The truthmakers

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A WORLD OF STATES OF AFFAIRS

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Writing Again

It's a balance back into the little tent where only a thin glow of light keeps open the forest, stretched like a membrane, an ever shining delicate blow of an open net, scattered upon the ocean breath, and above all in the frame of time, almost to the thin sheet of ice, with the blue cottoncandy as words.

ALISTAIR ELLIOT

Nothing is gained, simplicity is lost. Or might there be two kinds of truthmakers, B1 and B2, each of which one would have to supply its F meant that it had a fact. Perhaps it might be possible for someone else to have done the truthmaking. If B1 had existed, then our necessary connection between distinct things takes this form; necessarily, there exist either 0 or B2 or B3 or B4 or B5 and A has F. Again, nothing gained, simplicity lost.

In short, the good reason to believe Armstrong's thesis is that it affords the simplest way. If not quite the only way, of providing truthmakers for propositions. If we do not satisfy the demand for truthmakers, there will be nothing much we can say about why these contingent trues are true. We shall just have to say the statement that A has F is true because B has F. So it's because it's so. Isn't it? How bad would that be? Would it be just as bad as a parallel throwing-up-of-thumbs in the case of the alleged truthtens about permanent possibilities of sensation?

On the other hand, had we asserted that we intended to abandon conventionalism about possibility, and avoid necessary connections between distinct things? That is the price we pay for unprejudiced adherence to the demand for truthmakers. Because, the demand for truthmakers just a demand for necessary connections.

Another instance of the conflict between conventionalism and the demand for truthmakers, in virtue of which we ask what the truthmaker is for an (entirely contingent) denial of the statement, is the question whether there are any arctic penguins. The truthmaker for that matter would have to be something that could not possibly exist without an arctic climate. Armstrong's notion of a world of states of affairs provides a natural candidate for the job. But do we want to have any such thing? We might believe, no, something like that could never exist, or that any such thing can coexist with anything. Worse still, we might see a whole hodgepodge of conventionalists as to whether it is possible that there might have been something inherently nothing at all. It would then have been true that there was nothing. Would there have been a truthmaker for that truth? If so, there would have been something, and not nothing, conventionalism.

One principle or the other has to be compromised. Stick the demand for truthmakers and we're compromised. Stick the demand for conventionalism and we're compromised. Let's be led in Armstrong's world of states of affairs, or to something very like it. (Armstrong's book is exemplary in its justice to the nearly alternative view that the content of a statement polled is conventionally defined by the necessary connection between that thing and some distinct things, e.g., the notion of a world of states of affairs. Armstrong's book is exemplary in the justice it does to the nearly alternative view that the content of a state of affairs is conventionally defined by the necessary connection between that thing and some distinct things, e.g., the notion of a world of states of affairs.)