1. “The New Riddle of Induction”

Consider Goodman’s grue/bleen example:

\[ X \text{ is grue iff } X \text{ is green and observed before time } t \text{ or blue and not so observed.} \]
\[ X \text{ is bleen iff } X \text{ is blue and observed before time } t \text{ or green and not so observed.} \]

And the reversed definitions of green and blue:

\[ X \text{ is green iff } X \text{ is grue and observed before time } t \text{ or bleen and not so observed.} \]
\[ X \text{ is blue iff } X \text{ is bleen and observed before time } t \text{ or grue and not so observed.} \]

Regarding grue and bleen as genuine properties/predicates leads to absurdity: the absurdity that the same empirical observations could equally support both a reliable hypothesis that all emeralds are green and an unexpected hypothesis that all emeralds are grue. But denying the ontological/semantic statuses of grue and bleen leads to another absurdity: that we have no good reason to do so.

A plausible response to this riddle comes from appealing to the distinction between elite properties and non-elite ones. Here “elite” is introduced as a label for properties that are theory-guiding (p. 290). And “theory-guiding” is a second-order normative property such that any first-order property which instantiates it should guide our theoretical attitudes and activities such as forming beliefs, performing inductive inferences, giving explanations, and so on (pp. 290-291).

2. Ideal Realism

Ideal realism about any topic should consist in three claims.

1) The ontological claim: There are Xs as such.

2) The normative/value-theoretic claim: Xs have objective values.
   • In Dasgupta’s words, Xs should not be “normatively inert”.
     (Roughly speaking, normativity here include phenomena like rationality,
reasons, oughts and shoulds, right and wrong, and so on.)

- This an externalist principle. Carefully distinguish it from the internalist claim about human mental states such as normative judgments, motivations, and so on. (p. 292)

- Being theory-guiding is a way of having objective (epistemic) values.
  - Normative epistemology. (p. 291)

3) The epistemic/cognitivist/semantic claim: Knowledge about Xs could be acquired through respectable, non-obscure means (e.g. perception, inference, memory, testimony, intuition, etc.).

- This claim is sometimes called a semantic claim. That’s to say, utterances involving Xs must express beliefs and be apt for truth and falsity. (p. 313)

Strictly speaking, only the first claim is essential for robust/pure realism. For instance, agnostic theism and Schopenhauer’s moral realism (?) may dispense with the semantic principle, and Moore’s non-naturalist metaethical realism may dispense with the value-theoretic principle (pp. 294-295), etc. It is noteworthy that Dasgupta’s paper has nothing to do with the epistemic/semantic claim (p. 284).

3. The anti-realist upshot

There is no explanation of why elite properties are theory-guiding. The demand for explanation here should be understood in a metaphysical sense. According to Dasgupta, epistemological explanations are highly irrelevant in this context (pp. 292-293). While logical explanations of this fact get things the wrong way round, since this fact can hardly be a fundamental one (p. 293).

Consider, for instance, a specific gloss of the claim that naturalness is theory-guiding: “natural beliefs are better than unnatural beliefs.” (p. 295) Dasgupta proposes two potential explanatory strategies for it, and opposes them respectively.

- The first explanatory strategy: We can explain why naturalness is theory-guiding by appeal to the constitutive nature of the notions involved in this claim (i.e. belief, betterness, naturalness)
Dasgupta’s general objection: We cannot explain why we should prefer non-gruesome notions (e.g. belief, betterness, naturalness) over their gruesome counterparts (e.g. schmelief, greterness, graturalness).

The second explanatory strategy: We can explain why naturalness is theory-guiding by appeal to the connection between naturalness and other notions (e.g. nomic notions, metaphysical notions, semantic notions).

Dasgupta’s general objection: No matter which notion we choose to explain why natural belief is theory-guiding, we can replace this notion with its gruesome counterpart and then present an explanation of the claim that gruesome belief is theory-guiding.

4. Anti-realism

The positive claim about the anti-realist explanation: Green is elite (for us) because of facts about our interests and cultural history.

The semantics of the utterance of “x is elite”. (p. 313)

The negative claim about the realist explanation: Green’s being elite cannot be explained (in the objective sense) by green’s being natural.

5. The only way of avoiding the problem of missing value

Appeal to perceptual acquaintance.

Realism as idealism (a promising view)

This strategy cannot be applied to every property. (Really?)

Do we have perceptual acquaintance with causal power? Consider a putative theory about naturalness according to which objects that instantiate a natural property $F$ must exhibit the same causal power in some respect.