

Questions on Peter van Inwagen, 'Objectivity'

1. 'If your friend Albert responds to something you have said with the words, "That may be true for you, but it isn't true for me", his words can only be regarded as a rather misleading way of saying "That may be what you think, but it's not what I think.'" (p. 74) Are there any other ways we could make sense of this sort of remark? If so, are these any use in stating a coherent and non-trivial view in the spirit of anti-Realism?
2. What is the distinction between the positions van Inwagen calls 'idealism' and 'anti-Realism'? (p. 76)
3. Is the argument in the set-off paragraph on p. 77 convincing? What might an anti-Realist find to object to in this argument?
4. Which specific steps in the anti-Realist argument quoted on pp. 78-79 would van Inwagen want to resist, and what would he say was wrong with those steps?
5. The question where the boundaries of Mount Everest lie seems to be a highly *vague* one. Does this count against van Inwagen's claim that 'we have picked out certain objects as the objects designated by names like "Mount Everest", "Pikes Peak", "the Matterhorn", and so on' (p. 79)? If so, does this matter to van Inwagen's overall argument, or is he right to say (as he does on p. 75) that the issue of vagueness can harmlessly be ignored?
6. Van Inwagen (pp. 81ff) considers two substitutes an anti-Realist might offer for the notion of objective truth: 'fitting with our experience' and 'fitting with my experience'. Are there other importantly different options for the anti-Realist?
7. ... For example: would it make sense if the anti-Realist were to reply as follows: 'the status I take "lions are carnivorous" and AR itself to have is not that of "fitting with anyone's experience" or anything like that, but *truth*: these sentences are perfectly *true*, it's just that they are not *objectively* true.'
8. Is van Inwagen right (p. 84) that it is absurd to propose that a philosopher who says 'Objective truth and falsity exist' and a philosopher who says 'Objective truth and falsity do not exist' are not in genuine disagreement? If so, how might anti-Realists resist the attempt to derive this absurd consequence from their view?