

favour of unqualified verification theory of meaning is an untenable doctrine. First, any plausible anti-realist theory of meaning, based on the concept of verification or proof, has to incorporate the notion of truth in order to give a fully satisfactory account of the meaning of some compound sentences (e.g. conditionals), our inferential practice, and—what is perhaps the most important case—of a language applicable to empirical reality (the latter is emphasized more than once in Dummett's replies; see, for instance, p. 296 and 328). Second, if this is to be a substantial, and not merely a "disquotational", notion of truth, the idea of verification has to be extended in such a way as to cover not only what has been verified or can be verified, but also what could have been verified; in other words, it has to embrace what is verifiable "in principle" (in the broadest possible sense of this notoriously ambiguous phrase). And third, an anti-realist theory of meaning is under an obligation to deal with cases of sentences which are merely non-conclusively verifiable or admit several non-equivalent verification procedures. Dummett believes that all those modifications are so thoroughgoing that it would be confusing to continue to call the ensuing view a "verification theory of meaning". It is rather a justificationist theory of meaning which treats meaning "as given by the totality of possible grounds justifying assertion (or some canonical selection of them)" (p. 291). However this is mainly a terminological point without considerable importance. Also relatively unimportant in this context is the concern whether these modifications do not provide us with so "realistic" a picture of the world (of the world having fully determinate structure which confers meanings on our sentences) that we no longer know if it is still a form of anti-realism or rather a moderate realism, since this too can be dismissed as a largely terminological matter. Nevertheless, it is certainly not unimportant whether there is a legitimate route from extreme or global anti-realism to the justificationist theory of meaning, entertained recently by Dummett. To put it differently: the question is whether the moderating or weakening of radical anti-realism can be effectively achieved without smuggling into it some bits of realist truth-conditional theory of meaning (e.g. in the account of counterfactual verification conditions) or without presupposing in advance that such a moderate view is available. And this problem of internal consistency of anti-realism appears to me as the most pressing at this stage of the Dummett's project.

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Beyond Morality. RICHARD GARNER. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994. Pp. xiii, 404.

The idea that intrinsic values and demands are built into the very fabric of the universe, holds Garner, is an assumption "on which much of our thought and practice appears to be built" (p. 57). In fact, this idea—that there are *sui generis* properties possessing an objectively prescriptive authority independent of our interests, desires, and needs—is built into the very concept of morality, and since the idea is false, morality must be rejected. Garner not only defends the sort of "error theory" of morality that has been advanced previously by J. L. Mackie and Bernard Williams but also devotes much of the book to arguing that we can get on just fine without belief in morality. The book has some considerable strengths. Fun is in

short supply in philosophy, and Garner clearly has some in attacking the earnest assumption underlying much moral philosophy: that in trying to get things right intellectually, one is contributing, if only a little, to getting things right in the world. Another virtue is Garner's willingness to bring to bear on his subject major themes from other philosophical and religious traditions, from anthropology, and theories in cognitive and neuro-psychology. His book is broad, rich, and often entertaining in ways philosophy books usually are not. On the other side, Garner does not mine his comparative material very deeply. Similarly, his argument for "amoralism" and against competing positions is more hit-and-run than full engagement with the enemy, and he does not clearly think through the implications of his own position.

"Moralists" agree with Garner that the idea of *sui generis* properties with a categorical prescriptivity is essential to morality but hold this idea to be true. They are Garner's most direct target. His argument against them is familiar enough. Moral debates such as the ones between the vegetarian and the meat-eater and between foes of abortion and abortion-rights advocates are irresolvable because each side's position rests on simultaneously irrefutable but unprovable first principles. Garner grants that the mere fact of disagreement does not disprove the existence of a single truth in these matters, but he cites Mackie's argument that the best explanation of actual patterns of moral disagreement leads to skepticism about what such a single truth could be. Part of the argument here seems simply the claim that the single truth must be categorically prescriptive and that the very idea of categorical prescriptivity is implausible on the face of it. While many of us may agree, this is a case of preaching to the converted. The other part of Garner's argument rests on the claim that moral debates terminate only with arbitrary assertions of first principles by each side. While Garner acknowledges the reply by some that it is acceptable justification to rest on first principles that cannot be justified themselves, he counters that such a reply is not satisfactory because moral argument and justification always makes legitimate the "Why?" question. While this may be true, it also seems true of scientific disagreements where each side could rest its argument on first principles that have no justification themselves.

Because Garner holds that belief in morality implies a belief in the Platonic and Kantian claims about morality, he opposes not only moralism but accounts of morality holding that morality is ultimately about natural facts, Humean accounts denying the existence of categorical prescriptivity without holding that such prescriptivity is essential to the concept of morality, and relativistic accounts denying that there must be a single true morality in order for there to be any true morality at all. The core of Garner's argument against such alternatives is the claim that categorical prescriptivity is essential to the idea of morality. The moralist position truly characterizes the sort of thing morality would be if it were to exist, so the naturalist, Humean, and relativist accounts do not give us morality. However, Garner does not do much to persuade the unconverted that the concept of morality is sufficiently univocal and determinate to support his claim. To be fair, it should be noted that he often seems not even trying to produce a tight argument against rival accounts but merely introducing the reader to some of the important literature and staking out his preferred alternative to moralism.

Much of the discussion throughout this book takes on a speculative and exploratory tone. His chapter on human nature begins with a survey of theories of human nature and then veers off into some extremely speculative theories on the

origin of self-consciousness and on early human society as matriarchal in structure. These theories are applied only loosely and briefly to his main theme of amorality versus moralism, mainly with respect to the question of when and how human beings came to conceive a conventionally-established set of social rules as objectively binding and rooted in the fabric of things. Garner admits that the theories he has just discussed are speculative and moves on without making much philosophical hay from them. It often seems he just likes telling a good story, and the reader may get some fun taking it in such a spirit.

Garner provides competent capsule summaries of some main philosophical and religious themes in the Indian and Chinese traditions, suggesting that both moralism and amorality appear in these traditions. There is much that is admirable and enjoyable in Garner's willingness to explore different and interesting ideas but at the same time, this reader wished for more caution in his comparisons. For example, his comparison of Buddhist or Daoist detachment from conventional morality to his own brand of amorality does capture some similarities but misses some significant differences. Both Buddhism and Daoism distance themselves from conventional morality on the grounds that its dualisms and conceptual categories distort and obscure the world. Such a position is not necessarily a denial of the reality of value, but may be a denial of the accessibility of value to the discursive intellect.

At some points Garner recognizes the differences between these two possibilities but attributes without textual argument his own, debunking stance toward value to the Buddhists and Daoists. For example, he dismisses Creel's reading of Daoism as presupposing the universe is intrinsically good (p. 160). Interpretation on this matter is highly debatable, but Creel's reading does have the virtue of readily explaining why Daoists assume that acting spontaneously and with the natural grain of things will have wonderful results. Similarly, Garner makes the Daoist Zhuangzi out to be a tough-minded skeptic about the existence of value (p. 292), but on another interpretation Zhuangzi is criticizing conventional moralities for their failure to capture the many different kinds of conflicting values that do indeed exist. At times, Garner does not even seem to recognize a difference between the view of value as purely conventional and the view of value as an independent reality we cannot adequately describe. At one point (pp. 290–91), Garner professes to see no real difference between such a mysticism and his own debunking stance that value is purely conventional, arguing that anyone who places morality beyond language and thought has for all practical purposes adopted amorality. However, to apply this view to Buddhism and Daoism is to miss the possibility that these philosophies held in a special kind of access to a realm of independently-existing value that is not reducible to language or the discursive intellect.

Eastern traditions play a role in Garner's interesting argument that we can get on quite well without morality. Against the criticism that amorality contributes to immoral behavior, Garner's reply is that the amoralist need not be a monster, that she can respond compassionately to other people's suffering. The worry here, of course, is that there seems no necessity that the amoralist will respond with compassion, and here Garner makes extensive use of two themes from Eastern traditions: first, that there is a way of experiencing the world that provides information about the world not available through the analytical, discursive intellect; and second, that this way of experiencing the world is bound up with the reduction and control of desire, especially self-concerned desire. The rough idea in Garner's use

of these themes is that we normally perceive the world through a highly selective conceptual filter composed of theories of the world, our moralities and our personal goals and desires. These elements filter out information about the world because they ignore data that does not fit with them (as in the case of our theories of the world), because they are based on illusions (as in the case of morality and its claim to be rooted in the fabric of the world), or because they render salient a tiny fraction of what is in the world (for example, only what pertains to the satisfaction of our goals and desires). If we follow the Buddhist and Daoist debunking of morality's claims about the world and their strategies for reducing and controlling desire, we will be able to see the world more fully and clearly. Garner says at one point, "Clean and copious information will improve our decision making, trigger our natural compassion, and make it relatively safe for us to trust our spontaneous impulses" (p. 333). The debunking of morality's claim to have a monopoly on truth allows us to suspend our judgmental viewpoint of other persons and to better understand their own viewpoints, and we are more likely to feel compassion for them. The reduction and control of desire, especially self-concerned desire, also has the effect of triggering natural compassion.

There is much that is refreshing in Garner's attempt to work out this line of argument. One does not often see a professional philosopher advancing such homely advice as simply accepting the weather for whatever it turns out to be, driving one's car more "harmoniously" than usual, looking for opportunities to yield to pedestrians and to other drivers, and in cases of conflict to try giving in to someone on some matter. Garner appears here as a latter-day Stoic informed by Buddhist meditation, Hindu karmic yoga, and Daoist *wu wei*. However, it is distressing that he does not discuss at all the ways in which social, economic, and political institutions and practices can greatly inhibit the expression of natural compassion and encourage conflicting impulses that may be just as natural as compassion. Moreover, problems arise from the way Garner lifts the Eastern ideas from a supporting network of ideas.

Consider the question of why a clearer view of things would make it relatively safe for us to trust our spontaneous impulses. In the context of the Eastern traditions, one sees how this idea becomes plausible. Garner mentions the theme in the *Bhagavad Gita* that if we abandon our individual egos, wills, conscious decision-making mechanisms, desires, ends, purposes, and goals, we can invite God into our lives and allow him to work through us. He also mentions the Daoist theme that through connectedness with things, we will be able to naturally and spontaneously act in the appropriate ways. The Daoist theme strongly suggests the existence of a natural grain of things, a normative grain with which we can become attuned despite its inaccessibility to the discursive intellect. Moreover, this natural grain on most interpretations of the *Dao De Jing* is tied up with a metaphysical vision of the universe as an organic unity, a vision that coheres with and supports an emphasis on reduction of self-concerned desire and compassionate action. Such themes save these Eastern philosophies from the criticism that they promote a purely self-regarding concern for one's own tranquility. The problem is that Garner has arrived at his amorality by way of a tough-minded and naturalistic skepticism that seems inconsistent with or at least uncongenial to these themes, and therefore he seems unable to make use of them to support his trust in spontaneous reaction to "clean and copious information." There may be answers to this problem (e.g., some may argue that the Eastern themes are not so inconsistent with a tough-minded naturalistic approach, and others may dispute

the interpretations of these themes that have allowed me to pose the problem for Garner), but he does not even raise it as a problem.

Equally troubling is Garner's unclarity about the question of whether amorality is a rejection of moral values and principles altogether. On one possible interpretation of his position, the amoralist need not necessarily reject the practical content of moral values but only the claim to their categorical prescriptivity. Natural compassion is not necessarily antagonistic to moral values such as generosity, benevolence and justice, and in fact such values might serve to channel the expression of a compassion that might otherwise be unfocused and erratic. Some things Garner says are consistent with this interpretation. At one point (p. 50), for example, Garner suggests the amoralist can exploit moral language to condemn selfishness as long as she does not imply through the use of such language that her judgment is objectively binding. He points out that one can evaluate things according to standards as long as one has no illusions about the source of these standards.

At other times, however, Garner seems to hold that amorality requires the rejection of the practical content of values. For example, he seems to think the amoralist must avoid having to admit that certain things are *desirable* (p.283). Perhaps Garner is thinking that the standard meaning of 'desirable' implies some sort of categorical prescriptivity (that one somehow ought to desire it whether or not one's existing motivations require one to desire it), but he neglects the possibility that the amoralist can regard something as desirable because it accords with whatever standards she has adopted. A neglect of this possibility explains why Garner denies Nietzsche the title of amoralist on the grounds that he values strength (p. 284). One wonders why Nietzsche is not entitled to evaluate according to standards he has chosen. He can be read, after all, as making the point that one can adopt certain values as one's own without claiming for them a categorical prescriptivity or a rootedness in the fabric of things.

One wonders how the amoralist can take a coherent stance on the practical problems of life without adopting some coherent set of values, however contingent and conventional she takes them to be. Having said this, I must also say that I have great sympathy for Garner's criticism of the claim that rejecting moralism spells a disaster. He is right to point out that morality can be used to defend cruelty, selfishness, exploitation and neglect (p. 296), and the conviction that one's values are part of the fabric of the universe or categorically prescriptive for all has contributed to and justified enormous cruelty and bloodshed. But Garner has not shown that we can do without values at all, nor did he need to show this.

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Socializing Epistemology: The Social Dimensions of Knowledge.

FREDERICK F. SCHMITT (ed.). Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 1994. Pp. x, 315.

I

In his introductory essay "Socializing Epistemology: An Introduction through Two Sample Issues", Frederick F. Schmitt takes social epistemology to be "the conceptual and normative study of the relevance of social relations, roles, inter-