means of fulfilling certain human needs and not as an anthropological account. Hence, if my interpretation is right, expressivist purpose-attributions do not fall within empirical ethics and thus within a discipline which lies outside of the anti-Archimedean target zone. Having established that much, is there any reason why these purpose-attributions should still not classify as metaethical? I do not think so.

70　As indicated in footnote 14, this raises the very interesting question of whether expressivism can remain localised or whether it must be expanded into a global position (see in particular Macarthur/Price (2007), Blackburn (2007)). Regrettably, I cannot enter into this discussion here.

Although their background is generally linguistic, they clearly focus on ethics and fulfil, therefore, the intuitive criterion of being in some sense *about* ethics.[71] Consequently, I suggest that we should see expressivist purpose-attributions to moral vocabulary as part of metaethics. As such, they fall within the anti-Archimedean target area; the debate about their moral or non-moral status can begin.

5.2 PURPOSE-ATTRIBUTIONS—MORAL OR NON-MORAL?

Having established that expressivist purpose-attributions are metaethical, we can now turn to the question of whether to attribute moral or non-moral status to them. Kramer's response seems unequivocal: purpose ascriptions to morality *tout court*, according to one of his key theses, must themselves be moral. He presses this point in various places:

> [T]he ascription of a purpose to ethics or to the basic vocabulary of ethical discourse ... is itself a substantive ethical thesis, albeit at a high level of abstraction. Any such ascription singles out some aspect(s) of ethical categorization as centrally important for the lives of human beings or of rational beings generally. ... [The imputation of a purpose] attaches fundamental ethical value to an end, which transmits that value to the ethical norms and decisions by which the end is promoted (Kramer 2009: 332, 333).

> [A]lthough most attributions of purposes are not necessarily favorable in their tenor, any attribution of a point or purpose to ethics *tout court*—rather than to some particular code of ethics or to some particular practice of moralizing—must indeed involve a favorable judgment, whether directly or obliquely. Whereas any activity or any institution or any system of ethics is something on which we can adopt an external perspective when we impute to it a point or purpose, ethics *tout court* is quite different. We are always inside the domain of ethics *tout court* when we seek to attribute to it some point or purpose (Kramer 2009: 349).

> There is no escape from the domain of ethics *tout court*, then, for someone who undertakes an attribution of a point or purpose to that domain. Whether the attribution is directly favorable or ostensibly repudiatory, it manifests and reinforces the reach of the ethical domain by basing itself on ethical judgments (Kramer 2009: 351).

Consequently, he urges us to

> recognize that, despite initial appearances to the contrary, [Blackburn's] quasi-realist theorizing is an exercise in moral justification rather than in aetiological speculation. Instead of conjecturing about the causes that have led to the propositional character of moral discourse, Blackburn is recounting the moral values that are vitally served by that propositional character and by the reality of moral properties. Far from being aetiological, his quasi-realism amounts to an insistence that any account of the fundamental features of

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71 Traditionally, metaethics has always drawn on general philosophical resources and applied them to the subject of ethics. For instance, metaethicists picked up general philosophical thoughts on reliabilism, causal theories of reference or rule-following and applied them to ethics, without thereby ceasing to put forward metaethical theories. I cannot see, therefore, why a more general background should disqualify theses from being metaethical.

morality *tout court* has to proceed from the inside by reference to moral values (Kramer 2009: 201, fn. 6).[72]

The claim that purpose-attributions to morality *tout court* are internal assumes a key role in Kramer's arguments.[73] But, why should we believe this? Note here that minimalism does not appear to have any direct impact on this issue. Whilst minimalism revealed that a claim such as 'There are moral facts' is moral, it does not have similar revelatory powers when we look at a thesis such as 'The function of moral vocabulary is to foster coordination'. Hence, if minimalism had no influence on the status of purpose-attributions to moral vocabulary and if expressivists could show that these purpose-attributions are non-moral, they would have a great chance to hold on both to minimalism and their non-moral self-image. Determining the status of these purpose-attributions is thus crucial for the contest between expressivists and anti-Archimedeans.

We can begin this scrutiny by observing that Kramer's moral interpretation of expressivism, particularly when read along (heuristic) genealogical lines, has something going for it, as expressivism can relatively easily be seen as a justificatory account which follows the structure of social contract theories (Rawls 1973; Nozick 1974).[74] More precisely, expressivism could be read as an exercise in moral philosophy which helps us identify why moral practices are good or worthwhile, that is, as answering the question of why it is *good* or *favourable* for us to speak in moral terms, why we have a *reason* to engage in moral practices. In other words, we could interpret expressivism as giving the moral justification that engagement in moral practices is a *good* institution *because* it allows us to discuss our lives. According to this reading of 'purpose', then, identifying the purpose of ethics just *is* identifying its value.[75] Now, it is indeed the case that expressivists most certainly subscribe to the claim that moral practices and our engagement therein are good because they allow us to deliberate about our choices and achieve consensus on how to live, which ultimately makes our lives better. Moreover, just as Kramer (2009: 333) predicted, this positive moral value of the promotion of con-

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72 As should be clear from my previous explanations, I agree that expressivism should not be understood as providing an empirical aetiology of moral discourse. What is at stake here, though, is Kramer's claim that it offers a moral justification instead. As a little aside, the pages quoted by Kramer as a back-up for this internal interpretation of expressivism (Blackburn's (1998a: 311-12) answer to Q2) are not sufficient to fulfil this supporting act, as they concern the case of mind-independence which expressivists naturally interpret internally. This does not imply, though, that they also interpret expressivism as moral.

73 To be fair, though, when appealing to the moral status of purpose-attributions, Kramer is not primarily interested in the moral nature of expressivism, but in the moral status of the supervenience thesis, as I will explain in chapter 7. However, since these considerations are of prime importance for my interests, I will discuss them somewhat out of context here.

74 Kramer also suggested this parallel in private correspondence.

75 In the lengthy passages quoted above, I believe that Kramer does indeed come very close to an equation of the statement that morality has a purpose with the judgement that morality has positive moral value. For, his elucidations about purpose-attributions slide seamlessly into talk about "censorious" judgements, about "railing against" and "condemning" ethics *tout court* (Kramer 2009: 349, 350).

    I take it that certain purpose-attributions, such as 'The purpose of ethics is to enable us to live autonomous lives', should be understood in this way. At the same time, I do not believe that these positions aim to answer the question of how to fill in the 'diversity aspect' of minimalism's diverse unity of propositions, but that they aspire to point out the moral value of ethics. As I will explain below, since these theses are internal, moral stances, they can be endorsed by expressivism on the second, moral tier of expressivism and do not stand in conflict with expressivism.

sensus and deliberation about options further transmits its value to other ethical norms. Parts of the second half of Gibbard's *Wise Choices, Apt Feelings* (1990) can be read as a paradigm case of such a strategy, since he explicitly deduces certain moral standards, such as those about the authority of morality in the form of conversational demands, from the achievement of consensus. It is, therefore, right that expressivist purpose-attributions can be assigned a certain moral role. It is further indubitable that *if* we assume that making out the purpose of morality just *is* making out its value, purposes attributions are moral. However, at this point in the dialectic between expressivists and anti-Archimedeans, making this identification is illegitimate because it simply postulates what is at stake, namely that the attribution of a purpose *is* the attribution of a moral value. Using the word 'purpose' with all of its moral overtones, rather than the more neutral word 'function', might further be considered leading. Before accepting that this must be the way in which purpose-attributions—or attributions of functions—are to be understood, we first need to hear some supporting arguments.

Here, I believe that expressivists hold 'good cards' to show that no such supporting arguments are forthcoming. Instead, they can make a strong case for their non-moral self-image by arguing that any such evaluation is an optional moral add-on to an otherwise non-moral purpose-attribution. To explain why, I will proceed as follows. To start with, I will do some background work. This will firstly include scrutiny of the drive behind expressivism, leading to the extraction of a certain 'illumination requirement' which will play an important part in the remainder of this thesis. Secondly, it will contain presentation of how I believe expressivists conceive of their own position, namely as a two-tier account. Whilst the first tier is thought to be non-moral, the second tier is moral. Given this structure, there are two potential points for anti-Archimedeans to attack. The first is to reject that the first tier is non-moral; the second is to demonstrate that the two tiers cannot be kept apart. This chapter will be concerned only with the first line of attack and consider whether or not expressivist purpose-attributions to morality must be moral. The second line of attack will then be the subject of chapter 7.

5.2.1 THE DRIVE—A MORAL CONCERN?

To start with, I explained a few pages above that the development of expressivism is driven by a certain puzzlement or curiosity about moral concepts. The first question we can ask ourselves now is whether this thirst for understanding why we talk in moral terms is in any way based on a moral concern. At first sight, the answer appears to be no. To start with, we can observe that this curiosity does not appear to be limited to the moral domain, but that we can ask this question about any discourse. 'Why talk about goodness?' is totally on a par with the question 'Why talk about numbers?', 'Why talk about beauty?' or 'Why talk about trees?'. Moreover, these 'why-questions' are not normally understood in a moral tone. That is, rather than asking why engagement in these discourses is *good*, we ask why we talk in those terms. Expressivists now place two requirements on the answers we give to these 'why-questions'. Firstly, our responses must be illuminating in the sense that they do not give a 'just-so story' or simply repeat the internal, first-order commitments to which we subscribe within certain frameworks of thought, but that they widen our understanding of the frameworks themselves by explaining why we would engage in them.[76] Call this the 'illumination requirement'. Secondly, expressivists demand that these responses be naturalistically acceptable,

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76   As this will prove important later, notice here that the requirement is *not* that the response be external.

i.e. that they must be reconcilable with a naturalistic world view. Call this the 'naturalistic require-ment'. I will address this latter condition a little later on. First I will concentrate on the illumination requirement and examine whether or not this is morally motivated.

At first sight, the observation that the illumination requirement applies to all discourses, and not just to ethics, suggests that it is a non-moral constraint. I believe that this first impression is indeed right. More precisely, I think that the illumination requirement is not based on moral con-victions, but on sheer philosophical curiosity. However, against the backcloth of certain passages in expressivist writings, one may be forgiven for believing that the illumination requirement is a moral constraint, so it is worthwhile discussing these passages in greater detail. To elaborate, expressivists have been heard to say that a certain kind of scepticism would ensue if we could not explain how moral practices fitted into a natural world. For instance, Gibbard (2003a: 14) remarked in this vein that he would be sceptical about ethical claims if they consisted in attributing properties to things which conflicted with a naturalistic outlook. If this concern formed the basis of the illumination requirement, anti-Archimedeans would indeed be right to emphasise that this requirement is grounded on a moral conviction. For, the Moral Doctrine Test tells us that any inference which has a moral position as its conclusion must contain moral premises. As has already been argued above, though, moral scepticism is one such moral position. Accordingly, if expressivists derived moral scepticism (here: denial of moral truths) from the unavailability of informative, naturalistic explana-tions, they would themselves be putting forward a moral argument. The following potential infer-ence within which the link between the unavailability of informative explanations and moral scepti-cism features makes this point particularly clear:

(P₃)   If we cannot give an informative account of moral vocabulary, then there are no moral truths.

(P₄)   We cannot give an informative account of moral vocabulary.

(C₂)   Hence, there are no moral truths.

Employment of the Moral Doctrine Test shows that either (P₃), (P₄) or both[77] must be moral the-ses, since minimalism tells us that (C₂) is a moral judgement and Hume tells us that moral conclu-sions cannot be derived from sets of non-moral premises. Hume is right: (P₃) is indeed moral. First-ly, this is so because as I have explained in chapter 4, minimalism entails that any statement pertain-ing to moral truths must itself be moral. Secondly, (P₃) is a moral conviction because it attributes moral relevance to the availability of informative accounts, whilst deeming something to be morally relevant or irrelevant is itself a moral judgement. This is because it enquires how certain features impact on the moral status of the evaluated object, which can be answered only by evaluating the object against the background of these features. For instance, 'Do an agent's intentions impact on the permissibility of her actions?', 'Can the colour of shoe laces ever affect the virtuousness of a person?' or 'Is merit relevant for the justice of income distribution?' are all moral questions. For, we can answer this last question, say, only by judging whether unequal income distribution would be

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77   'Both' because, as I will explain below, attributions of moral relevance are moral and underlie (P₃), whilst (P₄) can be linked with expressivism's success in such a way as to reveal it to be moral. This would be so if the assessment that our moral practices cannot be explained in naturalistic terms was based on the verdict that naturalistic explanations debunk these very practices, which, as I will argue shortly, is it-self a moral judgement.

just if those who are better-off have worked harder than others, or whether the (in)justice of inequality remains totally unaffected by such considerations of merit. Similarly, 'Would nothing ever be right or wrong if we could not illuminate moral concepts in naturalistic terms?' can be asked and answered only in a moral voice. Hence, if the conditional (P_3) underlay the illumination requirement, the drive behind expressivism would indeed be moral. Roughly, expressivists' line of reasoning could then be summarised in the following practical syllogism:

> (P_5)   If we cannot give an informative account of moral vocabulary, then there are no moral truths.
>
> (P_6)   We want to avoid any such moral scepticism.[78]
>
> (C_3)   Hence, we had better find an illuminating account of our moral concepts and this is exactly what expressivism provides.

Both (P_5) and (P_6) have been exposed as moral: (P_5) because of its invocation of moral truths, moral scepticism and the implicit attribution of moral relevance to naturalistic explanations and (P_6) because rejections of the moral position of moral scepticism must themselves be morally grounded. Hence, if this syllogism captured expressivists' motivation to develop expressivism, expressivism and the illumination requirement would be driven by a moral concern.

Yet, I think that it would be a mistake to attribute this reasoning to expressivists, simply because I do not believe that expressivists do entertain moral convictions such as those expressed in ($P_{3/5}$). Instead, I believe that expressivists do not attribute moral relevance to illuminating, naturalistic explanations of our moral vocabulary at all, let alone moral significance which would be so immense as to impact on the truth of *all* moral judgements. Instead, expressivists should and do hold that informative accounts of moral concepts and thus expressivism are *morally irrelevant* with regard to the existence of moral truths and the correctness or incorrectness of our beliefs about them. Contrary to his remarks on scepticism earlier in his book, Gibbard (2003a: 195-196), for instance, agrees later in the text that "you'd better believe that torture is wrong and children are to be cherished and nurtured, with or without the kind of story of normative concepts [he] attempt[s] in [his] book". Given his comments on the value of ethics which I will address shortly, Blackburn too most certainly maintains that we are better off with our moral practices no matter whether or not we can understand them in illuminating terms. Indeed, expressivists had better deny that naturalist explanations possess any moral significance, because they would otherwise very quickly be trapped in a certain paradox. To elaborate, linking the availability of informative accounts to moral scepticism is, as I have explained above, a moral judgement which if correct, states a moral truth. Next, assume that no such informative account were at hand. In this case, an advocate of this link would deduce that there are no moral truths. However, if there are no moral truths, then the link between the availability of informative accounts and moral scepticism cannot be a moral truth either. Hence, the illumination-scepticism conditional is self-defeating.[79] It is just as well, then, that expressivists reject it.

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78   This opposition to moral scepticism will be examined in section 6.1. on debunking.

79   This points to another, more general paradox which the minimalist anti-Archimedean movement raises but which often goes unnoticed. According to the anti-Archimedean minimalist, declaring that no moral judgement is ever true is itself a moral judgement. But if so, error-theories are unstable: Either, they are self-defeating because their rejection of moral truths entails that their own moral judgement about

Hence, although some passages in expressivists' work lend support to a moral interpretation of the illumination requirement, I think that this would indeed be a misunderstanding. This requirement is not based on any moral concerns, but on philosophical inquisitiveness, i.e. on the general philosophical thirst to understand our practices better, no matter which specific domains we are talking about. The drive to develop expressivism and to impose the illumination requirement is thus non-moral.

AN EXCURSUS—NATURALISM

A few pages above, I said that expressivists demand not only that we give illuminating accounts of moral concepts, but also that these explanations be compatible with naturalism. What does 'naturalism' mean and why do expressivists put forward this 'naturalistic requirement'?

To start with, it is worth noting that minimalism makes the formulation of naturalism pretty difficult. For instance, against a minimalist background, naturalism can no longer be defined as the view that only natural facts exist.[80] For, stating that only natural facts exist —and thus that there are no moral or aesthetic facts—amounts to nothing less than a rejection of concrete moral and aesthetic judgements: Deny that there are moral facts and you deny that helping children flourish is good; deny that there are aesthetic facts and you deny that this sunset is truly beautiful. Quite tellingly, Gibbard (2003a: 181) explicitly states that he is not assuming that natural facts are the only real facts in the world, but that natural facts are the only facts to which he refers when constructing his expressivity explanations. Hence, since expressivists do not welcome any sceptical conclusions about moral facts, a different formulation of naturalism must be found. Blackburn's understanding is quite helpful here, as it is lenient enough not to conflict with minimalism, but robust enough to give us a basic idea of what naturalism comprises. To start with, Blackburn explains that the natural world is the world revealed by the senses and described by the natural sciences. "To be a naturalist", he (1998a: 48) continues, "is to see human beings as frail complexes of perishable tissue, and so part of the natural order. It is thus to refuse unexplained appeals to mind or spirit, and unexplained appeals to knowledge of a Platonic Form or Norms; it is above all to refuse any appeal to a supernatural order". A major part of naturalism thus consists in the rejection of supernaturalism. Moreover, implicit in this formulation is a certain reference to an explanatory 'promise', let us say, which is key to the naturalistic project. This is the claim that employment of any discourse-specific vocabulary can be illuminated in naturalistic terms. Crucially, this does not include semantic or ontological reductions; naturalists are well advised not to proclaim that all facts—moral, aesthetic, mathematical, etc.—are reducible to natural facts, or that all concepts are reducible to naturalistic concepts. What it points out instead is that we can illuminate any concepts belonging to a specific discourse *X* in naturalistic terms, i.e. without falling back on *X*-vocabulary. Importantly, this does not hold vice versa: we cannot illuminate the employment of natural language in moral, aesthetic or

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the dismissal of moral truths is false. Or they must say that all moral judgements but one are false, i.e. that the only true moral judgement is that there are no other moral truths. Yet, this would also pull the rug from under error-theories. The minimalist anti-Archimedean movement may thus have wider implications for error theories than is normally acknowledged.

80 Unless you hold, of course, that only natural statements are true and that all other statements—moral, mathematical, aesthetic, etc.—are false. Since it is clear that expressivists would not want to commit themselves to such a position, defining naturalism in those terms is not open to them.

mathematical terms. It is this explanatory asymmetry, then, to which naturalism is limited against a minimalist backcloth.

Why should we be concerned about these naturalistic explanations? As I have made clear above, it would be utterly unwise for expressivists to link them with any kind of moral scepticism.[81] I believe, therefore, that the naturalistic requirement is simply a specification of the illumination requirement. More precisely, it is based on the curiosity to understand why we, as the natural beings that we are, living in the world that surrounds us, engage in different discourses and employ various domain-specific languages. Some of these explanations will require us to rely on the vocabulary of the target discourse in order to be informative; others, such as explanations of moral discourse if we follow expressivists, can be illuminating only if they omit any reference to the target vocabulary. Stripped of the sceptical implications following from the potential unavailability of such naturalist explanations, this form of naturalism based on the explanatory primacy of the natural over the non-natural may not seem like very much. But I think that given minimalism, this is the best that naturalists can hope for.

5.2.2 EXPRESSIVISM'S SELF-UNDERSTANDING AS A TWO-TIER ACCOUNT

Having clarified that the expressivist drive for illumination is not based on any moral concerns, I would like to turn next to a certain conception of expressivism which is important for assessing the status of its purpose-ascriptions. That is, expressivists, I believe, implicitly conceive of their position as consisting of two tiers which are meant to correspond to a certain juxtaposition between the internal and the external. On the first tier, expressivists are solely concerned with questions about, for instance, the purpose of moral vocabulary and other classic expressivist theses, such as those about the mental states which underlie moral commitments. This tier is supposed to be external. On the second tier, expressivists consider potential moral implications of these explanations, for instance with regard to the existence of moral truths and facts or moral scepticism. This second tier is moral since, as expressivists explicitly appreciate, the considerations put forward on this tier require active endorsements of substantive moral views. The idea is then that this two-tier structure allows expressivism to be self-reflexive in the sense that everything happening on this second, admittedly moral tier, can be explained by the first, allegedly non-moral tier. For example, if the key thesis on the first tier is 'To make a positive moral judgement about X is to express a favourable attitude towards X', expressivists can explain that our rejection of moral nihilism on the second tier consists in our having a favourable attitude towards morality. Similarly, if the key thesis on the first tier is that moral disagreement consists in disagreement in plan, expressivists can explain that when disagreeing with relativists about the universality of moral truths, they are disagreeing in their plans, e.g. in their plans about what to do, about which considerations to take into account when deliberating, about

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81 Implications about scepticism differ from domain to domain. For instance, if you put forward the astrological claim that the positions of the planets influence our characters and I cannot find any empirical evidence for this claim, I can very well reject it by saying that there are no astrological truths. However, if I interpret your claim not as an empirical, causal thesis—say because I found that you reject taking any empirical evidence into consideration when discussing your astrological theses—I can start looking for an alternative explanation of what you are doing and, given this new interpretation, may stop being a sceptic. The important insight here is that this alternative explanation will not refer to any astrological terminology, but will be conducted in purely naturalistic terms.

which weight to give to certain concerns, etc. Although a big component of expressivism could thus be moral and operate within ethics, a different part of expressivism could at the same time remain outside of ethics and explain what expressivism's moral module involves. Crucially, expressivists want these two tiers to remain separate. That is, expressivists are keen to explain that the truth-conditions of the substantive moral judgements put forward on the second tier are fixed *internally*, i.e. by appeal to the standards adopted within ethics, and not *externally*, i.e. by the expressivist story put forward on the first tier. For example, the (supposedly) externalist expressivist thesis about the function of moral thought is not meant to entail straightforwardly that things are good if and only if they serve this particular function. Instead, a certain action may be good because it fulfils a promise, shows generosity or is based on good intentions. Of course, the function served by morality could potentially also feature in these truth-conditions. However, whether or not it does can be determined only internally, through moral reflection and application of moral theories. In principle, though, the purpose attributed to moral practices and the truth-conditions of substantive moral views are, according to the expressivist, two different 'kettles of fish' which must not be conflated.

Given this understanding of expressivism as a two-tier account, there are two ways in which anti-Archimedeans can attempt to show that contrary to all appearances, expressivism is a moral account. One is to challenge expressivists' claim that the first tier is external and argue instead that it is, although separate from the second, morally infused. The other is to put pressure on expressivists' declaration that these two tiers can be kept apart and demonstrate instead that both tiers merge.[82] I will examine this latter charge in chapter 7. Here, I will concentrate on the first version of the challenge, limiting myself to the key expressivist thesis that the purpose of moral language is to enable us to discuss and deliberate our way into actions and choices. Is this purpose-attribution moral or non-moral?

To start with a general argument, I conceded above that this purpose-attribution can indeed be read in a moral tone and that expressivists do positively evaluate the purpose which they assign to moral vocabulary. It is worthwhile engaging in moral thought because doing so allows us to meet a crucial need of ours, namely to debate our choices and ultimately make our lives better. However, it is also very clear that this positive evaluation of morality's function is detachable and cannot be directly derived from the purpose-attribution as such. For, even if we all agreed with the statement that the primary function of moral discourse is to serve our need to discuss choices, we can disagree about the moral status of this need and the corresponding function. This point becomes especially clear when we imagine an alternative purpose-attribution which explains that we talk in moral terms because doing so is a particularly efficient means to fulfil the need of the strongest to keep the weakest in check. Here, we have an account that clearly identifies a need which moral practices fulfil, yet I assume that most of us would seriously struggle to accept this as a convincing moral justification of morality. Purpose-attributions and evaluations of these purposes can, therefore,

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82 A further response to this conception of expressivism would be to suggest that these two tiers are not really two tiers of the same account, but that they reflect two totally different projects, as Kramer has suggested in private correspondence. That is, one project would be to give an empirical or even non-empirical account of moral practices, whereas the other would be the moral endeavour to determine whether or not morality is objective. However, as long as these projects are not interlinked at all, it is pretty pointless even to mention them in one breath—or so the argument goes. I will concentrate on the link between the two tiers in the next chapter.

come apart: even if agreement is reached on the purpose-attribution to moral concepts, what this implies *morally* about the value of ethics is a very different matter.

Hence, although it is perfectly correct for Kramer to point out that expressivists positively evaluate the function of morality and possibly transfer this moral value to other ethical norms, this is *not* enough to show that the attribution of a function to morality itself is morally motivated. This is so because it seems perfectly appropriate for expressivists to maintain that all of these positive moral evaluations take place on the second tier, but do not infiltrate the first, non-moral tier. Hence, although expressivist purpose-attributions can be used for justificatory purposes by adding a moral layer to them, the purpose-attribution itself does not appear to be moral. Expressivists can theorise about the function of morality without thereby putting forward the moral view whether or not morality or its function is good or bad. We have, therefore, not as yet seen any convincing back-up for Kramer's claim that all purpose-attributions to morality *tout court* must be moral (albeit not commendatory). I believe that this general argument centring on the detachability of moral evaluations from purpose-attributions can further be strengthened by examining, firstly, which considerations stand behind expressivists' attribution of a generally practical function to moral concepts and, secondly, which reflections back up their attribution of the specific practical function to enable us to discuss and deliberate our way into decisions.

5.2.3 THE STATUS OF THE GENERAL PURPOSE-ATTRIBUTION

Starting with the general purpose-attribution, we can observe that all purposes which we could possibly want to attribute to any vocabulary divide into two broad categories. One is practical, being predominantly concerned with action, and the other is non-practical, let us say, centring predominantly on cognition or intellectual activities, rather than action.[83] Crucially, these two functions need not be mutually exclusive. For instance, expressivists can happily agree that it is the function of moral language to describe moral reality correctly, yet insist at the same time that only their practical function can illuminate our employment of moral concepts. The query about morality's function is, therefore, not an either/or-question, but rather a question of primacy. The primary function of moral concepts is then defined as the one which illuminates our use of moral concepts. Given this clarification, we must consider next how expressivists could show that non-practical purpose-attributions cannot provide an informative account of moral concepts and thus cannot qualify as primary. In a nutshell, I will argue that expressivist purpose-attributions to moral concepts are non-moral because the decision to assign a practical, rather than a non-practical, function to moral vocabulary is based on the illumination requirement. Since the illumination requirement is non-moral, the attribution of a practical rather than a non-practical purpose is also non-moral. However, I will adopt a somewhat indirect strategy to establish this result. That is, I will not look at expressivist, practical purpose-attributions, but examine non-practical purpose attributions on the basis of their potential to illuminate moral talk. Since these non-practical purpose-attributions will be ruled out on the non-moral basis of the illumination requirement, expressivist practical purpose-attributions will be ruled in on the same non-moral basis. As non-practical purpose-attributions are closely associated with a certain branch of moral realism, I will take moral realism—if understood in

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83   Another title for this category might be 'theoretical'. Whichever label is chosen, though, the main difference I am after is one between a focus on what to do versus a focus on what is the case.

a certain way—as the target of my argument against non-practical and for practical purpose-attributions. This argument contains two components. The first of these is, maybe surprisingly, moral; the second, more significant argument, though, is based on non-moral grounds. The overall result of this section will be, therefore, that expressivism's general purpose-attribution can be built on a non-moral basis, although it can be supplemented with further moral considerations. I will adopt Dreier's (2004) thoughts on creeping minimalism and ways to stop it as the foil for this discussion. This requires me to lay out the background a little more.

THE EXPRESSIVIST-REALIST CONTEST REVISITED

In recent years, a certain worry, discussed under the heading of creeping minimalism, has grown amongst philosophers (Dreier 2004). This is the fear that minimalism eats up all those particular notions—truth, fact, reference, belief, even representation—which have traditionally helped to draw the demarcation line between expressivism and moral realism. Since all of these terms are too thin to establish any such delineation, minimalism threatens to level all metaethical differences and turn the metaethical landscape from a distinctive scenery into one big, amorphous mass.[84] Troubled by this potential upheaval, philosophers quite understandably set out to find some other way of rebuilding this landscape. One hope is that explanation could fill the hole left by the various deflations. More precisely, the idea is that although expressivists and moral realists now agree on the existence of moral properties, facts and beliefs, the way in which their respective metaethical accounts do or do not employ moral vocabulary could be the feature which distinguishes moral realism and expressivism. In this vein, Dreier (2004: 36), the most prominent advocate of this approach, elucidates: "[An expressivist] says that the best explanation of normative thought and talk involves no reference to the normative properties themselves, while a realist says that the best explanation must be in terms of those normative properties". Spelled out a little more, he proposes that an expressivist must explain a moral belief such as 'Julia believes that knowledge is intrinsically good' on the basis of conative attitudes, for instance as Julia's having a certain pro-attitude towards knowledge or a plan which includes knowledge in a certain way; in contrast, a moral realist must explain this belief as a certain doxastic relation in which Julia stands to knowledge and intrinsic goodness. Relating this proposal back to the present topic, the distinctive feature of expressivism is thus supposed to be its case for practical purpose-attributions to moral thought, arguing that we employ moral language in response to a certain practical need of ours, whilst the distinctive characteristic of moral realism is meant to be its case for a non-practical purpose-attribution to moral thought, suggesting that talking in moral terms is a cognitive response to the moral world around us. Given this understanding, expressivism's campaign against non-practical purpose-attributions can thus be understood as the campaign against moral realism (if understood as Dreier envisages).

As should be clear from my previous elucidations, I agree with Dreier's characterisation of expressivism. However, I believe that moral realists would be ill-advised to define their position along Dreier's lines. For, minimalism combined with the anti-Archimedean movement opens up a very different perspective on the expressivist-realist contest which brings to light two interesting argu-

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84 This worry is slightly different from the insight discussed in section 4.2 in the context of moral objectivity. There, the concern was that the notions of truth, fact, reference and so on cannot function as external foundations of metaethical positions because they never transcend the internal sphere. Here, the qualm is that they cannot help us to distinguish between these metaethical positions.

ments for expressivism and against moral realism *if realism is understood as Dreier suggests*. This caveat is very important, as I do not intend these thoughts to amount to a refutation of moral realism if moral realism is characterised as a position which centres on the justificatory role of moral facts, rather than their causal-explanatory role, or as a moral doctrine. The first argument against moral realism if read along Dreier's explanatory lines is based on moral reflections, the second on the illumination requirement.

ARGUMENT 1 – MORAL DEFICIENCIES

Although Dreier's suggestion sounds like a good idea to start with, once we take minimalist, anti-Archimedean insights into consideration, it leads to very unwelcome results. To elaborate, Dreier's suggestion commits realists to a certain view of moral properties and their features. That is, in order to give the realist explanation of moral belief any bite, it is not enough simply to declare that moral agents stand in a doxastic relation to moral properties. After all, expressivists would fully agree with that. Rather, for this explanation to function as the defining feature of realism, the doxastic relation must be spelled out in a way which requires moral properties to have a very robust quality: they must somehow bring about moral beliefs.[85] Two ways come to mind in which this could be fleshed out. The first is in terms of a causal tracking account: moral properties cause us to have moral beliefs about them. The causal relation required here is one which holds directly between the moral property and the believer, i.e. moral properties themselves must be causally efficacious, rather than being vicariously causally efficacious in the sense that the causal relation is mediated through other, causally potent properties with which moral properties are identified or on which they supervene. This is so because the causal potency of the subvenient base can never explain how the moral belief, rather than just the belief about the subvenient base, comes about. The second way is also a tracking account, but it replaces the causal relation with some kind of non-causal relation. Maybe intuition or some other channel like a sixth sense takes over the role played by our more conventional senses in the causal tracking account.[86] Either way, though, moral properties must exert some direct impact on us which leads to the formation of moral belief.

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85   Am I illegitimately turning the claim that moral properties must feature in the explanation of moral belief into the much stronger demand that they must bring moral belief about? I do not think so, partly because I believe that Dreier's specification of this requirement in terms of *relations* between moral agents and moral properties already indicates that something as strong as this lies in the background. After all, if Dreier's suggestion simply required that moral properties must feature in such explanations, no matter how, it would not be entirely clear why this quality should be a mark of realism. For instance, beliefs about the legality of actions or the married status of couples may have to refer to legality and marriage, without anyone wanting to proclaim that legal systems and institutions such as marriage should be understood in realist, rather than constructivist terms. (This argument runs in parallel to Shafer-Landau's (2003: 100) helpful comment that even the causal, counterfactual test is not a test for realism, since legal facts and facts of etiquette easily pass it.) Similarly, simply requiring that moral properties can feature in explanations of some explanandum other than moral belief, such as of revolutions, is too weak to establish realism since expressivists nowadays happily embrace such moral explanations (as moral layers to otherwise non-moral explanations). Hence, I believe that the demand that moral properties somehow bring about moral belief—a demand modelled on natural discourses—is required to give Dreier's suggestion any chance of drawing the demarcation line between moral realism and expressivism.

86   Let me make a brief remark here since Dreier compares Gibbard's account with Moore's in order to give an example of how his proposal would re-establish a difference between these two. Contrary to Dreier, my hunch is that we should read Moore not as providing an explanation of what makes it true to say of

Of course, both versions of this tracking account have been vehemently attacked on general metaphysical and epistemological grounds, be it on the basis of Harman's (1977) explanatory test, Wright's (1992) width of cosmological role, Mackie's (1977) argument from queerness, etc.[87] However, I suggest that what is really wrong with this picture is its inability to appreciate that theses about the existence of moral properties are moral, rather than starkly metaphysical, which drives moral realists into a general metaphysical battle over moral properties. By imposing on realists the condition that moral properties must be able to feature in our explanations of moral belief, it forces them to pick up the metaphysical gauntlet which has traditionally been thrown down by philosophers who either wanted to use this explanatory criterion as a means of showing either that there are no moral properties (Mackie 1977) or that moral properties must be of a certain mind-dependent kind (Harman 1977). Thinking that this challenge is legitimate and trying to meet it by attributing some kind of causal or non-causal efficacy to moral properties, though, is fundamentally misconceived, as Kramer (2009: 200) convincingly argues, because it does not appreciate that questions pertaining to the existence and nature of moral properties are fundamentally moral. In contrast to natural properties, causal-explanatory potency is not a test for the reality of moral properties—some things would still be good and others bad even if goodness and badness did not feature in the explanation of moral belief as Dreier envisages. Realists would thus be very ill-advised to let themselves be pushed into answering this explanatory challenge; instead, they should simply reject it as illegitimate, as missing the point with regard to the existence of moral facts. Hence, Dreier's approach to creeping minimalism traps moral realists in a very undesirable corner, as it denies them the ability to see questions surrounding the existence of moral properties for what they are, namely for moral, and not starkly metaphysical, queries. Moral realists would, therefore, be better advised to reject Dreier's proposal to define their position by reference to the role played by moral properties in the explanation of our moral beliefs.[88]

What is the upshot of these considerations with regard to the expressivist-realist contest and thus the debate about practical and non-practical purpose-attributions? Firstly, if my argument is correct, then moral realists should dismiss Dreier's characterisation of moral realism which centres on the explanation of moral belief. This obviously also entails that explanatory modes cannot help arrest creeping minimalism. How creeping minimalism may or may not affect expressivism will be considered shortly. Secondly, my reflections show that realist explanations of moral thought and talk should be rejected on moral grounds since they include the moral mistake of tying the existence of moral properties to general metaphysics. However, if it is right that realist explanations, and thus non-practical purpose-attributions, are ruled *out* for moral reasons, it follows that expressivist expla-

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us that we have moral beliefs, but rather as presenting a moral position about moral concepts and properties together with the epistemological, moral thesis that we find out about these properties through intuition. But since these theses are purely moral, this is again perfectly fine with expressivists, so it cannot mark the difference between expressivism and realism that Dreier envisages.

87 See Kramer (2009: 190-207) for more details on the application of the causal-explanatory criterion to ethics.

88 Of course, some moral realists already do so. For instance, Shafer-Landau (2003) and Sayre-McCord (1991, 1996) identify justification, and not explanation, as the key role of moral properties, Enoch (2007) focuses on deliberative indispensability, rather than explanatory indispensability, whilst Kramer (2009) and Dworkin (1996), being 'internal' moral realists, are naturally keen to avoid Dreier's understanding of moral realism.

nations, and thus practical purpose-attributions, are ruled *in* for moral reasons:[89] Expressivists could argue that we should prefer the expressivist, practical approach over the realist, non-practical approach because expressivism takes the reality of moral properties for what it is—namely as a moral, and not a metaphysical issue. Thirdly, the thesis that expressivism is morally superior to this version of moral realism is, of course, itself moral; it takes an engaged stance in moral debate and can clearly clash with opposing moral views, such as the position that no action would ever be right or wrong if this action's being right or wrong could not explain our moral beliefs. This debate is, therefore, carried out *within* morality and must include an exchange of moral judgements. Hence, we can conclude that expressivists' general choice to identify a practical rather than a non-practical function as the primary purpose of moral thought can be motivated on moral grounds.

ARGUMENT 2 – LACK OF ILLUMINATION

However, there is a second and, in my eyes, more significant argument for an expressivist and against a realist explanatory approach which is not morally driven. This is based on the illumination requirement. To elaborate, let me start with a quick reminder of Dreier's reconstruction of the expressivist-realist competition as a contest about the primary function of moral concepts. Expressivism aims to give an informative account of moral concepts without appealing to moral material, whereas moral realism tries to deliver illumination by assigning a central role to moral properties. As has been said many times previously, though, any appeal to moral properties and their features—any thesis about moral metaphysics and epistemology—is itself moral. Realist explanations are thus necessarily *internal*. The question is, therefore, how these explanations which inevitably operate from *within* ethics could nevertheless give an informative account *of* ethics. To find an answer, let us look at them in greater detail.

As argued above, a realist explanation cannot simply refer to a doxastic relation between us and moral properties; realists must put far more meat on the bones of this claim if it is to be in any way distinctive. The most natural way in which to tackle this task is, I believe, the following.[90] We form beliefs about justice, say, because we live in an environment where some states of affairs, actions or people are just. Since we stand in some kind of relation to this property of justice, we reliably form true beliefs about justice. This ability to form true beliefs about our moral environment and describe it correctly fostered our survival. We thus have a complete and very informative understanding of moral thought.

Contrary to first impressions, though, this explanation does not advance our understanding of ethics in any satisfactory way, which becomes clear when we unpack each step. Firstly, the statement that we live in an environment where some states of affairs, actions or people are just is plainly a moral judgement as it makes a claim about which moral facts obtain, which minimalism reveals as moral. Secondly, the claim that we stand in some kind of relation to this property of justice and reliably form true beliefs about it must boil down to the claim that our moral beliefs about justice are often true. This claim has also been revealed as moral when I discussed epistemological scepticism. Similarly, declaring that we have the ability to describe our moral environment correctly amounts to nothing more than the moral verdict that we have the ability to make true moral

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89   For the sake of simplicity, I consider only the expressivist-realist contest here and ignore other competitors, such as constructivism and error-theories.

90   'Natural' because it is modelled on explanations of other realist discourses.

judgements. So far, then, we have not had an informative account of moral judgement, but only reproductions *of* moral judgements. Put differently, up to now moral realists have attempted to respond to our question of why beings like us engage in moral thought by presenting a further (though more complex) moral belief, namely that there are moral properties to which we stand in some sort of relation. Hence, contrary to first impressions, the realist account has so far not done anything to assuage our thirst for understanding. The last hope for illumination is thus the claim that the ability to form true beliefs about our moral environment and describe moral reality correctly fostered our survival, which explains why we think and talk in moral terms. In other words, making moral judgements, and making them correctly, increased reproductive success, which is why we engage in moral practices. Now, this explanation is indeed informative. The problem is only that the parenthesis 'and making them correctly' is totally superfluous for its success, as has been pointed out by philosophers before (e.g. in Street (forthcoming)). To repeat once more, declaring that our moral convictions are correct is a moral verdict, which furthermore is totally detachable from the suggested illumination of moral thought. Moral sceptics, for instance, can unreservedly agree that we talk in moral terms because this promotes our chances of survival, yet disagree morally by maintaining that no moral judgement is ever true or correct. But if this explanation in terms of survival is illuminating no matter whether or not we include reference to moral properties, then moral properties obviously do not contribute to its informative value. Hence, this last hope for illumination has also been dashed. Realist explanations, attributing a non-practical function to moral vocabulary, fall far short of the illumination requirement.

Although this is already damaging enough, it is still not quite the end of the bad news for moral realists, as expressivism may even be able to envelop realist explanations. To elaborate, since realist explanations are necessarily moral, they fall once more within that particular range of theses which expressivism aims to reconstruct in terms of conative attitudes. As such, expressivists need not even reject realist explanations as false. For example, expressivists can fully agree with the realist-sounding explanation that we talk about justice because some things are just. Since this is now a purely internal, moral explanation, it falls within the ambit of expressivist understanding in terms of expressions of conative attitudes which also means that expressivists need not find any fault with it. It would have to be rejected only if it was based on morally unacceptable assumptions such as those discussed in the previous section. Yet, despite not rejecting it as false, expressivists do reject it as uninformative.

Can expressivism and moral realism, then, be seen to vie at all for the most illuminating account of moral vocabulary? Provided that expressivism engulfs realist explanations, we may be forgiven for thinking that the answer is no. However, I do not quite want to commit myself to this strong conclusion just yet—not before I have concluded my study about the moral or non-moral nature of expressivism.[91]

To recap the major points of this second argument for expressivism and against moral realism if understood in Dreier's terms, we can thus conclude that realist explanations of moral belief, and

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91 At the same time, we can already see an interesting dissimilarity to competitions for informative accounts of natural discourses, say. Realist explanations, in this case the standard mode of explanation, do not normally swallow any alternative explanatory accounts, such as idealism or brains-in-vats theses, but seek to expose them as false. The finding that realist explanations of ethics need not even be proved false by expressivists arguably demonstrates that expressivism and realism in ethics do not meet on a level playing field.

thus attributions of non-practical functions to morality, do not satisfy the illumination requirement. Once we appreciate that realist explanations are necessarily morally imbued from top to bottom, we see that they leave our employment of moral vocabulary unexplained. Moral realism's non-practical purpose-attribution, then, does not help us understand moral talk. In order to find illumination, we must leave moral beliefs, facts and properties behind and seek a different starting point for our metaethical accounts. The door for expressivism and thus practical purpose-attributions is thrown wide open.[92]

SUMMARY

Let me summarise the results of these considerations. The aim of this section was to determine which concerns stand behind expressivists' choice to attribute a practical, rather than a non-practical, function to moral vocabulary. Using the contest between realists and expressivists as a foil, I argued that one argument against non-practical purpose-attributions is moral—that is, what speaks against the assignment of non-practical purposes to moral discourse is that doing so involves morally mistaken views about moral properties. However, I suggested that a second, more significant argument is based on the illumination requirement—that is, what speaks against non-practical purpose-attributions is that they do not illuminate why we employ moral vocabulary. Since I suggested that the illumination requirement is a non-moral constraint, this argument against non-practical purpose-attributions is also non-moral. Hence, we can conclude that expressivists can rule out non-practical purpose-attributions and support their general claim that the function attributed to moral discourse must fall within the category of practical purposes on non-moral grounds. Importantly, this need not prevent us from saying that it is also the function of moral judgements to describe reality correctly. But when doing so, we are speaking from within morality and not about the primary function which could explain why we think in moral terms. This can be done only by practical functions. Although further moral arguments can add to this case for practical and against non-practical purpose-attributions, it need not be so supplemented. We can conclude, therefore, that expressivists' general attribution of a practical function to morality can be motivated on non-moral grounds. So far, then, we have still not heard any arguments explaining why expressivist purpose-attributions are moral.

FOUR MORE BRIEF THOUGHTS

I have now discussed reasons which speak for the attribution of a practical function to moral vocabulary. Before moving on to the question of which specific practical function should be assigned to morality, let me make four more comments. Firstly, these foregoing considerations are *not* to imply that there are no contexts within which appeal to moral facts would ever be illuminating. For instance, if we want to explain why we engage in moral thinking in the context of legal decision-making, we can give the helpful response that we do so because we necessarily have to consider

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92 Could there be any other, non-practical purpose-attribution which would fare better than those I attributed to moral realism? The chances for this are very slight. For, the challenge which this alternative non-practical purpose-attribution would have to meet is to provide a convincing, informative account of why we speak in moral terms without drifting into moral realism as understood by Dreier. Meeting this challenge, though, is incredibly hard. My pessimism about the tenability of these alternative purpose-attributions is strong enough to stop me from engaging with them in any greater detail.

questions of equality, dignity and respect in legal considerations.[93] Similarly, the question 'Why do you believe that torture is wrong?' can be informatively answered by explaining that torture violates the basic dignity of human beings, which is necessarily bad. More generally, we could even explain that we must engage in moral discourse in order to be good. However, it is clear that we are pursuing projects in all these three cases which are very different from the question of why beings like us talk in moral terms. One project is to explain a certain part of moral discourse (here, the legal context, if we want to adopt this interpretation) by drawing on some other aspects of morality. Another concerns an enquiry into the moral reasons for a moral belief, or into its truth-makers, which obviously requires a moral answer. The final project, in turn, speaks to the moral query of what it takes to be a good person and identifies engagement in moral practices as one morally necessary aspect of a good person. All these responses are helpful and illuminating. This, though, should not be surprising, since their common feature is that they are all answers to moral questions which require, of course, moral justifications that appeal to moral facts. The claim that moral explanations are uninformative is, therefore, not intended to extend to any of these moral contexts.

Turning to my second comment, the previous paragraph already hints towards the general function which I believe we should attribute to moral facts. Since questions pertaining to the existence of moral facts and properties are moral, we should realise that their function is also moral, rather than causal or explanatory. That is, the primary role of moral facts is to justify and to form the basis and reference point of our evaluations; they tell us what is good or bad, right or wrong, just or unjust. Whether or not these facts also possess some causal-explanatory power is, I believe, neither significant nor particularly interesting; this question simply misses the point of what moral facts are all about. Of course, this claim is, as I have emphasised above, also moral and must thus be supported by moral considerations. Here, I would dare to ask anyone who intends to draw sceptical conclusions from the (potential) causal-explanatory impotence of moral facts to reconsider her position. For, would she really believe that nothing would ever be right or wrong if being right or wrong did not explain why we talk in moral terms? Given the inappropriateness of applying the causal-explanatory criterion to moral properties, suggesting that moral realists should rely on any such explanatory approach to moral facts is thus deeply misconceived.

As a third comment, if we adopt this moral view which I warmly invite you to share, we must confront once more the challenge of creeping minimalism and furthermore the related objection that quasi-realist expressivism bites its own tail, or is self-undermining, because it ends up affirming everything it originally set out to deny (Wright 1988; Dworkin 1996). This latter charge can be formulated in at least two ways. The first is very similar to creeping minimalism. That is, we can declare that since quasi-realist expressivism ends up incorporating those features which were traditionally thought to be realist prerogatives—such as moral facts and properties, moral truth, moral belief, moral objectivity and moral explanations—it becomes hard to see what makes expressivism a distinctive metaethical position which would separate it from straightforward moral realism. My arguments have shown that this ball is not in the court of the expressivist, but of the realist. Expressivism is a metaethical position characterised by its distinctive pragmatist, explanatory approach revolving around practical purpose-attributions. The same cannot be said for moral realism, though. Whilst its commitment to moral objectivity *cannot* provide the defining characteristic of realism,

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93   Kramer suggested this example to me in private correspondence, having in mind Dworkin's legal position.

explanatory modes *should* not provide it. Against this backcloth and from what we know so far, since expressivism threatens to swallow moral realism and not the other way round, it is realists, and not expressivists, who need to be worried about this version of the objection. The question of how moral realists can deal with the problem of creeping minimalism I will happily pass on to realists themselves. The second way to spell out the tail-biting challenge is to declare that since expressivists now accept the existence of moral truths, moral facts, etc. they have deprived themselves of any motivation to develop expressivism in the first place. This charge has also been answered by the above argument. Even if moral realism collapses as a metaethical competitor in the way that I have argued here, and even though expressivism accepts the existence of moral truths, properties and moral beliefs, there are many more reasons—some of which are moral, others non-moral—which nudge us towards the development of expressivism and speak against moral realism. However, we might rightfully wonder whether the loss of moral realism as an equal competitor in the battle for the best explanation of ethics renders expressivism uninteresting, in line with the motto 'No contrast, no significance'. Yet, I do not think that this worry is well-founded, mainly because realist explanations remain a real and the most viable option when applied to natural discourses. Hence, although realism is, contrary to first appearances, not a live option as an explanatory account when applied to ethics, the contrast between realism and expressivism can still be found outside of ethics. Expressivism remains, therefore, an interesting position because it shows that different discourses must be explained differently.[94] Gibbard (2003a: 187) is thus quite right to be unimpressed by Dworkin's observation (here in its generalised form) that if moral realism was a completely internal position, there would be nothing in realism for expressivism to deny.

Finally, there are, of course, considerations other than the ones featuring in the above arguments which play a part in the motivation to develop expressivism and to which expressivists can appeal when answering the tail-biting objection. These normally concern more specific views about moral discourse. Blackburn (1998a: 48), for example, points out differences between ethics and natural discourses by emphasising that neither "the senses nor the sciences seem to be good detectors of obligations, duties, or the order of value of things. As everyone knows, nature is heartless: the universe runs as much in accordance with its own laws when it brings suffering and ruin, as on occasions when it brings peace and prosperity"; the natural order is thus not an ethical order. Quite interestingly, both these arguments for the contrast between natural discourses and ethics are again moral. The reason why the thesis that our senses are not good detectors for moral truths is itself moral has been given in the context of epistemological scepticism, where I have explained that statements about moral justification and reliability must be based on moral evaluations. The tenor of the statement that the natural order is not an ethical order, in turn, is also moral. For, what implicitly underlies this conclusion is the thought that the laws of nature can bring peace and prosperity, but also suffering and ruin. Peace and prosperity are here presented as prime examples of something good, whilst suffering and ruin are given as paradigm cases of something bad, which are clearly moral evaluations. Since the laws of nature can thus result in both good and bad, Blackburn concludes that they cannot govern the ethical order. Hence, if we lower the 'veil of moral ignorance' and envisage whether or not either of these two arguments could be made, I suspect that the answer

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94   To avoid misunderstanding, this contrast between moral and natural statements, for instance, does not concern the conceptions of truth, fact, property and assertion as presented in chapter 2, but pragmatic use.

would be no. Apart from these further moral arguments, expressivism is naturally also driven by theses about the practicality of morality, the status of which will be analysed in the next chapter. But empirical observations can play their part too. For, although we need not draw any moral conclusions about the existence of moral truths from observing that stronger emotional reactions are involved when people use moral language or that disagreement is more widespread with regard to moral rather than non-moral matters, these observations can nonetheless prompt us to develop a different approach to the practice which expresses these moral truths. Accordingly, a whole array of issues, some moral, some non-moral, can feature in the motivation to develop expressivism.

5.2.4 THE SPECIFIC PURPOSE-ATTRIBUTION—FOCUS FOR MORAL THOUGHT

The previous section concerned the question of how to arbitrate between attributions of practical functions versus attributions of non-practical functions. I will now consider how to choose between purpose-attributions which all fall within the practical category and whether this choice is based on moral or non-moral grounds.

To find out, let us return to a possible alternative to expressivism, namely the account which explains that moral practices have the function of helping the strongest to suppress the weakest. This function is clearly practical; it centres on influencing action. Exclusively for simplicity's sake, call this the 'Darwinist account'. How could expressivists argue against this account and for the expressivist alternative? To start with, they will certainly rely on two constraints, both of which hark back to considerations about the linguistic models which fill in the diversity aspect of pragmatism's 'diverse unity of propositions'. The first 'necessity constraint' demands (a) that these linguistic models be empirically adequate, i.e. that the features of model-agents and the model-environment sufficiently resemble our own features, and (b) that they can convincingly show that employment of moral vocabulary follows from this constitution of model-agents and their environment. If the first aspect of this requirement was not met, the linguistic model would be rather pointless in that it would not bear any link to actual language use and thus could not illuminate moral talk; if the second aspect was left unfulfilled, no account of moral vocabulary would have been given. Applying this constraint to the present case, expressivists could thus doubt that the strongest necessarily need to suppress the weakest and that even if so, moral language might not be an efficient means of fulfilling this need, in which case the Darwinian account would have to be rejected.

However, let us grant for now that the Darwinian account can indeed fulfil this requirement. In this case, expressivists' focus will probably shift from the necessity constraint to an 'internal adequacy constraint', which demands that the linguistic model be compatible with the surface features of moral practice. The word 'compatible' is important here. For, this constraint does *not* require that these models *explain* internal features in the sense that they can explain why there are moral truths, for instance. Since such internal claims about moral truth are moral, demanding that any model explain the truth of such claims would amount to demanding moral justifications and thus automatically require models to be moral doctrines. In order to avoid this, the constraint is weaker: It requires only that these models be *compatible* with internal features, e.g. both with claims about the existence and the non-existence of moral truths. In other words, it demands that these models explain why we talk in terms of truth, not why there are moral truths. The former is non-moral, whilst the latter is moral. This internal adequacy constraint applies to accounts of moral vocabulary

because no fruitful illumination of our actual moral activities would be achieved if the linguistic model resulted in a picture of a practice which did not resemble our own.[95] Based on this requirement expressivists could put pressure on the Darwinian account by questioning its ability to explain why a language which fulfils this suppressive function needs to be couched in propositional form, why we tend to evaluate our own actions and not just those of others if the function of these evaluations was to steer the actions of the weaker members of our society, or how this proposal could deal with moral fallibility and error. Whether or not compelling responses can be given to these queries is not my concern here. Instead, the important point is that neither the necessity nor the internal adequacy constraint which help arbitrate between attributions of different practical functions are morally motivated. Again, they are based on the non-moral illumination requirement.

What, though, if two different accounts have exactly the same merits with regard to these constraints? In this case, I suppose that rather than tossing a coin, the particular proposal can be chosen which is morally more acceptable, e.g. in this case arguably select the expressivist rather than the broadly Darwinian account. Accordingly, there may be some role for moral concerns to play in the selection of a particular practical function. How extensive this part is I do not know, although my hunch is that cases in which two proposals fulfil the non-moral constraints equally well will be rather few and far between. In general, then, my guess is that we can arbitrate between attributions of different practical functions on non-moral grounds.

To summarise these considerations, both the general choice to assign a practical function to moral practices and the specific decision to attribute the particular function of enabling us to discuss how to live, seem to be predominantly motivated on non-moral grounds. For all we know so far, expressivism's central thesis about the practicality of morality appears to be a non-moral, metaethical thesis based on the illumination requirement, necessity constraint and internal adequacy constraint. Hence, we have as yet found no reason to believe that purpose-attributions to morality *tout court* are necessarily moral or to think that the first tier of expressivism is in some sense morally permeated.

5.3 CONCLUSION

One key anti-Archimedean argument for the moral interpretation of expressivism states that purpose-attributions to morality *tout court* must be moral. The aim of this chapter was to scrutinise this first line of anti-Archimedean attack. As a first step, I suggested that these purpose-attributions should be located within metaethics, rather than empirical ethics, which ensured that expressivists and anti-Archimedeans are not talking at cross purposes. I further explained that expressivists conceive of their position as a self-reflexive two-tier account, the first tier of which is intended to be non-moral and supposed to analyse in expressivist terms moral commitments put forward on the second tier. I then examined whether expressivist purpose-attributions are moral or non-moral in status. I did so by considering how to adjudicate between practical and non-practical purpose-attributions on the one hand and how to arbitrate between different practical purpose-attributions on the other. I argued that although moral considerations can feature in these decisions, the main

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95   Still, could the demand that the linguistic model be non-revisionary not be moral? I will return to thoughts about vindication and debunking in section 6.1. Here, it seems that the non-moral demand that linguistic models fit actual language use is sufficient to prop up this internal adequacy constraint.

work behind these attributions is done by non-moral arguments, most importantly in form of the illumination requirement. Hence, whilst it is, of course, true that purpose-attributions to morality *tout court* must be moral *if* 'purpose' is equated with 'moral value', we have not as yet heard any arguments supporting adoption of this equation and explaining why expressivist purpose-attributions must be understood in these terms.

The most interesting by-product of this engagement with the anti-Archimedean movement was the new perspective which has been developed on the expressivist-realist contest if understood in explanatory terms. I argued that Dreier's suggestion to distinguish between moral realism and expressivism on the basis of their respective explanations of moral belief is misguided, firstly because it leads moral realists into deep moral trouble—forcing them to impose a metaphysical straitjacket on moral properties—and secondly because realist explanations fall short of the illumination requirement. Since minimalism and the 'internal turn' play the key part in both these arguments, maybe unexpectedly the minimalist anti-Archimedean movement does expressivists not one, but two favours. For, it not only defuses the potential problem of moral objectivity as discussed in chapter 4, but also takes care of what has been thought to be the fiercest competitor of expressivist purpose-attributions.

Expressivists thus appear to have a pretty strong case against the anti-Archimedean claim that all purpose-attributions to morality *tout court*, and hence expressivism, must be moral. If this case could be maintained, expressivists could continue to employ minimalism and enjoy the advantages it offers with regard to moral objectivity, yet maintain at the same time that expressivism is a non-moral account because its decisive theses pertain to morality's practicality, rather than its objectivity, which remain untouched by minimalism. Although this first anti-Archimedean strategy failed, different approaches might yet prove to be more successful. These will form the focus of the next two chapters.

6. VINDICATION AND OTHER TRAPS—SECOND ENCOUNTER

In this chapter I will consider a second attempt to prove that expressivism is a moral doctrine. This concentrates on further expressivist theses which could possibly expose expressivism's moral status. Claims about the vindication of moral practices and considerations which return to moral semantics in particular hold dangerous pitfalls for expressivists' non-moral self-image. In addition, scrutiny of further key expressivist theses, such as its stance on judgement-internalism and its key psychological claim that moral verdicts express conative attitudes, will advance our grasp of expressivism. Examining the status of these theses will not only help us understand the interplay between expressivism, minimalism and the anti-Archimedean movement better, but also provide some new perspectives on key expressivist theses.

6.1 VINDICATION AND DEBUNKING

I explained above that expressivists are aware that certain judgements which they put forward are moral. Their endorsement of (at least certain) theses about morality's objectivity and the positive evaluation of moral practices are two of the clearest examples thereof. That is, expressivists explicitly contrast themselves with moral nihilists, who argue that we would all be better off without morality, and error-theorists, who declare that all moral verdicts are false. This opposition to moral nihilism and error-theories must clearly be grounded on moral considerations, as should be clear from my previous explanations. Firstly, any dismissal of moral nihilism boils down to an explicit endorsement of morality—someone who rebuffs the view that moral practices are bad, or that we would be better off without them or that they are worthless, attributes positive moral value to them. Secondly, any rejection of a classic error-theory which proclaims that moral judgements are truth-apt but false must be advanced on moral grounds—casting aside the claim that moral judgements are false amounts to agreeing that at least some of our moral judgements are true which, as has been explained on several occasions above, is itself a moral judgement. Expressivists are fully aware of this. Blackburn (1998a: 14-21) explicitly makes the point that all evaluations of morality—no matter whether positive or negative—are moves within morality. Gibbard (2003a: 14) rejects moral scepticism because he does indeed think that there are correct and knowable answers to moral questions, whilst both fully accept and welcome the anti-Archimedean insight that all these theses about morality's objectivity, many of which expressivists happily embrace, must be established on moral grounds. The expressivist opposition to moral nihilism and moral error-theories is, accordingly, clearly built on a moral basis. As such, it must be located on the second, morally infused tier of expressivism.

Yet, expressivists normally make a further commitment which is slightly trickier and is more dangerously exposed to anti-Archimedean attacks. That is, expressivists do not normally limit themselves to the rejection of moral nihilism and error-theories; they do not intend simply to plunge into moral debate by subscribing to those particular moral verdicts which endorse moral thinking and

objectivity. Instead, their aim is to show that expressivism vindicates moral practices, that it does not undermine or debunk them (Blackburn 2009: 209; Gibbard 2003a: 195). Since this additional claim can now quite easily be heard in a moral key, it is worthwhile looking at it in greater detail. To start with, vindication can be understood in one of two ways. The first reading—vindication$_1$— is based on the illumination requirement and the weak version of the internal adequacy constraint introduced above. According to this understanding, to vindicate$_1$ moral practice is to assign a purpose to it which, firstly, explains why we employ moral concepts and, secondly, is compatible with the features which our moral activities possess. In this sense, expressivism is thought to be vindicatory$_1$ in that it accounts for the employment of moral concepts in a way which also accounts for talk about moral truths, facts, determinate correctness, etc. Yet, although expressivism is compatible with these features, it does not take an engaged stance on them. More precisely, expressivism when combined with minimalism explains what it is to call a moral verdict true, yet does not proclaim that there *are* moral truths; it incorporates an account of what it is to call moral truths mind-independent, but does not declare that moral truths *are* mind-independent and so on. In other words, it limits itself to explanations of what it is to make first-order, substantive moral verdicts, but avoids any substantive moral commitments itself. Vindication$_1$, then, makes us understand why we employ moral talk and why moral activities are shaped the way they are. The second reading of vindication—vindication$_2$— is more demanding and based on the stronger form of the internal adequacy constraint. According to this understanding, to vindicate$_2$ moral practice is to show why we are correct in thinking that there are moral truths and facts, why we are not mistaken in believing that the authority of morality lies somehow 'outside' of our practices, why we rightly hold that our moral verdicts are fallible, etc. Hence, if expressivism vindicated$_2$ moral practice in this way, it would not only explain why we talk in terms of moral truth, but also why we correctly hold that moral statements are true. Vindication$_2$, then, is more or less the opposite of debunking; it makes us understand why we are right to think that there are moral truths, facts, determinately correct answers to moral questions, etc.

At this point, we need to address two questions. Firstly, which status do these two interpretations of vindication have? Secondly, which reading shall we assign to expressivism? I take it that the moral status of vindication$_2$ is obvious. To say that we are correct in thinking that there are moral truths is to endorse the existence of moral truths, which amounts to the endorsement of substantive moral verdicts. Similarly, the claim that expressivism does not debunk moral practices must be moral: It declares that expressivist explanations neither entail that there are no moral truths nor undermine trust in our moral practices and the existence of moral truths. Given my explanations about moral scepticism above, it is easy to see the moral nature of this additional step. That is, just as any inference which entails moral scepticism must be a moral argument, any inference which entails the rejection of moral scepticism must also be moral. Envisaging how one could possibly rebut expressivists' non-debunking thesis helps to bring home this point. For example, assume that I hold that if expressivism was true, moral scepticism would ensue because the existence of moral truths presupposes the existence of God, which expressivists adamantly deny. Hence, I could take the rather radical stance that if we adopted expressivism, nothing would ever be right or wrong since it would not be backed by God's will. Expressivism would thus impact on the (non-)existence of moral truths *exactly because* it rejects what I regard as the grounding of all moral truths, namely God's will. Accordingly, if expressivists want to argue against my position, they must enter a *moral* debate with

me and field arguments which show that my moral reflections are misguided. For instance, they could declare that rightness and wrongness are not grounded in God's will, but in the correct principles of morality which hold independently of both God's existence and, indeed, also the availability of expressivist explanations. As this example shows, if expressivists want to convince us that their account does not debunk ethics, they must thus win us over on moral grounds. Similarly, if we want to reject this claim, we must launch our challenge from a moral platform. Vindication$_2$ is, therefore, moral through and through.

What about vindication$_1$, though? Something normative is clearly also going here. For, making us understand why we talk in moral terms by pointing out the purpose that this practice serves can be reformulated as saying why it *makes sense* or is *rational* for beings like us to employ moral concepts. Yet, 'making sense' and 'being rational' are clearly covered in normative dust. The most important question for us now is whether or not this dust is also moral. Maybe, we can cut a long story short by appealing once more to the analogy of minimalism about truth. For, minimalism too can be regarded as explaining why it makes sense for us or why we have reasons to use the truth-predicate by unearthing the need it serves; this is how it vindicates$_1$ talk in terms of truth. Again, certain norms of instrumental rationality are certainly in play here. At the same time, this kind of 'making sense' seems to be detachable from moral evaluations: I can agree that for beings with a certain need, it makes sense or is rational to engage in certain activities, without thereby being committed to holding that these activities are desirable or worthwhile. Hence, despite its reliance on instrumental rationality, we do not normally classify minimalism as a moral doctrine. I suggest that the same stance should be adopted when understanding expressivism along the lines of vindication$_1$. It clearly identifies certain needs and relies on the explicit assumption that it makes sense for beings who possess these needs to use moral concepts. Yet, it is not incoherent to accept that it makes sense or is rational for beings like us to embark on moral practices, but to deny that these practices bear any moral value. In sum, I cannot see why vindication$_1$ should lead to the moral interpretation of expressivism, whilst no such moral interpretation follows for other theories which share the very same vindicatory$_1$ assumptions. In contrast to vindication$_2$, vindication$_1$, then, does not appear to be moral.

Which vindicatory aim are we to assign to expressivists? It is clear that vindicating$_1$ moral vocabulary by appealing to its practical purpose is an essential feature of expressivism. After all, this is what drives the motivation to develop expressivism in the first place. Since vindication$_1$ is non-moral, this commitment poses no threat to the non-moral interpretation of expressivism. Do expressivist purpose-attributions also straightforwardly vindicate$_2$ moral practices? If they did, it would be clear that their non-moral status would be endangered. For, if vindication$_2$ could be derived straightforwardly from purpose-attributions, the Moral Doctrine Test would lock into place and declare that since moral conclusions follow from expressivist purpose-attributions, these purpose-attributions must themselves be moral. However, I do not believe that vindication$_2$ can be so derived. As I explained at the beginning of chapter 5, it is certainly true that expressivists do assign positive moral value to the purpose-attribution and appeal to it when giving certain moral justifications, about for instance the authority of morality. Yet, I also emphasised that this is an additional moral layer which is in principle *detachable* from the purpose-attribution itself. Hence, in order to vindicate$_2$ moral practices, purpose-attributions must be *supplemented* by further, independent moral assumptions put forward on the second tier, such as those fielded against opponents which argue

that expressivism debunks ethics. As long as these positive moral evaluations take place on the second tier but do not infiltrate the first tier, commitment to vindication$_2$ does not appear to support the claim that purpose-attributions to morality *tout court* must be moral. Instead, expressivists can hold on to expressivism's self-reflexive characteristic in that commitments about vindication$_2$ and moral objectivity can be analysed in expressivist terms. For instance, when disagreeing with their adversary about the non-debunking nature of expressivism, expressivists can elucidate that they are disagreeing in plan or attitudes; when putting forward the view that some things would still be right and others wrong if expressivism was true, they can still maintain that they are expressing a certain practical attitude of theirs. Hence, the distinctively expressivist work would still be done on the first tier and remain non-moral; the moral commitments which expressivists might share with other metaethicists (e.g., the commitment to moral objectivity which is shared by moral realists and expressivists) remain on the second tier. Consequently, whilst vindication$_1$ need not worry expressivists because it is non-moral, vindication$_2$ need not worry expressivists as long as the two tiers can be kept apart. Since up to this point, we have not as yet heard any arguments which would support direct links between the two tiers and disprove the expressivist claim that the moral layer is detachable from the distinctively expressivist, non-moral layer, more work must be done to show that key expressivist theses are moral in nature. This will be the focus of the next chapter.

6.2 MORAL SEMANTICS REVISITED—PROPOSITIONAL FORM AND TRUTH-APTITUDE

First, though, I would like to return to moral semantics and go into more detail than was possible in chapter 2, where I explained that minimalist semantics is a great boon for expressivism. However, minimalist semantics when coupled with anti-Archimedean insights generates certain pitfalls—I will discuss four—which expressivists would be well advised to avoid. To elaborate, let me start with the simple observations that moral judgements possess propositional form—more often than not, they are declarative indicatives with a subject-predicate structure—and are embeddable in indirect contexts, such as logical inferences and propositional attitude contexts. This particular feature of moral discourse is, according to expressivists, not supposed to shoulder any explanatory weight itself, but is instead one of those phenomena which any metaethical account must be able to explain. The reason why this task is regarded as a bigger challenge for expressivists than for realists or constructivists is well-rehearsed in literature, as is the expressivist response to this challenge. Suffice it to say here that although expressions of conative attitudes are not normally couched in propositional form, moral statements wear propositional clothing because otherwise moral thinking could not fulfil its practical function. More precisely, if moral judgements did not possess propositional form and were unable to enter indirect contexts, they could not fulfil their function of forming the focus for public moral debate, enabling us to discuss, assess and decide how to live. Hence, the function of moral vocabulary bears once more the decisive explanatory weight in the expressivist account of moral semantics.

However, it is very important to be absolutely clear about what this expressivist account does and does not explain. What it *does* explain is that moral judgements are couched in propositional form because of a practical need of ours. What this explanation does *not* explain is that there are moral truths only because we possess this practical need. This latter claim would manoeuvre expres-

sivists dangerously close to the first anti-Archimedean pitfall, firstly because it amounts to the moral stance of mind-dependence which is not supposed to be derivable from expressivism and, secondly, because any such derivation would prove on the basis of the Moral Doctrine Test that expressivism is a moral doctrine. For, saying that there would be no moral truths if we shared no such practical need amounts to declaring that nothing would ever be right or wrong if we were differently constituted. Accordingly, if expressivists want to steer clear of this snare and keep maintaining that expressivism does not entail mind-dependence and that their explanatory tier does not invade the truth-conditions of substantive moral verdicts, they would be better advised to stay away from the claim that there would be no moral truths if we did not possess a certain practical need.

Having clarified this important difference, we can also see that expressivism's rejection of fictionalism or error-theories which featured in the context of vindication is really a twofold project, corresponding to two premises of the error-theoretic argument which states that our engagement in moral discourses is based on a fundamental mistake. Arguably, these premises are, firstly, the claim that adopting propositional language presupposes that the primary function of the discourse to which this language belongs is to detect the discourse-specific facts and, secondly, the claim that there are no such facts in the case of ethics, which leads to the conclusion that all moral judgements are truth-apt but false. Expressivists' semantic thesis now proves the first of these error-theoretic premises wrong by showing that propositional form does not presuppose non-practical functions. Since practical functions too can explain why we speak in this propositional way, this stops moral scepticism being grounded on this basis. This semantic thesis, though, cannot by itself disprove the second error-theoretic premise, namely that there are no moral facts. As argued in the context of vindication, expressivists can refute this claim only by going beyond purpose-attributions and semantic theses about propositional clothing and by taking active moral stances which explain why at least some of these moral statements are true. Consequently, we must remember that expressivist semantic theses can establish only why we talk in propositional terms, but not why these propositional statements are also true. This is a task which is located on the internal, moral level. Hence, expressivism's semantic theses can counter only one part of an error-theoretic stance. It falsifies the claim that propositional form is inextricably linked to non-practical functions, but leaves moral truth untouched. So far, then, it appears that no moral conclusions can be derived from this semantic thesis, in which case its non-moral status seems to remain secure. The first pitfall has been avoided.

However, matters are actually more complicated than this. This complication, which forms the second pitfall, arises when the link between propositional form, truth-aptitude and truth comes into view. One aspect of this trap is produced by expressivists themselves, another is of a more general nature. Starting with the former, Blackburn in particular has always emphasised that given the expressivist foundations of ethics, we need to *earn* the right to talk about moral propositions and moral inferences. However, once we have earned this right and established the propositional form of moral language, we can have moral truths and facts 'for free'; we can simply add them at the end of the expressivist account after all the hard background work about propositional form has been done. It is now quite tempting to interpret these explanations as the suggestion that substantive moral truths are simply an end product of the expressivist background story which centres on certain needs of ours. If this was so, it would again be bad news for expressivists, as this interpretation pushes expressivism once more towards the moral stance of mind-dependence because it would base

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the existence of moral truths on the existence of human needs and thus towards a moral interpretation because moral conclusions would be derived directly from expressivist theses. However, I believe that it would be wrong to read Blackburn's remarks in this way. What is meant by 'throwing in truth for free at the end' is *not* that substantive moral truths are some kind of end products of the expressivist account, but that the truth-*predicate* comes without additional cost once we have given an account of moral assertion.[96] In other words, it encapsulates the minimalist insight that expressivists need not construct a conception of moral truth *in addition to* their account of the propositional surface features of moral language. Instead, if they can successfully account for statements such as 'Helping children flourish is good', they can simply attach the truth-predicate and receive the statement 'It is true that helping children flourish is good' without having to worry any further about a specific conception of moral truth. This gratis minimalist supplement of the truth-predicate, freeing it from any metaphysical cost, extends to all discourses. Crucially, though, it does *not* imply that the substantive truths are themselves 'free' or lightweight. Although the statement 'It is true that helping children flourish is good' is a free addition to the judgement 'Helping children flourish is good', establishing whether or not helping children flourish is indeed good is a substantive question. (After all, even after having established the propositional form of moral judgements, they may, of course, still turn out to be false. The same holds for non-moral examples: The addition 'It is true that grass is green' comes for free, but whether or not grass is green is a substantive matter.) Consequently, although some expressivist formulations may be open to misinterpretation, we should not confuse the claim that minimalism offers us truth-ascriptions to moral claims for free with the claim that minimalism offers moral truths for free. This removes the second pitfall.

Still, expressivists are not yet quite out of the woods. For, the third and more general snare is even bigger and appeals to the thought that the propositional form of moral judgements is not free-standing. Instead, it is tightly interwoven with conceptions of truth-aptitude, as I explained when discussing disciplined syntacticism. Indeed, the reason why the expressivist account of propositional form is so interesting and important is that more orthodox expressions of conative attitudes, say in terms of imperatives or a boo/hooray language, are not normally regarded as truth-apt. It is thought, therefore, that expressivists must not only be able to explain why moral judgements are couched in propositional form, but also why they are truth-apt. The most tempting way to do so is to equate these two, for instance on the basis of disciplined syntacticism which proclaims that wearing propositional clothing just *is* being truth-apt. Yet, truth-aptitude is intimately linked with truth in that the 'truth-inaptitude' of statements belonging to a certain domain entails that there are no discourse-specific truths and facts to be reported (although the reverse does not hold, i.e. truth-aptitude does not guarantee truth, as error-theories show). However, this now creates the following quite thorny problem for the expressivist project. If there are moral truths only if moral judgements are truth-apt, and if expressivists make the truth-aptitude and propositional form of moral judgements dependent on a practical need of ours, then expressivists also make the existence of moral truths dependent on this practical need. Contrary to my claim a few paragraphs above, expressivists could not maintain that, although propositional form is explained by appeal to a practical need of

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96   As I will explain shortly, giving an account of moral assertion is not necessarily limited to establishing propositional form. Or if it is, then propositional form does not just comprise discipline and syntax, but also the potential for disagreement.

ours, the existence of moral truths is not traced back to this need. The threat of mind-dependence and moral interpretation of expressivism looms large again.

How could expressivists respond to this danger? The answer is: Do not give in to temptation and look for an alternative conception of truth-aptitude which fulfils two requirements: Firstly, it must not equate truth-aptitude with propositional form and, secondly, it must not be constructed on the basis of human needs. In chapter 2, I have already presented one such alternative when arguing that expressivists need not adopt disciplined syntacticism, but can find some other conception of truth-aptitude which is compatible with minimalism, yet is not reduced to propositional form. This alternative, put forward most concisely by Gibbard (2003a: 60-68), relies on the potential for disagreement. Importantly, I believe that it can also meet both the requirements faced here. Satisfaction of the first requirement is obvious, as it centres on disagreement and not propositional form. With regard to the second constraint, this conception of truth-aptitude is not based on human needs either. This is because potential for disagreement does not appear to be constructed by expressivists; it does not arise in response to a certain need of ours; it is not something which we 'synthesise for a purpose', to use Blackburn's (1998a: 69) expression. Instead, it seems to be a given, internal feature of certain practices. You simply cannot disagree with acts of accosting, headaches or weeping and no syntactic transformations of linguistic expressions thereof will change this fact. But you *can* disagree with plans and endorsements. Accordingly, this potential for disagreement, crystallised in the truth-aptitude of judgements, now helps expressivists to chase away the spectre of mind-dependence and moral interpretation by re-establishing the gap between truth, truth-aptitude and propositional form. That is, expressivists can agree that if moral judgements were not truth-apt, there would be no moral truths. But this does not imply that if moral judgements were not couched in propositional form, there would be no moral truths. Although propositional form stems from a practical need of ours, neither moral truth nor truth-aptitude is grounded on this need.[97] Whilst the former is 'made' by us in response to a certain practical need of ours, moral truth-aptitude is, contrary to what might have been thought before, not so constructed. There is no danger, then, that specific expressivist semantic theses about the synthesis of the ethical proposition would automatically entail that moral truths themselves have to be synthesised. For now, it appears that expressivists can keep the two tiers apart and salvage their non-moral self-image.

Yet, one last pitfall still remains. So far, I have stressed that theses about moral truth are moral. But if the existence of moral truths is a moral phenomenon and if truth and truth-aptitude are as tightly linked as the previous pitfall declared, then must truth-aptitude not also be a moral phenomenon? Of course, this is exactly Kramer's view. According to him, truth-aptitude is one aspect of morality's objectivity which, as he emphasises in various places, must be established on moral grounds: The "semantic objectivity of moral discourse [i.e., moral judgements being truth-apt, declarative, fact-stating assertions] is morally indispensable" (Kramer 2009: 288).[98] Conceiving of

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97 I am aware that this proposal is very radical in that it detaches truth-aptitude from linguistic expression. In other words, if I was right, even a boo/hooray language would be truth-apt provided that it belongs to a discourse in which we have potential for disagreement. Here, compare Lenman's (2003) discussion of the Pure Discipline View.

98 On the one hand, Kramer (2009: 263) supports the minimal conception of truth-aptitude which holds that a statement is truth-apt if we can apply the disquotational technique to it, thus rejecting the objections to this account put forward by Jackson/Oppy/Smith (1994). He (2009: 275) believes that appeal to ordinary usage as well as considerations of moral necessity can deal with cases such as 'Bob is hiyo'

truth as a moral phenomenon and of truth-aptitude as a non-moral phenomenon would, therefore, be a very odd combination indeed. So, how could expressivists possibly square their non-moral explanation that moral statements are truth-apt because ethics includes the potential for disagreement with the moral explanation that moral judgements are truth-apt because they express moral truths (or falsehoods)? Maybe, there is no real conflict there. More precisely, expressivists could take up a similar stance towards Kramer's explanation of truth-aptitude as they did towards realist explanations of moral belief. That is, they can agree that when operating on the internal level as Kramer does, we can, of course, declare that moral judgements are truth-apt because they clearly state moral truths. However, they could still insist that this explanation is not particularly illuminating. If we want to understand what unites those discourses which are truth-apt and separates them from those which lack truth-aptitude, it is not very helpful to say that the former state truths (or falsehoods) and the latter fail to do so. Instead, we have to dig deeper. And what we find on this deeper level is, as both Gibbard and Price explain, the potential for disagreement; linguistic form is only secondary.[99] Accordingly, expressivists could accept Kramer's explanation of truth-aptitude in full, but at the same time maintain that this account falls foul of the illumination requirement. If we want to gain a deeper understanding of truth-aptitude not just with regard to ethics, but generally speaking, we need to adopt a pragmatist approach which enquires into what we *do* in these discourses. Hence, there is nothing wrong with the internal approach to truth-aptitude; but if we want illumination, we need to turn to an expressivist explanation. The threat of mind-dependence and the moral interpretation is again repelled.

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and the claim that moral statements are not genuinely declarative. On the other hand, some of his remarks appear to come very close to a conception of truth-aptitude such as Jackson/Oppy/Smith's (1994) which links truth-aptitude with the expression of belief: "Were there no moral facts (in a minimalist sense) to be declared and presupposed by moral assertions, and were all moral utterances *therefore* expressive only of noncognitive attitudes, the basic principles of morality would altogether lack their ... mind-independence" (Kramer 2009: 288, my emphasis). Here, he seems to presuppose that truth-aptitude is linked to belief and is incompatible with the expression of conative attitudes. Just as an aside, I think that this indirect, moral case for belief does not work, just as Kramer's moral plea for minimalism about truth as discussed in footnote 58 does not work. This is so because his argument for the moral necessity of moral belief would have to rely on a conception linking truth-aptitude and belief which is neither moral nor uncontroversial. As such, his case for the moral necessity of moral belief would stand and fall with this particular, *generally philosophical* conception of truth-aptitude, just as his case for moral realism as a moral doctrine stands and falls with the availability of the *generally philosophical* position of minimalism about truth. Moreover, the only plausible version of this conception of truth-aptitude operates with a minimal conception of belief, which cannot rule out expressivism's thesis about conative attitudes. To be fair, though, I do not believe that threatening quasi-realist expressivism was Kramer's intention anyway. However, if this is right, then the starkness in which Kramer formulates his theses is somewhat misleading.

99   Given my remarks in the previous footnote, Kramer could also 'dig deeper' if his conception of truth-aptitude was one which links truth-aptitude with belief. If this was so, he could explain that truth-apt statements are those which express beliefs, whilst non-truth-apt sentences are those which do not express beliefs. The interesting question is then whether or not *this* position is also moral. It does not seem to be. If so, then we have to ask whether this is an example of innocuous 'external recruitment' as mentioned in chapter 4, or whether this opens up a path to moral truth-aptitude which is not moral. Since this study is not concerned with a detailed critique of the anti-Archimedean movement, though, I will not pursue these matters here.

6.3 JUDGEMENT-INTERNALISM

Very closely related to expressivists' emphasis of morality's practical function is their endorsement of some version of judgement-internalism. Judgement-internalism[100] declares that there is a tight link between sincerely entertaining a moral judgement and the disposition to act in accordance with the content of this judgement. One very strong interpretation of this view is that in each and every case, someone who sincerely holds a positive moral verdict is also inclined to perform actions in accordance with this judgement, whilst someone who harbours a negative moral judgement is also disposed to abstain from actions condemned in the judgement. As Kramer (2009: 277) rightly observes, though, certain expressivists have distanced themselves from this very strong claim and instead allow that in certain individuals, this link can become 'unhinged'. Some people—Blackburn quotes Milton's Satan, whilst Kramer presents Shakespeare's Iago as an example—exactly reverse the proclaimed connection between verdict and motivation by being strongly attracted to thwarting what is good *exactly because* it is good and seeking what is bad *exactly because* it is bad. Importantly, they do not hold these views in the wake of incompetence with the concepts of 'good' and 'bad'. Quite the opposite: they can fully sample the pleasures of their evilness only by correctly judging that their actions *are* evil—this is what makes them so attractive. However, cases such as these, Blackburn (1998a: 61, 63) explains further,

> are necessarily parasitic, and what they are parasitic upon is a background connection between ethics and motivation. They are cases in which things are out of joint, but the fact of a joint being out presupposes a normal or typical state in which it is not out ... [I]n principle an individual may love the bad without ever having loved the good, provided enough social context, in which motivations are aligned with the good, is provided.

Accordingly, Kramer (2009: 279) summarises succinctly:

> What [judgement-internalism] should be taken to mean is that any sincerely held moral conviction not appropriately connected to a behavioral disposition is parasitic on the myriad moral convictions that are so connected. In other words, had Iago not lived in a world in which people usually act in accordance with the terms of their moral judgments rather than athwart those terms, he would not have possessed the conceptual resources needed for the formation of his own moral judgments and inclinations. A world where all the moral convictions of everyone are not properly connected to motivations is no more a possibility than is a world where all the utterances by everyone are mendacious.

As Kramer's reference to conceptual resources already indicates, the impossibility involved here is supposed to be conceptual. For, expressivists do not conceive of the link between judgement and motivation as empirical and contingent. More precisely, their claim is not that in our actual world moral judgements are linked with corresponding dispositions whilst in some neighbouring world, this link may manifest itself differently or be altogether absent. Instead, they maintain that it is in some sense conceptually necessary that moral judgements are linked with motivation. Since judgement-internalism is one of those positions which has traditionally stood at the centre of metaethics,

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100 There are many different forms of 'internalisms'—Brink (1989: 40), for instance, distinguishes between agent, appraiser and hybrid internalism—but no such fine distinction is required for my purposes here.

it now seems that anti-Archimedeans have to argue that this *conceptual* necessity is also in some sense *moral*.[101] For, if a position as central to metaethics as judgement-internalism was non-moral, a big hole would have been knocked into the anti-Archimedean movement. Yet, I will argue next that, maybe surprisingly, this is not necessarily the case, as the status of judgement-internalism is tightly linked to the status of expressivist purpose-attributions.

To see why, let us concentrate on the conceptual status of judgement-internalism first. Here, it is quite helpful to look at Kramer's parallel to truthful communication. He (2009: 279) rightly explains that "[o]nly against a general background of truthful communications do people have opportunities to engage in prevaricative communications, since in the absence of such a background the people who undertake the prevaricative communications would not be presented with any established patterns of reference and meaning which they could distort for their own dishonest purposes". This argument is interesting, not because it refers to the existence of certain social institutions, but because it invokes deeper conceptual considerations about meaning and reference. More precisely, mendacious utterances are not just parasitic on truthful communication in the sense that lying presupposes an institution of truth-telling. They are parasitic because the *meaning* as well as the *reference* of the concepts used in untruthful statements is fixed by the use of these terms in honest assertions. To elaborate, in order to tell a lie, you must know and employ the concepts which you use with their 'true' meaning and reference as they are recognised by other competent language users. Dishonestly declaring that grass is blue can be a lie only if you use the word 'grass' as referring to grass and the predicate 'blue' as referring to the class of blue (and not green) objects, although you are very well aware that grass is not a member of this class. However, the fact that 'grass' refers to grass and 'blue' to blue (and not green) objects is fixed through true statements, as I have explained in chapter 2 in the context of Davidson's principle of charity. Consequently, truth-telling must conceptually be prior to lying not simply because prevaricative utterances are intelligible as prevaricative only if there are others which are honest, but because it provides the meaning and reference of the terms which are then used in mendacious assertions. In this conceptual sense, then, is it impossible that there is a world where everyone's utterances are always mendacious.

For the same argument to go through in the context of judgement-internalism, we must be able to tell some similar story about Iago's case. Kramer's parallel is the following:

> Likewise, only against a general background of moral judgments appropriately connected to moral motivations does anyone like Iago have opportunities to arrive at moral judgments that are not so connected. In the absence of such a background, Iago would not be presented with the moral concepts by reference to which he pursues evil as such. He cannot identify evil as something to be pursued, unless he can differentiate it from moral goodness as something to be pursued and from evil as something to be shunned; and he cannot achieve that differentiation unless the sundry contexts of his life have supplied him with the requisite concepts. If everyone throughout those contexts were devoted to evil as such, then there would be no established patterns of perceived moral goodness (as something to be sought) and perceived moral badness (as something to be eschewed) from which the pursuit of evil as such could be differentiated. Only because there are

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101 Of course, anti-Archimedeans need not accept judgement-internalism but could endorse judgement-externalism instead. This is not relevant for the present discussion, though, since the only point that matters is that anti-Archimedeans have to conceive of the internalist/externalist contest as a moral debate between opposing moral positions.

these established patterns in the world in which Iago forms his identity, does he have any point of reference from which he can disassociate his own quest for wickedness. His quest is profoundly reactive. Its momentum is entirely that of a reaction against a regnant moral order. In that respect, his satanic perversity is parasitically dependent upon the sway of ordinary motivational patterns amongst other people (Kramer 2009: 280).

As a first preliminary remark, for this argument to be as interesting as the thoughts about truthful communication, it is not enough to point out that Iago can bathe in the deliciousness of being rebelliously different from others only if there is a certain social institution with which he can contrast himself. For sure, this is certainly right; after all, it is possible to swim against the tide only if there is a tide to swim against. But this general insight cannot be all that judgement-internalists are after. For, what they must aim to establish is not just that there must be some background from which Iago can differ, but that this particular background with its specific vocabulary is in some sense conceptually necessary for Iago's remarks and his rebellion to be intelligible in the first place. Put differently, it must be the case that Iago cannot even formulate his own wicked stance unless he operates against a backcloth in which goodness and motivations are properly aligned. Just as the liar must use concepts, the meaning and reference of which are fixed by truthful assertions, judgement-internalists must show that Iago has to use moral concepts which are intelligible only within a discourse where moral judgements and dispositions are properly aligned.

As a second preliminary remark, an argument such as Kramer's would not reach the bottom of judgement-internalism if it boiled down to the claim that goodness is to be sought and evil to be shunned. Once more, this is certainly right; after all, something would be terribly wrong if we all decided, just as Iago, that evil is the thing to pursue and good the thing to eschew.[102] "Doing what you know to be bad is bad", as Blackburn (1998a: 65) rightly declares, and I am sure that he would agree that this is necessarily so because dreadful consequences would follow if we ought to seek what is evil. It is also clear that at this point, we are operating within the moral sphere: 'You ought not to seek what is evil' and 'Doing what you know to be bad is bad' are paradigmatic first-order moral judgements based on moral reflections which can be rejected.[103] However, the reason why this mor-

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102 The reason why I inserted 'just like Iago' here is that I do not intend this case to be read as an example of where the words 'good' and 'evil' have been interchanged whilst their referents remain the same. That is, I am not interested in a twin-earth scenario where the twin-earthlings use the term 'evil' in the way in which we use our term 'good', but the extensions of these terms are the same, i.e. everything to which we refer as good they refer to as evil. Instead, what I have in mind is a scenario in which 'evil' is used in its standard way, yet still thought to be the thing to pursue.

103 Does anyone who disagrees with the judgement 'You ought to pursue what is good and eschew what is evil' display incompetence with the moral concepts 'good' and 'evil', rather than succumbing to a moral mistake? Given the immensely tight link between goodness and to-be-pursuedness, we could think that it is part of the meaning of 'good' that what is good is something we ought to pursue (Gibbard (2003a: 142) appears to have such a semantic relation in mind). If so, anyone disagreeing with this ought-judgement would not know how to use the word 'good' and be conceptually confused, rather than morally mistaken. I think that this interpretation has something going for it. However, we have to bear two points in mind. The first draws on Hare's (1964) rejection of Searle's (1964) conceptual interpretation of 'One ought to keep one's promises' which is based on the argument that this is an instruction of how to act, rather than just of how to speak, and must thus be synthetic. The same thoughts would apply here. Secondly, if we assumed that anyone disagreeing with the statement that we ought to pursue goodness would be conceptually confused, Iago would have to count as incompetent with the use of the term 'good'. However, this is exactly an interpretation of his case which we do *not* want to adopt. For,

al judgement is not enough to support judgement-internalism is that internalists' opponents would certainly agree with it, yet posit that the link between moral verdicts and motivation is nowhere near as tight as internalists proclaim. Making this ought-judgement is one thing, externalists proclaim, saying that we are motivated to act upon it another. Hence, establishing a *morally* necessary link between goodness and 'to-be-pursuedness' is not sufficient to establish a *conceptually* necessary link between moral judgement and motivation.

So, how can this stronger claim about the conceptual priority of the proper alignment between moral judgement and motivation be supported? Since this case is more complicated than the example of prevaricative communication—as indicated in the previous paragraph, we are not just interested in the meaning and application of concepts, but in their link to action—we cannot apply the analysis of the liar's case one-to-one, but have to widen our view. The best way to do so is, I suggest in accordance with expressivists, not to look for an analytical dissection of the term 'good', trying to draw conclusions from its meaning and reference, but to look at the workings of moral vocabulary as a whole. And this is exactly the point where expressivist theses about the function of moral vocabulary come in again: if moral vocabulary had no direct bearing on our actions and decisions, it would be utterly arcane why we would employ moral concepts in the first place. For, the need which moral language answers is our need to deliberate our way into decisions and actions. Hence, if moral language had no impact on decisions and choices, this need would not be addressed and it would remain obscure why we evaluate the world.[104] Accordingly, the link between moral judgement and motivation is conceptually necessary in the following way: We can conceive of Iago as making a moral judgement despite reversing or severing the link between verdict and motivation only against a background in which moral judgement is motivationally potent, because the moral concepts used by Iago enter language and acquire their place in the intricate web of language and action only in light of their practical function which includes its bond to motivation. Lose the practical function of moral judgements and concepts, and you lose your grip on Iago's moral statements. This is why the link between moral judgement and motivation is conceptually necessary.

Accordingly, we can sum up these explanations about conceptual necessity as follows: We cannot understand why we talk in moral terms and engage in moral practices unless we grasp their function to guide and issue in action. As a consequence, any scenario which imagines a reversed or altogether absent link between moral judgement and motivation conceptually presupposes a background in which moral judgement and motivation are correctly aligned. Hence, if you buy into expressivism's purpose-attribution, you also buy into judgement-internalism. This also means that the status of judgement-internalism is intertwined with the status of the purpose-attribution of morality. In other words, if expressivists can hold on to the claim that these purpose-attributions are non-moral and if judgement-internalism is linked to these purpose-attributions in the way that I suggested, then judgement-internalism need not contain any moral considerations either.[105]

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what makes Iago's case so interesting is exactly that he competently uses 'good' in the standard way, yet still rejects that goodness ought to be sought. Hence, if we want to stick to this interpretation of Iago's case, we have to reject the thesis that to-be-pursuedness is ingrained in the concept of good. In which way to-be-pursuedness could nonetheless be conceptually linked to goodness despite not being part of the meaning of 'good' will be explored in a few paragraphs.

104 For more details of this argument, see Gibbard (2003a: 11-17).

105 Given this tight link between practical purpose-attributions and judgement-internalism, it is an interesting question how positions which campaign for a combination of judgement-internalism with non-

6.4 PSYCHOLOGY REVISITED—CONATIVE ATTITUDES

Finally, let me return to expressivism's key psychological thesis that moral judgements express conative attitudes which featured in chapter 3 and is, just as expressivist purpose-attributions, also located on the first tier. Traditionally, it has been thought that expressivism's psychological thesis is based on considerations about morality's practicality in general and judgement-internalism in particular. However, contrary to common philosophical belief, I think that this psychological thesis should *not* be traced back to the practical function of moral thinking. Let me explain.

The classic view is that expressivists are committed to the thesis that moral judgements voice conative attitudes, *rather than* beliefs, and further that this claim is based on the Humean theory of motivation which declares, roughly, that conative attitudes and beliefs are distinct mental states, with the former being motivationally potent and the latter being motivationally impotent. Philosophical lore then has it that moral judgements must express conative attitudes because motivationally inert beliefs cannot account for the practicality of morality. However, I believe that this traditional picture is wrong. Firstly, expressivists would be well-advised to maintain that moral judgements express conative attitudes which are also minimal moral beliefs. The reasons for this were given in chapter 3 where I considered the incorporation of minimal belief within expressivism. Secondly, expressivists would be better not basing their psychological thesis on the claim that there are no motivational beliefs. For, their own account shows that there are! To elaborate, if the incorporation of minimal belief is successful, expressivists demonstrate that moral judgements express moral beliefs which—since they are also conative attitudes—are motivationally potent. Consequently, if their own position is to succeed, expressivists cannot deny that there are motivationally potent beliefs. A Humean account can, therefore, not motivate expressivism's psychological thesis about conative attitudes. Instead, I suggest that the illumination requirement takes up this role and gives expressivists' psychological thesis real momentum. For, as should have been obvious from my previous explanations, the considerations presented in the context of the illumination requirement do not just open the door for expressivism's general pragmatist approach, but also for its more specific psychological thesis that moral judgements express conative attitudes. More precisely, the reason why no informative metaethical account can start with moral belief, or endorse the thesis that moral judgements express *only* moral beliefs, has been given in the context of the expressivist-realist contest: we cannot begin with theses about moral belief because such claims would lack any kind of informative value and would instead enter an infinite regress which replaces one moral belief by another. Illuminating insights can be gained only if we move away from the conception of these mental states as solely cognitive and understand them also and distinctively in terms of conative attitudes. As a consequence, expressivists' psychological thesis is not driven by Hume, but by the thirst for illumination.

This now paints a new picture of the expressivist psychological thesis. That is, we are now in a position to see that the traditional battles fought over Humean dichotomies are somewhat mistaken. Whether the practicality of morality can be explained only by appeal to conative attitudes, or

practical purpose-attributions could argue for judgement-internalism and if this would be in any way morally motivated. I believe that envisaging this reverse scenario is important for understanding issues surrounding judgement-internalism fully. However, the scope of this thesis does not allow me to go into any of these details here.

also by motivational beliefs, or by non-motivational beliefs which are closely tied to motivational states, need not be expressivists' most pressing concern. Instead, they should—and, I believe, already do—realise that thinking of the mental states which underlie moral judgements as conative attitudes or beliefs is not mutually exclusive; instead, these descriptions serve different purposes. When approaching the question of mental states from an angle which is interested in the illumination of moral thinking *tout court*, we should think of them along the lines of conative attitudes because only appeal to conative attitudes can provide interesting insights into why we engage in moral thinking. If, in turn, we are adopting an angle which focuses on questions about moral truth and objectivity, there is nothing wrong with conceiving of these mental states as moral beliefs. This is then an internal stance which is already engaged in moral thinking. To sum up, the reason why expressivism's paradigmatic psychological thesis describes the mental states underlying moral judgement as conative attitudes is not grounded in considerations about motivational power. Instead, expressivists adopt this approach because only conative attitudes hold the key to illumination. Since the illumination requirement is non-morally driven, expressivists' psychological thesis can also be non-morally motivated.

6.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have examined the moral or non-moral status of further expressivist theses and examined whether or not they can support the anti-Archimedean claim that expressivism is a moral doctrine. With regard to debunking, I have suggested that moral conclusions about moral objectivity and about expressivism's non-debunking nature are not directly entailed by expressivist purpose-attributions, but can be derived only if these assignments are supplemented by *additional* moral assumptions. This prevents the Moral Doctrine Test from locking into place and allows expressivists to argue that as long as these additional moral assumptions can be confined to the second, moral tier and do not infiltrate or bear any direct links to the first tier, the non-moral interpretation of expressivist purpose-attributions remains untouched. Crucial in this context was the distinction between two senses of vindication and the specific formulation of the internal adequacy constraint which demanded that metaethical positions be compatible with internal features of moral practice, rather than explain them. In line with this internal adequacy constraint along the lines of compatibility, I further considered expressivist theses about the propositional form of moral judgements and disentangled them from substantive moral commitments. Whilst I argued that the moral or non-moral status of judgement-internalism is intertwined with the status of expressivist purpose-attributions, I explained that expressivism's key psychological thesis is based on the non-moral illumination requirement. As a result, none of these further expressivist theses supported the thesis that expressivism and expressivist purpose-attributions to morality *tout court* must be moral. Hence, the conclusion of chapter 5, declaring that both expressivism's non-moral self-interpretation and its combination with minimalism stay intact, appears to be remain untouched. Expressivists survive this second encounter with anti-Archimedeans unscathed.

7. THE MORAL STING IN THE TAIL?—THIRD ENCOUNTER

In the previous two chapters, I made a strong case for expressivism's non-moral self-image. I explained that expressivism can be understood as a two-tier account and argued that moral evaluations of expressivist purpose-attributions, together with theses about moral objectivity and debunking, are in principle detachable from these purpose-attributions themselves. Kramer's claim that purpose-attributions to morality *tout court* must be moral seemed, therefore, false and the expressivist world very rosy. However, even against the background of this strong case for expressivism, the 'moral sting in the tail' may still be to come. For, I believe that insisting on the moral status of purpose-attributions is the wrong strategy for anti-Archimedeans to pursue. Rather than being preoccupied with theses about the function of moral vocabulary, anti-Archimedeans should remember my explanations in chapter 5 which declared that expressivism is exposed to two lines of anti-Archimedean attack. The first, arguing for the moral permeation of the first tier, was the subject of chapters 5 and 6. However, the second line of attack adopts a wider, less isolated perspective by aiming to show that the dichotomy of the two tiers cannot be upheld. More precisely, I will argue that the strongest anti-Archimedean challenge to expressivism attempts to reveal cases where moral conclusions are straightforwardly entailed by expressivist theses as located on the first tier. For, if these moral conclusions were, in contrast to positive evaluations of purpose-attributions, *not* detachable from the expressivist position, the Moral Doctrine Test would tell us that at least one of the expressivist premises from which these conclusions are derived must be moral.[106] This strategy will not only re-direct our focus from the red herring of purpose-attributions towards other key expressivist claims which may be far more susceptible to moral interpretation, but also show that although minimalism does not hold any direct sway over expressivism's theses about morality's practicality, its impact on expressivism's moral status may well be indirect and hidden. Hence, if this strategy proved successful, anti-Archimedeans would, after all, have the last laugh even if expressivist purpose-attributions retained their non-moral status.

To examine this line of attack, I will proceed as follows. Firstly, I will introduce two claims which will take centre stage in these entailment relations, one pertaining to the permissibility of actions and the other to supervenience. Next, I will explain why these verdicts follow directly and are not detachable from expressivist theses put forward on the first tier. Although my arguments will rely heavily on Kramer's key insights on supervenience, my approach will also differ somewhat from his. To elaborate, Kramer's general interest lies in establishing the moral status of supervenience, aiming to show that prominent attempts to explain supervenience must be read as moral justifications. He tries to do so partly by invoking his claim that purpose-attributions to morality *tout court* must be moral. My approach now reverses this order: I will examine whether or not the moral nature of the claims in question can be ascertained independently from thoughts about purpose-attributions and then be used as the driving force behind the moral interpretation of expressivism. This approach offers the advantage, firstly, of avoiding reliance on the so far unsupported claim that

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106 This strategy implicitly featured in chapter 6, particularly when discussing moral semantics.

purpose-attributions to morality *tout court* must be moral and, secondly, of giving a more solid footing to the anti-Archimedean claim that expressivism is a moral doctrine by extracting a *direct*, *non*-detachable link between moral evaluations and expressivist theses. Having made a strong case for this most promising line of anti-Archimedean attack, I will then consider how expressivists could repel this assault. Although this challenge is indeed very serious, I will conclude that it can be met by expressivists whilst upholding the combination with minimalism *and* accepting key anti-Archimedean assumptions. Hence, minimalism and the non-moral self-image are compatible despite minimalism's close link to the anti-Archimedean movement.

7.1 PERMISSIBILITY AND SUPERVENIENCE

7.1.1 PERMISSIBILITY AND SUPERVENIENCE

When trying to find cases of direct entailments of moral conclusions by expressivist premises, I will concentrate on two claims. The first concerns the permissibility of actions and finds expression in verdicts such as 'φ-ing is permitted'. Since permissibility is clearly a moral concept and 'φ-ing is permitted' a member of the class of paradigmatic moral judgements, I take its moral status to be uncontroversial.

The second claim is the thesis of supervenience. More precisely, it is the thesis that the moral status of an object can change, or that the moral status of two objects can differ, only if the object changes, or the two objects differ, in non-moral respects. The supervenience relation can be understood as a relation between two classes of properties—in the present case, between moral and non-moral properties—as a relation between moral concepts and non-moral properties—Gibbard's preferred reading[107]—or as a relation between moral and non-moral judgements (Klagge 1988). Traditionally, supervenience has been regarded either as a conceptual thesis—the preferred interpretation of expressivists—or as an austerely metaphysical thesis—the reading usually associated with a certain brand of moral realists. However, anti-Archimedeans such as Kramer (2009) insist that the supervenience thesis is *moral*.[108] Indeed, I believe that this moral interpretation has great initial appeal. After all, supervenience establishes a direct link between an object's moral status and its non-moral properties by declaring that an object cannot turn from good to bad, right to wrong, just to unjust, etc. unless some change in its non-moral properties has taken place. It now seems very natural to assume that any thesis which makes a claim about the moral status of objects must be based on an exercise in moralising. For, in which other way could you agree that non-morally indiscernible objects cannot differ in their moral status, if not by examining these objects and *evaluating* them?

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107 I believe that Gibbard's (2003a: chapter 5) insistence that supervenience concerns moral concepts, rather than properties, is at least partly due to a robust reading of property as well as the fear that talking in terms of properties leads into mistaken assumptions about moral practices. Since I adopt an entirely minimal understanding of moral properties and moral metaphysics in general, though, Gibbard's qualms about property-talk need not upset us too much.

108 This moral classification does not rule out that the supervenience thesis is also conceptual, as I explained in footnote 48. Gibbard (2003a: 92) agrees about its normative and conceptual status.

This initial appeal can further be supported by additional arguments for the moral interpretation of supervenience. Firstly, anti-Archimedeans could call once more on minimalism about truth to support the moral status of supervenience. This becomes particularly clear when we conceive of the supervenience relation as a relation between judgements. More precisely, the supervenience thesis can be read as the claim that the *truth-value* of a moral evaluation of an object cannot change unless the truth-value of at least one description of this object changes. For instance, the truth-value of 'John is generous' cannot change from 'true' to 'false' unless the truth-value of the description 'John often treats his friends to a drink', say, changes from 'true' to 'false'. Yet, minimalism reveals that truth-ascriptions to moral claims must be moral. Hence, since the supervenience thesis pertains to moral truths and since minimalism entails that claims about moral truths are moral, it seems that minimalism supports the anti-Archimedean claim that supervenience is a moral thesis. Secondly and somewhat ironically, Blackburn himself provides a further, very important argument for the moral status of supervenience.[109] To elaborate, when discussing supervenience, Blackburn (1993a: 133) rightly introduces a so-called limitation thesis which declares that "there is necessarily a boundary to the kind of [subvening non-moral] properties that [any moral property] can depend on", identifying purely spatio-temporal characteristics as one example of non-moral properties which can never feature in the subvenient base. This limitation thesis is supposed to protect the supervenience claim from vacuity.[110] Yet, anti-Archimedeans can now argue that it also exposes the moral nature of the supervenience thesis by showing that any meaningful supervenience thesis rests on the claim that certain non-moral features, such as spatio-temporal properties, are necessarily morally irrelevant—no moral property can ever depend on them. However, any attribution of moral (ir)relevance must itself be based on moral grounds, as has been argued in chapter 5. For, how else could you decide that goodness (rightness, justice, etc.) never depends on spatio-temporal properties as such, if not by engaging in moral deliberation and asking the *moral* question 'Could the geographical position of an object by itself ever impact on its goodness?'? Accordingly, being based on a substantive moral judgement about the necessary moral irrelevance of spatio-temporal properties, the supervenience thesis must itself be moral.[111] I believe that this *prima facie* case for the moral status of the supervenience thesis is very strong, strong enough to consider how anti-Archimedeans could use it to their advantage.

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109 'Ironically', because Blackburn normally wants to contrast supervenience as a conceptual constraint with moral truths. I will return to this argument when discussing his particular version of expressivism.

110 I believe that there are further reasons to introduce this limitation thesis, as for instance considerations about the guidance function of morality. I say more about this in footnote 122.

111 As an aside, whilst Kramer is adamant that the supervenience thesis is moral, he also holds that

     R   If two situations x and y differ in their moral properties, then they differ in their morally relevant physical and/or mental properties.

is an analytic truth (Kramer 2009: 344). I disagree with this categorisation. Firstly, this cannot be right because the limitation to physical and mental properties, and thus the exclusion of supernatural properties, cannot be analytic. Secondly, if the anti-Archimedean movement was successful, even an unrestricted claim such as 'Moral properties supervene on non-moral properties' would have to be moral.

7.1.2 INTERNAL JUSTIFICATIONS?

Before looking at how claims about permissibility and supervenience could feature in an anti-Archimedean argument for the moral interpretation of expressivism, we must be clear that it would not be enough to show that expressivist explanations of permissibility and supervenience are moral justifications which are in principle detachable from expressivist premises. For, in this case expressivists could simply fall back on the tools presented in chapters 5 and 6 and explain that justifications of these claims are located on the second, moral tier and open to expressivist analysis. For instance, when declaring that a certain action is permissible, they could give an internal, moral justification of this claim and then analyse it as an expression of certain practical attitudes. Similarly, expressivists could embrace the moral interpretation of supervenience, yet explain at the same time that all they ever wanted to do was to provide a moral justification for this internal, moral thesis.[112] The following quotes seem to support this reading:

> But partly [supervenience] arises simply from the value of justice. When I react to like cases differently I risk doing an injustice to the one which is admired the least, and one of our common values is that we should be able to defend ourselves against such a charge (Blackburn 1981: 180).

> Now it is not at all surprising that a fickle function—one which has an apparently random element through time, or across similar cases—is one which we cannot readily endorse or identify with. Partly this is a question of the purpose of moralizing, which must at least partly be social. A fickle sensibility is going to be difficult to teach, and since it matters to me that others can come to share and endorse my moral outlook, I shall seek to render it consistent (Blackburn 1981: 180).

The invocation of the moral ideal of *justice* in the first of these quotes could not be more explicit. The second reference, in turn, considers *endorsement* (or rather: disapproval) of fickle functions and arguably reflects on the moral reasons why we ought not to approve of fickle endorsements, which appeal to the guidance, selection and teaching function of moral discourse. Expressivists could thus be seen as responding to the question 'Why does the moral supervene on the non-moral?' by giving certain *moral* responses.

Importantly, if expressivists could banish these moral justifications of permissibility and supervenience to the second tier, they would be back in their comfort zone. For, in this case they could argue once more that these justifications proceed exclusively on the second tier and are, as such, in principle detachable from expressivist theses as put forward on the first tier, which could safely remain non-moral. Consequently, if all there was to expressivist explanations of permissibility and supervenience were moral justifications, i.e. if these justifications simply added a moral layer to an otherwise non-moral, expressivist account, the anti-Archimedean movement would again run out of steam.

However, this expressivist retreat to the detachable, moral second tier is unsuccessful as it shows too much leniency where no leniency can be allowed. As I will show next, neither the success of Gibbard's nor of Blackburn's explanation of supervenience presupposes that we share certain

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112 See Kramer's (2009: 336-351) very thorough remarks about the moral interpretation of expressivism's explanation of supervenience, which address the issue of fickleness, justification and purpose-attributions.

moral views of justice or moral justification. It does not even demand that we accept their positive evaluation of morality's purpose. Quite ironically, both their explanations allow the rejection of all these moral evaluations, but do *not* allow the rejection of supervenience. Yet, if the truth of the supervenience thesis is entailed by expressivist premises and if supervenience is moral, then the Moral Doctrine Test on the basis of Hume's law tells us that at least one of these premises must be moral. This argument is, I believe, the strongest anti-Archimedean attempt to show that expressivism is a moral doctrine. It would be even more precarious for expressivists if anti-Archimedeans could reinforce the first hunch that minimalism plays a crucial part in the classification of supervenience as a moral thesis. For, in this case, expressivists' adoption of minimalism would commit them to the moral interpretation of supervenience and would, in light of direct entailment relations between moral supervenience and expressivist premises, leave expressivists no choice but to accept that expressivism is a moral position. Hence, although its sway over expressivism's moral status would be somewhat indirect, the adoption of minimalism would stand in direct conflict with the expressivist non-moral self-image. The details and success of this anti-Archimedean challenge and minimalism's role within it will be examined next.

7.2 THE ANTI-ARCHIMEDAN CHALLENGE—MORAL ENTAILMENTS

So far, I have discussed expressivism as a more or less monolithic account, running Gibbard's and Blackburn's positions together. Since the anti-Archimedean challenge applies somewhat differently to Gibbard's account than to Blackburn's, though, I will discuss separately here their versions of expressivism and their exposure to the anti-Archimedean challenge.

7.2.1 GIBBARD'S PLANS AND THE ANTI-ARCHIMEDEAN CHALLENGE

CASE I: PERMISSIBILITY

Gibbard (2003a: 138) assimilates moral thinking to the practice of planning; moral judgements, he claims, combine fact with plan. The key function of planning is to guide us around the world and settle how to act in conceivable situations. More precisely, the actors featuring in Gibbard's linguistic-pragmatist model are planners who must deliberate about how to act in different circumstances and conclude these deliberations by coming to some kind of decision. For instance, Mary who wonders whether to eat a piece of cake, a healthy apple or neither of them, deliberates about these options and finally decides to eat the healthy apple. In this case, she expresses her decision by saying 'I ought to eat the apple.[113] If, in turn, her plan had ruled out only the third option but ruled in

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113   At this stage, Gibbard operates with the stipulated predicates 'the thing to do' and 'okay to do', which then (roughly) translate into 'ought to do' and 'being permitted' respectively. I omit this intermediate step here. Similarly, I ignore certain important nuances, such as Gibbard's definition of 'permitted' as 'reject rejecting' (Gibbard 2003a: 56). Moreover, it may be argued that Gibbard's account does not declare that being ruled in by a plan makes it true that an action is permitted, but only that 'being permitted' gives expression to this plan. In other words, I may be guilty of turning Gibbard's expressivism into a version of naïve subjectivism. If this was so, an account closer to Blackburn's would have to be adopted in that it would have to include premise (P_{20}) as presented below. Since this premise is very much in accord with Gibbard's views, though, the anti-Archimedean challenge could still be upheld.

eating either the cake or the apple, she would have expressed her decision by declaring 'Both eating the cake and eating the apple are permitted'. For, an action ruled in by a plan is 'okay to do' or, in other words, is permitted (Gibbard 2003a: 91). As Gibbard himself (2003a: 56) emphasises, it is now essential for the practice of planning that a plan "must not rule out every alternative open on an occasion. A plan that did that ... would preclude offering any guidance on what to do on that occasion" and thus, we can add, flout the very function which provides the raison d'être of planning. Accordingly, no matter in which situation Gibbard's planners find themselves, their plan must rule in at least one action. Given this background, we can now construct the following argument:

(P$_7$)   Moral judgements are plan-laden judgements. They combine plan with fact.

(P$_8$)   Plans must, due to their guidance function, rule in at least one of the actions open to agents in any conceivable situation.

(C$_4$)   Hence, whichever plan agents adopt, there is at least one action ruled in by their plan.

(P$_9$)   An action ruled in by a plan is permitted, an action ruled out by a plan is forbidden.

(C$_5$)   Hence, there is at least one action in whatever situation which is permitted.[114]

(P$_7$) expresses Gibbard's assimilation of moral thinking to the practice of planning, whilst (P$_8$) captures a plausible constraint which governs this practice. (P$_9$), in turn, is crucial for Gibbard's model because it establishes the required link between his linguistic-pragmatist model on the one hand and actual moral concepts on the other. If there was no such interesting connection between stipulated plan-laden terms and moral concepts, Gibbard's model would not tell us anything about our actual moral language and would thus be pretty fruitless. Finally, as we have already clarified above (C$_5$) is a moral conclusion. Declaring that we are always permitted to perform at least one action, no matter what the circumstances are, amounts to making a moral judgement which, if true, states a moral truth and can clearly clash with other substantive moral verdicts. For instance, just think of a typical Greek tragedy in which our hero has several courses of action open to him, but none of them is permitted—whatever he does, he does something forbidden. Hence, since this inference entails a moral conclusion, the Moral Doctrine Test, appealing to Hume's Law, tells us that at least one of the key expressivist theses as expressed in (P$_7$) – (P$_9$) must be moral.

CASE II: SUPERVENIENCE

Gibbard (2003a: 92) accepts that supervenience is a 'plan-laden' thesis. At the same time, he takes great pains to prove that the supervenience thesis follows directly from the need to plan. For,

> a plan can distinguish between situations only in terms of their [non-moral] properties, and it can distinguish between acts only in terms of the [non-moral] properties of those

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114   There might still be a slight doubt here about the meaning of 'permitted', since 'permitted' might be different from 'permissible'. Whilst 'permissible' is necessarily moral, it might possibly be argued that 'permitted' is non-moral. However, this interpretation would be wrong. Gibbard uses 'permitted' as a moral, plan-laden term, which is contrasted with the non-moral, factual term '*p*-permitted', which stands for 'permitted by plan *p*'. However, we may rightly wonder here if 'permitted' could be normative, yet not moral. I will address this possibility when discussing Blackburn's potential responses to the anti-Archimedean challenge.

acts. If two acts in two possible situations differ in no [non-moral] way, a plan can't distinguish them, permitting one and ruling out the other. Either it will permit both or it will rule both out .... [A]nyone who was fully decided on a plan for living—a hyperplan which provides for every conceivable situation—would accept the dictum 'No difference in being okay without a [non-moral] difference (Gibbard 2003a: 91-92).

Based on this quote we can again construct the following inference:

(P_{10})   Moral judgements are plan-laden judgements. They combine plan with fact.

(P_{11})   Plans can distinguish between different situations and actions only in terms of their non-moral properties.[115]

(C_6)   Hence, any plan either rules in two non-morally indiscernible actions φ-ing and π-ing, or it rules both out.

(P_{12})   An action ruled in by a plan is permitted, an action ruled out by a plan is forbidden.

(C_7)   Hence, two non-morally indiscernible actions φ-ing and π-ing are either both permitted or both forbidden. It cannot be the case that φ-ing is permitted, whilst π-ing is forbidden, or vice versa.[116]

Consequently, since (C_7) expresses the supervenience thesis which, as anti-Archimedeans argue, is moral, this is yet another example of a moral conclusion being directly derived from Gibbard's plan-based model. Hence, endorsing these moral conclusions about permissibility and supervenience is, in contrast to the moral evaluation of purpose-attributions as discussed in chapter 5, *not*

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115 I assume here that this subvenient basis excludes spatio-temporal properties, although Gibbard (2003a: 90) could arguably be read as disagreeing with this claim. This points to another little side note. That is, it is not entirely clear that Gibbard's reliance on plans can explain supervenience in a convincing way. For, it is not obvious why plans should exclude spatio-temporal properties from the subvenient base. Planning to choose apple *A* over apple *B* simply because *A* is within easy reach—i.e. because of its geographical location—seems perfectly fine, whilst the same cannot be said about a case where murder *C* is judged to be wrong whilst murder *D* is judged to be right simply because *C* was committed in front of my flat. Hence, if Gibbard wanted to claim that assimilating moral practices to planning can account for moral supervenience, I suppose that he would have to supplement his explanations in such a way as to exclude spatio-temporal properties from the subvenient base in the moral case although no such exclusion is required in the more general case of planning. If, and if so how, this could be achieved is not my concern here.

116 I dropped here Gibbard's additional declaration that 'anyone who was fully decided on a plan for living—a hyperplan which provides for every conceivable situation—would accept the dictum 'No difference in being okay without a [non-moral] difference'. The reason why Gibbard includes this step is that it is a crucial part of his general technique of 'proceeding from hyperstates' (Gibbard 2003a: 90), which declares that planners are committed to any statement to which a hyperdecided planner would subscribe. However, I do not believe that this step does any additional work here. Rather, I believe that hyperdecided planners would accept this dictum *because of* the inference presented above. However, if this was not the case—for instance, if my interpretation was wrong and hyperdecided planners would not accept this explicit inference, but employ the supervenience thesis as an expression of a feature of their plans—Gibbard's explanation of supervenience would have to be understood like Blackburn's and rely on premise (P_{20}) as introduced below. The anti-Archimedean challenge would then apply to Gibbard's model in the same way as it does to Blackburn's.

detachable from expressivist premises themselves.[117] Instead, they follow straightforwardly from the constraints that govern the practice of planning. Hence, once we accept Gibbard's plan-based model, we cannot help but accept these substantive moral conclusions. Since the expressivist plan-based model thus entails substantive moral truths, both in form of permissibility and supervenience, it must itself contain moral elements. As a result, the two allegedly distinct tiers merge. Gibbard's expressivism must, therefore, contain moral assumptions.

7.2.2 BLACKBURN'S ENDORSEMENTS AND THE ANTI-ARCHIMEDEAN CHALLENGE

Blackburn's (1998a) expressivist account differs from Gibbard's in that it suggests, roughly, that moral judgements do not express states of planning, but endorsements which we voice within a public space with the purpose of discussing and guiding our choices and teaching ways of living. There is the possibility, therefore, that Blackburn's expressivism fares better with regard to the anti-Archimedean challenge than Gibbard's very specific plan-based model. Whilst this is true with regard to permissibility, it does not hold with regard to supervenience, as I will show next.

CASE I: PERMISSIBILITY

When looking at concrete moral judgements such as verdicts about permissibility, Blackburn's account does indeed have a significant advantage over Gibbard's. When examining the plan-based account, I explained that the constraints governing the very practice of planning, to which moral thinking is assimilated, lead to substantive moral conclusions. However, when we look at the practice of endorsing, we struggle to find any similar constraints. Whereas it is a constraint built into the practice of planning that plans must rule in at least one course of action in any given situation, the practice of endorsing is not governed by a similar constraint which would require us to endorse at least one action. More precisely, we can*not* construct the following argument:

(P$_{13}$)   Moral judgements are expressions of endorsements with a specific practical function.

(P$_{14}$)   One constraint governing the very practice of endorsing is that we must endorse at least one action in any given situation.

(P$_{15}$)   Roughly, endorsing an action is judging this action to be permitted.

(C$_8$)   Hence, *qua* participants in this public practice of expressing endorsements, we must judge that there is at least one action in any conceivable situation which is permitted.

(P$_{16}$)   There is no difference between having to judge an action to be permitted and its being true that this action is permitted.[118]

(C$_9$)   Hence, there is at least one action in any conceivable situation which is permitted.

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117   The same argument applies to other plan-laden theses which anyone who is in a hyperdecided state would accept, such as claims about factual constitution and moral explanations.

118   I will explain the background of this premise shortly.

I suggest that (P_{14}) should be rejected on grounds of implausibility, since being capable of endorsing does not imply that one must indeed endorse any objects—it could be rejection and disapproval all the way. As a result, the inference to (C_9) collapses. Consequently, due to the structural difference between the practice of planning and the practice of endorsing as manifested in the constraints which govern these practices, Blackburn's version of expressivism does not entail concrete moral judgements about, for instance, the permissibility of actions. So far, then, Blackburn's expressivism does not come up against the anti-Archimedean challenge; the separation of the two tiers remains—for now—intact.

CASE II: SUPERVENIENCE

However, this picture changes when we shift focus to more abstract claims, such as the thesis about supervenience. Here, it seems to be the case that Blackburn's account too allows us to derive the conclusion that the moral supervenes on the non-moral. And indeed, this is exactly how Blackburn envisaged it to be. For, he never intended to provide a purely moral, internal justification of supervenience which would be detachable from expressivist premises. Instead, he proudly presents expressivist explanations of supervenience understood as a conceptual constraint on moral thinking as one of the major advantages of expressivism over realism.[119] I believe that he uses two different though related routes to explain the supervenience thesis. The first refers to a certain property of the moral attitude:

> There can be no question that we often choose, admire, commend, or desire, objects because of their naturalistic properties. Now it is not possible to hold an attitude to a thing because of its possessing certain properties and, at the same time, not hold that attitude to another thing that is believed to have the same properties. The nonexistence of the attitude in the second case shows that it is not because of the shared properties that I hold it in the first case. Now, moral attitudes are to be held towards things because of their naturalistic properties. Therefore it is not possible to hold a moral attitude to one thing, believe a second to be exactly alike, yet at the same time not hold the same attitude to the second thing. Anybody who appears to do this is convicted of misidentifying a caprice as a moral opinion (Blackburn 1993a: 122).[120]

We can see a certain parallel to Gibbard's account here. Just as Gibbard explained that plans process non-moral features of actions and situations and cannot arbitrate between non-moral phenomena unless they differ in their non-moral qualities, endorsements are reactions to our non-moral environment which cannot distinguish between different objects unless these objects possess different non-moral features. Hence, just as plans must envisage the same course of action in non-morally indistinguishable situations, our reactions must deliver the same outcome—either endorsements or

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119 By the way, Kramer (2009: 352-353) insists that if we accept that the supervenience thesis is a moral truth, realists need not fear Blackburn's challenge of conceptual supervenience anymore. I agree with Kramer.

120 What kind of impossibility is involved when Blackburn declares that it is not possible to hold different attitudes to qualitatively non-morally indiscernible objects? His claim cannot be empirical—otherwise, what Blackburn labels 'caprice' would not be possible. I believe that considerations about the classification of views as moral or non-moral underlie these explanations and will return to questions about the definition of 'moral' and how they could be used to expressivists' advantage when discussing Blackburn's possible responses to the anti-Archimedean challenge.

rejections—if objects are non-morally indiscernible. Add to this the assimilation of moral thinking with the practice of endorsing, and we have an explanation of supervenience: The moral supervenes on the non-moral because our reactions to the world are structured in such a way as to endorse two objects which share their non-moral properties, or to reject both, but never to endorse one but not the other.[121]

The second way to explain supervenience centres on thoughts about function which we have already encountered above. Again, we can detect a certain parallel to Gibbard's model. Plans, we heard above, can fulfil their guidance function only if they rule in at least one action in conceivable situations. Similarly, Blackburn tells us that the function of the practice of uttering endorsements in a public sphere can be fulfilled only if we structure our endorsements as explained in the previous paragraph, which then finds expression in the supervenience claim. For, if our endorsements were not arranged in this way, then this "would betray the whole purpose for which we moralize, which is to choose, commend, rank, approve or forbid things on the basis of their natural properties" (Blackburn 1993a: 137). In a nutshell, Blackburn (1993a: 144) declares that "moralizing is an activity that cannot proceed successfully without recognition of the supervenience constraint". In its more schematic and expanded form, the argument is the following (Blackburn 1984: 186):

(P$_{17}$) Moral judgements are expressions of endorsements which serve a specific practical function.

(P$_{18}$) This function can be fulfilled only if our patterns of endorsements are reliable and predictable. This is established either by endorsing two non-morally indiscernible actions φ-ing and π-ing, or by rejecting both. The function cannot be fulfilled if we endorse φ-ing, but not π-ing or vice versa.

(C$_{10}$) Hence, *qua* participants in this practice, we are necessarily committed to forming our endorsements in such a way as to endorse both φ-ing and π-ing, or to reject both φ-ing and π-ing, if φ-ing and π-ing do not differ in their non-moral features.[122]

(P$_{19}$) Roughly, endorsing an action is judging this action to be permitted; rejecting an action is judging it to be forbidden.

(C$_{11}$) Hence, *qua* participants in this practice, we are necessarily committed to judging that both φ-ing and π-ing are permitted, or that both φ-ing and π-ing are forbidden, if φ-ing and π-ing do not differ in their non-moral features.

(P$_{20}$) There is no difference between being necessarily committed to attributing the same moral status to φ-ing and π-ing and its being true that φ-ing and π-ing share the same moral status if φ-ing and π-ing are non-morally indistinguishable.

(C$_{12}$) Hence, it is true that φ-ing and π-ing share the same moral status, if φ-ing and π-ing are non-morally indistinguishable.

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121 This is oversimplified. This argument establishes only that our moral judgements must be regulated in a certain way, not that moral truths must be so ordered. In order to derive the truth of the supervenience thesis, (P$_{20}$) would have to be inserted. I omit this here for simplicity's sake.

122 Here, we have another reason why it is pivotal for Blackburn to limit the supervenience thesis in such a way as to exclude spatio-temporal properties because otherwise the guidance function of moral discourse could not be met. For, if you are told that a killing committed on the 2nd of May is right, whereas a qualitatively indistinguishable killing committed on the 4th of May is wrong, how could this guide you in your evaluation of a qualitatively indiscernible killing committed on the 5th of May?

(P$_{17}$) – (P$_{19}$) capture key assumptions of Blackburn's expressivism. (P$_{20}$), in turn, needs more explaining. For, is it not possible that the supervenience thesis could be false, although we are necessarily committed to it? The reason why Blackburn's account does not allow any such gap between necessary practical commitments and truth is found in his deep commitment to pragmatism. More precisely, the supervenience thesis expresses our practical commitment to a certain endorsement pattern in propositional form; it is the pattern's "propositional reflection" (Blackburn 1993a: 125). Yet, having established that the supervenience thesis expresses a necessary practical commitment of ours, there is no *additional* question of whether or not this thesis is *really* true.[123] For, once we accept that we are necessarily committed to a certain endorsement pattern and that the supervenience thesis gives expression to this pattern, there is no question as to whether or not the supervenience thesis is true other than the question of whether or not to regulate endorsements expressed within moral practice as envisaged by it—and here, Blackburn tells us that there is no way of violating the endorsement pattern yet to remain within moral practice. Consequently, once we engage in moral thinking, it is impossible to dismiss coherently the supervenience thesis because doing so would try to reject what it necessarily presupposes. Hence, no gap between the necessary commitment of regulating endorsements in a certain way on the one hand and the truth of the supervenience thesis on the other hand can be found. Consequently, (C$_{12}$) follows.

We have thus reached the same point as we did when discussing the plan-based model: Blackburn's argument for supervenience is not a detachable layer added to non-moral expressivist premises. Instead, we can derive the claim of supervenience directly from Blackburn's endorsement-based model.[124] As a consequence, provided that supervenience is a moral thesis, the Moral Doctrine Test tells us that at least one of Blackburn's premises must be moral. The anti-Archimedean challenge thus applies to Blackburn's version of expressivism too, although it does so only on the more abstract level of supervenience and not on the level of concrete moral truths, such as about permissibility. Moreover, since minimalism appears to lend significant support to the moral classification of the supervenience thesis, it also seems to play a crucial, though somewhat indirect, part in this anti-Archimedean challenge. More precisely, if minimalism entailed the moral status of the supervenience thesis which is directly entailed by expressivist premises, it would allow the Moral Doctrine Test to lock into place and conclude that expressivism is a moral doctrine. Put more tersely, by buying into minimalism, you would have to accept that the supervenience thesis is moral and by buying into expressivism, you must accept that the moral supervenes on the non-moral. Hence, there would be no way to hold on to all expressivist premises and to minimalism, yet to deny that expressivism entails moral conclusions. Minimalism and the non-moral interpretation of expressivism would be incompatible.

We can now also see why I argued several pages above that the attempt to regard expressivist explanations of supervenience as purely moral justifications which could be banished to the second moral tier fails. There, I declared that Gibbard's and Blackburn's explanations of supervenience allow the rejection of moral views about justice, moral justification and positive evaluations of pur-

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123 Blackburn confirmed this view in private conversation. In this section, I rely heavily on Gibbard (2003a: 97-98).

124 Although Blackburn does not pursue this line of thought, the similarities between his and Gibbard's explanations of supervenience are so extensive that he could easily take Gibbard's thoughts about factual constitution and moral explanations on board. Just as in Gibbard's case, the argument that moral conclusions follow from allegedly non-moral expressivist premises could thus be extended to these examples.

pose-attributions, but *not* the rejection of supervenience. This is so because the supervenience of the moral on the non-moral, in contrast to positive evaluations of morality's purpose or considerations about justice and justification, can*not* be coherently rejected once expressivism is accepted. Expressivists' explanation of supervenience is, therefore, not like any of their other moral justifications put forward on the second tier, which require expressivism to be supplemented with moral assumptions that are in principle detachable from expressivism. Instead, in the case of supervenience, the expressivist premises as presented on the first tier reach right into the second tier. Quite ironically, then, the explanation of supervenience which Blackburn always intended to be a key argument *for* expressivism and *against* moral realism appears to turn against the expressivist non-moral self-image.

7.3 GRASPING THE 'MORAL NETTLE'—CULPRITS AND CONSEQUENCES

Before examining expressivist countermoves to this challenge, let me examine next which expressivist premise(s) should be identified as moral and which consequences this moral status would entail.

7.3.1 MORAL CULPRITS

Starting with the first question and the plan-based considerations on permissibility and supervenience, the Moral Doctrine Test tells us that at least one of the following premises must be moral:

(P$_{7/10}$)   Moral judgements are plan-laden judgements. They combine plan with fact.

(P$_8$)   Plans must, due to their guidance function, rule in at least one of the actions open to us in any conceivable situation.

(P$_{9/12}$)   An action ruled in by a plan is permitted, an action ruled out by a plan is forbidden.

(P$_{11}$)   Plans can distinguish between different situations and actions on basis of their non-moral properties.

Here, it is most natural to make out (P$_{9/12}$) as the moral premise because this appears to include most obviously an identification of a moral property ('being permitted') with an otherwise non-moral phenomenon ('being ruled in by a plan'). Could Gibbard simply give up (P$_{9/12}$)? I do not think so. As I have explained above, (P$_{9/12}$) is essential for Gibbard because it offers the link between his plan-based model and actual language use. If there was no such link forthcoming, Gibbard's model would not inform or vindicate$_1$ moral practices and thus fail by its own standards.

However, although (P$_{9/12}$) might be Gibbard's moral culprit, this cannot be the whole story about expressivism's moral elements. After all, Blackburn's explanation of supervenience does not include this premise, so the moral premise(s) must sit somewhere else. We can choose from the following set:

(P$_{17}$)   Moral judgements are expressions of endorsements which serve a specific practical function.

(P$_{18}$)   This function can be fulfilled only if our patterns of endorsements are reliable and predictable. This is established either by endorsing two non-morally indiscernible

(P₁₉) 　Roughly, endorsing an action is judging this action to be permitted; rejecting an action is judging it to be forbidden.

(P₂₀) 　There is no difference between being necessarily committed to attributing the same moral status to φ-ing and π-ing and its being true that φ-ing and π-ing share the same moral status if φ-ing and π-ing are non-morally indistinguishable.

Picking out the moral premise in this case is more difficult. It seems to me that we can exclude (P₁₈) from the list of suspects, as it appears to make a non-moral statement about how a certain function can be fulfilled. Similarly, (P₁₉) is, I believe, not the point where the moral lever is inserted. This is so because (P₁₉) arguably links two non-moral phenomena, namely endorsements on the one hand and making moral judgements on the other, but does not say anything about the truth of these moral verdicts. This leaves (P₁₇) and (P₂₀). Here, we could let the 'moral buck' stop with the most fundamental expressivist assimilation of moral thinking to public discussions of endorsements as expressed in (P₁₇). However, although Kramer focuses on purpose-attributions, I have already hinted in the introduction of this chapter that I do not believe that this is the way to go, given my explanations about these ascriptions in chapter 5. Instead, I suggest that (P₂₀) should, perhaps surprisingly, be our focal point. For, (P₂₀) is most similar to Gibbard's premise (P₉/₁₂) in that both establish a certain link between the expressivist background story and moral truths. Certainly, (P₂₀) differs from (P₉/₁₂) in that (P₉/₁₂) connects a straightforward non-moral concept with a moral concept, whereas (P₂₀) contains the notion of 'commitment', which is already covered in normative dust. But I believe that both premises nonetheless share the same thrust. That is, just as the key to Gibbard's explanation of the truth of permissibility and supervenience consists in truths about plans, the key to Blackburn's explanation of the truth of supervenience consists in truths about endorsements. In the present example, this manifests itself in the translation of the necessary structure of endorsements into the necessary structure of moral truths.[125] Both (P₉/₁₂) and (P₂₀) thus represent the interface between the expressivist background story on the first tier and internal moral truths as located on the second tier. The identification of (P₂₀) as the moral premise is further supported by the Moral Doctrine Test. For, just as our Greek dramatists explained that none of the actions open to our hero is permitted even though it might be ruled in by a plan, critics could now declare that even though we may have to structure our endorsements in a certain way when engaging in moral practice, this has no implications whatsoever for the moral order. For, it would still be morally true that spatio-temporal properties as such never bear any moral relevance even if we were not committed to regulating our endorsements in a certain way. Of course, the stances of the Greeks and the critic may not stand up to closer (moral) scrutiny. Yet, this does not appear to make them any less moral. Hence, if this is so, we have ascertained that (P₂₀) can clash with a substantive moral view and that it must, therefore, be a moral judgement itself. What speaks further for the identification of (P₂₀) as the moral linchpin is that acceptance of premises (P₁₇) – (P₁₉) does not appear to commit us to any claims about the *truth* of the supervenience thesis. Accepting (P₁₇) – (P₁₉) entails that we must regu-

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125 　Gibbard's explanation of supervenience is congruent with Blackburn's, so the same thoughts apply to the plan-based account of supervenience. There, the moral crux is that having to plan in a certain way is translated into moral truths having to be structured in a certain way.

late our moral endorsements in a certain way, yet it does not entail that moral truths must correspond with this pattern. Only by inserting (P_{20}) can we reach the moral conclusion that the supervenience thesis is true. I suggest, therefore, that it is most plausible to identify (P_{20}) as the moral premise.

Could Blackburn (or Gibbard for that matter) give up (P_{20})? On the one hand, it seems that he could. Although his expressivism could in this case not explain why moral truths supervene on nonmoral truths—a shortcoming once rubbed like salt into moral realists' wounds—it could still explain why we are committed to regulating our moral judgements in a certain way. The truth of the supervenience thesis would then have to be established internally by supporting it with moral considerations which are in principle independent from expressivist premises. This would possibly diminish expressivism's appeal somewhat, yet not eradicate it. On the other hand, though, it is not clear that Blackburn can simply relinquish (P_{20}) without surrendering his expressivism altogether. To see why, recall my explanations about (P_{20})'s background which declared that (P_{20}) is based on Blackburn's steadfast commitment to pragmatism. Accordingly, if Blackburn withdrew from (P_{20}), he would now have to admit that there *is* an additional question of whether or not the supervenience thesis is true other than the question of whether or not to live and endorse objects in accord with it. Renouncing (P_{20}), then, amounts to renouncing the expressivist approach altogether.

To sum up these considerations, abandoning the premises which were identified as moral does not appear to be a viable option for expressivists as this would come at an immense cost, since these theses stand at the very heart of expressivism. Which consequences would follow if this anti-Archimedean challenge proved successful will be examined next.

7.3.2 CONSEQUENCES

There are at least three important implications which would be entailed by a moral interpretation of expressivism. The first concerns the ways in which expressivism can be attacked, the second pertains to the spectre of mind-dependence and the third addresses expressivism's aim to account for moral discourse on a non-moral basis.

Regarding ways of attack, it is clear that if expressivism contained moral claims, it could also be attacked on moral grounds. Importantly, this moral attack would not be limited to showing that expressivism is in some way morally *reprehensible*; we could now field moral arguments to show that it is *false*. Take Gibbard's account of permissibility as an example. Here, we could argue that whilst it might be true that plans must not rule out all actions open to us in any given circumstance as expressed in (P_8), it is not necessarily true that at least one of these actions is also permitted, as claimed in (C_5). It is, therefore, false to believe that an action ruled in by a plan is permitted, as claimed in (P_9). From this, we can draw two consequences. Either, we reject this particular moral premise in expressivism and search for a morally superior replacement which can also ensure that Gibbard's model tells us something interesting about the way in which we use moral language. Or, we decide that no such replacement can be found and that, as a consequence, moral thinking cannot be assimilated to planning; (P_7) must be wrong. A parallel assessment of Blackburn's model could be even less forgiving as it may not even allow us to look for alternatives. That is, if it is morally false that the moral supervenes on the non-moral although we are necessarily committed to regulating our endorsements in a certain way, then (P_{20})—and thus the expressivist-pragmatist ap-

proach—must be false. Hence, moral views would allow me to reject expressivism as false and not just to expose it as morally objectionable if expressivism was a moral doctrine.

Consequently, accepting that at least one expressivist thesis must be moral would bring about a significant shift in the dialectic of discussions surrounding expressivism. So far, expressivists could argue that substantive, internal moral views cannot conflict with external, non-moral expressivist claims because these theses belong to different domains. Since substantive moral claims are adopted within ethics and since expressivism is a position which stands outside of ethics, it would be a mistake to think that these different positions could clash since they belong within different domains—let us call this the 'shield of the two domains'. Provided that expressivism is (weakly) internally adequate and that substantive moral claims are part of those internal moral features which are adequately explained by expressivism, it is thus impossible for them to conflict with expressivism because expressivism engulfs them. Internal moral judgements can, therefore, never pose a threat to expressivism. However, if a direct link between expressivist theses and substantive moral views could be established, expressivism would lose this protective 'shield of the two domains'. Substantive moral verdicts could now push to the very heart of expressivism and entail expressivism's refutation on moral grounds.

This loss of the 'shield of the two domains' is closely related to the second important consequence which would follow from expressivism's moral status, as it would allow the spectre of mind-dependence to return which we briefly encountered in chapter 6's reprise of moral semantics. More precisely, mind-dependence is one of those internal, moral stances against which expressivists thought themselves protected by the 'shield of the two domains'. Since the question of moral truths' mind-(in)dependence is a substantively moral matter and since expressivism was believed not to entail any such substantive conclusions, the claim that expressivism entails mind-dependence was thought to be defused because of its exposure as a moral stance on the second tier which expressivists can analyse in expressivist terms. Expressivism could explain what it is involved in holding moral truths to be mind-(in)dependent, but not whether or not moral truths *are* mind-(in)dependent. In order to avoid any such entailment of mind-dependence, I emphasised in chapters 5 and 6 expressivists' eagerness to stress that their purpose-attributions do not automatically enter the truth-conditions of substantive moral judgements. However, if it could be established that the supervenience thesis, for instance, is moral and follows directly from expressivist premises, this dividing wall would start to crumble, as contrary to expressivists' original plan, expressivist purpose-attributions would now seep into the truth-conditions of substantive moral views. For, would it now be true that spatio-temporal properties are never morally relevant, say, because it is a moral truth that the goodness of an object can never depend, in and by itself, on its sheer geographical position? Or would it be true that spatio-temporal properties are never morally relevant because moral talk could otherwise not fulfil its guidance function? Or both? Moreover, if our practical need, the satisfaction of which requires a certain endorsement pattern, changed, would the truth of the supervenience thesis and the moral status of spatio-temporal properties also change? It appears that expressivists' answer would have to be yes: since they explain the truth of the supervenience thesis by appeal to the function of morality which serves a particular practical need of ours, it seems that if we had no such practical need, the moral would not supervene on the non-moral. Consequently, provided that the supervenience thesis is moral, expressivism would imply that supervenience is a mind-dependent

moral truth because it makes this truth dependent on a need of ours. Mind-dependence, then, would become a genuine hazard to expressivism.

Finally, accepting that expressivism includes substantive moral assumptions would, of course, put an end to expressivists' aim of providing a purely non-moral account of ethics. By implicitly relying on moral evaluations, it would be accepted as a convincing metaethical account only if these evaluations were shared. Expressivism's 'persuasive reach' would, therefore, be more limited than originally thought. For instance, those who endorse the moral claim that actions ruled in by a plan are permitted might accept Gibbard's plan-based model; those who disagree will reject it as false or at best unfruitful because it cannot tell us anything illuminating about moral practices. Similarly, those who accept the moral judgement that the order of moral truths follows the structure of our endorsements might be inclined to accept Blackburn's endorsement-based model; those who do not share this moral verdict will reject Blackburn's expressivism. Hence, if key expressivist assumptions such as (P$_{20}$) could be exposed as moral, critics of expressivism would have to be convinced of their truth on moral grounds.

Would this also imply that expressivism would fail to give an illuminating account of ethics? I do not think so. Expressivist considerations about the purpose of moral vocabulary, the practicality of morality as well as its psychological and linguistic considerations could still be very informative and offer new understanding of our engagement in moral practices even if they were morally imbued. Importantly, when introducing the illumination requirement I deliberately did *not* declare that in order to be informative, metaethical accounts need to be external. Instead, I said that they must not give a 'just-so story' or simply repeat the internal, first-order commitments to which we subscribe within certain frameworks of thought, but that they widen our understanding of the frameworks themselves by explaining why we would engage in them. Expressivism would still do exactly that even if it contained substantive moral commitments: It would give an informative account *of* ethics despite operating from *within* ethics. Pointing out that we engage in moral practices because we need to plan and act, discuss and deliberate about our choices together certainly gives us a new perspective on moral activities which we would not obtain if we simply remained immersed within concrete first-order moral verdicts. Hence, expressivism could turn out to be self-enveloping in a different way than initially thought. Rather than being self-reflexive in the sense that its non-moral module presented on the first tier can explain its moral module as put forward on the second tier, expressivism could be self-enveloping in that it provides interesting insights about ethics whilst being itself a moral position that operates from within ethics.

7.4 EXPRESSIVIST FIGHT-BACK

How could Gibbard and Blackburn respond to this anti-Archimedean challenge? To start with, they could simply accept that at least one expressivist thesis is moral and swallow the implications presented in the previous paragraph. However, this is certainly not their preferred option—and not just because they would want to avoid the unwelcome consequences presented in the previous section. Rather, the finding that the general philosophical position of pragmatism as manifested in (P$_{20}$) would have to be regarded as moral if the anti-Archimedean challenge proved successful should, I believe, make us feel quite ill at ease and alert us to the possibility of something having gone wrong along the way. Identifying where exactly the flaw lies will thus be the focus of the re-

mainder of this chapter. Here, it is clear that expressivists would not want to locate the flaw with Hume's Law, declaring that contrary to Hume's thoughts, moral conclusions can be derived from exclusively non-moral premises. Expressivists would have to be rather desperate before choosing this option, as they normally fully embrace the insights gained by Hume and allow them to play a not unimportant role within their metaethical thinking. It is thus clear that expressivists would want to look for a different response to the anti-Archimedean challenge. First, I will consider how this alternative way should *not* be pursued. Then I will consider the most promising expressivist attempt to meet the challenge whilst keeping the combination with minimalism alive.

7.4.1 HOW NOT TO RESPOND

There are three routes which expressivists should not take in response to the anti-Archimedean challenge. The first of these tries to derive only innocuous non-moral conclusions from expressivist premises, the second appeals to a different interpretation of expressivist explanations and the third attempts to give up explanations of supervenience altogether. Let me explain.

FIRST ROUTE

Starting with the first route and limiting myself to Gibbard's explanation of supervenience, expressivists could try to modify the moral conclusion about supervenience in such a way as to turn it from a moral into a non-moral statement. In this case, expressivist premises would simply entail a non-moral conclusion and the anti-Archimedean challenge would evaporate. This path could be spelled out in two ways. Firstly, expressivists could transform the entailment of supervenience in such a way as to establish not that being *permitted*, say, supervenes on the non-moral, but that being *p-permitted* supervenes on the non-moral, where *p*-permitted means 'permitted relative to a given plan' (Gibbard 2003a: 89). Whilst 'permitted' is a normative, plan-laden concept, '*p*-permitted' is a straightforward non-normative, factual concept. Secondly, expressivists could argue that the plan-based model does not entail the *truth* of supervenience, but explains only our *belief* in moral supervenience, where this belief is again an innocuous, non-moral phenomenon.

However, given the specific design of Gibbard's and Blackburn's models, I think that both these suggestions about possible modifications try to find a gap where none exists. This is so because the inferences which expressivist models allow can never stop at our beliefs in moral truths or at sheer *p*-permissibility; they always drive further and engulf these moral truths themselves. The reason for this has implicitly been given when discussing Blackburn's commitment to pragmatism. More precisely, just as in the context of Blackburn's endorsement-based model, one cannot coherently accept Gibbard's plan-laden model, yet maintain that the moral does not supervene on the non-moral. For, if you buy into Gibbard's account, you must accept that moral judgements are plan-laden and that plans must choose actions on the basis of their non-moral qualities. At the same time, denying that the moral supervenes on the non-moral amounts to making a further normative judgement and, therefore, to making a further plan. Accordingly, trying to reject moral supervenience is incoherent because it attempts to flout what it, *qua* plan, necessarily presupposes: namely, that actions must be chosen on the basis of their non-moral features. Hence, a stance which accepts the plan-based model, yet dismisses moral supervenience, is incoherent. Accordingly, if you accept

Gibbard's and Blackburn's expressivism, there is no way around accepting the truth of moral supervenience.

Gibbard (2003a: 92, 98) himself is fully aware of this consequence of his account:

> We end up, then, with a strong result: anyone who thinks and plans is thereby committed to the supervenience of being [permitted] on [non-moral] fact. I myself am a thinker and planner, and so are you. I therefore invite you to join me in accepting and asserting something to which we are both committed: being [permitted] supervenes on [non-moral] fact. This is an invitation, if I'm right, that you cannot consistently reject. ... There's no question whether the Claim of [Supervenience] is true apart from the question of whether to live in accord with it—and no possible way to live fails to satisfy it.

Taking the pragmatist approach fully to heart, Gibbard thus realises that given our necessary practical commitment to the supervenience thesis, there is no space for the additional qualm of whether or not the moral *really* supervenes on the non-moral. Moreover, he (2003a: 93) explicitly rejects any attempt to transform supervenience from a normative into a non-normative claim, stating that the thesis of supervenience "must not be confused with the claim ... that being p-[permitted] supervenes on [non-moral] properties. The claim of supervenience is plan-laden, whereas the other claim, that being p-[permitted] supervenes on [non-moral] properties, is not". Blackburn also implicitly rejects a scaled-back version of the supervenience thesis. For, when discussing realist attempts to explain supervenience, Blackburn (1993a: 122) insists that the moral realist does "not explain supervenience at all: [he] merely [puts] conditions upon what can be *believed* to be the truth, not upon what *is* the truth. Our belief, he is saying, has to be consistent across naturalistic similarities—but this is no explanation of why, on his theory, the truth has to be". The implied claim is then that expressivism can explain the *truth* of the supervenience claim and not just our *belief* in this thesis. Identifying this as expressivism's distinctive edge, Blackburn thus implicitly rules out any scaled-back version of the supervenience thesis. Consequently, I do not believe that Gibbard or Blackburn could limit the reach of their models so as to stop at unproblematic non-moral conclusions. Once we accept their expressivist account, there is no way around accepting moral conclusions themselves. Gibbard's invitation to accept the supervenience thesis is, therefore, no real invitation at all.

SECOND ROUTE

However, maybe I have misinterpreted the nature of expressivist explanations and illegitimately conflated them with naïve subjectivism. To elaborate, expressivists are always more than keen to stress that, although moral judgements express endorsements (or plans), this does not imply that these moral verdicts are also made true by the endorsements which we entertain. For example, although Mary's statement 'Helping children flourish is good' expresses her approval of the promotion of children's welfare, her approval need not be what makes it true that helping children flourish is good. Whether or not it does make it true must be established through moral reflections. Maybe, expressivists could also take advantage of this difference between expression and truth-conditions in the case of supervenience. When explaining (P_{20}), I have already mentioned that the supervenience thesis is the 'propositional reflection' of our commitment to a particular endorsement pattern. The following passage by Blackburn provides some more details:

By a 'propositional reflection' I mean roughly any statement that, while appearing to make a factual claim about states of affairs, their interrelations, and their logic, is actually making claims about attitudes, *although* none of the propositions involved in the statement is to be analyzed into one whose subject is an attitude. ... If we return again to the [expressivist] explanation of [supervenience], we can see that it shares ... the feature that an attitude—the attitude of moral approval—is said to have certain properties, and this by itself is the truth of which [supervenience] is, in the above sense, a propositional reflection. Thus, the moral attitude is said to be necessarily held because of the naturalistic properties of its objects, and the statement of supervenience, made in terms of which differences entail which others, is a realistic-appearing way of putting the view that difference in moral attitude to two things must, logically, be justified by difference in beliefs about them. So the theory ... does give an account of the relation between moral predicates and moral attitudes that allows the anti-realist explanation of supervenience to be successful (Blackburn 1993a: 125-126).

Let us ignore here Blackburn's insinuation that the supervenience thesis only 'appears to make a factual claim about states of affairs'. When read minimally, Blackburn would have no quarrel with the claim that the supervenience thesis describes a certain relationship between moral and non-moral properties or states of affairs. More importantly for my purposes, on the basis of these elucidations expressivists could insist that their explanation of supervenience should be understood so as to maintain only that the supervenience claim is the propositional expression of a certain structure of our endorsements; however, this does not automatically imply that this structure is also what makes the supervenience thesis true. Whether or not our endorsements do play a role in the truth-conditions of the supervenience claim is again to be determined through moral deliberation. Accordingly, Blackburn and Gibbard could retreat to the position that their accounts analyse supervenience in expressivist terms, but leave it open whether or not the supervenience thesis is also true. As should be clear from my discussion of the first route, though, this move will not do either because once more it shows too much leniency where no leniency can be allowed, as neither Blackburn nor Gibbard allow any space to maintain that although we might be *committed* to the supervenience thesis, the *truth* of this thesis is open to debate. Accordingly, the parallel with the example of Mary's evaluation breaks down. Although expressivism does indeed leave open the truth and the truth-conditions of concrete moral judgements, about for instance the promotion of children's welfare, and can banish them to the second tier, it does take an engaged stance on the truth of supervenience and thus cannot hide behind the more modest claim about expressivist analyses.

THIRD ROUTE

The third route to meet the anti-Archimedean challenge is to give up altogether the claim that any metaethical account must be able to explain supervenience. For, in one sense we might think that Blackburn has dug a hole for expressivists by including conceptual supervenience in this set of explananda. After all, provided that the supervenience thesis is moral, demanding that any metaethical account be able to explain the truth of supervenience entails that these metaethical explanations must in some way or other be moral—it places a moral 'mole' straight into the explanatory requirement, thus playing straight into anti-Archimedeans' hands. This is exactly what I intended to avoid in chapter 5 and 6 by adopting a weaker version of the internal adequacy constraint which demands only that metaethical accounts be *compatible* with internal features of moral practices,

rather than *explain* them. For instance, this weaker constraint requires that metaethical positions be compatible with mind-independence, but does not demand that they also be able to explain why moral truths are mind-independent. However, Blackburn's stance on supervenience now presupposes the stronger version of the internal adequacy constraint, in that he requires that metaethical accounts must explain the truth of the supervenience thesis, rather than be compatible with it. Since any explanation of moral truths must be moral, this stronger version of internal adequacy thus entails that in order for metaethical accounts to achieve internal adequacy, they must be *moral* accounts which explain the features of morality from *within*. Upon realisation of this unwelcome result, though, could expressivists not simply respond to the anti-Archimedean challenge by withdrawing to the weaker version of the internal adequacy constraint, requiring only that metaethical accounts be compatible with supervenience, yet not explain its truth? In this case, expressivists would, of course, lose one argument for expressivism's supremacy over realism, but that would be a small price to pay.[126] Yet, although this thought is very enticing, it is also unsuccessful. For, declaring that expressivism *need* not explain the truth of supervenience obviously does not entail that expressivism *does* not explain its truth. In other words, crossing supervenience off the list of explananda does by no means change the fact that expressivist premises entail that the moral supervenes on the non-moral. This result can be avoided only if expressivists give up at least one of their premises in order to stop this moral inference. Expressivists can, therefore, not simply move from the stronger version of the internal adequacy constraint to its weaker form but must find some other way to meet the anti-Archimedean challenge.

7.4.2 HOW TO RESPOND

Having dismissed these first three attempts to meet the anti-Archimedean challenge, I will consider next an approach which may have greater chances of success. Since Blackburn's model is not troubled by concerns surrounding permissibility, I will concentrate only on supervenience here. To understand this approach better, it is helpful to disentangle two implicit difficulties which are wrapped up in the anti-Archimedean challenge. This first concerns the general question of how a normative conclusion can be derived from a set of exclusively non-moral premises. The second returns to the anti-Archimedean claim that supervenience is a moral thesis, which enables the Moral Doctrine Test and the moral interpretation of expressivism to gather momentum. Accordingly, in order to meet the anti-Archimedean challenge, I suggest that expressivists must demonstrate, firstly, how supervenience as a *normative* claim can follow from allegedly non-normative premises and, secondly, that supervenience is, contrary to the strong *prima facie* case for its moral status, a *non-moral* thesis. I will address these difficulties in turn, yet discuss the first issue only briefly as my main concern lies with the moral interpretation of supervenience.

NORMATIVE ENTAILMENTS

Starting with the first difficulty, let us look again at the first part of Blackburn's explanation of supervenience:

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126 This price becomes even smaller when we remember that this supremacy may vanish anyway once it is accepted that supervenience is a moral claim (see footnote 119).

(P$_{17}$) Moral judgements are expressions of endorsements which serve a specific practical function.

(P$_{18}$) This function can be fulfilled only if our patterns of endorsements are reliable and predictable. This is established either by endorsing two non-morally indiscernible actions φ-ing and π-ing, or by rejecting both. The function cannot be fulfilled if we endorse φ-ing, but not π-ing or vice versa.

(C$_{10}$) Hence, *qua* participants in this practice, we are necessarily committed to forming our endorsements in such a way as to endorse both φ-ing and π-ing, or to reject both φ-ing and π-ing, if φ-ing and π-ing do not differ in their non-moral features.

Since (C$_{10}$) is normative in that it instructs us how to regulate our endorsements, we can concentrate on this first part of Blackburn's explanation of supervenience when envisaging how normative conclusions could be derived from non-moral premises and need not be concerned just yet with further thoughts on supervenience.

Given Hume's Law, how is it possible that a normative conclusion such as (C$_{10}$) can be derived from the allegedly non-moral premises (P$_{17}$) and (P$_{18}$)? Without being able to go into great detail here, my suggestion is that this is made possible by the specific content of premise (P$_{17}$). More precisely, by making a statement about the *function* or *aim* of moral practices, (P$_{17}$) implicitly opens the door for normative instructions as to what to do in order to achieve this aim. This general relation between attributions of functions and normative instructions holds generally and is not limited to the present case. For instance, remember discussions in chapter 3 which revolved around the truth-aim of belief. There, I argued that the truth-aim entails certain norms of epistemic behaviour which concern the formation, revision and extinction of belief. Given that beliefs aim at truth, it follows that we *ought* to form beliefs in truth-conducive ways and that something is *wrong* with a belief which is upheld against conclusive evidence that it is false. Despite being non-normative, attributions of aims or functions thus stand in an intimate relation to *ought*s, i.e. to instructions as to how these aims are to be achieved. Importantly, the kind of normativity involved in these cases does not appear to be moral, but rather some form of instrumental rationality.[127] Hence, since the content of (P$_{17}$) pertains to the aim of moral practices and since the move from (P$_{17}$) and (P$_{18}$) to (C$_{10}$) is implicitly mediated through instrumental rationality which concerns the relation between ends and means to realise this ends, I suggest that this move is compatible with Hume's Law. Whether or not this general link between non-normative statements about aims and normative statements about how to achieve these aims can remain implicit or should be specified in an explicit premise to demonstrate the compatibility with Hume's Law is not to be my concern here. Rather, the crucial point is that expressivists have at their disposal strategies of demystifying the specific derivation of the normative instruction (C$_{10}$) from non-normative premises (P$_{17}$) and (P$_{18}$) without having to give up Hume's Law.

SUPERVENIENCE—NON-MORAL AFTER ALL?

Turning to my main interest, in order to defuse the anti-Archimedean challenge expressivists have to show that supervenience, though constraining moral truths, is nevertheless a *non-moral* thesis.

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127 Compare my thoughts about vindication$_1$ and instrumental rationality as discussed in chapter 6.

This approach differs from the first and second route of response discussed above in that it stands by the claim that expressivism entails the *truth* of supervenience (and not just some scaled-back conclusion in terms of belief or *p*-permissibility), yet insists that this truth is not moral. No doubt, this approach treads a fine line and requires subtle arguments to show against a minimalist background how supervenience can be normative but non-moral. But it shows good prospects of success—or so I will argue next. I will do so by considering what speaks for, what against the moral interpretation of supervenience.

ARGUMENT 1 – MINIMALISM

I briefly indicated above that Kramer's case for the moral interpretation of supervenience relies heavily on his claim that purpose-attributions to morality *tout court* must be moral. Since I could not find any support for this claim, I will not consider it as an argument for the moral status of supervenience here. Rather, as hinted previously, I believe that the possibility of minimalism being the driving force behind the moral interpretation of supervenience is to be taken much more seriously. As I explained in chapter 4, minimalism entails that claims about moral truths and facts never succeed in moving beyond the internal sphere of moral judgement. Rather than adding some kind of external, metaphysical quality, a statement such as 'It is true/a fact that helping children flourish is good' boils down to the first-order moral judgement that helping children flourish is good and thus stays within the realm of substantive moral judgement. Since the supervenience thesis pertains to possible changes in moral truths, this seems to suggest that minimalism also entails that supervenience is a moral thesis. As explained above, if this was so, then minimalism would, after all, play a crucial role in the classification of expressivism as a moral doctrine. Since minimalism would now entail that the supervenience thesis is moral and since the supervenience of the moral on the non-moral is derivable from expressivist premises, the Moral Doctrine Test could lock into place and tell us that at least one expressivist premise must be moral. As I said previously, by buying into minimalism, you would have to accept that the supervenience thesis is moral and by buying into expressivism, you must accept that the moral supervenes on the non-moral. Hence, to stand any chance of upholding the non-moral status of expressivism at all, the combination with minimalism would have to be severed.

Fortunately for expressivists, though, despite strong initial appearances to the contrary, minimalism does *not* entail that supervenience is a moral thesis. To see why, it is most helpful to employ the following understanding of supervenience here (Blackburn 1993a: 131):

(S) $N ((\exists x) (Fx \;\&\; G^*x \;\&\; (G^*xUFx)) \supset (y) (G^*y \supset Fy))$,[128]

where F stands in the present case for a moral property and G^* is the complete subvenient base of non-moral properties on which the moral property F supervenes or which 'underlies' F. Accordingly, the "formula says that as a matter of necessity, if something x is F, and G^* underlies this, then anything else in the physical or natural (or whatever) state G^* is F as well" (Blackburn 1993a: 131). Filled in with a concrete example and stripped down to the basic points relevant to the present discussion, the supervenience thesis states:

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128 Blackburn (1993a: 131) contrast (S) with "(N) $N (x) (G^*x \supset Fx)$" which he would classify as a synthetic moral truth.

(S*) If Hannibal is evil because he harms children, then Jack who harms children is evil.

Looking at the two judgements featuring within (S*)—'Hannibal is evil because he harms children' and 'Jack who harms children is evil'—we are clearly confronted with moral judgements. Accordingly, minimalism tells us that statements which ascribe truth to these verdicts are also moral verdicts. Crucially, though, this does *not* entail that the overall inference (S*) must also be moral. To illustrate this point, take the following parallel:

(H) If Humphrey is a dog, then Humphrey is an animal.

'Humphrey is a dog' and 'Humphrey is an animal' are clearly empirical statements which, if true, state empirical truths. However, this does not imply that the truth of (H) is empirical. Rather, it is clear that (H) is conceptually true—anyone who understands the meaning of 'dog' can infer that Humphrey is an animal if he is a dog without having to embark on any further empirical enquiries. Returning to the case of supervenience, this shows that although supervenience pertains to moral judgements the truth of which must, as minimalism teaches us, be moral, minimalism holds no sway over the question of how the truth of (S*) must be interpreted. Minimalism leaves open the question of whether the conditional expressed in (S*) states a moral or non-moral truth despite declaring that truth-ascriptions to moral judgements must amount to further moral judgements.

This leads to the second important insight for our assessment of minimalism's impact on the moral or non-moral status of supervenience, which is based on the simple observation that although minimalism declares that truth-ascriptions to moral judgements are moral, it does *not* give us any indication as to what counts as a moral judgement. *If* the statement 'Helping children flourish is good' is moral, then 'It is true that helping children flourish is good' is also a moral judgement. Similarly, *if* the claim 'No moral differences without non-moral differences' is moral, then 'It is true that there cannot be any moral differences unless there are non-moral differences' is also a moral judgement. However, minimalism does not tell us whether or not these antecedents hold. Rather, it is totally blind to the content and nature of those claims which are plugged into the truth-schema and needs to be supplemented with *independent* criteria as to how different statements and corresponding truths should be categorised.

Finally, we may think that in spite of what I have just said, minimalism does not leave any space for the possibility of supervenience being a non-moral thesis. After all, minimalism appears to collapse the distinction between allegedly external, theoretical claims about a practice and internal, first-order judgements within a practice. However, as my previous explanations should have made clear, this assessment is correct only with regard to a particular class of seemingly external statements about a practice, namely those which concern the existence of moral truths and facts. Yet, it is incorrect with regard to other claims which appear to be about a practice, rather than within it. Theses about the meaning of concepts are one example, claims about the function or regulatory principles of a practice are others. Hence, if anti-Archimedeans wanted to argue that these theses, in addition to claims pertaining to the existence of moral truths and facts, are moral, they have to look beyond minimalism to gain support for this classification.

To summarise these considerations, although it seems at first sight as if minimalism entailed that supervenience is a moral claim, this first impression is false. Anti-Archimedeans have to establish the moral status of the supervenience thesis independently from their employment of minimal-

ism. Hence, as a first and very important interim result, we can conclude that expressivists' adoption of minimalism does not force them to accept that supervenience is a moral thesis and abandon their non-moral self-image. Minimalism and the non-moral status of expressivism are compatible.

<center>ARGUMENT 2 – EXPLOITING THE MORAL DOCTRINE TEST I</center>

Of course, anti-Archimedeans already have a criterion at hand which is independent from minimalism and tells us when to classify a position as moral. This is the Moral Doctrine Test: A position counts as moral if it is inconsistent with at least one substantive moral verdict. Hence, if supervenience conflicts with at least one substantive moral verdict, then it must be a moral thesis. One such potential clash implicitly featured above when anti-Archimedeans explained that the supervenience thesis presupposes that, as captured in the limitation thesis, spatio-temporal properties are necessarily morally irrelevant.[129] This, though, seems to be a view which we can reject on moral grounds. Someone might hold, for instance, that that sheer fact that an action was performed on a certain day or at a certain place determines whether this action is right or wrong. No doubt, this view is morally preposterous; yet, that does not make it any less moral. Hence, since supervenience is inconsistent with the substantive moral verdict that spatio-temporal properties are morally relevant, the Moral Doctrine Test classifies the supervenience thesis as moral.

However, there is a way for expressivists to parry this move which, maybe surprisingly, exploits the Moral Doctrine Test to expressivism's advantage. For, Blackburn always emphasises that supervenience is not any old claim about moral discourse; rather, it is a *regulatory principle*, or *meta-rule*, or *presupposition* or *framework principle* in the sense that it determines how moral activities have to be regulated and which activities qualify as moral in the first place. He normally phrases this thesis in terms of competence with moral vocabulary: "To deny [the supervenience claim] would be to exhibit a conceptual confusion: a failure to grasp the nature of the relevant vocabulary or to follow out immediate implications of that grasp. … [To deny the supervenience claim] would be constitutive of lack of competence with the vocabulary" (Blackburn 1993a: 136). Assigning the status of a framework principle to moral supervenience, we can then define that a practice counts as moral only if it observes the supervenience constraint, whilst a judgement counts as moral only if it belongs to a practice which is governed by the supervenience constraint. Once this definitional thesis is combined with the Moral Doctrine Test, though, it allows expressivists to draw the following

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129 As a further counter-example to supervenience, Kramer (2009: 313) also discusses the case of the ascetic who argues that although he is morally obligated to eschew certain things, other people who are qualitatively indistinguishable from him are not so obligated. However, I do not believe that this is a genuine counter-example to the supervenience constraint since this case can be interpreted as one pertaining to existential commitments, rather than moral demands by which everyone is bound (see Gibbard 1990: 168). Indeed, I cannot even imagine a genuine violation of the supervenience constraint if Blackburn's limitation thesis is blanked out. For, once we bracket the limitation thesis, what could a violation of the supervenience constraint amount to? Evaluations of objects which are not based on *any* non-moral properties whatsoever? Since I do not believe that cases like these are even intelligible, I will not pursue this line of thought here. Yet, since Blackburn's (though not necessarily Gibbard's) explanation of supervenience does indeed presuppose the limitation thesis—mainly, I suggest, because the guidance function of moral discourse could otherwise not be fulfilled—and since the moral interpretation of the limitation thesis has a strong initial appeal, I believe that concentrating on the case of the moral (ir)relevance of spatio-temporal properties has the best chance of showing that a moral thesis can be inconsistent with the supervenience constraint.

conclusion: A judgement classifies as moral only if it observes the supervenience constraint. Hence, *per definitionem* there is no judgement which is moral and violates the supervenience constraint. Consequently, since there is no moral judgement which could possibly be inconsistent with the supervenience constraint, the Moral Doctrine Test classifies the supervenience thesis as non-moral. The Moral Doctrine Test thus provides an unlikely source of support to expressivists.

This argument shifts our focus from the classification of supervenience as moral or non-moral to the classification of concrete verdicts as moral or non-moral. More precisely, it entails that a verdict which assigns moral relevance to spatio-temporal properties does *not* count as moral. Notice here that the Moral Doctrine Test does nothing to contest or confirm this classification. For, the Moral Doctrine Test tells us that *if* a verdict such as 'Eating meat was wrong because it was done on the 5th of May' is moral, then supervenience is also moral in virtue of its inconsistency with this verdict. Yet, it does not determine whether or not the verdict 'Eating meat was wrong because it was done on the 5th of May' is indeed moral. Hence, the Moral Doctrine Test can do nothing to arbitrate between the expressivist classification of this verdict as non-moral and its anti-Archimedean classification as moral. How else could we decide?

One expressivist argument for the non-moral classification of a claim such as 'Eating meat was wrong because it was done on the 5th of May' could be that this verdict is unintelligible as a moral claim—we simply cannot make any sense of it as a moral judgement.[130] This bewilderment is not down to puzzlement about how anyone could put forward such an outlandish moral view; rather, we cannot even interpret it *as* an outlandish moral view. Whatever someone who asserts such a claim does, she does *not* put forward a moral judgement. It is clear, though, that anti-Archimedeans would not be particularly impressed by this response. Indeed, their opposition to this 'argument from unintelligibility' is quite plausible. After all, a person who asserts this statement clearly seems to *evaluate* eating meat as wrong, although she bases this judgement on *morally* preposterous grounds. Moreover, since her judgement attributes a thin moral predicate to eating meat, it appears to fall within the class of paradigmatic, substantive moral views as introduced in chapter 4. Furthermore, it does not seem to be the case that this judgement is unintelligible, as for instance a statement such as 'It is raining, but I do not believe that it is raining' would be. With regard to this latter instance of Moore's paradox, we genuinely cannot read any sense into it. Indeed, if anyone uttered this statement, our puzzlement may even be so comprehensive that we would not even ask how he would want to back up this statement. Evaluations on the basis of spatio-temporal properties, though, appear to be quite different from this case. Certainly, our bafflement when confronted with a statement such as 'Eating meat was wrong because it was done on the 5th of May' would be immense. We surely would not believe that this is 'the end of the story'; rather, our first impulse would be no doubt to ask for further justification—maybe, what the person had in mind is that eating meat is wrong on the 5th of May because this coincides with a certain religious festival which forbids the consumption of meat, for instance. Yet, it seems plausible to assume with anti-Archimedeans that this bewilderment is first and foremost a moral bafflement and not a matter of sheer unintelligibility. I suggest, then, that the 'argument from unintelligibility' is not good enough a test for moral status. Firstly, it is not as uncontroversial as expressivists would want to suggest, as the considerations in this paragraph show. Secondly, it leads to a stalemate between anti-Archimedeans and expressivists, with the former insisting on intelligibility and the latter insisting on

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130 Blackburn hinted at this train of thought in private correspondence.

unintelligibility. This stalemate is not resolvable unless further reasons for the moral or non-moral interpretation of claims such as 'Eating meat was wrong because it was done on the 5th of May' are provided. Indeed, given the *prima facie* case for the moral interpretation of this claim, I would even go so far as to place this onus of proof on expressivists' shoulders.

One attempt to discharge this onus and resolve the stalemate in expressivism's favour could involve returning to thoughts about the function of morality as presented in chapter 5. More precisely, expressivists could support their categorisation of judgements as moral on the basis of supervenience by declaring that we can understand employment of moral concepts only on grounds of their practical function, which can be fulfilled only if the supervenience constraint is in place. As a next step, they can declare that since we are interested in understanding these specific activities of ours, we are justified in taking their features as our reference point for the classification of other practices as moral or non-moral. Put differently, the definition of 'moral' is modelled on our own moral practices, which implies that only verdicts which resemble our own moral judgements can count as moral. Accordingly, if we encounter a practice which possesses the same practical function and is, therefore, governed by supervenience, we will count it as moral; however, if it does not share these features with our own moral activities, then no such classification is forthcoming. Applied to the present case, this implies that a judgement such as 'Eating meat was wrong because it was done on the 5th of May' is not classified as moral because it does not resemble our own moral judgements in crucial respects.

I believe that this response moves in the right direction, yet that it should be spelled out differently. That is, I do not find it entirely satisfactory because it does nothing to address the intuitions about intelligibility presented in the previous paragraph. Excluding verdicts such as 'Eating meat was wrong because it was done on the 5th of May' from the class of moral judgements on the basis of definitions—even on the basis of definitions which are anchored in considerations about the function of moral discourse—will thus rightly leave a somewhat sour taste in anti-Archimedeans' mouths. However, a more subtle way to exploit thoughts about the function of expressivism may be able to deal with anti-Archimedean intuitions about the moral status of certain verdicts *without* having to admit that supervenience is moral.

ARGUMENT 3 – EXPOITING THE MORAL DOCTRINE TEST II

In contrast to the second argument for the non-moral status of supervenience, the third argument does not attempt to rule out inconsistencies between supervenience and allegedly substantive first-order moral views by excluding these views from the class of moral judgements, but by adopting a more subtle way to show that these inconsistencies are only apparent, rather than real. More precisely, this third argument acknowledges that there are moral judgements which appear to be inconsistent with the supervenience thesis, yet maintains that this apparent inconsistency nevertheless does *not* entail that the supervenience constraint is moral.

To understand how this feat could be pulled off, recall the expressivist approach to judgement-internalism and Iago who proclaimed that good is to be shunned and evil to be sought. In chapter 6, I explained that expressivists can reconcile Iago's case with judgement-internalism by declaring that we can conceive of Iago as making a moral judgement only against a background in which moral judgement and motivation are properly aligned, because the moral concepts used by Iago enter language only in light of their practical function which includes its bond to motivation. As a

result, although Iago qualifies as putting forward genuine moral views despite reversing the link between judgement and motivation, his case is not really a counter-example to judgement-internalism; it does not allow us to draw any conclusions about its truth or status. For, although it seems *as if* Iago's moral views falsify judgement-internalism, this impression is false. Rather, Iago's case implicitly *presupposes* judgement-internalism, which is based on expressivism's non-moral purpose-attribution. Consequently, it would be wrong to appeal to Iago's case in order to establish that judgement-internalism is false.

I suggest that expressivists should now apply exactly the same strategy to the case of supervenience. That is, they should argue that they can reconcile certain moral judgements, such as 'Eating meat was wrong because it was done on the 5th of May', with supervenience by declaring that we can conceive of these judgements as moral only against a background in which moral practices and judgements observe the supervenience constraint. This is because the moral concepts used in these verdicts enter language in light of their practical function which can be fulfilled only if supervenience obtains. As a result, verdicts such as 'Eating meat was wrong because it was done on the 5th of May', though being moral, are not really counter-examples to supervenience; they do not allow us to draw any conclusions about the truth or status of supervenience. For, although it seems as if these moral views are inconsistent with supervenience, which would then result in its classification as moral through the Moral Doctrine Test, this impression is false. Rather, these verdicts implicitly *presuppose* the supervenience constraint, which is based on expressivism's non-moral purpose-attribution. Consequently, it would be wrong to appeal to verdicts such as 'Eating meat was wrong because it was done on the 5th of May' in order to establish that the supervenience constraint is a moral thesis.

Accordingly, this strategy allows expressivists on the one hand to account for anti-Archimedean intuitions which categorise verdicts such as 'Eating meat was wrong because it was done on the 5th of May' as substantive moral judgements. As such, it makes it possible to engage with these views on *moral* grounds and to rule them out on the basis of being necessarily *morally* false. On the other hand, this strategy allows expressivists to maintain that inconsistencies between supervenience and such moral judgements are only apparent, rather than genuine, and thus do *not* allow us to conclude on the basis of the Moral Doctrine Test that the supervenience thesis is moral. These verdicts have no significance for the moral or non-moral interpretation of supervenience because they obscure the fact that they implicitly *presuppose* supervenience. Hence, expressivists can not only exploit the Moral Doctrine Test to their advantage, but also allow moral dismissals of claims, about for instance the moral relevance of spatio-temporal properties, *without* having to give up their claim that supervenience is a framework principle of moral discourse which regulates and constraints moral truths, yet does nonetheless not follow from substantive moral truths.[131]

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131 Compare again Blackburn's (1993a: 131) differentiation between (S) and (N) mentioned in footnote 128. Whilst Blackburn would maintain that claims about necessary dependence relations between specific moral properties and sets of non-moral properties must be ascertained on moral grounds, he does not hold that the truth of the supervenience claim is a moral truth. This position would be ruled out, though, if (S) was understood as a derivation of (N). For, in this case, (S) would follow from the substantive moral truth (N) that everything which is G^* is also F and would thus be moral. In this case, we would face a purely internal, moral explanation of (S). However, Blackburn does not believe that (S) is simply a derivation of (N). If he is right, then the expressivist claim that (S) does not follow from substantive moral truths is back in contention. Of course, there may be ways to contest this stance on the

Consequently, expressivists have now reached a point where they can defuse the most serious anti-Archimedean challenge. Although it is true that supervenience is a normative thesis which follows from expressivist premises, this does not entail that any of these premises must be moral. Firstly, expressivists can defend their position that, albeit normative, supervenience is a non-moral framework principle of moral discourse which does not follow from substantive moral views, but is derivable from the function of moral vocabulary. Secondly, the derivation of this normative conclusion from non-normative expressivist premises is demystified by appeal to the specific content of the premises involved, which implicitly include an intimate link between the function of moral discourse and instructions as to how this function is to be fulfilled. As a result, no substantive moral verdict is directly entailed by expressivist premises; no conclusions can be drawn on the basis of the Moral Doctrine Test about the moral nature of expressivism. The anti-Archimedean challenge has been overcome.

7.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have attempted to give a stronger footing to the anti-Archimedean claim that expressivism is a moral doctrine. I did so by trying to find a direct entailment relation between expressivist premises and moral conclusions, which would allow the Moral Doctrine Test to conclude that at least one expressivist premise must be moral. I argued that the most promising case of such an entailment is expressivism's explanation of supervenience, provided that anti-Archimedeans can establish that the supervenience thesis is moral. Since I admitted that the *prima facie* case for the moral interpretation of supervenience is strong, I considered how it could be used to anti-Archimedeans' advantage and which consequences would follow from the moral interpretation of expressivism. I suggested that these consequences are not just unsettling for expressivists; rather, the conclusion that a general philosophical position such as pragmatism would have to count as moral if the anti-Archimedean challenge were successful should alert us of the possibility that something went wrong in this challenge. After discussing several unsuccessful expressivist attempts to locate this fault and divert the anti-Archimedean challenge, I examined the possibility of expressivists' designing a more successful counter-move by arguing that supervenience is, contrary to the *prima facie* case, not a moral thesis. The first important result of these examinations was that defending the non-moral status of supervenience does not require expressivists to give up minimalism. Minimalism and the non-moral interpretation of supervenience are compatible. The second important result was that expressivists are able to argue that, although certain genuinely moral judgements appear to be inconsistent with the supervenience constraint, this appearance is false because these judgements implicitly presuppose supervenience. Consequently, the Moral Doctrine Test does not classify supervenience as a moral claim. As a result, the derivation of supervenience from expressivist premises does not imply that expressivism is a moral doctrine; the anti-Archimedean challenge has been met. Moreover, expressivists overcame the anti-Archimedean challenge *without* relinquishing minimalism or rejecting basic anti-Archimedean assumptions, about for instance the Moral Doc-

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relation between (N) and (S). If my arguments presented above are correct, though, these ways could not be based on alleged inconsistencies between individual substantive moral verdicts and supervenience or indeed minimalism.

trine Test or the moral status of certain individual verdicts. Expressivists do not only repel anti-Archimedean attacks; they beat anti-Archimedeans at their own game.

8. CONCLUSION

The stability of the expressivist-minimalist marriage is normally examined with regard to minimalism's semantic and psychological implications for expressivism. The first part of my thesis touched on these better known discussions, arguing that minimalist conceptions of truth, fact, representation and belief are a real boon for expressivism, enabling it to account for representational features of moral discourse without incurring any metaphysical costs which would compromise the expressivist approach. However, the main aim of my thesis was to disclose a certain complication within expressivism's relationship to minimalism which has so far gone almost totally unnoticed. This is minimalism's close link to the anti-Archimedean movement which proclaims that, contrary to expressivists' self-image, expressivism is not a morally neutral account, but a moral doctrine. Since minimalism collapses a certain distinction between allegedly external claims *about* ethics and internal claims *within* ethics, it provides formidable support for the anti-Archimedean movement and arouses the serious suspicion that once expressivists adopt minimalism, they have no choice but to accept the anti-Archimedean claim that expressivism is a moral position. The considerations put forward in the second part of my thesis showed that this anti-Archimedean challenge and minimalism's role within it are subtle and serious. However, I argued that it can nevertheless be met *without* having to give up minimalism. The crack in the expressivist-minimalist marriage can be sealed.

More precisely, I examined three anti-Archimedean attacks on expressivists' non-moral self-image and minimalism's part within them. I explained in chapter 4 that minimalism, by deflating notions such as truth and fact, supports the claim that theses about morality's objectivity must be moral in status. This result offers significant advantages both for anti-Archimedeans and expressivists. However, I also suggested that it holds no *direct* sway over the moral or non-moral status of expressivism. Since expressivism's distinctive theses do not pertain to morality's objectivity but its practicality, theses on which minimalism has no immediate impact, there is hope that expressivism can retain its non-moral status without having to sever its link to minimalism. In this vein, I argued in chapter 5 that the first anti-Archimedean attempt to show that expressivism is a moral doctrine fails, as its argument for the moral status of expressivist purpose-attributions to morality *tout court* cannot be made to stick. Since positive evaluations of such purpose-attributions are in principle detachable from any such attributions, expressivists emerged from this first encounter with anti-Archimedeans unscathed. Chapter 6 confirmed this result by demonstrating that expressivists also win a second encounter with anti-Archimedeans which focuses on further expressivist theses about, for instance, vindication and moral semantics. However, in chapter 7 I considered the strongest anti-Archimedean attack on the expressivist non-moral self-image which aimed to reveal instances in which moral conclusions directly follow from allegedly non-moral expressivist premises. Concentrating mainly on the case of supervenience, I argued that if anti-Archimedeans could show supervenience to be a moral thesis which is directly entailed by expressivist premises, the Moral Doctrine Test would conclude that at least one expressivist premise must be moral. Since there was the real possibility of minimalism playing a crucial, albeit subtle, role within this challenge, I argued that its influence over expressivism's moral or non-moral status could well turn out to be *indirect*. More precisely, if minimalism played a key role in the classification of supervenience as a moral thesis and

if the supervenience of the moral on the non-moral was derivable from expressivist premises, the adoption of minimalism itself would push for the conclusion that expressivism is a moral doctrine. Minimalism and the expressivist non-moral self-image would be incompatible.

However, I argued that expressivists can overcome this most serious anti-Archimedean challenge *without* having to relinquish minimalism or indeed call into question central anti-Archimedean assumptions, such as the Moral Doctrine Test or the classification of certain individual verdicts as moral. The line they have to tread to achieve this is doubtless fine. However, they can do so successfully by pointing out that, although minimalism implies that truth-ascriptions to concrete substantive moral judgements are moral, it does *not* imply that the supervenience thesis is also moral. Moreover, by declaring that supervenience is a framework principle of moral discourse which is implicitly *presupposed* by all moral judgements but does *not* follow *from* moral judgements, they can exploit the Moral Doctrine Test to their advantage by arguing that no apparent inconsistencies with moral verdicts allow us to infer that the supervenience thesis is moral. As a result, no substantive moral verdict is directly entailed by expressivist premises; no conclusions can be drawn about the moral nature of expressivism. The anti-Archimedean challenge has been met. Accordingly, none of the anti-Archimedean attacks examined in this thesis succeeds in establishing that expressivism is a moral doctrine. If anti-Archimedeans still want to campaign for the moral status of expressivism, they thus have to find other arguments to support this venture. Most importantly for my purposes, minimalism, though being intricately linked with the anti-Archimedean movement, does not provide this required support. Minimalism and expressivists' non-moral self-image are compatible. The expressivist-minimalist marriage has once more overcome a major hurdle and 'lives to fight another day'.

Yet, although the anti-Archimedean movement may be ultimately unsuccessful, engagement with its theses nevertheless unearths very interesting results about expressivism and metaethical debate in general. It forces us to sharpen our understanding of expressivist key theses and their limitations, as for instance with regard to vindication, conative attitudes and the rejection of error-theories. Moreover, it leads to the key finding that moral realism should not be defined as a position which centres on the causal-explanatory role of moral properties and sheds new light on the expressivist-realist contest. Since expressivism need not even reject internal realist explanations of moral thinking as false but can engulf them, expressivism and moral realism if understood in causal-explanatory terms do not meet on a level playing field. Hence, if the expressivist-realist contest is supposed to be reanimated, this new life must be found elsewhere. Finally, engagement with anti-Archimedeans opens our eyes to the crucial insight that some of those considerations which have so strongly dominated metaethical debate and the rivalry between expressivism and moral realism—for instance about the causal (in)efficacy of moral properties or the possibility of motivational moral beliefs—are misconceived. Anti-Archimedeans teach us that many of the most important discussions to be had in metaethics are not starkly metaphysical debates, but *moral* questions. When should we feel confident and when should we feel insecure about our moral beliefs? Which considerations have the power to rock our moral foundations? Should the realisation that we engage in moral activities because of a practical need of ours lead to more cautious evaluations of the worlds around us? These questions and others are pressing, *moral* concerns. Certainly, appreciating as much should not detract from very important non-moral enquiries into ethics, such as the expressivist project to illuminate moral practices and the role they play within our lives. Yet, the anti-

Archimedean movement together with minimalism nonetheless help us re-calibrate our assessment of certain metaethical debates and re-direct our focus in crucial respects from *meta*ethics to *ethics*.

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