WRIGHT ON DISPUTES OF INCLINATION

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In his recent paper "On Being in a Quandary" (*Mind* 110), Crispin Wright attempts to solve three distinct philosophical problems by invoking the notion of a "quandary". One of the problems he addresses is the problem of making room for the intuitive distinction between "disputes of fact" and "disputes of inclination", i.e. between disputes where disagreements may not be an indication of one party's error, and disputes where they must be. In this note I want to put forward 3 objections to Wright's solution to this problem, namely (a) that it fails to be close the commonsense notion of a dispute of inclination, (b) that an analogy with phenomena of vagueness, with which Wright tries to support his solution, is far-fetched, and (c) it falls foul of an aim Wright set for his framework in *Truth and Objectivity* (Wright 1992). Before stating my objections in §2, I need to clarify Wright's exact position, wich I shall do in §1. In §3, I briefly assess the range of alternative positions.

1.Blameless Disagreements and Quandaries

Wright distinguishes disputes of inclination from disputes of fact. The former are disputes where it is intuitively possible that neither disputant should be said to have made a mistake, as for example when two people disagree on whether Ali G is funny. It may be that both have exactly the opinion they ought to have about Ali G given their beliefs, preferences and perhaps sense of humour, and that these beliefs and preferences and this sense of humour are in no way inappropriate. The two parties can "agree to differ" without blaming each other for getting things wrong. Disagreements of fact are disagreements that cannot be blameless in this sense: one of the two disagreeing parties must have comitted some kind of error.

The first of the three problems Wright tackles in his paper (and the focus of this discussion note) is the problem of making room for disputes of inclination. This is no trivial matter. For consider again the dispute on whether Ali G is funny. Judging by ordinary use, or by Wright's minimal account of truth-aptness, the proposition that Ali G is funny appears to be truth-evaluable, in which case it is hard to see how two disputants could contradict each other without one of them being somehow wrong.

Suppose that in an apparent dispute of inclination A holds that *p* and B holds that not-*p*. Then Wright distinguishes four views one might take of the situation:

(i) Rampant Realism, the view that all disagreements involve some mistake, so that "there will … be a fact of the matter which one of the parties will be getting wrong" (p. 48). Thus either A or B is making a mistake.

(ii) Indexical Relativism, the view that *p* is implicitly indexical, so that (say) the content of A's belief is really the proposition that *p* on A's standard, while the content of B's belief is the proposition that not-*p* on B's standard, so that A's and B's belief only apparently contradict each other.

(iii) Expressivism, the view that *p* is not truth-conditional, so that A holding *p* and B holding not-*p* is just a matter of them having different attitudes. Again, A and B are only apparently in conflict.

(iv) True Relativism, the view that while A and B's dispute concerns a truth-evaluable proposition, "there need be nothing about which either disputant is mistaken, nor any imperfection in their grasp of what it is that is in dispute" (p. 53).

Wright says that True Relativism is "closest to the commonsense view" (p. 53) of such disputes, and that in *Truth and Objectivity* he was implicitly trying to defend this view. For in that book he claimed that some truth-apt discourses fail to exert Cognitive Command (CC), where CC is defined thus:

> A discourse exerts cognitive command just in case it meets this condition:
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> > It is a priori that differences of opinion formulated within (that) discourse, unless excusable as a result of vagueness in a disputed statement, or in the standards of acceptability, or variation in personal evidence thresholds, so to speak, will involve something which may properly be regarded as a cognitive shortcoming. (p. 55)

The idea of a dispute of inclination—of a possibly blameless disagreement—is just the idea of a dispute within an area of discourse that lacks CC.

The implicit True Relativism of *Truth and Objectivity*, however, faced two objections. In the book, Wright himself anticipated, and responded to, the first obection.[1] The second objection was made by Shapiro and Taschek (1996). In

[1] See 1992, pp. 148–57.

sections 1 and 6 of "On Being in a Quandary", Wright now responds to the second objection and thereby in effect replaces the original response to the first objection.

Here is one version of the first objection:[2] Consider an arbitrary proposition p. If p is truth-apt then it will be governed by the equivalence schema (ES):

(ES) $\mathrm{T}(p) \leftrightarrow p$

and consequently by the following two principles:

(P1) $p \rightarrow \neg\mathrm{T}(\neg p)$
(P2) $\neg p \rightarrow \neg\mathrm{T}(p)$[3]

Consider again the dispute between A, who holds p, and B, who holds $\neg p$. Suppose that p. Then, according to (P1), what B believes is not true. Now suppose that not-p. Then, according to (P2), A believes something not true. Thus in either case, one of the disputants believes something not true. But the norms of cognition demand that one believe only truths. We might express this by (CS):

(CS) Believing something not true constitutes cognitive shortcoming.

Thus it is a priori that one of the two is guilty of cognitive shortcoming. As p was chosen arbitrarily, this holds for any dispute whatsoever. So every dispute exerts CC.[4]

Wright's original response to this kind of "trivialising" objection was to insist that while believing something not true may be a mistake, it need not amount to cognitive shortcoming, thus denying (CS) (1992, pp. 148–57). One commits a cognitive shortcoming when there is "something amiss in the way [one's] views were arrived at, some independently appreciable failure in the representational mechanisms" (2001, p. 58). But believing something that merely is not true need not amount to that sort of failure.

There are several reasons why such a response is unsatisfactory. For one thing, conceding that every disagreement involves *some* mistake, even if not necessarily a cognitive mistake, rules out the view that disputes of inclination sometimes involve no mistake at all, a view for which Wright must leave some space given the aims of

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[2] The first objection is analogous to Wright's Simple Deduction (p. 56)—but Wright's version shows that the point is independent of (ES).
[3] (P1) and (P2) *can* be derived from (ES) in intuitionistically acceptable steps, but as we shall see, intuitionistic considerations will play a role at a later stage.
[4] This argument involves the inference rule of constructive dilemma, which is not intuitionistically acceptable.

his book.[5] Wright now concedes this weakness of the original response (2001, p. 58). Surely we have to accept (M):

(M) Believing something not true constitutes a mistake.

Even if neither disputant may have committed a *cognitive* mistake, at least one has committed *some* mistake. But that's precisely what Wright's True Relativist does not want to say, since the True Relativist holds that "there need be nothing about which either disputant is mistaken". Whatever the merits of the earlier response, Wright has now been forced by the second objection to rethink.[6]

The second objection is similar to the first but adds a consideration that in effect forces Wright to accept (CS)[7]. Wright is committed to the following evidential constraint on tuth:

(EC) $p \rightarrow$ it is feasible to know that p.
(Wright 1992, p. 41; Shapiro and Taschek 1996, p. 82; Wright 2001, p. 59)

Consider again the diagreement between A and B. Suppose that p. Then, according to (EC), it is feasible to know that p. So B believes something which is the negation of something she could have known. So B's belief is less than cognitively perfect. But now suppose that not-p. Then, according to (EC), it is feasible to know that not-p. So A believes something the negation of which she could have known. So A falls short cognitively. Either way, one of the two disputants is guilty of cognitive shortcoming.

The new objection shows clearly that the original response was unavailable to someone committed to (EC): if truth is epistemically constrained then believing something untrue indicates less than perfect cognition—(CS) holds.[8]

Wright's new response to both objections is as follows: both arguments relied on a constructive dilemma: in each case we supposed first that p and derived the conclusion that one of the two disputants had made a mistake and then we supposed that not-p and derived again the conclusion that one of the two had made a mistake.

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[5] As pointed out in Kölbel 1997, p. 46. Another criticism that has been made repeatedly is that the 1992 response makes the usefulness of the CC criterion depend on an account of cognitive shortcoming (see Williamson 1994, p. 140, and Sainsbury 1996, p. 902, Kölbel 2000, pp. 216–20).
[6] The second objection was formulated by Shapiro and Taschek (1996). Their argument corresponds to Wright's EC-Deduction (2001, p. 60).
[7] See 2001, pp. 85, 86.
[8] Why does this show that (CS) holds?—the converse of (P2), which follows from (ES), shows that if a proposition p is not true then not-p. If not-p, then it is feasible to know not-p. So, someone who believes p when p is not true believes a proposition the negation of which could have been known and thereby falls short of cognitive perfection.

From that we concluded that in any dispute, one disputant is mistaken. This form of inference, however, is not intuitionistically valid, for it relies on the law of excluded middle. Thus, we cannot derive, in an intuitionistically legitimate way, that it is a priori that disagreements involve one party's mistake.

However, Wright presents the following improved version of the first objection, which relies on intuitionistically valid steps only (p. 56):

1	(1)	A accepts *P*	Assumption
2	(2)	B accepts not-*P*	Assumption
3	(3)	Neither A nor B has made a mistake	Assumption
4	(4)	*P*	Assumption
2,4	(5)	B is guilty of a mistake	2,4
2,3	(6)	Not-*P*	4,5,3 RAA
1,2,3	(7)	A is guilty of a mistake	4
1,2	(8)	Not-(neither A nor B has made a mistake)	3,3,7 RAA

Wright accepts the conclusion: it is not the case that neither A nor B is guilty of a mistake (2001, p. 85). But he refuses to infer from this that either A or B is guilty of a mistake, which would show that every discourse exerts CC:

> To achieve the alleged demonstration of cognitive command—that it is a priori that cognitive shortcoming is involved—we have first to eliminate the double negation. (2001, p. 85)

On Wright's view, there is an important difference between saying that it is not the case that neither A nor B has made a mistake and saying that either A or B has made a mistake. For there is the possibility that we are in what Wright calls a "quandary". We are in a quandary with respect to a proposition *p* just if "we do not know what to say about *p*, do not know how we might find out, and can produce no reason for thinking that there is a way of finding out or even that finding out is metaphysically possible" (p. 77–8). In such a situation, it may be the case that even though we know that it's not the case that no mistake has been committed, we nevertheless need not say that a mistake has been committed. Thus there may yet be cases where CC does not hold: it is not a priori that disagreements involve a mistake. This is what we have in mind when we think that there may be such a thing as a blameless disagreement in a dispute of inclination.

2. Wright's account of disputes of inclination: three objections)

2.1 First objection

The first observation to make is that Wright cannot deny the Rampant Realist's view. He cannot say that there are, or can be, any disagreements that are blameless in the most straightforward sense that there is nothing about which either disputant is mistaken (2001, p. 86). For Wright claims that it can be proved of any dispute that it is not the case that neither disputant has committed a mistake. All Wright can do is refrain from accepting that one of the disputants has made a mistake.

What, then, has become of the difference beetween a disagreement of fact and a disagreement of inclination? In Wright's original formulation of True Relativism (see (iv) above) a dispute of inclination is one where:

> there *need be* nothing about which either disputant is mistaken, nor any imperfection in their grasp of what it is that is in dispute (2001, p. 53, my emphasis)

The precise wording is more important than a careless reader might have originally thought, for this is *not* to mean that in disputes of inclination it is possible that neither disputant is mistaken, for it is a priori that this is not the case. All this is to mean is that in some cases, even though we cannot deny that one of the disputants is mistaken, we should at least refrain from claiming it.

Wright has a story to tell on why, in certain areas of discourse, this is the appropriate response. For in these areas, there can be disputes "which we do not know how to resolve, do not know how we might get to know, and do not know that there is, or could be, any getting to know" (p. 87). These are cases of "indeterminacy *in re*" (p. 87). But "indeterminacy in re" does not mean that we should, in these cases, deny that there is a fact of the matter. Rather, they are cases where we "lack warrant to believe in a fact of the matter" (p. 87)—the indeterminacy consists in the appropriateness of agnosticism. This phenomenon is not restricted to evaluative matters, agnosticism can be equally appropriate in cases of vagueness. Agnosticism is appropriate ultimately, because of the principle of evidential constraint: for every fact *p*, it is feasible to know *p*.

As mentioned above, Wright claims that among (i)–(iv) True Relativism is the most commonsensical way of conceiving of disputes of inclination. Now, there is reason to doubt that Wright's own intuitionistic reading of (iv) is in any way close to common sense. Clearly, if (iv) captures common sense, then it does so on the cruder

reading, according to which in a dispute of inclination it may be that neither disputant is mistaken, i.e. the straight denial of Rampant Realism. In any case, how could the subtlety of refusing to accept something the negation of which one rejects ever be close to commonsense? It is therefore useful to distinguish the commonsense view of disputes of inclination, namely:

(v) A dispute of inclination is one where it is possible that neither disputant is mistaken.

from Wright's intuitionistic reading of (iv):

(iv)^{W} A dispute of inclination is one where it may be appropriate not to accept that one of the disputants is mistaken (while, of course, we must reject the idea that neither of them is mistaken).

The first objection to Wright's new solution is that (iv)^{W} fails to capture the commonsense view of disputes of inclination, for it fails to allow one to deny Rampant Realism and it involves a level of logical subtlety grasp of which requires considerable philosophical schooling.[9] Even if (iv)^{W} were "closest to the commonsense view" (2001, p. 53), it would still fail to be close to the commonsense view.

Now Wright, of course, believes that (v) is wrong (at least if there are to be disputes of inclination), because it can be proved that no dispute is a dispute of inclination in the sense of (v). So he could reply that (iv)^{W} is the nearest we can consistently get to the commonsense view that there can be blameless disagreements in certain areas of discourse. However, Wright never explicitly considers a view like (v) and whether there would be any way of saving it short of distorting it into (iv)^{W}. I shall discuss some alternative ways of salvaging (v) in my last section.

2.2 Second objection

Part of Wright's case for (iv)^{W} is an alleged parallelism with borderline cases of vague predicates. We are in a quandary as to how many grains make a heap. So we should be agnostic about whether there is a number *n* such that *n* grains do not make a heap and *n*+1 grains do. Similarly, we are in a quandary with respect to disputes of inclination: we lack warrant to believe in a fact of the matter. That's why, in a dispute

[9] The subtelty of the difference between Rampant Realism and Wright's (iv)^{W} makes one wonder whether "True Relativism" is a good name for (iv)^{W}. In Conversation, Andrew McGonigal has suggested the much more telling label "Wafer-thin Anti-realism", because it is only one double negation elimination that separates it from Rampant Realism.

about whether Ali G is funny, we should remain agnostic as to whether one of the two disputants is mistaken.

My second objection is that the cases are not analogous, and that disputes of inclination do not present us with quandaries. We are in a quandary with respect to *p* just if

> we do not know what to say about *p*, do not know how we might find out, and can produce no reason for thinking that there is a way of finding out or even that finding out is metaphysically possible. (2001, p. 77–8).

It may be plausible to say that any borderline proposition of the form "*n* grains don't make a heap and *n*+1 grains do" presents a quandary. It may also be that the proposition expressed by

> There is a number *n* such that *n* grains don't make a heap and *n*+1 grains do.

is a quandary proposition. But consider the proposition that Ali G is funny. Many people know what to say about it, and have a very good idea of how one finds out. Unlike in borderline cases of vague predicates, we have no special problem at all in making up our mind on whether Ali G is funny (just watch his programmes!). The problem with a predicate like "is funny" is not that we lack criteria or reasons for deciding whether it applies.[10] Rather, the criteria are not objective. You and I may well have a perfectly clear idea of what is funny and what isn't. But nevertheless your verdict may contradict mine. But it is utterly implausible to claim that we are both wrong because we should have been agnostic about the matter. Thus at this point the analogy between vagueness and evaluative discourse breaks down.

Now, Wright doesn't explicitly claim that we are in a quandary with respect to *that* proposition, i.e. the proposition that Ali G is funny. Rather, he claims that a dispute about whether Ali G is funny is a dispute of inclination because we are in a quandary with respect to the proposition that one of the disputants has committed a mistake, and with respect to the proposition that there is a fact of the matter. However, this is equally doubtful. We may well have a very good idea of what constitutes a mistake about the funniness of Ali G. For example we might think that it is a mistake to believe that Ali G is funny if Ali G doesn't tend to make one laugh. Or we might have some other view of how people ought to arrive at their judgements of what is funny. We might therefore conceivably have good reasons for believing that neither of two

[10] Of course there may be problems related to vagueness *in addition* to the problems related to funniness being a subjective matter.

disputants about funniness has committed a mistake. It is plausible to say that we at least know roughly how we would find out whether the disputants have made mistakes. While we may be in a quandary about the boundaries of vague predicates, we are not in a quandary with respect to whether someone has made a mistake in a dispute of inclination.

Here is another way of making the same point.[11] Wright claims that we are in a quandary with respect to proposition (9)[12]

(9) Either A or B has made a mistake

and that's why we should not accept it, even though we know we can't deny it either because we are committed to

(8) Not-(neither A nor B has made a mistake),

the conclusion of the Simple Deduction. Let us spell out (8) and (9) in a way that makes clearer the inferential relations that are relevant for the Simple Deduction.

(8)' Not-not-(((A accepts *p*) and not-*p*) or ((B accepts that not-*p*) and *p*))
(9)' ((A accepts *p*) and not-*p*) or ((B accepts that not-*p*) and *p*)

Now, since lines (1) and (2) of the Simple Deduction assume that A accepts *p* and B accepts not-*p*, the only way in which we could refuse to accept (9)' would be if we could refuse to accept (10):[13]

(10) not-*p* or *p*

Presumably this means that if we want to treat (9) as a quandary, we must also treat (10) as a quandary, and (10) can't be a quandary without *p* being a quandary. But I have already argued that we cannot treat propositions like the proposition that Ali G is funny as quandary propositions. If *p* is the proposition that Ali G is funny then it is clearly *not* the case that "we do not know what to say about *p*, do not know how we might find out, and can produce no reason for thinking that there is a way of finding out or even that finding out is metaphysically possible". If *p were* a quandary, then A

[11] Thanks to Bob Hale for this suggestion.
[12] This is the conclusion Wright refused to draw from (8) in the Simple Deduction (see. p. 5 above).
[13] We can at most refuse to accept (10), for we must, intuitionists or not, accept (11)

(11) not-not-(not-*p* or *p*)

so we can't *deny* (10).

and B would in fact *both* be wrong, because they would both have definite commitments were agnosticism is appropriate.

In conclusion: vague and evaluative predicates present quite different problems. For every vague predicate, there are cases where it is impossible to decide whether to apply it and we just have no idea of how to settle the matter. We are then in a quandary, on Wright's definition. For an evaluative predicate, however, it is possible that while no-one has any difficulty in deciding whether to apply it different people might still decide differently without making mistakes. Thus, no analogy between vagueness and evaluative discourse can lend support to Wright's view and the theory of quandaries does not illuminate the problem of disputes of inclination.

2.3 Third objection

The third objection, or query, concerns the motivation of Wright's project. Chapter 1 of *Truth and Objectivity* contains a section entitled "The Need for a New Approach". In this section Wright argues that Dummettian anti-realism fails to elucidate the sort of intuitive anti-realism we feel is appropriate, for example, regarding the comic:

> A global victory, on general semantic grounds, for Dummett's anti-realist would leave the moral realism which many find attractive, and the corresponding comic realism which almost nobody finds attractive, still available as apparently live options. Of course, that's an impression which might disappear on closer analysis. Still, the claim that what an adverse reaction to realism about the comic really comes down to is a recoil against verification-transcendent comic truth is, at least prima facie, merely far-fetched. (1992, p. 9)

Wright goes on to excuse this limitation of Dummettian anti-realism by saying that it "was fashioned with the cases of mathematics and discourse about the past chiefly in view." (1992, p. 9).

In "On being in a Quandary", however, Wright seems to have lost the earlier insight and to return to the Dummettian-verificationist paradigm. It is the verificationist epistemic constraint (EC) which drives Wright's new position. Quandary propositions are genuinely indeterminate because of (EC): if *p* then it is feasible to know that *p*. He is thus doing precisely what his earlier self dismissed as (at least prima facie) far-fetched: he is trying to account for anti-realist inclinations about the comic by invoking, in Dummettian-verificationist fashion, the view that we need not accept all instances of the law of excluded middle. Is there any reason

(besides the alleged analogy with vagueness phenomena) not to hold on to the 1992 prima facie judgement that the 2001 view is far-fetched?

3. Genuine faultless disagreement

In this section, I shall conduct a brief systematic survey of the space of competing positions. The point of this cannot be to establish any one of these positions. Rather, I hope to show that there are respectable alternatives to Wright's 2001 view, which need to be considered.

The basic problem can be represented as an inconsistency between a number of desiderata: the view that there are disputes of inclination, the view that the specific difference of such disputes is that they need not involve a mistake on anyone's part, the view that believing something not true is a mistake and finally minimalism about truth-aptness.

(A1) There are disputes of inclination.

(v) A dispute of inclination is one where it is possible that neither disputant is mistaken.

(M) Believing something not true constitutes a mistake.

(A2) We have a commitment to all syntactically well-formed instances of (ES), i.e. "T(p) $\leftrightarrow$ p", whatever the subject matter of p.[14]

We have seen that these four claims, in their current form, are inconsistent. Which of the 4 desiderata should be abandoned? One option, of course, is to abandon (A2), as for example expressivists do. Another simple option is to give up on (A1) and deny the existence of disputes of inclination. But let's ignore those two possibilities and explore the options available within the minimalist framework to make room for disputes of inclination.

3.1 Denying (v)

Let's start by focussing on denying (v). The basic idea is that while we have to grant that even disputes of inclination involve an error of fact, because they involve believing something that is not so (see (M)), we can at least play down the significance of that error. Disputes of inclination cannot be free of *that* kind of error,

[14] Horwich 1998 does not, strictly speaking, accept (A2). Rather, he thinks that competent speakers have an *inclination* to believe all well-formed instances of (ES), an inclination they will resist in the case of liar instances once they realise that these lead to contradiction. For present purposes, the simplified formulation of (A2) is adequate.

but they can be free of mistakes of other sorts. Thus we can modify (v) along the lines of

(v)* A dispute of inclination is one where it is possible that neither disputant has committed a mistake of a certain sort *S*.

This was Wright's basic strategy in 1992, when he replaced (v) with

(v)** A dispute of inclination is one where it is possible that neither disputant has committed a mistake of a cognitive sort.

But Shapiro and Taschek forced him to accept

(CS) Believing something not true constitutes cognitive shortcoming.

by showing that it follows from Wright's evidential constraint (EC), thus creating a new inconsistency between (A1), (v)**, (CS) and (A2).

But there are other ways of pursuing the strategy of modifying (v) along the lines of (v)*. First, one could hold on to (v)** but give up (EC) and (CS). Thus, non-verificationists could stick to (v)**.

Secondly, one could choose a different substitution for "*S*" in (v)*, perhaps even one that does not require a denial of (EC). The basic idea is always that in disputes of inclination, the mistake of believing a proposition that is not true may not amount to much, in particular not to something one should be blamed for, to something one should regret or something that requires a change of mind.[15]

One general drawback of any of these views is their cavalier attitude towards belief that lacks truth. They involve the claim that every disagreement involves at least a factual error—the error of believing something that is not so. However, this will only be acceptable if factual errors are treated as insignificant. The idea is that disputes of inclination, while of course involving factual error, need not involve any error that needs correcting. We can, in these disputes, remain indifferent towards factual error. The success of the replacement offered for (v) therefore depends on the extent to which the replacement waters down the normative significance of truth. Avoidance of falsehood is no longer regarded as a primary intellectual aim, rather it is the avoidance of mistakes of type *S* that we should pursue.[16]

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[15] In the introduction to his *Philosophical Papers*, volume 1, David Lewis sketches a similar view of disagreements on matters of opinion. He substitutes "mistake of method" for "mistake of sort *S*".

[16] A further general difficulty with this strategy arises when one considers the status of disputes concerning whether a mistake of sort *S* has occurred. Suppose we want to say that A's and B's contradicting beliefs concerning the funniness of Ali G are both free from *S*-type mistakes, even though

Wright's 2001 replacement of (iv)^{W} for (v) is no improvement, for the reasons outlined above. Wright wants to say that one should be agnostic on whether an error of fact has occurred—treat this as a quandary. But this seems to require us to treat the disputed proposition as a quandary too, which entails that both A and B are believing something about which they should be agnostic.

3.2 Denying (M)

Can we instead modify (M), the view that believing a proposition that is not true is a mistake? Let's first be quite clear that acceptance of (M) need not be an issue concerning *truth* in particular. As a minimalist, one could express what (M) expresses without mentioning truth by saying merely that instances of the following schema are correct:

(M)* If not-*p* then it is a mistake to believe that *p*.

However, it is much more convenient to frame discussion of (M) in terms of truth (it's the truth predicate discharging its constitutive syntactical function!).

Many people believe that "belief is aimed at truth" or that truth "is a norm" governing belief. (M) expresses this norm in the sense that it requires one to avoid beliefs that lack truth. We try not to violate this norm by following more or less strict methods of belief acquisition—methods that reliably generate only true beliefs. Our methods are not 100% reliable. Sometimes the best available method, correctly applied, yields a belief that is not true. There is a sense, therefore, in which we sometimes blamelessly violate (M): we did everything we should have done and we could not have done any better, but we still arrived at a belief that wasn't true.

However, such violations of (M) are not blameless in a strict sense. If the aim of our methods is the generation of true beliefs, then any untrue belief must be the result of some imperfection. The method employed—even though it may have been the best available method—was not completely reliable, for the belief generated by it lacks truth. As long as we accept (M), this is inescapable.

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one of them gets the facts wrong. Now suppose further that A's and B's beliefs about Ali G's funniness rely on their second-order beliefs concerning *S*-type mistakes. For example, B believes that to believe that Ali G is funny is to commit an *S*-type mistake, while A believes the negation of this. Now we have a second disagreement, and our current strategy forces us to say that this must involve at least an error of fact, because either A or B is believing something that is not true. But suppose that B is the one who is factually wrong in the second disagreement, i.e. that it is not an *S*-type mistake to believe that Ali G is funny. Then this conflicts with our view that the first disagreement did not involve an *S*-type mistake. The same goes for the case in which A is factually wrong in the second disagreement. This strategy will need to address this problem. (Thanks to Penelope Mackie for discussion of this issue.)

Therefore, the intuitive idea of a blameless disagreement on a matter of opinion is in direct conflict with (M). Suppose we want to treat the disagreement between someone who believes that Ali G is funny and someone who believes he is not as a dispute of inclination on a matter of opinion. Then we clearly do not want to say that the method of at least one of them was less than perfect. Both may have perfect methods yet fail to agree. If we want to say this, we have to revise (M).

The simplest way of revising (M) to make room for completely faultless disagreement is to exempt certain propositions. Suppose, for example, we want to make room for faultless disagreement on evaluative propositions. Then we could adopt (M)** instead of (M):

(M)** Believing a non-evaluative proposition that is not true constitutes a mistake.

Roughly, (M)** expresses the view that truth is the aim of all non-evaluative beliefs. But what, then, is the aim of evaluative beliefs? Are we to say that, when *p* is evaluative, it could not be a mistake to believe that *p* even though not-*p*? Would anyone say that believing that Ali G is funny when he is not funny might occasionally not be a mistake? This would be highly counterintuitive. Everybody thinks that to believe that Ali G is funny when he is not is a mistake. It therefore seems wrong to say that truth is not a norm (or an aim) for evaluative belief.

This defect could be removed by a radical, but not unprecedented, maneuver. Suppose, on the model of Prior's tensed propositions,[17] that evaluative propositions are evaluated as true or false only relative to an evaluation function, and that each thinker *possesses* an evaluation function. Then we could say that

(M)*** Believing an evaluative proposition that is not evaluated as true by one's own evaluation function constitutes a mistake.

When two different thinkers possess evaluation functions that assign different truth values to the same evaluative proposition, then they could disagree on that proposition without violating (M)***. [18] The possession relation between thinkers and functions

[17] See Prior (1962). There are similar proposals in other areas. For example, John MacFarlane (2002) has recently proposed that vague propositions should be treated as being evaluated only relative to a context of evaluation.

[18] It would be more elegant to combine (M)** and (M)*** in a single normative requirement, along the lines of "Believing a proposition that is not true on one's own evaluation function constitutes a mistake". The difference between evaluative and other propositions can then be modelled by postulating that no evaluation functions diverge in the truth value they assigns to non-evaluative propositions. This strategy is pursued in Kölbel 2002.

would then have to be explained on the basis of those individual features of a person that makes it appropriate for that person to believe certain evauative proposition but not others—whatever these might be.

The disadvantage of this way of modifying (M) is that many regard any form of relativism about the truth of propositions as absurd.[19] According to this view, propositions are by definition *absolute* truth-bearers. If an alleged proposition varies in truth-value with some parameter, then this shows that the alleged proposition wasn't a proposition, but just a propositional function. However, there is no prima facie reason to believe that a different notion of proposition, one which makes the truth-value of (at least some) propositions relative, cannot succeed. Such a view cannot be dismissed out of hand.[20]

In this section, I have shown that there are series competitors to Wright's 2001 view of disputes of inclination—even if we grant some of Wright's basic commitments, such as (EC) and (A2). In §2 we saw that Wright's 2001 view suffers from a number of defects. I conclude, therefore, that Wright's 2001 view of disputes of inclination is unattractive, and that a lot more needs to be done to show that no other view is less unattractive.[21]

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[19] E.g. Frege 1918, Newton-Smith 1982.

[20] Just as Prior (1962) and MacFarlane (2002) cannot be dismissed out of hand.

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