

Intralinguistic Motivation for Pluralism about Truth

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ABSTRACT. Critics of the scope problem that motivates pluralism about truth have argued that it is a pseudo-problem. If the criticism is correct, then truth pluralism is left unmotivated and potentially bankrupt. In this paper, I argue that closely related to the scope problem is another problem, which I call “the scalar problem.” If the property of truth is sensitive to how an agent expresses the truth predicate within a single linguistic discourse and different agents or groups of agents express truth differently within that discourse, then there are different ways of being true within the same linguistic discourse. Given this possibility, even if the scope problem fails, truth pluralism remains fully motivated.

Key-words: alethic pluralism, truth, Quine-Sainsbury problem, experimental philosophy

1. Introduction

Proponents of pluralism about truth have argued that there is more than one way for a truth-bearer to be true, and this view is primarily motivated by the scope problem: the truth of expressions differ in different linguistic discourses (See Edwards, 2013a, 2013b, 2018; Lynch, 2001, 2004a, 2004b, 2005, 2009; Wright, 1992).¹ I will argue in this paper that there is an additional *intra*-linguistic problem that motivates pluralism about truth. True statements not only differ from one linguistic discourse to another, but even within the same linguistic discourse do the

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¹ The ‘scope problem’ label comes from Michael Lynch (2004). There are other names for it, including the “common denominator” problem (Sher, 1998, Wright, 2005) and the “correspondence puzzle” (Lynch, 2009, p. 79).



truth of expressions vary.² If truth is sensitive to how an agent or group of agents expresses the truth predicate within a single discourse and different agents or groups of agents express truth differently, then this represents different ways of being true. What my argument should suggest is that a critic of pluralism may be on shaky ground if their challenge rests upon the scope problem. Critics of truth pluralism have called into question whether the scope problem motivates pluralism about truth properly. Among the harshest critics is Julian Dodd (2013) who has argued that the scope problem is a “pseudo-problem.” If his criticism is correct, then there is no incentive to pursue the Wright-Lynch form of truth pluralism who contends the scope problem is a pseudo-problem will have to reconsider this objection in light of the scalar problem.

Here is how the paper will proceed. First, I provide an overview of the scope problem. Then, I turn to two of the most salient criticisms against the scope problem, one provided by Mark Sainsbury and the other by W.V.O. Quine. Once I have laid out the scope problem and criticisms of it, I will then argue that there is good reason to believe intralinguistic domain variance motivates pluralism about truth without succumbing to the Quine-Sainsbury problem. In Section 5, I call upon extant data to support the scalar problem. And, in Section 6, I show that even a modest deflationary approach to truth proposed by Julian Dodd cannot escape the scalar problem. Given the success of my argument, motivation for pluralism about truth remains fully intact.

2. The Scope Problem

On a monistic theory of truth, each expression is true if (and only if) it meets a specified necessary and sufficient condition. On the correspondence theory a proposition is true if and only if it corresponds to fact. Notably, one problem with the correspondence theory of truth is its inability to explain why some propositions are taken to be true but fail to correspond to fact. For example, “the sum of two and two is four” is true, but it does not correspond to fact because numbers do not exist. The mathematical expression is true because it is a correct representation of quantities and relations that are consistent with the rules and framework of arithmetic operations. Similarly, “Sherlock Holmes wears deerstalker caps” is true, but it is not true because it corresponds to fact. It is true because Arthur Conan Doyle authored the stories of Sherlock Holmes where the fictional character

² Notably, if my interpretation of intra-linguistic differences is accurate, it sidesteps what Will Gamester (2022) has called the ‘individuation problem’ while also agreeing with him that removing inter-linguistic differences helps to defuse the problem of mixed atomics.

supposedly wore deerstalker caps. Mathematical and fictional statements may be true, despite that they fail to correspond to fact.³

Let's consider three different statements from three different linguistic domains: the empirical domain (*e*), the moral domain (*v*), and the mathematical domain (*m*):

T_e : "The cat sits on the mat"

T_v : "Torturing people is wrong"

T_m : "The triangle has three sides"

T_e , T_v , and T_m are all true, but they appear to be true in different ways. T_e is true when a cat sits on a mat. The cat and the mat exist, and the cat instantiates the relation of being on the mat. T_v is true but not because of what exists and the relations that hold between existent objects. The proposition is true when it is morally wrong to harm others, particularly when that harm is excessive and done for no other reason other than to see victims suffer. Since on the correspondence theory of truth a proposition is true if and only if it corresponds to fact, T_v cannot be true or false because there is no fact which corresponds with the proposition. There is no singular and monolithic property of truth that satisfactorily explains why all of propositions are true. Finally, T_m cannot be true or false on the correspondence theory because triangles are abstract mathematical figures. While there may be many objects that instantiate such abstract figures, T_m does not need to involve any of them.

The inability of a correspondence theory of truth to generalise explanatory scope beyond propositions arising in any one class of sentences suggests against the monistic assumption that there is one and only one property common to all true propositions. This is the primary motivation for accepting truth pluralism, and this is known as the "scope problem" (Lynch, 2009, pp. 2-9).

Let me provide some additional support for the view that the scope problem motivates pluralism about truth and then go on to reconstruct what has come to be known as the Quine-Sainsbury objection. A precise definition of the scope problem might be:

For any candidate property, ϕ , there are a class of propositions that fail to possess ϕ but are nevertheless counted as being true.

³ There has been quite a bit of work done on truth in mathematical and fictional discourse. Those debates lie beyond the thesis of this paper. For anyone who may be interested, please see for mathematics: Benacerraf, 1973; Fair, 1984; Putnam, 1975 and for fiction: Armour-Garb and Woodbridge, 2015; Lewis, 1978; Walton, 1990.

If we suppose that the candidate property, ϕ , is about the relationship between truth and correspondence, and we uphold ϕ in a very strict sense (i.e., no proposition can be true unless it satisfies the property ϕ), then T_v and T_m are not true. Nothing corresponds with “wrong” or an abstract “triangle.” Of course, we want to say that propositions like “torturing people is wrong” or “triangles have three sides” are true, even if they do not correspond to fact. To do that, however, would be to deny that truth is strict correspondence between what the proposition means or represents and that which is represented. Thus, the view that correspondence satisfies the singular and monolithic property of truth is mistaken.

Propositions from each discourse, T_e , T_v , and T_m , can be true, even if they are “radically different in subject and function” (Lynch, 2009, p. 2). We might say for T_v that nothing would be acceptable or unacceptable if there was no axiological system. Axiological truths are unlike truths of the natural and physical sciences. Thus, we should not restrict ourselves to a correspondence view of truth to accommodate propositions whose subsentential components fail to denote things, events, or actions occurring in the natural world. According to this line of reasoning, pluralism about truth, the view that there is more than one way for a proposition to be true, is well motivated.

According to Lynch, all forms of representational theories of truth face the scope problem primarily because proponents of representationalism have suggested that (i) true beliefs are a representation of mind-independent objects that exist (i.e., medium-sized goods) and (ii) our minds are at least indirectly causally responsive to mind-independent objects and properties. For Lynch:

If you allow yourself to focus only on examples involving physical objects, it is easy to slip into thinking that what goes for thoughts about cats and cars must also go for everything else. But on reflection, that is highly implausible. Consider propositions like *two and two are four* or *torture is wrong*. Under the assumption that truth is always and everywhere causal correspondence, it is a vexing question how these true thoughts *can* be true. That two and two are four is unimpeachable, but even granting that numbers are objects, how can any thought of mine be in causal contact with something like a number? (Lynch, 2009, p. 34)

The scope problem amounts to a rejection of the invariant nature of truth across different regions of linguistic discourse. That the representationalist might have devised an account of truth to handle expressions about the empirical world is indisputable. What is disputable is the application of representationalism to other domains of discourse.

The scope problem is not limited to a concern just for representationalist theories of truth like the correspondence theory. For example, Lynch has pointed out that it seems compatible with a pre-theoretic assumption: “it seems at least as

plausible to think that the truth of, e.g., ethical claims consists in something quite different than the truth of assertions concerning the physical world” (Lynch, 2004b, p. 385). Whatever approach we take to the nature of truth, the scope problem seems to apply (Lynch, 2009, pp. 48-49).

3. The Quine Sainsbury Objection

Not everyone has agreed with the claim that the scope problem is a good motivation for alethic pluralism. Some critics of alethic pluralism have argued that the scope problem is a pseudo-problem and, when properly understood, cannot serve as a motivation for pluralism. The rejection of the scope problem may be derived from two sources: Mark Sainsbury and W.V.O. Quine. For example, Sainsbury has argued:

[E]ven if it is one thing for “This tree is an oak” to be true, another thing for “Burning live cats is cruel” to be true, and yet another for “Buster Keaton is funnier than Charlie Chaplain” to be true, this should not lead us to suppose that “true” is ambiguous; for we get a better explanation of the differences by alluding to the differences between trees, cruelty, and humour. We could thus be minimalist about what it is for sentences about comedy to be true, some species of realist ... about what it is for sentences about morals to be true, without supposing that there is more than one univocal truth predicate. (Sainsbury, 1996, p. 900)

Like Sainsbury, Quine has maintained that we need not believe philosophical terms of art, like ‘true’ and ‘exists’, are ambiguous but that we should think of the difference as that between the subject of the expression under consideration. He writes:

There are philosophers who stoutly maintain that ‘true’ said of logical or mathematical laws and ‘true’ said of weather predictions or suspects’ confessions are two usages of an ambiguous term ‘true’. There are philosophers who stoutly maintain that ‘exists’ said of numbers, classes and the like and ‘exists’ said of material objects are two usages of an ambiguous term ‘exists’. What mainly baffles me is the stoutness of their maintenance. What can they possibly count as evidence? Why not view ‘true’ as unambiguous but very general, and recognize the difference between true logical laws and true confessions as a difference merely between logical laws and confessions? (Quine, 1960, p. 131)

If pluralism about truth is unmotivated, then there is no reason to deny that there is something invariant about the property of truth across discourses.

Although the Quine-Sainsbury objection has hit upon an interesting feature in the analysis of expressions across varying domains, it fails to consider whether

expressions occurring within a single domain of discourse might be true in different ways. The scope problem does not seem to accommodate the rich diversity of language present in any single domain of discourse.⁴ If, as Sainsbury and Quine have argued, that we can account for the truth of expressions not because of the diversity of the truth-predicate but by the differences in the content of the expressions themselves, then there should be no distinction in the truths of a particular discourse. The aim of the next section is to argue that there are expressions in a single domain of discourse that seem to reveal truth to be multiform not just across discourses but multiform within one and the same discourse.

4. Intralinguistic Domain Variance and the Scalar Problem

As we have seen in the previous section, the Quine-Sainsbury objection gives us reason to deny that the scope problem adequately motivates pluralism about truth. In this section, I argue that the scalar problem presents a viable alternative motivation for pluralism about truth—one that even the deflationist cannot deny. This scalar problem shows how there are propositions that occupy a single discourse but are true in different ways.⁵

The primary focus of pluralists and monists about truth has been the property of truth and whether it functions in the same way across all truth-bearers. Pluralists about truth have pointed out that truth varies from one discourse to the next and they have pointed to practical instances, e.g., T_e , T_v , or T_m , as a means testing our pre-theoretic conception of whether truth is fragmented. Monists, on the other hand, have argued that truth is uniform across all discourses.

Let's begin by considering whether truth operates in the same way within a single given discourse. In other words, we ask monists and pluralists to suspend discussion over whether truth varies from one discourse to the next and instead focus on instances that appear in one discourse. To an extent, then, instead of asking the way in which the property of truth operates between domains of linguistic discourses, we turn our attention to the subject matter of what it is that is

⁴ This intuition seems to have been appreciated by Stewart Shapiro in his 2009 review of Lynch's *Truth as One and Many*.

⁵ Jeremy Wyatt (2013) has shown that truth pluralists have not been attentive to the fact that one proposition may occupy two different linguistic domains. Given that there are propositions that may occupy more than one linguistic domain, he argues that multiple domain membership not only preserves Lynch's formulation of truth pluralism but also provides a more satisfactory resolution of the problem of mixed atomics. I will not address multiple domain membership in this paper, but I direct the reader to Wyatt's fine paper.

being said within a particular domain of linguistic discourse. If there exist a variety of instances of propositions in a single domain with the same subject matter but that are true in different ways, then we reinvigorate the motivation for pluralism about truth without introducing a second linguistic discourse or multiple discourses. Pluralism about truth seems to be fully motivated, again.

I call this motivation “the scalar problem” because it focuses less on how truth functions differently across different linguistic discourses and more on whether truth functions the same way in any single discourse. The scalar problem recognizes that there is a variety of ways in which truth may be employed by different groups of people who are communicating within the same discourse.

Imagine that we are presented with the following two sentences and asked whether they are true:

- (1) Ted Bundy violated the law.
- (2) Martin Luther King, Jr violated the law.

It goes without saying that the two propositions are true. Bundy violated criminal law by committing atrocities against young women, while MLK Jr’s violated civil disobedience law by speaking out against the injustice of Jim Crow laws towards African-Americans in the American South. It also goes without saying that the two expressions are true in virtue of the legal dimensions of the truth predicate. When Ted Bundy sexually assaulted, raped, and murdered women, he undoubtedly violated the law which prohibited these criminal acts. When MLK Jr openly criticised Jim Crow laws of the American South by demonstrating peacefully in opposition to these unjust laws, he undoubtedly violated the law prohibiting acts of civil disobedience. But are the two propositions true in the same sense? We seem compelled to argue that they are true *in different ways*. After all, one is a heinous act of vengeance and criminal behaviour while the other sought to bring attention to a form of social injustice that had been otherwise ignored by the white majority. They are both legally true, but they are true in different ways.

They are *true in different ways* not because of how they function differently in different linguistic discourses but in the subject matter of one particular discourse, i.e., the legal discourse. Both Bundy and King did “violate the law” but we also note that certain alethic features not present in the respective expressions that make us want to qualify our reaction to the following: *It is true that* Bundy violated the law and *It is true that* King violated the law. To start with, Bundy’s violating the law inflicted tremendous physical and emotional damage on the victim, as well as the families and friends of those victims of those who did not survive. Let’s agree that it is true that Bundy violated the law in a bad way. King’s violating the law, however, helped to emancipate millions of America who had been arbitrarily subjected to penal laws whose sole purpose was to segregate and to

discriminate against a population because of the colour of their skin. It is true that King violated the law but true in a different way.

Perhaps one might claim that the comparison between (1) and (2) is unfair. There are different ways the expressions are true because the name 'Ted Bundy' is negatively valenced and the name 'Martin Luther King, Jr' is positively valenced. Our reaction to the question whether (1) is true is partly informed by the heinous acts of a serial killer, while our reaction to the question whether (2) is true is partly informed by the supererogatory and charitable acts of a zealous advocate of human rights. If it is the positive or negative valence associated with the subjects of the expressions that drive our judgments about whether the expression is true, then we are in some way begging the question against the monist.

It is difficult to take this concern seriously when it is the legal context that is in question. Dodd (2013) has argued that differences in domain is not a matter of different truth-properties but a difference of subject matter. Since the property of truth may differ across subject matters, it goes without saying that what the pluralist has uncovered something of interest. Yet, what they have uncovered is not of interest to the truth-theorist because they would like to see the different functions of truth across linguistic domains. Enter the examples above.

Let's set aside (1) and (2) and consider the following examples:

- (3) Torturing people is wrong.
- (4) Torturing insects is wrong.
- (5) Stealing candy is wrong.
- (6) Stealing the Mona Lisa is wrong.

(3), (4), (5), and (6) are interesting examples because they seem to focus our attention squarely upon whether each is true in one way or distinct ways, rather than forcing us into a position of judging whether the expression is true in light of different subject matters. Just as with the legal cases, the four examples are true in different ways, in spite of them being a moral wrong.

(3) and (4) concern the torture of living things. That is their subject matter, so the difference between the two is minimized even further than the legal cases above concerning Bundy and MLK, Jr. However, if we think about the two examples, it may be possible to come to very different conclusions about whether they are true. There seems to be no doubt that it is true that torturing people is wrong. It is wrong to harm other moral agents and torturing is a form of harm, so it is wrong to torture people. However, that torturing insects is wrong is debatable. Even if we say that torturing ants is the same as torturing humans, there are ways in which we may torture insects that may be less objectionable, such as the use of insecticides to rid our house or section of some six-legged invaders, or running over ants in a vehicle like a car or four-wheel all-terrain vehicle. The two propositions are true but differently true.

There is a strong distinction between (5) and (6), too. Stealing candy is a morally wrong act, but it's being true strikes us very differently than stealing the Mona Lisa. Are they true in the same way or in different ways? While (5) may be true given that it is a violation of a social contract, it would not seem appropriate to say that (4) may be true given it is a violation of a social contract. Likewise, we might say that (3) and (4) may be true in different ways if we suppose that there is nothing that a puppy could have done to warrant the torture. This is not to suggest that there might be reason to torture people; on the contrary, "torturing" is morally wrong *sans phrase*, but it is open to debate whether the two statements are true in the same way.

Even within a domain of empirical discourse the truth of propositions differs. For example:

- (7) The earth orbits the sun every 365 $\frac{1}{4}$ days.
- (8) The wall is an eggshell white colour.
- (9) Humans are bipedal.

While (7), (8), and (9) are propositions in an empirical domain of discourse, we would say that they are true in different ways. Each of them corresponds to fact, but some are mediated by precise laws of nature. For (8), which is relatively imprecise in comparison with (7) and (9), the colour of the wall serves as the representative feature described by the declarative expression. (7) may seem to be precise but it is not *exactly* the length of time it takes for the earth to orbit the sun. In this sense, it is true in a different sense than (8) because (7) is more of an approximation than (8).

In this section, I have tried to show that we can extend the motivation for pluralism about truth in such a way that we encounter the same kinds of difficulties when we are confined to working within one discourse. The scalar problem seems to be further motivation for pluralism about truth, which is distinct from the scope problem. Of course, it would help if we had some empirical evidence for the kind of phenomenon which has been represented in this section of the paper. In fact, there is some empirical work that has already been done, and, in the next section, I will report some of the interesting data Arne Næss reported that supports the view.

5. Næss and the Scalar Problem

Insofar as people use the term 'true' and its cognates—and perhaps use it correctly—in natural discourse philosophers can come to a more thorough understanding of how the term operates in language by engaging with the views of ordinary people and

not repelling them.⁶ Næss recognised that philosophers had been ignoring a profitable vein of research (*cf.* Næss, 1953a,b) that employs empirical studies to inform their considered view and believed that philosophers had to undertake a more systematic accounting of how truth functions in natural language if we were interested in the term's ordinary usage. Næss indulged such a call for an empirical study asking respondents open-ended qualitative questions, such as "what is the common characteristic of truth?" or "What is understood by the expression "something is true"?" in one of the earliest experimental studies of its kind (Næss, 1938, p. 24).

When subjects were asked about truth, Næss was surprised to discover at least thirteen different ways in how people expressed their views on truth. Only 7% of the participants thought truth was "agreement with reality" (Næss, 1938, Secs 33-36). Only 5% of the respondents believed truth was "agreement with fact" (Næss, 1938, Sec 36). Næss also reports that his study participants were far more likely to agree with an instance of the T-Schema than with either agreement with reality or with fact (*cf.* Næss, 1938, Figure 97,1). Despite this, Næss did recognize that study participants who received "PAf 148:" "'p' ist wahr, wenn p" the people were divided; it "received much criticism as well as appraisal" (Næss, 1938, p. 148). The cumulative data do not show any consensus on one view of truth. Already, with just this experimental data to go on, we see how one might interpret the folk notion as exemplifying pluralism about truth.

If we ask agents operating in any given discourse, then we may find that they express their views about the property of truth in different ways. Asserting that a proposition is true if and only if it corresponds to fact reflects a correspondence notion of truth. Yet, we would say that a person who states that a proposition is true if and only if its content corresponds with the way the world is seems to reflect a correspondence notion, too. There seems to be no way in which we might restrict the ways in which the property of truth is exemplified in discourse.

Despite that the surface grammar of the two correspondence notions appear to be on the level and in agreement, we quickly see that the two are very different. While a proponent of the first view might not be forced to accept that a

⁶ This is not the first time such a topic has been broached by someone interested in the use of true in a discourse. Perhaps the earliest work into such a view came during the time of the Vienna Circle, especially through the work of Arne Næss. The concern might be much older than that. Members of the Lwow-Warsaw School, particularly Twardowski and his major professor Franz Brentano, seem to have alluded to the operation of truth in a discourse as early as 1884 (*cf.* Brentano, 1966; Woleński, 1989). The Austro-Polish 'obsession' with truth did not end with the death of either Twardowski or Brentano. Łukasiewicz, Leśniewski, and Kotarbiński all developed formal understandings of truth, including the somewhat controversial notion of sempiternal truth. Of course, Tarski, Leśniewski's student, seems to be the towering figure in truth theory because of his semantic conception.

proposition is true only when the propositional constituents it denotes exist, leaving this sort of correspondence theorist fully capable of accepting arithmetical truths, a proponent of the second is not so lucky. The proponent of correspondence who claims a proposition's truth or falsity depends upon whether there is something in the world that corresponds with its sentential or subsentential components cannot accept that a proposition referring to abstracta is true. One might contend that Næss' experimental results are inconclusive because all participants fail to converge on one and only one conception of truth. If one were to believe that the ordinary or folk notion of truth is singular and monolithic, then there is something about Næss' results that seem inconclusive. Yet, if one were to suggest that the folk notion is fragmented in a way anticipated by alethic pluralism, then Næss' findings should not come as much of a shock at all. Ordinary people seem to be sensitive to the varying ways in which an expression might be true within natural language.

In a discussion of the questions classified as "Ge1-groups," Næss collected nearly "974 'truths', varying from each other in the most astonishing way" (Næss, 1938, pp. 131-132). The examples of "truths" he collected from 250 participants ranged from the mundane, "It is true that I am now sitting and writing" to the profound, "There is a hell." §38 divides up the examples into four main groupings, Ge1.1: examples containing the term "we," Ge1.2: examples referring to "others," Ge1.3: examples of all sorts of "trivialities" (Næss, 1938, p. 136), and Ge1.4: examples of historical importance. Then, in §83, he compared the frequency of different Ge1-groups. When he analysed the data, he discovered that people who have been asked for an example of a truth more often (60% of all statements) give an example one might consider trivial than a "normative" or "mathematical" claim.

The result is informative for this paper concerning the scalar problem, particularly when we turn to Næss' analysis of how participants responded to the formulations of truth other participants offered. Participants were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the formulation of another participant in the same study. The formulation appears in the "()", and the response of the participant outside the parentheses.

Afr 1,1 (That it agrees with reality.) A good answer.

Afr 9,2 (My own conviction) This conviction does not need to agree with reality.

Afr 59,1 ([Truth] serves life.) "Lies also serve life (may be it is deeper than I can understand)." (Næss 1938: §89)

Næss believes that participants either assent to the formulation of another participant, criticize it, or remain neutral with respect to the other's formulation. It is far more likely that any participant will reject or criticize the formulation of

another participant (77.0%) than the person would assent to the formulation of another participant (14.5%) (Næss, 1938, §91).⁷

Given the wide variety of ordinary notions of truth he has collected using the questionnaire method and given that participants in his studies are far less likely to accept the truth formulation of another person, Næss' results show that there is not one singular and monolithic view of truth operative in natural language among ordinary users. The ordinary notion or commonsense view of truth is a myth. People operating within one discourse express their views about truth in different ways. Not only is it the case, as the truth pluralist has argued, that any given property of truth need not be satisfied by different classes of propositions, but also different agents or groups of agents use the truth predicate in different ways. Therefore, truth is not uniform.

6. The Challenge of Deflationary Monism

Some proponents of deflationary monism have recommended against pluralism about truth on the grounds that the scope problem is a pseudo-problem and cannot be a motivation for undertaking pluralism. If pluralism about truth is unmotivated, then there is no reason to deny that there is something invariant about the property of truth across discourses. In this section, I argue that the scalar problem presents a viable alternative motivation for pluralism about truth—one that the deflationist cannot deny.

Deflationary accounts of truth are theoretically parsimonious because they deny that truth is anything beyond what can be captured by its expressive capacity. If the truth predicate were not a kind of expressive device, then it would not be needed in language. We can explain how the truth predicate acts as an expressive device without thereby also being committed to any other facts about truth. Therefore, according to the deflationist about truth, considerations of theoretical economy demand that we refrain from proposing a metaphysically robust conception of truth.

Deflationary monism about truth, particularly the view originating in Horwich (1990/1998) and developed most recently by Dodd (2013), has it that there is nothing more about truth we need to assume than that "*p* is true" is just an indirect way of saying that *p*. For Horwich, Tarski's material adequacy condition, Convention-T: "*p*" is true if and only if *p* (Tarski 1983, 1944) is something approaching a universal generalization which is inferred from a potentially infinite number of non-paradoxical instances of Conv-T. For example:

⁷ The results appearing in Ge1-groups, as well as some of the finer details of Næss' experimental work, have been omitted in recent work that attempts to draw conclusions about how empirical studies bear, or fail to bear, on the philosophic study of truth (Asay 2024, forthcoming).

“Grass is green” is true if and only if grass is green.

“Serdar Berdimuhamedow is prime minister of Turkmenistan” is true if and only if Serdar Berdimuhamedow is prime minister of Turkmenistan.

“The ideal number of men in a Turkish bath is 17” is true if and only if the ideal number of men in a Turkish bath is 17.

On Tarski’s view, these instances or examples of Conv-T are known individually as examples of the “T-Schema.” Whereas Tarski devised the semantic conception of truth, which employed two formal conditions: formal correctness and material adequacy (Conv-T), to generalize over all instances of the T-Schema, Horwich believed the biconditionals comprising his minimalist view, i.e., all instances of the T-Schema, to be the fundamental part of his view because our grasp of truth is composed of accepting these biconditionals as the source for everything else we do with the truth predicate and they explain all the facts we need to know about truth (Horwich, 2001, p. 149-150).

Perhaps the most obvious concern with Horwich’s minimalism, anticipated by Tarski, is that a universal generalization is not entailed by a set of its instances (*cf.* Armour-Garb, 2004). The less obvious concern, however, is one introduced by the scalar problem. If “our” grasp of truth is somehow settled by instances of the T-Schema, then we should be able to empirically test whether philosophers (and non-philosophers) find the instances of the T-Schema to have something in common and that something which is in common among all instances is the property of truth that agents working within a particular discourse believe expresses something about the truth predicate. This is not to permit decisions about the theory of truth to be decided by consensus of the majority; rather, it is a matter of discovering what property of truth is operative in a discourse.

If it turns out that there is more to truth than merely a set of instances of the T-Schema, then minimalism is missing a fact about truth. Remember that Næss’ (1938) findings suggested that among the respondents he tested a form of correspondence seems to have come up in at least 7% of the population he questioned. Barnard and Ulatowski (2013) have shown variance in non-philosophers’ responses to questions concerning correspondence truth, and they have shown that non-philosophers may have different conceptions of objectivity when it comes to truth (Barnard and Ulatowski 2021). Mizumoto (2022) has reported cross-linguistic variance in the folk concept of truth between native English speakers and native Japanese speakers (*cf.* Reuter 2024; Wyatt and Ulatowski 2024). Reuter and Brun (2022) have shown substantive variance in how people respond to questions concerning coherence and truth. Also, Ulatowski (2022) has shown that practical variants of the equivalence schema are widely accepted by non-philosophers. The experimental results might not convince us that the property of truth operating in

natural discourse is robust and inflationary, but there are people who agree that it is not deflated in the way that Horwich argues. There is a missing fact about truth minimalism that it is potentially incapable of accounting for. Thus, it seems that a view cannot be founded upon the biconditionals as the source for everything else we can do with the truth predicate or explain all the facts we know about truth.

Somewhat incensed by the problem of universal generalization minimalism faces, Dodd has sought to argue for a more modest version of deflationary truth than Horwich's minimalism. His view aims to settle the concern over how to explain universal generalization by exploiting both standard nominal quantification and sentential quantification. Doing so allows the view to endorse "the finitely stateable claim that can be glossed as follows: any entity x is true just in case, for some way things may be said to be, x is the proposition that things are that way, and things *are* that way" (Dodd, 2013). According to Dodd, the semi-formal universally quantified proposition that permits him to capture the gloss is:

$$\text{TD: } \forall x (x \text{ is true if and only if } \exists p (x = \langle p \rangle \wedge p))$$

TD is more fundamental than Horwich's minimalism because any instance of the T-Schema can be proved by appealing to it, and, according to Dodd, TD avoids the universal generalization problem because TD is a universally quantified proposition.

The question is whether Dodd's modest deflationary monism is able to account for the diversity of truth present in a single linguistic discourse. According to the view Dodd presents, the only option he leaves for us is to perform a massive experimental study of people operating within a given linguistic discourse. If TD is more fundamental than the T-Schema, then it should be present within all different expressions appearing in any given discourse. Finding one counterexample would seem to work against Dodd's modest deflationism, or, at the very least, invite us to have a further discussion of what is most fundamental in any given discourse.

7. Conclusion

Proponents of pluralism about truth have argued that their view is motivated by the scope problem, and, although I do not disagree, I believe there is another relevant problem motivating truth pluralism. It is what I have termed the "scalar problem," which suggests that there are a variety of ways truth is employed by agents within a single discourse or across different discourses. If the analysis is correct, and it seems to have been shown to be true in the early empirical studies of Arne Næss, then pluralism about truth is motivated by the scalar problem too. The challenge

some deflationists about truth have presented in opposition to the scope problem seems unable to defend against the scalar problem. If anything, it turns out that these minimalists either will have to perform their own empirical studies to support their view or explain what is meant when they claim their view is the most “fundamental.”⁸

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