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## Reply to Lynch, Miscevic, and Stojanovic

Mark Richard

My thanks to Michael, Nenad, and Isidora for their trenchant and helpful criticisms, from which I've learned a great deal. In what follows I haven't taken up all of the very good points each of them makes; instead, I confine discussion to their central criticisms.

### Lynch

Lynch poses a problem for the relativism I sketch in *When Truth Gives Out* (WT, henceforth); as he observes, it is a version of a problem any relativist view faces.

The relativism I defend holds that though we share a common notion of wealth, our individual perspectives may determine different extensions for this common notion. Sharing a single notion of wealth, we each say the same thing when we say that Mary is rich; since the extension of the notion *wealth* varies across perspectives, what we say is true or false only relative to a perspective.

I say that

1. When an agent judges that his belief that *p* is true and that those who differ about *p* are thus mistaken, he takes (the relevant aspect of) his perspective to be one that others ought to share.<sup>1</sup>

I think (and Lynch agrees) that a reflective relativist needs to endorse *something* along the lines of (1). For when I judge that your belief is in error while mine is not, I am claiming the epistemic higher ground. But if I am, epistemically, on higher ground than you, you should come up to my level. To deny this, one thinks, is to succumb to a sort of epistemic nihilism, on which it makes no difference what one believes.

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<sup>1</sup> Below I sometimes suppress the 'relevant aspect' qualification in principles like (1).

I also say that often when a claim  $p$  is only relatively true, there is no perspective independent fact or reason that justifies believing  $p$  instead of its denial. You and I (for example) may have different criteria for what it is to be a rich New Yorker. Neither of us need be irrational in adopting our own criteria as opposed to the other's; neither of us need be missing some information that would bring us to exchange our own criteria for the other's.<sup>2</sup> Lynch takes me to hold that this is, in fact, always the case –that is, he takes me to hold

2. If  $p$  is only relatively true, then no perspective independent consideration shows that a perspective that makes  $p$  true is epistemically better than one that makes  $p$  false.

Now, suppose I think Mary rich; suppose I take your belief that she is not rich to be mistaken. As a relativist, I may still grant that your belief is true relative to your perspective. Given that I accept (1) and think your belief mistaken, I should say

3. You ought to share (the relevant part of) my standards for assessing wealth.

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<sup>2</sup> When I speak of 'perspective independent reasons', I mean ones which are such that no matter what one's perspective, one would be irrational not to be moved by them (were they brought to one's attention). In a relativist framework, there are multiple notions of 'perspective independent reason' available, since it is open to a relativist to say that what is (ir)rational may to some extent vary across perspectives.

Write  $R(c, c', a)$  for *relative to the standards of rationality in perspective  $c$ , act  $a$  is rational for the agent of perspective  $c'$* . One notion of perspective independent reason –that intended in the text –is that of a reason  $r$  such that, for any perspective  $c$ , it's not the case that  $R(c, c, \text{to be unmoved by } r)$ . Besides this 'internal' notion of perspective independent reason, there are various 'external' notions –for example, where  $c^*$  is *my* perspective, there is the notion of a reason  $r$  such that, for any perspective  $c$ , it's not the case that  $R(c^*, c, \text{to be unmoved by } r)$ . Similar remarks are true of talk about what someone ought (epistemically speaking) to think or what it would be better for her to think.

Observe that it is thus possible to evaluate someone's rationality using 'internal' standards, while using 'external' standards in making normative judgments about what it would be best, epistemically, for the person to believe. This is relevant to the argument in the following paragraphs.

But given (2), it would seem that I *shouldn't* say (3). For surely (3) requires that there be something –some reason, fact, or consideration –that has, as Lynch puts it, "normative, ought-enforcing power on both of us." If there is such a consideration, that would be a perspective independent reason for adopting my standards for assessing wealth. But (2) tells us there is no such consideration.

I stand by both (1) and (a suitably weakened version of) (2). However, given the chance to exposit my view all over again, I would present (1) as an optional, derived principle. The principle from which (1) is derived is sufficient to secure the claim that relativism needn't lead to an epistemic nihilism.

To explain all this, let me momentarily switch examples. Suppose I am liberal about abortion and you are conservative: I judge that abortion in the first trimester is unrestrictedly permissible; you deny it. I think my belief true and that you have the wrong view on the matter. But I may grant –indeed, I do grant –that this is a difficult case, and there are reasons that support each of our views. I balance these reasons in one way, you balance them in another; this explains why we differ. In this case, I may well also think –indeed, I may also know –that there is nothing that you are ignorant of, and that you are not being irrational in balancing the reasons as you do.

How should we describe this sort of situation? If I really believe that abortion is permissible<sup>3</sup> --not just for me and mine, but for anyone –I must think that the way I balance the relevant considerations is better than balancing them in any way that would lead one to condemn abortion. The underlying principle here is not quite the same as (1), since the claim I am making is not deontological but axiological. The underlying principle is

4. When an agent judges that his belief that p is true and that those who differ about p are thus mistaken, he takes (the way reasons are balanced and extensions are assigned in) his perspective to be better than (the way reasons are balanced and extensions are assigned) in other perspectives.

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<sup>3</sup> and believe that you and I are right in thinking that we are aware of all the relevant considerations and aren't being irrational

If I accept (4) and the details of the abortion example, I must accept

5. (Limiting our purvey to your perspective and mine) the best way of thinking about abortion in the first trimester is the way I think about it.

But this is pretty obviously consistent with

6. There is no perspective independent consideration that shows that you should think about abortion as I do.

Certainly many –indeed, most –of us accept analogs of both (5) and (6) when we think about many difficult disputes: we think that there is a best way of thinking about matters (usually our own), but no consideration such that any rational person must be moved by it to think about matters in that way.<sup>4</sup> Anyone who thinks that someone can know all the relevant facts about a matter, make no mistake in reasoning about the matter, but still quite rationally be mistaken about the matter will think this sort of thing. The only twist my view puts on this rather common take on intractable disputes is suggesting that sometimes both parties to the dispute may have relative truth on their side.

I would say this sort of thing about the example we started with: in it, I should, believe

7. The standards I use for assessing wealth are superior to the ones you use.

There is no incoherence in thinking this and thinking that there is no perspective independent consideration I could give you that would force you (if you were being rational) to adopt my standards. Thinking such a thing is of a piece with thinking (5) and (6).

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<sup>4</sup> That (5) and (6) are consistent is obvious if we think of perspective independent reasons internally, but have an external notion of what it is best for someone to believe –that is, in saying that it is best for an agent to believe p, we are saying that relative to *our* standards of rationality it would be irrational for him not to believe p.

Things get controversial when we infer principle (1) from principle (4) or infer claim (3) from claim (7). These are Lutheran inferences, ones that assume that if the best you can do is such and so, then, well, you *ought* to be doing such and so. Some fans of supererogation will resist the inference, saying that it isn't always the case that we are *required* to do what it would best for us to do. I think in the epistemic case the inference is sound. But in point of fact, I think the sort of view I outline in WT doesn't require anything more than principle (4).

I intimated above that I didn't accept a full strength version of (2) in WT. There, I gave examples of cases in which a claim is relatively true but there are compelling reasons for those who believe it –indeed, for those who know it –to stop believing it. For example, claims involving gradable adjectives like 'square' are, I think, often relatively true. Such claims may be made true or false by the sort of conversational processes David Lewis discusses in "Scorekeeping in a Language Game." Contextual adjustment of a concept's extension is, however, by and large *independent* of considerations about whether treating an utterance as true will further the interests that govern a conversation. You may say 'France is square' in a conversation in which we are trying to find good examples of familiar squarish things to teach geometry to eight year olds; if I accommodate you, what you say is true relative to our conversational context. That doesn't mean that, given our goals, it was a good idea to accommodate you; perhaps other standards for what counts as square would work better to give the students a sense of how a rhomboid differs from a square.

The goal of our conversation about France and the square was finding a way to teach geometry; adopting a particular criterion of squareness not only made the comment 'France is square' true, it also contributed, perhaps not as well as it might have, to an attempt to achieve our pedagogical goal. We can criticize the standard adopted –criticize the making-true of 'France is square' –without denying that it *was* made true in the conversation. The mechanism that fixes whether a utterance is true or false (here, conversational accommodation) is by and large *independent* of the evaluative pressures that might lead a person in one conversation to say that there is a better way to think of being square or being rich than the way people in another conversation are thinking of it.

Indeed, in the current example, the right thing for conversants to do, when someone points out that France is rhomboidal, not square, may be to agree.

The upshot is that there is a consideration –roughly, *given that what is to count as square should be easily distinguishable from a rhomboid, France should not count as square* –that is perspective independent and which shows that the standards of a certain perspective are worse (given the perspective's goals) than other standards open to the agents of that perspective. It follows that (2) is not unrestrictedly valid.

### Miscevic

Miscevic gives a useful and thorough criticism of my views of slurring speech. He defends the claim that the fact that someone slurs does not in itself prevent the slurring speech from being true.

While we certainly differ on important points, I think our views are not quite as far apart as Miscevic thinks. For example, Miscevic writes

The problem with [Richard's] view is that the sincere use of BOCHE carries implications that go way beyond mere expression of dislike, in being cognitive and factual: "Hans is a Boche" implies that he is prone to cruelty....[it is] specific in a cognitive, factual, or descriptive direction.

Most slurs, of course, are associated with descriptive stereotypes of their targets; who would deny that? The question is whether the stereotypical is *conventionally* associated with a slur, in a sense that implies that someone who did not make the association would fail to understand a use of the slur.

I am unconvinced that work-a-day slurs have very much in the way of descriptive information **conventionally** associated with them. A person who is not familiar with the stereotypes associated with 'kike', 'wop' or the N-bomb does not, it seems to me, suffer from **linguistic** ignorance. This is **not**, of course, to say that typical uses of these slurs don't *imply* that the stereotypes are true of their targets. When someone slurs, they usually intend to exploit common knowledge to achieve their derogatory goals; knowing

that certain stereotypes are commonly, even if not conventionally, associated with a slur, they can thus use the slur to invoke the stereotype. A use of a slur can carry --in fact it very often carries --*very* specific descriptive information. But to say this is not to say that that information is conventionally associated with the slur. I agree with Miscevic about the phenomenon he points to in the citation above, but I don't see that it is a problem for the view that I developed in WT.

The primary difference between Miscevic and me is not whether such complex negative information is commonly --or even conventionally or semantically --associated with a slur. Our primary difference is over whether other dimensions of slurring --in particular, its performative and expressive dimensions --effectively *prevent* slurring speech from being true or false. The issue, as I put it in the chapter Miscevic discusses, is whether the performative and expressive here *trump* the semantic. As I see it, there is a kind of (mis) representation associated with slurring speech that is independent of conventional linguistic representation. This later sort of representation is sensitive to, and can be cancelled by, ordinary negation. That slurring involves another sort of representation is suggested by the fact that slurs "scope out" of negation and conditionals: 'he's not a Boche' and 'if he's a Boche, you should avoid him' are offensive for exactly the reason that 'he is a Boche' is. The persistence of this sort of (mis) representation as the slur embeds, I argued in WT, leads to slurring speech being truth valueless. Whether slurring involves this sort of misrepresentation is quite independent of whether stereotypical information is part of the meaning of slurs.

Are there facts that should lead us to say that slurring speech is typically truth valued? Miscevic thinks that there are. He observes that sentences in which (as we might put it) pejoratives are used pejoratively may be true. 'bigot', Miscevic observes, can be used as a pejorative in the true 'only a bigot would use that slur'; the sentence 'the pigs beat the demonstrators' may (perhaps) be used truly when it conveys contempt for the police in virtue of their being knowing implementers of repression.

I agree with the spirit of these remarks. Indeed, I claimed in WT that many pejorative uses of 'he's an asshole' are true, as there are many assholes out there. Miscevic suggests that this is problematic for my view, but I can't say I see how. The view I defended in WT was that slurring typically involves a kind of "performative



*misrepresentation*", one distinct from everyday linguistic misrepresentation. This is how *slurs* work. But performative representation is not invariably *misrepresentation*. When it is not, the performative will not trump the semantic, and what is said may well be true, as it is when one says that a bigot is a bigot.

Is there a better explanation of the phenomena than one that requires us to say that slurring speech is truth valueless because of a novel form of (mis) representation?

Miscevic comes close to endorsing the view that (1) conventionally associated with a (typical) slur is information contained in an associated stereotype; (2) a sentence in which such a term is used presupposes that this information is true of whomever is discussed in the sentence (or the members of the group targeted by the slur). This view, along with facts about presupposition projection and the view that failed presuppositions induce truth value gaps would explain our intuitions that something is wrong with the sentences 'Jane married a Boche', 'Jane didn't marry a Boche', and 'if Jane married a Boche, she's unhappy'.

In WT I argued against several different presuppositional accounts of slurs. Against the view that such presuppositions are a matter of linguistic meaning, I observed that linguistic meaning has to supervene on speaker psychology and use, but the mass of contemporary speakers don't have the sort of attitudes that would support thinking that stereotypical information was a *conventional* presupposition. Miscevic responds that I am "over optimistic", and that most "non-intellectuals" are happy to have slurs at their disposal. He in effect makes an empirical claim: when a word functions as a slur in a public language, competent speakers believe that when the word is used without the audience objecting, conversants believe they are supposed to add stereotypical negative information about the slur's target to conversational presuppositions.<sup>5</sup> But this universal claim is surely false, and this was my point in WT. Even if this were true of *some* slurs, it is clearly false of many others. This is particularly obvious in the case of slurs targeted at groups that are not generally held in contempt in a society. It is false that if an American speaker uses 'Wop' or 'Mick' slurringly in the U.S., the audience will accept—or

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<sup>5</sup> Observe that this is a much stronger claim than the claim that when the audience understands a slur, they generally (or even always) think that the speaker wants them to accept such information, or that they think that the speaker thinks they ought to accept it. These latter claims do not support the claim that slurring induces presuppositions.

think that there's a linguistic requirement that they accept for conversational purposes -- that Italians or Irish are in some particular respect inferior. Competent speakers know this (in particular, they know it about themselves), and so don't think that people think that a use of the slur requires them, if objection is not made, to add stereotypes to presuppositions.

Most of us don't have any use for these words, and do not assume that we are "supposed to assume" that Italians or the Irish are inferior when the words are used.<sup>6</sup> But they are *still* slurs, and presumably they have the same sort of semantics as do slurs that are used more often. I take it that the linguistic and semantic facts about contemporary American uses of 'Mick' are of the same sort as those about 19<sup>th</sup> century American uses of slurs on African-Americans. Since the former are not to be explained presuppositionally, neither are the latter.

Miscevic seems to think that if the use of an expression in some way involves the representation of an individual as having a complex trait (e.g., being despicable because of her ethnicity), the expression must introduce a presupposition about that trait or introduce the trait into what is said in the way an adjectival phrase would. I'm not sure why he thinks this; in any case, it is false. If I judge that Jones is an obnoxious twit who deserves contempt, I may give vent to this judgment with a gesture of the hand (in the U.S., we employ a raised middle finger for these purposes). The *reason* I have for making my gesture is not expressed by the gesture in a way that makes the gesture a 'saying' of the reason. Nor does my making the gesture in any relevant sense presuppose my reason for making it, any more than my saying 'Jones is an obnoxious twit' presupposes in any relevant sense whatever evidence I may have for thinking that he is. Expressive performances can be bound to very complex cognitive states without in any interesting sense expressing or presupposing the content of those states.

I'll close with a word about thick terms. I say that the evaluative component in a thick term is not essential to it. As (for example) Simon Blackburn uses 'lustful', applying the term to behavior does not imply that something is wrong with it; as the Pope

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<sup>6</sup> What we know is that the words are used by people to express their negative attitudes. But knowing this does not lead to such uses involving presupposition, any more than knowing that a use of 'I despise philosophers' expresses a speaker's contempt for philosophers leads to a conversational presupposition that philosophers are despicable.

uses it(s German translation), its application does express condemnation. Miscevic agrees with me, I think, that some uses of terms like 'lust' involve an evaluative element while others do not. But he thinks this is to be explained by saying that 'lust' (and 'lustig') are ambiguous, contributing different things to the thoughts expressed by Simon and Benedict.

It's not clear to me that Miscevic's position is stable. The problem is evident in the way in which we report others' uses of 'lust' (and its translations). If Simon says 'Lust is God's gift to mankind' and Benedict says 'Lust ist nicht ein Geschenk Gottes an die Menschheit', we will report them as disagreeing, saying that Simon thinks, while Benedict denies, that lust is God's gift to mankind. On pretty much every account of thought and its expression, this report is made true by Simon and Benedict's utterances only if one of the utterances expresses the denial of what the other expresses. But then if the report is correct, Simon's non-condemning use of 'lust' and Benedict's condemning use of 'Lust' must be expressing the same concept or thought component.

### **Stojanovic**

Stojanovic takes issue with what I say about "faultless disagreement" over matters of taste; she also argues that the relativism I propose in WT is undermotivated. Before discussing her worries I'll exposit the views she criticizes.

I say we may have incompatible beliefs while each of us is "right from his own perspective". Sometimes when this happens each of us may reasonably takes the other's belief to be wrong. A paradigm of this is a case in which two people disagree about whether Mary is rich (for a New Yorker), when each is reasonably accommodated by her conversational partners and each has reason to think the other to be wrong about what it takes to be rich for a New Yorker. However, sometimes when we have incompatible beliefs, it would be unreasonable for either of us to think the other is wrong in any respect. A paradigm of this is the case in which I think okra is tasty, you think it is not, and each of us thinks (something along the lines of) 'well, I don't share his view, but he's certainly entitled to it.'

In WT I argued that if we think our own opinion *true*, we must think that those who disagree with us are mistaken. The argument is pretty simple: If I think *p* and that *p* is true, then I must think that if you think not-*p*, your belief is false. But if you have a false belief, you're making a mistake. I'm afraid that is not the best argument I ever gave. Suppose that *p* is relatively true, and is, in fact, true from my perspective and false from yours. Must I say that you are mistaken?

I would now say that it depends on whether there is a reason for us (all things considered) to have the same opinion about *p*. But whether this is so can be expected to vary across cases. In some cases –matters of taste are a likely example –there will very often be no reason that you and I *ought* to see eye to eye. If there is no reason for you to agree with me, you need not be making a mistake. In other cases –for example, cases in which there is a better way to think about wealth than the way you are thinking of it (and thus a sense in which you ought to think of wealth differently) –there may be reason for us to agree. In this case, it's apt for me to say that you are mistaken.

So I continue to think that there are different kinds of cases in which we may have contrary beliefs and each be correct from our own perspective. Stojanovic doesn't think there is a distinction to be drawn here. She complains that I don't give an argument that there are both of the kinds of cases mentioned above; she observes that I don't give criteria for sorting one kind of case from the other. It's certainly true that I don't give criteria. As for not giving an argument: I do assume that most people share the intuition that in the wealth case, it is reasonable for each woman (assuming that each can give reasons for their opinions about Mary's wealth) to think the other wrong; I assume that most people share the intuition that when I have a belief I voice with 'okra is tasty' I need not think that there is something wrong with your thinking that okra is not tasty. Pretty much everyone *does* share these intuitions. The place where argument, or at least some buttressing, is needed is the point where it is said that in each case the beliefs in question are incompatible and that each is (relatively) correct. Certainly I gave an argument in the wealth case: in that case, the believers and everyone else take themselves to disagree. That's a good reason to think that they do disagree. If they do, then they have incompatible beliefs. And well motivated principles concerning conversation give us reason to think that each speaks truly in expressing her belief. In the okra case, the

argument is similar: when I say 'okra is tasty' and you say 'it's not', you and I and everyone else finds us to disagree in a way we do not if I simply say 'Mark Richard likes okra' (or 'okra tastes good to me') and you saying 'Isidora Stojanovic does not like okra' (or 'okra does not taste good to me'). But whether an opinion about whether something is tasty is correct is settled by how that thing tastes to she who holds the opinion, at least when she has much experience tasting food, a normal, healthy palate, and has considered the matter.<sup>7</sup>

In a paper written after WT I give an account of disagreement that makes it somewhat more complicated than a matter of incompatible beliefs or assertions.<sup>8</sup> The account was meant to allow us to distinguish cases like those of differences over taste from cases like the wealth example. It presupposes that there is a distinction to be drawn between evaluating a proposition at a situation<sup>9</sup> --something that one can always sensibly try to do<sup>10</sup> --and evaluating a particular person's token belief at a situation. If there is no reason for you and I to have the same standards about what is tasty, it's an idle exercise for me to evaluate *your* beliefs about what's tasty relative to the standards in *my* perspective. But if there is reason for us to share standards on wealth, then there is a point in my evaluating your beliefs about wealth relative to my standards, since in this case there is reason for me to think that your beliefs are beholden to my standards. We can thus distinguish between those situations relative to which it is appropriate to evaluate a belief, and those relative to which it is not. Assuming all this, I suggested that

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<sup>7</sup> Stojanovic says that the distinction between the two sorts of cases of relatively correct, incompatible beliefs cuts across the distinction between cases in which we differ over matters of taste and other sorts of cases. I agree.

<sup>8</sup> "Relativistic Content and Disagreement." This paper has been published online in *Philosophical Studies*. It is available on my website (<http://markrichardphilosophy.wordpress.com/>). I have amended the account of disagreement in this paper in a latter paper, "What is Disagreement?", also available at <http://markrichardphilosophy.wordpress.com/>. Stojanovic's discussion makes use of the characterization of disagreement in the first paper. For the most part, in this discussion I stick with that characterization.

<sup>9</sup> 'situation' is my jargon for relativistic circumstances of evaluation; a situation is a pair of a possible world and a perspective.

<sup>10</sup> though one might be unable to, as for instance one might not be able to evaluate the proposition that Socrates is cranky at worlds not graced by Socrates.

two people disagree provided they have incompatible beliefs and there is a situation relative to which it is appropriate to evaluate both beliefs.

Stojanovic reacts to this picture of disagreement by giving an argument that is meant to show that self-aware relativists who take themselves to differ about a relativistically true proposition could not have a faultless disagreement. As I understand the argument, it goes like this. A relativist doesn't think that what we say is true or false *simpliciter*, but only true or false relative to a situation (i.e., a world and a perspective). So relativists who disagree must disagree about something like a claim *paired* with a situation (or a set thereof). For us to disagree about whether Mary is rich is for there to be some set S of situations on which we are focused, with one of us thinking that Mary is rich in all of them, the other thinking that she is not. But then what can a self aware relativist make of a case in which: he says Mary is rich, another relativist says that she is not, and he takes himself to disagree with the other? The dispute presumably can't be over whether the claim that Mary is rich is true from both of their perspectives, for the self aware relativist will recognize that a relativistic claim may be true from his perspective but false from the other's. If he says that in such a case one person thinks that Mary is rich according to *his* standards, and the other thinks that Mary is rich according to *his* standards, he does not take the case to involve genuine disagreement. There is relativistic disagreement only if there is a single situation in which each relativist takes the claim that Mary is rich to be true. But then the disagreement can't be faultless, for one or the other of the two is wrong about whether the claim that Mary is rich is true relative to s.

I don't think the argument succeeds.<sup>11</sup> Ignore the argument for a moment, and simply consider a case in which there is a reason for us to agree about (say) what it is to be wealthy –perhaps because we have to agree in order to set tax policy –but there are several ways in which we could agree –we could, in particular, agree to adopt my standards or agree to adopt yours. In this case, there is reason for us adopt my standards (though not one that compels adopting them) and reasons for adopting your standards (again, the reasons do not compel). There are *two* situations relative to which it is

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<sup>11</sup> My thinking here was influenced by discussion with Stojanovic and Barry Smith in Dubrovnik; I'm grateful to both of them for helping me sort through the issues.

appropriate to evaluate our beliefs, my situation and yours. Thus, there is a situation relative to which it is appropriate to each of our beliefs, and thus we disagree by the definition above. This doesn't mean that one of us is at fault, at least not on the natural definition of fault, on which a person's belief *b* is faulty when there is no situation *s* relative to which it is appropriate to evaluate *b* and relative to which it is true.

Now turn to Stojanovic's argument. Stojanovic would have me say that in this sort of situation, when I say or think that Mary is rich, I must in effect be thinking or asserting that Mary is rich relative to my standards or relative to both of our standards. But I reject this picture. I don't think that "the point" of an assertion is invariably to put forward a claim as true, or as true in a particular situation. Sometimes when I say that Mary is rich, my point is not to characterize a particular situation in terms of what is true in it, but to *suggest* a way of looking at things to my audience. (This idea is developed in Chapter 4 of WT.) This is how we should, I think, understand much of the give and take in active disagreement.

I close with a remark on Stojanovic's suggestion of an alternative way to understand those disagreements I interpret as being about relativistically true claims. Stojanovic suggests that the way to understand such cases is as practical disagreements about how to resolve the indeterminacy of a shared concept. This, she says, allows us to make sense of the idea of faultless disagreement without invoking relativistic truth:

If we accept the idea of an underdetermined concept, then a disagreement that involves such a concept will easily turn out to be faultless. For, at the time of the disagreement, the concept's precise extension is not yet fully determined, and so neither of the parties is strictly speaking wrong. But note that even if, at the time of the dispute, the concept may be open-ended, and the two parties' claims, though in apparent contradiction, may be such that neither is false (since neither has a truth value yet), the way in which the concept is going to develop will make it possible to decide, albeit retrospectively, which of the two parties got it right.

This proposal seems like a curious half way house to me. The suggestion is that (in some cases, at least) when I say 'Mary is now, 14 July 11, a rich New Yorker' and you say 'Mary is not now, 14 July 11, a rich New Yorker': (1) we say incompatible things; (2) what each of us says is, when we say it, without truth value because (when we say it) the concept *rich New Yorker on 14 July 11* is neither true nor false of people who have Mary's level of wealth on 14 July 11; (3) in the future, what one of us says will be true, because the concept *rich New Yorker on 14 July 11* will have a more determinate extension.<sup>12</sup> On this suggestion we have what is formally, at least, relativism, since we have a claim –that Mary is on 14 July 11 a rich New Yorker –that is true relative to some but not all perspectives in a single world. The change in truth value of this claim, in turn, is a result of standards for wealth changing over time, and thus across perspectives. The difference between this sort of relativism and that espoused in WT is that I say that not only do diachronic differences in standards result in differences in truth value across perspectives, but synchronic differences can also have this effect. Why should we be able to have the one sort of relativistic variation but not the other?<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> I take it that what Stojanovic has in mind in speaking of concepts are things that are constituents of the objects of beliefs.

<sup>13</sup> Many thanks to the comments of those who attended the session on *When Truth Gives Out* in Dubrovnik in September 2010, where earlier versions of Lynch, Miscevic, and Stojanovic's papers were presented. I'm especially indebted to Dunja Jutronic for inviting me to the conference, for her invitation to respond in print to these papers, and for her patience while I completed this response.