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WITTGENSTEIN'S ACCOUNT OF TRUTH:
A NOVEL PERSPECTIVE ON THE SEMANTIC REALIST/ANTIREALIST
DEBATE

by

Sara Ellenbogen

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Ph.D.
Graduate Department of Philosophy
University of Toronto

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Wittgenstein's Account of Truth:  
A Novel Perspective on the Semantic Realist/Antirealist Debate  

Ph.D. 1998, Sara Ellenbogen, Department of Philosophy, University of Toronto  

Dissertation abstract:  
Semantic antirealists such as Dummett read Wittgenstein as endorsing the view that we must reject a truth conditional account of meaning in favor of one based on assertibility conditions. I take issue with that interpretation: I argue that Wittgenstein held a unique account of truth which does not fit neatly into the categories of realism and antirealism and which, moreover, undermines the dichotomy between them. Wittgenstein identified truth conditions with conventions and criteria whereby we predicate "is true" of our sentences. And he held that because different sentences in a language are accepted as true upon different kinds of grounds, what is meant by calling a statement "true" varies for statements within different language games. Therefore, Wittgenstein has a novel conception of truth which can be applied, across the board, to all sentences in a language; a conception which links the truth condition of a statement to the way that the statement is used. I further argue that an implication of "meaning is use" is that we should revise our project of formulating an account of truth simpliciter, and focus instead on articulating the concept of truth that emerges from our uses of the predicate "is true".
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# Table of Contents

Chapter 1 ............................................................................................................. x

From ‘Meaning Is Use’ to the Rejection of Transcendent Truth: Criteria as Truth Conditions .................................................................................................................. x

INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................. 2

FROM ‘MEANING IS USE’ TO THE REJECTION OF TRANSCENDENT TRUTH ......................................................................................................................... 3

WITTGENSTEIN’S CONCEPT OF TRUTH VS. SEMANTIC ANTIREALISM ............ 7

THE POSITIVE ACCOUNT OF TRUTH: CRITERIA AS TRUTH CONDITIONS ........ 9

ANTIREALISM AGAIN ......................................................................................... 23

Chapter 2 ............................................................................................................. 46

"From "Meaning Is Use to Semantic Antirealism: The Unjustified Move from Truth Conditions to Justified Assertibility Conditions" ........................................................................ 46

INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................. 47

FROM ‘MEANING IS USE’ TO SEMANTIC ANTIREALISM: THE ACQUISITION ARGUMENT AND THE MANIFESTATION CRITERION ......................................................................................... 49

ANTIREALISM PRESUPPOSES REALISM ................................................................ 61

TENSIONS BETWEEN WITTGENSTEIN AND DUMMETT: "MEANING IS USE" VERSUS MOLECULARISM AND REVISIONISM ......................................................................................... 75

SEMANTIC ANTIREALISM IS INCONSISTENT ..................................................... 90

Chapter 3 ............................................................................................................. 109

Why a Revisionist Account of Truth? Truth Conditions, Criteria, Revisability, an Knowledge ......................................................................................................................... 109

vi
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAZING INTO THE ABYSS OF SCEPTICISM: CRITERIA ACCORDING TO CRISPIN WRIGHT</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...AND FRIGHTENED INTO REALISM: CRITERIA ACCORDING TO JOHN MCDOWELL</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHY CRITERIA ARE NOT DEFEASIBLE: THE NONINDUCTIVE EVIDENCE VIEW REJECTED</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRITERIAL CHANGE, CONCEPTUAL CHANGE, AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CONCEPT OF TRUTH</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHY A REVISIONIST ACCOUNT OF TRUTH? THE WITTGENSTEINIAN VIEW VERSUS THE PRAGMATIST’S ACCOUNT</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.B.</td>
<td><em>Blue Book</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O.C.</td>
<td><em>On Certainty</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.G.</td>
<td><em>Philosophical Grammar</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.I.</td>
<td><em>Philosophical Investigations</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.R.</td>
<td><em>Philosophical Remarks</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T.E.I.</td>
<td><em>Truth and the End of Inquiry: A Peircean Account of Truth</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T.O.E.</td>
<td><em>Truth and Other Enigmas</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z.</td>
<td><em>Zettel</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"But how can human understanding outstrip reality and itself think the unverifiable?"—Why should we not say the unverifiable? For we ourselves made it unverifiable.

A false appearance is produced? And how can it so much as look like that? For don't you want to say that this like that is not a description at all? Well, then it isn't a false appearance either, but rather one that robs us of our orientation. So that we clutch our brows and ask: How can that be?

Zettel #259
Chapter 1

From 'Meaning Is Use' to the Rejection of Transcendent Truth:
Criteria as Truth Conditions
INTRODUCTION

The later Wittgenstein’s conception of meaning as use is often taken as providing the inspiration for semantic antirealism. That is, it is taken as having inspired the view put forth by Michael Dummett and Crispin Wright in the 1980s that we should reject a theory of meaning that is based on truth conditions in favor of one based on assertibility conditions. Yet, by rejecting truth conditions, antirealists such as Dummett go much further than Wittgenstein. For, as I will argue, to hold that because Wittgenstein rejected the realist account of truth put forth in the *Tractatus* he, therefore, must be an antirealist is to fail to recognize that Wittgenstein held a unique account of truth which does not fit neatly into the categories of realism and antirealism and which, moreover, undermines the dichotomy between them. Wittgenstein did not reject the idea that sentences have truth conditions. Rather, he revised his conception of a truth condition. He identified truth conditions with criteria, that is, with conventional rules which determine, for any statement within a given language game, the circumstances under which we may predicate is "true" of the statement. And he held that, as statements within different language games are accepted as true upon different kinds of grounds, the kind of certainty we require in order to accept a sentence as true depends on the language game to which the statement belongs. Therefore, Wittgenstein has a unique conception of truth which can be applied, across the board, to all sentences in language; a conception which links the truth condition of every type of sentence which is treated as being true or false to the way that the sentence is used.
In the first part of this chapter, I outline the positive account of truth that falls out of the dictum that meaning is use. I then argue that the antirealist’s case for replacing truth conditions with assertibility conditions presupposes a realist conception of truth which Wittgenstein explicitly rejected. Finally, I show how Wittgenstein’s account of truth avoids the objections which can be made against both realism and antirealism. For through his more radical break with the realist/correspondence view, he puts forth an account of truth that avoids the truth value gaps that prompt the antirealist to reject truth conditions.

FROM ‘MEANING IS USE’ TO THE REJECTION OF TRANSCENDENT TRUTH

Wittgenstein’s rejection of a realist conception of meaning in favor of his account of meaning as use led to his parallel rejection of a realist picture of truth which holds that propositions are true in virtue of their correspondence to facts which might transcend our capacity for knowledge. For Wittgenstein reasoned that as there is nothing more to meaning than use, there is nothing more to our concept of truth than we can grasp through our use of statements which we treat, in our language, as being true or false. On Wittgenstein’s view, it only makes sense to think of truth in terms of our capacity for knowledge. For we have the concept of truth only in so far as we have the concept of how to establish something as true (O.C. #200). And we have the concept of how to establish something as true only in so far as we participate in language. For just as within
a linguistic community, we agree on correct uses of words, within a form of life, we agree upon methods of testing the statements which we treat as being true or false. That is to say, as we participate together in the rule-following practices within a community, we play various kinds of language games and engage in various kinds of inquiry. In each type of inquiry, we devise methods of testing assertions which are appropriate tests of statements within that type of language game. We agree on what is to count as an adequate test of any given type of statement (O.C. #82). And thus, we agree on criteria which determine when it is correct to predicate "is true" of sentences within each type of language game. Therefore, as an individual begins to participate in language, he acquires the concept of how to establish something as true. For as he is initiated into the linguistic practices of a community, he learns conventional rules for predicating "is true" of the sentences in language which his community treats as being true or false.

Wittgenstein remarks,

What counts as [a] test [of a statement?]--"But is this an adequate test?"--As if giving grounds did not come to an end sometime. But the end is not an ungrounded presupposition: it is an ungrounded way of acting. (O.C. #110)

Wittgenstein's contention is that if we want to know why the grounds on which we accept a statement are adequate, we cannot hope to find the answer by looking further than the language game in which the statement is used. That is, there is no extra-linguistic standard by which our methods of testing could be seen to be correct or incorrect. For just as nothing determines the meanings of words other than the rules of a linguistic
community for the correct and incorrect ways of using them, nothing determines the circumstances under which it is correct to predicate "is true" of a sentence other than a community's practice of predicating "is true" of the sentence under these particular circumstances. That is, nothing determines when it is correct to predicate "is true" of a sentence other than a rule of language which tells us the grounds upon which we may accept the sentence as true.\(^3\)

When Wittgenstein rejected a realist account of truth, he conceived of questions about truth in terms of questions about meaning. He held that it is only within a language in which human beings agree on conventions for predicating "is true" of their sentences that statements can be said to be true or false. For it is only within a form of life that there are grounds for affirming and denying statements. He does not want to say that human agreement decides what is true and false or that truth is dependent on human opinion. As he argues, "It is what human beings say that is true or false and they agree on the language they use. That is not agreement in opinions but in form of life". (P.I. #241). Agreement in form of life is logically prior to agreement in opinions. For agreement in form of life is our agreement on methods of testing and judging our various statements. Or, to put the point another way, it is our agreement on a shared world picture (cf. O.C. #94, #95, #96, #97). It is our agreement on a set of grammatical propositions or "hinge propositions" which, among other things, describe what count as compelling grounds for certainty of statements within our different language games (cf. O.C. #270, #271). And, thus, agreement in form of life is what grounds our ability to communicate and to argue and inquire. It provides the framework within which agreement
in opinions may or may not take place. The form of life within which a community's statements count as true or false cannot itself be tested for correctness. For the set of grammatical propositions which we accept as true form our basis for making judgements. And we may not call into question the totality of statements that our community accepts as true at once if we are to continue to judge. A form of life within which hypotheses can be tested and answers given cannot itself be true or false because it is the very framework within which questions can be framed (O.C. # 205). It is the framework within which human beings are able to form and express beliefs and make assertions. Therefore, it is also the framework within which they devise methods of testing beliefs and assertions.

As Wittgenstein notes,

*We call something a proposition [i.e. the sort of thing that can be true or false] when, in our language, we apply the calculus of truth functions to it. And the use of the words "true" and "false" may be among the constituent parts of the game, and, if so, it belongs to our concept 'proposition', but does not fit it. (P./. #136).*

For the realist who holds that truth is independent of meaning, the truth of a sentence is independent of our capacity for knowledge. But for Wittgenstein who holds that the predicate "is true" applies only to sentences in language for which we have ways of determining their truth, truth is wholly a function of our capacity for knowledge. Since the meaning of a proposition is determined by the conditions for knowledge as laid down by our conventions of testing, truth cannot be conceived of as independent of our capacity for knowledge.
WITTGENSTEIN’S CONCEPT OF TRUTH VS. SEMANTIC ANTIREALISM

Wittgenstein’s rejection of a realist picture of truth has been taken as semantic antirealism by Michael Dummett and the Crispin Wright of the 1980s. Semantic antirealism, in its simplest terms, is the view that knowledge of the truth conditions of sentences in a language is not what we as language speakers acquire when we come to understand that language. Instead, we learn the conditions under which we are justified in asserting the sentences in language which we treat as being true or false. The argument for antirealism is that some sentences which we treat as being true or false, or bivalent, would have truth conditions transcending our ability to recognize them. For the process of verifying such sentences would outrun our ability to learn of their truth value. Statements about the remote past, for example, are held by the antirealist not to be determinately true or false because in order to know what would render such statements true or false, we would have to be able to survey the past as we do the present. Clearly, there often is nothing left of the past, and so we are unable to do so. Antirealists hold that our linguistic practice of treating such statements as determinately true or false is inaccurate and in need of revision. They argue that since we cannot have learned how to use these sentences by learning to recognize their truth conditions as obtaining when they obtain, we cannot give a truth conditional account of their meaning, but only one in terms of the conditions which justify asserting them.

I will examine the argument for attributing this form of antirealism to Wittgenstein in Chapter 2. But for now it is important to see that Wittgenstein’s rejection of a
realist/correspondence account of truth is more radical than the antirealist's. The antirealist is still, in a sense, committed to the correspondence theory of truth even while he rejects the possibility of giving a truth conditional account of meaning. That is, he implicitly assumes that the only viable account of truth would have to be a realist account. And thus he accepts the realist view that the truth of statements about the remote past must consist of their correspondence with that particular segment of reality of which there now no longer exists any evidence. And it is his commitment to this correspondence account of truth that forces him to deny that such statements have truth conditions after he has rejected the idea of transcendant truth, and adapted the knowability principle which states that if something is true, it must be possible for us to know that it is true. For his belief in the correspondence theory of what makes statements about the past true causes an antirealistic to hold that finding out whether they are true must involve surveying the past as we do the present. But his agreement with Wittgenstein's verificationist thought that if something is true, it must be possible for us to know that it is true makes the antirealist say that since we cannot discover whether statements about the past are true, such statements do not have truth conditions. Thus, the antirealist denies that statements about the past have truth conditions because the only kind of truth conditions he recognizes are realist truth conditions, and when these are undermined by verificationist scruples, he has nothing left to replace them with.

Wittgenstein's rejection of a realist account of truth goes further than antirealism. For while Wittgenstein shares with antirealists the thought that if something is true it must be possible for us to know it is true, he does not share their commitment to the realist
doctrine that the truth of a statement about the past must consist in its correspondence with some segment of reality in virtue of which it is true. Thus, Wittgenstein is not forced to deny that statements about the past have truth conditions because, unlike the antirealist, he has an alternative conception of a truth condition with which to replace realist truth conditions.

THE POSITIVE ACCOUNT OF TRUTH: CRITERIA AS TRUTH CONDITIONS

Wittgenstein identifies truth conditions with what he calls criteria, that is, with rules which determine, by linguistic convention, the circumstances under which we may predicate "is true" of the sentences in language which we treat as being true or false. For Wittgenstein held that every type of statement to which we apply the predicate "is true" is governed by a criterion which counts as a way of telling whether what it asserts is true. A criterion is a conventional way of testing a statement which we take or treat as settling a question with certainty. It is a rule of language which determines, as part of the grammar or "logic" of a statement that some state of affairs exists, the circumstances under which it is correct to affirm the statement. A criterion can take the form of a defining characteristic of an object or a condition where the presence of the characteristic indicates the existence of the thing in question. For example, in answer to the question, "How do you know it's a diamond?", a jeweller would cite the physical properties of a stone which establish that it is a diamond. Or a criterion can take the form of a test by which we judge that something is the case which becomes the conventional standard by
reference to which we justify our judgements concerning it. Statements of criterial rules such as, "If a stone has these features, then it is a diamond" or "If the criterion for ascribing pain to someone is met, then that person really is in pain" provide truth conditions because they state grammatical truths or conceptually necessary statements. That is to say, it is true in virtue of a rule of language, convention, or definition that if the criterion for saying that someone is in pain is met, then that person is in pain. Therefore, it is not possible for the criterion of such a claim to be met and for the criterially governed claim to be false for this would violate a rule of language.

Criteria and conventional rules differ from realist truth conditions in that a conventional rule for predicating "is true" of a sentence is always linked to the way in which we currently use a sentence. That is, a conception of truth conditions in terms of conventions or criteria is a conception which identifies the truth condition of a sentence with a linguistic rule which determines when it is correct to predicate "is true" of the sentence. Or, to put the point another way, it is a conception which identifies the truth condition of a sentence with our current way of telling whether it is true. And, of course, the consequence of identifying the truth condition of a statement with our current way of telling whether it is true is that our conception of the truth condition of any given statement becomes internally related to our current capacity for knowledge. For the standards by which we judge whether something is true reflect what we know at a particular time. What we accept as an adequate ground on which to accept a statement as true reflects the current state of our knowledge. And, obviously, the grounds upon which we accept our statements as true can change in response to empirical discoveries.
There can be a fluctuation between criteria and symptoms. That is, what we currently take to be a defining characteristic of some state of affairs which is decisive for establishing that it obtains may later be discovered to be merely contingently associated with it (P.I. #354, BB., pp.24-25, Z. #438). For example, from the beginning of the 17th to the late 19th century, the defining criterion of gold was solubility in aqua regia. But in the 19th century it was discovered that gold had the atomic number 79, a feature not exclusively correlated with the feature of solubility in aqua regia, i.e., the former criterion was discovered to have room for non-"noble" metals whereas the latter criterion uniquely defined "gold". Thus, with the discovery of the atomic number of gold, the old criterion was degraded to symptom status\textsuperscript{12}. We can also simply discover that we were wrong about what we previously held as true; we were not yet aware of any countervailing factors which would have cast doubt upon our ways of judging (O.C. #124). Therefore, the conventions according to which it is correct to predicate "is true" of our statements are subject to revision as our knowledge increases. As Wittgenstein remarks, our language games change with time (O.C. #256). What gets treated one day as a proposition to be tested by experience may get treated another day as a rule of testing (O.C. #198, cf. O.C. #63, #65, Z. #352). And, conversely, propositions which were treated as norms of description can come to lose that status. For example, the statements "It is impossible to get to the moon", "Lightening never strikes in the same place twice", and perhaps "The earth is flat" were accepted as true by previous groups of inquirers, but they are not held true today. The thrust of identifying truth conditions with criteria or conventional rules is that the Wittgensteinian wants to say that previous inquirers were
correct to say "It's true that lightning never strikes in the same place twice", etc., although it would now be incorrect to predicate "is true" of those sentences (O.C. #542, #607, #124, #191).

Those with realist sympathies will resist the move to identify the truth condition of a sentence with a convention for predicating "is true" of it. They will argue that if we turn out to have been wrong about what we previously counted as true, we will not have been correct to predicate "is true" of a statement asserting it. That is, they will take the fact that we can be wrong about what we hold true to mean that the truth condition of a statement cannot be internally related to the state of our knowledge at a given time. Instead they will hold that the truth condition of a statement must be something independent of our current state of knowledge. As Hilary Putnam puts this point,

Truth cannot simply be rational acceptability for... truth is supposed to be a property of a statement that cannot be lost, whereas justification can be lost. The statement, "The earth is flat" was very likely rationally acceptable 3,000 years ago, but it is not rationally acceptable today. Yet it would be wrong to say that [the statement] "The earth is flat" was true 3,000 years ago, for that would mean that the earth has changed its shape.

(Reason, Truth, and History, p.55)

Putnam argues that since our former belief that the earth was flat was rationally acceptable and yet was proven false, the truth condition of a sentence clearly is independent of our current capacity for knowledge. And he holds that in order to preserve our common understanding of truth as independent of our current knowledge, we must insist on severing any apparent link between our concept of truth and rational
acceptability here and now. We cannot identify the truth condition of a sentence with a criterion for judging it to be true nor with a convention for predicating "is true" of it.

The Wittgensteinian response to Putnam's objection should be to reject the claim that truth is a property of a statement that cannot be lost. For on Wittgenstein's view, truth is not a property at all, but a relation. Our concept of a truth is internally related to what we can know, and hence what we can say (P.I. #136, 241-2, O.C. #191)\textsuperscript{13}. For the concepts of truth and falsity cannot be explained without reference to the linguistic activities of thinking creatures (cf. P.I. #241). That is, assertibility is an essential feature or a defining feature of the concept of a truth. Other concepts are not like this; we can explain the concept of a stone without reference to its being kickable by people. But we cannot explain the concept of a truth without reference to its being assertible by people. For although what makes a stone kickable is the property of being hard, and although we cannot explain the concept "stone" without reference to the concept of hardness, the concept of a truth is disanalogous in the following respect: a stone's having the property of hardness does not depend on the existence of human creatures who can kick it. But, on the other hand, the property of being assertible does depend on the existence of linguistic creatures who can make assertions. What makes a statement assertible is our normative agreement on criteria whereby it is correct to predicate "is true" and "is false" of it.\textsuperscript{14} And, thus, the concept of truth is dependent on the activities of thinking creatures not merely in the sense that the concept of a mountain, as distinct from a mountain, depends on thinking creatures conceptualizing it. The predicate "is true" only applies to beliefs, statements, assertions, etc. So, as Davidson remarks, without creatures using...
sentences, nothing would count as a sentence and hence the concept of truth would have no application.\footnote{15}

To put the point another way, truth is not a use-independent property of a sentence. Nor is truth a relation between a thought or a statement and a mind or language-independent item like a fact. The predicates "is true" and "is false"\footnote{23} do not apply to facts, but to what is said. And what is said is not like what is eaten (a cake). The word "what" in the phrase "what is said" does not name an object. Instead, it introduces a propositional clause or a "that" clause. It introduces a belief or an assertion which gets expressed in language by a thinking creature.\footnote{16} And what determines the conditions under which it is correct to make an assertion is our normative agreement on what count as being adequate grounds upon which to assert or affirm a statement (\textit{O.C.} \#270, \#271, \#200, \#82). Therefore, the fact that previous communities held as true statements like "Lightning never strikes in the same place twice", etc. made it correct to predicate "is true" of those sentences, although it did not make it correct to predicate "is true" of them come what may. That is, it did not make it correct to predicate "is true" of them in the light of future discoveries or recalcitrant experience. Rather, our empirical discoveries caused us to revise the conditions under which we were willing to predicate "is true" of these sentences of which we previously had been objectively certain (\textit{Z.} \#352).\footnote{17} But nevertheless, before we were forced to revise our ways of judging the truth values of these sentences, i.e., before we revised our conventions for predicating "is true" of them, it was correct to predicate "is true" of them. For although we must revise our application of "is true" to sentences when we find we can no longer take them as true, there is no
other use which "is true" could have in our language-- there is no other way in which it would be correct to use it--except as a predicate which we apply to whatever we now take true. As Wittgenstein puts this point,

Well, if everything speaks for an hypothesis and nothing speaks against it--is it certainly true? One may designate it as such. - But does it certainly agree with reality, with the facts? - With this question, you are already going round in a circle (O.C. #191)

Wittgenstein's point here is that no new information is gained by asking whether a statement which we designate as true agrees with reality or with the facts. For the concepts of truth and falsity cannot be explained without reference to our practice of calling statements true (P.I. #136). Nor, therefore, can they be explained without reference to our agreement on the standards by which we judge statements as true and the grounds upon which we accept them as true: "The reason why the use of the expression 'true or false' has something misleading about it is that it is like saying 'it tallies with the facts or it doesn't, and the very thing that is in question is what tallying' is here" (O.C. #199). That is: we may conceivably revise our world picture so that today's propositions will not seem to tally with what we will then take as "the facts". But this possibility plays no role in our practice of treating statements as true or false or acting as though they were true or false (O.C. #110, #652, #342, #341, #343). What determines the correct uses of "is true" can only be our agreement, within a community, on the conventions and criteria whereby we apply the predicate to statements. So to ask whether we are correct to predicate "is true" of a statement will only be a question about what our practice
actually is, rather than a query about whether this practice is actually justified by reference to some extralinguistic standard which is informed by facts that transcend our current knowledge\(^1\).

Therefore, to paraphrase an argument of Glock's, to express the fact that the way things are is independent of what we say about it by saying "Before 1900, there was a truth that there were radioactive substances" is infelicitous\(^2\). And so is even the more acceptable, "It was true before 1900 that there were radioactive substances". What can be said is "It is true that before 1900 there were radioactive substances". And this is logically equivalent to "There were radioactive substances before 1900". That this was so independently of our thinking so has nothing to do with the mind- independent nature of truth nor with the alleged eternal existence of an abstract realm in which truths subsist. It has everything to do with the fact that our saying that \(p\) doesn't make it the case that \(p\). Our conception of truth as objective--i.e., as not being dependent on what anyone says or thinks--arises from our awareness that People say that "\(p\)" and "\(p\)" do not entail each other. The conditions under which we are correct to predicate "is true" of a statement at a given time and the conditions under which the statement corresponds to reality can come apart. We recognize that they can come apart. And we use "is true" as though these conditions do come apart in our practice of affirming or asserting our statements. We do not take the fact that we currently predicate "is true" of any given sentence as making it correct to continue to predicate "is true" of it come what may. We predicate "is true" of our sentences knowing full well that it is theoretically conceivable that they may have to be withdrawn (\(O.C. \#620, \#652\)). And when we find out that we were
wrong about something, we are willing to revise our practice of applying the truth predicate to a given sentence. But although we hold in such a case that we were wrong about what we asserted, we do not say that we were wrong to insist that our assertion was true at the time when we made it. That is, we do not say that we were wrong to predicate "is true" of our statement at the time when we made it\(^\text{20}\). We do not say this any more than one would say that one was wrong to say "I know that N.N. will arrive in half an hour’s time", when one has spoken to N.N. ten minutes ago on the telephone, even if N.N. gets into an accident after calling and never does arrive. In such a situation, we would have to say that we didn’t actually know. But it would be misleading for someone to say that he or she was not right to say "I know" (\textit{O.C.} \#542). For this is the way in which the words "know" and "true" are used in our language. The fact that we have to revise our application of "is true" to particular sentences in light of what we discover about reality does not make truth a property of a statement which cannot be lost, which exists independently of our use of the statement. For "is true" is a word which is used to predicate something of beliefs. Its meaning--which, on a Wittgensteinian view, boils down to its correct use--depends on our normative agreement on how we are to apply it in particular cases. The conditions under which it is correct to predicate "is true" of a sentence depend on our agreement on how the predicate is to be applied to a particular kind of sentence. They depend on our agreement on what counts as an adequate test of a particular kind of statement, i.e., of a statement within a particular kind of language game (\textit{O.C.} \#82). This means that the predicate "is true" can only be meaningfully applied to a sentence for which we have some criteria or some convention
whereby we predicate "is true" or "is false" of it. We cannot give content to calling something true where we have no criteria for determining its truth or falsehood\textsuperscript{21}.

Hans-Johann Glock makes an objection which might appear to undermine the view I have put forth. Glock thinks that there are true thoughts which have never been expressed and even "truths which have never been entertained, even in silence". And he argues that if there were no people, it would still be a truth that there are mountains. For according to Glock,

1) "If there were no people, there would still be mountains" implies
2) "If there were no people, it would still be true that there are mountains"
   which in turn seems to imply
3) "If there were no people, it would still be a truth that there are mountains".

Rorty has recently objected to the move from the first statement to the second by asking "What is 'be true' supposed to mean in a world in which there are no statements to be true nor minds to have true beliefs?"\textsuperscript{22}. According to Rorty, the realist cannot reply to this question without dogmatically presupposing his account of truth. Glock argues that Rorty’s conclusion is precipitous because it runs together the question of what "is true" means in a world without people with what it means of a world without people: "[the fact that] in a world without people, no one would be in a position to explain the meaning of 'is true' or use it in statements like (2) does not entail that we cannot meaningfully use "is true" to make a statement like (2)". However, I think that because of Glock’s
conditional "would" in the statement "If there were no people, it would still be true that there are mountains", his claim is not a claim about what "is true" means of a world without people. It is still a claim about what it means in a world without people. For we can ask, "What is the word ‘it’ supposed to refer to in the sentence ‘If there were no people, it would still be true that there are mountains’?" It must surely refer to something like a thought. And now we can ask, In virtue of what is that thought true? In virtue of what would it be correct to predicate "is true" of "There are mountains"? In virtue of which standards of classification would some things count as mountains? Of course, what we call mountains would still exist, but if there were no intersubjective agreement on what counts as a mountain, what would make it correct to predicate "is true" of "There are mountains"? And if nothing could make it correct to predicate "is true" of "There are mountains", then in virtue of what would it be true? In virtue of what could it be true other than a mind-independent object like a Fregean thought or a proposition? (And if the realist were to give this answer, then he would, as Rorty says, be "dogmatically presupposing his account of truth").

Glock does not see it this way. He thinks that the deflationist strategy is a knock-down move against Rorty. Glock says that " 'It is true that there are mountains’ means the same of a world without people as it does of a world with people, namely that there are mountains. This equivalence does not rely on any realist or Platonist assumptions it does not presuppose a correspondence theory of truth according to which truth is a relation between a thought, a proposition, and a mind or language-independent item, a fact. On the contrary, the equivalence is essential to the deflationary account of truth".
which Rorty himself favors." However, I do not think Glock has shown that the equivalence schema does not rely on any realist, Platonist, or metaphysical assumptions. The challenge for Glock is to give a precise answer to the question of what he takes to be a truth bearer. And the even greater challenge is to give an account of how that truth bearer can have meaning in the absence of use. Indeed, while Glock examines several possible candidates for truth bearers and rejects them as being excessively nominalist or Platonist, his own account of a truth bearer comes uncomfortably close to Fregean Platonic-realism. He says that "is true" applies to whatever is or could be said. He thinks that what is true must be in principle expressible in language-capable of being expressed—but need not actually be expressed just like Fregean thoughts—cf. Glock’s remark, "there are even truths which have never been entertained, even in silence"). I think that this is a dangerous slide in the direction of Fregean Platonic-realism even if it is not actually identical with it. I want to say, If publicity is not an essential feature of a truth bearer, what gives it objective meaning? Not the same thing that gives it intersubjective meaning or that makes it communicable or shareable. And in that case, what guarantees that it is communicable or shareable? Or, to put the point another way, if we construe the meaning of "is true" without reference to the way in which we use the predicate, what account can we give of the meaning the word has in our language? We cannot absolutely rule out the possibility that there exists some higher intelligence or some being outside of the time sequence who could think true thoughts in the absence of human creatures. But what such a being would mean by 'true' would be very different from what we mean by 'true' in our language since his or her epistemic perspective would not be the human epistemic
perspective. Here I would like to paraphrase an argument of Dummett's: if we are to make sense of calling a statement "true", it must be true, it must be true in virtue of the sort of fact which we have been taught to regard as justifying us in asserting it. It cannot be true in virtue of some quite different fact of which we can have no direct knowledge for then "is true" could not have the meaning that we have given it.

My point here goes beyond Davidson's observation and Misak's observation that if there were no speakers, there would be no statements or beliefs to be true so that truth would be "an uninstantiated property". The problem lies deeper than that: if there were no speakers, there would be no intersubjective agreement in virtue of which beliefs and assertions could be true. And, thus, I think we can say: although the conditions under which something is real or is the case are independent of our normative agreement, the conditions under which it is correct to predicate "is true" of a sentence are wholly dependent on our normative agreement. These conditions are dependent on our agreement on what count as adequate grounds upon which to affirm our statements (O.C. #82, #270, #271). And the grounds which we consider to be telling or adequate on which to accept our statements as true can only reflect the state of our knowledge at a particular time.

We see therefore how Wittgenstein's conception of meaning as use implies the rejection of a realist account of truth. His conception of the truth condition of a sentence in terms of a convention for predicating "is true" of it or a conventionally accepted way of telling whether it is true entails the rejection of any view whereby truth can transcend our current capacity for knowledge. The realist objects to identifying the truth condition of a sentence with a criterion for judging it to be true because of his concern about yet-to-
be-discovered facts. For he holds that if we could turn out to be wrong about what we previously held to be true, then identifying the truth condition of a statement with a convention for predicing "is true" of it amounts to a kind of idealism. That is, it amounts to the view that the way things are is a product of our thought and talk. We have seen how Wittgenstein can avoid this charge of idealism by distinguishing the grammar of "is real" from the grammar of "is true".

The antirealist, as we shall see, also takes issue with identifying truth conditions with criteria. For while he agrees with Wittgenstein's thought that truth cannot transcend our capacity for knowledge, he is also committed to the realist conception of truth as correspondence with reality. This places him in a dilemma about what to say about yet-to-be-discovered or undiscoverable facts given his prior commitment to the view of truth as correspondence and his subsequent rejection of the notion of transcendent truth. He attempts to relieve the tension in the following way: he holds that given that there are undiscovered facts and given that truth cannot transcend our capacity for knowledge, we should simply jettison the concept of truth and replace it with that of assertibility.

Wittgenstein holds that the antirealist's move ought to be resisted (O.C. #607). For the fact is that we use the predicate "is true" to indicate that we are basing a claim we are making on our current norms of verification. We have a picture of truth as correspondence because of our awareness of the fact that "We say that "p" does not entail "p". That is, we picture truth as correspondence because we know that the fact that we call a statement true does not necessarily mean that it will be correct to call it true in the future. But the fact is that we do use "is true" as though we are correct to affirm as true
the statements which we currently count as true. And the fact that we use "is true" in this way shows that the correspondence picture is not something our practice commits us to. We should not, therefore, accept an account of truth which respects the realist's intuition of correspondence. And we should not join the antirealists in jettisoning the notion of truth out of respect for this intuition. For the conception of truth conditions in terms of criteria and conventions provides us with a way of arguing against the very idea of transcendent truth.

ANTIREALISM AGAIN

Wittgenstein's identification of a truth condition with a conventional rule for predicating "is true" of a sentence undercuts the realist thought motivating semantic antirealism, namely, that some sentences might have truth conditions which transcend our ability to recognize them. For, as we have seen, Wittgenstein's novel conception of a truth condition links the truth condition of every sentence in language which is treated as being true or false with the way that the sentence is used. Wittgenstein held that in every area of discourse or, in his terminology, in every type of language game, we predicate "is true" of a sentence because the satisfaction of the criterion governing it decisively establishes it as true. For by linguistic convention, if the criterion of a claim is met, it is certain that a criterially governed claim is true. He further held that statements belonging to different language games-e.g. "It is true that 3+3=6" and "It is true that Jones is in pain" or again "It is true that C.M. was born in 1961" and "It is true that
Moses lived" are used differently in the context of affirming and denying them although we predicate "is true" of each of them. Because they belong to different language games, we recognize different kinds of criteria as decisive for establishing their truth. We know that the first statement is true because it is an arithmetical rule and thus a grammatically necessary proposition that $3+3=6$. The criterion that Jones is in pain is Jones’s pain behaviour coupled with a criterion that he is not merely pretending. And the criterion that C. M. was born in 1961 is one type of record, while the criterion that Moses lived is yet another type of record which would be considered insufficient to establish the truth of a statement of the former type. Therefore, while it is possible to be certain of each of these types of statements, they are different kinds of certain propositions, that is, they are used to express different kinds of certainty. As Wittgenstein describes the difference between different types of statements which we treat as being true or false in our language,

I can be as certain of someone else's sensations as of any fact. But this does not make the propositions "He is much depressed", "25 x 25 = 625", and "I am sixty years old" into similar instruments. The explanation suggests itself that the certainty is of a different kind. This seems to point to a psychological process. But the difference is logical....The kind of certainty is the kind of language game. (P.1., p.224)

Wittgenstein cautions us not to infer from the fact that we accept different kinds of statements as true upon different kinds of grounds that some statements to which we apply the predicate "is true" are more certain than others or that the predicate "is true" is actually misapplied to some sentences. For example, we should not think that because the certainty expressed by the statement "It is true that he is depressed" is different from
the certainty expressed by "It is true that I am sixty" and "It is true that 3+3=6", the first statement involves a misuse of the predicate "is true" because we can never definitively determine whether it is true. For every statement in language which we treat as being true or false is treated as being true or false because we have a criterion of its truth which counts as an adequate test of a statement within that language game. That is to say, we call a proposition true or false when we have a conventional way of determining whether it is true which we intersubjectively agree upon as being decisive for establishing the truth of that type of statement. And naturally, what counts as an adequate test of one type of statement is different from what counts as an adequate test of another type. This does not mean that statements such as "He is in pain" in contrast to statements such as "She lives on Charles Street West" are not determinately true or false or do not have truth conditions. Rather, it means that the former type of statement is not used to express the same kind of certainty as the latter, for we employ different kinds of criteria in determining the truth of each.

Antirealists assume that because we cannot ascertain the truth of statements referring to the remote past or to other peoples’ mental states in the same way that we can ascertain the truth of other types of statements, the former are not determinately true or false, and our conventional practice of treating them as bivalent is inaccurate. Wittgenstein’s answer to this is that we should not expect to be able to ascertain the truth of each type of truth functional statement in the same way before we are prepared to predicate "is true" of each of them. We should keep in mind that what we treat as an
adequate test of one statement is different from what we treat as being an adequate test of another. As Wittgenstein remarks,

"What is internal is hidden from us."---The future is hidden from us. But does an astronomer think like this when he calculates an eclipse of the sun? If I see someone writhing in pain with evident cause, I do not think: all the same, his feelings are hidden from me. (P.I., p.223).

We cannot find out whether future tense statements are true in the same way that we can determine the truth of statements about the present. But given that statements about the future are used to make predictions, we are as entitled to call them true on the basis on which we make them as we are in classifying statements about the present as true on the grounds upon which we assert these. Antirealists who claim that we are incorrect in treating some statements as determinately true or false forget that what it means to call a statement true varies across different language games as our manner of calculating truth values varies in different areas of discourse. But once we realize the nuances in the predicate "true" the idea that statements about the past are not determinately true or false because they can never be conclusively established reflects a failure to recognize that "Moses lived" and "C.M. was born in 61" are not used to make the same type of assertion.

According to Wittgenstein the only way for a statement to have a truth condition transcending our capacity for knowledge would be for a statement to be governed by a criterion which we could never ascertain as having been met. But this is not a logical
possibility. It is possible that in a particular case it might be a contingent fact that we might be unable to ascertain whether the criterion of a claim was met. In Canfield's example, we might make the criterion of a chess player's being a grandmaster his having a particular rating. And it is possible that in a particular case, the records of a chess player's rating might be destroyed so that we might be contingently unable to determine whether the criterion of his being a grandmaster had been met. But on Wittgenstein's view, it is not logically possible for a statement which we treat as being true or false to be governed by a criterion which we could never, in principle, recognize as having been met. For he connects meaning with use, and knowing the circumstances under which to predicate "is true" of a sentence which we treat as being true or false is part of knowing how to use that sentence. Therefore, such a sentence could not be governed by a criterion which we could never, in principle, recognize as having been met, for in that case we could never have learned when to predicate "is true" of a sentence which we treat as having a truth value. That is, a sentence which we treat as being true or false could not logically be governed by a criterion which we could never recognize as having been met, for in that case, we could never have learned how to use the sentence.

To be sure, we can think of declarative sentences which lack criteria of truth. One such sentence is the inverted spectrum hypothesis which Wittgenstein mentions at P.I. #272, that one section of mankind might have one sensation of red and another section another. But precisely because this type of sentence has no criterion of truth, we cannot, contrary to first impressions, treat it as being true or false. And therefore, Wittgenstein argues, we cannot properly classify it as a hypothesis or a proposition or as any other
type of sentence which we think of as bearing a truth value. What Wittgenstein says about the inverted spectrum hypothesis at P.I. #272 is not that it is possible to make it although it is unverifiable. Rather, he says that on the assumption that the word "red" refers to a private exemplar, the hypothesis would be possible, though unverifiable. But this consequence shows the absurdity of that assumption. For if the meaning of the word "red" were taken as something that each person could know only from his own case rather than as the colour we agree to call "red", then it is not clear what it could mean to question or affirm that something was red. For in that case, there could be no normative standard of what counts as being red. And consequently, the word "red" could not have any intersubjective meaning; we could never have learned to use it in sentences ascribing the quality of being red to objects. Given that the word "red" does have an intersubjective meaning, it is absurd to suppose that we could construe its meaning as its private reference rather than as its use.

By parity of reasoning, it is absurd to think of the inverted spectrum hypothesis, which rests on the assumption of private reference, as a possible hypothesis or proposition or as the sort of thing which we really think of as being either true or false. For we could only have come to think of it as a true or false proposition if we treated it as being true or false in our language, that is, if we used it in the contexts of affirming it and denying it. Or, as Wittgenstein puts it, we could only have come to think of it as a proposition if, in our language, we applied the calculus of truth functions to it. But we cannot apply the calculus of truth functions to the inverted spectrum hypothesis, that is, we cannot use it in the contexts of affirming it and denying it, because there is no criterion whereby we
could predicate "is true" or "is false" of it. And this means that we can never have learned the circumstances under which we should affirm it as true. Hence, Wittgenstein's view is that every sentence which is treated as being true or false in our language is treated as being true or false only in so far as we have a criterion whereby we predicate "is true" of it, which tells us the grounds on which to affirm a statement of that type. For it is by learning the grounds or criterion of a sentence that we learn how to use such a sentence in the contexts of affirmations and denials. Thus, Wittgenstein's conception of the truth condition of a sentence in terms of the use of the sentence undermines the realist thought that some sentences may have truth conditions transcending our ability to recognize them.
NOTES

1. The term "language game" has been so widely used that a word of clarification is in order as to what I mean by it and how finely individuated I take language games to be. As I will be using the phrase here, "language game" will refer to any area of discourse which employs methods of investigating and testing which are unique to that area of discourse. Some examples would include: the language game played by historians, the language game played by social scientists, and the language game played by the scientific community. And I take language games to be individuated in roughly the way that these examples are. Of course, numerous other examples of language games can also be found in more common activities that we engage in. For the important point is that the concept of a language game is grounded in human activity: as Wittgenstein says "...the term 'language-game' is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity or a form of life" (P.I. #23). Or, as Ronald Bienert puts this point, "The concept of a language game entails the concept of human activities containing language. These particular human activities are fundamental to the existence of the particular use of language that is isolated in a particular language game and so are fundamental for that particular language game" (Wittgenstein's Concept of a Language Game, p.265).

I would also like to remark here that I will be using the term "language game" primarily as an epistemological concept: in our various language games, we go about testing statements in different ways and we accept our statements as true upon different
kinds of grounds. This interpretation of the concept of a language game is supported by remarks such as "What counts as an adequate test of a statement belongs... to the description of the language game" (O.C. #82) and "The kind of certainty is the kind of language game" (P.I. p.224). Wittgenstein also uses "language game" as a more exclusively semantic concept, i.e., as a way of opposing a Tractarian meaning theory. But (with the exception of a few parts of my second chapter) that is not the sense in which I will use the term here. For a fuller discussion of Wittgenstein's concept of a language game, see Ernst Specht's *The Foundations of Wittgenstein's Late Philosophy* and Ronald Beinert's unpublished dissertation, *Wittgenstein's Concept of a Language Game*, University of Toronto, 1996.

2. The reader may recognize the reference to the concept of a rule-following practice as one possible rout to the antirealist reading of Wittgenstein. The notion that a rejection of truth conditions in favor of justification conditions is implicit in Wittgenstein's discussion of following a rule was first suggested by Kripke in his Wittgenstein on *Rules and Private Language*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: 1982). Kripke argues that because there can be no fact about an individual nor any fact in the world in virtue of which he could mean addition by there can be no such thing as meaning something by a word. He then suggests the following "sceptical solution" to this sceptical paradox about meaning: according to him, Wittgenstein holds that what allows us to say of any individual that he means addition by "+" is that he uses it in accordance with his community. It is not that the community's agreement makes an answer to a given addition problem objectively correct
or that 5 statement such as '3 + 3 = 6' is true. Rather, Wittgenstein is supposed to hold that if this is the answer everyone gives, no one will feel justified in calling the answer wrong. In other words, Kripke thinks that when Wittgenstein rejected the view in the *Tractatus* that a statement gets its meaning by virtue of its truth condition or by virtue of its correspondence to facts that must obtain if it is true, he proposed a picture of meaning based not on truth conditions but on justification conditions or assertability conditions: under what circumstances are we allowed to make a given assertion? (Kripke, 1982, p.74) Since Kripke’s initial presentation of this view, a vast literature has sprung up arguing for and against an antirealist reading of Wittgenstein based on rule-following considerations (see especially McDowell’s "Following a Rule" and Wright’s "Rule-following, Objectivity, and the Theory of Meaning" in *Wittgenstein: To Follow a Rule*, eds, Holtzman and Leach, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981). I will not be discussing this issue here as it is a different argument for semantic antirealism that I am concerned with. In Chapter 3, section 4, I do discuss Kripke’s worry that the possibility of a change in a rule governed practice means that "nothing about grasping concepts guarantees that it will not all break down tomorrow" (1982, p.97) For a criticism of Kripke’s view, see Baker and Hacker’s *Scepticism, Rules, and Language* (Oxford: 1984).

3. Lynette Reid once made the objection against me that I gloss *O.C.* #110 as though the last sentence were "the end is not an ungrounded presupposition, but an ungrounded convention" rather than "an ungrounded way of acting". She thinks that my talk of intersubjective agreement on conventions, criteria, and linguistic rules is in tension with
remarks such as "Giving grounds.. comes to an end;—but the end is not certain propositions striking us immediately as true; i.e., it is not an ungrounded way of seeing; it is our acting which lies at the bottom of the language game" (O.C. #204). She herself would favor an account of "agreement in form of life" along the lines of Peter Winch's in "Im Anfang War die Tat" in Trying to Make Sense (Oxford: 1987). For she thinks that my account of agreement rests upon the philosophical prejudice that there must be rules governing a practice. The reason this is supposed to amount to a "prejudice" is that often the speakers of a language would not be able to formulate the rules they were using. We shall see, however, that this type of objection is not a good one. For my account of agreement within language games on conventions for predicing "is true" of sentences is grounded in human activity. And it is not a requirement of the view that I am defending that speakers be able to formulate and state the criterial rules they are using. Even when they cannot do so, it can still be the case that they use certain criteria in justifying their judgements. For a detailed discussion of why this is so, see Canfield’s Wittgenstein: Language and World (Amherst: 1981), p.39.

4. For a similar discussion of P.I. #241, see Jerry Gill’s "Wittgenstein’s Concept of Truth", International Philosophical Quarterly VI 1966.

5. However, as Laurence Hinman points out in "Can a Form of Life Be Wrong?" (Philosophy 58 1983), it does not follow that one form of life cannot be incorrect in contrast to another. All that follows from the fact that a form of life is the only
framework within which it is possible to make judgements is that an entire form of life cannot be called into question at one time from within that form of life. As Hinman argues, language and the form of life in which it is grounded cannot be said to be either true or false for they must be presupposed as a whole in order for particular knowledge claims to be judged true or false. But this alone is hardly sufficient to insulate the form of life from any possible criticism at all.


7. I will give a more sustained account of semantic antirealism and of Dummett's argument for it in Chapter 2. I want to stress here that in opposing the view that Wittgenstein rejected a truth-conditional account of meaning, I am not arguing that Wittgenstein held that the general form of an explanation of meaning is a statement of a sentence's truth conditions. That is, I am not suggesting that Wittgenstein would have advocated giving a systematic theory of meaning based on truth conditions. What I am arguing is simply that Wittgenstein would have rejected Dummett's and Wright's view that it is problematic to speak of certain sentences, which we treat as being true or false, as having truth conditions. In *Language, Sense, and Nonsense* (Oxford: 1984), Baker and Hacker raise numerous objections against truth-conditional semantics and go on at great length about what truth bearers could not be. These objections do not pose a problem for my view because I am not arguing for a systematic theory of meaning. As will be seen,
I take truth conditions to be context-dependent conventions and criteria. And I take truth bearers to be whatever is said to which we apply the predicate "is true"—a modified version of Glock's view in "Truth Without People" (Philosophy, 72 1997) where he says that is true applies to whatever is or could be said.

8. Wittgenstein first introduces the concept of a criterion by way of the following example: "If medical science calls angina an inflammation caused by a particular bacillus, and we ask in a particular case 'Why do you say this man has got angina?' then the answer 'I have found the bacillus so-and-so in his blood gives the criterion, or what we may call the defining criterion" (B.B., p.25). By contrast, a symptom of some state of affairs is something that experience has shown us to coincide in some way with the defining criterion. Thus, to answer the question 'How do you know he has angina?' by saying "He has an inflamed throat" would be to appeal to a symptom or to empirical evidence.

In saying that Wittgenstein identified truth conditions with criteria, I am using "criteria" in a somewhat looser sense than this one. For "criterion" is a technical term and, as Canfield (1981) has argued, Wittgenstein did not think that all sentences which we treat as being true or false in language are governed by strict criteria. For most sentences in language that we treat as true or false, we have no way of distinguishing their criteria from their symptoms in a way which is not ad hoc. Nevertheless, Wittgenstein held that, with a limited number of exceptions, every sentence which we treat as being true or false in language is one for which we have some conventional way
of telling whether it is true. As he remarks, "Really, 'the proposition is either true or false' only means that it must be possible to decide for or against it. But this does not say what the ground for such decision is like" (O.C. #200). Thus, many kinds of judgements which are not governed by strict criteria such as "This is an orange" can be justified or determined as true by reference to certain features, e.g., by reference to the way an orange looks and smells. These features constitute ways of telling, and language users take them as settling the truth of judgements. Henceforth, when I speak of the Wittgensteinian conception of a truth condition, I will usually speak of "criteria and conventions" and reserve the term "criteria" for the narrower and more technical concept.

9. The two exceptions to this generalization, as Canfield (1981) has noted, are avowals such as "I am in pain" and tautologies such as "All bachelors are unmarried men". Avowals can certainly be either true or false since one can lie about being in pain. Yet one cannot be said to find out that one is in pain; as Wittgenstein remarks, "What I do is not, of course, to identify my sensation by criteria" (P.I. #290). And statements such as "All bachelors are unmarried men" are certainly treated as being true, but we could not be said to find out that they are true. For to know that all bachelors are unmarried is just to know the meaning of the word "bachelor". With these two exceptions, I take Wittgenstein's view to be that every statement in language which we treat as being true or false is governed by some conventional way of establishing it as true. Canfield does not want to make such a wide generalization. He argues that there can be no way of settling the truth of Russell's hypothesis that the world came into existence
five minutes ago complete with our memories and historical records. As he remarks, "There is no compelling reason to insist the statement is nonsense. On the other hand, it is obviously relevant to understanding its use to ask what, if any, criterion governs it" (1981, p.147). On my view, Canfield is simply wrong in thinking that there is no compelling reason to regard Russell’s hypothesis as nonsense. For, as I will argue, we employ a convention of treating the existence of historical records as establishing that historical events occurred. I take the point of Z. #663 to be that the meaning of statements about the past cannot transcend what we can know about the past now.

10. This remark represents Norman Malcolm’s view in "Wittgenstein’s Philosophical Investigations" in The Philosophy of Mind, ed. V.C. Chappell, (New Jersey: 1962). The view of criteria which I will defend here is roughly the "defining criteria" view defended by Malcolm and by Canfield in Wittgenstein: Language and World. I will discuss this view in much greater detail in Chapter 3.

11. I follow Canfield (1981) in speaking of a criterion’s being met. It is more common in the literature to speak of a criterion being satisfied. But those who use this terminology generally do not stipulate that the circumstances must be appropriate for us to apply a criterial rule in order for a criterion to be satisfied. By contrast, Canfield’s view is that in order for a criterion to be met, it is not enough that a phenomenon that we sometimes treat as a criterion be physically manifested. Rather, the circumstances also have to be appropriate for us to apply our criterial rule. We shall see that much of the debate over
whether criteria can be taken as truth conditions hangs on whether circumstances are
taken as being important in formulating a criterial rule.

12. I have taken this example from Petra von Morstein’s "Concepts and Forms of Life:
Criteria and Perception" in Wittgenstein, the Vienna Circle, and Critical Rationalism, eds.

13. However, as I will argue in Chapter 3, it does not follow that Wittgenstein’s view
of truth amounts to idealism or relativism. For it is not being argued that our applications
of "is true" are made correct by a world which is entirely of our making. Our
applications of "is true" are made true by norms which reflect our current knowledge.
And knowledge is only partly of our making. Knowledge is a relation between our
cognitive capacities and reality (which we can slice in several alternative ways). And, thus, we can say that knowledge comes into existence as we probe. But nevertheless,
Wittgenstein holds that we can make sense of a world picture’s being shown to be wrong
either by confrontation with new discoveries or by confrontation with the world picture
of another form of life. The criterion for one world picture’s being correct in contrast to
that of another is that the former can explain the same phenomena that the latter can
explain and can also explain phenomena which the latter cannot explain. In this case, we
can say that such a world picture approximates reality more closely than another world
picture. Or, to put the point another way, one form of life’s applications of the predicate
"is true" are correct according to more accurate or exacting standards of correctness. For
a good discussion of this issue, see Thomas Morawetz's "Understanding, Disagreement, and Conceptual Change", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 41 1980.

14. The realist will object here that what makes a statement assertible—or what makes it correct to predicate "is true" of a statement—is that it is actually true, where "true" means "corresponds to reality". My reply to the realist is that we need to distinguish between what we can say about what truth really is and about what our concept of truth can amount to. In order to give an account of what our concept of truth can amount to, we need to examine the uses to which we put the word "true" in our linguistic practice. And our practice of applying the truth predicate to statements is conditioned by certain facts about the human epistemic perspective—e.g., that our knowledge at any given time can never be considered complete. I would not rule out the hypothetical possibility that there might exist some "higher intelligence" or some "superhuman being outside of the time sequence" who could think true thoughts in the absence of any human creatures. But the first point to make is that the epistemic perspective of such a being would be very different from our own. Consequently, what she or he would mean by "true" would be very different from what we mean by it. Secondly, the hypothesis that there is such a God's eye perspective on the concept of truth is such that nothing could count either for or against it. And, as a verificationist, I believe that if nothing can speak either for or against the correctness of some philosophical view, then we ought not to speculate about its correctness. To do so under these circumstances is merely to engage in spurious metaphysics. So what I am arguing here is not that the realist's theory of truth is wrong
but that we have no way of telling whether it is correct or incorrect. Therefore, we should abandon our project of formulating a theory of truth simpliciter, and focus instead on articulating the concept of truth that emerges from our uses of the predicate "is true". I will discuss this further in my conclusion.


16. The arguments in this paragraph following my second reference to the Investigations are taken from H.J. Glock's "Truth Without People" in *Philosophy* 72 1997, pp.97-8. I have modified them slightly and he would probably not wholly endorse my use of them.

17. For the distinction between subjective and objective certainty, see *O.C.* #194, #270, #271. For a good discussion of the distinction, see Carol Carraway's "Is Wittgenstein's Account of the Relation Between Knowledge and Certainty Consistent?" in *Philosophical Investigations* 1 1978.

18. For a similar discussion of *O.C.* #191, see Peter Winch's "True or False?" in *Inquiry* 31 1986, p.273. He writes, "...the word 'true' is doing no real work at [the] point [where one asks 'But does it certainly agree with reality...?']: it is an idle wheel. And the danger of such an idle wheel distracting us from the real workings of the mechanism are shown in what follows: the temptation to insist on the question as though
something further were in question something transcending the boundaries of the language game. Instead of transcending its boundaries, however, we go round and round within it."


20. It might be objected that although we were not wrong to insist or claim that \( p \) was true, we were still wrong that \( p \) was true. But Wittgenstein’s point is that given that it only makes sense to say that we were wrong that \( p \) was true in light of information which transcended our knowledge at the time when we said "\( P \) is true nothing follows from the fact. In particular, it does not follow that it was not correct to predicate "is true" of the statement at the time of utterance. If someone wants to argue that it does follow that it was not correct to predicate "is true" of the statement—e.g., if she holds the predicate "is true" does not get applied correctly but fallibly—then she will owe us an account of what would make it correct to predicate is true' of a sentence on any given occasion. And it will no longer be open to her to say that what makes it correct to predicate "is true" of a given sentence is our intersubjective agreement on how to apply the predicate to a particular kind of sentence. And if someone cannot say this, then she will have snapped Wittgenstein’s link, which there are good reasons for forging, between meaning and agreement.
21. Notice that the argument that I have given and will expand on against the concept of transcendent truth turns on a point about meaning. It presupposes that we construe the concept of truth in terms of the meaning of "is true". And it then presupposes that we construe the meaning of "is true" in terms of our intersubjective uses of "is true". For this reason, the argument for rejecting the concept of transcendent truth which I have attributed to the later Wittgenstein is consistent with--and indeed falls out of--his account of meaning as use. If meaning is construed in another way--e.g., if language is taken to have meaning and truth value in terms of its mapping on to mind-independent thoughts which exist and bear their truth values absolutely, my argument will not go through. But there are independent reasons for rejecting a realist account of meaning. Elsewhere, I have argued that if we construe objectivity without reference to intersubjectivity--or, to put the point another way, if we construe meaning without reference to use--we will be led to a doctrine of privacy for certain parts of language. If we think of words as having meaning in virtue of their roles in sentences that map on to mind-independent thoughts, then the meaning of the demonstrative "I" becomes unlearnable and incommunicable (see my "On the Link Between Frege’s Platonic-Realist Semantics and his Doctrine of Private Senses" in Philosophy 72 1997). But we can also make a more general objection against construing meaning without reference to use beyond saying that such a view can result in a doctrine of privacy. We can simply say that if we try to give an account of the meaning of any word in language, such as the word "true" without reference to the way in which we use the word, then we will not have given an explanation of the meaning it has in our language.

23. It might also refer to something like a T sentence or a propositional clause. The latter is Glock’s view. But it is not clear that these types of truth bearer are altogether different from those which I have mentioned. Therefore, we should not be too quick to think that shifting to a deflationist’s choice of a truth bearer can rescue Glock from my objection. We can still ask "What makes that T sentence or propositional clause true?"


25. Anscombe (1976), Bloor (1996), Kober (1996), Williams (1974), and Lear (1982) have argued that the view that concepts are to some extent dependent on human classifications of reality and that these classifications are to some extent arbitrary amounts to linguistic idealism. I prefer to call this view "conceptualism".

27. The question might be raised here of whether I am speaking of degrees of certainty or of degrees of verification. My response would be that statements within different language games admit of different kinds of verification and that this is built into their "grammars", although I am using "verification" in a somewhat broader sense than the one in which it is often used. What I mean is that what counts as "finding out" whether a statement is true varies for statements in different language games. Consequently, the kind of certainty that our conventions and criteria confer on our sentences varies across different language games. It is not that statements within some language games are less certain than others, for every convention that we use for predicating "is true" of a statement is treated as establishing it as true. Rather, the difference in the kind of certainty is grammatical or logical. It has to do with what it means to accept a given kind of statement as true. As Wittgenstein remarks, "The kind of certainty is the kind of language game". For example, we can no longer observe the events that statements about the remote past are about. But we employ a convention of treating certain kinds of evidence, such as historical records, as decisively establishing that these events took place. Thus, my account of the meaning and truth value of statements about the past comes very close to the one given by Cheryl Misak in *Truth and the End of Inquiry: A Peircean Account of Truth* (Oxford: 1991), p.137. She writes, "...we must remember not to correlate unverifiability and undecidability. To decide or agree that something is the case is not the same as to verify by direct observation that it is the case. For the reasons for deciding upon something might have little to do with sensory evidence... Statements about the past... can, in principle, be candidates for the truth predicate despite the fact
that they have no direct link with empirical observation.... [For] example, although we have not seen Napoleon Bonaparte, we cannot explain the documents and monuments referring to him without supposing that he existed."


29. I thank Cheryl Misak for urging me to take this seriously as a possible counterexample.
Chapter 2

"From "Meaning Is Use to Semantic Antirealism: The Unjustified Move from Truth Conditions to Justified Assertibility Conditions"
INTRODUCTION

We have seen how Wittgenstein’s conception of meaning as use leads to his rejection of transcendent truth: if we conceive of the truth condition of a sentence in terms of the way in which we use the sentence, then a sentence could not have a truth condition which we could not recognize as obtaining. If it had a transcendent truth condition, we would not have come to treat it as being true or false. Michael Dummett reads the dictum that meaning is use as implying the rejection of a truth conditional account of meaning. He claims that it has inspired a position which he terms "semantic antirealism", viz. that we do not come to understand our sentences by learning what it is that would make them true. For Dummett thinks that rejecting transcendent truth entails rejecting truth tout court. According to Dummett, the crux of the dictum that meaning is use is that what a speaker’s understanding consists in must be manifestable in his use of language. And he holds that there are some sentences which we treat as being determinately true or false, or bivalent, for which we are not in a position to determine their truth values. Therefore, since there is no practical ability through which we could manifest our knowledge of these sentences’ truth conditions, we must reject the thought that we understand these sentences by learning to recognize their truth conditions as obtaining when they obtain. And, thus, we must also reject the notion that the general form of explanation of meaning is that the meaning of a statement is its truth conditions. We must hold instead that, in the case of undecidable sentences, we grasp their meanings.
by learning to recognize conditions under which we are justified in asserting them where these fall short of being decisive for establishing their truth.¹

I will argue that Dummett’s attempt to read semantic antirealism into Wittgenstein is out of the spirit of "meaning is use" as Wittgenstein intended the dictum. First of all, I will show that Dummett’s notion that certain sentences which we treat as bivalent in fact have no truth values rests upon a realist conception of truth. That is, Dummett’s argument rests upon the assumption that the only possible way to construe what it is to determine a sentence’s truth value is in terms of recognizing the obtaining of a realist truth condition. And, thus, his argument ultimately rests on a refusal to recognize an alternative account of what it is to determine the truth value of a sentence which falls out of the dictum that meaning is use: namely, that to determine the truth value of a sentence is to learn to apply a conventional rule which tells us the grounds upon which we may predicate "is true" of the sentence. I will further argue that the premises Dummett requires to draw his antirealist conclusion are in tension with an account of meaning as use. Specifically, we shall see that Dummett’s argument for rejecting a truth conditional account of meaning depends on a commitment to molecularism. Yet, as I shall argue, the notion that meaning is use entails a holistic view of meaning. That is, it implies that a sentence has meaning only in the context of an entire language. And once we accept the holism implicit in an account of meaning as use, Dummett’s argument for semantic antirealism does not go through.

Another of my aims in this chapter is to show that semantic antirealism in itself is not a coherent position. There is a tension between Dummett’s verificationism and his
commitment to truth as correspondence: He is led to reject the possibility of a truth conditional account of meaning because he is torn between his desire to hold, with the realist, that if something is true there must be something in the world in virtue of which it is true and his desire to say, with Wittgenstein, that if something is true we must be able to know that it is true. But if we do accept that the concept of truth is internally related to our capacity for knowledge, then the fact that a sentence corresponds to no perceptible segment of reality is irrelevant to the question of whether it is true or false. Wittgenstein’s account of truth is to be preferred to antirealism partly because the former is consistent with the initial motivation for rejecting realism. For if we hold that the realist cannot give content to his conception of truth on the grounds that it outruns our use, then we can only identify truth conditions with criteria and conventions. Thus, Wittgenstein’s more radical break with the realist/correspondence tradition is grounded in a deeper commitment to the thought that meaning is use.

FROM ‘MEANING IS USE’ TO SEMANTIC ANTIREALISM: THE ACQUISITION ARGUMENT AND THE MANIFESTATION CRITERION

Dummett’s project in his ”What Is a Theory of Meaning” articles is to argue that a theory of meaning based on truth conditions cannot give content to what a speaker’s knowledge consists in. He argues that when we learn a language, we do not, in general, come to understand our sentences by learning what it is that would render them true. Thus, the general form of an explanation of meaning is not a statement of a sentence’s
truth conditions. Dummett claims to base this position, which he terms "semantic antirealism", on Wittgenstein's notion that meaning is use. His defense of this position rests on the following line of argument: 1) that a speaker's understanding must be manifestable and 2) that what counts as manifestation of a speaker's understanding of some concept cannot outrun the way this understanding was initially acquired. He presents this case as follows.

He first points out that we expect a theory of meaning to give an account of how language users communicate by means of it or of "what makes language function as language" ("What Is a Theory of Meaning I", henceforth "WTM I", p.99). That is, a theory of meaning ought to make explicit the principles regulating our use of language which we already implicitly grasp. According to Dummett, if we are to grant Wittgenstein's thought that "to grasp the meaning of an expression is to understand its role in the language" ("WTM I", p.99), then the problem for a theory of meaning is to describe the knowledge that a speaker has when he knows the meaning of an expression, which has to be in terms of some capacity to use it. A theory of meaning ought to articulate the ability that speakers of a language have and analyze it into distinct components. It should do so first by representing linguistic ability as a set of propositions which a speakers would have to know in order to understand a language, including axioms specifying the reference of terms and the applications of predicates. And, second, it should specify some practical ability for each of these propositions by which a speaker could demonstrate his knowledge of it. That is, if part of understanding a sentence is knowing how to use it, then if a theory of meaning is to say what a speaker's
understanding of a given sentence consists in, it must specify some observable linguistic skill which this understanding is to issue in. The lesson we should learn from "meaning is use" is that "...a theory of meaning is required to make the workings of language open to view. To know a language is to be able to employ a language" ("WTM I", p.100). Hence,

Where we are concerned with a theoretical representation of understanding in terms of propositional knowledge of some practical ability, and, in particular, where that practical ability is precisely the mastery of language, it is incumbent on us, if our theory of meaning is to be explanatory...to specify not only what someone has to know for him to have that ability, but also what it is for him to have that knowledge, that is, what we are taking as constituting a manifestation of knowledge of those propositions; if we fail to do this, the connection will not be made between the theoretical representation and the practical ability it is supposed to represent ("WTM I", p.121).

Meaning is not a private matter, for language is essentially communicable; to understand a sentence is to know how to use it. Thus, if a theory of meaning is to give content to what a speaker's understanding consists in, it must describe how that understanding is to be manifested. For each sentence that a speaker is said to grasp, the theory must specify some practical ability, the possession of which constitutes knowledge of the meaning of that sentence.

Dummett makes the further point that in order for a theory of meaning to give content to what a speaker's knowledge consists in, it must specify how a speaker could master his own mother tongue. That is, it cannot merely explain how a foreigner, who has already acquired the concepts expressible in his own language, could learn how to
interpret another language. Rather, it must say how a native speaker initially acquires the concepts he learns when he learns to speak his own language. Thus, Dummett holds that a theory of meaning can only explain what language mastery consists in if it is molecular, i.e., if it assumes that an agent attains mastery of a language one piece at a time. A holistic theory of meaning, which holds that a fragment of language makes sense only within the context of an entire language, cannot explain what language mastery consists in. For holism provides no way of segmenting the ability to use language as a whole into distinct component abilities ("WTM I", p.116). And, thus, it cannot provide an account of how language acquisition takes place. As Dummett puts this point,

The difference between a molecular and a holistic view of language is...that on a holistic view, it is impossible fully to understand any sentence without knowing the entire language, whereas, on a molecular view, there is, for each sentence, a determinate fragment of language knowledge of which suffices for a complete understanding of that sentence. Such a conception... seems to be required if we are to allow for the progressive acquisition of a language. On a holistic view, on the other hand, there can be nothing between not knowing the language at all and knowing it completely ("WTM II", p.79)

Thus, according to Dummett, only a theory of meaning which is molecular rather than holistic can give an account of how an agent acquires mastery of a language and, hence, of what the ability to speak a language consists in. For molecularism "allows for the arrangement of expressions and sentences in a language according as the understanding of an expression is or is not dependent on the prior understanding of
another" ("WTM II", p.79). And it holds that there is a ground level of sentences which we initially acquire, knowledge of which presupposes no prior knowledge of a language.

Dummett identifies what a speaker's understanding consists in with what he terms his "implicit knowledge". That is, he identifies it with the knowledge of the meaning of those sentences which we can learn without having any prior linguistic competence -- i.e., with the sentences containing the most basic elements of language, such as the references of terms and the applications of predicates. For according to Dummett, it is these sentences which represent what mastery of one's mother tongue consists in; if a foreigner who did not know the language were to memorize them, then assuming that he could make fast enough inferences, his linguistic behavior would match that of the native speaker. Because these sentences can be grasped by someone who has no prior knowledge of a language, Dummett holds that a speaker's understanding of them must be manifested nonverbally. Such understanding cannot be manifested by an ability to express a sentence by means of an equivalent sentence. For, according to Dummett, if we want to discover what a speaker's understanding of his native tongue consists in, we must examine the way in which it was initially acquired. And what counts as manifestation of this knowledge cannot outrun the way it was initially acquired. He argues that

...it would be self-defeating to require that [a] speaker's knowledge of the propositions constituting the theory of meaning for the language should be manifested in an ability to formulate them verbally since the fundamental aim of the theoretical representation is to explain what someone who does not yet know any language
Dummett thinks that we cannot allow what counts as manifestation of a speaker’s understanding to be a capacity to give verbal explanations. Such a capacity presupposes that a speaker already has considerable linguistic ability, and so it does not distinguish what a child must learn in order to master his own language from what a foreigner must know in order to interpret another language. And what we want from a theory of meaning is that it should explain the initial acquisition of our concepts. Thus, if, for example, we want to say that in mastering a language, we come to understand our sentences by learning what it is for them to be true, we must give an account of what it is to know this which does not presuppose prior knowledge of the sentence. To ask what our concept of truth consists in is to ask where our implicit grasp of the concept comes in, i.e., how the concept is initially acquired. Therefore, manifestation of a speaker’s grasp of what it is for a sentence to be true cannot in general consist in his capacity to verbally state the truth condition or we will never get a handle on how the concept was initially acquired.

As Dummett puts this point,

An ability to state the truth condition of a sentence is no more than an ability to express the content of the sentence in other words. We accept such a capacity as evidence of a grasp of the meaning of the original sentence on the presumption that the speaker understands the words in which he is stating the truth condition, but at some point it must be possible to break out of the circle (Truth and Other Enigmas, henceforth TOE, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1978, p.224)
In other words, knowledge of meaning can be either implicit or explicit. It is explicit when a speaker can state what he knows, i.e. when he can assert some sentences that express the content of his knowledge (and then, of course, it is implied that he knows the meaning of the sentences he asserts). But it would be circular (and thus, as Dummett says, "self-defeating") to explain all knowledge of meaning as explicit knowledge for any such explanation presupposes what it is to know the meaning of some sentences. Hence, knowledge of meaning must in the end be explained in terms of implicit knowledge, i.e., in terms of some practical ability. And, therefore, if we want an account of what a speaker’s understanding of a truth condition amounts to, then what counts as manifestation of this knowledge may not be his ability to state what it is. Instead, it must issue in his ability to recognize the truth condition of a sentence as obtaining when it obtains.

Armed with the principle that manifestation of a speaker’s knowledge must issue in a recognitional capacity, Dummett proceeds to argue that we must reject a truth-conditional theory of meaning. That is, he denies that our understanding of our language can be explained in terms of our learning, for each sentence, what it is for it to be true. For, according to Dummett, natural language is full of sentences with truth conditions which we could not recognize as obtaining. That is, we treat many sentences as being determinately true or false which are not effectively decidable, i.e., for which "we have no effective procedure which will, in a finite amount of time, put us into a position in which we can recognize whether the truth condition of a statement is satisfied" (T.O.E., p.16). Examples of such sentences include subjunctive conditionals and those which refer
to regions of space-time in principle inaccessible to us such as the remote past or future. With undecidable sentences, we cannot give content to ascribing implicit knowledge of what the truth condition is to a speaker since there is no practical ability by which this knowledge could be manifested. And, thus, we cannot hold that we learn the meanings of these sentences by learning to recognize their truth conditions. Therefore, we cannot adopt a theory of meaning which assumes that bivalence must hold across the board. That is, we cannot maintain that, in general, we come to understand our sentences by learning to recognize their truth conditions. For many sentences in language are such that we can give no account of how we acquire the concept of what it is for them to be true.

According to Dummett, we assume we have a grasp of what it is for our sentences to be true because we employ a two-valued logic. We treat certain inference forms as valid which presuppose that bivalence holds across our sentences. And, thus, we think we have a grasp of what their truth value consists in. In fact, however, we learn the inference forms of classical logic only after we have mastered our language. Therefore, our bivalent logical practice does not explain our acquisition of the concept of truth. It merely explains our belief that we have the concept. As Dummett argues, classical logic depends for its justification on our having the notions of truth and falsity which license the assumption of bivalence. Thus, a mere training in a practice cannot itself generate the notion of truth unless we already have it ("WTM II", p.102).

It might be objected that if semantic antirealism is supposed to be inspired by the dictum that meaning is use, then a community’s treatment of a statement as determinately true or false should suffice for us to attribute to its members a grasp of the truth
condition. We might argue that a speaker manifests his grasp of what the truth value of a statement consists in merely through his bivalent logical practice. Such an account of what counts as manifestation would appear to be consistent with the thought that meaning is use: if a word has meaning in virtue of its intersubjective use within a community, then a sentence has whatever meaning a community’s use confers on it. All that is required for a community member to grasp a concept expressible in his language is that he be trained in a linguistic practice.

Dummett rejects the thought that our existing practice suffices to explain our grasp of the concept of truth. He holds that we cannot assume at the outset that our bivalent logical practice does not stand in need of revision. According to Dummett, the task of a semantic theory is to tell us what model we must have for the meanings of our sentences if our inferences are justified (T.O.E., p.311). Thus, what we seek is not merely a description of our practice. We want a theory of meaning that is capable of criticizing it. In order to provide such a potentially revisionist theory of meaning, we must assume at the outset that meaning holism is false. We cannot allow the unit of meaning to be no smaller than the entire language. For if we want a theory of meaning to be capable of criticizing a practice, we must have a way of distinguishing good inferences from bad ones. And since inferences are valid partly in virtue of meaning, such a criticism would have to be levelled at the meanings of the sentences. But if we are holists, we will be unable to make this kind of criticism. For if we assume that a sentence has meaning only in the context of a language, then a sentence will have meaning just in virtue of its use. That is, it will have whatever meaning our use has already given it. Therefore, if we
want a semantic theory to show us where we must revise a practice, a sentence must be
taken as saying something on its own. That is, there must be, for each sentence, "a
representation of its content which is independent of the description of the entire language
to which the sentence belongs" (*T.O.E.*, p.304). As Dummett argues,

> the possibility that a language may stand in need of adjustment...
> is implicit in the idea that a language ought to be capable of
> systematization by... a molecular theory of meaning for there [is]
> no guarantee that a complex of linguistic practices which has grown
> up by piecemeal historical evolution.. will conform to any systematic
> theory ("WTM II", p.104)

> the idea, which Wittgenstein held, that acceptance of any principle
> of inference contributes to determining the meanings of the words
> involved, and therefore, since speakers of a language may confer on
> their words whatever meanings they choose, forms of inference
generally accepted are unassailable by philosophical criticism has its
home only within a holistic view of language. If language ought to
be capable of systematization by a molecular theory of meaning, we
are not free to choose any logic we like, but only one for which it
is possible to provide a semantics which accords with the other
uses to which our sentences are put; in accepting or rejecting any...form of inference, we are responsible to the meanings of the
logical constants, thought of as given in some uniform manner (e.g.
by two- or many-valued truth tables) ("WTM II", p.105).

On a molecular view of meaning, our acceptance of an inference presupposing the
bivalence of a statement does not justify attributing to us a grasp of what its truth value
consists in. We may believe that a statement is determinately true or false only because
we employ a two-valued logic system. But classical logic may be incorrect; it may license
invalid inferences. In Dummett’s example, we cannot infer from a community’s
acceptance as a valid principle of inference the alternation of opposing counterfactuals
that counterfactuals are bivalent. For if a speaker cannot explain how to verify a
counterfactual (such as "Jones would have proven brave had his courage ever been
tested"), then he cannot give content to what its truth value must consist in. Hence, wherever there are sentences for which we cannot say what our implicit grasp of their truth conditions consists in, we must revise our practice of treating them as bivalent. We must abandon descriptivism in favor of revisionism, for we can no longer hold that we learn the meanings of these sentences by learning to recognize their truth conditions. We must hold instead that we learn to recognize the situations in which we are justified in asserting them.

Dummett concedes that rejecting a truth-conditional account of the meanings of certain sentences will lead to counter-intuitive results. For example, in denying that statements about the past are determinately true or false, the antirealist will be denying the truth value link between statements referring to the remote past and present tense statements made in the remote past. We are all inclined to say that what makes a past tense statement, made in the present, true is the fact that the same statement, made long ago in the present tense, was true. The antirealist denies that it is from an understanding of the truth value link that we grasp what it is for a past tense statement to be true. As he argues, we learn the use of the past tense by learning to recognize certain situations as justifying statements expressed in that tense. And there is no way we could pass from a grasp of the kind of situation which justifies asserting a past tense statement to a grasp of what it would be for such a statement to be true independently of any situation which would justify us in asserting it now. In other words, "the only notion of truth for past tense statements which we could have acquired through our training in their use is one which coincides with the justifiability of assertions of such statements, i.e., with the
existence of situations which we are capable of recognizing as obtaining and which justify such assertions. We are not therefore entitled to say, of any arbitrary statement about the past, that it must be true or false independently of our present or future knowledge, or capacity for knowledge, of its truth value" (*T.O.E.*, p.363). Thus, the antirealist account of statements about the past is incompatible with acknowledging a truth value link between differently tensed statements uttered at different times, for if it follows from the truth of some present tense statement S that a past tense statement S', uttered in the future will be true, then it follows that S' will not just be true in virtue of something we could recognize as justifying us in asserting it. It might still be true even if we had no evidence of it. The antirealist rejects this thought by relating the truth value of past tense statements not to the evidence that was available for them at the time of evaluation referred to but to the evidence that is available now. Dummett admits that the notion of a truth value link appears to be a fundamental part of our understanding of past tense statements: he admits that he, like everyone else, feels a strong undertow toward realism here. But he holds that this is one of those "errors of thought to which the human mind seems naturally prone" and, as such, it is one of those cases where we must be revisionists about language. Since we could not grasp the truth conditions of statements about the remote past through our training in their use, we must bite the bullet and say that the only account we can give of their meaning is in terms of the conditions which justify asserting them.
What are we to make of Dummett's argument for rejecting a truth conditional account of meaning? First of all, it should be noted that it presupposes a commitment to a realist conception of truth which the later Wittgenstein explicitly rejected. That is to say, Dummett's belief that some statements which we treat as being determinately true or false have truth conditions which we could never recognize as obtaining rests upon a realist conception of truth conditions. That is, it rests upon an assumption that the only thing that could make a given statement true is its correspondence with some segment of reality in virtue of which it is true. For Dummett assumes that our assumption of bivalence for a given statement can only be explained by ascribing to us a belief that something in the world must make such a statement true. And it is only because he makes this initial assumption that Dummett is led to hold that certain statements are problematic for a truth conditional theory of meaning, given his thought that if something is true it must be possible for us to determine its truth value. In other words, it is only because Dummett assumes that the claim "p is true" amounts to the claim that there is something in virtue of which it is true that he is led to his antirealist conclusion, viz., that we treat certain statements as being true or false for which we can give no content to what our grasp of their truth conditions consists in. This becomes clear when we examine Dummett's argument that unless we revise our linguistic practice, we will be imputing to ourselves a grasp of the notion of truth that goes beyond any knowledge which we could manifest in our use. Dummett writes,
...the correspondence theory expresses one important feature of the concept of truth: that a statement is true only if there is something in the world in virtue of which it is true. Realism consists in the belief that for any statement there is something in virtue of which either it or its negation is true: it is only on the basis of this belief that we can justify the idea that truth and falsity play an essential role in the notion of the meaning of a statement, that the general form of explanation of meaning is a statement of the truth-conditions. (*TOE*, p.14, second emphasis mine)

What Dummett is alluding to here is a tension between what he sees as the two central features of the concept of truth: on the one hand, he holds that it is part of the concept of truth that if something is true, there must be some segment of reality in virtue of which it is true (what he calls "Principle C" in "What is a Theory of Meaning II"). And, on the other hand, he holds that if something is true, it must be possible for us to know that it is true (which he terms "Principle K"). Dummett believes that certain statements -- e.g., subjunctive conditionals and those which refer to the remote past and future -- are problematic for the view that the general form of an explanation of meaning is a statement of the truth conditions. For since we cannot point to any tangible segment of reality in virtue of which such statements are true, there seems to be no way that we could tell whether they are true. And, given Principle K, it then seems that we cannot give content to saying that they have truth conditions. Dummett argues that the only way we can justify our assumption of bivalence for these problematic statements is by adopting a realist account of what their truth value consists in -- i.e., by assuming that there is some segment of reality in virtue of which they are true, even though that reality is inaccessible to us. For example, Dummett holds that we assume bivalence for statements about the remote past because
we are inclined to think of statements in the past tense as being rendered true or false by a reality which is no longer accessible to us... but which nevertheless is in some sense still there, for if there were, as it were, nothing left of the past, then there would be nothing to make a true statement about the past true, nothing in virtue of which it would be true. On such a picture... our knowledge of what actually makes such statements true or false involves our understanding of what it would be to apprehend their truth directly, i.e., by that which actually rendered them true. To be able to do this would be to be capable of observing the past as we do the present, that is, to be able to survey the whole of reality... from a position outside the time-sequence.. We cannot do this; but we know just what powers a superhuman observer would have to have in order to be able to do it--a hypothetical being for whom the sentences in question would not be undecidable. And we tacitly suppose that it is in our conception of the powers which this superhuman observer would have to have, and how he would determine the truth values of the sentences, that our understanding of their truth conditions consists ("W.T.M. II", p.98)

Dummett holds that the only account we can give of our grasp of the truth conditions of what he calls "undecidable statements" must involve imputing to us powers of observation which we do not possess. For statements about the remote past, Dummett holds that we imagine what a superhuman being might observe who could survey the past from a perspective outside of the time sequence. For counterfactual statements such as "Jones would have proven brave, had his courage ever been tested", Dummett says that we imagine some extraordinary type of fact, perhaps known only to God, in virtue of which it is true. For example, we might imagine that courage consists in a spiritual mechanism rather than in its behavioral manifestations so that "Jones is brave" would have been already true or false before his courage was revealed by his encountering danger. (T.O.E., p.15)

However, Dummett holds that this type of account will not suffice to explain our grasp of the truth conditions of undecidable statements. For it plainly does not describe
the way we actually do determine the truth values of these statements. And thus, it does not explain how we learn to use them in the context of predicating "is true and "is false" of them. That is, it does not explain how we come to treat them as being bivalent. As Dummett remarks,

> Anyone with a sufficient degree of sophistication will reject [the] belief in a spiritual mechanism... His ground for rejecting the argument is that if such statement as "Jones was brave" is true, it must be true in virtue of the sort of fact which we have been taught to regard as justifying us in asserting it. It cannot be true in virtue of some quite different sort of fact of which we can have no direct knowledge, for otherwise the statement 'Jones was brave' would not have the meaning that we have given it. (TOE, p.16)

Dummett argues that since we cannot give content to our grasp of the truth conditions of these undecidable sentences in a way which is consistent with our actual use of them, we must give up the thought that an explanation of their meaning can be given in terms of their truth conditions. We must accept that for this type of statement, we can no longer explain their meaning by laying down the truth conditions, but by stipulating the conditions under which they may be asserted. The justification for this change is that this is how we in fact learn to use these statements (T.O.E., p.18). In other words, we ought not to treat undecidable statements as being determinately true or false for,

> We are entitled to say that a statement p must be either true or false, that there must be something in virtue of which it either it is true or it is false, only when p is a statement of such a kind that we could in a finite amount of time bring ourselves into a position in which we were justified either in asserting or denying p. The notions of truth and falsehood cannot be satisfactorily explained once we leave the realm of effectively decidable statements (TOE, p.16-18)
Thus, Dummett holds that we cannot adopt a theory of meaning which assumes that bivalence holds, across the board, for any class of sentences without attributing to ourselves a grasp of the notion of truth which goes beyond any knowledge which we could manifest in our actual use of language. As he puts this point,

> There is... no possible alternative account of that in which our grasp of the truth conditions of such statements consists: but this one works only by imputing to us an apprehension of the way in which those sentences might be used by beings very unlike ourselves, and, in doing so, fails to answer the question how we come to be able to assign our sentences a meaning which is dependent on a use to which we are unable to put them... There is no way of distinguishing such an account from the thesis that we treat certain of our sentences as if their use resembled that of other sentences in certain respects in which it in fact does not; that is, that we systematically misunderstand our own language. ("WTM II", pp.100-1)

Thus, the argument for semantic antirealism can be summed up as follows: if we assume that bivalence holds for every class of sentences which we treat as being determinately true or false, we will be imputing to ourselves a grasp of truth conditions which we could never recognize as obtaining. Therefore, we cannot maintain that the general form of an explanation of meaning is a statement of a sentence's truth conditions, for this would mean attributing to ourselves a grasp of the concept of truth which we could not manifest in our use.

Dummett's argument for rejecting a truth conditional theory of meaning presupposes that a realist conception of truth conditions is the only one that is available to us. His conclusion that the notions of truth and falsity cannot be satisfactorily explained for undecidable statements such as those about the remote past only seems plausible if we
believe that what makes a true statement true is its correspondence with some fact or some segment of reality in virtue of which it is true. It is only if we conceive of a truth condition in this realist manner, i.e., in terms of correspondence between a statement and a fact, that it seems as though the only thing that could make a past tense statement true would be its correspondence to a now no-longer-existent segment of reality. And it is only if we conceive of the truth condition of a past tense statement in this way that we will hold that determining its truth value must involve surveying the past as we do the present. Thus, it is only on a realist conception of truth conditions that it is obviously impossible for us to determine the truth value of statements about the remote past. And, a fortiori, it is only on a realist conception of truth that there is a problem explaining what our understanding of the truth condition of a past tense statement consists in for someone who is committed to the verificationist thought expressed by Principle K.

However, we need not accept the realist’s conception of truth. Nor need we think of the truth conditions of our sentences in terms of their correspondence to facts. I have argued that it is open to us to think of truth not in terms of correspondence but in terms of use. That is, we can hold, as Wittgenstein does, that our use or treatment of a statement as being determinately true or false means that we have a conventional way of testing it which we accept as establishing it as either true or false. And we can think of the truth condition of a statement as a conventional way of finding out whether it is true or false, or as a conventional rule for predicating "is true" of it. That is, we can think of a truth condition as a linguistic rule or convention which tells us the grounds upon which we may affirm the statement. If we do conceive of truth conditions in terms of criteria
or conventions, we will be sensitive to the differences between the kinds of statements that we treat as true or false, and between the areas of discourse to which they belong. For to think of a truth condition in this way is to think of it as a rule which tells us how to use a given statement in certain contexts. And statements belonging to different language games are used differently in the context of predicking "is true" and "is false" of them: Our methods of testing them differ, the definitiveness of our tests may differ in different areas of discourse, and, consequently, what we mean by calling a statement true will depend on the type of statement it is and the type of language game to which it belongs. Thus, it follows that if we think of a truth condition as a linguistic rule governing our use of "It is true that p", we will bear in mind how we might go about testing the type of statement in question when we determine what our criterion or convention for applying the truth predicate to it must be.

If we conceive of the truth conditions of our sentences in terms of the way in which we use them, we will not be tempted by Dummett's thought that "the notions of truth and falsity cannot be satisfactorily explained once we leave the realm of effectively decidable sentences". This thought was originally inspired by mathematical conjectures for which we lack an effective decision procedure such as Goldbach's Conjecture that every even number greater than two is the sum of two primes. The antirealist holds that it is natural to say that Goldbach's Conjecture must be determinately true or false even though we have not yet been able to prove or refute it. And he holds that because we do not have a way of proving it, it constitutes an example of a mathematical proposition whose truth value transcends our recognitional capacities. But, as Wittgenstein argues,
this thought betrays a misunderstanding of the nature of mathematical conjectures. A mathematical conjecture has the character of a heuristic device which may someday lead to the construction of a proof. It does not have the character of a mathematical proposition which is already true or false although we do not yet know its truth value. For a mathematical conjecture differs from a mathematical proposition in that there are no rules governing its use, for it is not yet part of a system of propositions for which we have a general method of verifying them. Consequently, a mathematical conjecture cannot be true or false, for the concept of mathematical truth only applies to expressions for which we understand how to determine their truth value. As Shanker argues, it is not that we cannot assert a proposition before we have constructed a proof for it; it is that we cannot understand a string of symbols until we have constructed a rule for its use. Or to put the point another way, it is not that the truth value of Goldbach's Conjecture transcends our recognitional capacities, but that no thought has been expressed by it at all for "[w]here we have no logical method for finding a solution, the question doesn't make sense either" (P.R. #151). Hence, Goldbach's Conjecture is not an example of a case where our concept of truth cannot be explained. Rather, the situation is that we have no concept of its truth for we have no rule which would govern our use of it in the context of predicking "is true" and "is false" of it. By contrast, in the language games in which we do have rules for predicking "is true" of our sentences, we are not in general at a loss to determine the truth value of a statement which we treat as being true or false. For any ground we might have for establishing a given type of sentence as true appears an effective way of deciding its truth value once we consider what is meant by
affirming a statement within that type of language game. That is, any method we have of testing one of the statements which we treat as being true or false appears an adequate way of deciding its truth value once we take into account the way that the statement is used. And, given the differences among the language games in which we predicate "is true" of our sentences, we will not expect each test of a statement to establish its truth value with the same degree of conclusiveness. As Wittgenstein puts this point,

That the evidence makes someone else's feeling (i.e. what is within) merely probable is not what matters to us; what we are looking at is the fact that this is taken as evidence for something important; that we base a judgment on this involved sort of evidence, and hence that such evidence has a special importance in our lives and is made prominent by a concept. (The 'inner' and the 'outer', a picture). (Zettel, #554)

If we hold that statements such as "Jones is in pain" are not determinately true or false in contrast to statements about the weather because, unlike the latter, pain is not directly observable, we will be missing the point of making third person ascriptions of pain. We will be missing the fact the 'uncertainty' involved in ascriptions of pain relates not to the particular case, but to the method or rules of evidence within that language game, and that there is not an uncertainty in each particular case (Z. #555, #556). In other words, just as our concepts of the outer are based on what is directly observable, our concept of pain is based, inter alia, on pain behavior. When we make a judgment about someone else's feeling, we base our judgment on this sort of evidence against a background of what we know about their veracity. Thus, given that we do treat statements such as "Jones is in pain" as being true or false, the question to ask is 'What do we mean by
affirming that 'he is in pain'? In other words, how do we use this type of sentence? Plainly, when we say "It's true that Jones is in pain", we mean to assert that we have observed his pain behavior and that the question of doubt has not arisen. And we are understood to be using the statement in this way, rather than as we would use a statement such as "It really is snowing outside!". The fact that we are sometimes mistaken in our judgments about other's sensations and that the evidence makes our judgments merely probable is not what matters to us. The fact that the language game of ascriptions of pain admits of a different type of certainty than statements about the 'outer' does not mean that statements about other's sensations are not determinately true or false. What matters is the way we use the type of statement in question, and what we mean by predicating "is true" of it. 

A similar argument can be made against the view that statements about the remote past are not determinately true or false in contrast to statements about the present. For just as ascriptions of pain belong to a different language game from statements about the external world, our use of statements about the remote past is importantly different from our use of statements about the present. When we affirm the existence of a living figure such as Ronald Reagan, there are a multitude of attributes associated with the individual which we are definitely prepared to affirm of him, such as "was an actor, is married to Nancy Reagan", "is Patty Davis's father" and other bits of information which are in public records. But when we affirm the existence of a figure such as Moses or William Tell, there are attributes associated with them which we are not prepared definitively to affirm or to deny (cf. Philosophical Investigations #79). That is, there are things which
are commonly said about Moses and William Tell which were once known to be true or false, but have now become part of legends surrounding persons who lived in the remote past. Thus, when we say, "It’s true that William Tell lived", we mean something like, "There was a person called William Tell who lived in Austria under the Hapsburg Empire and who may have shot an apple off his son’s head..." That is, it may not be as clear just how much is involved in affirming a statement about the remote past as it is with respect to statements about the present. Yet we still treat statements such as "Moses lived" as being true or false. That is to say, statements about the remote past do not express the same type of certainty as statements about the present. But this is irrelevant to whether the former are true or false. The issue is what we mean by predicking "is true" of a statement about the remote past and what we are understood as saying.

On an account of truth conditions in terms of criteria and conventions, we are no longer faced with Dummett’s problem of "explaining how we come to be able to assign a meaning to our sentences which is dependent on a use to which we are unable to give them". For this dilemma presupposes that the use to which we do put our sentences is the sort of use to which a realist would put them. It only arises on the assumption that when we say "It’s true that p", we mean "p corresponds to some segment of reality". But if we think of the truth conditions of our sentences in terms of their use, i.e., if we hold that the meaning of "true" depends on the context in which it is uttered, it no longer makes sense to speak of "a use of our sentences to which we are unable to put them." For a truth condition just is a rule which tells us when we are to predicate "is true" of one of the sentences which we treat as being true or false. It is a rule which tells us how we are
to use a sentence in the context of judging its truth value. And a sentence could not be
governed by a sort of rule for determining its truth value which it would be impossible
for us to apply, for in that case, we would never have come to use that sentence in the
context of affirming and denying it. Or, to put the point another way, a sentence which
we treat as being true or false could not be governed by a criterion which we could
never, in principle, recognize as having been met, for in that case we should never have
come to treat the sentence as being true or false.

Dummett’s argument that we must either give up our assumption of bivalence for
certain statements or else attribute to ourselves a grasp of truth conditions which we could
not recognize as obtaining only works if we grant his key premise: i.e., that "there is no
alternative account of what our grasp of the truth conditions of such sentences consists
in" [other than the one which Dummett has proposed]. But we have seen that there is an
alternative account of what our grasp of these truth conditions consists in. We need not
hold that we grasp the truth conditions of, e.g., statements about the past, by imagining
what it would be to observe the past as we do the present. We can hold instead that we
learn when to predicate "is true" of statements about the past by learning on what basis
we are to count them as true. That is, we can hold that we learn what counts as
establishing past-tense statements as true by learning a rule which tells us the grounds
upon which we affirm them -- or a convention which tells us what it means to call a
past-tense statement true. And once we conceive of learning the uses of "is true" as a
matter of learning linguistic rules, the meaning we take our sentences to have is
necessarily consistent with the use to which we put them. For we learn what it means to
say that a past-tense statement \( p \) is true when we learn the criterion for judging its truth, i.e., when we learn how to use the statement "\( p \) is true". Moreover, on an account of truth conditions as criteria, there is no problem of explaining what our grasp of the truth condition of a past tense-statement consists in: we will say that we learn what it is for it to be true by learning the criterion or the conventional rule which tells us when we may affirm its truth.

Something stronger can be said in favor of Wittgenstein's account of truth than that it does not require us to revise a practice which does not seem to entail any untoward philosophical commitments. We can also say that it provides a more faithful account of this existing practice than Dummett's antirealist picture. Recall that the antirealist is forced to deny that what makes a past tense statement true is the fact that the sentence, when uttered in the past and in the present tense, was true. And, thus, he denies our intuition that we come to understand what makes statements about the past true by grasping the truth value link between past tense statements and present tense statements made in the past. For he holds that if something is true, it must be possible for us to know that it is true. And there is often no longer anything in virtue of which statements about the past are true, i.e., there is often nothing left of the past. On Wittgenstein's account of truth, however, we have a way of upholding the truth value link between statements about the past made now and present tense statements made in the past. We can make sense of our thought that our grasp of the truth value link forms part of our understanding of what makes past tense statements true. What we can say is that the fact that we treated a statement as being true or false in the past and used it to express the
type of certainty belonging to present tense statements explains why we now treat the statement, in the past tense, as being true or false to express a different type of certainty. There is a causal link between our past treatment of a statement and our present treatment of it. That is, there is a causal link between our having predicated "is true" of a statement in the remote past and our predicating "is true" of a statement referring to the remote past. Our having treated a statement as being true or false in the remote past is one way in which we know the statement to be true or false when we use it in the present tense. And in learning how to use statements about the past what we come to understand is the link between differently tensed statements uttered at different times. The antirealist holds that treating statements about the remote past as being bivalent amounts to realism. And the antirealist then objects to this practice on the grounds that it amounts to treating a statement as being determinately true or false when there is no fact which we could recognize as obtaining in virtue of which it could be true. But we need not be realists to hold that statements about the past are determinately true or false. We can still hold that truth is internally related to our capacity for knowledge. But the traces of our previous knowledge, in legends and oral and written histories, are one way in which we can know about the past. Thus, Wittgenstein’s account of truth provides us with a way of justifying our practice of acknowledging the truth value link between differently tensed statements without falling into the realist picture that the Wittgensteinian wants to avoid.
TENSIONS BETWEEN WITTGENSTEIN AND DUMMETT: "MEANING IS USE" VERSUS MOLECULARISM AND REVISIONISM

We have seen that Dummett's attribution of antirealism to Wittgenstein cannot be supported by Wittgenstein's discussion of what Dummett calls undecidable statements. Far from lending itself to an antirealist reading, Wittgenstein's conception of meaning as use leads to a novel account of truth -- and an account which avoids the truth value gaps that cause Dummett to reject a truth conditional account of meaning. I will now argue that Dummett is led to misread Wittgenstein as being sympathetic to antirealism because of Dummett's misunderstanding of Wittgenstein's thought that meaning is use. Dummett's attribution of antirealism to Wittgenstein rests primarily on this dictum which Dummett cites in support of the manifestation criterion. Yet while Dummett makes some nominal use of the dictum, there is in fact a tension between an account of meaning as use and several assumptions on which he relies in his argument for antirealism. Specifically, I shall argue that "meaning is use" has implications which are at odds with both molecularism and revisionism. Therefore, Dummett's argument for semantic antirealism only seems plausible if we assume these departures from the thought behind "meaning is use". That is, Dummett is led to read antirealism into Wittgenstein because of his failure to recognize that "meaning is use" is incompatible with the assumptions which Dummett needs to back up his antirealism.

Recall that Dummett's argument for rejecting a truth-conditional account of our understanding of certain sentences presupposes that manifestation of that understanding
must issue in a recognitional capacity. As Bilgrami and Blackburn have argued, it is only if a speaker is required to manifest his grasp of a truth condition through his capacity to recognize it as obtaining when it obtains that it is impossible for him to manifest this understanding. However, if a speaker were allowed to manifest his grasp of a sentence’s truth condition by using the sentence in theoretical explanations, we should have no ground for denying that he understood its truth condition. Furthermore, Dummett’s insistence that a speaker can only manifest his grasp of a truth condition through his capacity to recognize it as obtaining rests upon a narrow construal of what it is to understand a sentence. That is, it depends on what Blackburn terms "an empiricist equation between a conception of a state of affairs and a conception of our sensory access to that state of affairs". But, as Blackburn points out, linguistic understanding should not be construed so narrowly: we can also come to understand what it is for a state of affairs to obtain by an "indirect, theoretical description of the features or things involved". And so we should not insist that manifestation of a speaker’s understanding must issue in a capacity to recognize a sentence’s truth condition as obtaining when it obtains. We should allow that such understanding may also be manifested by various neighbouring abilities such as,

the ability to construct explanations dependent of the truth or falsity of the putatively undecidable sentence, the ability to tell why attempts at verification are blocked, the ability to tell things of related sorts, even if not this one, the ability to work out what else would be so if the sentence in question were undetectably true, the ability to embed the sentence in complex contexts and so on (Blackburn, 1988, p.34)
For example, the statements "Dummett's only great-grandson will marry" and "Dummett's only great-grandson will always be a bachelor" are both undecidable because we are not at present in a position to determine their truth value. Yet if someone understood that both statements could not be true together, we should say that he had a grasp of what would make each of them true\textsuperscript{14}. Therefore, we ought not to think of our grasp of the truth conditions of undecidable statements exclusively in terms of our capacity to tell whether they are true. We also show that we possess this understanding by showing that we understand what sort of thing would make them true, what would count as evidence for them, or how we would try to find out whether they were true\textsuperscript{15}. It may in the end turn out that we cannot decide the truth value of a sentence such as "Jones was brave" where Jones, now dead, never encountered danger. It may be that there really is no evidence either way. But nevertheless, we have a conception of how we might find this sort of thing out. We understand what someone is doing when he checks Jones's high school and army records or asks about his trips to the dentist. And we are inclined to say that someone understands what would make such a sentence true in so far as we "can find method and intelligence in [his] researches,....represent his aims to [ourselves] and appreciate his attempts to fulfil them". The fact that we know how to investigate the truth value of a sentence ought to suffice to attribute to ourselves a grasp of its truth condition. For it is our conception of what the truth value of a sentence consists in that gives our investigations their point. That is, we understand what counts as evidence of a statement because we have a grasp of what it is evidence for. Therefore, what we count as manifestation of a speaker's grasp of a truth condition should be
expanded to include the abilities involved in investigating a sentence’s truth value. And once our conception of manifestation has been broadened in this way, we have no basis for denying that a speaker understands something about the truth condition of a sentence which he treats as being true or false.

Dummett’s demand that manifestation of our grasp of a truth condition must issue in a recognitional capacity springs from his belief that a meaning theory must be molecular. According to Dummett, the holistic view of meaning, whereby a sentence has meaning in the context of a whole language, is inadequate to the tasks of a theory of meaning. He argues that holism cannot account for language acquisition as "there can be nothing between not knowing a language at all and knowing it completely". Nor can it account for communication, for since no one knows an entire language it seems to follow that no one understands the meaning of a sentence ("I can’t know anything a man believes until I know (or guess) everything that he believes... so it becomes incomprehensible how anyone can tell another anything")\(^{16}\). And Dummett holds that if a meaning theory is to redress these deficiencies, it must give an account of what language mastery consists in which does not presuppose prior involvement in a linguistic community. A proper theory of language "must not make use of notions specifically related to the use of language (for instance the notion of assertion or that of communication) which it leaves unexplained"\(^{17}\). In other words, Dummett argues, first, that if we want to discover what language mastery consists in, we must examine the way in which it was initially acquired. And, second, what counts as manifestation of this understanding cannot outrun the way in which it was initially acquired. Thus, he holds that since language is acquired cumulatively, one piece
at a time, a speaker’s understanding must be identified with his implicit knowledge of a language - i.e., with a grasp of the lower level sentences which can be acquired without any prior linguistic competence and which could thus be grasped by someone who was not a member of a linguistic community. This, in turn, leads Dummett to hold that a speaker’s understanding of his language must be manifested nonverbally, e.g., by his capacity to recognize the truth condition of a sentence as obtaining when it obtains. As Dummett argues, if we allow what counts as manifestation of a speaker’s understanding to issue in his capacity to give verbal explanations, we will be presupposing that he already has considerable linguistic ability. And, thus, we will not have given an account of what language mastery consists in which distinguishes what a native speaker must know in order to speak his own language from what a foreigner must know in order to interpret another language.

Wittgenstein, however, would object to identifying what language mastery consists in with what Dummett terms "implicit knowledge". For he would argue that we cannot infer what language mastery itself consists in from the way in which language is initially acquired. According to Wittgenstein, understanding a language means being familiar with a multiplicity of language games which are involved in the activity of speaking a language. As he remarks, "To understand a sentence is to understand a language. To understand a language is to be a master of a technique" (P.I. #199). That is, to understand a language is to have a mastery of various uses to which language can be put, a mastery which enables a speaker to communicate. And our uses of language do not make sense in isolation from one another. They have content within a complex network
of uses and customs which, taken together, comprise a language. So the child who has reached the stage where he can be described as using language -- i.e., the stage at which his utterances are meaningful to himself as well as to others --- must already be participating in many language games. For the speaker who can be described as using language must be aware of various possible contexts of utterance and various possible uses of language in order to recognize a legitimate move in a language game. Canfield remarks, "To utter a word in a given context is to engage in a language game. Language games are customs (P.I. #199). In learning to speak the child is acculturated: he acquires one by one the customs that make up a language".18

What language is, is a collection of contexts, language games, or uses. The meaning of a word determines the contexts in which it is correct and incorrect to utter it; we say that an agent understands a word when he can distinguish between correct and incorrect uses of it. And, in learning the correct uses of a word, a child masters the proprieties of several inferences connecting its application to that of other words. For example, to learn the use of the word "red" is to learn to treat "This is red" as incompatible with "This is green", as following from "This is scarlet" and as entailing "This is colored". That is, as Brandom argues, concepts are essentially inferentially articulated. To grasp a concept is to have a practical mastery of the inferences it is involved in. It is to be aware of its role in justifying some further attitudes and in ruling out others. And in order to grasp any one concept one must already have many other concepts. For to grasp a concept such as "red" is to master the proprieties of inferential moves that connect it to other concepts: those whose applicability follows from the
applicability of the concept in question, and those whose applicability precludes or is precluded by it. So the notion of an autonomous language game is a radical mistake\textsuperscript{19}: once a child can be described as making an intentional move in a language game, he must already be familiar with many others. This is not to say that the child must have mastered many concepts before he begins to utter words. We may of course acquire language one bit at a time. But once "light has begun to dawn over the whole" of what the child knows how to say -- i.e., once the child is making utterances which are meaningful to himself as well as to others (in contrast to those of a parrot which are meaningful only to others) -- the child must be familiar with many different contexts of use.\textsuperscript{20} The molecularist who wishes to employ the slogan "meaning is use" forgets that a given use of language only makes sense within a particular context, i.e., a particular language game. And this in turn must be grasped within the broader context of a collection of customs. The meaning of a word is not its use as abstracted from a network of other uses -- i.e., from the language in which it is used. Rather, it is its use within a complex form of life. Therefore, if we want an account of what language mastery consists in, we should not turn our attention to the way it is initially acquired. For to fully understand a sentence is to understand a language. Wittgenstein's remark at P.I. #32 illustrates this point:

Someone coming into a strange country will sometimes learn the language of the inhabitants from ostensive definitions that they give him; and he will often have to guess the meaning of these definitions, and he will sometimes guess right and sometimes guess wrong. And now I think we can say: Augustine describes the learning of human language as if the child came into a strange country and did not understand the language of the country: that is, as if it already had a language only not this one. Or again: as if the
child could think only not yet speak. And "think" would here mean something like "talk to itself".

Wittgenstein's suggestion here is that whereas the foreigner, who has already acquired the concepts being ostensively defined in a foreign tongue, will sometimes be able to make correct educated guesses, the pre-verbal child who has not yet acquired any language will be completely unable to make sense of ostensive definitions. For the pre-verbal child lacks the semantic categories with which to make sense of new words. In order for a speaker to understand what kind of word is being defined, he must be familiar with the uses of different kinds of words in language. And for this he must be familiar with a multiplicity of different language games, in which he learns to participate as he learns a language (P.I. #30, #31). To understand a word or sentence is to know how to use it (P.I. #1, #29). And to be able to use a word or a sentence is to be capable of recognizing the contexts in which it is appropriate to utter it. Therefore, the project of giving an account of what a speaker must know to speak a language as distinct from what a foreigner must know in order to interpret one is ultimately misguided. A speaker's knowledge must not be identified with what Dummett terms his implicit knowledge, that is, with the sentences he can acquire without any prior linguistic ability. Rather, a speaker's knowledge must be identified with what he knows how to do after he has mastered a language. This is not to deny that language is acquired one fragment at a time and cumulatively. But the way in which language is initially acquired is irrelevant to what language mastery consists in. As Akeel Bugrami puts this point,
The holist need not deny that we in fact acquire language mastering some one fragment and then some other and so on, nor even which fragment we are more likely to begin with (‘tables’ and ‘chairs’ before ‘mass’ and ‘unconscious’) she cannot deny this because these are manifestly facts. [But what she can say is] that these facts are not relevant to the tasks of a theory of meaning which is only concerned with specifying what knowledge suffices for someone to be the master of a language; and that this specification need not mirror the process by which one came to be a master. The facts, therefore, have no philosophical significance. The holist only needs to say that though one, of course, learns a language by learning one fragment and then another, in learning an initial fragment one has not fully mastered it, and will only learn it fully if one learns others. In learning the others, one may not only add to but even revise one’s understanding of the initial fragment2.

Clearly, what a speaker who has mastered a language understands by a sentence goes far beyond what a child who is still in the process of becoming a language user understands by it. The linguistic behavior of the child who is just starting to engage in primitive language games can be described in strictly causal terms. For example, when we train a child to turn his head in the direction we are pointing when we say the word "Look!", we resist saying that the child understands the word or that we have explained its meaning to him22. We say instead that he is reacting and that we have trained him to respond to our gesture, much as we might train an animal (cf. B.B., p.77). However, as the child begins to participate in more complex language games, it ceases to be possible to explain his linguistic behavior in purely mechanical terms. For the different kinds of uses that words have demand increasingly complex accounts of an agent’s behavior. Once a speaker has reached the stage of communicational complexity where it makes sense to speak of language use, his behavior requires intentional and normative concepts for its correct description and explanation. The point here is not a developmental one, but a grammatical one23: behavioral criteria must be satisfied before we can speak of teaching
-- that is, of giving explanations of meaning -- rather than of training. That is, there must be sufficient complexity in an agent's behavior in order for us to speak of teaching him. Or, to put the point another way, an agent's behavior must exhibit a certain degree of complexity in order for us to attribute understanding to him. And, as Shanker argues, this is why we do not say that a dog has the concept of "mealtime" because he salivates to the sound of a bell: "it is not that we lack sufficient evidence to know what the dog is thinking, but that the language game played with 'time' demands far greater behavioral complexity than has been displayed by the dog in order to describe it as possessing even a primitive version of the concept". In other words, it is part of the grammar of the concept of "speaking a language" that we describe this activity in normative terms. To speak of "the meaning of an expression" is to speak of the ways in which it is correct or incorrect to use it. And, thus, to say that a speaker understands the meaning is to say that he can distinguish between correct and incorrect uses of it. Therefore, the language master differs from the language learner in that the master has arrived in what Sellars has termed the "space of giving and asking for reasons": he understands what makes a given utterance correct or incorrect and can justify his use of it.

For this reason, what counts as manifestation of a speaker's understanding cannot be modeled on the way it was initially acquired. And in particular we must not insist that manifestation of his knowledge of a truth condition must issue in a (non-verbal) recognitional capacity. Instead, we must allow manifestation of a speaker's knowledge to issue in his capacity to perform verbally. And his knowledge of a truth condition must issue in a capacity, inter alia, to state it. And once manifestation of a speaker's
knowledge is allowed to issue in the stating response, then the statements Dummett classifies as having "recognition-transcendent truth conditions" no longer appear undecidable. For when a speaker is asked what the truth condition of a statement is, he can give the criterion whereby he determines the truth value of the statement. That is, he can give the relevant rule he uses for determining the truth value of the statement, which is dependent on the language game to which the statement belongs and which is his way of determining its truth value.

Dummett’s case that we cannot understand the truth conditions of certain sentences presupposes that we must demonstrate our understanding by recognizing these truth conditions. It presupposes that we cannot demonstrate our understanding through our capacity to formulate them verbally or in any other manner which would require more linguistic competence than we had in our initial stages of language acquisition. This constraint on what can count as manifestation of linguistic understanding springs, in turn, from Dummett’s molecularism. More precisely, it springs from his desire to give an account of what language mastery consists in which does not presuppose any linguistic competence or any prior involvement in a linguistic community. But this project ought to appear misguided to a proponent of the dictum that "meaning is use." The use of a word is, after all, its use within a whole language, i.e., within a complex network of other uses. So in order for a speaker to be described as using language (as distinct from making very primitive utterances), he must already have competence in that language. As McDowell remarks, "[i]f we insist on eliminating dependence on prior involvement in forms of life, then we eliminate the very possibility of understanding."
We can make the further point that if we accept the holism entailed by an account of meaning as use, we cannot justify rejecting a community's acceptance of a given inference as evidence that the community has a grasp of the truth conditions of the statements involved. Rather, if a community accepts an inference which presupposes the bivalence of a statement, we will be compelled to take whatever content the community assigns to calling the statement true or false as constitutive of the statement's truth value. For if we hold that the meaning of a word is its intersubjective use, or that a fragment of language has meaning only within the context of an entire language, then our sentences will have whatever meaning that our use confers on them. That is, a statement will have meaning in virtue of our use, and an inference will be valid in virtue of our treatment of it as valid. For to hold that meaning is use is to be committed to conventionalism, i.e., to the view that there is no extralinguistic standard by reference to which an inference can be said to be valid or a statement can be called bivalent. On this view, therefore, a community's acceptance of an inference presupposing the bivalence of a statement must be seen as a sufficient reason to hold that the statement is decidable. For the dictum that meaning is use forces on us an account of truth conditions as criteria rather than as correspondence with possibly recognition-transcendent facts. This is not, of course, to say that Dummett could not advance an independent argument to justify constructing a semantic theory which would be capable of levelling criticisms at a practice. But it is not open to him to argue that semantic antirealism is implicit in the dictum that meaning is use if he also wishes to claim that a theory of meaning should be revisionist. For "meaning is use" is in considerable tension with molecularism and revisionism.
Given that the assumptions behind semantic antirealism conflict with an account of meaning as use, it is fair to ask what Dummett’s commitment to the dictum amounts to. Generally speaking, he writes as though it amounts to the view that meaning is not private, that understanding must be manifestable. But the primary thought expressed by "meaning is use" is not that meaning is social and cannot be private, but rather that language has meaning in virtue of our intersubjective use of it. The thesis that meaning cannot be private and the thesis that language is essentially intersubjective are not equivalent. Some philosophers have been committed to the first thesis without holding the second one, although the second claim is logically prior to the first. And if one does reject the second claim, as Dummett does through his commitment to molecularism and revisionism, one will have no way of arguing that meaning cannot be private. Why, then, does Dummett want to maintain that a practice may stand in need of revision? That is, why, if he accepts one implication of "meaning is use", does he reject the conventionalism that is also implied by it? Molecularism and revisionism are of course connected in Dummett’s argument: if we are to be able to criticize our practice of treating certain sentences as bivalent, then we must take a sentence as saying something on its own. For the antirealist/revisionist wants to be able to say that a sentence is not determinately true or false if "no procedure is known for making a strong empirical case for its truth or falsity". And if, as Quine says, a sentence does not come with its own bundle of empirical content but faces the tribunal of experience only as part of a corporate body, then no truth value assignment of any sentence is ever mandatory in the light of experience. What is less clear is Dummett’s initial motivation for revisionism;
why does he want a meaning theory to able to criticize a practice? The answer to this question is never given explicitly. But Dummett sometimes writes as though his revisionism springs from a commitment to something like the realist conception of meaning associated with logical atomism. Consider the following passage:

A sentence is a representation of some facet of reality.... The theory of meaning, which lies at the foundation of the whole of philosophy, attempts to explain how we represent reality by means of language. It does so by giving a model for the content of each sentence, its representative power. Holism is. ...the denial that a theory of meaning is possible. On a holistic view, no model for the individual content of a sentence can be given: we cannot grasp the representative power of any one sentence save by a complete grasp of the linguistic properties underlying our use of the entire language, and when we have such a grasp of this whole, there is no way in which this can be systematized so as to give us a clear view of the contribution of any particular part of the apparatus... we are part of the mechanism and cannot view it from the outside (TOE, p.309, my emphasis).

The view of meaning that Dummett is putting forth here bears an obvious affinity to the picture theory of the *Tractatus*. Just as Wittgenstein held there that a proposition presents a state of affairs, so Dummett maintains that a sentence represents some segment of reality. He equates the content of a sentence with its representative power. And thus he holds as well that what makes a sentence true or false is its agreement or lack of agreement with what it represents. That is, more precisely, he adheres to the traditional Fregean view that meaning along with whatever is non-conventional (such as "facts" or "evidence") determines the semantic values of our statements. And he holds that, as long as we appreciate the facts, the semantic values we assign to our statements will coincide with their 'true' semantic values. Just as Wittgenstein held in the *Tractatus* that a
proposition is true if and only if the state of affairs it presents obtains, so Dummett remarks that "the question as to the nature of reality is also the question what is the appropriate notion of truth for sentences in our language, or again, how we represent reality by means of language" (*T.O.E.*, p.314). And elsewhere he writes that

Metaphysics attempts to describe the most general structural features of reality... by expressing the structural features of our language as structural features of the world about which we think and talk. More particularly, a semantic theory will tell us what, in general, makes a statement of one or another kind true, if it is true: in virtue of what it is capable of being true... Viewed in one kind of way, a thesis about what, in general, makes a statement of a given kind true is a semantic thesis, determining the type of content attaching to statement of that kind. Viewed in another way, it is a metaphysical thesis telling us what is the substance of a certain sector of reality: what kinds of thing, or better, what facts, constitute that reality.

Now only someone who adheres to a realist view of meaning -- and who, accordingly, sees the meaning-theoretical task as one of explaining our assignments of semantic value -- will want a semantic theory to be capable of being revisionist. For only someone who thinks that sentences have meaning and truth value in virtue of representing reality will think we must be able to view a practice from the outside to see if it is in need of revision. The holist, who construes the meaning of a sentence as its use within a language instead of as its representative power, will not see the necessity of "getting outside the [linguistic] mechanism and viewing it from the outside". For since the holist thinks that a sentence has content in virtue of its use, there is no type of consideration independent of a practice that could tell us that we must revise a practice. As Winkler
puts this point, "...holism calls into question the distinction between fact and convention upon which Dummett's conception of the meaning-theoretical task depends\textsuperscript{34}. Here there is an analogy between Dummett's thought that in order to know what would make a past tense statement true, we must survey the past from a perspective outside of the time sequence and the thought that a language must be subject to criticism from a perspective outside of a practice: Only someone who is already committed to realism will think we must be able to get outside a practice in order to judge its correctness. Thus, it is not surprising that Dummett misreads Wittgenstein as being sympathetic to antirealism nor that Dummett puts forth an argument for this which contradicts the view that meaning is use. For there is some evidence that Dummett is less sympathetic to Wittgenstein's later conception of meaning than he is to the early Wittgenstein's picture theory\textsuperscript{35}.

**SEMANTIC ANTIREALISM IS INCONSISTENT**

I have argued that Dummett's attribution of semantic antirealism to Wittgenstein is a misinterpretation; that it presupposes a realist account of truth which Wittgenstein rejected and, further, that it depends on a molecular view of meaning which is at odds with an account of meaning as use. I will now argue for a stronger claim: that, independently of whether it can attributed to Wittgenstein, semantic antirealism in itself is not a consistent position. I shall then suggest that, once we have rejected a realist account of truth, Wittgenstein's view of truth is the one which we should accept.
To see why semantic antirealism is inconsistent, let us re-examine Dummett's argument that statements about the remote past are not determinately true or false. Now Dummett holds first (Principle C) that it is part of our concept of truth that if something is true, there must be some segment of reality in virtue of which it is true. That is, he is committed to some form of a realist/correspondence theory of truth. And, second, he holds (Principle K) that if something is true, it must be possible for us to know that it is true. That is, he is committed to some form of a verificationist theory of truth. There is a tension between realism and verificationism, and it comes out in the following way: because he is committed to Principle C, Dummett holds that the truth of statements about the remote past consists in their correspondence to a segment of reality which is now no longer existent. Thus, he holds that finding out whether these statements are true must involve surveying the past as we do the present, from some perspective outside of the time sequence. And, because he is committed to Principle K, Dummett holds that because we cannot survey the past, statements about the remote past do not have truth conditions. As he argues, since it is impossible for us to observe the past from a perspective outside of the time sequence, there is nothing which the truth value of statements referring to the remote past could consist in. However, if one were really committed to the thought that if something is true, it must be possible for us to know that it is true, then our inability to survey the past ought not to matter to whether statements about the past have truth conditions. For if we think of truth as being related to our capacity for knowledge, we will not hold that the truth of past-tense statements consists in their correspondence with the past. And, thus, we will not hold that finding out whether they are true must involve
surveying the past from a perspective outside of the time sequence. Instead, we will say that the truth value of statements about the past consists in whatever evidence we take as decisive for establishing them as true or false. And we will construe finding out whether they are true in terms of examining this evidence. That is to say: if we adopt a verificationist account of truth (as Principle K suggests) we will not construe finding out whether a past tense statement is true or false in a way which would transcend our ability to determine its truth value. For if we really hold that if something is true, it must be possible for us to know that it is true, then if a certain type of fact is such that we could never in principle determine whether it obtained, then we will not consider this type of fact as the type of thing in which the truth value of a statement consists. We will have to keep in mind here that the predicate "is true" does not apply to facts, but rather to statements and beliefs. We do not say that facts are true or false, but that statements are true or false.

Wittgenstein's account of truth is to be preferred to semantic antirealism. For unlike Dummett's view, Wittgenstein's is consistent with the motivation for rejecting realism. Wittgenstein argues that the realist cannot give content to what he says is his concept of truth. The realist construes the truth of a sentence as its correspondence with a fact that makes it true. And he thinks that some sentences are made true by facts which transcend our capacity for knowledge. Thus, through his commitment to the idea of transcendent truth, the realist is attempting to attach a meaning to "is true" which outruns the use to which we could put the predicate. For on his account of truth, the truth
predicate would apply to sentences for which we could have no way of determining their truth value.

Wittgenstein holds that we must abandon the correspondence account of what makes a true sentence true. For the concept of truth that it commits us to goes beyond what we could come to grasp through our use of language. We acquire the concept of truth by learning to use the word "true" in our language, i.e., by applying the predicate to actual sentences. And if the meaning of "is true" were such that we could have no way of telling when it applied to a sentence, then the word could not have any use in language. Here there is an analogy with the beetle in the box: if we should have no way of knowing what sort of thing to call a beetle, the word "beetle" could not play any role in language. And if part of the meaning of "true" were such that we could have no way telling when to apply it to certain sentences, then whatever was supposed to correspond to this aspect of its meaning could not play any role in language. If we want to find out what our concept of truth amounts to, we must examine the role that the truth predicate plays in our discourse. We must examine the circumstances in which we use the word "true". And whenever we apply the truth predicate to a sentence, we have a way of determining its truth value. That is, we have a criterion of its truth, which is an appropriate test of the type of statement it is, and which counts as a way of telling whether it is true. Our concept of truth is internally related to our capacity for knowledge -- to our capacity to learn of the truth values of our statements. And, thus, it makes sense, once we have rejected the realist picture of truth, to identify truth conditions with our criteria for judging truth values. To adopt Dummett's line and deny that
bivalence holds for certain statements that we treat as true or false is still to be committed
to realism.

Wittgenstein's account of truth goes beyond antirealism in rejecting the
metaphysics of transcendent truth. And it allows us to see both sides of the
realist/antirealist debate as part of the same metaphysical tradition. Antirealists follow
Wittgenstein in rejecting the idea of transcendent truth, yet they remain very much
implicitly committed to the realist view of truth that lies behind it. Therefore, in rejecting
realism, they merely replace it with another view based on the same metaphysical
assumption. Wittgenstein's more radical critique of realism sees the realist's view of truth
as untenable. He replaces it with an account of truth that is free of metaphysical
assumptions: that, as there is nothing more to meaning than use, there is nothing more
to our concept of truth than we can grasp through our use of statements that we treat as
being true or false.
NOTES

1. Dummett shows some ambivalence on this point. In some places he writes as though he wants to identify truth conditions with assertibility conditions. For example, he says "[For the antirealist], understanding . . . a statement consists in knowing what counts as evidence adequate for the assertion of the statement, and the truth of the statement can consist only in the existence of such evidence". (Truth and other Enigmas, London, 1978, p.155). However, he also writes as though he definitely wants to replace truth conditions with assertibility conditions. In Truth and Other Enigmas, (London: 1978), p.xxxviii, he says "...it is essential to the concept of pain both that we judge on the basis of behavior and that such judgments are frequently defeasible" (p.xxxviii). Thus, he concludes that "[t]he account of meaning in terms of truth conditions has to be replaced by one in terms of the conditions under which we are justified in making statements [such as "Jones is in pain"], including ones where the justification may be overturned..." What follows hinges on Dummett's speaking in the second way. As Kirkham (Mind 98 1989, p.210) rightly points out, all of Dummett's arguments on the question directly support the second reading.

3. This remark represents Kirkham’s explication of the concept of "implicit knowledge" (1989, pp.211-215). According to Kirkham, implicit knowledge, for Dummett, means non-propositional knowledge. Knowing a language is supposed to be a knowing-how, not a knowing-that. That is, it is ability knowledge, not propositional knowledge. But the practical ability that a competent speaker has can be represented by propositions, i.e. by axioms and theorems of a theory of meaning, including those which specify the references of terms and the applications of predicates. And it is these axioms and theorems which model what a speaker knows when he knows a language. He does not really know them, but it is as if he knows them. As Kirkham illustrates this point, touch-typing ability does not presuppose algorithmic knowledge of the relative positions of the keys, but it could be represented that way. And then if a non-typist were to memorize those algorithms and could make fast enough inferences, he would also be able to touch-type. And, in the same way, if someone who was not competent in a given language were to memorize the propositions of a theory of meaning for that language, then, if he could make fast enough inferences, his linguistic behavior would match the native speaker’s. I find Kirkham’s explication of "implicit knowledge" perspicuous. However, it is problematic to read Dummett this way because Dummett also writes as though "implicit knowledge" refers to actual sentences. I think that Dummett must either be read as using the term in two different ways or "implicit knowledge" must be taken as referring to actual sentences which a speaker would first acquire from which he could infer the propositions of a theory of meaning for that language (and nothing else). I prefer the second reading. I agree with Kirkham that what a competent speaker knows is not the propositions of a
theory of meaning for a language. But I think "implicit knowledge" must still be taken as knowledge of actual sentences. For whereas implicit knowledge must be manifested by a practical ability, it is still knowledge of meaning and thus, is not merely a "knowing how" such as touch-typing or riding a bicycle.


5. Some commentators have objected to Dummett's way of presenting the case for rejecting realism in terms of a case for rejecting bivalence. As Loar and Rosen have pointed out, Dummett tends to write as though a commitment to bivalence were a necessary condition of realism. But, as Rosen argues, one could be a realist and still hold that bivalence fails for statements containing vague predicates such as "Jones is bald" said of a man with a dozen scattered hairs. That is, one could accept truth value gaps due to vagueness and still hold that the facts about baldness and the rest obtain independently of our minds and our linguistic practices. I will not address this issue here. For a discussion of it, see Rosen's "The Shoals of Language", *Mind* 104 1995, pp.6-7 and Loar's "Truth Beyond All Verification" in *Michael Dummett: Contributions to Philosophy*, ed. Taylor (Dordrech: 1987).
6. For example, at the beginning of *Frege's Conception of Numbers as Objects* (Aberdeen: 1983), p.xv, Crispin Wright asks, is it not "natural to say that Goldbach’s Conjecture must be determinately either true or false?"

7. This raises the question, "What will we say about Goldbach’s Conjecture if it is proved?" The answer to this, as Shanker argues, is that a mathematical proposition is internally related to its proof. So when a proposition has been created by the construction of a proof, what we have is a new proposition and not the conjecture in a different garb (see Shanker, *Wittgenstein and the Turning Point in Philosophy of Mathematics*, (London: 1987), p.58. As Wittgenstein puts this point, "A proposition construed in such a way that it could be undetectably true is completely detached from reality and no longer functions as a proposition" (*P.R.*, 225).


9. Janna Thompson makes a similar point in "About Criteria", *Ratio* XIII 1971, pp.37-39. As Thompson argues, "being in pain" is essentially a psychological concept. And we as human beings have a social use for psychological terms such as "pain". That is, such terms have a function within our social environment within which we have to interact as persons with other persons, make sense of their actions, and respond appropriately and sometimes sympathetically to what they say and do. So we would be
unlikely to change our criterion of pain from a behavioral criterion to a physiological criterion even if we were to discover a correlation between pain and the presence of a neurological state.

10. It might be objected that if statements about the remote past do not express the same type of certainty as statements about the present, there is then no reason to resist the temptation to call our uses of the former statements mere warranted assertion--or as a lower-class kind of truth. The right reply to this is that our uses of all statements can be called "warranted assertion" in this sense. That is, in every language game or area of discourse we have grounds on which assert any given statement, grounds which are relevant to the way in which we use the statement and which are germane to the language game to which the statement belongs. It is just that different language games admit of different degrees of certainty. And it is not clear why our use of statements about the remote past ought to be called "a lower-class kind of truth"--it is simply an instance of the truth predicate being applied on a different kind of ground -- not on a "lower" kind of ground.

11. I am not arguing here that statements about the remote past are governed by criteria. I do not think that we have ways of actually testing these statements. But we can certainly make the point that we learn when to call these statements "true" by learning on what basis we are to count them as true. The existence of a legend is such a basis. That is, the existence of a legend surrounding a historical figure is our evidence that such
a person did once live. We have a convention of treating as valid the inference that since many things have long been said of Moses and Christ and William Tell, these persons did actually live in the remote past. Furthermore, historians employ methods, unique to their discipline, of distinguishing legends from mere fictional stories.

12. Notice that, for this reason, Wittgenstein’s account of our grasp of the truth conditions of past-tense statements is not vulnerable to the antirealist objection which can be levelled against McDowell’s account in “On ‘The Reality of the Past’” in Action and Interpretation: Studies in the Philosophy of the Social Sciences, eds. Hookway and Petit (Cambridge, England: 1978). McDowell holds that the realist can meet the antirealist’s challenge to manifest his grasp of past-tense statements’ truth conditions without appealing to a truth value link. He argues that knowledge of the past occurrence of an event is sometimes non-inferential; events make impacts on our senses when they occur and leave persistent traces on our nervous systems afterward. We learn to recognize these circumstances as justifying us in our assertions of statements about the past. And we attain competence in past tense statements of the problematic sort by thus acquiring a conception of the kind of circumstances that would constitute their truth conditions. Hence, the realist need not accept the antirealist’s view that the circumstances justifying assertions must belong to the sort which are available to awareness whenever they obtain. He can hold instead that they can be of the sort which are sometimes available to consciousness -- as on occasions which constitute opportunities for training -- and at other times not. For what we are dealing with is a general competence with statements
about the past. And the ascription of a sub-competence with past tense statements whose truth conditions are unmanifestable is justified since 'the general competence of which it is an application can be observed in the operations of others of its applications'. The antirealist will surely reply here, however, that competence with past-tense statements of the problematic sort is just not an application of the general competence with statements about the past. For McDowell’s account of how we acquire training in the circumstances which justify the assertions of past tense statements leaves statements about the remote past quite out of the picture. The virtue of Wittgenstein’s account of our grasp of statements about the remote past is that it treats them as belonging to a different language game from statements about the recent past. So the antirealist can no longer claim that no account has been given of our grasp of statements about the remote past except on the (disanalogous) model of statements about the recent past—nor, therefore, that no adequate account has been given.

13. See Akeel Bilgrami’s "Meaning, Holism, and Use" in *Truth and Interpretation: Perspectives on the Philosophy of Donald Davidson* ed. LePore, (New York: 1986) and Simon Blackburn’s "Manifesting Realism" in *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 14 1989. Bilgrami argues that a scientific realist could claim to manifest his grasp of the truth conditions of a theoretical sentence of a scientific theory by his use of it in successful explanations. He would accordingly decline to answer the question of whether he could recognize these truth conditions as obtaining on the grounds that this is irrelevant to the adequacy of his reply to the question of how he manifests his understanding. And
Dummett has no ground for challenging the adequacy of the realist’s manifestation without appealing to his antiholist commitments.


15. Blackburn notices that construing our grasp of truth conditions in terms of sensitivity to evidential pressure will make grasping a truth condition appear to be very similar to grasping an assertibility condition. He denies, however, that this is "a victory for the antirealist". For, as he argues, "A friend of truth-conditions...will protest that he never wanted a grasp of them to play an explanatory role...in an account of understanding. He may have been content with an equation between understanding and grasp of truth-conditions each to be equally explained...by identifying the capacities that count as the exercise of understanding" (p.36). But Blackburn’s reply here is inadequate because the concept of truth he is committed to does allow for the possibility of transcendence (cf. p.41) even while he wants to explain our understanding of truth conditions in terms of neighboring abilities. And this leaves him open to just the objection that Dummett wants to make: that no content has been given to an equation between understanding and grasp of truth conditions. For example, Blackburn remarks (p.41) that construing the truth of p realistically need not mean construing it in such a way that we could never tell whether we were nearer or farther from it since the realist wants to say that there are better and worse reasons for believing p. But if the truth of
p is possibly transcendent there can no longer be any necessary connection between having good reasons for believing it and being justified in inferring from this that we are nearer to its truth. So Dummett can say that if truth conditions are not to play an explanatory role in an account of understanding, then his objection holds: a (realist) truth conditional theory of meaning cannot give content to what a speaker’s understanding consists in. For Blackburn’s account severs the link between our grasp of actual truth conditions and our grasp of assertibility conditions: his explanation of what counts as grasping a truth condition makes it an account of grasping something quite different. Thus, Blackburn has not offered a convincing defense of a (realist) truth conditional theory of meaning. Instead, he has given a convincing argument for identifying truth conditions with assertibility conditions.


20. For an empirical study which bears out this hypothesis about language learning, see Canfield’s "The Living Language: Wittgenstein and the Empirical Study of Communication" in *Language Sciences* 15 1993. Canfield’s findings suggest that the child’s first utterances are utterances which are embedded in language games are customs that the child has acquired. That is, its first utterances can be described as "moves within language games". Canfield argues that the child at some point does pass spontaneously into language -- but on the basis of its mastery of an antecedent pattern of interaction, such as making natural gestures and thereby being given something.


23. For an account of the transition from language acquisition to language mastery which focuses on the developmental process, see McDowell’s "Anti-Realism and the Epistemology of Understanding" in Parret and Bouveresse, *Meaning and Understanding*, ed. Gruyter, (Berlin: 1981), pp.239-241. McDowell argues that learning a language "makes a new range of facts available to our awareness, not previously within our perceptual ken-facts about what people are saying. For light to dawn is for one’s dealings
with language to cease to be blind responses to stimuli; it is to come to hear utterances as expressive of thoughts and to make one's own utterances as expressive of thoughts. It is to come to have something to say and to conceive of others as having something to say as opposed to merely making and reacting to sounds in a way that one has been drilled to feel comfortable with. And light does not dawn piecemeal over particular sentences; "Light gradually dawns over the whole" (O.C. #141) of a more or less coherent totality of sentences we have been drilled into accepting. Thus, working one's way into language is working one's way into a conception of the world, including a conception of oneself as a person among others.


26. Indeed, as Blackburn points out, in "Manifesting Realism", (1989, p.34) Dummett himself relies on "neighboring abilities" to explain our grasp of assertibility conditions. Otherwise he could not allow the intelligibility of undecidable sentences. And, as Tenant
points out, in his "Holism, Molecularity, and Truth" in *Michael Dummett: Contributions to Philosophy* ed. Taylor (Dordrecht: 1987), p.44, Dummett’s molecularism is not consistent; he makes conflicting remarks about whether we can grasp a sentences’ content without knowing others. He says (*T.O.E.*, p.304) that a sentence must be taken as saying something on its own, but he also says that "a grasp of the meaning of any sentence must, even on a molecular view of language, depend on mastery of some fragment of the language, a fragment which may, in some cases, be quite extensive" (*TOE*, p.304). As Tenant remarks, "if understanding demands fragments, our understanding of the demands of molecularism fragments".


28. For example, Frege denied (in "The Thought: A Logical Inquiry", from *Philosophical Logic*, ed. Strawson, translated by A.M. and Marcell Quinton (Oxford: 1964) that meaning can be private without holding that meaning is essentially intersubjective: he construed the objectivity of sense by postulating mind-independent thoughts existing in a third realm which are graspable by all speakers without making the shareability of these thoughts their primary feature.

29. For an account of how an attempt to account for the objectivity of meaning without reference to its intersubjectivity leads to a doctrine of privacy for certain parts of
language, see my "On the Link Between Frege’s Platonic-Realist Semantics and his Doctrine of Private Senses" in Philosophy 72 1997.


31. Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" in From a Logical Point of View, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: 1953), p.41

32. The clarification given here is taken from Kenneth Winkler’s "Scepticism and Antirealism" in Mind 94 1985, p.45


34. See Winkler, 1985, p.46.

35. For a good discussion of the tension between Dummett’s revisionism and his employment of "meaning is use" see Wright’s "Dummett and Revisionism" in Michael Dummett: Contributions to Philosophy ed. Taylor (Dordrech: 1987). As Wright argues, the concept of objectivity which Dummett needs to justify his revisionism requires that it is "fixed, determinate, and in no sense conditional on our ratification what use in a new context of an expression accords with our previous use of it" (p.36). And it is far from obvious how this can be explained without reinvoking the notion of transcendent
objectivity which the antirealist repudiates. Thus, Dummett has essayed to occupy an incoherent middle ground between Frege and the later Wittgenstein because his explanation of why antirealism should be revisionist at all requires appeal to an objectivity of meaning to which his antirealist entidement needs making out.

Chapter 3

Why a Revisionist Account of Truth?

Truth Conditions, Criteria, Revisability, and Knowledge
INTRODUCTION

It is part of our understanding of the concept of knowledge—or as Wittgenstein would say, it is part of the grammar of "knowing"—that knowledge entails the truth of what is known. An epistemology which denies the entailment will accordingly seem to most of us to be one that we should reject. We have seen that Wittgenstein identifies truth conditions with conventional ways of finding out whether our statements are true. And for certain statements, he identifies truth conditions with criteria, or with linguistic rules which tell us the grounds upon which we may predicate "is true" of our sentences. Many commentators, beginning with Albritton, have assumed that criteria are defeasible. That is, they have held that it is possible for the criterion of a claim to be satisfied and for the criterially-governed claim to be false. Thus, they have held that criteria determine what counts as good evidence for a statement that some state of affairs obtains, but, do not strictly define what it is for that state of affairs to obtain. For since they hold that it is possible for a criterion to be satisfied and a criterially-governed object to be absent, they take the criteria of our various statements as falling short of being decisive for establishing them as true. That is, they hold that our criteria provide "necessary evidence" or "noninductive evidence" for our statements, but fall short of being decisive for establishing their truth. And, thus, they argue that criteria should be identified with conditions under which we are justified in asserting our statements rather than with their truth conditions. However, Crispin Wright has argued that if criterially-based knowledge does not entail the truth of what is known, then criteria cannot provide the requisite
notion of entitlement for our assertions and hence cannot play any role in a theory of knowledge or of meaning. And John McDowell has gone in the other direction and argued that since defeasibility is incompatible with the thought that knowledge entails the truth of what is known, then if a criterially-based epistemology is to preserve this thought, it must interpret criteria as being similar to realist truth conditions.

I will argue in this chapter that criteria ought to be taken as providing an alternative and novel conception of truth conditions. They are not to be taken as realist truth conditions, nor are they to be taken as conditions which justify our assertions but fall short of establishing them as true. As I will argue, the resistance to seeing criteria as the basis of a novel conception of truth conditions springs from a refusal to take our uses of "is true" as relevant to our conception of a truth condition. Or to put the point more broadly, it springs from a refusal to take our uses of "is true" as relevant to the concept of truth or to the meaning of "is true". For it is, in part, this refusal that leads to the view that criteria are defeasible. But, as I will argue, once we acknowledge the relevance of the way in which we use a given sentence in the context of predicating "is true" of it to our conception of its truth condition, we will not hold that we treat any sentence's criterion as being defeasible. What we will hold is that we treat our criteria as being in principle revisable. The difference between defeasibility and revisability is significant enough that once we interpret criteria in the latter way, it is open to us to identify them with truth conditions'. And an epistemology based on criteria allows us to uphold the thought that knowledge entails the truth of what is known, albeit in an unusual way which
calls for what I will argue is a necessary and justified revision in our traditional picture of truth.

In the first part of this chapter, I distinguish criteria from defeasible assertibility conditions and realist truth conditions. And I show how we might reject the argument for the view of criteria as providing defeasible, necessary evidence. In the second part of the chapter, I discuss how a criterial change can take place within a community, and I outline the revisionist account of truth which follows from the fact that we treat criteria both as providing truth conditions and as being in principle revisable. Finally, I consider some objections to the account of truth put forth here, and I contrast the Wittgensteinian view with an alternative approach to avoiding a transcendent account of truth. I then argue that once we accept the argument that truth is an epistemological concept, we should be prepared to reject any view which makes our concept of truth transcend our current capacity for knowledge. Instead, we should take the meaning of "is true" as being determined by the conditions under which we are correct in calling a statement true. And what determines the conditions under which it is correct to predicate "is true" of our statements are the criteria and conventions that we use for determining our statements' truth values.
GAZING INTO THE ABYSS OF SCEPTICISM: CRITERIA ACCORDING TO CRISPIN WRIGHT

In his "Second Thoughts about Criteria", Crispin Wright expresses scepticism about whether criteria can play the role he had previously envisioned in a semantic theory based on assertibility conditions. Formerly, Wright had held that criteria might provide an alternative to realist truth conditions in an account of what it is to treat a sentence as assertible. For criteria would be taken as providing necessarily good evidence for a statement in virtue of a convention. That is, a criterion would be taken as a good ground on which to make an assertion, a ground which would have this status by virtue of convention or definition. So we would be justified in claiming to know some statement \( p \) on recognition that the criterion of the statement was satisfied. Yet at the same time, it would be part of our notion of a criterially based assertion that the best evidence that we could have might fall short of being conclusive. That is, it would always remain a possibility that the criterion of some claim might be satisfied although the criterially governed claim was false. For example, we might claim to know that someone was in pain on the basis of his pain behavior, having learned to treat pain behavior as necessarily good evidence for pain ascriptions. Yet it would always be possible that in an exceptional case someone might exhibit pain behavior without being in pain; he or she might merely be pretending. So criteria would fall short of providing conditions which establish criterially governed claims as true. They would instead provide conditions which merely justify us in asserting our statements. And thus the semantic antirealist had hoped that the
notion of a criterion could provide the basis of a suitable alternative to a realist truth conditional theory of meaning. He had held that the notion might provide the basis of an account of what it means to assert an undecidable sentence, which would be consistent with the use to which we put such sentences. That is, it could explain how we learn to affirm and deny these sentences without attributing to ourselves a grasp of truth conditions which we could not recognize as obtaining. And, thus, it could account for the meaning of our statements' assertibility conditions without making our grasp of them impossible to manifest in our use, which the semantic antirealist is anxious to avoid doing.

In "Second Thoughts", however, Wright thinks that there are insurmountable problems with the notion of a criterion which preclude it from meeting the requirements of an antirealist meaning theory. He argues that the very feature of being defeasible or of "falling short of being truth conditions" which had made criteria so attractive to the assertibility conditions theorist will make it impossible for criteria to play any role in a semantic theory. For if it is part of the concept of a criterially based assertion that the satisfaction of a criterion is always consistent with a criterially governed claim's proving false, we will not take ourselves to be justified in making assertions on the basis of criteria. That is, it is part of the concept of making an assertion that we assume responsibility for what we claim; we do not assert a statement with an open mind about subsequent defeat. Thus, Wright concludes that, because they are defeasible, criteria cannot provide conditions under which we take ourselves as being justified in asserting the sentences whose truth conditions transcend our ability to verify them. And he holds
that if the defeasibility feature is waived, criteria will not be interestingly different from realist truth conditions.\(^4\)

Wright’s argument for this conclusion presupposes a particular interpretation of criteria. It presupposes accepting certain features which he attributes to criteria as being "cardinal features" of them. And whether we are obliged to accept Wright’s conclusion about criteria ultimately depends on whether we accept the view of criteria that it rests upon. We shall see that Wright’s claim that "orthodoxy in the interpretation of criteria" attributes these features to them is an exaggeration. But the view that Wright is committed to is certainly one that is widely held. And thus it is useful to examine the role that the features he attributes to criteria play in his argument that criteria cannot provide an alternative to realist truth conditions in an account of what it means to assert a sentence. For by doing so, we will come to understand a common source of the traditional resistance to treating Wittgenstein’s concept of a criterion as the basis of a novel conception of a truth condition. And we can then see how a Wittgensteinian might overcome these objections.

According to Wright, the following are the essential features of criteria:\(^5\):

1) that recognition of satisfaction of criteria for p confer sceptic-proof knowledge that p (the knowledge feature);

2) that p’s criteria determine necessarily good evidence for p and thereby fix its content (the meaning feature);
3) that the satisfaction of a criterion will always be a public matter;

4) that to know of the satisfaction of criteria for \( p \) is always consistent with having or discovering further information whose effect is that the claim that \( p \) is not justified after all.

Wright argues that the defeasibility feature of criteria cannot be made to harmonize with either the knowledge feature or the meaning feature. And, thus, the notion of a criterion cannot provide an accurate account of our practice of making knowledge claims. Or to put the point another way, criteria cannot give content to the use to which we put assertions. Thus, criteria cannot provide the conditions under which we assert that our statements are true nor the conditions under which we claim to know them. He presents this case in the following way.

He first points out that our practice of making knowledge claims is based on our conception of knowledge as entailing the truth of what is known. When we claim to know some statement \( p \), we are vouching for the truth of that statement. That is, we take ourselves to be understood as saying that our knowledge claim is guaranteed correct. And, thus, when we claim to know that \( p \), we must have a conclusive basis on which to claim to know it. But if the criteria of our statements are taken as being open to defeat, then a knowledge claim made upon recognizing the satisfaction of a criterion will not be made on a conclusive basis. It will be made on the basis of something which is consistent with our obtaining further information according to which our claim is not justified. So
knowledge that criteria are satisfied cannot amount to knowledge that p, as we normally think about knowledge. Thus, the notion of a criterion cannot serve as the basis of an account of making knowledge claims. For it cannot give content to our concept of knowledge as guaranteeing truth.

Wright suggests that the proponent of criteria could make the following emendation in the knowledge feature: he could argue that knowledge that the criterion of a statement is satisfied is not supposed to constitute knowledge that the claim in question is true. Rather, the recognition that the criterion of a statement would tell us when we were justified in asserting it; it would tell us when we were entitled to claim knowledge of it. And it would be part of our concept of a criterially-based knowledge claim that any such claim might have to be withdrawn. That is, it might be argued that what constitutes the truth of a knowledge claim is just the state of information of the claimant at the time of making it. And if he should subsequently acquire information in light of which he could no longer claim to know that p, his original claim would "no more be contradicted than would yesterday's claim, 'It is raining' by today's assertion of 'It is not raining.' In other words, we might "identify the content of the claim to know that p with...the claim that one's present state of information includes awareness of satisfaction of criteria for p and of no consideration defeating the warrant for p which that supplies". Or, to put the point another way, we could deny that the content of a knowledge claim is given by an explanation of the truth conditions of what is claimed. Instead, we could hold that the content of such claims is given by "explaining the criteria for making them and the
conditions under which those criteria should be considered defeated and the statements withdrawn”.

Wright denies that emending the knowledge feature along these lines makes the notion of criterially-based knowledge more coherent. First of all, it leaves it unclear what knowledge is being taken to be. Or, to put the point another way, it leaves it unclear what is supposed to constitute knowledge that a given claim is true. On the hypothesis that criteria are defeasible, recognition of the satisfaction of a criterion cannot constitute this knowledge; criteria and truth conferring facts are distinct. And this poses a dilemma: in a case where an agent is said to know that p and makes a justified knowledge claim on the basis of a criterion, either the truth conferring fact of p lies within his cognitive reach or it does not. If it does, then one can ask, "what is the point of this convention, when provided the subject does know that p, a further investigation will disclose a state of affairs which constitutes the fact?". And on the other hand, if the truth conferring fact lies beyond the subject’s cognitive reach when he makes this claim, then the sceptic can ask why the adoption of a convention is supposed to provide a reason for claiming the existence of a distinct state of affairs.

The more serious objection to the proposal is that because it calls for a revision in our concept of knowledge as a sceptic-proof epistemic state, it cannot provide an accurate account of our practice of making knowledge claims. And, therefore, emending the knowledge feature of criteria in this way will not make criteria more useful to the assertibility conditions theorist. For if criteria are taken as defeasible, they cannot give content to the use to which we actually put our knowledge claims. The fact is that we do
normally think of knowledge as a stable, truth entailing state. We cannot make sense of saying that we no longer know what we did know. And therefore it is built into our practice of making knowledge claims that we do not responsibly make them with an open mind about subsequent defeat. To suppose that one had full reason for making an assertion yet no reason to discount the possibility of its being defeated would be inconsistent with our practice of making knowledge claims. For a knowledge claim is a claim about the future; in claiming to know, we seek to transfer information that can be acted on. And as Wright remarks, "it is impossible to see what it would be to put the assertions of others to practical use if the convention was that no expectations were licensed." Thus, explaining the content of knowledge claims in terms of conditions which justify us in making them rather than in terms of their truth conditions does not allow us to make more sense of claiming knowledge on the basis of criteria. For a notion of correctness as distinct from correctness relative to a state of information is implicit even in the notion of a justified assertion. But because criteria are defeasible, the notion of a criterially-based assertion cannot give content to our practice of treating knowledge claims made by ourselves and others as being guaranteed correct. And, thus, criteria cannot be regarded as providing the grounds on which we make such claims.

Wright makes the related point that because criteria are defeasible, they cannot be regarded as determining a priori good grounds or necessary evidence for our statements. And, therefore, a criterion cannot be regarded as providing the conditions which determine a statement’s correct use. In other words, the defeasibility feature of criteria is incompatible with what Wright terms the meaning feature: criteria cannot provide
assertibility conditions or conditions which justify our assertions. And hence, criteria cannot provide an alternative account of meaning to the realist truth conditional account.

The antirealist’s motivation for wanting to replace the realist truth-conditional account of meaning is his demand that understanding be manifestable. That is, he holds that, "[t]he most one can ask, if someone is to show that he understands a particular statement is that he displays... a practical grasp of the distinction between states of affairs that may reasonably be taken to warrant its assertion and states of affairs that may not." And the antirealist holds as well that the putative truth conditions of certain sentences, such as those referring to other’s inner states, would transcend our ability to recognize them. For the process of verifying such sentences would outrun our ability to learn of their truth value. Thus, he argues that to say that the assertibility conditions of such sentences amount to truth conditions is to misdescribe their meaning. For if a sentence’s truth condition transcends our ability to recognize it as obtaining when it obtains, its truth condition can play no role in how we come to use the sentence in the context of affirming and denying it. Accordingly, the antirealist wants to explain the meaning of such problematic sentences by reference to conditions of warranted assertion whose obtaining is not sufficient for their truth. He wants to regard these sentences as being associated with assertibility conditions which are treated both as having that status a priori and as being defeasible. For he holds, first, that "in order for an expression to have a determinate meaning at all, it must on some level be a matter of convention what its correct use consists in: any...empirical investigation into whether it is correctly used in a particular case presupposes such a convention." And, secondly, he holds that
assertibility conditions must be regarded as defeasible because "the circumstance that standard assertion conditions of a statement were not sufficient for its truth would have to be manifestable in the use of the statement. And the only way in which that could be manifest is if the obtaining of those conditions were, under further circumstances, acknowledged as insufficient for the correct assertibility of the statement". In other words, the only way we could manifest our knowledge that our best grounds for asserting a statement might fail to be conclusive is by treating those grounds as being fallible indicators. Criteria had seemed to be good candidates for providing such assertibility conditions. For criterial rules are supposed to determine what counts as good evidence for a statement in virtue of conventions of language. For example, it is supposed to be true in virtue of a rule of language that pain behavior is necessary evidence that someone is in pain. Yet at the same time, the criterial relation is supposed to be weaker than entailment. And, thus, it is supposed to be part of our conception of criterially governed claims such as pain ascriptions that we recognize the grounds upon which we make them as fallible.

Wright contends, however, that a criterion's being defeasible is in fact incompatible with its being taken as providing necessarily good evidence for a statement. For if a criterion is defeasible, it may be defeated. And if it is defeated often enough, we will not take it as a ground on which we are justified in making assertions. As Wright puts it, "no type of ground, even one conventionally associated with P can be necessarily ‘good evidence’ if it is regarded as a defeasible ground for... it may be defeated, so frequently that, bearing in mind the consequential character of any assertion of P, one
would rightly become reluctant to assert P on its basis." Thus, he concludes that criteria cannot provide the basis of the hoped-for alternative to a realist theory of meaning.

II

What are we to make of Wright's argument that criteria provide no viable alternative to realist truth conditions? First of all, we should notice that it presupposes the necessary evidence, or, as it is sometimes called, the noninductive evidence view of criteria. That is, it presupposes the interpretation of criteria put forth by Lycan, Baker, and others which holds that the criterial relation is a new sort of logical relation which is "stronger than induction, but weaker than entailment". For it is on this interpretation that criteria are not decisive for establishing the truth of criterially governed claims. Wright argues that criteria cannot be an alternative to realist truth conditions because the former cannot provide the basis of an account of the use to which we put assertions. He argues that because criteria are defeasible, they cannot provide conditions under which we take ourselves as justified in making assertions. For defeasible criteria cannot give content to the consequential character that we treat assertions as having. And, in his overview of the features of criteria, Wright presents defeasibility as a separate, independent characteristic. In fact, however, the concept of defeasibility is built right into the meaning feature--viz., that the criteria for p determine necessarily good evidence for p, but fall short of being decisive for establishing p as true. And, as we shall see, this is not the only way to interpret the criterial relation; there is another view according to
which criteria are not defeasible. This is the defining criteria view, originally proposed by Albritton and defended by Canfield. On this view, if X is a criterion for Y, then it is true in virtue of a rule of language, convention, or definition that if X obtains, Y obtains. That is, a criterion for X is a grammatically or logically determined ground or reason for the obtaining of X. These conventional links between criteria and criterially governed statements are a human creation; they may be adopted ad hoc and be of short duration. And because a convention is adopted for a particular purpose, any given criterial rule is only applicable within a limited context. That is, as Canfield argues, it is not the case that a phenomenon which we treat as criterion for some claim is always a criterion. The circumstances have to be appropriate for us to apply a criterial rule before we can say that the criterion of a claim is met. But when the criterion of a claim is met, this is decisive for establishing that a criterially governed claim is true. Wright argues that criteria cannot be taken as warranted assertibility conditions because they cannot provide the basis on which we make our knowledge claims. For if criteria are defeasible, then the recognition that the criterion of a statement is satisfied cannot constitute knowledge that the statement is true. And if the satisfaction of P’s criterion does not constitute knowledge that P is true, it cannot entitle us to claim knowledge—we do not feel justified in making knowledge claims when we feel that they may be overturned. But the view that recognition of the satisfaction of P’s criterion does not constitute knowledge that P is true presupposes acceptance of Wright’s meaning feature. It presupposes that criteria are not decisive for establishing the truth of criterially governed claims. But if we accept the interpretation that says that criteria are decisive, then it is open to us to take criteria as
a basis on which we make knowledge claims. For on this view, someone who has recognized that the criterion that p is met will have recognized the truth-conferring fact. And, as the satisfaction of the criterion of p will be taken as establishing the truth of p, we would indeed take ourselves as justified in asserting p on this basis. Thus, if we adopt the "defining criteria" view in favor of the necessary evidence view of criteria, it is open to us to take criteria as providing conditions which justify us in making assertions—or, to put the point another way, which justify us in predicating "is true" of our sentences. And if—as I will argue that we ought to—we think of truth conditions as linguistic rules which tell us what we are currently justified in taking as true—then it is open to us to take criteria as providing a novel conception of truth conditions.

I have suggested a way in which criteria can be taken providing an alternative to realist truth conditions in an account of what it means to treat a sentence as being assertible, i.e., as being the sort of thing which can figure in knowledge claims, affirmations, and denials. As I have shown, it is not obviously necessary to take criteria as being either defeasible assertibility conditions or else as being realist truth conditions. Instead, we can take criteria as the basis of a novel conception of a truth condition which links the concept of a sentence's truth condition to our grounds for predicating "is true" of it or to the way that the sentence is used. I would now like to argue that Wright does not recognize this alternative way of taking criteria as truth conditions because Wright does not follow Wittgenstein in taking our uses of the truth predicate as relevant to an investigation of what an assertibility condition must be. That is, Wright does not see the ways in which we use "is true" as being relevant to the way in which we ought to
construe the concept of a truth condition. For, as I will argue, it is only if we refuse to think of the truth condition of a sentence in terms of the way in which we use the sentence that we seem to be forced with a choice between defeasible assertibility conditions and realist truth conditions.

To see this, consider Wright's remark that if the defeasibility is waived, criteria will not be interestingly different from (realist) truth conditions. I have argued that this remark betrays a refusal to recognize an interpretation of criteria under which they are not defeasible. And this interpretation presupposes that we think of the truth condition of a statement in terms of the way that the statement is used. That is to say, it presupposes that we think of criteria as providing truth conditions for our statements within particular contexts. A criterion is a linguistic rule which tells us the grounds upon which we may affirm a statement of a given type. It is a convention which we adopt for a particular purpose. And as we have different purposes for predicking "is true" and "is false" of the various statements that we treat as being true or false, we accept our different kinds of statements as true upon different kinds of grounds. Our various statements belong to different language games. And we use them to express different kinds of certainty. Thus, on the view that a criterion provides a truth condition of a statement only within a given context, an assertion which appears to express a weaker degree of certainty than other assertions that we make is not one whose assertibility condition falls short of being a truth condition. Rather, it is one that belongs to a language game that admits of a different kind of certainty. And the kind of certainty that a justified assertion expresses depends on the kind of language game to which the assertion belongs (c.f. P.I. p.224). In Wittgenstein's
example, the astronomer who calculates an eclipse of the sun does not express the same
kind of certainty with his assertion that one would express by asserting a statement about
the present. But when we take into account the language game which the astronomer is
playing and the use to which he is putting his assertion—i.e., when we bear in mind the
fact that he is making a prediction—we do not take him as being incorrect in affirming the
truth of his statement. We understand him to be making a different kind of statement than
he would be making by affirming the truth of a present-tense statement. That is, we know
what he means by applying the truth predicate to a statement in the future tense. And thus
we identify the grounds on which the astronomer bases his assertion with the truth
condition of the sentence. Wright does not recognize this alternative way of taking criteria
as truth conditions because he does not take our uses of "is true" as relevant to the
meaning of "is true". And, thus, he does not take the fact that we use the truth predicate
in different ways as relevant to the way in which we should construe the concept of a
truth condition. For on the assumption that the use to which we put an assertion has no
bearing on our concept of its truth condition, certain statements will seem to be asserted
under conditions which fall short of establishing them as true. And, thus, assertions with
which we express a different kind of certainty—such as statements about the future and
about other people’s inner states—will seem to be made on merely defeasible grounds. It
will seem as though we cannot learn the meaning of these sentences by learning to
recognize their truth conditions. But if we think of the truth conditions of our sentences
in terms of the way in which we use them, then the condition under which we assert a
sentence cannot be taken as falling short of a condition which establishes it as true. For
what makes it correct to predicate "is true" of a sentence is a conventional rule which
tells us the grounds upon which we may accept a given type of statement as true. It is a
convention which tells us what counts as an adequate test of a given type of statement.
And the standards of adequacy for the tests of our various statements are internal to the
language games to which they belong. As Wittgenstein puts this point, "What counts as
an adequate test of a statement belongs to logic. It belongs to the description of the
language game (O.C. #82) Or, to put the point another way, what we count as being an
adequate test of a statement, and hence as an adequate ground on which to assert it.
depends on the way that the statement is used. Thus, Wright's failure to recognize an
alternative conception of truth conditions springs from his refusal to take our use of a
given statement as relevant to what it means to call a particular statement true. It springs
from a refusal to construe the truth conditions of our statements in a way which takes into
account the varying uses to which we put "is true".

Another way of putting this point is that Wright is led to his antirealist project—that
of replacing truth conditions with assertibility conditions—because he does not ultimately
share Wittgenstein's commitment to the dictum that meaning is use. That is, Wright
denies that the assertibility conditions of certain statements amount to truth conditions
because he does not take our uses of "is true" as relevant to the meaning of "is true".
Like Dummett, Wright thinks that language should be capable of systematization by a
theory of meaning. We should be able to give an account of assertibility conditions which
can be applied, across the board, across all the contexts in which we treat sentences as
assertible. Or, to put the point another way, we should be able to assign a single meaning
to "is true" which is independent of the various contexts in which the predicate is used. And we should be able to construct a theory of meaning for a language which is based on one central concept—be it truth, verifiability, or falsifiability—from which we can derive every feature of the use of a sentence. When we are in the grip of this picture of meaning, the nuances in our uses of "is true" will not appear relevant to the way that we ought to construe the concept of a truth condition. For when we try to construct a systematic theory of meaning, it appears as though there is something outside of language by reference to which we can explain what meaning is. That is, it appears as though there is something independent of our actual use of words in language which bestows meaning on them—and which does so in a uniform way. And if we do not take our use of a sentence as internally related to our conception of its truth condition, it will seem that in predicating is true’ of certain sentences, we are doing so incorrectly. For if we hold that "is true" has a fixed meaning, then any given application of the predicate which does not conform to the general model we have given for it will seem to be made on a ground which falls short of being a truth condition. And whenever we apply the truth predicate in an unusual way—i.e. whenever we apply it to sentences within a language game which admits of a different kind of certainty from most of the language games in which we use "is true"—this will seem to indicate that the ground on which we are basing an assertion falls short of establishing its truth value decisively. Accordingly, it will seem as though we cannot explain how we learn to use certain sentences, e.g., those referring to others’ mental states, in terms of our learning to recognize their truth conditions. For we cannot manifest our grasp of the truth condition of "He is in pain" in the same way that we can
manifest our grasp of the truth conditions of many other kinds of statements. That is, we cannot directly observe someone else's sensations in the way that we can observe the truth conditions of statements about the outer. And if we hold that the truth conditions of our sentences can be construed without reference to the uses to which we put them, then whenever we put a given sentence to a different kind of use from most of the sentences which we treat as being true or false, it will appear as though we do not understand what would make the sentence in question true. For if we hold that "is true" has one meaning, then the fact that we predicate "is true" of a sentence upon different kinds of grounds from most of our sentences will seem to show that we cannot have learned to use it by learning to recognize its truth condition as obtaining when it obtains. It will seem that we must instead have learned to use it by learning the conditions under which we are justified in asserting it.

Wittgenstein, however, would have denied that we can construe the meaning of "is true" without reference to the way in which we use the predicate. And, more broadly, he would have rejected the thought that language should be capable of systematization. Hence, he would have denied that we can give a uniform account of what it means to treat a sentence as assertible which can be applied across the board, in a uniform way, in all the contexts in which we use "is true". As he argues, the notion that meaning can be explained without reference to anything other than use arises from the fact that "in our discussions, [we] constantly compare language with a calculus proceeding according to exact rules" (B.B., p.25). And we are inclined to say that the meaning of a word must be fixed and precise in order for it to be intelligible (cf. P.I. #79). But we should
remember that "in general, we don’t use language according to strict rules—it hasn’t been taught us that way either" (B.B., p.25). In practice, we do not always use names with a fixed meaning—we may use the name "Moses" without a predetermined sense of which descriptions we are willing to substitute for it. And this does not detract from the usefulness of the name in our language (P.I. #79). Similarly, we may say to someone "Stand roughly there", and the inexactness of the expression does not make it unusable (P.I. #88). The person we are addressing will know what we mean and what he must do to satisfy the request. Examples such as these should suggest to us that what determinate meaning requires is not conformity to a universal standard or model. Rather, it requires an understanding of what is needed by those concerned in a given context. Thus, Wittgenstein would have rejected the thought that the meaning of "is true" can be given apart from a given context in which the predicate is used. What makes it correct to predicate "is true" of a sentence depends on the context in which the predicate is uttered (O.C. #205). So the fact that we use "is true" differently in different contexts is directly relevant to how we should construe the concept of a truth condition. It means that we should think of the truth condition of a sentence as that which makes it correct to predicate "is true" of a sentence where this is dependent on the way that a sentence is used. Or, to put the point another way, we should think of a truth condition as a criterion or a conventional way of finding out which we adopt. We should think of it as a conventional rule whose applicability depends on context and which may be modified or revised at any time. And once we have followed Wittgenstein in construing truth conditions in terms of use, we do not have to interpret the fact that we express a different
kind of certainty by calling certain statements true in the way that Wright interprets it. That is, we do not have to say that we cannot manifest our grasp of the truth condition of "He is in pain". We do not have to say that we learned when to affirm and deny it by learning to associate it with a ground which falls short of being a truth condition. Instead, we can say that statements about others’ mental states belong to a different language game from statements about the external world. And we manifest our grasp of what it means to call pain-ascriptions true by treating them differently from other statements in the context of affirming and denying them. Wright refuses to recognize this interpretation of our linguistic behavior because he does not think of truth conditions in terms of our uses of sentences. But if we follow Wittgenstein in holding that meaning is use, then this is surely the way in which we should think of truth conditions. For if we identify meaning with use, then "is true" has the meaning that we have given it. What determines whether it is correct to predicate "is true" of our various sentences are our criteria or conventional ways of finding out which tell us how the predicate is to be applied in a given context. And the nuances in the meaning of "is true" are as various as the language games in which we use it. We apply the truth predicate on different kinds of grounds and express different kinds of certainty with it. So any ground on which we accept a statement may be taken as establishing it as true when we take into account its context of use. That is to say: there are no obstacles to identifying criteria with truth conditions once we conceive of truth conditions in terms of use.

We can make the further point that if we think of the way in which we use a sentence as being internally related to our conception of its truth condition, we will not
be forced to adopt Wright’s sceptical interpretation of the implications of criterial change. That is, we will not have to take the fact that we sometimes change our criteria to mean that we treat our criteria as being defeasible grounds. Wright is correct that the notion that we treat criteria as defeasible cannot give content to our practice of making assertions. For it is indeed impossible to see what practical use to which we could put assertions if the convention was that no expectations were licensed. But there is another way in which a community can acknowledge that the world sometimes turns out awkward, that experience sometimes compels us to change our criteria, which is consistent with its treating its current criteria as providing truth conditions. What we can say is that a community treats its criteria as being in principle revisable. But there is a significant difference between treating a criterion as being defeasible—i.e., as though there is no guarantee of its accuracy—and treating it as being in principle revisable at some future time. We do in fact treat our criteria as being revisable in the latter sense. For we know that historically criteria which were previously accepted have been overturned. And, thus, we can admit as a theoretical possibility that the criteria we currently employ for determining the truth value of our statements may someday no longer be considered adequate tests of their truth value. This is just a point that is familiar from Quine’s "Two Dogmas" and Peirce’s critical commonsensism: no statement is in principle immune from revision in response to recalcitrant experience (cf. O.C. #96, #97, #98). What allows us to inquire—what Wittgenstein calls "the element in which arguments have their life"—is a conceptual system or a "world picture" (O.C. #105, #94). It is a system of propositions which we hold true. Some of these propositions are "deeply entrenched" or "hard", while
others, which lie close to the periphery of a conceptual system are "fluid". And if inquiry were to be pursued far enough, we could conceivably revise even the propositions which, in Wittgenstein's terminology, are "hard" rather than "fluid"—i.e., our grammatical and hinge propositions. However, as Peirce, Quine, and Wittgenstein have argued, it does not follow from the fact that no statement is in principle immune from revision that we treat our current methods of testing as being subject to doubt. For, as Wittgenstein remarks, it belongs to the logic of scientific investigations that certain things are in deed not doubted. That is to say, the questions that we raise and our doubts depend on the fact that some propositions are exempt from doubt, as it were, like hinges on which those turn. And if we want the door to turn, the hinges must stay put (O.C. 342, 341, 343, Wittgenstein's emphasis). Thus, we cannot accommodate it as a standing possibility that the criteria we currently employ for determining the truth value of our statements may not be adequate tests of them. For a criterion is a standard by reference to which we justify our judgments. And we cannot coherently question whether our standard of truth and falsity is accurate while we are using it as a standard (cf. O.C. 205). That is to say, if we did not treat a criterion as being immune from doubt, i.e., if we did not treat it as an objective ground for certainty that a statement is true, we could not use it as a basis for judging the truth value of a statement. Therefore, while we can acknowledge that our criteria are revisable, it is just not the case that we treat them as being defeasible. We treat a criterion as being an adequate ground on which to make an assertion—i.e., as being decisive for establishing the truth of a criterially-governed claim. And, thus, pace Wright, it is just not a part of the convention surrounding our use of criteria that no expectations
are licensed by criterially-governed assertions. When someone makes an assertion on the basis of a criterion, we expect his assertion to be true. We take criteria as determining when it is correct to predicate "is true" of our sentences. And therefore, it is a plausible description of our practice to say that we take criteria as providing the truth conditions of our sentences. The fact that our criteria are revisable only means that it is part of our concept of the use of "is true" that we take ourselves to be applying the truth predicate to what we currently hold as true. And we realize that an application of the truth predicate to a sentence which is currently correct may not be correct at some future time.

Clearly, more would have to be said about how a criterial change can take place. And more would have to be said about the resulting account of truth conditions I have outlined before such an account could be persuasive. I will address these issues in detail in a subsequent section. But the important point now is that there is a way of taking criteria as assertibility conditions which Wright leaves out of his account. We do not have to think of criteria as being defeasible. And once we have rejected that view, criteria can be seen as providing the basis of a novel conception of truth conditions—a conception which identifies the truth condition of a sentence with a convention according to which it is correct to predicate "is true" of the sentence. That is to say, pace Wright, once the defeasibility feature of criteria is waived, criteria will differ significantly from realist truth conditions. To see this, let us now examine an attempt made by someone who has been termed a "middle realist" to avoid the problems arising from the "defeasible evidence" view.
We saw from Wright's recantation of his earlier position why the view that criteria yield defeasible support poses a threat to the view that they provide truth conditions. If it is possible for the criterion of a claim to be satisfied and for the criterially-governed claim to be false, we cannot give content to interpreting criteria as decisively establishing the truth of criterially-governed statements. And if we cannot take criteria as decisively establishing the truth of criterially-governed statements, then they cannot form the basis of an account of knowledge or an account of what it is to treat a sentence as assertible. The fact is that we do think of knowledge as guaranteeing truth. John McDowell is someone who takes the threat of defeasibility very seriously. Like Wright, McDowell wants to resist the "necessary evidence" view of criteria which says that "criteria are supposed to be a kind of evidence [whose] status as evidence... unlike that of symptoms, is supposed to be a matter of 'convention' or 'grammar'... but [that] the support that a criterion yields for a claim is defeasible: that is, a state of information in which one is in possession of a criterial warrant for a claim can always be expanded into a state of information in which the claim would not be warranted at all". According to McDowell, the view that criteria yield defeasible support is incoherent because it entails ascribing knowledge to someone on the strength of something which is compatible with the falsity of what is claimed to be known. And such an account of criterial knowledge commits us to the thesis that knowing that someone else is in an inner state can be constituted by
being in a position in which, for all one knows, that person might not be in an inner state. As McDowell argues, "...since criteria are defeasible, it is tempting to suppose that experiencing the satisfaction of 'criteria' for some claim is to be in a position in which, for all one knows, the claim might not be true... someone who experiences the satisfaction of 'criteria' for the ascription of an 'inner' state is thereby in a position in which, for all he knows, that person may not be in that inner' state" (1982, pp.457-8). And this cannot give content to our conception of knowledge as entailing the truth of what is known. As McDowell asks rhetorically, "...if that is the best that one can achieve, then how is there room for anything recognizable as knowledge that the person is in an inner state?...How can an appeal to 'convention' somehow drive a wedge between accepting that everything one has is compatible with things not being so, on the one hand, and admitting that one does not know that things are so on the other?" (1982, p.458).

McDowell wants to retain the thought that knowledge entails the truth of what is known by conceiving of criterial knowledge as confrontation with appearances whose content is or includes the content of the knowledge acquired. According to McDowell, we should think of a case in which a criterion is satisfied as one in which "...the appearance which is presented to one is a matter of the fact itself being disclosed to the experiencer" (1982, p.472, my emphasis). For McDowell argues that, unlike the "defeasible evidence view", his own account of what it is for a criterion to be satisfied will allow us to explain knowledge as a match in content between an appearance and a truth-conferring fact. In other words, it will allow us to say that in some cases, the content of appearances is or includes the content of knowledge and that it thus explains
our acquisition of the knowledge in question. It allows us to say, for example, that one’s experience of rain is the result of the fact that it’s raining. And, hence, one’s knowledge that it is raining is the upshot of the fact that it is raining. That is, it can be the fact or circumstance that p itself that makes us know that p.

According to McDowell, the view that criteria yield defeasible support arises in the following way: there is an idea that what someone says or does constitutes a basis for knowledge of what he feels. This basis is taken as being something knowable in its own right, independent of what it is a basis for. And our correct judgments about other peoples’ inner states are thought to count as knowledge by virtue of standing in an inferential relation to this basis. McDowell thinks that the notion that this basis must yield defeasible support for our knowledge claims is necessitated by the requirement of its being knowable in its own right. For philosophers commonly hold that knowledge must be the result of our having a basis for making judgments, which itself must be taken as the highest common factor of what is available in experience in both deceptive and non-deceptive cases. They note as well that in deceptive cases, our experiential intake is the same as in non-deceptive cases. For example, when someone successfully pretends to be in pain, what is available to our experience is the same as when his pain behavior is the result of his really being in pain. Therefore, it is assumed that because our experiential intake is the same in both deceptive and non-deceptive cases, and because in deceptive cases our experiential intake falls short of the facts in the sense of its being consistent with there being no such fact, our experiential intake in the non-deceptive case must fall short of the facts as well. This leads to the view that the basis on which we make
knowledge claims, or the standard by reference to which we justify our judgments, is at best defeasibly connected to their truth or correctness. For example, we may learn to treat the pain behavior that is common both to cases of real pain and pretended pain as our criterion for pain ascriptions. But because pain behavior can also be present in cases of mere pretence, our criterion is taken as being defeasibly connected to our judgments that someone is in pain. It is taken as justifying our judgments rather than as decisively establishing their truth. In other words: it is argued that because cases in which appearances are deceiving are indistinguishable from those in which they are not, we cannot use the distinction between actual and apparent satisfaction of criteria to guide us in making knowledge claims. Therefore, we require a basis for our claims which we can assure ourselves of possessing before we go on to evaluate the credentials of the claims themselves. The only thing that could serve as such a basis is the highest common factor of what is available to experience in both deceptive and non-deceptive cases since this is the only thing which is definitely ascertainable. And because appearances of the "highest common factor" can turn out to be deceiving, criterial support is seen as providing "at best a defeasible ground for knowledge, though one which is available with a certainty that is independent of whatever would put the knowledge in doubt" (1982, p.471).

McDowell rejects the assumption which he sees as underlying the "defeasible evidence" view of criteria, viz. that the basis of a judgment is something on which we have a firmer cognitive purchase than we do on the claim itself. He argues that in spite of the fact that appearances can be deceiving at times, we do not have to picture appearances as mediating or interposing themselves between an experiencing subject and
the world. That is, we do not have to think of the objects of experience in general as being mere appearances. We can say instead that in a deceptive case, the object of our experience is a mere appearance. But in a non-deceptive case, what we confront in experience is the fact itself making itself manifest to us. For example, we can say that when someone’s pain behavior results from his really being in pain, that person is expressing the fact or circumstance itself. And once we have freed ourselves of the notion of appearances as intervening between the world and an experiencing subject, we do not have to say that our knowledge of how someone feels is the result of our having an independently ascertainable basis for making judgments. Rather, we can evaluate knowledge claims by asking whether, in a particular case, knowledge is really available, i.e., whether it is possible in a particular case to tell how things are on the basis of how they look rather than by asking whether we have an independently ascertainable basis for making a judgment. On this interpretation, a case in which someone successfully pretends to be in pain is not a case in which the criteria for a pain-ascript are satisfied but defeated. Rather, a case of successful pretence is one in which someone brings it about that the criteria for a pain ascription seem to be satisfied although they are not really satisfied. Or to put the point another way: a case in which someone’s pain behavior results from pain is one in which the knowledge of how he or she feels is really available on the basis of the way things look. The case of pretended pain, by contrast, is one in which the relevant knowledge is not available, "although we cannot rule out its seeming to be available". In other words, McDowell’s view is that a case in which criteria are satisfied is one in which we can tell on the basis of how things look, whether things really
are the way a claim represents them as being. That is, it is one in which knowledge is really available to us on the basis of the way things appear.

II

What are we to make of McDowell’s proposal? As I will argue, his own account of criterial knowledge is one that we should unequivocally reject as being both un-Wittgensteinian and of dubious coherence. On McDowell’s interpretation, what it means for a criterion to be satisfied becomes uncomfortably similar to what it means for a realist truth condition to obtain. And by conceiving of a criterion along these lines rather than as a conventional way of testing a statement or an independently ascertainable basis for making judgments, McDowell’s view flies in the face of Wittgenstein’s thought that “Knowledge is in the end based on acknowledgment” (O.C. #378). That is, McDowell commits himself to rejecting the thought that the possibility of knowledge is conceptually dependent on our agreement on what count as grounds for certainty of our statements or on what count as being adequate tests of our statements (O.C. #270, #271). Or, to put the point another way, McDowell denies that knowledge is conceptually dependent on our agreement on what counts as being an adequate test of a statement (O.C. #82). And because he denies that knowledge is dependent on our having normatively accepted grounds for certainty, McDowell leaves himself with no way of giving any account of knowledge. For he cannot provide what is surely an essential element of any epistemology, i.e., an explanation of error. This is not to say that we should reject
McDowell's arguments that the view that criterial support is defeasible is incoherent. On the contrary, McDowell and Wright are surely correct in their criticisms of that view. But McDowell's conception of criterial knowledge is not the only alternative to the view that criterial support is defeasible. And, contrary to what he argues, the idea that knowledge requires a basis for making knowledge claims which is independently ascertainable or "knowable in its own right" just does not lead naturally and inevitably to the conclusion that this basis must support our claims defeasibly. To see this, let us re-examine the way in which McDowell arrives at this conclusion.

He begins by making the tacit assumption that the only type of "independently ascertainable" basis which we could have for our knowledge claims must be the "highest common factor" of what is available to experience in both deceptive and non-deceptive cases. Because what is available to experience in the deceptive case is a mere appearance which falls short of the facts, the "highest common factor view" yields the conclusion that the basis on which we make judgments is at best defeasibly connected to their truth or correctness. And, thus, McDowell goes on to make the more general point that the very idea of a basis for knowledge claims being independently ascertainable or "knowable in its own right" necessitates the defeasibility of the relation between such a basis and the claims that it supports. It is worth noting, however, that the more general point does not simply follow from McDowell's criticisms of the highest common factor view. For the "highest common factor" conception of what is given is not the only basis which we could use for making judgments which would be independently ascertainable or knowable in its own right. On the defining criterial view, which Canfield defends, we base our judgments
that someone is in pain on the evidence of his pain behavior and the evidence of his truthfulness. A criterion is satisfied—or, in Canfield’s terminology, a criterion is *met*—only when the circumstances are appropriate for us to apply our criterial rule. In the case of pain-ascriptions, this means that no sufficient number of countervailing statements that would tell against the person’s truthfulness can be true. This type of criterial basis for judging someone to be in an inner state would definitely be knowable in its own right. It is independently ascertainable; we use it in evaluating the correctness of our claims. And we could be mistaken in thinking that the criterion for a pain ascription had been met; we could falsely believe that it had been met. But this would not mean that the basis on which we made judgments offered "at best, defeasible support for our knowledge claims". On the contrary, one could consistently hold—as Canfield does hold—that it is not logically possible for the criterion of a pain ascription to be met and for the criterially-governed object (pain) to be absent. And despite the fact that we could be wrong in thinking that the criterion of a claim was met, it would be consistent to say that someone was justified or entitled to claim to know something on the basis of his (mistaken) belief that a criterion had been met if his belief that it had been met had been justified. For it is consistent to say that one is correct in claiming to know something on a certain basis even if one turns out to be wrong about what one claims to know if one’s basis is correct. Therefore, despite what McDowell’s rhetoric suggests, defeasibility is not an essential feature of the concept of a criterion-qua-independently-ascertainable-test. And thus, it seems that, as Robinson has suggested, McDowell’s real complaint against criterial knowledge is not that it is defeasible. His real complaint is that it is conventional.
This is strongly suggested by his remark "How can an appeal to 'convention'... drive a wedge between admitting that everything that one has is compatible with things not being so on the one hand and admitting that one does not know that things are so, on the other?" Robinson wonders why McDowell thinks that conventional evidence is less epistemologically serviceable than non-conventional or "symptomatic" evidence. I think the answer to Robinson's question clearly lies in McDowell's commitment to what has been termed "M-realism". For it is most typically the realist who wants to say that our knowledge that p is the upshot of the fact that p rather than the upshot of our having a basis on which we are justified in believing that p. McDowell explicitly denies that his attack on criterial knowledge presupposes a commitment to realism. He writes "My account of [my] epistemological qualms certainly made implicit play with a notion of truth conditions in my talk of 'circumstance' and 'fact'. But the notion involved nothing more contentious than this: an ascription of an 'inner' state to someone is true just in case that person is in an inner state. That is hardly a distinctively 'realist' thought or one that the later Wittgenstein could credibly be held to have rejected" (1982, p.461). However, as I would argue, McDowell's thought here is both a realist one and one which the later Wittgenstein rejected. On my view, Wittgenstein's remark "We call something a proposition when in our language we apply the calculus of truth functions to it" (P.I. #136) is accurately paraphrased as "We call something a proposition--i.e., the sort of thing that can be true or false--when in our language we have a way of determining its truth value". That is to say, we call something a proposition in so far as we treat it as being true or false in our language. And --if we restrict our discussion to contingent
propositions and empirical propositions which is what McDowell is concerned with here--we treat something as being true or false in our language in so far as we have a conventional way of finding out whether it is true (cf. O.C. #200). In other words, we do not say "P is true" when we are confronted with a fact which would make p true. Rather, we say "P is true" when we recognize that the criterion of p has been met, i.e., when we are confronted with something which we recognize as decisively establishing p as true.

On McDowell’s view of criterial knowledge, knowledge appears to be something which is just loose in the world. He writes as though knowledge were not a relation between a knowing subject and what is known. And thus he wants to say, for example, that it is our experience of the fact that it is raining which makes it the case that we know that it is raining (1982, p.474). But surely it is more than the fact that it is raining which makes us know that it is raining. For we can ask, does the dog also know that it is raining? Does the chicken know that it is raining? Most people would argue that it does not. Yet the dog and the chicken also experience the same fact that we do. And if we are reluctant to say that the dog and the chicken know that it is raining, then knowledge that p must require something more than confrontation with a fact or with that which p is about. Knowing that p must require one to have a way of conceptualizing p or a way of articulating p. And we learn to conceptualize and articulate the content of what we know when we learn to speak a language (cf. P.I. #384). For in learning a language, we learn various concepts and criteria for their application. This, I take it, is part of the point of Wittgenstein’s remark “Knowledge is in the end based on acknowledgment”: the
possibility of our knowing that it is raining as partly dependent on our agreement on what counts as being constitutive of rain (cf. *P.I.* #354, *O.C.* #114).

I want to stress again that I am not arguing that McDowell is wrong in criticizing the view that criterial support is defeasible. Where I think he goes wrong is in wanting to make the correctness of a knowledge claim depend on something other than what currently justifies us in making it. McDowell wants to make the correctness of a knowledge claim depend on something else such as the way things really are. And therein lies his commitment to realism. For it is this desire which leads him to identify the *satisfaction* of a *criterion* with the truth-conferring fact making itself manifest in experience. But this conception of criteria entails a misdescription of our practice of making knowledge claims. For it is part of the grammar of the statement "I know that p" that it only makes sense to say this when we have an independent way of *finding out* whether p is true. This is precisely why Wittgenstein holds that "I know I am in pain" is nonsense, for there is no way in which one could *find out* that one was in pain. There is no way in which one could pass from a state of not knowing to knowing that one was in pain. And while this example is controversial, my argument does not depend upon it. We can simply say with Hacker that it is *misleading* to say that in perceiving the criteria for A’s being in pain, we experience the very circumstance itself. We do not claim to know that p on the basis of the truth-conferring fact itself but on the basis of an *indicator* which functions as a test or a way of telling. A’s pain behavior is not the same thing as his actual toothache, just as a man’s performance is not the same thing as his actual talent. To see *that* A has a toothache is not to see A’s actual toothache nor is it to
see the fact that he has a toothache. Rather, A’s pain behavior is a manifestation or an
to expression of his toothache. It is part of our ground for judging that he has a toothache,
and part of what we will cite as evidence if we are challenged "How do you know that
he has a toothache?" And, by the same token, a man’s performance is the basis on
which we make a judgment about his talent. Indeed, if a performer is having an off day,
we might be led to make a justified but false inference about his talent. On McDowell’s
view of criterial knowledge there is no way of explaining how this type of error in
judgment is possible, and this is why I said that he cannot provide an account of error.

McDowell thinks he can provide an account of error by saying that in successful
pretence, one brings it about that the criteria for the ascription of an inner state seem to
be satisfied but are not really satisfied. That is, he seeks to provide an account of error
by holding that in a deceptive case, knowledge is not really available, but falsely seems
to be available. But it is open to us to press the question, what makes knowledge seem
to be available? And it is not at all clear that McDowell can reply to the question. For
he does not want to think of criteria as defining features of states of affairs which are
ascertainable independently of these states of affairs themselves. He does not want to
think of a criterion as a way of telling or as a basis on which to claim to know that some
state of affairs obtains. And if he does not want to think of criteria in this way, then we
can ask, "In virtue of which features of experiential content could knowledge possibly
seem to be available?" Or, to put the point in a way in which it becomes irresistible to
put it, "What makes it falsely appear that we are justified in claiming to know
something?" J.L. Martin puts this point nicely in "A Dialogue on Criteria":
’...how can you tell that [so and so] is apprehensive?....I want to know what your evidence is. The fact that he appeared to you to be apprehensive isn’t evidence’

"But why cannot the object of immediate awareness be a thing and yet be our evidence for whatever may be our thoughts about the material world?"

‘You have to specify the particular features of your experience which indicate apprehensiveness rather than, say, restless anticipation....[if they ‘look different’, then] they ‘look different’ in virtue of particular features which are different....These features are the criteria you use to tell whether a person is apprehensive or whatever....They are tests for the application of concepts’

To conceive of criterial knowledge in the way that McDowell does would be to revise our concept of knowledge as being a relation between a knower and what is known. It would be to deny the thought that the concept of "knowing something" implies the ability to conceptualize the content of a given knowledge claim. And this ability in turn depends on our possessing what Martin terms "a test for the application of a concept". It presupposes our agreement on the features which we count as being constitutive of particular concepts. Therefore, if we want to preserve our conception of knowledge as being a relation, i.e., if we want to avoid doing violence to the depth grammar of "knowing", we must find a way of resisting the view that criteria are defeasible which does not deny their epistemological role in our practice of making knowledge claims. We must find a way to resist saying that criteria are defeasible which allows us to preserve the Wittgensteinian conception of a criterion as a basis on which we make judgments. McDowell’s account of criterial knowledge does not offer a suitable alternative.
WHY CRITERIA ARE NOT DEFEASIBLE: THE NONINDUCTIVE EVIDENCE VIEW REJECTED

We have seen why the view that criteria are defeasible is a thorn in the side of the Wittgensteinian who wants to identify criteria with truth conditions. If a criterion can be satisfied even though a criterially governed claim is false, then criteria cannot be decisive for establishing the truth of our statements. The classic objection to the defining criterion view, which says that a criterion is decisive for establishing that a given state of affairs obtains, is that it is possible to successfully pretend to be in pain. And it is this worry which causes most criteriologists to deny that criteria are defining: on the one hand, they reason that if "an inner process stands in need of outward criteria", then our criterion for making third-person pain ascriptions must be pain behavior. And, on the other hand, they hold that because it is possible for someone to exhibit pain behavior without being in pain (e.g., where he is shamming), the fact that our criterion for making pain ascriptions is satisfied does not conclusively establish that someone is in pain. That is, our criteria lend merely defeasible support to the judgments we make about other peoples’ inner states. Therefore, rather than taking criteria as decisive for establishing criterially governed claims as true, these criteriologists take criteria as providing "noninductive evidence" or, as it is sometimes called, "necessary evidence" for our statements. They hold that "if X is a criterion for the truth of a judgment, then the assertion that it is evidence is necessarily true rather than contingently true." Or, as Chihara and Fodor put it, "if X is a criterion of Y, it is necessarily true that instances of Y accompany
instances of X in all normal cases... the very meaning of Y justifies the claim that one can recognize, see, detect, or determine the applicability of Y on the basis of X in normal situations.28.

To put the point another way: a criterion is supposed to be what we have learned to call evidence, whereas a symptom is what we have found to be evidence. The falling barometer (see P.I. #345) and the water leaking through the ceiling have been found (inductively) to be signs of concurrent rain, but we have been taught to say, "It's raining" when it looks and feels like that outside39. Criterial justifications are supposed to have the form "Usually A's are B's; this is an A; therefore, in the absence of contravening data, one is justified in believing that this A is B". And this type of inference is said to differ from an ordinary inductive generalization in that, where a criterial relation is concerned, the major premise is supposed to be necessarily true30. Criterial relations (or "c-relations") are said to earn this privileged intermediate logical status by playing an essential role in the way certain concepts are formed, and in the way certain words are learned. For example, if the criterial relation (or c-relation) did not hold between pain and pain behavior, i.e., if pain behavior did not usually accompany pain, our concept of pain would not be what it is. But because criterial relations are not entailments, criteria are not taken as decisive for establishing the truth of criterially-governed statements. Rather, the noninductivist's view is that it is possible for the criterion governing a judgment to be met and for the criterially-governed judgment to be false. For example, it is possible for the criterion of "He is in pain" to be met and for the person not to be in pain. Therefore, criteria are taken as "noninductive, nondeductive inference rules which allow us to move
from an assertion of criterial evidence to a justified though not necessarily true conclusion of that which it supports"\(^3\). Or, as Richardson puts this point, a criterion \( p \) is noninductive evidence for \( q \) if there is a convention that \( p \) justifies \( q \)\(^2\). In other words, on the noninductive evidence view, criteria do not provide truth conditions. Rather, they merely provide grounds on which we are justified in making assertions.

I will argue that the noninductive evidence view is incoherent. It does not make sense to say that in every case in which we are justified in asserting some statement \( S \) on the basis of a criterion \( C \), it is possible to have \( C \) and not-\( S \). That is, as Canfield argues, it is not logically possible for a criterion to be met and a criterially governed object absent because this would violate a rule of language\(^3\). If we had endless doubts about the genuiness of expressions of pain---i.e., if we did not recognize anything as decisively establishing that someone was in pain---it would make little sense to say that we had the concept of another’s being in pain\(^4\). Since we do have the concept of another’s being in pain, criteria must be decisive. It does not make sense to suppose that another person might not be in pain even though the criterion of his being in pain was met. The resistance to saying that criteria are decisive stems from a failure to recognize the fact that criterial rules apply only in particular contexts. The noninductivist is led to hold that our criterion that someone is in pain can be met or satisfied without that person’s being in pain because he fails to realize that criteria function as criteria only in the appropriate circumstances. But, as I will argue, once we realize the importance of circumstances to the way that criteria function in our language, the possibility of manifesting pain behavior without being in pain no longer provides a counterexample to the defining criteria view\(^5\).
And, thus, once we take account of the fact that criterial rules are context-dependent, it is open to us to say that criteria are decisive for establishing the truth of our statements.

To see what is wrong with the noninductive evidence view, it is useful to examine how it comes to be adopted. Generally, criteriologists infer that criteria cannot be defining from the fact that criterial relations are not entailments. They realize that someone’s manifesting pain behavior does not entail the truth of the proposition, "He is in pain". Pain behavior can be present in a situation in which someone is shamming or in which he is acting or in which he has been hypnotized. Nor would it be possible to formulate a list of all the background conditions which would have to obtain which, together, would entail the statement "He is in pain". For there is no such list of necessary background conditions which language users consult in making judgments about others’ pain. The noninductivist infers that if criterial relations are not entailing, then criteria must be defeasible. He adopts the noninductive evidence view on the grounds that the entailment view is unsatisfactory. As Lycan argues, "It is perfectly possible, in almost any given case that a c-proposition should be true while the other is false no matter how unlikely. So a criterion is not a defining characteristic." Thus, the noninductivist thinks that because we cannot provide a list of conditions which together would entail the truth of some judgment, criteria cannot be decisive for establishing the truth of our judgments.

However, as Malcolm and Canfield argue, it does not follow from the fact that we cannot formulate a list of circumstances which would entail that someone was in pain that we can never know for certain that someone is in pain. There are cases when doubting that someone was in pain would be senseless: "If I see someone writhing in pain with
evident cause, I do not think 'Just the same, his feelings are hidden from me'" (P.I. p.223). That is, there are cases in which we can know, beyond a doubt that someone is in pain on the basis of our criterion of being in pain: the issue is settled beyond question. Therefore, the fact that we cannot provide a list of jointly necessary conditions which would entail the truth of some statement does not mean that criteria are not decisive. What we must keep in mind if we are to see why this is so is that whether we treat some behavior as establishing some state of affairs depends on the context in which the behavior occurs. Conventions and criteria are used—or exist—against a background of circumstances (cf. Z. #492). And, as Canfield argues, we must distinguish between saying

1) In certain background conditions (things being what they generally are when the piece of language in question is used): it is a rule of language that if C then S

and

2) It is a rule of language that: if C, and if certain background conditions are such and such, then S

That is to say, the background conditions within which a convention is employed are not listed in the statement of the convention itself. Rather, the fact that a criterial rule is applicable presupposes that certain background conditions exist\textsuperscript{40}. To put the point another way, we can usefully distinguish between saying that a criterion is manifested and saying
that a criterion is \textit{met}. A criterion is manifested when it is physically present without functioning as a criterion. But on the other hand, a criterion is met only when it is manifested and when the circumstances are appropriate for us to apply a criterial rule\textsuperscript{41}. Once we have distinguished between these concepts, we will see how to reply to the objection that criteria are not defining. We will see why the possibility of shamming pain is not a counterexample to the view that criteria are decisive. What we should say is that a case of simulated pain is not a case in which our criterion was \textit{met}. The mistake underlying the noninductivist’s objection consists in construing our criterion that someone is in pain as pain behavior \textit{simpliciter}. This leads to the view that in a case of successful pretence, our criterion that "He is in pain" is met but defeated. But in fact, we do not justify our judgments about whether someone is in pain merely on the basis of whether he exhibits pain behavior. We base this type of judgment on several factors, such as whether he shows pain behavior, what we know about his veracity, and whether he is likely to be pretending. Wittgenstein remarks that our criterion for someone’s saying something to himself is what he tells us and the rest of his behavior (\textit{P.I.} #344). And by parity of reasoning, our criterion that someone is feeling pain is what he tells us and the rest of his behavior. In order for our criterion that someone is in pain to be met, it is necessary that no sufficient number of statements that would count against his truthfulness can be true. It is necessary that no sufficient number of statements be true that would make us suspect that he is pretending\textsuperscript{42}. Of course, it sometimes happens that we do not have enough evidence to determine whether our criterion is met. Sometimes we make judgments which we do not regard as being decisively established. In Canfield’s example,
we might knock on someone's door to invite him to lunch with us and he may excuse himself, saying that he has a headache. We take him at his word, but later find out that he lied to us. In such a case, we would probably not say that we had decisively established that he was in pain. We would probably not say that our criterion had been met. It can also happen that we make mistaken judgments on the basis of criteria; we can be wrong in thinking that a criterion was met. But in such a case, the latter is what we will say--it will not make sense to say that our criterion that someone is in pain was met but that person was not really in pain. For our criterion for ascribing pain to others tells us what it means to say that others are in pain. It is partly constitutive of our concept of pain. Therefore, as Canfield argues, it is not logically possible for a criterion to be met and for a criterially governed object such as pain to be absent because this would violate a rule of language.

I have argued that the possibility of successfully pretending to be in pain does not provide a counter-example to the view that criteria are decisive. So the noninductivist's objection that pain behavior can be simulated does not pose a problem for the defining criteria view. But it is important to see that, even taken on its own merits, the noninductive evidence view is incoherent. For if the noninductivist wants to say that it is possible for the criterion that A is in pain to be met and for A not to be in pain, it is open to us to press the question, "What criterion governs the judgment that our original judgment (that A is in pain) is false?". And the noninductivist has no adequate reply to this question. As Canfield points out, the noninductivist must say one of two things: either the criterion governing the judgment that the original judgment was false is the same criterion or it is
a different criterion. If it is the same criterion, then it must yield the same judgment, namely "A is in pain", not "A is not in pain". But, on the other hand, if it is a different criterion, then it does not follow from the fact that A is not in pain judging on the basis of the new criterion that the original judgment "A is in pain", made on the basis of the old criterion was false. To see why this does not follow, we need only consider that the judgment A is a grandmaster", made on the basis of one criterion, is not negated by the judgment "A is not a grandmaster", made on the basis of another criterion where the two criteria in question list different requirements for being a grandmaster

As Canfield argues, what the noninductivist really wants is to get away with having no bottom line, no standard that can be used to settle the truth of judgments once and for all. But at some point, there must be a bottom line. For at some point we do make a judgment, and we do treat something or other as decisive for settling a question. If we always hold open the possibility that our necessary evidence may be overthrown, then the question arises, "What criterion will count as being involved in its overthrow?". If this is something we want to leave to the future, then a crucial part of our claim that p is true is left undetermined. We cannot wait until the future to decide what is to count as showing the truth or falsity of our present assertion that p

Presumably, what motivates the noninductive evidence view is the fact that mistakes are possible. But, as Canfield has demonstrated, the defining criteria view can handle this fact as well as the opposing view. Of course, judgments can be overthrown. But if a judgment is overthrown, it will be overthrown by the application of the very same criterion that governed the original judgment. If someone makes a judgment that A
is in pain and then comes to revise his judgment and concludes that A was not in pain after all, the mistaken person will say that he was wrong to think that the criterion was met\textsuperscript{46}. And as Canfield and Malcolm argue, the question is not whether we can ever be fooled but whether there is any case in which we know we are not fooled and can establish with certainty and decisively that someone is in pain. Or to put the point another way, the question is not whether mistakes are possible but whether a certain kind of mistake is always possible. This is the kind of mistake where we establish conclusively that the criterion for being in pain is met, but in which it is conceivable and in some cases true that the person is not in pain (where "pain" is used in accord with that very criterion). On the defining criteria view, such mistakes are never possible, for it is inconceivable—i.e., it is a violation of a rule of language—to say that the criterion is met but that the object governed by that very criterion is absent\textsuperscript{47}. If we did deem it conceivable for our criterion to be met and for someone not to be in pain, that would mean that we were not using any criterion of being in pain. So it would no longer make sense to say that we had the concept of another's being in pain\textsuperscript{48}. To see this, let us consider a thought experiment of Putnam's which is intended to show the possibility of pain in the absence of its normal expression.

Putnam asks us to imagine a race of human-like creatures on another planet who might be termed "Super-super Spartans"\textsuperscript{49}. These people feel pain and are able to understand talk about pain. They can refer to their own pains and note that they have them. But on the other hand, they have an inbred tendency toward stoicism and an ability to act as though they were free of pain. They would never give the slightest outward sign
of being in pain although they could if they wanted to. And, thus, this is an alleged example of perfect simulation generalized over an entire race. Putnam argues that if Wittgenstein is right that criteria are defining and the criterion for "He is in pain" is behavioral, then these creatures are not in pain; but by assumption they are; therefore, one of Wittgenstein’s claims is wrong. However, the response we should make to Putnam is to ask, what does it *me a n* to say that these creatures are in pain? Judging by our criterion, they certainly are not in pain; we would never entertain the possibility that someone chatting happily with friends over drinks might actually be suffering from kidney stones. And if, as Putnam suggests, we say that we know that the Super-super Spartans are in pain because their C-fibers are firing, then we are introducing a different criterion. And if we were to adopt a neurological criterion of pain as opposed to a behavioral criterion, then our concept of other peoples’ pain would be different from what it is now. And it would not follow from the fact that these creatures are in pain, where "pain" is defined according to the new criterion, that they are in pain where "pain" is being used in the way that we currently use it. What is probably at the root of the hypothesis that the Super-super Spartans are in pain is the notion that "pain" can be defined by inner ostension. It makes sense to say that the Super-super Spartans are in pain only if one thinks that one can *This is what I mean by 'pain'*, pointing to one’s inner sensation. But even without defending the private language argument, we can surely say that this type of move is not one that the noninductivist should want to make. For he does think that we employ behavioral criteria in judging that others are in pain. Furthermore, he thinks that our criteria for ascribing pain to others determine what we mean by "pain".
In fact, as Canfield points out, the noninductivists link criteria with meaning even more closely than Wittgenstein does51. Once we accept that we cannot explain our concept of another’s pain without reference to behavioral criteria, we must also acknowledge something else: if we did not treat anything as decisive for establishing that someone was in pain, our practice would not be what it is. There are cases where this is regarded as being conclusively established; where we do not entertain a doubt about it. Therefore, the defining criteria view is the one that we ought to accept. It is incoherent to say that criteria are defeasible or to deny that they are decisive. Criteria do not merely provide grounds upon which we are justified in making assertions. Rather, criteria provide the truth conditions of our statements.

CRITERIAL CHANGE, CONCEPTUAL CHANGE, AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CONCEPT OF TRUTH

We have seen how the Wittgensteinian who wishes to identify criteria with truth conditions can overcome one obstacle to this view which springs from the assumption that criteria are defeasible: If we hold that certain circumstances or background conditions must be present before we can speak of a criterion’s being met, we will not have to interpret a situation in which a phenomenon which we sometimes treat as a criterion is present and a criterially governed object is absent as one in which the criterion of a claim has been satisfied, but defeated. We can say instead that in such a case the criterion of the claim was not met. But there is a residual problem for interpreting criteria as truth
conditions which arises from the fact that criteria can change. That is, there is a problem for the truth conditional view of criteria which arises from the fact that our criteria are in principle revisable and are acknowledged as being in principle revisable. For we have seen that criteria are a species of grammatical truths. That is, it is true in virtue of a rule of language, convention, or definition that, e.g., a man has angina if a certain bacillus is found in his blood. And, thus, the fact that criterial rules can be revised raises two kinds of objections to the view that criteria provide truth conditions. First of all, it may be assumed, as indeed Malcolm and others have assumed, that if criterial rules are true in virtue of language, then changing the criterion of some term is, ipso facto, changing the concept. That is, any change in the criterion of a term will involve a change in its meaning so that when the scientific community changes the criterion of some term they can no longer be said to be investigating the same phenomenon that they were previously investigating. And this opens up a host of worries. First of all, if criterially-governed statements are true solely in virtue of rules of language, then criteria will not seem to tell us anything about the world. As Garver argues (in opposition to Malcolm who holds that a criteria is something which settles a question with certainty"), what criteria determine is not the empirical fact of whether or not A, but rather the meaning of "A". On this view, criteria may seem to be unlikely candidates for truth conditions for, as Glock remarks, "conventions don’t render anything true, but merely establish rules.. to remove a sentence from the scope of empirical refutation by choosing to use it normatively rather than descriptively is not to create a truth but to adopt a convention". Another worry about whether criteria can be taken as providing truth conditions follows closely on the
heels of this one: if criteria cannot be falsified in response to empirical discoveries but merely revised or abandoned, then any change in criteria is going to seem arbitrary. That is, any decision to change a term’s criteria will seem like an arbitrary decision to change a convention. Or to put the point another way, it will seem like a completely arbitrary decision to change a term’s meaning -- a decision to which neither empirical discoveries nor principles of rational inquiry can be relevant. And, as Putnam argues, this model of scientific change as being conceptual change does not seem to provide an accurate account of scientific progress or of the growth of knowledge. It does not seem to give content to our sense that, in engaging in scientific investigations, scientists are learning more and more about the same phenomena. Another worry arising from the apparent arbitrariness of criterial change is that it seems to make shifts in meaning or changes in use utterly inexplicable. And by doing so, it makes our agreement appear to be something precarious, without any foundation. The most dramatic expression of this type of worry is voiced by Kripke in his Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language where he writes,

On Wittgenstein’s view, a certain type of traditional and overwhelmingly natural explanation of our shared form of life is excluded. We cannot say that we all respond as we do to ‘68 + 57’ because we all grasp addition in the same way. Rather, our license to say of each other that we mean addition by ‘+’ is part of a language game that sustains itself only because of the brute fact that we all generally agree. Nothing about grasping concepts guarantees that it will not break down tomorrow.

Thus, it may be objected that if the truth conditional view of criteria makes changes in linguistic use inexplicable, it does not offer a very robust account of what communal
agreement is based upon—indeed, it may not seem robust enough to warrant an explanation of meaning in terms of actual truth conditions rather than in terms of mere justified assertibility conditions.\textsuperscript{56}

The second type of objection to identifying criteria with truth conditions can be put as follows: It may be asked, If criteria are treated as providing truth conditions, how could we ever possibly come to change or revise them? That is, assuming that it is true that criteria are in principle revisable and that we acknowledge that they are revisable, what sense can we make of saying that we also treat them as truth conditions? What sense can we make of saying that they provide truth conditions of our statements? Doesn’t that clash with our conception of both truth values and truth conditions as something stable and determinate?

In the first part of this section, I address the first set of worries. I outline one way in which criteria may be taken as being linked up with the world and thus as providing truth conditions of empirical statements rather than mere tautologies. That is, I show how the concept of a criterion may be taken as that of an epistemic test rather than merely as a semantic test.\textsuperscript{37} I then go on to show how Wittgenstein’s account of criterial change can provide a plausible account of scientific change in terms of scientific progress as well as a plausible explanation of how shifts in linguistic use can occur. In the second part of this section, I show how it is possible for us to treat our criteria as providing truth conditions consistently with our treating them as being revisable. I then outline and defend the account of truth that results from these two seemingly incompatible features of our practice.
In *Dreaming*, Norman Malcolm argues that Dement's and Kleitman's attempt to establish a correlation between waking testimony of dreaming and physiological phenomena (Rapid Eye Movements) rests upon a tacit and illicit change in the meaning of the term "dreaming". According to Malcolm, it is part of our concept of dreaming that a subject's sincere waking testimony decisively establishes whether and what he dreamt. He holds that our concept of dreaming is derived from the descriptions people give of dreams, i.e., from the phenomenon that we call "telling a dream". And, thus, in our everyday discourse about dreams, what we take as determining beyond question that a person dreamt is that, in sincerity, she or he should tell a dream. In other words, our *criterion* of dreaming is the testimony that a dreamer gives upon waking; this is what we take as settling with certainty the question of whether someone dreamt. Therefore, if someone were to question whether there really are dreams corresponding to peoples' reports of dreams, it would follow that such a person would have to have another idea of what would settle the question. He or she would not be using *our* criterion--i.e., dream reports--as the criterion of dreaming, and, therefore, could not mean what we mean by dreaming. Thus, when Dement and Kleitman remark that "[the] knowledge [of when dreaming occurs] , in the final analysis, always depends on the subjective reports of the dreamer, but becomes relatively objective if such reports can be significantly related to some measurable physiological phenomena", they are introducing a new criterion of dreaming without realizing what they are doing. For, according to the old criterion of
dreaming, it does not make sense to say that a subject could be mistaken about whether she or he had dreamt—i.e., that she or he could have a false impression of having dreamt or could falsely believe to have slept a dreamless sleep. But if REM were taken as the phenomenon which decisively settled the question of whether or not a subject had dreamt, then dream reports would become a mere symptom of dreaming, only contingently associated with it; a subject might claim to have slept a dreamless sleep and be held to be mistaken in light of the occurrence of REM. And Malcolm argues that there is no provision in the language game of dreaming according to which the notion of an erroneous dream report can make sense: although Dement and Kleitman take it for granted that the subjective/objective distinction applies to dreams, the fact is that when someone tells a dream or says he has had one, he is not making a subjective report which may or may not agree with the objective fact. Rather, his waking testimony is what establishes that he had a dream and what the content of his dream was. That is, 'subjective' and 'objective' are one and the same in the case of dreams which is to say that the distinction does not apply.\[1\]

Malcolm thinks that Dement’s and Kleitman’s introduction of a physiological criterion is an illegitimate move. For adopting such a criterion of dreaming would involve such radical conceptual changes that a new concept would have been created that only remotely resembled the old one. He argues that

to use the term "dreaming" for the new concept would merely result in confusion which can be avoided by holding fast to waking testimony as the sole criterion of dreaming... Physiological phenomena... may be discovered to stand in interesting empirical
correlations with dreaming, but the possibility of these discoveries presupposes that these phenomena are not used as the criterion of dreaming. The desire to know more about dreaming should not lead scientists into transforming the concept in such a way that their...discoveries no longer pertain to dreaming.  

Putnam disagrees with Malcolm that changing the criterion of a term like "dreaming" amounts to a change in its meaning and in the relevant concept. He argues that Malcolm's radical conventionalism distorts the role of empirical discovery and theoretical construction in the sciences and is, thus, incompatible with the view that science progresses by learning more and more about the things it investigates. Furthermore, he denies that changes in scientific criteria can be characterized as changes in meaning; he argues that there is no distinction between conceptual change and theoretical change—viz., between cases in which a term is redefined and those in which we discover new facts about the thing denoted by the original concept. As he notes in the following example,

Two hundred years ago, a chemist might have had only two or three criteria for a substance's being an acid: being soluble in water; sour taste (in water solution); turning litmus paper red. Today we have a theoretical definition in terms of 'proton donor'...the theoretical definition has changed and in that sense the 'sense' has changed. This is not a case of saying something different because we have given words new meanings: rather, the 'sense' in one sense has changed because we have new knowledge.

And elsewhere, Putnam employs a similar argument to the effect that in Newtonian physics, "momentum" was defined as "mass times velocity". It soon turned out, moreover, that momentum is conserved in elastic collision. But with the discovery of
Einstein’s Special Theory of Relativity a problem emerged: if momentum was to remain a conserved quantity, it could not be exactly equal to rest-mass times velocity. Consequently, it was not only possible but rational for Einstein to revise the statement that momentum is equal to mass times velocity despite the fact that this statement was originally a definition. Putnam thinks that the view that this is a case where scientists decided to change the meaning of a term cannot be right. For it implies that now we are talking about a different physical magnitude when in fact "we are still talking about the same good old momentum—the magnitude that is conserved in elastic collisions". According to Putnam, our use of a great many terms is based on the supposition that there is something—a 'natural kind', so to speak—for which our criteria are good but not perfect indicators and in the case of such terms, the accepted criteria are modified in the course of time. He acknowledges that "we could learn to speak with Malcolm and say that a term is given a series of new uses". But he thinks that this obscures just what we want to stress, namely that the changes in our criteria reflect the fact that we are gaining more and more knowledge about a particular thing.

What are we to say about the debate between Putnam and Malcolm? First of all, it should be noted that the assumption that criteria are treated as having a special status in scientific inquiry does not in itself entail the radically arbitrary conventionalism that Putnam sees it as entailing. For indeed, as several commentators have pointed out, it is hard to make sense of scientific discourse without assuming a distinction between criteria and symptoms. To see this, we need only consider the fact that Dement and Kleitman’s attempt to establish REM as an indicator of dreaming presupposes their
treating dream reports as a criterion of dreaming. For, as Janna Thompson points out, dreaming is defined, even by Putnam, as a mental event. And, thus, if we accept something as an indicator of dreaming, we must have a reason for believing that it is an indicator of the mental event dreaming. The association between a subject's dream reports and the mental event of dreaming itself is obvious and difficult to call into question. But, on the other hand, it is perfectly conceivable that physiological phenomena like eye movements may not be connected at all to the mental event. That they are so connected must be established by means of a correlation with something whose connection with dreaming is beyond question, and the criterion--dream reporting--is in this position. Eye movements, then, are established as indicators in a way very much like the way that symptoms are established. They are indicative of dreaming if and only if there is good reason to believe that under optimum conditions, they are usually associated with dream reports. Nor is the need for criteria unique to this example; rather, as Herzberg and Glock argue, it appears to be a general requirement of scientific research. For, as Herzberg argues, a distinction between criteria and symptoms is presupposed by the notion of a judgment being based on evidence. What makes something evidence for a statement p is that it justifies our asserting p. And if a person asserts that p and is challenged as to the character of his evidence, he can do one of two things: he can assert that his evidence was not in need of justification; that this was what p's being the case amounted to. That would be an appeal to criteria. Or else he can claim that he had learned through experience that the evidence he had was a reliable sign of p's being the case. That would be to postpone the appeal to criteria for nothing could justify our
regarding something as a reliable sign of p’s being the case apart from its having been found to be correlated with what was already accepted as decisively indicating p. And, thus, if we are to avoid an infinite chain of justifications, we must assume that all evidence ultimately derives from evidence which is not itself in need of justification—that is, from criteria. In a language game without shared criteria, there could be no distinction between good and bad evidence nor any procedure for resolving empirical disagreements. It could not be argued that one method of observation was better than another nor could one resolve to take a closer look at the phenomena for there could be no agreement on the meanings of "better" or "closer" here. If we try, then, to describe what scientists are doing without assuming any kind of distinction between conceptual and empirical matters or between criteria and symptoms, their manner of responding to scientific disputes is going to seem arbitrary.

Putnam thinks that he has found a counter-example to this view of scientific discourse in the fact that Einstein revised "momentum is equal to mass times velocity" despite the fact that this statement was originally a definition. According to Putnam, the fact that it was rational for Einstein to revise this statement in light of the Special Theory of Relativity shows that this is not a case where scientists decided to change the meaning of a term: "we are still talking about the same good old momentum--the magnitude that is preserved in elastic collisions." However, as Glock points out, Putnam’s argument trades on the possibility of oscillating between two different definitions of momentum. What we are still talking about is the same good old momentum in one of the two senses that the term previously had, namely, "whatever quantity is preserved in elastic collision"
while giving up the other of "mass times velocity". The plausibility of Putnam's story turns on the fact that before Einstein, both could be equally regarded as constitutive of the meaning of "momentum". Since the two seemed to coincide invariably, there was no need to decide which of them should be accorded normative status and which should be regarded as empirical. This changed when it was discovered that mass times velocity is not strictly preserved in elastic collision. What Einstein did in response to this discovery was to accord normative status exclusively to "preserved in elastic collision". And this amounts to altering the rules for the use of the term "momentum". Therefore, pace Putnam, despite the fact that the possibility of leaving open the precise status of certain statements may be a necessary condition for the fruitful development of science, there is still a distinction between the normative and the factual. There is still a distinction to be drawn between conceptual and empirical connections. For once the question of logical status arises, it is possible to distinguish between those connections which are adopted as norms of representation and those which are abandoned. The fact that there may be a fluctuation between normative and descriptive uses and even an indeterminacy of status does not obliterate the difference between these roles. To deny this would be to deny that we can distinguish between the role of an instrument of measurement and the role of an object to be measured. That is to say: the idea that revisability rules out a distinction between normative and empirical roles amounts to a fallacy. For the fact that we can deprive certain statements of their normative status does not mean that they never really had this status in advance of the conceptual change.\textsuperscript{70}
We can make the further point, contra Putnam, that even if we grant that criteria have a special logical status in inquiry—even if we grant that criterial rules are true in virtue of meaning—we do not have to say that the criteria we employ are simply arbitrary. That is, even when we insist that there is a distinction between empirical propositions and grammatical propositions and that criterial rules are of the latter sort, we still do not have to embrace the radical conventionalism that Putnam worries about. We still do not have to say that our conventions do not latch on to anything and, therefore, that criterial rules do not tell us anything about the world. This is a trap which Glock himself falls into. And it is this view which leads him to precipitously conclude that criterial rules cannot provide truth conditions of our statements. Glock argues that criteria and conventions cannot be identified with truth conditions because "in the sense in which, for example, the fact that the cat is on the mat might be said to render true the statement that the cat is on the mat, conventions cannot be said to render anything true." He holds that to choose to remove a statement from the scope of empirical refutation by using it normatively rather than descriptively is merely to establish a rule. It is not to create a truth, but merely to adopt a norm of representation or an arbitrary convention. His reason for thinking this is that criterial rules, like all statements belonging to the conceptual framework, cannot be falsified but only abandoned. In other words, a criterial rule cannot be revised in response to an empirical discovery or in response to the falsification of an empirical theory. For as Glock argues, the normative status of any type of grammatical rule is constitutive of the meaning of its constituent expressions. Therefore, there can be no such thing as falsifying a criterial rule for that would amount to changing the concept or the meaning
of the term in question. For example, we could not empirically disconfirm the statement "All bachelors are unmarried men" by finding a bachelor who was married. For the role of "Bachelors are unmarried men" is not to make a true statement of fact about bachelors but to partially explain the meaning of the term "bachelor". So if we chose to revise this statement we would be choosing to change the meaning of the expression. Or again: if we allow the statement "Jane’s three year old daughter is an adult" because she has amazing intellectual capacities, we would not have falsified the statement "Nobody under ten can be an adult". For allowing the former statement would amount to a new way of using "adult" and would thus introduce a new concept. Hence, the two statements would not contradict one another because "adult" would mean something different in each of them. Consequently, Glock argues that because criterial rules cannot be contradicted by empirical propositions, the former do not state truth conditions; what is revised when we change a criterion is not a truth about the world but a rule for the use of an expression71.

His conclusion about criteria, however, is precipitous. For his argument incorrectly assimilates criterial rules to analytic statements merely because they are both kinds of grammatical rules. Glock’s points certainly hold true for his examples "Bachelors are unmarried men" and "Nobody under ten can be an adult". But these are not examples of criterial rules. That is to say: it is true that Glock’s examples are examples of grammatical rules or grammatical truths. And it is true that criteria are one kind of grammatical proposition. But not all grammatical propositions are criterial rules. Or, to put the point another way, not all statements of which we predicate "is true"—neither those of the sort "Ravens are black", or "Bachelors are unmarried men" or "Oranges are
"orange" are governed by criteria. Rather, as Canfield has pointed out, a criterion is a highly specialized notion. It makes sense to speak of a statement's being governed by a criterion only when it also makes sense to speak of the symptoms of that statement--i.e., only where there is a logical difference between a statement of the symptoms of X and the criterion of X. For example, the statement 'If something has all the features of an orange (looking and tasting like an orange, coming from an orange tree, etc.), then it is an orange is certainly true in virtue of a convention or a rule of language. That is, it is definitely a conventional rather than an empirical truth. But admitting this does not yield the conclusion that there is a criterion for being an orange. For in order for something to have a criterion, it must be possible to distinguish between a phenomenon whose association with the criterially-governed object is unquestioned and a phenomenon which experience has shown to be correlated with the criterion. Thus, in Wittgenstein's example, we can speak of a certain bacillus's being the criterion of angina precisely because there is a symptom of angina (having an inflamed throat) which has been found to coincide in some way with the defining criterion. Furthermore--contra Glock--once we realize how specialized the notion of a criterion is, we will be much more reluctant to say that we could never revise a criterion even partly in response to empirical discoveries. For criteria are conventions which we adopt in order to learn more about the world. They are conventions which we adopt in order to learn more about diseases such as angina and other phenomena which are of importance in our lives. And given that criteria are conventions which we employ in order to conduct empirical investigations--and that we want our criteria to be accurate instruments for investigating a world which we don't
believe is of our making—we generally do revise our criteria in light of empirical discoveries. This point should not be overstated because it is true that criteria are conventions which we ourselves create. It is true that we do not construct a concept wherever we see a similarity but only where the similarity is important to us (Z. #380). And it is true that, as Carol Caraway says, general facts of nature do not completely determine our particular system of concepts (P.I. p.230). That is, the general facts of nature are not the sole cause of the formation of our concepts; they merely place limits upon our selection of concepts by limiting the forms of life, interests, and types of linguistic training that are possible for us. But, nevertheless, once we have chosen to adopt a given criterion in order to investigate a particular phenomenon, then other things being equal, we will usually choose to revise our criteria in the light of factual discoveries. As Wittgenstein remarks,

Do I want to say, then, that certain facts are favorable to the formation of certain concepts; or again unfavorable? And does experience teach us that? It is a fact of experience that human beings alter their concepts, exchange them for others when they learn new facts; when in this way what was formerly important to them becomes unimportant, and vice versa (Z. #352).

That is to say, given that our interest in adopting a criterion is most often to conduct an empirical investigation, it usually does serve our interests to modify our criteria when we discover new facts. The discovery of new facts most often does make certain language games less important to us and other language games more important. And therefore, unless we have some particular reason for stubbornly retaining our criteria in the light of
empirical discoveries—e.g., unless our use of a particular criterion plays some special role or serves some purpose in our lives which is better served by our retaining it than our revising it—we do change our criteria when we discover new facts. Therefore, despite the fact that criteria have a normative status, it is incorrect to deny that they provide truth conditions for our statements. In so far as criterial rules tell us when we may *predicate* "is true" of our statements, they do provide truth conditions. For, on Wittgenstein’s view, a statement is not "as such" true or false. Rather, its truth conditions depend on or are even part of its utterance conditions within a certain game. Or, as Canfield puts this point, a criterion does provide truth conditions since it tells us the conditions under which one is justified in affirming a statement S on the basis of a criterion—i.e., the conditions under which, by convention or definition, it is *true* that p. Thus, although criteria are conventions, there is an important sense in which they must be taken as truth conditions: criteria determine the conditions under which it is correct to predicate "is true" of our statements.

We can make the further point, in connection with criterial change and meaning change, that the criterion of a statement is only one aspect of the use of the statement. Therefore, pace Malcolm et al, it is not the case that any change in the criterion of a term is *ipso facto* a change in its meaning, nor vice versa. For, as Canfield argues, there are other factors in addition to criteria which are relevant to the meaning of an expression. That is, there are other aspects of use. First of all, there is the fact that our language games are played against the background of certain general facts of nature. There is only a point to playing certain language games in some and not all background
conditions, so if the conditions that the rules take for granted change, the rules may well become inapplicable. Second, there is the fact that certain human behaviors such as crying may sometimes be taken as indicative of pain and sometimes as indicative of sadness depending on the circumstances or the external occasions in which they occur (Z. # 492).

Finally, there is the role that an expression plays in a language game. For example, the role that "He is in pain" plays in our language game is not one of disinterested description. Rather, it is used in order to bring about a certain kind of social response such as sympathy and medical help. Thus, Canfield argues that if there were an alien race who employed our criterion of pain, but who used "He is in pain" only as a disinterested description, the word "pain" would not mean the same thing in their language that it does in ours. They would not have our concept of pain. And Janna Thompson makes a similar point in her article "About Criteria". She argues that it is not necessarily irrational to resist redefining sensation and emotion terms in the light of developments in neurological research. For "being in pain" is essentially a psychological concept. And we as human beings have a social use for psychological terms such as "pain". Such terms have a function within our social environment within which we have to interact with persons as other persons, make sense of their behavior, and respond appropriately and sometimes sympathetically to what they do and say. So we would be unlikely to change our criterion of pain from a behavioral criterion to a physiological criterion even if we were to discover a correlation between pain and the presence of a neurological state. And, by the same token, given that dreaming is partly a psychological concept, it would not
be irrational for us to refuse to change our criterion of dreaming in light of the discovery of a correlation between dream reports and rapid eye movements.

I would like to modify Thompson's point somewhat and argue (with Canfield) that we do not have to change the meaning of dreaming just because we have adopted another criterion. For, given that the concept of dreaming plays a social role in our lives in addition to being a subject for research in the sciences, we can come to use the term "dreaming" in two different ways if a physiological criterion appears to be indicated by our empirical research. I believe that this is what has in fact happened in the case of dreaming. In certain contexts, i.e., in ordinary discourse about dreaming, we use peoples' assertions of remembering dreams as the criterion of their having dreamt. When we ask someone "Did you dream last night?", we take whether he or she remembers having dreamt as determining whether he or she did dream. But when we speak about dreaming in a more technical or scientific sense, we assume that the criterion of dreaming is physiological and that someone might have dreamt even if they do not remember it. For as Wittgenstein might say, the two uses of the term "dreaming" belong to different language games. It is probably true that in the case of a conflict, the scientific language game will override the other. If someone appeals to the scientific criterion in arguing that someone may have dreamt even if he does not remember, this will probably be taken as an authoritative move. But for the most part, the language game of science and that of ordinary discourse simply co-exist with one another. Wittgenstein describes how this type of thing can happen at Zettel # 438:
Nothing is commoner than for the meaning of an expression to oscillate, for a phenomenon to be regarded sometimes as a symptom, sometimes as a criterion of a state of affairs. And mostly in such a case the shift of meaning is not noted. In science it is usual to make phenomena that allow for exact measurement into defining criteria for an expression; and then one is inclined to think that now the proper meaning has been found. Innumerable confusions have arisen in this way. There are degrees of pleasure, for example, but it is stupid to speak of a measurement of pleasure. It is true that in certain cases a measurable phenomenon occupies the place of a non-measurable one. Then the word designating this place changes its meaning and the old meaning becomes more or less obsolete. We are soothed by the fact that the one concept is the more exact and do not notice the fact that here in each particular case a different relation between the 'exact' and the 'inexact' concept is in question: it is the old mistake of not testing particular cases.

Some commentators have taken Wittgenstein's point here to be that any change in the criterion of a term is ipso facto a change in its meaning and in the relevant concept. A cursory reading of the passage may create this impression because of the phrases "the shift in meaning..." and "the word designating this place changes its meaning". However, I do not think that this is the right reading of Z#438. It does not provide a reading of the passage in its entirety and it fails to take account of the qualifying remarks such as "the shift in meaning is not noted", "in certain cases a measurable phenomenon occupies the place of a non-measurable one", and "the old meaning becomes more or less obsolete". Rather, I think that the passage should be read in conjunction with O.C. #48-9 where Wittgenstein makes a remark, in a similar spirit, about the ultimately pragmatic basis of a decision to regard something as "fixed": "...out of a host of calculations certain ones might be designated as reliable once and for all, others as not quite fixed. And now, is this a logical distinction? But remember: even when the calculation is something fixed for
me, this is only a decision for a practical purpose". I take Wittgenstein’s point at Z #438 to be: when scientists take a phenomenon to be the defining criterion of a concept, and when that phenomenon admits of exact measurement into the defining criterion of a term, there is a temptation to think that now the proper meaning has been found. But this is a misleading way of looking at things, for it fails to take account of the fact that what we choose to make a defining criterion is determined by our purpose in using a criterion. What we require in a criterion will depend on the kind of language game in which the criterion is being used. It is not always necessary for a concept that we use to be capable of exact measurement; "there are, for example, degrees of pleasure, but it is stupid to speak of a measurement of pleasure". With certain concepts and in certain areas of discourse, we can choose something for a criterion which does not admit of particularly exact measurement. And this does not detract from the intelligibility of the relevant concepts (any more than the inexactness of "Stand roughly there" detracts from the intelligibility of that order). When we make the "old mistake of not testing particular cases", we forget that the degree of exact measurement that we require for a concept depends on the area of discourse in which the concept is being used.

We see, therefore, that, pace Malcolm, we could conceivably change the criterion of a concept without changing the way in which we use the concept or the role that the concept plays in our lives. Conversely, we could conceivably change the use to which we put a given concept without changing its criterion (we could, e.g., come to treat "pain" as Canfield’s aliens do). And, as Herzberg points out, numerous forms of intermediate conceptual change might be imagined in which some aspects of the use of the concept
changed along with part of the criteria. What cannot be imagined, however, is a profound change both in criteria and in manner of use at the same time. Or rather: such a change, if it were to occur, would be unintelligible. For the aspects of a concept which do not change are what makes the change intelligible; they are, as it were, the hinges on which the concept turns. But in the case of total change, the new concept would have no connection with the old; we could not see the transition from one to the other as a meaningful step to take. Consequently, if such a change really could occur, it would make our agreement seem utterly inexplicable. It would also make our agreement seem utterly precarious for, if such a change were possible, then, as Kripke remarks, nothing about grasping concepts would guarantee that it would not all break down tomorrow. However, this is not the way in which shifts in linguistic use take place. Breakdowns in communication do not just suddenly occur because we do not just suddenly stop interacting with one another. We do not just suddenly abandon each and every language game that we engage in together at the same time. If we abandon some, we continue others, and those that we continue are the hinges on which communication turns, which make changes in meaning intelligible. Therefore, we see that one type of objection to interpreting criteria as truth conditions ought not to prevent us from adopting this view: Wittgenstein’s conception of truth conditions in terms of criteria can provide an account of conceptual change which allows us to construe changes in science in terms of progress in science. In addition, Wittgenstein’s conception of truth conditions as criteria can provide a plausible explanation of how changes in meaning can occur.
I have argued that the apparent threat of arbitrary conventionalism should not prevent us from accepting a truth conditional interpretation of criteria. As I have argued, a closer look at Wittgenstein's account of criterial change shows that it is not in fact vulnerable to the objection that it makes paradigm shifts in science arbitrary and irrational and changes in meaning inexplicable. I would now like to return to the second type of objection to the truth conditional view of criteria that I raised at the beginning of this section, namely, What sense can we make of saying that we treat our criteria as truth conditions if we treat them as being open to revision? If criteria are in principle revisable and are acknowledged as being in principle revisable, how could we possibly treat them as truth conditions? For if criteria can change, what sense can we make of identifying them with truth conditions? Is it not a conceptual truism that truth values and therefore truth conditions are stable and determinate? In addressing these issues, I will argue that the implication of our treating our criteria both as truth conditions and as being in principle revisable is that we need to revise our traditional picture of truth.

According to the view that I will defend here, the sense in which we treat our criteria as providing truth conditions is simply that they are the best ways of judging that we have. As Neurath pointed out in his boat metaphor that we cannot replace each part of a theoretical vessel at once while we are at sea in inquiry, and as Peirce, Quine, and Wittgenstein have also argued, we cannot abandon all our ways of judging at once, if we are to continue to judge. And we, as human beings engaged in inquiry, realize that we
have to go on judging. We realize that our criteria, or our ways of judging, are in principle revisable. That is, we realize that we may not always take ourselves to be correct in predicking "is true" of those statements of which we currently think it is correct to predicate "is true". But while we are using criteria in inquiry, we cannot do other than take them as providing the conditions under which it is correct to predicate "is true" of our statements. For as Wittgenstein argues,

Now can I prophesy that men will never overthrow the present arithmetical propositions, never say that now at last they know how the matter stands? Yet would that justify a doubt on our part? (O.C. #652)

A judge might even say "That is the truth--so far as a human being can know it". But what would this rider achieve? ("beyond all reasonable doubt") (O.C. #607)

That is to say, given that in our practice of inquiring, we take our criteria as determining when it is correct to call a statement true, and given that we realize that our criteria are not immune from revision, it is a feature of our practice of applying the truth predicate to sentences that we realize that the correctness of any given application of it may change. Another way of putting this point is that we use the predicate "is true" as though the correctness of the application of the predicate were internally related to our current knowledge. We apply it to a statement only when we can make sense of saying that we know that it is true (O.C. # 200). And because, on the one hand, our concept of truth is internally related to our capacity for knowledge, and, on the other hand, our epistemic situation is such that our knowledge can never be considered complete, it is built into our
practice of using the predicate "is true" that the correctness conditions of any given application of the predicate can change. Is this practice in tension with the truism that truth values and therefore truth conditions are stable and determinate? I would argue that it is not. It is truth values, not truth conditions which are stable and determinate. Or rather: to say that truth values are stable and determinate is just to say that it is part of the grammar of the word "true" that it makes no sense to say "The statement 'the earth is flat' was true at time $t$". But to point this out is only to express a grammatical feature of the word "true". It is not to call attention to an aspect of the metaphysical nature or essence of truth. (Compare Wittgenstein's remark "Essence is expressed by grammar"). And, as far as truth conditions are concerned, once we grant that our criteria determine the conditions under which it is correct to call our statements true, it should be clear why truth conditions cannot be stable and determinate. For I have argued that the notion that meaning is use implies a novel and revisionist conception of a truth condition, where a truth condition is taken to be a conventional rule or a criterion which, by linguistic convention, makes it correct to predicate "is true" of a given sentence. If we hold that meaning is use, then what makes it correct to predicate "is true" of a sentence is not that it is true, where "true" is taken to mean "corresponds to reality" or "would be discovered to be true, if inquiry were to be pursued as far as it could fruitfully go". Rather, what makes it correct to predicate is true" of a sentence is that we know that it is true. And, once we have granted this much, then, given what our epistemic situation is, we have no choice but to hold that any warranted application of "is true" must be classified as correct. For we are the ones who are applying the truth predicate. And, hence, what
makes it correct to apply the truth predicate are our criteria or our current ways of judging. What makes it correct to apply the truth predicate to sentences are the grounds which we agree are adequate upon which to accept our statements as true. And the grounds which we count as adequate on which to accept our statements as true can only reflect the state of our knowledge at a particular time.

To put the point another way: it is simply part of the human epistemic condition that knowledge must always be considered defeasible. Thus, St. Paul's remark, "What we know now is partial, but when what is perfect comes our knowledge will be complete, as complete as God's knowledge..." And we do not think that St. Paul is mis-using the word "knowledge" in speaking of "partial knowledge". For given the contrast between our epistemic situation and God's epistemic situation, it is part of the grammar of "knowing" that it can be correct to say "We know" even if what we claim to know turns out to be false. As Wittgenstein remarks,

It would be wrong to say that I can only say 'I know that there is a chair there' when there is a chair there. Of course, it isn't true unless there is, but I have a right to say this if I am sure there is a chair there even if I am wrong. Pretensions are a mortgage which burdens a philosopher's capacity to think (O.C. #549).\textsuperscript{82}

It would be pretentious to claim that it is only correct to claim to know something if the statement we claim to know never requires revision. For given what our epistemic situation is, our language game of making knowledge claims cannot be like that. If the God of St. Paul's epistle were to say "I know that p will occur" or "I know that p is
permanently indefeasible", his foreknowledge to the contrary having temporarily slipped
his mind, he might fairly be accused of being incorrect in saying "I know". But if we
were to make a justified knowledge claim of a statement which we later discovered to be
false, it would be wrong to say that we were incorrect to say "We know". In such a case,
we would have to say that we didn’t actually know, but only thought we knew. But if our
knowledge claim had been justified, it would not be right to say that we were incorrect
in saying "We know".

By parity of reasoning, Wittgenstein argues that it is misleading to deny that we
are correct in predicating "is true" of a statement on the grounds on which we predicate
"is true" of it merely because we may someday have to revise those grounds. As he
remarks,

...if everything speaks for an hypothesis and nothing speaks against
it--is it then certainly true? One may designate it as such (O.C.
#191).

A judge might... say "That is the truth--so far as a human being can
know it." But what would this rider achieve? (O.C. #607)

Once we have said "That is the truth", there is no point to adding the qualifier, "so
far as a human being can know it". What makes it correct to predicate "is true" of a
statement is our normative agreement on the grounds on which we are willing to affirm
our statements. And the grounds which we count as adequate on which to affirm our
statements can only reflect our current epistemic situation. Again, if God were to
predicate "is true" of a statement which was going to be falsified in ten years time, then
another being outside the time sequence might say "It is incorrect for you to predicate 'is true' of that statement". But we are the ones who are applying the truth predicate, and the conditions of our practice of doing so is partly determined by certain general facts of nature—i.e., facts about our cognitive limitations and about our being temporally situated at a discrete point in the course of human inquiry. Therefore, we can attach no sense to saying that anything determines the conditions under which it is correct to predicate "is true" of our statements other than the conventions which we employ in our practice.

Does the view that I have been ascribing to Wittgenstein amount to linguistic idealism or relativism? I will argue that it does not, although it might superficially appear to do so. Linguistic idealism is generally taken to be the view that human beings create truths with their thought and talk or with their linguistic practices. But it is not being argued here that human agreement makes things true or decides what is true or false. Rather: human agreement determines the conditions under which it is correct to predicate "is true" and "is false" of sentences (cf. P.I. #241). Some people may still want to call this view "idealism" simply because it denies that truth and assertibility come apart. They will argue that, because it denies that truth and assertibility come apart, the Wittgensteinian view is at odds with the truism that the concept of truth includes the concept of objectivity. It is at odds with the truism that truth is not dependent on what anyone says or thinks, that human agreement does not decide what is true and false, and that "people say that p" does not entail "p". For it may seem that if human agreement does not decide what is true and false, then what makes it correct to predicate "is true" of a sentence cannot be our normative agreement on what counts as an adequate ground
upon which to accept it as true. Rather, what makes it correct to predicate "is true" of a sentence must be something else such as the way things really are or the way the world is. It may be objected that the Wittgensteinian view of what the correctness of an application of the truth predicate consists in cannot give content to the following thought: namely, that what explains why we come to classify some of our prior applications of the truth predicate as incorrect are our empirical discoveries. That is, what explains our revision of statements which we previously held true is the brute confrontation of those statements with recalcitrant experience. It is our discovery that those statements which we held as true did not in fact get the world right. And surely that world is not of our making.

But there is a reply to this objection. It is not being argued that the world is of our making. But what explains why we come to revise our criteria and conventions is not the way the world is simpliciter. Rather, we revise our criteria and conventions because we have increased our knowledge. So it is not being argued that our applications of "is true" are made correct by a world which is entirely of our making. They are made correct by norms which reflect our current knowledge. And knowledge is partly of our making. It is a relation between facts about ourselves and our cognitive capacities and general facts of nature or the way the world is. And, as the constructivist says of mathematics, it comes into existence as we probe. Thus, the Wittgensteinian wants to say that it is not truth and assertibility which come apart. Rather, it is truth and reality which come apart. They come apart in the sense that although we can have reasons for believing that our current applications of the predicate "is true" are correct according to more rigorous and
exacting standards of correctness than our previous ones were, we can never be confident that our current knowledge does not fall short of being the most accurate and comprehensive description possible of that which we are attempting to explain when we conduct empirical investigations. This should not sound like idealism, however, because the world is at least partly causally efficacious in determining what we take as true. And our awareness that our knowledge may fall short of being complete, i.e., our awareness that "We say that p" does not entail "p" is reflected in our practice of treating the criteria whereby we predicate "is true" of our statements as being in principle revisable. This is the point of insisting on a sharp dichotomy between the grammar of "is real" and the grammar of "is true".

Nor should this view sound like relativism. For we can make sense of an entire form of life's being shown to be wrong in the light of recalcitrant experience. One form that recalcitrant experience can take is confrontation with another form of life which has an alternative world picture. In such a case, we can say that the criterion for one world picture's being correct in contrast to that of another is that the one can explain all that the other can explain and can also explain things which the explanatory power of the poorer world picture is inadequate to explain (O.C. #286, #288). In this case, we can say that one world picture approximates reality more closely than the other. Or to put the point another way, one form of life's applications of the predicate "is true" are correct according to more rigorous and exacting standards than those of the other form of life. That is to say, there is a higher court of appeal than the community itself in the question of whether any given form of life is correct. It does not follow from the fact that a form
of life is the only framework within which it makes sense to say that statements are true or false that any statement held true by that form of life is immune from revision. All that follows is that an entire form of life cannot be called into question at one time from within that form of life. As Hinman puts this point, "language and the form of life in which it is grounded cannot be said to be either true or false for they must be presupposed as a whole in order for any particular knowledge claims to be judged true or false. Talk about truth and falsity presupposes participation in a language game and in a form of life, yet this in itself is hardly sufficient to shield the form of life from any possible criticism at all". Therefore, whoever believes that the concept of truth is epistemically constrained--whoever believes that there is an internal relation between meaning and use, and, thus, between the concepts of truth and practice--should not balk at accepting the account of truth that I outlined here in spite of the fact that it is revisionist. For once we have examined the concept of truth that our practice commits us to, the revision which I have called for in our traditional picture of truth should appear to be a justified and a necessary revision. And because the view put forth here avoids idealism and relativism, it does not violate the depth grammar of "is true". It allows us to retain our conception of truth as something objective.
WHY A REVISIONIST ACCOUNT OF TRUTH?

THE WITTGENSTEINIAN VIEW VERSUS THE PRAGMATIST'S ACCOUNT

I have argued that the Wittgensteinian view of truth should not be rejected merely because it is revisionist. The revision that it calls for in our traditional picture of truth is a necessary and a justified revision: our practice of taking and treating as true the statements which we are currently justified in asserting commits us to denying the thought that what makes it correct to predicate "is true" of a sentence outruns our current knowledge. But the picture of truth as transcending our current knowledge has a powerful grip on our intuitions. Even those who agree that truth cannot transcend our capacity for knowledge may still find it irresistible to say that truth can transcend what we might know here and now. Someone who holds this type of view will typically define truth as the pragmatist does, i.e., as what would be believed at the end of inquiry, as what would be believed if inquiry were to be pursued as far as it could fruitfully go, or as what would continue to best fit with evidence and argument. According to this type of view of truth, the predicate "is true" does not get applied to sentences correctly, where it is part of speakers' understanding of "is true" that the conditions for the correctness of a given application of the predicate can change. Rather, the pragmatist holds that the predicate "is true" gets applied fallibly. This type of view is articulated and defended in Cheryl Misak's *Truth and the End of Inquiry: A Peircean Account of Truth*.

According to the view which Misak attributes to Peirce, the concept of truth is internally related to that of practice or inquiry. For truth is what we aim at in inquiry.
The concept of truth that arises from this link between truth and practice is that of what would be believed if inquiry were to be pursued as far as it could fruitfully go. And we, as inquirers, must hope that a consequence of a hypothesis’s being true is that, if inquiry relevant to it were to be pursued as far as it could fruitfully go, then at that point, the hypothesis would be believed. Thus, on the Peircean view which Misak defends, truth is connected to human inquiry (it is the best that inquiry could do). But it goes beyond any particular inquiry. And, thus, in a way, Misak’s view is an attempt to give content to the thought that the concepts of truth and practice are closely connected while leaving most of our basic intuitions about truth intact. Misakian pragmatism is an attempt to reconcile the powerful intuition that most of us have that truth can transcend what we might know here and now with the thought that the concept of truth is internally related to that of inquiry. For apparently, Misak thinks that retaining this degree of transcendence is the only way of giving content to our conception of truth as objective--i.e., as not being dependent on what anyone says or thinks.

I will argue that Misak’s attempt to square the pragmatist’s link between truth and practice with our intuitive picture of truth as transcendent is irreparably flawed. The account of truth that results from the uneasy union of her two incompatible commitments conflates the grammar of "is real" with the grammar of "is true". And in doing so, it radically misdescribes our practice. I will then suggest that once we have rejected the picture of truth as transcending inquiry--i.e., once we have committed ourselves to upholding the link between the concept of truth and practice--the Wittgensteinian view is the one that we should accept. We should resist any version of the pragmatist’s view
according to which truth transcends our current knowledge. That is, we should reject any view—whether Cheryl Misak’s, Hilary Putnam’s, or Crispin Wright’s—which holds that the predicate "is true" gets applied fallibly rather than correctly. Instead, we should say that every justified application of the predicate "is true" is correct even though it is in principle revisable.

To see how Misak’s account of truth conflates the grammar of "is real" with the grammar of "is true", we need to examine the Peircean way of cashing out our conception of truth as objective. According to Misak, the objectivity of truth boils down to the thought that truth goes beyond what any group of inquirers might happen to believe here and now. A community’s believing that a hypothesis is true does not make it true. Rather, what is true is that which would be agreed upon if inquiry were to be pursued as far as it could fruitfully go. And there is a parallel notion of objectivity in Peirce’s account of what is real: the real is that which is independent of whatever we may think of it. And "the consequence of a thing’s being real is that a hypothesis asserting its reality would be, if inquiry relevant to it were to be pursued, perfectly stable and doubt-resistant. reality is the 'object' of true beliefs--it is what true beliefs are about" (T.E.I., p.131). We must remember, however, that it is only a hope that the consequence of a belief’s being true is that, if inquiry relevant to it were to be pursued, it would be held true. And, therefore, it is also only a hope that the consequence of a thing’s being real is that, if a hypothesis asserting its reality were pursued, it would become the object of belief. Furthermore, it is always a possibility that inquiry may not be pursued as far as it could fruitfully go. Therefore, the Wittgensteinian wants to say that the grammars of
"is real" and "is true" come apart here, for if there are no permanently indefeasible beliefs, there will be nothing that the predicate "is true" could apply to; there will be nothing that is true. But on the other hand, all those real things that exist independently of human beliefs will still exist; in the absence of any beliefs it still makes sense to call them "real". They will be as fully real as they would have been if indefeasible beliefs had fixed on them. And, therefore, the grammars of "is real" and "is true" come apart; in a situation in which it makes no sense to speak of the existence of what is true, it makes perfect sense to speak of the existence of what is real.

Misak will reply here that even in the absence of any beliefs or statements to which the predicate "is true" could apply, truth would still be "an uninstantiated property". She will argue by analogy that a stone would still be hard even in the absence of any inquirers who could kick it, scratch it, and find out that it was hard. And, by parity of reasoning, a potential indefeasible belief which is not actually believed but which could have been believed if human creatures had existed--that is, a potentially believed indefeasible belief, which Misak would want to call a truth -- would still be true, even in the absence of thinking creatures who could form the belief, inquire into it, and find out that it was true. But it is not clear that Misak’s reply to the objection that she conflates the grammar of "is real" with the grammar of "is true" can silence the Wittgensteinian. Indeed, her reply invites an even more serious objection: we can ask, "If, in the absence of any beliefs, truth would be an uninstantiated property, then what is the force of saying that truth is a property of our beliefs?" For this is what Misak wants to say: she writes, "...what would be believed is independent of what is now
believed. None the less, truth is a property of our beliefs. And truth is what we would find ourselves with at the end of a sufficiently resolute inquiry” (T.E.I., p.132, Misak’s emphasis). But if, in the absence of any beliefs to which "is true" could apply, truth would be an uninstantiated property, what can be the point of emphasizing the "our" in "Truth is a property of our beliefs"? We can grant that on Misak’s view, truth is a property of our beliefs. But if, in the absence of beliefs and statements which could be true, truth would be an uninstantiated property, in what sense is truth dependent on us, as Misak claims it is (T.E.I., p.132)? The concept of truth certainly is not being construed here as being internally related to our forming and expressing beliefs, as it surely should be. Indeed, if one were inclined to speculate about the metaphysical nature of truth, then Misak’s view, unlike the Wittgensteinian’s, would make it easy to do that: one might be tempted to suggest that what actually believed indefeasible beliefs and potentially believed indefeasible beliefs have in common is that they both share in the form "the True". My point here is that the pragmatist’s view breaks faith with the thought that the concept of truth depends upon and alludes to the linguistic activities of thinking creatures. It breaks faith with the thought that the concept of truth depends upon thinking creatures forming and expressing the beliefs, statements, and assertions which are candidates for truth value. It is committed to denying that the concept of truth is an abstraction from the instances of our uses of "is true". And because of this, it becomes increasingly difficult for the pragmatist to explain the meaning of "true" in terms of our use of "is true". Or, to put the point another way, it becomes difficult for the pragmatist to explain the meaning of "is true" in terms of our agreement on the correct ways of
using "is true". And the Wittgensteinian wants to say that when it becomes difficult to explain the meaning of "is true" in terms of use and agreement, it becomes difficult to explain its meaning at all. For if Misak wants to say that the predicate "is true" gets applied fallibly rather than correctly, then she owes us an account of what would make it correct to apply the predicate "is true" on any particular occasion. And it is not clear that she can give such an account without invoking a realist conception of meaning—i.e., without making the correct use of a word depend on something other than normative agreement. This may seem, on the face of it, like a harmless enough consequence. The realist may say, "Well, fine, I don’t mind making the correctness of an application of ‘is true’ depend on something other than our normative agreement on the correct way of applying it in a particular case. I’m happy to hold that something determines the correctness of our applications of ‘is true’ other than our normative agreement on the conditions under which it is correct to apply it." But, as I will argue, it is far from harmless to snap the link between meaning and agreement this way. For if we hold that what determines the correct use of "is true" is something other than our normative agreement on the correct ways of using "is true", it will be unclear how we learn how to use it. It will be unclear how we could give "is true" the meaning that the pragmatist wants to give it. And it will remain a mystery how we could acquire the relevant concept of truth from our practice. Consequently, if we insist on adopting an account of truth which says that "is true" gets applied fallibly rather than correctly, we will radically misdescribe our practice. To see this, let us turn now to Misak’s description of her hypothetical Peircean pragmatist inquirer.
Like any experienced scientist, Misak's inquirer accepts many statements as true knowing that, in light of the history of science, it's a good bet that much of what she holds true today will someday be overturned. Because she accepts Peirce's critical commonsensism, she does not actively doubt any of the statements which she currently accepts as true. As long as she knows that any given statement which she now holds true was arrived at by a reliable method, her awareness of the possibility that it may someday be falsified does not prevent her from feeling "warranted in accepting it, asserting it, and acting upon it" (T.E.I., p.124). But because she agrees with Peirce and Misak that the predicate "is true" gets applied fallibly rather than correctly, she thinks of truth in terms of what would be believed if inquiry were to be pursued as far as it could fruitfully go. At least she hopes that a consequence of a hypothesis's being true is that, if inquiry were to be pursued as far as it could fruitfully go, it would be agreed upon. It is something like this hope which motivates her to inquire. And now we must ask, Is this an accurate description of our practice? What exactly is Misak's inquirer hoping for here? On a Wittgensteinian analysis, there are a number of things she might hope for. She undoubtedly hopes to contribute to the growth of knowledge. She hopes to contribute to the development of beliefs that will be correct according to more and more rigorous and exacting standards of correctness. She hopes to contribute to the development of criteria for judging statements to be true or false which will be the most rigorous, exacting, and accurate criteria humankind could ever attain. But does she hope to contribute to the development of beliefs which will really be true in contrast to those which she now takes true? What content could she give to such a hope that would be consistent with her
taking and treating the statements she now takes true as true? What role could a hope for beliefs that will really be true—in contrast to those she now holds, which she only thinks are true—play in her practice of inquiring? The pragmatist’s hope here is one that Wittgenstein might well have characterized as "the hope that does no work". That is to say: the goal of alighting on an ultimately indefeasible belief is such that one cannot know that one has achieved it when one has achieved it. Consequently it is not a goal which can guide us in our practice of inquiring. Certainly, the conception of this goal cannot influence the actions of Misak’s inquirer; she can never be said to know whether she is really correct in regarding some scientific hypothesis as settled and whether she may now stop investigating it.

On a Wittgensteinian view, Misak’s inquirer certainly doesn’t think that her believing that p makes p the case. That is why she is prepared to revise the grounds upon which she takes it as correct to apply the predicate "is true" to p. But she undoubtedly takes herself to be correct in applying the predicate "is true" to statements on the grounds on which she applies it. And if those grounds are overturned, she will say that she was correct to apply the truth predicate on those grounds, although it would be incorrect for her accept statements as true on those overturned grounds now. For that which she takes the correctness of her applications of the truth predicate to consist in is her community’s normative agreement on the correct ways of applying the truth predicate to statements. It is her community’s agreement on what count as reliable methods for testing their statements and on what count as adequate grounds upon which to accept them as true. And these grounds can only reflect the state of her community’s knowledge at a particular
time. The pragmatist's view breaks faith with the thought that the correctness of a given application of "is true" depends on normative agreement within a community. For it makes the correctness of an application of "is true" depend on something which transcends the community's current knowledge and which, therefore, can have no influence on its normative agreement nor play any role in its practice of "taking true".

To say that the truth predicate gets applied fallibly rather than correctly puts an unbearable strain on the connection between meaning and use or, to put the point another way, between meaning and agreement. For if our agreement on the conventions and criteria whereby we predicate "is true of our sentences does not make our applications of the truth predicate correct, it is not clear what would make them correct. Nor could the criteria whereby we accept our statements as true reflect any information, however relevant, if we do not yet have it. Consequently, and ironically enough, the pragmatist's view of truth also puts an unbearable strain on the connection between the concept of truth and practice. For if what makes an application of the truth predicate correct transcends our current knowledge--i.e., if it transcends the criterial grounds whereby we do apply the truth predicate in our practice--then it is unclear how we could acquire the relevant concept of truth from our practice. The pragmatist may think that we could acquire this concept by imagining the epistemic perspective of a being further along in the time sequence. She may think that we could acquire the relevant concept of truth by imagining the epistemic perspective of a being who could see what permanently indefeasible beliefs would look like. But Dummett is surely right that this type of move does not give content to our concept of truth: "...if a statement...is true, it must be true
in virtue of the sort of fact which we have been taught to regard as justifying us in asserting it. It cannot be true in virtue of some quite different sort of fact of which we can have no direct knowledge for then ['is true'] would not have the meaning that we have given it".  

The pragmatist may think that retaining some degree of transcendence is necessary if we are to give content to our notion of truth as objective, or as independent of what anyone says or thinks. But I have argued that this is not the only way of cashing out the objectivity of truth. We can give content to our notion of truth as being objective simply by saying that it is part of our concept of truth that we recognize that we can be wrong about what we now take true. Therefore, our intuitive urge to construe the meaning of "is true" as being independent of what we currently know is one which we ought to resist. We ought to revise our picture of the meaning of "is true" as being independent of our current knowledge; this is a use which we ought to reserve for "is real". Rather, the right way of respecting the truism that our calling a statement true does not make it true, without snapping the link between meaning and agreement, is to say that it is part of our concept of the meaning of "is true" that the conditions for the correctness of the application of the predicate can change. Nothing metaphysical should be added to this conception: truth is what we predicate of statements which meet our current criteria of truth with the full understanding that these criteria may one day stand in need of revision. This is all that we require in an account of truth.
NOTES

1. Judith Genova reads Wittgenstein as proposing a radical revision in our concept of knowledge as guaranteeing truth. According to her, "the most radical implication of Wittgenstein’s challenge to Descartes is his questioning of the long-standing belief that I know that p implies p or the truth of the proposition in question" (Wittgenstein: A Way of Seeing, New York: 1995, p.189). This cannot be right. I will argue later that the passage on which she bases this interpretation should be read in a different way.


4. What Wright actually says is that criteria will not be interestingly different from public truth conditions if defeasibility is waived. However, it is clear from his remarks that he is thinking of truth conditions as realist truth conditions. For Wright, what distinguishes criteria and assertibility conditions from truth conditions is that they fall short of being truth conditions—ie., they’re not decisive for establishing the truth of what is asserted. And nowhere in "Second Thoughts about Criteria" does he suggest that we should identify truth with assertibility.
5. Wright mentions a fifth feature of criteria, that the criteria of a statement will typically be multiple. This feature plays no role in his argument so I leave it out. But I follow Wright in this section in speaking of criteria in the plural.

6. Later in this chapter, I will call into question whether we can make sense of such a distinction without snapping the link between justification and practice. And the picture of correct assertion or justification as being possibly recognition-transcendent—and hence unconnected to a practice—is one that Wright himself is anxious to avoid.

7. This is why a conception of meaning in terms of use must undermine the notion, so popular in contemporary philosophy of language, that language ought to be capable of systematization by a theory of meaning. For an argument that there is no such thing as a theory of meaning for a language, and, therefore, no such thing as a significant contribution to such an enterprise, see Baker and Hacker's Language, Sense, and Nonsense (Oxford: 1984). See also their Scepticism, Rules, and Language (Oxford: 1984).


9. John McDowell makes a similar point in "Criteria, Defeasibility, and Knowledge", Proceedings of the British Academy LXVIII 1982, p.461. He writes, "...we are told to
model our conception of 'antirealist' semantics on the mathematical intuitionists' explanation of logical constants in terms of proof-conditions. But proof is precisely not defeasible, so there is nothing in the model to make us comfortable with the defeasibility of criteria... Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, #651--cited by Wright at page 244 of 'Antirealist Semantic: the role of criteria'--makes a point about fallibility. Reliance on a defeasible basis is quite another matter."

10. Of course, we can question whether a criterion is an adequate way of judging. In this situation, there will be a fluctuation between criteria and symptoms. But if we do this, we will be employing a new way of judging. We will not be questioning whether a certain method of testing is adequate according to the old standards of adequacy.

11. McDowell first applies this term to himself in "On 'The Reality of the Past'" (*Action and Interpretation*, eds. Hookway and Pettit (Cambridge, England: 1978) where he argues that "Realism" is not vulnerable to the antirealist objections which can be made against truth value link realism. In "Realism, Truth Value Links, Other Minds, and the Past", *Ratio* xii 1980, Crispin Wright argues that M-realism fares no better than truth value link realism.


14. What I will focus on here is the incoherence of McDowell’s proposed alternative to the view that criteria are defeasible. For a criticism of McDowell’s argument against the possibility of knowledge based on defeasible criteria, see Paul Robinson’s "McDowell Against Criterial Knowledge", *Ratio* IV 1991. Robinson argues that McDowell’s case against criterial knowledge turns on his denying that one can know that p even though one’s basis for believing p is compatible with not p. That is, McDowell is committed to the principle that “experiential knowledge cannot be constituted, even in part, by facts which are not required to obtain if the experience on which the knowledge claim is based is to be enjoyed” (p.71). And Robinson argues that McDowell’s principle cannot be confined to criterial knowledge. It would also rule out all perceptual knowledge and all knowledge based on inductive generalizations. For on McDowell’s view, someone could not be said to know that some x which was G was F on the basis of the generalization x(G-F) since he might be confronting some particular x which was G and not F.

15. Indeed, this is the first thing McDowell says in the revised version of "Criteria, Defeasibility, and Knowledge". He writes: "One can sometimes know what someone else feels.. by.. .what he says and does. It is very common for philosophers to interpret this idea so that 'what he says and does' is taken to allude to a basis for knowledge of what the person feels or thinks. Their thought of a basis here has two elements. The first is
that the basis is something knowable in its own right... I argue that... the defeasibility of the inferential relation... is necessitated by the first of the two elements mentioned above" (p.209).

16. As Robinson argues, McDowell owes us an argument for the principle that one cannot be said to know something if the basis open which one claims to know it is compatible with the falsity of what one claims to know. And Canfield makes a similar point in *Wittgenstein: Language and World* (Amherst: 1981), p.122; he writes "It is...consistent to know something on a basis and yet for it to be logically possible for that thing to be false and the basis true". I think that what Robinson and Canfield must mean or at any rate what they ought to say is that it is consistent to say that one is *correct* in saying that one knows something if one is justified in saying so, even if one turns out to be mistaken. For, as Canfield himself has said in conversation, it is part of the grammar of knowledge that knowledge entails the truth of what is known. Therefore, a case in which one turns out to be mistaken about what one made a justified claim to know is a case in which one was correct to say "I know" only before one’s justification was lost. It is not a case in which one *knew*.

17. See Robinson, p.75.

18. For a similar argument against McDowell to the effect that "the world does not provide us with reasons", see Peter Baumann’s unpublished manuscript, "McDowell on
Content". See also his "John McDowell: Mind and World" (Philosophische Rundschau 44 1997), where he says "[McDowell] proposes a "rationalist" conception of mental content according to which thoughts can only have content of they entertain rational (justificatory) relationship to the world. McDowell doesn’t offer arguments for this claim. There are good reasons to doubt that thoughts and beliefs can be justified by something different from (other) thoughts and beliefs. McDowell often says that the world ("how things are", things being thus and so") stands in a justificatory relation to our thoughts and beliefs (25,112,142ff.). Davidson and many others would object that it is hard to see how the world could offer us reasons for our beliefs and thoughts."

19. McDowell may not be one of them. At least his argument in "Criteria, Defeasibility, and Knowledge" would be consistent with this. But the arguments against attributing knowledge and belief to non-language users are powerful enough to make such attributions extremely contentious. As Davidson argues in "Rational Animals" (Dialectica 36 1982), in order to attribute to a dog the belief that the cat went up the oldest tree on the block or the oak tree, we would have to be justified in attributing to the dog the concepts of "tree" and "oak" and "oldest". And as Shanker points out in "The Conflict Between Wittgenstein and Quine on the Nature of Language and Cognition and its Implications for Constraint Theory" (in Wittgenstein and Quine, eds. Glock and Arrington (London: 1996), p.235, we cannot say that the dog has the concept of "mealtime" because he salivates at the sound of a bell. And this is not because we lack sufficient evidence to know what the dog is thinking but because the language game played with time demands
far greater behavioral complexity than has been displayed by the dog in order to ascribe to it even a primitive version of that concept". Savigny's paper, "Some Doubts About Hopeless Dogs" (The British Tradition in 20th Century Philosophy: Proceedings of the 17th International Wittgenstein Symposium, Vienna: 1995), is one that I take as making a hopeless case.

20. I realize that the thought here may seem plausible and unproblematic to many readers. That is, it will seem intuitively very plausible to say that what makes it correct to make an assertion is that it is true. However, I ask the reader to consider whether this view does not rest upon a realist account of what the correctness of an assertion consists in. And I ask the reader to further consider whether such a realist conception of correctness does not strain the link between meaning and agreement. This point was suggested to me by Goren Sundholm in the question period after his talk "A Constructivist’s Perspective on Truth and Knowledge" at the 1996 Prague International Colloquium. Frederick Stoutland objected "Surely what makes it correct to make an assertion is that it’s true!" Sundholm replied, "No. What makes it correct to make an assertion is that you know that it’s true."

21. For a good defense of this view, see Canfield's "‘I Know I am in Pain’ Is Senseless" in Analysis and Metaphysics, ed. Lehrer (Dordrech: 1975) and Garver's "Neither Knowing nor not Knowing" in Philosophical Investigations 3 1984.

23. It may seem, at first glance, as though McDowell’s view is the same as Canfield’s view. McDowell thinks that in successful pretence, the criteria for a pain ascription seem to be satisfied but are not really satisfied. And Canfield thinks that it is possible for us to mistakenly believe that the criterion of a claim is met. However, there is an enormous difference between McDowell’s conception of what it is for a criterion to be satisfied and Canfield’s conception of what it is for a criterion to be met. On Canfield’s view, the criterion for saying that someone is in pain is met if that person exhibits the pain behavior which we treat as indicating pain and if the circumstances are appropriate for us to apply our criterial rule. In other words, on Canfield’s view, our criterion for saying "He is in pain is a basis on which we judge that someone is in pain--a basis which is distinct from the pain itself but which indicates the presence of the pain. Unlike McDowell, Canfield would not want to identify the criterion of some circumstance with the circumstance itself.


25. As we shall see, Canfield (1981) challenges the assumption that we make judgments about whether others are in pain solely on the basis of their pain behavior. For a discussion of whether P.I. #580 suggests that criteria define mental processes or merely
show that they have occurred, see Hunter’s Wittgenstein on Inner Processes and Outward Criteria", *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 7 1977.

26. Canfield distinguishes between three different versions of the noninductive evidence view which I will not discuss separately. For an independent treatment of each of them, see Wittgenstein, *Language and World* (Amherst: 1981), pp.79-95.


35. On the other hand, Carol Caraway gives an account of criteria which does take the importance of circumstances into account and she nevertheless maintains that we judge others to be in pain on the basis of defeasible criteria (see her "Criteria and Circumstances" in the *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 22 1984). I do not think that this view is correct, although she makes a plausible case for it.


37. Canfield points this out in "Criteria and Rules of Language", *Philosophical Review* 83 1974, p.82.


42. See Canfield (1981), pp.96-123.


44. I owe this discussion to Canfield (1981), pp.90-95, 123.


56. Thus, Kripke remarks, "...Wittgenstein proposes a picture of language based not on truth conditions but on assertibility conditions or justification conditions: under what circumstances are we allowed to make a given assertion" (1982, p.74).
57. In "Meaning and Knowledge: The Place of Criteria in Epistemology", *Dialectics and Humanism* 8 1981, Timo Aireksinen argues that the semantic aspect is more fundamental to criteria than the epistemological aspect. One argument that he gives in support of the view that a criterion is a semantic concept rather than an epistemological one is that centuries, witch-hunters who used the trial by water believed that they had evidence or criteria of illusory entities. However, in "Science and Certainty" (*Acta Philosophica Fennica* 32 1981), Lars Herzberg argues that the people in the 17th century made an error in applying the word "witch" or that they should have used a different set of criteria. What we really want to say is that they should not have talked about witches at all or regarded certain phenomena as expressions of witchcraft. But to say this is to express a verdict on their way of life and that way of life was the frame of reference within which they made judgments.


67. See Herzberg's "Criteria and the Philosophy of Science" (1978) and Glock's "Necessity and Normativity" (1996).

69. I owe this discussion to Herzberg’s "Criteria and the Philosophy of Science", p.43.
Rorty, in "Criteria and Necessity" (Nous 7 1973), argues that we need not suppose that
criteria must be shared: all we need to suppose is that for every speaker there is some
consideration he holds to be decisive. But, as Herzberg points out, this sounds rather like
arguing that we do not need shared rules to play soccer: it is enough that everyone plays
by some rules.

70. I owe this discussion to Glock’s "Necessity and Normativity", p.214.
71. I owe this discussion to Glock’s "Necessity and Normativity", pp.211-212.
72. Canfield makes this point in "Criteria and Method" (Metaphilosophy 5 1974,
p.306) in which he criticizes Garver for saying that all statements which are treated as
being true or false are governed by criteria.

73. Caraway, "Criteria and Conceptual Change in Wittgenstein’s Later Philosophy",
Metaphilosophy 17 1986, p.166.

74. Michael Kober makes this remark in "Certainties of a World Picture: The
Epistemological Investigations of On Certainty" in The Cambridge Companion to

76. See also Caraway (1986), Kenny (1967), Hollinger (1974).

77. See Canfield (1981), pp.70-78.


79. Caraway (1986) reads Z.#438 this way. However, she does not quote or discuss the entire passage.

80. I owe this discussion to Herzberg’s "Criteria and the Philosophy of Science", pp.47-48.

81. Compare Peirce’s remark, "'What! Do you mean to say that what a man does not doubt is ipso facto true? 'No, but.. he has to regard what he does not doubt as absolutely true'" (CP 4. 416, 1905). Elsewhere, Peirce writes, "...that which you do not at all doubt, you must and do regard as infallible, absolute truth" (CP 5. 416,1905). However, since Peirce holds that the predicate "is true" gets applied fallibly, the latter remark amounts to a bit of an equivocation on "infallible". One great advantage of the Wittgensteinian view of truth over the Peircean view is that the Wittgensteinian’s allows for a distinction between defeasibility and revisability. Therefore, the Wittgensteinian can help herself to the Peirce’s critical commensensism without having to commit this type of equivocation on "infallible".
82. Judith Genova (*Wittgenstein: A Way of Seeing*, New York: 1995, p.89) reads this passage as presenting an argument that we should revise our concept of knowledge as guaranteeing truth. This may seem like a plausible reading, but I do not think that this is Wittgenstein’s point here. What Wittgenstein says in the passage is not that I actually know there’s a chair there even when there isn’t. What he says is that I can say that there’s a chair there--or that I can "have a right" to say this even when there isn’t. I think that *O.C. #549* must be read in conjunction with the remarks on truth at *O.C. #607* and #652. Thus, Wittgenstein’s point in *O.C. #549* is that just as it can be correct to say "p is true" even when p does not correspond to reality, it can be correct to say "I know that p" under these same circumstances.

83. To understand this distinction, it will be necessary to keep in mind what I said in the first chapter, namely that the conditions under which it is correct to predicate "is true" of a sentence and the conditions under which the sentence corresponds to reality can come apart. It must also be born in mind that I am not giving an account here of what truth is or of what a God’s eye perspective on the concept of truth would be. I am giving an account of what our concept of truth can amount to given what our epistemic situation is.

84. For a good discussion of this, see Thomas Morawetz’s "Understanding, Disagreement, and Conceptual Change" in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 41 1980.
85. Lawrence Hinman, "Can a Form of Life Be Wrong?", *Philosophy* 58 1983, p.343.

86. Misak has formulated the pragmatist view of truth in these three ways: as what would be believed at the end of inquiry, as what would be believed if inquiry were to be pursued as far as it could fruitfully go, and as what would continue to best fit with evidence and argument. The latter is her considered opinion.

87. At this point it is fair to say that there are certain objections that the Wittgensteinian and the pragmatist can make against each other to which neither can reply without begging some questions. None the less, the Wittgensteinian’s position is stronger than the pragmatist’s. All the pragmatist has to support her position is an appeal to a powerful and commonly held intuition. The Wittgensteinian has a good independent argument against snapping the link between meaning and agreement to support her opposing position.

88. Misak will reply that her inquirer might have alighted on a true belief and that further inquiry might continue to confirm it. But this not that I actually know there’s a chair there even when there isn’t. What he says is that I can say that there’s a chair there—or that I can "have a right" to say this even when there isn’t. I think that *O.C. #549* must be read in conjunction with the remarks on truth at *O.C. #607* and #652. Thus, Wittgenstein’s point in *O.C. #549* is that just as it can be correct to say "p is true" even
when p does not correspond to reality, it can be correct to say "I know that p" under these same circumstances.

89. Dummett, *Truth and Other Enigmas* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: 1978) p.16. I have replaced Dummett's "Jones was brave" with "is true". The substitution makes a slightly different point, but it is also a point which Dummett would be happy to make.


--- "'I Know I am in Pain' is Nonsense" in *Analysis and Metaphysics*, ed. Lehrer (Dordrecht: 1975).


Davidson, Donald, "Rational Animals", *Dialectica* 36 1982.


---- *Truth and Other Enigmas* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: 1978).


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--- "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" in From a Logical Point of View (Cambridge, Massachusetts: 1953).


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