ABSTRACT. Writers such as Stalnaker and Dummett have argued that specific features of subjunctive conditional statements undermine the principle of bivalence. This paper is concerned with rebutting such claims. 1. It is shown how subjective conditionals pose a prima facie threat to bivalence, and how this threat can be dissolved by a distinction between the results of negating a subjective conditional and of negating its consequent. To make this distinction is to side with Lewis against Stalnaker in a dispute about possible worlds semantics for such conditionals, and reasons are given for doing so. 2. These arguments are extended to answer Dummett's claim that behaviourist and phenomenalist analyses in terms of subjunctive conditions violate bivalence. This answer is shown to be compatible with the principle that hypothetical statements are true only in virtue of categorical facts.

Robert Stalnaker has argued that subjunctive conditional statements violate the principle of bivalence, which says that, of necessity, every well-defined statement is either true or false. In a different way, Michael Dummett has argued that certain statements, analyzed in terms of subjunctive conditionals, violate bivalence. This paper aims to show how, if we are careful to negate subjunctive conditionals correctly, we can answer both arguments.

1.

Had there been nothing but a gold or silver sphere, would it have been gold? Apparently, to answer "Yes" is to say that had there been nothing but a gold or silver sphere, it would have been gold; to answer "No" is to say that had there been nothing but a gold or silver sphere, it would not have been gold (and therefore would have been silver). Not only have we no reason to say either of these things, but it is hard to take seriously the supposition that one or other of them is, unbeknownst to us, true. Can subjunctive conditionals then fail to be either true or false, thereby falsifying the principle of bivalence?

There is an obvious way of dealing with this threat, as follows. The answer "Yes" to the original question is obviously unacceptable. To answer "no" is to deny that, had there been nothing but a gold or
silver sphere, it would have been gold. That is to assert that it is not the case that, had there been nothing but a gold or silver sphere, it would have been gold. The argument does not require that there be a more idiomatic reformulation of this rather cumbersome assertion, but if one is required, a good candidate would be the assertion that, had there been nothing but a gold or silver sphere, it might not have been gold. However, none of this is to assert that, had there been nothing but a gold or silver sphere, it would not have been gold. For there is no reason why negating a subjunctive conditional should be equivalent to negating its consequent, although it is plausible that it is equivalent to changing "would" to "might" and then negating the consequent. We can also, of course, assert the triviality that, had there been nothing but a gold or silver sphere, it would have been either gold or not gold – for there is no reason why this conditional with a disjunctive consequent should entail the disjunction of unattractive conditionals, that either had there been nothing but a gold or silver sphere, it would have been gold or had there been nothing but a gold or silver sphere, it would not have been gold. Of these assertions, only the one to which the answer "No" does not commit us (had there been nothing but a gold or silver sphere, it would have been gold) is unacceptable. Hence we can reasonably answer "No". But if it is not the case that had there been nothing but a gold or silver sphere it would have been gold, then the statement "Had there been nothing but a gold or silver sphere, it would have been gold" is false; since it is false, it is bivalent. In other words, the apparent threat to the principle of bivalence is diagnosed as resulting from a confusion between the scopes of negation and subjunctive conditional operator.

Such a treatment is suggested by the work of David Lewis on counterfactuals. Stalnaker has championed a rival view on which the above treatment would fail. Before we examine the bearing of their debate on the issue of bivalence, however, it is worth formalizing the original dilemma; for in doing so we shall uncover an unexpectedly elaborate network of assumptions about subjunctive conditionals that are of use in subsequent discussion.

Let us write the subjunctive conditional with antecedent $P$ and consequent $Q$ as $P \square \rightarrow Q$. ‘~’, ‘∨’ and ‘&’ are negation, disjunction and conjunction respectively. $G$ is the statement that there is nothing but a gold sphere, $S$ the statement that there is nothing but a silver sphere. Thus the queried statement is $(G \lor S) \square \rightarrow G$. What needs to