

enjoyed it. This affirmation of autonomy in the fiction in fact was hiding the denial of autonomy in real life. This is a method of objectification through affirming someone's autonomy. Langton concludes by saying that at least sometimes pornography is objectifying women in this way. This is a dangerous type of objectification because, through its autonomy-affirmation, 'it makes abuse easier, hiding it, and hindering escape.' (240)

The main problem with this argument is that it is not clear if in *Deep Throat* we have a genuine instance of autonomy-affirmation. Langton mentions briefly this problem but she thinks that there can be such instances. But it seems to me that in *Deep Throat* we have a clear case of autonomy-denial in both senses. The attribution of autonomy is a false attribution, as Langton herself acknowledges. Later we find out in her book that it was a false attribution. Thus I think it is doubtful if there is such a pornography (genuinely affirming women's autonomy and, in the same time, denying it). It is nevertheless interesting how a false attribution of autonomy can help to hide autonomy-denial and make abuse easier (according to MacKinnon the film actually legitimated real life autonomy-denials, provoking throat rapes). Moreover, Marchiano had problems in protesting against her abuse. Her book of protest, *Ordeal*, was sold as pornography.

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Truth and Ontology, by Trenton Merricks. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, 202 pp.

The main thesis of *Truth and Ontology* has been described by previous reviewers as 'the radical conclusion that what is true does not depend on what there is' (J. Schaffer, 'Truth and Fundamentality: On Merrick's Truth and Ontology,' *Philosophical Books*, 49, 4, 2008), and as the 'bold and interesting view ... that we should give up the view that truth depends on being. (So the book could have been called *Truth without Ontology*.)' (B. Caplan, 'Truth and Ontology,' *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*.) I disagree. Unfortunately for those in the mood

for radical views, Merricks' thesis is *not* that truth does not depend on being, but rather that truth does not depend *substantially* on being. This qualification is crucial, as we will see in a moment. The thesis that truth does not depend *substantially* on being is very interesting, but far from radical or bold. In fact, it is a thesis that has been defended by many critics of truthmaker theory, such as D. Lewis, J. Melia, and J. Dodds among others. Needless to say, not everyone who believes Merricks' conclusion will be convinced by Merricks' particular arguments for it, some of which I will discuss in what follows.

Let us first clarify Merricks' overall position. Most people, including Merricks himself, agree that whether it is true that Obama is smart depends on being: that Obama is smart is true because Obama is smart — if Obama were not smart, it would not be true that Obama is smart. This is what Merricks calls 'trivial' dependence of truth on being. What Merricks and others deny is that there is a more substantive dependence, as would be if *truthmaker theory* (which Merricks calls simply '*Truthmaker*') were true. According to truthmaker theory, every true proposition p is *made true* by some particular entity e that *necessitates* p — i.e. an entity e such that it is not possible that e exists and p fails to be true. This implies that most contingent propositions (that Obama is smart) are made true by entities of a special sort, typically *state of affairs* (like *Obama's being smart*) or *tropes* (like *Obama's smartness*), since ordinary individuals (like Obama himself) are unsuited to play this role. That is to say, unlike the trivial dependence of truth on being that everyone accepts, the substantial dependence postulated by truthmaker theory implies the adoption of an ontology of states of affairs or tropes. This is a very straightforward way to appreciate the difference between the kind of dependence on being that Merricks accepts and the one that he rejects. The central target of the book is therefore the controversial *truthmaker theory*, not the truism that truth somehow depends on being.

Although the aim of the book is to refute truthmaker theory, Merricks should in the first place be credited for the work done in elucidating his target. In fact, one of the main contributions of the book is, in my opinion, Merricks' positive proposal about how truthmaker theory should be understood. One of the main unresolved problems within truthmaker theory is what exactly the truthmaking relation is. What does it take for an entity e to be the truthmaker for p — i.e. for p to be true in virtue of e ? Part of the answer is more or less clear and

has already been mentioned above: in order to be a truthmaker for p , e must necessitate p . But although some may think that necessitation is all there is to truthmaking (and thus, that my left hand is a truthmaker for ‘ $2 + 2 = 4$ ’), a consensus is emerging that something else is necessary. What is this something else? Merricks’ proposal is as follows (see especially sections 2.II and 2.III): in order for e to be a truthmaker for p , p must be *about* e — i.e. e must be the *subject matter* of p . This is a very interesting proposal, one that deserves thorough exploration and assessment in comparison with alternative proposals. The notion of aboutness as used by Merricks is admittedly obscure and in need of further clarification, but so are the notions that feature in rival accounts: the notions of essence, ontological dependence, and explanation.

Why does Merricks reject truthmaker theory? Although the book provides us with a battery of arguments that work together against truthmaker theory, I think we can recognize a major and central line of thought. The idea is this: truthmaker theory is eventually unable to meet one of its allegedly primary goals, namely to help us tell legitimate ontological positions from those that are ‘just cheating.’ In effect, truthmaker theory is sometimes considered by its proponents as imposing a constraint that ‘good’ ontologies can meet whereas ‘bad’ ontologies cannot. *Presentism* — the view that only the present is real — is an example of the kind of ontological doctrine that is seldom thought of as not passing the truthmaker test: if there is no sense in which dinosaurs exist, as presentists say, what grounds the truth of the proposition that dinosaurs once roamed the earth? This is how the ‘truthmaker objection to presentism’ begins. Now, Merricks’ main argument is as follows: if truthmaker theory is going to play this role in philosophical argumentation, it should be possible to find truthmakers for negative existential truths (like the proposition that there are no hobbits) and universal generalizations (like the proposition that all ravens are black). Indeed, for a truthmaker theorist who is arguing against presentism, it would be inappropriate to step back and say that propositions of these kinds are exceptions to the theory — that they are true without having truthmakers. That would be just an invitation for the presentist to do the same: if exceptions are allowed, why could not propositions about the past be among them? So the truthmaker theorist must be a *truthmaker maximalist*, i.e. she must hold that *every* proposition whatsoever has a truthmaker. But, as Merricks proceeds to argue, the most promising strategies for finding truth-

makers for negative existential truths and universal generalizations face serious problems, one of which (Merricks discusses other problems that these strategies face — given the dialectical pressure to accept maximalism —, which he also regards as good reasons for rejecting truthmaker theory. See especially section 3.4) is that they can plausibly be replicated by presentists and other deemed cheaters. Merricks conclusion is then that truthmaker theory does not accomplish what he takes to be its primary goal: to ‘catch cheaters.’

Before addressing some more specific arguments, it is worth trying to evaluate Merricks’ argument at this high level of generality. I think that even if the argument is correct, it does not show that truthmaker theory is false — that there is no substantial dependence of truth on being. All the argument shows is that truthmaker theory cannot do the job of ‘catching cheaters’ — i.e. that it is not a litmus test that allows us to tell the good ontological proposals from the bad. Merricks thinks of this job as a primary motivation for truthmaker theory, and as a matter of historical fact he may be right; but it seems to me that even if the original proponents of truthmaker theory had this motivation in mind, the theory has independent interest and can easily be dissociated from it. The theory may well be taken by its own value, as a view about how the world makes truths true. Relatedly, it seems that most contemporary truthmaker theorists will be happy to acknowledge that truthmaker theory is a controversial bit of philosophical theory, rather than a neutral truism that anyone could use in order to assess different philosophical theories. (Remember that, as noted above, truthmaker theory goes well beyond the trivial claim that truth somehow depends on being. This latter claim *is* a truism, and any philosophical theory that denies it is initially implausible). Thus, the failure to rule out views like presentism need not count as a reason against truthmaker theory. (In fact, one might think of this failure as a positive outcome for truthmaker theory: given that presentism is a respectable and at least not trivially false philosophical theory, it is a good thing for truthmaker theory that there is no immediate conflict with it.) Released from the dialectical pressures imposed by the cheater-hunting project, a truthmaker theorist may well deny that true negative existentials have truthmakers. And if she decided to look for truthmakers, she could be less scrupulous about them than would be appropriate if she were devoted to cheater-catching.

So far I have emphasized an aspect of truthmaker theory in virtue of which it must be considered as a substantial philosophical theory rather than a trivial truth: its implicit commitment to an ontology of states of affairs (or some other suitable kind of fancy philosophical entity, like ‘non-transferable’ tropes). But since Merricks thinks of ruling out presentism (and other allegedly ‘bad’ ontologies) as a primary motivation for truthmaker theory, he thinks that a second set of substantive metaphysics should be built into the theory (see section 2.III): a ‘well-articulated’ version of truthmaker theory should include a view about which properties are acceptable as constituents of truthmaker states of affairs, and which are not. Notice that a presentist could try to ground the truth of ‘dinosaurs once roamed the earth’ by pointing to the state of affairs of *the world being such that dinosaurs once roamed the earth*. In order to block this strategy from the outset, truthmaker theory has to be supplemented with a reason for excluding ‘suspicious properties,’ properties like *being such that dinosaurs once roamed the earth* — otherwise truthmaker theory would have no purchase in the business of telling the good ontologies from the bad. I think Merricks is right to emphasize that it is a substantive metaphysical view about properties that does the work in excluding ‘bad’ ontologies, and that issues like the ‘truthmaker objection of presentism’ ultimately depend on the question of which properties are allowed to do truthmaker work. But again, it seems that truthmaker theory itself is in fact independent from its use as a tool for assessing philosophical views. A truthmaker theorist may hold the theory for its intrinsic interest as a view about how truths relate to the world, independently of any sanitizing project in ontology. And in particular, a truthmaker theorist may well welcome presentism and properties like *being such that dinosaurs once roamed the earth*.

In my opinion, one of the most interesting and controversial contributions of the book is the whole of chapter 4, where Merricks discusses truthmaker theory’s ‘cousin,’ as he calls it: the view that truth supervenes on being (*TSB*). This is the view that no two possible worlds differ on which propositions are true about them without also differing on which objects exist in them, or what properties and relations those objects instantiate. Merricks’ discussion of this view tends to highlight the family connection with truthmaker theory, which is of course real: like truthmaker theory, *TSB* is motivated by the intuition that what is true depends on how the world is; as with truthmaker theory, there have been attempts to use *TSB* as litmus test

to tell the bad ontologies from the good (see for instance Sider 2001, ch. 2); and finally, *TSB* seems to be a fallback position where truthmaker theorists can retreat in order to avoid the problem of finding truthmakers for true negative existentials. But I think it is vitally important to emphasize as well the difference between *TSB* and truthmaker theory: unlike truthmaker theory, *TSB* does not require the adoption of an ontology of states of affairs or tropes — the ontology of ordinary individuals and their properties is sufficient. This alone makes *TSB* much more palatable to philosophers of different persuasions. In fact *TSB* is arguably no stronger than the kind of trivial dependence of truth on reality that everyone accepts.

TSB has been subscribed by many critics of truthmaker theory (most notably, David Lewis), for whom truthmaker theory is an over-reaction to the initial intuition that truth is grounded on how the world is. But it is interesting to ask whether *TSB* is by itself sufficient to capture that intuition. Merricks argues it is not, and I think he is right about this. As I mentioned above, there seems to be an emerging consensus among truthmaker theorists that there is more to truthmaking than mere necessitation. For similar reasons, mere supervenience seems equally insufficient. Is it possible to strengthen *TSB* so that it yields a more substantive kind of dependence of truth on being, without thereby collapsing with truthmaker theory? As I see it, whether this middle ground exists is one of the most interesting questions in the area. Merricks argues that it does not: any attempt to satisfactorily complement *TSB* will lead us to truthmaker theory itself.

Before concluding this review, I would like to briefly comment on the contents of the chapters not discussed so far, some of which provide additional arguments against truthmaker theory. The most interesting in this respect is chapter 6, in which Merricks addresses the relationship between presentism and truthmaker theory. As mentioned above, he thinks that a version of truthmaker theory worth its ink will be incompatible with presentism. But Merricks argues that presentism is true and that truthmaker theory is therefore false. Chapter 7 provides yet another argument against truthmaker theory: that no acceptable version of the theory can satisfactorily explain the truth of subjunctive conditionals such as ‘if the glass had been struck, it would have shattered.’ Chapter 5 is concerned with truthmaker theory and modal truths. Although very interesting in itself, this chapter is irrelevant to the general dialectics of the book, since Mer-

ricks does not think that modal truths impose any special problems on truthmaker theorists. Finally, chapter 8 argues against the correspondence theory of truth, and also against any other theory according to which *being true* is a relation between a truth and that in virtue of which it is true.

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Fiction and Fictionalism, by Mark Sainsbury. London: Routledge, 2010, 243 pp.

If there are no fictional characters, how do we explain thought and discourse about them? And if there are fictional characters, what are they like? Mark Sainsbury's 'Fictional and Fictionalism' (henceforth F&F) argues in favour of an irrealist view according to which there are no such things as fictional objects, be they understood as nonexistent, abstract or merely possible entities.

After an introductory first chapter on the nature of fiction and the different attitudes that are connected with it, such as pretending, imagining and make-believe, and the different emotional responses generated by fictional works, in chapter two Sainsbury addresses some of the main motivations for realism about fictional objects, according to which Sherlock Holmes, Anna Karenina and the like are entities belonging to our reality. The chapter focuses on a central motivation for a realist account of fictional characters, provided by fictional names: fictional names appear to be plainly meaningful, and yet, can a name be meaningful if it does not have a bearer? If the answer is negative, then realism for fictional characters seems to be called for. This last motivation is challenged by Sainsbury's semantics originally presented in *Reference without Referents* (2005), according to which fictional names are meaningful but have no bearers; on such an analysis, a sentence like

- (1) Sherlock Holmes smokes a pipe