

OBJECTIVITY AND METHOD: HOW THE *EUTHYPHRO* WORKS

M. GLOUBERMAN

1. *Objectivity and consistency*

Socrates regards holiness as an objectivity (OBJ) notion — exemplified, when exemplified, apart from personal wish or whim. The focus of the present discussion is the Socratic conception of the conditions an OBJ *definiens* must meet.⁽¹⁾ Against the view that the critical progress Socrates makes in the search for an answer to 'What is holiness?' rests on rationally binding logical requirements, I shall argue that the conditions of OBJ, which shape the *Euthyphro's* definitional search, are *exclusively* extra-logical. Through the discussion it will thus emerge just how a definition functions for Socrates as more than an instrument which synchronises the cognising subject's understanding with the object, *whatever the latter may be*. Symptomatically, in the swath of text from 4e to 6b,⁽²⁾ the demand which the definition is said to satisfy is not the demand for 'knowledge' *simpliciter*, but for 'accurate knowledge', 'clear knowledge' and 'full knowledge'.

On the interpretation I oppose, Socrates rejects Euthyphro's several definitional proposals because they violate logical consistency (LC). Such a reading's initial attraction is apparent.⁽³⁾ The requirement that definitional pro-

⁽¹⁾ The Socratic concern is obscured from today's reader by the sample. Those among us who take holiness as, by contrast with goodness, distinctively religious will find a treatment of the former as SUBJ from the standpoint of the gods' reasonable. What better basis for holiness than divine desire? Thus, while a Decalogue sanctioning murder would be seen as a sign of a morally bankrupt religion, no difference would be felt had observance of two days as Sabbath been commanded.

⁽²⁾ References in the text are to the *Euthyphro*. I make use of the G.M.A. Grube translation, in *Five Dialogues*, Hackett, Indianapolis, 1981.

⁽³⁾ The idea that this reading is correct is well-entrenched in the non-scholarly mind. Christopher Cherniak (*Minimal Rationality*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, The MIT Press, 1986, p. 60) calls bringing about change in a subject's doxastic condition by eliciting inconsistencies among the subject's beliefs 'the Socratic Effect'.

posals satisfy LC needs no defense.⁽⁴⁾

Oddly, the presumptive inadequacy of the mentioned reading is proportional to its appeal. No LC-violating definition could do justice to its OBJ *definiendum*. But since LC's satisfaction is certainly insufficient for definitional adequacy, the effective basis must, it appears, invoke some substantive conception of OBJ.

If not for the strong impression that Socrates critically exploits the charge of LC-violation, it is unlikely that the reading on the logical basis would draw adherence. But as things seem, an adhering interpreter might insist that Socrates' use of logic is inept.

Before neutralising the mentioned textual impression, let me meet a general objection. Wouldn't it be only reasonable to defend a mixed reading of the dialogue — to maintain that both logical and extra-logical bases are operative?

There is a position, historically identified as 'rationalist', which makes more of LC than a necessary condition of OBJ rationality. Leibnizeans argue that LC is rationality's *fons et origo*. The modalities of possibility and actuality collapse, they hold, into necessity. The idea of *bona fide* alternatives to the actual is an epistemological mirage. And consider Kant's moral philosophy. On a popular reading, Kant links immorality directly to irrationality: the principles of action underlying immoral behaviour could not consistently be acted upon. So taken, the position illustrates the view of logic as more than a background constraint on moral rationality.

Once we appreciate the rough affinity of the Socratic position, the dichotomous distinction drawn between the logical basis and the extra-logical basis can begin to seem anachronistic. True, weakening the logic/extra-logic contrast weakens the contrast between unitary and mixed interpretations too. Nevertheless, the kind of *rapprochement* between LC and OBJ which the preceding remarks suggest will by its nature lessen the appeal of an interpretation which takes the logical basis as an independent basis in the Socratic frame.

⁽⁴⁾ In the *Meno*, a more advanced dialogue, such assumptions are questioned. See *Meno*'s insistence on Socrates's answering about the nature of colour at 76a. The assumption questioned is one that seems to inform the *Euthyphro*, viz. that definition must be discursive.

2. *The positive level and the logical level*

Violation of LC cannot be read directly off what is encountered 'positively' — on the level of utterance. From the fact that a subject voices some declarative sentence assertively, and also voices the negation of that declarative sentence assertively, it cannot be inferred that the subject has spoken inconsistently. What is asserted on the one occasion must also contradict what is asserted on the other.

Let us distinguish then between 'positive contradiction' and 'logical contradiction'. The two may coincide. But they may also diverge.

Euthyphro, at times, *is* positively inconsistent. Socrates manages to put together a contradictory conjunction, ' $p \ \& \ \sim p$ ', from the several admissions he makes. But, arguably, in none of the cases is Euthyphro guilty of logical inconsistency. If Socrates needs the logical inconsistency to refute his interlocutor, then he fails.

I claim that Socrates does not fail. At each stage in the process, he *knowingly* elicits at most a positive inconsistency. The variable answers extracted from Euthyphro are not presented as being in logical conflict. Consequently, securing even the less problematic cases requires making the kinds of (extra-logical) moves needed to secure the more problematic ones.

A moral for interpreters is nigh. In dealing with the *Euthyphro*, it is wise to take our lead from the more problematic cases. Socrates's position on OBJ will be misunderstood if we see him, earlier on, as appealing to LC, and as misapplying LC when he later adverts to it.⁽⁵⁾ Even at the first stage LC is not the operative critical tool. Since the non-logical character of the basis is far clearer in the later part of the discussion, it is by that part that we should be guided.

In view of Socrates's ostensible refutational use of the charge of LC-violation, it is important to attend to the following fact. While Socrates elicits positive inconsistency from Euthyphro, Euthyphro never asserts, even positively, ' $p \ \& \ \sim p$ '. Rather, he assents to the (positive) ascription of a property to an object, and Socrates elicits from him assent to the (positive) negation of the ascription. While, *prima facie*, it may appear that the clearest presumptive violation of LC is a speaker's straightforward assertion of the conjunction of ' p ' and ' $\sim p$ ', this isn't so. Even Euthyphro agrees that LC cannot be violated by the definition. Against *his* detractors he says:

⁽⁵⁾ This was the position taken by the objector in the third paragraph of the preceding section.

'They contradict themselves in what they say about the gods and about me' (6a). It is therefore important for Socrates to show that Euthyphro is separately committed to claims which he would agree cannot be conjointly held. When, in fine, a speaker explicitly voices ' $p \ \& \ \sim p$ ' on the positive level it is highly *unlikely* that what is asserted should be logically inconsistent. The reasonable presumption is that deeper logical form cannot be read directly off surface form. In section 4, we shall see that ordinary language is sensitive to the character of such cases.

3. *Objectivity and positive inconsistency*

Socrates defeats the various definitional proposals by showing that, if accepted, they commit Euthyphro on the positive level to classifying an object or act both as holy and as unholy. No violation of LC is charged. Rather, the positive inconsistency is in each case linked with some extra-logical OBJ condition.

A number of OBJ conditions inform the discussion. These, in my code, are BIV, EFF, NON-REL, NON-GEN, CONTRAD-CONTRAR, and NEC & SUFF.

To isolate the first two conditions, let me quote a few lines.

Tell me [Socrates requests] what this form itself is, so that I may look upon it, and using it as a model, say that any action of yours or another's that is of that kind is pious, and if it is not that it is not. (6d)

One claim here is that a definitional attempt will fail if, on the basis of what the definition contains, one cannot conclude, of any item in the relevant domain, either that it exemplifies or that it fails to exemplify the pertinent property. Either ' $F(a)$ ' is true — the action a is holy — or ' $\sim F(a)$ ' is true — the action a is not holy. The contention is that bivalence — BIV — is a condition of OBJ: any exemplifiable (consistent) OBJ property is either exemplified or not exemplified.

How does BIV's violation lead to positive contradiction? For an a neither definitely F nor definitely $\sim F$, the subject can be brought to say both ' a is not F ' and ' a is not $\sim F$ '. Take Bill, who has lost much of that youthful mop of hair he sported in the 'sixties. Is he bald? Well, Bill isn't bald. But it cannot be said that 'Bill is not bald' is true.

Cobbling up a Socratic refutation which elicits the positive contradiction is easy. But care with words would prevent even positive inconsistency from

arising. It is no accident that I was forced a moment ago to thrash about in the seas of circumlocution. (Rather than writing "Bill is not bald" is false"; I wrote 'It cannot be said that "Bill is not bald" is true'.) As I shall later show in detail, sensitive use of language stands in the way of eliciting the pieces of the contradictory conjunction.

EFF — effectiveness — is implicit in the same extract. An adequate definition must possess *criterial* force. 'Come,' Socrates later presses, 'try to show me a clear sign that all the gods definitely believe this action to be right' (9a-b). A failure of EFF is a failure of rationality-in-OBJ.

Three points. (i) EFF has a clear epistemological slant. To say that a definition is EFF is to say that it provides *us* with the wherewithal to decide whether *a* is *F*. It is not to comment on the structural character of *F*-hood's exemplification. (ii) Accordingly, EFF is independent of BIV. A property like baldness is an example of a \sim BIV EFF notion. If the concept of baldness were \sim EFF, that would mean that, for certain items falling within the relevant domain, one could not always decide where they fall. The world might not co-operate. But, in the case given, it is perfectly clear where Bill falls, viz. neither definitely in the extension, nor definitely outside. Socrates seems to treat BIV as an EFF-corollary. Discussing disagreements which engender hostility, he describes these as cases 'when we are unable to come to a satisfactory decision' (7d). The fallacious implication is that when we can decide on a definition's basis whether some item instantiates the relevant property, we can decide *that* it does or doesn't. (iii) Again in the matter of positive inconsistency, violation of EFF can result in judgements which seem inconsistent. For a \sim EFF notion, the speaker might respond with a 'No' both to 'Can you say that *a* is *F*?' and to 'Can you deny that *a* is *F*?'

The condition of non-relationality (NON-REL) emerges via Euthyphro's proposal that the holy is that which is 'dear to the gods, what is not [dear to the gods] is impious' (7a). Before examining the treatment, a point made above should be underscored. I said that while LC may seem to be operative in the earlier parts of the discussion, it could only be seen to apply beyond that at the cost of charging Socrates with logical blindness. So far as NON-REL goes, the positive inconsistency elicited has only the most tenuous linkage with violation of LC, and hence the utter catastrophe that would ensue were we to cite LC as Socrates's operative definitional condition clasps hands with the total implausibility of the citation.

Referring to Olympian strife, Socrates observes that since an act loved by one god is invariably despised by another, Euthyphro must conclude that the act is both holy and unholy.

Plainly, there is no logical inconsistency in the imputed conclusion. On the definition, 'a is holy' is relational, like 'a is small'. The linkage with positive inconsistency is clear enough. If I establish holiness by citing Zeus's amity, and you establish unholiness by citing Artemis's enmity, we shall be in disagreement. Our ascriptions, conjoined, give 'a is holy & a is unholy'.

On logical and philosophical grounds, we must resist the definition's rejection on the ground that it breeds LC-violating conjunctions. Too, we must also hope that *Socrates* is not guilty of the blunder.

Some interpreters avert their gaze from Socrates's apparent mistake. Steven Burns approvingly quotes R.E. Allen: '[Socrates's] reason...for rejecting Euthyphro's definition is [not that it can lead to contradictory judgements, but] that it cannot in principle provide a basis for sufficient decision in determining what things are holy and what things are not'.⁽⁶⁾ This is quite wrong. The definition, formalisable as

'a is holy' =df '($\exists x$) (God(x) & Loves (x, a))'

certainly supplies a ground for deciding. An act is holy if *some* god loves it. If a is dear to Zeus, then a is holy. That Artemis despises a is not a basis for concluding otherwise. And since the corresponding definition of 'unholy' requires that *all* the gods dislike an act, it follows, *pace* Burns & Allen, that the definition gives a perfectly sharp response.

Rather than extricating Socrates from a jam, the attempt to bypass the problem about the relationality of Euthyphro's definitional proposal actually disguises his point. What might that point be?

Two criticisms naturally arise against Socrates, on the more natural reading. In generating the positive inconsistency, Socrates ignores the relationality (REL) of the notion, as defined. Also, he takes the negation of 'Some gods love a' to be 'Some gods do not love a'. The clue to what Socrates is up to is the subsequent definitional move. How does Euthyphro react to the supposed inconsistency? He replaces 'loved by some of the gods' with 'loved by all the gods'. Now, finding some god who dislikes a suffices for classifying the act as unholy. The difference between the definitions is not a difference on the score of REL. Still, it is a difference which has some bearing for REL. In effect, the *degree* of REL is diminished on the successor proposal. Recur to the fact that there may be no inconsistency between

⁽⁶⁾ 'Doing Business with the Gods', *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 15, 1985, pp. 316-317. Burns is quoting Allen's *Plato's 'Euthyphro' and the Earlier Theory of Forms*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970, p. 34.

'a is large' and 'a is not large'. Comparably with the second definition, on which the universal quantifier is used, 'large' might be defined as 'larger than everything else'. This is a REL notion with a difference. Since to determine largeness one has to examine the whole class, there will never be variation in the answer to 'Is a large?' Let me refer to this as *fixed relationality*, on the grounds that one relatum is held constant. (In logic, the open sentence ' $R(a,x)$ ', with 'a' constant and 'x' variable, operates like a monadic predicate.) Accordingly, we can take the definitional shift as showing not that Socrates himself regards the preceding variable decisions on unholiness as inconsistent, nor yet guilefully exploits Euthyphro's unsophistication to wrest that conclusion, but, rather, that he is using the positive inconsistency to point up the non-fixed relationality.

Why should OBJ put a premium on fixed relationality? Crucial to the answer is the notion of definiteness. The conditions of OBJ as a whole are, I submit, conditions of definiteness. Recur to BIV and EFF. When a notion is EFF, we are in a position to be definite about it. And when it is BIV, there is no indefiniteness about its exemplification. What, now, of the case at hand?

In logic, universal quantifiers resemble names.⁽⁷⁾ 'All Fs are Gs' has an affinity for 'John is G' which it lacks for 'Some Fs are Gs'. In the sense in which I say something definite about the world when I say that John is G, I also say something definite when I say that all Fs are Gs, but not when I say that some Fs are Gs. 'What about this F?' gets a clear answer only in the first two cases. To know that some F is G isn't to know anything about this F. But to know that all Fs are Gs is to know that this F is G. If we see Socrates as linking OBJ with definiteness, then the move to the third definition gets explained otherwise than on the basis of a blunder about REL. Recall the point that the second definition, formalised in terms of the existential quantifier, gives definite answers to 'Is a holy?'. We may be able to see, in terms of the preceding point, why, in another sense, definiteness might be denied. Socrates certainly is aware that an object can be both large and small. His point would be that such attributions, for involving non-fixedly relational predicates, fail to say something *definite enough*, or *as definite as possible*. By parity, if I know that some object is non-fixedly large, I know something about it that has precious little content, viz. that it is larger than something. This is not a property for which there could be,

(7) In treating the fact that some gods love an act as conflicting with the fact that some gods do not love the act, Socrates is in effect treating 'some gods' like a name.

as Socrates phrases it, 'a model I could look at and use to determine'.

The reading is borne out by a detail in the third definition. I allude to the word 'opposite' in Euthyphro's claim that the unholy is 'the opposite, what all the gods hate' (9e). Between 'All the gods love a' and 'All the gods hate a' falls 'Some gods (though not all) love a'. The initial claim has two 'opposites'. This is not so for a case in which we have but a single god. Zeus either loves or he does not. If the gods operate in concert, then 'opposite' is univocal.⁽⁸⁾ Again, the presence of two opposites can generate a positive inconsistency. The elimination of the possibility of the duality blocks that eventuality, just as does the elimination of \sim BIV and \sim EFF.

I began with NON-REL. NON-GEN (non-generality) has been introduced along the way.⁽⁹⁾ Preference for the 'all'-definition was connected to the fixedness of its relationality. And preference for *that* was clarified by noting the affinity with the proper name form. So in the first stage, a particular kind of generality — existential — is eliminated. In the second stage, the other kind, still objectionable (though less so) relative to the requirement of definiteness, goes. In neither case does LC underwrite the movement. Accordingly, foolish or knavish attribution, on Socrates's part, of violation of LC to the 'some'-definition is not what fuels the change to 'all'. It is, rather, the former's flaw in OBJ. And, as we now see more clearly, it is implausible, despite the presence of the whiff of positive inconsistency, even to suspect that Socrates is thinking logical inconsistency.

CONTRAD-CONTRAR. This condition, that contradictories behave logically like contraries, is also implicit in the term 'opposite'. Consider a notion whose contradictory is not like a contrary, e.g. redness. The contradictory class is heterogeneous, containing blueness, greenness, etc. An example of the other kind is given by the mathematical property of oddness. If something is not odd, it is even, and vice versa.⁽¹⁰⁾ Thus, to specify

(⁸) The third definition would have been suggested immediately in a monotheistic context.

(⁹) The generality that is regarded as incompatible with OBJ is quantifier-generality.

(¹⁰) I restrict myself to natural numbers. Socrates employs the odd/even example later in the dialogue, at 12c-e. While the point cannot be defended solely in terms of the *Euthyphro*, there is potential significance to the fact. In the *Meno*, Socrates shies away from definitions which follow the genus/species pattern, preferring identificatory treatments of general notions which place them relative to other, external, ones. Thus, shape is given as 'that which... always accompanies colour' (75b). In the frame of an extension of the definite/indefinite contrast to the general realm, this is what we should expect, since definitions *per genus et differentiae* involve general notions, viz. the generic ones, which are, relative to the species notions, less definite.

an object by negating a predicate is, in the latter case, to specify what it is. The truth-conditions of 'The number n is not odd' are the same as those of ' n is even'. By contrast, if I say that a (coloured) object a isn't red, I am not specifying what a is. The ground for being 'non-red' might be the fact that a is blue. But the ground diverges from the truth-conditions of the claim.⁽¹¹⁾ What about positive inconsistency? Here the link turns tenuous. For one thing, the problem that arises is of a higher order. Suppose I tell you that an object isn't red. Do I tell you what the object is? There is a sense in which I do not. Despite having said something that is true about the object, the ground for that truth is not presented by my words. I may state a truth, but — to promulgate a verbal form for the intended distinction — I do not present a fact.

One further point about CONTRAD-CONTRAR. In dealing with the shift from 'some gods' to 'all gods', I explained Socrates's interest in replacing the existential by the universal quantifier. Where this condition is satisfied, we have the same kind of effect, relative to cases where it is not. The contradictory of some general term might be taken as the disjunction of contraries, and hence as linked to a (higher-order) existential quantification. So the elimination of non-contrary contradictories is the elimination of a disjunction, and an existential.

NEC & SUFF. This condition is that any (complex) general OBJ notion must be such that unpacking its complexity will involve the specification of conditions which any instance must satisfy, and which, jointly, are sufficient for the truth of the corresponding ascription. *Prima facie*, NEC & SUFF seems incontrovertible. Suppose that some item a is F , and that some other item b is F , and suppose that what is true of a is the same as what is true of b . If the truth in a 's case rests on the fact that a is (say) G , H , and I , while the truth in b 's case rests on the fact that b is J , K , and L , doesn't it follow, contrary to hypothesis, that a and b are not the same? Cases where the antecedent is satisfied, and in which we would say both ' a is F ' and ' b is F ' are true, would be cases where ' F ' is a pure homonym, e.g. 'bank'. But this is also a case in which 'the same' is not, in the relevant sense, said of a and b .

Are there univocal terms violating NEC & SUFF? Wittgensteinians hold family resemblance terms to be univocals for which necessary conditions are lacking: sometimes they (truly) apply because of G , H , and I , sometimes

⁽¹¹⁾ This difference between grounds and truth-conditions is pertinent to the debate about whether an act is holy because it is loved, or vice versa. I will return to the matter shortly.

because of J, K, and L. Eliciting positive inconsistency is easy. Q: 'You say that a is F because it is G, H, and I?' A: 'Yes.' Q: 'And you agree that b is none of these?' A: 'I do.' Q: 'Then b is not the same as a?' A: 'That seems to be true.' Q: 'But didn't you say that b is F?' A: 'I did.' Q: 'So, for you, b is both the same as and different than a.'

The net result is that the various conditions, qua OBJ conditions, are anchored in the demand for definiteness. The suggested reading thus winds the otherwise loose filaments into a single braid.⁽¹²⁾

4. *Positive inconsistency and ordinary language*

As indicated for BIV, ordinary language does not generate a clear positive inconsistency. The same goes for all the conditions.

BIV. Suppose we encounter a problem case for a \sim BIV notion. How do we describe Bill, our superannuated hippie? Not as being both bald and not bald; rather, as not being definitely bald. Or, in conjunctive form, we describe him as not being definitely bald nor definitely failing to be bald.

EFF. Similarly, for a notion which is not EFF, we would say, of a problematic case, that we cannot tell whether the property is exemplified or whether it is not exemplified. This, again, isn't the same as saying that the property is and is not exemplified.

NON-REL. Take the case of the moth, large in comparison with the midge, small relative to the mouse. How, in a conjunctive sentence, might we describe the moth in the matter of size? 'The moth is large and it is also small'. 'Also' signals some difference. So again we do not have positive inconsistency.

NEC & SUFF. When this condition is violated, the conjunctive claim would be too complex to look much like a positive inconsistency. 'This', we might say, 'is a game for being H, I, J, not for being J, K, L, though

⁽¹²⁾ A seventh condition, Discursive Definability (DD), might just be mentioned. Socrates requests of Euthyphro: 'Tell me...what this form itself is' (6e). (There are at least ten occurrences of 'tell' and 'say' in the portion of the dialogue including 5 and 6.) The idea is that OBJ notions are verbally decomposable in terms of other OBJ notions. How might failure of DD lead to informal inconsistency? Subjects might find themselves saying that a pertinent notion is something (since it is exemplified) and also (since it cannot be said what it is) that it isn't something. See footnote 4.

being J, K, L, not H, I, J is what makes that a game'.⁽¹³⁾

CONTRAD-CONTRAR. Here, the generation of even a positive inconsistency is strained. When the condition is violated, the attribution of the contradictory of some predicate is and is not a specification of a truth. It is the specification of a truth, in that what is said is true. It is not the specification of a truth, in that one who ascribed the contradictory does not present a fact about the item described. So here, on the positive level, the closest we get to the look of contradiction involves a fairly plain ambiguity in the notion of 'truth'.

On the reading I oppose, Socrates has to be charged with moving illicitly from positive to logical inconsistency. But, in truth, there is not even positive inconsistency here — providing we observe the linguistic niceties. I mentioned that Euthyphro never states something of the form ' $p \ \& \ \sim p$ '. We can now see this textual fact in another light. It is not that Socrates takes the two separately elicited conjuncts, and combines them. Rather, there is (implicit) recognition that if the conjunctive form were used, not even a positive inconsistency would arise. Given that we can identify the logical particles, 'a is large & a is not large' looks, syntactically, like a contradiction. But 'a is large & a is also not large' does not. The form of the last conjunction is more closely matched by 'a is large & a is quite large'.

Under the circumstances, we must look quite differently at the elicitation of positive inconsistency. Socrates has to be (implicitly) criticising the locutions which do not involve syntactic inconsistency, e.g. 'a is not definitely large'. He has to be saying that our rationality would be defective if our OBJ-grasp were too tolerant of these kinds of claims.

⁽¹³⁾ Doesn't Wittgenstein establish that NEC & SUFF is simply no condition of OBJ? Let me ask, in defense of Socrates, whether there are sufficient conditions for applying a family resemblance term stateable independently of the other (complex) conditions relevant, on other occasions, to the truth of such an ascription. Aren't family resemblance notions by nature such that there are disjoint sets of sufficient conditions? Mustn't the idea of such disjoint sets therefore be understood by the subject who applies it in one case? Wittgensteinians poke fun at the idea that what the various cases have in common is like what the links-of-a-chain have in common. But constituting the same chain is a feature of these links. Otherwise, the chain would not span the distance it spans. We have links-of-a-chain, not links which, as it happens, make up a chain. But aren't linked links different, relevantly to the analogy, from linkable (but separate) links? The affirmative answer points in a direction which tends to weaken the radical Wittgensteinian repudiation of NEC & SUFF. Compare Socrates's discussion of male and female health and strength at *Meno* 72.

5. *Definiteness: Logic and Metaphysics*

The requirement is definiteness. OBJ goes along with definiteness. Is this sheer Socratic dogmatism? In responding to the plea for an impure reading, I spoke of a *rapprochement* between logic and rationality. The best *rapprochement* would be one that, without softening our understanding of logic, brought the pair into coincidence. But though the thesis that the world's nature could be determined on logical grounds alone is too much to credit, some of the OBJ conditions *have* been defended in the literature in the name of logic.

BIV. Michael Dummett argues that observational predicates, because of their vagueness, 'infect [our language] with inconsistency'.⁽¹⁴⁾ Since Dummett defends a thesis which looks like Socrates's, that should at least give us pause before indicting Socrates with logical naïveté.

NON-GEN. Intuitionists do not allow use of 'some' without the ability to produce a sample. Since ultimate justification for asserting the existential claim lies, it is held, in the truth of the embedded open sentence of some individual, unless such an instance can be produced one would therefore be making an indefinite assertion and admitting that a more definite one might not be makeable. This is to violate the intuition that the facts are definite. Suppose an object is coloured. It cannot however be only coloured. It has to be, e.g., blue. Obviously, for Platonic purposes, it will not do to read the requirement for definiteness along intuitionist lines as the requirement that the specific claim underlying the generalised one actually be producible. The position is that the generalised form is made true by the (definite) fact.

And Leibniz, relevantly to NON-REL, argues that relational claims are reducible to non-relational ones.

Some of these arguments lean towards the logical side, others have the metaphysical slant. Can the conditions be unified? One avenue enlists Bertrand Russell's distinction between factual assertions which state (genuine) facts, and those which do not. Russell denies that there are general, or negative, or disjunctive, facts. Without denying that an assertion of 'The sun is not shining' is true, Russell would deny that its narrowly linguistic truth conditions, given by the relevant instance of "p" is true iff p, cor-

⁽¹⁴⁾ 'Wang's Paradox', in *Truth and Other Enigmas*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1978, p. 268.

relate with any fact.⁽¹⁵⁾ In the course of the discussion, *à propos* the positive contradiction linked to violation of CONTRAD-CONTRAR, I claimed that while 'a is not red' may be used to state something which is *true*, it might yet be denied to state *a truth or to present a fact* about a. The idea here is obvious — and again links up with the demand for definiteness. Making the claim true is a's having some determinate colour; the negative claim is an indirect specification of that fact, and, as such, has about it an element of indefiniteness of the sort attaching to assertions quantified existentially. While I shall not connect this point to the dizzying discussion of whether acts are holy because they are loved, a connection could exist. Mightn't Socrates be relying on the fact that the definition of holiness which Euthyphro offers does not tell us what a holy act is qua holy? What about NON-REL? Again, one could see Leibniz as arguing, along Russellian lines, that there are relational assertions but no relational facts.⁽¹⁶⁾

I do not advance these claims on their philosophical merits. Their presentation is motivated by the indefensibility of the reading of the *Euthyphro* which welds LC to OBJ. To conclude in this spirit, I suggest two models, from the modern period, each of which might be conscripted to illuminate the case. On the first, Cartesian, model, the argumentation for the OBJ conditions takes the form of depth analysis; on the second, Kantian, model, of (inverted) antinomian reasoning.

The Cartesian model may be represented by one of its twentieth-century incarnations, Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. Let me arrange a hasty marriage between the Socratic demand for the OBJ conditions to be satisfied and the Tractarian conception of the essentials of language as a world-representative medium.

On the *Tractatus*-view, definiteness is a constitutive demand of linguistic (representational) well-formedness. What lacks definiteness violates a minimum of representational adequacy. Now Wittgenstein's well-known claim

(¹⁵) Note that Dummett ('Wang's Paradox', *ibid.*) infers from the result quoted above that 'there are no phenomenal properties'. Russell's point is of course far stronger than Dummett's, since Russell decides on non-factuality without relying on any putative inconsistency.

(¹⁶) This suggests that the fact that in each of the early dialogues a different virtue is examined does not necessarily show that the Socratic idea of a definition is, as such, formal or abstract. Socrates might subscribe to the thesis of the unity of virtue. If so, each of the dialogues may specify only part of the good; and that means that each specifies virtue only indefinitely. On this reading, the conditions of OBJ, fully satisfied, have a unique ontological content. The thesis of the unity of virtue, in the relevant sense, is argued by Terry Penner, 'The Unity of Virtue', *Philosophical Review*, LXXXII, 1973.

here is that 'all the propositions of our everyday language, just as they stand, are in perfect logical order'.⁽¹⁷⁾ But doesn't everyday language involve considerable indefiniteness in the form of vagueness? The Tractarian answer is that vagueness disappears on analysis. An argument to the effect that unless definiteness were present at some level, our ordinary representational activities would break down, is given at *Tractatus* 2.0211: 'If the world had no substance, then whether a proposition had sense would depend on whether another proposition was true'.⁽¹⁸⁾

What about the Kantian? According to Kant, our ordinary conception of things involves fundamental indeterminacies. His, by contrast with that of the philosophers of the Cartesian tradition, is a metaphysics of indeterminacy. In the Antinomies chapter of the first *Critique* he argues that the kind of determinacy demanded by Cartesians leads to insoluble problems. If so, the elimination of indeterminacy requires switching representational frames. We cannot have determinacy if our ordinary conditions of representation are honoured. This faintly echoes what I take to be the Socratic point, and gives it more than a merely rhetorical edge. To be sure, some (Kant, for instance) would turn the point on its head: the unswerving demand for those conditions to be satisfied is itself what nullifies our ordinary view. Might this reflect one of the motives behind Plato's fashioning of an ideal world in which alone fully rational activity is possible?⁽¹⁹⁾

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, B.C., CANADA

⁽¹⁷⁾ *Tractatus* 5.5563. I quote from the D.F. Pears-B.F. McGuinness translation of the *Tractatus*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963.

⁽¹⁸⁾ I have analysed 2.0211 in a fashion conformable with the claim here made in 'Tractatus: Monism or Pluralism?', *Mind*, LXXXIX, 1980.

⁽¹⁹⁾ This paper was written during my tenure as a Canada Research Fellow at the University of British Columbia. Thanks to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.