R.N. Johnson and M. Smith (eds.), *Passions and Projections: Themes from the Philosophy of Simon Blackburn*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), xx + 276 pages. ISBN: 978-0-19-872317-2. Hardcover: $65.

The range and influence of Simon Blackburn's work is reflected in the thematic variety of the contributions to this excellent volume edited by Robert N. Johnson and Michael Smith. The quality of the essays is consistently high, and together they provide a comprehensive, in-depth treatment of Blackburn's many original and controversial ideas. The book is divided in two parts: Metaphysics and Epistemology (eight chapters), and Metaethics and Moral Psychology (six chapters). I will discuss one chapter below, but first let me offer a brief overview of the other essays.

Louise Antony explores the relation between her position and Blackburn's when it comes to giving an account of folk psychology, and suggests that their main disagreement concerns the need for a "language of thought" hypothesis. Helen Beebee compares Blackburn's Humean account of causation, on which causal claims express inferential commitments, with a different projectivist view, proposed by Frank Ramsey and Huw Price, according to which causal discourse encodes the epistemic standpoint of a deliberating agent. Frank Jackson uses a possible worlds framework to give an account of the content of singular thought, a topic explored by Blackburn in *Spreading the Word* (Oxford University Press, 1984). Carrie Jenkins argues that quasi-realists about any domain of thought need to account for the possibility of knowledge in that domain, and that her own explanation-based epistemology might be useful in addressing this challenge. Richard Kraut defends a projectivist account of ordinary claims about what artworks express, on which such claims do not ascribe genuine properties, but rather invite the audience to experience artworks in certain ways. Rae Langton addresses a question raised by Blackburn in "Filling in Space" (*Analysis*, Vol. 50, No. 2, March 1990, pp. 62-65): how can we know the categorical bases of dispositions, given that science only deals with dispositional properties? She suggests that an answer might be provided by certain contextualist accounts of knowledge, or by views that treat some properties as both categorical and dispositional. Cynthia MacDonald argues that primitivism about color—the view that colors are simple, irreducible, perceiver-independent properties—is preferable to both response-dependence views and projectivism.

The essays in Part II concern Blackburn's quasi-realist expressivism about normative discourse. Jamie Dreier argues that quasi-realism has an advantage over normative realism when it comes to explaining the connection between normative judgment and motivation. At the same time, Dreier also

suggests that there might be no meaningful difference between quasi-realism and the kind of realism defended by T.M. Scanlon and others, which purports to eschew problematic metaphysical commitments. Allan Gibbard, another prominent supporter of quasi-realism, explores one point of disagreement between him and Blackburn: whether normative thoughts are *sui generis* mental states of norm-acceptance, as Gibbard has argued, or they can be assimilated to familiar kinds of attitudes. Terry Horgan and Mark Timmons discuss a long-standing problem for quasi-realism: how to account for the possibility of deep moral error. The solution they propose is to combine an expressivist account of ordinary fallibility claims with the rejection of certain realist theses about the possibility of error, interpreted as metaethical, non-moral claims. Peter Railton argues that contemporary psychology and even some of David Hume's ideas put pressure on the distinction between 'Apollonian' and 'Dionysian' mental states, which is at the center of Blackburn's *Ruling Passions* (Oxford University Press, 1998): desires are not mere passions but have a cognitive side as well, while beliefs have a dynamic functional role rather than being inert representations. In the last two chapters, Mark Schroeder defends a new version of the higher-order attitude response to the Frege-Geach problem, and R. Jay Wallace argues that quasi-realists cannot account for the role of normative reasons in practical deliberation.

The chapter I will focus on is Huw Price's 'From Quasi-Realism to Global Expressivism and Back Again?'. This chapter is perhaps the most useful for understanding Blackburn's place in the current philosophical landscape. Critics often complain that Blackburn's views have become elusive, after too many refinements over the years. Readers who share these concerns should look to Price's essay for a particularly illuminating discussion of Blackburn's central philosophical commitments.

Blackburn's metaethical quasi-realism has two main components: an expressivist account of normative discourse, according to which normative claims express desire-like mental states, and a minimalist account of truth and other related notions, e.g. fact, belief, or description. Minimalism allows Blackburn to endorse many realist-sounding claims. For instance, he accepts that it is true that genocide is wrong, or that "Genocide is wrong" describes a fact, taking such claims to be merely rehearsing the verdict that genocide is wrong. However, minimalism also seems to be in tension with expressivism. If Blackburn accepts that normative claims are truth-apt, descriptive, etc., what is it that he *denies* about normative discourse? As Price puts it, minimalism undermines the traditional *bifurcation thesis* associated with expressivism: it seems to leave expressivists unable draw a contrast between normative discourse and regions of discourse that are genuinely descriptive or representational.

Price argues that, far from posing a challenge to the stability of Blackburn's project, minimalism should be seen as strengthening expressivism. This is because it leads to a 'global expressivism,' according to which semantic notions like truth and reference do not play a substantive explanatory role in *any* domain of discourse. More precisely, Price encourages Blackburn to endorse a 'two-tier pragmatism': first, a general pragmatist story about the genealogy and social function of notions such as truth, reference, or assertion—a story that would be applicable even to scientific or ordinary descriptive discourse; and then, different functional stories about specific vocabularies, including an account of the attitude-expressive function of normative discourse.

In his piece 'Apologia pro Vita Sua,' which opens the volume together with the editors' 'Introduction,' Blackburn expresses unease with Price's proposal. However, it is not clear whether the two disagree about anything substantive. First of all, Blackburn does reject an inflationary conception of truth, factuality, description, etc. for all domains of discourse. Moreover, by endorsing minimalism as an account of the meaning of ordinary terms like 'true' and 'fact,' Blackburn denies that these notions could be used intelligibly in a more robust metaphysical sense. (This idea is often ignored by Blackburn's philosophical interlocutors, including by some contributors to this volume. For instance, Jenkins attributes to Blackburn the claim that there are no normative facts, except in a "minimalist" sense (p. 65), while Wallace bluntly asserts: "Simon Blackburn believes that there are no mind-independent normative facts." (p. 246) These exegetical claims do not do justice to Blackburn's view. If we take minimalism seriously, there is no sense in which Blackburn rejects the existence of objective normative facts: his metaphysical commitments are as robust as they can be.)

Price and Blackburn are in agreement, then, with respect to the scope and ambitions of minimalism. What they disagree about is whether we should call someone who endorses this overarching minimalist framework a 'global expressivist.' Blackburn is unhappy with the label: it obscures, he says, important functional differences between various domains of discourse, particularly between normative and ordinary descriptive discourse. A key theme of his work is that the best naturalistic account of the function of normative concepts does not involve normative facts in a causal-explanatory role, while the best scientific explanation of why we use concepts for physical objects and properties assigns a central role to physical facts. So there is, for Blackburn, a sense in which ordinary descriptive discourse is representational, and normative discourse is not—namely, a naturalistic functional sense.

Again, though, this is something that Price too accepts. In *Expressivism, Pragmatism and Representationalism* (Cambridge University Press, 2013) and other works, Price has defended the idea that ordinary descriptive concepts are representational in a narrow functional sense: they have the function of tracking facts in our environment. Or, to use his terminology, such concepts are *e-representational*. (The *e* comes from 'external'.) Moreover, at the end of the present essay, Price acknowledges that something resembling the traditional bifurcation thesis of expressivism can be preserved in functional terms: some regions of discourse are e-representational, while others, including normative discourse, are not.

Is 'global expressivist' an appropriate label for someone who endorses the broad minimalism sketched above but also relies on a functional notion of representation to distinguish between regions of discourse? This strikes me as an insignificant verbal issue. What matters is that Blackburn and Price have converged on a distinctive and fertile philosophical view: a general minimalism about the metaphysical and semantic notions that are typically used in stating realism about various domains, accompanied by functional pluralism at a deeper explanatory level. This view allows them to make good on our commitments to truth and objectivity, in the normative domain and elsewhere, while also isolating the sense in which certain regions of discourse are not in the business of representing facts.

Camil Golub

Rutgers University – Newark

camil.golub@nyu.edu