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Conceptions of Truth
CLARENDON PRESS · OXFORD
2003

Preface

This book is organized around a set of conceptual questions about truth which are charted in the introductory chapter, and it argues for what I take to be the most reasonable answers. It is partly due to my philosophical upbringing in Gadamer's Heidelberg, I suppose, that the history of philosophical reflections on the key questions I have selected will play a far larger role in these pages than it does in books on truth from the pen of other analytical philosophers. I am deeply convinced that, as Strawson once put it, 'the progress of philosophy, at least, is dialectical: we return to old insights in new and, we hope, improved forms'. A more specific reason why I have gone to some lengths to trace answers to my key questions is that I cannot help thinking that nowadays too many analytical philosophers neglect even the English classics of their own tradition. (As the reader will soon notice, I take this tradition to have originated already in the early nineteenth century in Prague, in the heart of what my Anglophone colleagues tend to call 'the Continent'.) I hope that, as a result of my scholarly ambitions, this book will also serve as a reliable guide to the vast literature, both 'ancient' and contemporary, on its topic(s). As to the questions I shall go into, a confession at the outset might spare my prospective readers at least one disappointment: I have nothing enlightening to say about, let alone to contribute to, the debate on the semantic antinomies. Bracketing this deep problem about truth, apart from a few asides and a brief guide to the literature, might well be the most glaring of the omissions from which this book suffers. (But then, there is also something to be said in favour of not entering this arena: in antiquity, at least one philosopher died prematurely because he had worried too much about the 'Liar'.)

The book is based on courses of lectures, and I have deliberately retained some features of those lectures: the use of tables and flow charts, a certain amount of rhetorical emphasis and recapitulation, the prodigality of examples, and even one or two serious attempts at making a joke. I hope all this will make for greater readability. The very rich supply of sometimes fairly extensive quotations is meant to give the reader a chance to assess my interpretations of other philosophers on the spot. The book has been long in the making. Various earlier versions of my lectures were delivered at my home university. The first (more or less) English versions of my Hamburg lectures were presented in the mid-1990s in Oslo and in Venice. It was on those occasions that I began thinking that it might be worthwhile to transform my lectures into a book. Material from what are now the two final chapters was used in 'Simple Truth and Alethic Realism', which was my Gareth Evans Memorial Lecture in Oxford in May 1998. Parts of the penultimate draft of this book formed the text of the Dasturzada Dr Jal Pavry Lectures which I delivered at Oxford in Hilary Term 1999. Drafts of many sections of this book were read as occasional papers in Berlin, Bertinoro, Bielefeld, Fribourg, Heidelberg, Kirchberg, London, Munich, New York, Oldenburg, Oxford, Padua, Reading, Saarbrücken, San Marino, Siena, Toruń, Zielona Góra, and, most recently, at the Moral Sciences Club in Cambridge. Many of the questions and objections of my audiences have contributed greatly to the clarification of my thoughts.

I am indebted to my students in Hamburg for much feedback over the years, especially to Simon Dänhardt, David Filip, Ben Höfer, Miguel Hoeltje, Niels Kröner, Vincent Müller, Michael Oliva-Cordoba, Stefanie Richter, Severin Schröder, Christian Stein, Armin Tatzel, Christian Tielmann, Elisabeth Wienberg, and above all, to Benjamin Schneider. I am also grateful to Maik Sühr, who helped prepare the manuscript for the publisher. I consider myself lucky that, many years ago, Kevin Mulligan, Peter Simons, and Barry Smith infected me with their enthusiasm for Austro-Polish philosophy, and I hope to have added a distinctly Bolzanian tone to their singing. I benefited especially from meetings with Peter in those years, when he had occasion to speak Austrian German most of the time. In Norway, Italy, and Poland exchanges with Dagfinn Føllesdal, Olaf Gjelsvik, Paolo Leonardi, Ernesto Napoli, and Jan Wolenski were very stimulating. At different stages I was helped by comments on various chapters of the book, which I received from Ansgar Beckermann, Ali Behboud, Emma Borg, Bill Brewer, Pascal Engel, Hartry Field, Manuel García-Carpintero, Thomas Hofweber, Andrea Jacona, David Kaplan, Andreas Kemmerling, Holger Klärner, Max Köbel, David Oderberg, Hilary Putnam, Tobias Rosefeldt, Ian Rumfitt, Stephen Schiffer, Mark Siebel, Markus Stepanians, Mark Textor, David Wiggins, and Ed Zalta.

Very special thanks must go to Sir Michael Dummett, who commented incisively on my Evans Lecture, and to Jonathan Dancy, Hanjo Glock, Peter Hacker, Paul Horwich, John Hyman, Christopher Peacocke, and the anonymous referees commissioned by Oxford University Press for taking the trouble to go through drafts of the entire book and to provide me with generously detailed and pointed written comments. Their searching questions and constructive suggestions have prompted much needed clarification and revision (and for very different reasons they will presumably all be disappointed by my inability to follow their good advice on every point).

I am particularly indebted to Chris Peacocke and David Wiggins, who opened many doors for me at Oxford. I have to thank various British institutions for support of my work. (In view of the nationality of the author of this book,
the second adjective should be stressed. I am grateful for the hospitality of three Oxford Colleges, St Catherine’s, St John’s, and Wolfson, during the terms when I held Visiting Fellowships. I am much obliged to The Leverhulme Trust, which awarded me a Visiting Professorship, and to the members of the very lively Department of Philosophy at Reading University, who made my time as Leverhulme Visiting Professor extremely rewarding and very enjoyable indeed. I also wish to thank my editor at OUP, Peter Momtchiloff, for his unfailing interest in my project, his constant support, and his admirable efficiency in all matters editorial. I have also been very fortunate to have Sarah Dancy as copy-editor, to whom I am most grateful for her careful work. For many months, when my thoughts were occupied by the content of this book to the exclusion of most other things and when my spirits often flagged, my wife Malakeh and my son Sebastian must often have found life with me less than easy, to put it mildly. I thank them very much for their forbearance.

With admiration, gratitude, and affection I dedicate this book to Sir Peter Strawson. Whenever I met him in Oxford, he gave me the greatest possible encouragement. ‘Under certain circumstances’, a great novel has it, ‘there are few hours in life more agreeable than the hour dedicated to the ceremony known as afternoon tea.’ For me, these circumstances are defined by his entirely unceremonious presence and the opportunity to enjoy the perceptiveness, self-irony, and dry humour of his remarks on philosophy, philosophers, and much else. Thirty years ago, his work drew me into analytical philosophy, and his lasting influence will be visible, or so I would like to think, on many pages of this book.

Hamburg, 14 July 2002

W. K.

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1 Some Questions About Truth

To the lay mind it is a perplexing thing that the nature of truth should be a vexed problem. That such is the case seems another illustration of Berkeley’s remark about the proneness of philosophers to throw dust into their own eyes and then complain that they cannot see. . . . The plain man . . . has learned, through hard discipline, that it is no easy matter to discover what the truth is in special instances. But such difficulties assume that the nature of truth is perfectly understood. . . . Whence and why the pother?  

There are at least two ways of asking the question, 'What is truth?' One of them is commonly attributed to Pilate: is there ever any hope that we might disclose the truth if the problem is a really delicate one? As is well known, jesting Pilate. . . would not stay for an answer. Another way of putting that question is the way Socrates asked, 'What is courage, what is piety, what is knowledge?' Many great philosophers took the question 'What is truth?' in a Socratic spirit, and the answers given through the ages are what the title of this book alludes to as 'conceptions of truth'. In advocating a conception of truth, philosophers may pursue different, though internally related, goals. Some of them try to explain the concept of truth—or to demonstrate the futility of all attempts at explaining this concept. Some of them mean to tell us what being true consists in (assuming that this may very well not be written into our concept, as it were). Most of them endeavour to specify (conceptually) necessary and sufficient conditions for something's being true. All of them aspire to be faithful to our workaday concept of truth, which is employed by Dewey's 'plain' men and women who have 'learned, through hard discipline, that it is no easy matter to discover what the truth is in special instances'.

The phrase 'the concept of truth' or, equivalently, 'the concept of being true', like all locutions of the type 'the concept of being F' or 'the concept of F-ness' (where 'F-ness' is a placeholder for the appropriate nominalization of the general term replacing 'F'), must be handled with care. Having a concept is having a cognitive capacity: you have the concept of being thus-and-so, I take it, if and only if you are able to think of something as thus-and-so (or as not thus-and-so). The concept of being F differs from the concept of being G if it is possible that somebody thinks of something as F without thinking of it as G. This may be the case even if (the property of) being F is (the property of) being G. An example or two will do no harm. A girl may be able to think of her father as having spent half of his salary on drink without being able to think of him as having spent 50 per cent of his salary on drink, notwithstanding the fact that having spent half of one's salary on drink is having spent 50 per cent of it for this purpose. Two concepts, one property. Thinking of a dish as needing some salt was something we often did long before our first lessons in chemistry, but at that stage we were not yet able to think of a dish as needing some sodium chloride. Nevertheless, needing some salt is needing some sodium chloride. Two concepts, one property. Of course, having the concept of being F differs vastly from having the property of being F: fortunately, you do not have to commit a murder in order to acquire the concept of a being a murderer.2

I shall try to defend a (decidedly non-startling) answer to the Socratic question, 'What is truth?', understood as a request for an elucidation of the concept, but I also invite the reader to a journey through the ages. The focus is clearly on the analytical tradition, but I think there is still a lot to be learned from pondering over conceptions of truth which grew on different soils. Michael Dummett once remarked, as an aside, that 'philosophical theories of truth have usually been intended as contributions to delineating the outlines of some theory of meaning'.3 I am taken aback by the adverb. Generations of philosophers, from Plato and Aristotle to Bolzano and Brentano, Peirce and Bradley, had no such intention, and quite a few analytical philosophers and logicians of the twentieth century who struggled with the concept of truth did not dream of thereby contributing to the theory of meaning; neither Moore nor Tarski did, to mention just two examples.4

In this introductory chapter I shall present a kind of flow chart. It is meant to give a bird's-eye view of a fairly large theoretical landscape and to provide a guide to the overall structure of this
book. The chart comprises sixteen *quaestiones de veritate*. They draw attention to some of the main junctions of the many roads which lead through this landscape. I shall describe these intersections, explain

(Q1) Is truth a property?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nihilism</td>
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(Q2) Is truth a relational property?

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<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
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(Q3) Is the implied relation one towards truth-value bearers?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
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(Q4) Is the implied relation one towards objects?

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(Q5) Is the implied relation one towards facts?

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<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
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(Q6) Are truths identical with facts?

<table>
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<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
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(Q7) Is there a one-one correlation between truths and facts?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
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Figure 1.1. Questions 1-7

some key terms, mention some of the philosophers who took either this road or that one, and mark those answers I intend to examine as well as those which I am going to put aside. I will announce which answers I shall endorse. (On the chart they are marked by asterisks.)
Is truth a relational or a non-relational property? Is it a naturalistic property or a non-naturalistic one? Is it epistemically constrained or unconstrained? Some philosophers give the same answer to all three questions: it is neither one nor the other. Truth isn't any kind of property, so nothing has the property of

end p.3

being true. I call this view (tongue in cheek) 'nihilism'. In a way this is the most radical stance one can take in our field, so in Chapter 2 ('A Bogus Predicate?') I shall devote quite a lot of critical attention to the negative answer to Question 1 in Figure 1.1. One strand in Gottlob Frege's reflections on truth points in this direction. The question when, according to Frege, two sentences express one and the same proposition will loom large in this chapter, and some lessons will be drawn from Bernard Bolzano's rather different answer to that question. In his very first essay on truth Peter Strawson drew nihilist conclusions from certain observations concerning the performative potential of the expression 'is true'. Frank Ramsey's so-called Redundancy Theory and its refinement in the work of Arthur Prior have been a fertile source of inspiration for nihilism in the last three decades. Detailed expositions of nihilism were given by Christopher Williams and by Dorothy Grover, and the most recent version is Robert Brandom's. I shall scrutinize their views at length, and I shall reject all of them.

Suppose, truth is a property: is it a relational property (Question 2)? In order to get a grip on this question, some terminological preparations will be useful. A predicate is an expression which takes one or more singular terms to make a sentence, in other words, it is a sentence-forming operator on singular terms. So from 'Rachel is married to Jacob' you can obtain two different monadic predicates, depending on which singular term you delete; when you remove both singular terms, the result is a dyadic predicate. A property which is *designated* by a singular term of the type 'F-ness' (or 'being F') is, as I shall put it, *signified* by the corresponding predicate 'is F'. (This predicate *applies* to all, and only to, F-things, if there are any, and if one fully understands it, one possesses the concept which is *expressed* by it.) So if truth is a property, then the singular term 'truth' (or 'being true') designates it, and the monadic predicate 'is true' signifies it. Being F is a *relational property* if and only if (the property of) being F is (the property of) being related in such-and-such a way to something/somebody. Thus, (i) being married to Jacob and (ii) being a spouse (that is, being married to somebody) are relational properties of Rachel. Both properties are signified by monadic predicates, 'is married to Jacob' and 'is a spouse' respectively. Only polyadic predicates signify relations. The dyadic predicate 'is married to' signifies the relation that is implied, as it were, by (i) and (ii). In case (i) a member of the right field, or counter-domain, of the implied relation is identified, in case (ii) it is not.

end p.4

So if truth is a relational property, then, in analogy with case (ii), being true is being related in a certain way to something. In giving a negative answer to Question 2 one denies the consequent of this conditional. Nihilism is bound to give a negative answer to Question 2. Prima facie at least, several other conceptions of truth are not committed to a positive answer, thus disquotationalism, minimalism, and the account I favour. (We will soon have occasion to give a provisional description of these views when we confront a different set of questions.)

But suppose truth is a relational property: is the implied relation one in which truth-candidates stand to other truth-value bearers (Question 3)? Yes, say those who embrace a Coherence Theory. (This, too, is a view we shall encounter again when posing a different kind of question.) Philosophers who opt for a Correspondence Theory answer Question 3 negatively. Strangely enough, only one of the varieties of correspondence which are distinguished under Questions 4-7 tends to be registered in the literature, namely the Cambridge variety, which I call 'Fact(-based) Correspondence'. A central aim of Chapter 3 ('Varieties of Correspondence') will be to restore the balance. Aristotle paved the way for 'Object(-based) Correspondence', the affirmative answer to Question 4, which was to be the prevailing view for many centuries. Paradigmatic elements of the right field of the correspondence relation thus understood are material objects such as mountains and people. In the first decades of the twentieth century some philosophers in
Cambridge took facts to be what truths correspond to. The entries under Question 7 allude to a sort of economical difference between the Cambridge friends of correspondence: George Edward Moore was rather lavish with facts, whereas Bertrand Russell, pushed by Ludwig Wittgenstein, came to be rather stingy with them. More recently, John Searle is hardly less generous than Moore was: 'If it is true that if the cat had been on the mat, then the dog would have had to have been in the kitchen, then it must be a fact that if the cat had been on the mat, then the dog would have had to have been in the kitchen. For every true statement there is a corresponding fact.'

In the course of weighing up the main objections against Fact-based Correspondence, we will see that there is yet another option for correspondence theorists. Under the left branch of Question 5 it is registered as 'Event(-based) Correspondence'. Here and elsewhere in this book, the term 'event' is meant only to cover one-off happenings that could not be repeated, such as the eruption of Vesuvius which buried Pompeii, or the death of a particular cat. (Even if a cat had nine lives, none of its nine deaths could be repeated.) By contrast, the Venice Carnival, which is celebrated year after year, is not an event, but an event-kind. Russell, never at a loss for a new answer to his old questions, pleaded for Event-based Correspondence in 1940. Let me briefly illustrate the three options for friends of correspondence which have to be canvassed. Suppose I have the true belief that Vesuvius erupted in 79. Does the correspondence obtain (i) between the concept expressed by the predicate 'erupted in 79' and the mountain my belief is about? Or between (ii) my belief as a whole and the fact that Vesuvius erupted in 79? Or between (iii) my belief and an event which took place in 79? On the whole, my verdict on correspondence accounts of truth will be less than favourable.

Nowadays there is much talk about 'making true'. Making sense of this talk turns out to be rather difficult. In the long final section of Chapter 3 I shall try to convince you that several readings, with very different credentials and ranges, should be carefully distinguished.

The limiting case of a relational conception of truth is referred to under the right branch of Question 6. According to the so-called Identity Theory, something is true if and only if it is (identical with) a fact. This contention makes sense only if one does not regard linguistic or mental entities as truth-value bearers, but, rather, propositions, something which can be expressed by declarative sentences and which can be the content of certain mental acts and states. So the tenet is (Idem) For all x, x is a true proposition iff (if and only if) there is a fact with which x is identical.

Between 1899 and 1906 Moore and Russell upheld the Identity Theory (which by 1910 they were to renounce in favour of fact-based correspondence views).

Around the turn of the century they complained that correspondence theorists suffer from double vision:

It is commonly supposed that the truth of a proposition consists in some relation which it bears to reality; and falsehood in the absence of this relation. The relation in question is generally called a 'correspondence' or 'agreement' . . . . . It is essential to the theory that a truth should differ in some specific way from the reality, in relation to which its truth is to consist. . . . It is the impossibility of finding any such difference . . . which refutes the theory . . . . A truth differs in no respect from the reality to which it was supposed merely to correspond: e.g. the truth that I exist differs in no respect from the corresponding reality—my existence. (Moore, 'Truth', 20, 21)

The derived nominal phrase at the very end of this passage is to be understood, I take it, as in a sentence like 'Not many people are aware of my existence', which comes to the same thing as 'Not many people are aware (of the fact) that I exist'. Alexius Meinong characterized truths as 'subsisting objectives [bestehende Objekte]', 'factual objectives [tatsächliche Objekte]', or 'facts [Tatsachen]'. Implicitly, this provides identity theorists with an account of falsity as well. Analysing the notion of a fact as that of a state of affairs [Objektiv] which obtains [besteht], an advocate of (Idem) can say: x is false iff for some y, y is a state of affairs and y does not obtain and x is identical with y. However, Meinong's agreement with the identity theorists is only partial: he accepted only the left-to-right half of (Idem), because he took only those facts to be truths which are contents of
acts of judgement. Frege, who referred to the truth-evaluable contents of utterances as thoughts, embraced (Idem) without any reservation when he wrote in his paper 'The Thought'.

'Tatsachen! Tatsachen! Tatsachen!'ruft der Naturforscher aus. . . Was ist eine Tatsache? Eine Tatsache ist ein Gedanke, der wahr ist. ['Facts, facts, facts', cries the scientist. . . What is a fact? A fact is a thought that is true.]

(Der Gedanke', 74)

Frege, Moore and Russell are agreed that for a correspondence theory it is essential that the relata of the correspondence relation are distinct. (That's why I introduced the Identity Theory as the limiting case, not of a correspondence view, but of a relational conception of truth.) But unlike Moore and Russell in their early writings, Frege never dreamt of saying that reality, or the world, consists of true propositions (and their components): his 'first realm', the physical world, and his 'second realm', the mental world, do not contain any proposition (nor any constituent of propositions), and the 'third realm', with its somewhat unfortunate German name, harbours not only true propositions, but also false ones. In the correspondence between Russell and Frege the reason for this disagreement became clear. Both take propositions to be structured entities, but whereas the components of Fregean propositions are 'modes of presentation' ('senses'), Russellian propositions are composed of the things represented, objects and properties. For Frege, the proposition that Mont Blanc is more than 4,000 metres high consists of the sense of 'Mont Blanc' and the sense of 'is more than 4,000 metres high'; Russell, on the other hand, takes that proposition to contain the mountain with all its snowfields and the property of being 4,000 metres high as constituents. The claim that true propositions (and their components) are the building-blocks of the world is surely more palatable if one thinks of Russellian propositions.

There is, however, at least one adherent of (Idem) who does take the world to consist of true Fregean propositions, namely John McDowell:

[T]here is no ontological gap between the sort of thing... one can think, and the sort of thing that can be the case. When one thinks truly, what one thinks is what is the case. So since the world is everything that is the case (as [Wittgenstein] once wrote), there is no gap between thought, as such, and the world. . . . But to say that there is no gap between thought, as such, and the world is just to dress up a truism in high-flown language. All the point comes to is that one can think, for instance, that spring has begun, and that the very same thing, that spring has begun, can be the case. That is truistic, and it cannot embody something metaphysically contentious. . . .

Given the identity between what one thinks (when one's thought is true) and what is the case, to conceive the world as everything that is the case (as in Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, 1) is to incorporate the world into what figures in Frege as the realm of sense. The realm of sense (Sinn) contains thoughts in the sense of what can be thought (thinkables) as opposed to acts or episodes of thinking. The identity displays facts, things that are the case, as thoughts in that sense—the thinkables that are the case. (Mind and World, 27, 179)

Is (Idem) really truistic, as McDowell wants us to believe? It is indeed a truism that one and the same that-clause can be used to single out a true thinkable (a true proposition) and a fact. But does it follow from this that facts are nothing but true thinkables? Suppose we accept (P1) What Ben first thought was that Ann survived the accident.
(P2) That Ann survived the accident is a miracle.

If the identity of the that-clauses in (P1) and (P2), provided that the context is kept constant, were to guarantee that 'the very same thing' is introduced into discourse, then we would have to conclude from these premisses:
(C) Therefore (?), what Ben first thought is a miracle.

We can avoid this slide into nonsense by treating that-clauses as systematically ambiguous. Then we can say: only in (P1) does the that-clause single out a thinkable (and a true one, provided that Ann survived the accident), hence the displayed argument commits the fallacy of equivocation. We do not have to dwell on the question (which we will face in due course) what the that-clause singles out in (P2): what matters here and now is only the explanatory potential of assigning different 'things' to the that-clauses in (P1) and (P2). The unacceptability of the argument to (C) shows that McDowell cannot simply conclude from the identity of his italicized that-clauses that 'the very same thing' can be both a true thinkable (a true proposition) and a fact.
Of course, even if McDowell's argument is weak, (**Idem**) may be correct. But a former advocate of (**Idem**) seems to have refuted it a long time ago:

[Suppose I have the true belief] that a given tree, which I see, is an oak. . . . [T]he proposition that the tree is an oak is something which is and equally is whether the belief is true.

\[\text{end p.9}\]

or false. . . . But. . . the fact that the tree is an oak is something which is, only if the belief be true; and hence it is quite plain that. . . the fact that the tree is an oak is quite a different thing. . . from what I believe, when I believe that it is one. . . . (Moore, *Some Main Problems of Philosophy*, 308)

Let 'p' express some contingently true proposition. Somebody could think that p even if it were false that p; what our thinker thinks, the *proposition* that p, exists whether or not he is right. But the *fact* that p would not exist if it were false that p. Therefore, Moore argues, the proposition that p is not identical with the fact that p.

But is this refutation really cogent? An advocate of (**Idem**) can reply: 'Socrates' designates Socrates in every possible world in which he exists, regardless of whether he is married or not. By contrast, 'Xanthippe's husband' designates him only in those possible worlds in which he is married. Obviously this does not prevent Socrates from being identical with Xanthippe's husband. Now, similarly, the adherent of (**Idem**) continues, 'the proposition that p' designates the proposition that p in all possible worlds, whereas 'the fact that p' designates that proposition only in those worlds in which it is true. So why, he asks, should this observation refute the identity claim?

But I think there are good reasons for rejecting (**Idem**). If facts are nothing but true propositions, why is it that 'True propositions are true' expresses a trivial truth, whereas 'Facts are true' has an awkward ring? Why is it that 'The Pythagorean Theorem is true' makes sense, whereas 'The Pythagorean Theorem is a fact' does not? Why is it that 'The victory of the Labour Party in 2001 is a fact' is significant, whereas 'The victory of the Labour Party in 2001 is a true proposition'

\[\text{end p.10}\]

is nonsense? If you think that the doubtful propriety or undeniable impropriety of certain forms of speech cannot bear much weight as evidence against a philosophical thesis like (**Idem**),

recall that McDowell at least did not offer any other support for that thesis than a linguistic observation. But this is only an *ad hominem* argument.

By reminding us of an earlier use of 'fact' and offering an alternative explanatory hypothesis, Julian Dodd has tried to show that the kind of linguistic observations I adduced does not rebut the identification of facts and true propositions. Once upon a time, he tells us, 'fact' was used as a synonym for 'event'. John L. Austin has conveniently summarized the evidence collected in the Oxford English Dictionary, so let me insert his summary here:

For the first 200 years of [the] use of ['fact'] (sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) it meant (cf. 'feat') a deed or action, either the thing done or the doing of the thing, and more especially a criminal action; during the eighteenth century this use gradually died out in favour of a more extended meaning which began to appear already in the seventeenth century: a fact is now *something that has really occurred* (even classical Latin extended *factum* to mean '[actual] event' or '[actual] occurrence'). ('Unfair to Facts', 164)

Nowadays this use is no longer predominant, but, Dodd argues, if there were still occasional hangovers from that earlier usage in our 'fact' talk, this would explain why the expressions 'fact' and 'true proposition' are sometimes not interchangeable, although facts, in the currently dominant use of this term, *are* true propositions. For then we could say that 'this [substitution-resistant] part of our discourse concerning "fact"' is still stained with its old meaning. But consider the following expansion of one of my examples: 'The victory of the Labour Party in 2001 is a fact which no British citizen denies.' Dodd's hypothesis cannot explain why the substitution of 'true proposition' is not acceptable therein. One can deny only what can be stated, but no *event* can be stated. So although 'fact' does *not* have its earlier meaning in this sentence, it cannot be replaced by 'true proposition', and Dodd's alleged inference to the best explanation evaporates.

At any rate, the next observation should carry conviction: we individuate facts less finely than true propositions. The fact that you never met Cassius Clay is the same as the fact that you never met Muhammad Ali, the fact that I am
German is identical with the fact that WK is German, the fact that three-quarters of the electorate went to the polls is the same as the fact 75 per cent of the electorate went to the polls, and the fact that for cooking we often need some common salt is identical with the fact that for cooking we often need some sodium chloride. But (as Frege would be the first to insist) in each of these cases my utterances of the embedded sentences express different propositions.

Criticizing his teacher Husserl and other members of the Brentano school, Adolf Reinach once said: 'All Austrians constantly confuse proposition [Satz] and state of affairs [Sachverhalt].' Philosophers who quite explicitly identify facts (obtaining states of affairs) with true propositions cannot be accused of confusing them, but I think they, too, are confused. So I shall not revisit (Idem) in the following chapters.

Let us now consider the next three questions on my flow chart (see Figure 1.2). Suppose truth is a property of sentences (Question 8), of type-sentences perhaps or of token-sentences (or of acts of producing such tokens): then the next question is whether the concept of (sentential) truth is explainable (Question 9). I call those philosophers who answer 'no' adherents of 'sentential primitivism'. You will not hear 'primitivism' as a term of abuse once you realize, or recall, that Donald Davidson has maintained, for many years now, that our general notion of truth is a 'primitive concept':

[T]ruth is as clear and basic a concept as we have. . . . Any attempt to explain, define, analyse or explicate the concept will... either add nothing to our understanding of truth or have obvious counter-examples. Why on earth should we expect to be able to reduce truth to something clearer and more fundamental? After all, the only concept Plato succeeded in defining was [the concept of] mud. ('Afterthoughts', 155-6)

(The sarcastic allusion is to Plato's Theaetetus: in this dialogue 'mud' gets defined as 'earth mixed with water', whereas the attempt at defining 'knowledge' is the first of a long series of failures.) The very title of Davidson's paper, 'The Folly of Trying to Define Truth', epitomizes the theme. Of course, primitivism does

end p.12

(Q8) Is truth a property of sentences?

no* yes

(Q9) Can the concept of sentential truth be explained?

no yes

Sentential Primitivism

(Q10) Can one finitely state what sentential truth is?

no yes

Disquotationalism (Semantic Conception of Truth)

Figure 1.2. Questions 8-10

not exclude that a lot of what we know a priori involves the concept of truth essentially. Thus we know a priori, for example, that a set of truths is always consistent.

Note how quickly Davidson moves, in the passage quoted above, from 'explanation, definition' to 'reduction to something more fundamental'. Perhaps this is too quick. Why shouldn't a concept resist the latter and yet allow for the former? Johann Heinrich Lambert (much admired by Kant) was perhaps the first German philosopher who declared truth to be a simple concept. (We
will soon see that he wasn't the last.) But he conceded that a concept may defy reduction or dismantling analysis without resisting explanation:

\[ \text{[Wahrheit] ist ein einfacher Begriff, welcher sich folglich, da er nicht mehrere innere Merkmale hat, höchstens nur durch Verhältnisse zu andern Begriffen definieren oder kenntlich machen läßt. [Truth is a simple concept which, as it does not have several internal marks, can at best be defined or elucidated only through its relations to other concepts.]} \]

\[ (\text{Anlage zur Architectonic, vol. I, § 305}) \]

In the course of this book I shall confront sentential primitivism only indirectly, by arguing (a) that propositions are the primary truth-value bearers, and (b) that the notion of truth can be adequately explained.\(^{32}\)

Alfred Tarski's elaboration of the so-called semantic conception of truth has often been read as if it were an attempt to answer the philosophical question 'What is truth?', an attempt which should be entered under the right branch of Question 10. Whether this is a correct reading is a matter of controversy, and we will have to enter this debate, which has been raging now for six decades. What can hardly be doubted is that Tarski provides us with a recipe for systematically specifying the truth-conditions of sentences in languages which have a certain tightly circumscribed structure. If \(L\) is such a language, then the complete specification of the truth-conditions of all sentences in \(L\) is what Tarski calls a definition of a truth-predicate for \(L\). Without much deference to Tarski's own words, various claims and counter-claims have been made, sometimes by one and the same philosopher, on behalf of such truth-definitions, and only very few of his critics and admirers (outside of Poland) ever take his background in Austro-Polish philosophy into account. Trying to make up for these omissions will turn out to be particularly helpful, or so I would like to think, when it comes to determining the relation between Tarski's conception of truth and correspondence views.

Tarski offered a touchstone for definitions of truth-predicates which has been a source of inspiration for the view registered under the left branch of Question 10. According to Tarski's criterion of material adequacy, a definition of 'true' for a regimented part of English which contains the sentence 'Snow is white' is materially adequate only if it allows for the derivation of the biconditional: 'Snow is white' is true if and only if snow is white. Here, the sentence quoted on the left-hand side is disquoted\(^{33}\) (shorn of quotation-marks) on the right-hand side. The biconditional is a substitution-instance of the Disquotation Schema

\[ (\text{Dis}) 'p' \text{ is true if and only if } p, \]

where both occurrences of the letter 'p' are to be taken as place-holders for occurrences of the same declarative sentence. In other words, we are not to understand the left-hand side of (Dis) as ascribing truth to the sixteenth letter of the Roman alphabet.\(^{34}\) Starting from the observation that we are generally inclined to accept as a matter of course any instance of (Dis), save for those that engender paradox,\(^{35}\) champions of disquotationism go a step further and

\[
\begin{align*}
(Q11) & \quad \text{Is truth a property of propositions?} \\
\text{no} & \quad \text{yes*} \\
(Q12) & \quad \text{Is truth a stable property of propositions?} \\
\text{no} & \quad \text{yes*} \\
\text{Temporalism} & \quad \text{Eternalism}
\end{align*}
\]
maintain that what is said remains unaffected whether we append the predicate 'is true' to the quotational designator of a sentence or whether we simply erase the quotation marks. But then, why use such a predicate at all? Because it turns out to be a priceless gift, so the disquotationalists' answer runs, when we want to talk about truth-candidates that we cannot present verbatim. Disquotationalists like Hartry Field claim that in the mouth of a certain speaker of English at a certain time \( x \) is true abbreviates an infinite disjunction: \( (x = 'p_1', \text{ and } p_1) \), or \( (x = 'p_2', \text{ and } p_2) \), or \( (x = 'p_3', \text{ and } p_3) \), or . . . , where \( 'p_1', 'p_2', 'p_3' \), etc. are all the declarative sentences which that speaker at that time understands. I have put this conception of truth under the left-hand branch of Question 10, since it is not only for medical reasons (as Russell might have put it) that this disjunction cannot be written down. I shall devote Chapter 4 ('In and Out of Quotation Marks') to the semantic conception of truth and to disquotationalism. We shall see that, for different reasons, both approaches provide us, not with an explanation of our workaday concept of truth, but rather with a multitude of surrogates.

end p.15

The penultimate sequence of questions on my flow chart is given in Figure 1.3. Suppose truth is primarily a property (not of sentences but) of what sentences can be used to say, of propositions (Question 11): then my next question is whether truth is a stable property of propositions (Question 12). Is there such a thing as the proposition that today is Tuesday, which (if today is Tuesday) will become false tomorrow and will regain truth next week? Or is the proposition which is today expressed by 'Today is Tuesday' different from the proposition which will tomorrow be expressed by this sentence? In Chapter 5 ('Propositions, Time, and Eternity') I shall first elucidate the concept of a proposition and argue that truth is primarily a property of the things which fall under that concept. Then I will confront the question whether it is a property that can be lost. I shall mark some divisions within the opposing camps of temporalists and eternalists and plead for a version of eternalism. As is to be expected, indexicality is a topic which will loom large in that chapter.

With respect to sentential truth, there was no counterpart to Question 12 on my flow chart, because if type-sentences can be said to be true at all, then it is a matter of course that some sentences have shifting truth-values, and if utterances of type-sentences can be said to be true at all, then they do not have shifting truth-values. Question 13, on the other hand, echoes question Question 9. Propositional primitivism is an important ingredient in Frege's reflections on truth, from his early to his late work:

**Was wahr sei, halte ich für nicht erklärbar.** [What is true, I hold to be not explainable.]

(Kernsätze zur Logik' [1880], in NS 189 (174))

**Wahrheit ist offenbar etwas so Ursprüngliches und Einfaches, dass eine Rückführung auf noch Einfacheres nicht möglich ist.** [Apparently truth is something so primitive and simple that a reduction to anything still simpler is not possible.]

(Logik' [1897], in NS, 140 (129))

**Hierarch ist es wahrscheinlich, daß der Inhalt des Wortes 'wahr' ganz einzigartig und undefinierbar ist.** [Hence the content of the word 'true' is probably quite unique and indefinable.]

(Der Gedanke' [1918], 60)
As can be seen from the beginning of the last statement, Frege thinks he has a good argument for his primitivism. (It is actually a very puzzling argument which is not above the suspicion of sophistry.\textsuperscript{36}) Looking back at our discussion of the Identity Theory above, the three extracts from Frege put it beyond any doubt that, by assenting to \textit{(Idem)}, Frege did not mean to explain the concept of truth. Rather, he took \textit{(Idem)} to explain the notion of a fact.

Note that Frege moves from 'explanation' to 'reduction to something still simpler'. The similarity to Davidson's move is striking, and once again the question arises why a concept couldn't defy the latter while permitting the former.

\textbf{end p.16}

Moore and Russell, too, were adherents of propositional primitivism—as long as they identified truths with facts. As in the case of Frege, this throws some light on the status of the Identity Theory in their thinking. They did not take it to be an explanation of the meaning of 'true',\textsuperscript{37} but, rather, as a metaphysical claim. Reality, Moore and Russell then thought, is the totality of all true propositions; it consists of true propositions and their components. Here is Moore's own characterization of the theory that he once pleaded for:

[The] theory which I myself formerly held... adopts the supposition that in the case of every belief, true or false, there is a proposition which is what is believed... But the difference between a true and a false belief, it says, consists simply in this, that where the belief is true the proposition believed... has a... simple unanalysable property which is possessed by some propositions and not by others. The propositions which don't possess it, and which therefore we call false... just have not got this... property of being true. (SMPP 261)

Certainly, the young Moore would have been ready to say of truth what he actually did say of goodness and yellowness:

'[G]ood' is a simple notion, just as 'yellow' is a simple notion. ... Definitions... which describe the real nature of the... notion denoted by a word... are only possible when the... notion in question is something complex. ... But yellow and good, we say, are not complex: they are notions of that simple kind, out of which definitions are composed and with which the power of further defining ceases. \textit{(Principia Ethica, 6-8)}

Here again, primitivism with respect to a concept does not exclude that a lot of what we know a priori involves that concept essentially. Thus we know a priori that no surface that is yellow all over is black all over, that personal affection is intrinsically good, and that whatever follows from what is true is itself true. The colour example makes it plain that the following comment on the early Moore's conception of truth is misguided: propositional primitivism, we are told, 'gives a sense of impenetrable mysteriousness to the notion of truth'.\textsuperscript{38} Does Moore give a sense of impenetrable mysteriousness to the notion of \textit{yellowness} by declaring it to be indefinable? As Davidson's example shows, one can be a primitivist with respect to truth and yet contend that 'truth is as clear a concept as we have'. The entailment example ('Whatever follows from what is true is itself true') helps us to see why Frege's primitivism does not prevent him from maintaining, a few lines before making his indefinability claim that 'it is the task

\textbf{end p.17}

of logic to discover the laws of truth. ... In the laws of truth the meaning of the word "true" is spelled out.\textsuperscript{39} Of course, talk of spelling out is very misleading here, since it almost inevitably suggests the idea of dismantling analysis. The point must be rather that of uncovering a system of principles concerning truth, such as 'Every logical consequence of a truth is itself a truth', 'The conjunction of a truth with its own negation is a falsehood', or 'The negation of a truth is a falsehood.' In this book I shall confront propositional primitivism only indirectly.\textsuperscript{40} It is a conception of truth which should only be resorted to, I think, when one has made sure that 'the decent alternatives have been exhausted',\textsuperscript{41} and I will try to show that there is a decent alternative, a non-reductive explanation.

In Chapter 6 ('Two Pleas for Modesty') I shall confront Question 14. At the centre of Paul Horwich's highly influential reflections on truth\textsuperscript{42} stands a schema which I propose to call the Denominalization Schema

\textbf{(Den)} \textit{It is true that p, if and only if} p,

\textbf{since the sentence nominalized in the left branch of the biconditional is denominalized in the right branch.}\textsuperscript{43} Most authors call this schema either 'T-schema' or, following Dummett, 'Equivalence
Schema'. The obvious drawback of both titles is that they suit the Disquotation Schema equally well. Note that the crucial feature of the biconditionals covered by (Den) and by its translations into other languages is that the sentence-nominalization on the left-hand side is cancelled on the right-hand side. Not all languages are so obliging that the nominalization of a sentence literally contains an occurrence of that very sentence. Thus, in the Latin translation of 'It is true that snow is white, iff snow is white', the nominalization of 'nix est alba' needed in the left-hand branch is an accusative-cum-infinitive construction: 'nivem albam esse verum est'. This difference notwithstanding, 'verum est' shares with 'it is true' the feature that is captured by (Den) and enshrined in my title for this schema.

end p.18

Horwich's 'minimal theory' of truth contains all and (almost) only those propositions which are expressed by (non-pathological) instances of (Den). According to Horwich's 'minimalist conception' of truth, the content of the concept of truth is completely captured by the minimal theory. Since one cannot write down the minimal theory, I have put this view in the left-hand branch under Question 14. Finally, I shall explain the contrasting conception of truth that I favour: the Modest Account. 'A new theory of truth?'—Heaven forbid. I shall unearth the roots of this account in earlier works; but I will introduce, motivate, and develop it in my own way, and I will be at pains to defend it against various objections.

Let me insert here a remark on terminological policy. I shall steadfastly refrain from using the term 'deflationism', which has been applied to various entries on my flow chart (in particular to nihilism, disquotationalism, and minimalism). What deflationism comes to varies with the target that is alleged to be inflated. So we find a confusing multiplicity of uses in the literature. According to Field, "Deflationism" is the view that truth is at bottom disquotational. This implies that deflationists must take truth to be a property of something that can be put between quotation marks. But then Horwich's minimalism cannot be called deflationist, since he takes truth to be a property of propositions. Yet he is very keen to promote his conception of truth under the label 'deflationism'. Nihilists, too, would lose the right to call themselves deflationists, since they deny that truth is a property at all. Marian David links deflationism with a metaphysical distaste for non-physical entities. Again, minimalism is out, and so is every conception according to which truth is a property of type-sentences. According to Paul Boghossian, Crispin Wright, and William Alston, deflationism is the view that 'it is a mistake to suppose that there is a property of truth (falsity) that one attributes to propositions, statements, beliefs, and/or sentences. Once

end p.19

again, minimalism turns out to be inflationist, and so does disquotationalism, because they take truth to be a property of propositions or of certain linguistic objects. A few pages later Wright tells us that it is deflationism's 'most basic and distinctive contention that "true" is merely a device for endorsing assertions'. But this characterization only fits the position that Strawson took in 1949. Horwich himself seems to mean by 'deflationism' the denial of the claim that 'the property of truth has some sort of underlying nature', but why not call the minimalist account an attempt at disclosing the nature of truth? In view of this terminological chaos, I propose to put the term 'deflationism' on what Otto Neurath once called, tongue in cheek, the Index Verborum Prohibitorum.

The last two questions to be considered in this book are given in Figure 1.4. The term 'alethic realism' (which I have borrowed from Alston) is not only a very ugly Greco-Latin concoction. It also tends to be mispronounced or misprinted as 'athletic realism', which is very unfortunate because the doctrine for which I use this title is not a very muscular affair. Its one and only contention is this: some true propositions which human beings are able to comprehend can never be contents of any justified human beliefs. Truth, alethic realists contend, outruns rational acceptability; it is not epistemically constrained (Notice that in my mouth these slogans are intended to abbreviate the italicized statement.) Alethic realism, thus understood, calls attention to a kind of inevitable ignorance on our part, but it is not committed to allowing the possibility of undetectable error: it does not imply that even a 'theory that is "ideal"' from the point of view of
operational utility, inner beauty and elegance, "plausibility", "simplicity", "conservatism", etc. might be false.\footnote{Since it lacks this implication, alethic realism differs vastly from the doctrine Putnam calls 'metaphysical realism'.} Furthermore, alethic realism is not wedded to the principle of bivalence, according to which every truth-candidate is either true or false.

According to alethic anti-realism, on the other hand, every truth that is comprehensible to human beings can become the content of a justified human

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{l|c}
(Q15) & Is truth epistemically constrained? \\
\hline
\textbf{no*} & \textbf{yes} \\
Alethic Realism & Alethic Anti-Realism \\
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{l|c}
(Q16) & Is the concept of truth an epistemic concept? \\
\hline
\textbf{no} & \textbf{yes} \\
Definitional Alethic Anti-Realism & \\
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

Figure 1.4. Questions 15-16

belief. (The term 'anti-realism' is Dummett's coinage. Its paleness is intended: 'idealism' carries too many connotations which are irrelevant to the point at issue.) Truth, alethic anti-realists claim, does not outrun rational acceptability, it is epistemically constrained: whatever is true could be rationally accepted.

Taking the variables in the following universally quantified biconditionals to run over acts or states or propositions (as the case may be) which human beings can perform or be in or comprehend, we can say that alethic anti-realism is correct if (the left-to-right half of) any of these biconditionals expresses a truth about truth.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{Brentano} $\forall x \ (x \text{ is true } \leftrightarrow x \text{ is, or has the same content as, an evident judgement})$
\item \textbf{Bradley} $\forall x \ (x \text{ is true } \leftrightarrow x \text{ belongs to a maximally coherent set of beliefs})$
\item \textbf{Peirce} $\forall x \ (x \text{ is true } \leftrightarrow x \text{ is a belief that all investigators would finally share if investigation were pursued long enough})$
\item \textbf{James} $\forall x \ (x \text{ is true } \leftrightarrow \exists t \ (x \text{ is a belief acquired at time } t \& x \text{ meets all experiences at } t \text{ and after } t \text{ satisfactorily}))$
\item \textbf{Goodman} $\forall x \ (x \text{ is true } \leftrightarrow \exists t \ (x \text{ is credible at time } t \& x \text{ remains credible at all times after } t))$
\item \textbf{Putnam} $\forall x \ (x \text{ is true } \leftrightarrow \text{ it would be rational to accept } x \text{ if epistemic conditions were good enough})$
\item \textbf{Dummett} $\forall x \ (x \text{ is true } \leftrightarrow x \text{ can in principle become a content of knowledge})$
\item \textbf{(Wright)} $\forall x \ (x \text{ is true } \leftrightarrow \exists y \ (y \text{ is an actually accessible state of information } \& x \text{ is warranted assertible in } y \& x \text{ remains warranted assertible no matter how } y \text{ is enlarged upon or improved})).$
\end{itemize}

I've put the last name in brackets, because Wright offers this biconditional in an exploratory spirit. In Chapter 7 ('Truth and Justifiability'), the final chapter of this book, I shall explain, and brood on, the above anti-realist biconditionals.\footnote{I have spelt out the anti-realist slogan, 'Truth does not outrun rational acceptability', in such a way that 'it is rationally acceptable that p' abbreviates 'it is in principle possible that some human being or other is justified in believing that p'. Let me now motivate this anthropocentrism by considering certain features of traditional theism and of Dummett's portrayal of the realist. The God of the Philosophers cognitively surpasses us to such an extent that He literally knows everything. Which impact would this doctrine, if it were true, have on the alethic realism/anti-realism issue? Bolzanno marks one respect in which it would have no impact:}
challenges him to explain how we can understand realist to give such an explanation: it is true that p, iff it is
concept of truth is governed by the half of Dummett's biconditional. The fact that it has b
would be rational to believe that p, then it is true that bico
understood, the right-to-left half
under the standard reading of 'possible' in alethic modal logic, the right-to-left half
holds: if it is not true that p, then it cannot be known that p. Under the standard reading of 'possible' in alethic modal logic, the right-to-left half of
of knowability: 'If a stat
some contingent falsehoods are possible contents of knowledge, since a proposition that p which is false in the actual world but true in other possible worlds may be such that in some of those possible worlds somebody knows that p. So Dummett needs a reading of 'knowable' in which the possibility of knowledge implies truth. (Thus understood, the right-to-left half of his biconditional is a matter of course. Contrast, for example, Putnam's equivalence, read in the same direction: 'If under epistemically optimal conditions it would be rational to believe that p, then it is true that p' is a substantial claim, as can be seen from the fact that it has been seriously debated.) But what we are interested in here is the left-to-right half of Dummett's biconditional.

Somewhat surprisingly, Dummett maintains that even a realist has to concede that the concept of truth is governed by the principle of knowability: 'If a statement is true, it must be in principle possible to know that p. But the difference between knowability and, say, rational acceptability is not important for the point that is now at issue. There is another worry that can be safely put aside here. The modal expression 'can' in the Dummettian biconditional is to be understood in such a way that the following holds: if it is not true that p, then it cannot be known that p. Under the standard reading of 'possible' in alethic modal logic, the right-to-left half of that biconditional would be clearly incorrect: some contingent falsehoods are possible contents of knowledge, since a proposition that p which is false in the actual world but true in other possible worlds may be such that in some of those possible worlds somebody knows that p.

So Dummett needs a reading of 'knowable' in which the possibility of knowledge implies truth. (Thus understood, the right-to-left half of his biconditional is a matter of course. Contrast, for example, Putnam's equivalence, read in the same direction: 'If under epistemically optimal conditions it would be rational to believe that p, then it is true that p' is a substantial claim, as can be seen from the fact that it has been seriously debated.) But what we are interested in here is the left-to-right half of Dummett's biconditional.

Somewhat surprisingly, Dummett maintains that even a realist has to concede that the concept of truth is governed by the principle of knowability: 'If a statement is true, it must be in principle possible to know that it is true. A realist is bound to reject this principle, of course, if 'in principle possible' is supposed to mean: in principle possible for beings with our modes of sensory awareness and our conceptual resources. But his attitude towards the principle of knowability will change, Dummett contends, as soon as it is taken also to cover hypothetical beings endowed with super-human (yet sub-divine) perceptual and conceptual abilities. Why is the realist's attitude towards the principle of knowability supposed to change if it is given this reading? Dummett challenges him to explain how we can understand answers to questions that we do not know how

to decide, and the hypothesis of a super-human (yet finite) verifier seems to enable the realist to give such an explanation:
The realist holds that we give sense to those sentences of our language which are not effectively decidable by appealing tacitly to means of determining their truth-values which we do not ourselves possess, but which we can conceive of by analogy with those which we do. (Truth', 24) [The realist] concedes the absurdity of supposing that a statement could be true if it was in principle impossible to know that it was true. The anti-realist's mistake, he thinks, is to apply this proposition in such a way that
'impossible' is taken to mean 'impossible for us'. Our... observational and intellectual faculties are, contingently, limited, so that there is no reason to suppose that any true statement will be able to be known to be true by us. All that is necessary is that there could be a subject capable of knowing it, if only with greater perceptual or cognitive powers than ours. *(LBM 345)*

In the case of questions we do not know how to decide, the realist is supposed to think of a super-human, but not omniscient, verifier, of a being with cognitive abilities which transcend our own, but which we can conceive of by analogy with those we do possess. This being, just to mention a few of its most remarkable achievements, is per hypothesin able to inspect not only each cup in his or her cupboard individually but also all elements of an infinite totality, and it can 'directly see' into the remote past and future as well as into your soul. Dummett then goes on to reject this appeal to a hypothetical super-human cognitive subject as an obscurum per obscurius. After all, what is dubious is whether the realist correctly ascribes to us an ability to understand answers to questions we do not know how to decide. How could this ascription be legitimized by appealing to the idea of an ability which we—undoubtedly—do not possess?\footnote{Realists will be well advised to lock out this Trojan Horse before Dummett can jump out with the sword of his criticism.}

But then they must find a more plausible way of answering Dummett's hermeneutical challenge: how can we understand sentences that allegedly express truths beyond justifiability?\end{p.24}

Alethic anti-realists never present empirical evidence for their biconditionals, and they never restrict the alleged co-extensiveness of truth and a certain epistemic property to the actual world. So we may assume that they take their biconditionals to express conceptual (necessary and a priori knowable) truths about truth. They do not thereby incur an obligation to identify the sense of 'true' with that of any epistemic predicate. But some of them make such an identification and thus answer Question 16 affirmatively. Charles Sanders Peirce, for example, seems to do so when he says:

> If your terms 'truth' and 'falsity' are taken in such senses as to be definable in terms of doubt and belief and the course of experience... well and good. ('What Pragmatism Is' (1905))\footnote{The distinction registered under Question 16 and the implications of calling a claim 'conceptual' are of great importance for the enquiry to be undertaken in this book. So let me pause to elaborate. The demands on 'is F' in tenets of the form 'for all x, x is true iff x is F' can be of various strengths, ranging from absolutely minimal to absolutely maximal. This predicate may be required to express}

\begin{enumerate}
  \item a concept that is co-extensive with the truth concept;
  \item a concept that is necessarily co-extensive with it;
  \item a concept that can be known a priori to be co-extensive with it;
  \item a concept that is self-evidently co-extensive with it;
  \item the same concept as is expressed by 'true'.
\end{enumerate}

If a predicate expresses a concept C, fully understanding that predicate suffices for possessing C. Satisfaction of condition $n$ is a necessary but not sufficient condition for satisfying condition $n + 1$. Here are some philosophically neutral examples of predicate pairs, arranged in the same order, in which the second predicate meets the pertinent requirement with respect to the concept expressed by the first. (These examples will serve us at various points in the course of our reflections on truth.\footnote{For all x,}

\begin{enumerate}
  \item (a) x is a vertebrate with a heart iff x is a vertebrate with a liver
      (b) x was written by the author of *Middlemarch* iff x was written by the author of *Silas Marner*\end{p.25}
  \item (a) x is a lump of common salt iff x is a lump of sodium chloride
      (b) x was written by George Eliot iff x was written by Mary Ann Evans
  \item (a) x is a triangle iff x is a closed plane rectilinear figure whose internal angels add up to 180°
      (b) x is an equiangular triangle iff x is an equilateral triangle
      (c) x has a hundred inhabitants iff x has $1^3 + 2^3 + 3^3 + 4^3$ inhabitants
  \item (a) x is a closed three-sided plane rectilinear figure iff x is a closed three-angled plane rectilinear figure
\end{enumerate}
(b) x is a glass which is half-full iff x is a glass which is half-empty

(5) (a) x is a triangle iff x is a plane figure bounded by three straight lines
(b) x is an equiangular triangle iff x is a triangle with equal angles
(c) x is a drake iff x is a male duck
(d) x is a serpent iff x is a snake.

The property of being F is identical with the property of being G only if necessarily all and only F's are G. So properties are more finely individuated than extensions. The concept of being F is the same as the concept of being G if and only if 'F' and 'G' are synonymous. So concepts, too, are more fine-grained than extensions. If two predicates need not have the same sense in order to signify the same property (as many philosophers plausibly assume), then properties are more coarsely individuated than concepts. The predicates paired in (5b), for example, unlike those in (3b), are synonymous, hence they express the same concept.

No philosopher who tries to define 'true' is aiming to graft a new meaning upon an old word. So the notion of a definition which my rubric 'definitional alethic anti-realism' invokes is not that of a 'constructive definition' or a stipulation, which either introduces a new expression for purposes of abbreviation (such as 'pi-meson' in physics) or forces an old expression into a new, tightly circumscribed service (e.g., 'model' in mathematical logic), but rather that of an analytic definition which purports to capture, by means of a compound expression, the sense of an atomic expression already in use. The predicate on the right-hand side of (5c), for example, could serve as definiens in an analytic definition of the predicate on the left-hand side. As can be seen from (5d), a non-analytic definition need not be a stipulation.

Tenets of strengths (III), (IV), and (V), if correct, articulate conceptual truths about truth. Acquiring the knowledge that is described in (III) may be a strenuous undertaking (as your school-day memories concerning the examples under (3) may confirm). By contrast, the knowledge alluded to in (IV) is just a matter of lexical competence: two predicates express self-evidently co-extensive concepts if and only if nobody who fully understands both predicates (knows their conventional linguistic meanings) can believe that one of them applies to a certain entity x (doesn't apply to x) without believing that the other one applies to x as well (doesn't apply to x either). Meeting this requirement is also a necessary condition for two predicates' expressing the same concept. It isn't a sufficient condition, though, for otherwise we would have to declare the predicates paired in (4), or the predicates 'is true' and 'is true and either denied by someone or not denied by anyone' to express the same concept.

Let us now consider, in the light of these distinctions, two attempts at refuting all epistemic conceptions of truth. They both brandish the Denominalization Schema

(Den) It is true that p, iff p

as an allegedly lethal weapon. It is commonly thought that advocates of very different views about truth—including alethic anti-realists—can, with the greatest equanimity, accept as conceptually true all propositions expressed by (non-pathological) instances of this schema. But Alston and Lewis disagree with the common lore. Let us start with Alston's argument. How does he reach the heterodox conclusion that 'epistemic accounts of the concept of truth. . . are incompatible with an acceptance of the T-schema [i.e. (Den)]'?

The core of his argument is this:

[T]he fact that sugar is sweet is both necessary and sufficient for its being true that sugar is sweet. It is true that p if and only if p. . . . Any such biconditional is necessarily, conceptually true. . . . Since the fact that p is (necessarily) both necessary and sufficient for its being true that p, that leaves no room for an epistemic necessary or sufficient condition for truth. Nothing more is required for its being true that p than just the fact that p; and nothing less will suffice. How then can some epistemic status of the proposition . . . that p be necessary and sufficient for the truth of [the proposition that] p? It seems clear that the imposition of an epistemic necessary and sufficient condition for truth runs into conflict with the T-schema. (RCT, 209)

Since there is no reference to facts in the schema, I assume that Alston's talk of facts here is just a manner of speaking: as soon as one replaces the binary connective 'if and only if' by the
dyadic predicate 'is necessary and sufficient for', one has to grope for' noun phrases. (Actually, it isn't a very felicitous way of speaking, for if it is not true that p, talk of 'the fact that p' is inappropriate.)

As Alston recognizes, the argument will not yet do by itself. Why shouldn't two non-synonymous sentences equally succeed in specifying a (necessarily) necessary-and-sufficient condition for a certain proposition's being true? Substitution-instances of our examples (3a) and (5a) contain on their right-hand sides two non-synonymous sentences which equally succeed in specifying such a condition for a certain figure's being a triangle.

Before we turn to Alston's reaction to this reply, let us look at Lewis's (more recent and apparently independent) attempt to show how acceptance of instances of (Den), which he somewhat misleadingly calls 'redundancy biconditionals', conflicts with any 'epistemic theory of truth'.

Consider the following derivation. Its first premiss is a substitution-instance of (Den), its second premiss results from applying an anti-realist ('epistemic') conception of truth to a particular truth-candidate, and the conclusion is obtained via transitivity of 'iff':

(P1) it is true that cats purr, iff cats purr;
(P2) it is true that cats purr, iff it is (knowable) that cats purr;
(C) therefore, cats purr iff it is (knowable) that cats purr.

I have kept Lewis's feline example, but I have replaced his 'it is useful to believe' with 'it is (knowable). This is legitimate because Lewis explicitly claims that his reflections on what he calls the 'pragmatic theory' of truth apply with equal force to 'epistemic theories'. The locution 'is (knowable)' is just a place-holder for a predicate that is alleged to signify an epistemic necessary-and-sufficient condition for truth. (You find serious candidates in my list of anti-realist biconditionals.) Now Lewis rightly says about the premisses of the derivation that 'these two biconditional are meant to be a priori', he declares the conclusion to be 'manifestly not a priori', and he concludes that a conception of truth which embraces (P1) is incompatible with an account which endorses something like (P2). How is this supposed to follow? A logically valid derivation, the premisses of which are all a priori, cannot have a conclusion that is not a priori. The above derivation is logically valid. So if (C) is not a priori, then (P1) and (P2) cannot both be a priori, and, consequently, the two theories which assign apriority to the pre-misses cannot both be true. This is incontestable. Unfortunately, Lewis does not say why he takes (C) to be manifestly not a priori. An alethic anti-realist who thinks otherwise is not refuted by being told that he is obviously wrong.

Alston substantially agrees with Lewis. He explicitly says that all (non-pathological) instances of (Den) express 'necessary, conceptual, analytic' truths, so by his lights, too, it is a priori knowable that P1. His argument from (Den) is directed against definitional alethic anti-realists who 'identify the concept of truth with the concept of a positive epistemic status' and who are thereby committed to maintain that it is a priori knowable that P2. When confronting the anti-realist reply to his core argument cited above, Alston argues that the biconditional connecting the two allegedly necessary-and-sufficient conditions for the truth of a given proposition must itself also be taken to express a conceptual truth. Thus

(C*) sugar is sweet iff it is (knowable) that sugar is sweet

would have to formulate a conceptual truth. And at this point Alston believes himself to have shown what he had set out to show, for 'what should we say about that [i.e. about the assumption that it is conceptually true that C*]? So far as I can see, it is totally lacking in plausibility.' So he concurs with Lewis's comment on (C).

Alston does tell us why he finds this assumption about the status of (C*) totally implausible. The proposition expressed on the left-hand side of (C*), he says, 'attributes sweetness to sugar. It says nothing whatever about [any epistemic condition]. It asserts a fact about a substance, a foodstuff. This reasoning presupposes that a biconditional cannot express a conceptual truth if one side of it 'says something about' something about which the other side is silent. Is this presupposition plausible? A truth (about truth, or whatever) is either conceptual or non-conceptual,
and if it is non-conceptual then it is either contingent or necessary. Alston duly registers these distinctions, but he neglects the differences, within the field of conceptual truths, between (III), (IV), and (V). He takes it for granted that an anti-realist biconditional can only express a conceptual truth about truth if an epistemic condition is, as it were, written into the concept of truth; in other words, if the epistemic predicate in its right branch spells out the sense of the truth-predicate. 76 This explains why Alston takes it to be an objection against anti-realistic biconditionals that we are not 'saying anything about [any epistemic condition] when we say that a proposition is true' (unless, of course, that proposition itself happens to be about an epistemic condition). 77

Alston is keenly aware that advocates of an epistemic conception of truth are not obliged to identify the concept of truth with any epistemic concept. In any case, one may wonder whether any appeal to (Den) is needed to refute the conceptual identity claim: as the ongoing philosophical debate amply illustrates, the concept of truth is not self-evidently co-extensive with any of the concepts expressed in the anti-realist biconditionals, hence it is a fortiori not identical with any of them. When Alston characterizes the alternative option (which he then goes on to reject as well) he uses biconditional (2a) as a model:

There may be necessary and sufficient conditions for [a proposition's being true] that are not embodied in the concept [of truth]. Having a chemical composition of sodium chloride is necessary and sufficient for a substance's being salt, even though that is different from the conditions embedded in our (ordinary) concept of salt (looking and tasting a certain way). (RCT, 229-30) 78

If alethic anti-realists really had to rely on the model of equivalences like (2a), then one should scold them as follows: 'A necessary but non-conceptual truth can only be discovered a posteriori. But you never offer empirical evidence for your claim about truth. Hence your contention is just a wild speculation.' But does alethic anti-realism depend on that model? A biconditional may very well express a conceptual truth even though on its right-hand side something is said about something, about which nothing is said on the left-hand side. Recall our examples for pairs of concepts that can be known a priori to be co-extensive: (3a) something is a triangle iff it is a closed plane rectilinear figure whose internal angles add up to 180°; (3b) something is an equiangular triangle iff it is an equilateral triangle; (3c) something has a hundred inhabitants iff it has $1^3 + 2^3 + 3^3 + 4^3$ inhabitants. Nothing is 'said about' a sum of angles on the left-hand-side of (3a), or about sides of equal length on the left of (3b), or about a sum of numbers on the left of (3c). Nevertheless, all three biconditionals formulate conceptual truths. So an alethic anti-realist can consistently claim to teach us a conceptual truth about truth and deny that 'true' has the same sense as any epistemic predicate.

For all that, I confess to finding the assumption that (C) and (C*) express conceptual truths as implausible as Alston and Lewis do. But Lewis does not pause to argue for this verdict, and I have tried to show that Alston's argument from 'aboutness' does not succeed. Suppose a version of alethic anti-realism implies that (even if there is no omniscient being) it can never be true that things are thus-and-so unless there (actually) is at least one thinking being. Advocates of this view who also subscribe to (Den) are committed to a kind of idealism

accoring to which things can never be thus-and-so if no thinker exists. So if you believe that the moon would be round even if there were no thinkers around, you would be well advised not to embrace such a variety of alethic antirealism. Still, acceptance of (Den) can consistently be combined even with this view of truth, provided the latter is in itself consistent.

So it seems that the common lore got it right: the Denominalization Schema is not a lethal weapon against every conception of truth which takes truth to be epistemically constrained. It may, however, provide ammunition against some such accounts. Thus, Spinoza, who seems to favour a coherentist conception of truth, 79 comes dangerously close to denying the right-to-left half of a (non-pathological) instance of (Den) when he writes in his *Treatise on the Emendation of Human Understanding*:

\[
Si aliquis dicit, Petrum ex. gr. existere, nec tamen scit, Petrum existere, illa cogitatio respectu illius falsa est, vel, si mavis, non est vera, quamvis Petrus re vera existat. Nec haec enunciatio, Petrus existit, vera est, nisi
\]
These reflections, I daresay, scarcely contribute to the emendation of our understanding of truth.

Russell attributes to William James the tenet that, for all p, it is true that p, iff it makes for happiness to believe that p. His critique of this contention relies on (Den):

Take the question whether other people exist. . . . It is plain that it makes for happiness to believe that they exist—for even the greatest misanthropist would not wish to be deprived of the objects of his hate. Hence the belief that other people exist is, pragmatically, a true belief. But if I am troubled by solipsism, the discovery that a belief in the existence of others is 'true' in the pragmatist's sense is not enough to allay my sense of loneliness: the perception that I should profit by rejecting solipsism is not alone sufficient to make me reject it. For what I desire is not that the belief in solipsism should be false in the pragmatic sense, but that other people should in fact exist. And with the pragmatist's meaning of truth, these two do not necessarily go together. The belief in solipsism might be false even if I were the only person . . . in the universe. ('Transatlantic "Truth", 122)

The core of Russell's argument (using 'p_1' as abbreviation for 'There are other people' and 'p_2' for 'I am alone') is this: (A) It may be pragmatically-true that p_1, although not-p_1, and (B) it may not be pragmatically-true that p_2, although p_2. Hence 'pragmatically-true' is not equivalent with 'true'. Why does this follow? Well, if we replace 'pragmatically-true' in the first conjunct by 'true', we see that it does not comply with the right-to-left half of (Den), and if we make the same substitution in the second conjunct, we recognize that it offends against the left-to-right half of (Den). 

For more than a decade Hilary Putnam, partially under Dummett's influence, advocated what may very well be the most liberal variety of (nondefinitional) alethic anti-realism. At that time he was convinced that every truth that human beings can understand is made true by conditions that are, in principle, accessible to some human beings at some time or other, if not necessarily at all times or to all human beings. (Reply to David Anderson', 364)

By the early 1990s he had given up this position. After rehearsing his reasons, I shall offer an argument from blind spots in the field of justification, which refutes all varieties of anti-realism at one stroke—or so I would like to think. I shall try to show how the alethic realist can cope with Dummett's hermeneutical challenge if this challenge is directed at the starting-point of that argument.

Before embarking on the long exploratory voyage on which I have invited you to join me in this chapter, some of my readers may want to know where they will come across my own (positive) views. So I'd better tell them now that in

- Chapter 2, sections 1.3-5, 2 (Introduction), and 3,
- Chapter 5, sections 1, 3.3, and 4,
- Chapter 6, section 2, and
- Chapter 7, section 3.

I shall argue for the answers that are 'starred' in the flow charts in Figures 1.1-1.4, and explain the principles and notions that are required for those arguments. I hope this hint will not be misunderstood. I would have written a book that comprises not much more than the sections just mentioned, if I were not thoroughly convinced that much is to be learned from engaging with the opposite answers.
2 A Bogus Predicate?

Truth, to coin a phrase, isn't a genuine predicate. (Grover et al., 'A Prosentential Theory of Truth', 94)

The noun 'truth' was not to John Austin's liking. At the beginning of his contribution to the famous debate with Strawson, he remarked: 'In vino, possibly, "veritas", but in a sober symposium "verum".' Bearing this advice in mind, let us glimpse only at the different uses of the noun 'truth', lest we get drunk. When Jane Austen writes, 'It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife', she uses 'truth' as a count noun. When you comment upon a lecture, 'There was not much (some, a lot of) truth in what he said', you use the noun as a mass term, the pertinent 'mass' consisting of truths. When somebody declares, 'Improbability does not exclude truth', he uses 'truth' as a singular term: truth in this sense seems to be a property (quality, attribute, characteristic, feature) shared by all truths. One seems to ascribe this property to thinkables and sayables when one calls them 'true'. (At last we have arrived at the adjective the Oxford symposiast wants us to concentrate upon.) If grammatical appearances are not deceptive, we can now go on and ask: is the property of being true relational, is it epistemically constrained? etc.

But perhaps appearances are deceptive: some philosophers squarely deny that truth is any kind of property. They pursue what Kotarbiński and Tarski called 'the nihilistic approach to the theory of truth'. This conception is registered under the left branch of Question 1 on the flow chart in Figure 1.1. A. J. Ayer, who took his cue from Frank Ramsey, presented truth-theoretical nihilism with characteristic drive:

[T]here is no problem of truth as it is ordinarily conceived. The traditional conception of truth as a 'real quality' or a 'real relation' is due, like most philosophical mistakes, to a failure to analyse sentences correctly. There are sentences. . .in which the word ['true'] seems to stand for something real. [But] our analysis has shown that [it] does not stand for anything. (Language, Truth and Logic, 119)

According to one strand in Gottlob Frege's numerous (and not easily reconcilable) reflections on the sense of 'true', truth is at best a very strange kind of property. I shall scrutinize this aspect of Frege's views on truth in section 2.1. My criticism will be inspired in part by Bernard Bolzano, the 'great-grandfather' of analytical philosophy. In section 2.2, I shall give a critical exposition of several (two British and two American) varieties of truth-theoretical nihilism. As a whole, the chapter is an attempt to defend the affirmative answer to the question whether truth is a property.

2.1 Frege's Identity Thesis

2.1.1 Redundancy and Omnipresence

Here is a very telling passage from Frege's 1918 paper 'The Thought', in which he declares truth to be a 'property' in shudder-quotes, so to speak:

[A] [Es gibt] zu denken, daß wir an keinem Ding eine Eigenschaft erkennen können, ohne damit zugleich den Gedanken, daß dieses Ding diese Eigenschaft habe, wahr zu finden. So ist mit jeder Eigenschaft eines Dinges eine Eigenschaft eines Gedankens verknüpft, nämlich die der Wahrheit. [It is worth pondering that we cannot recognize a property of a thing without at the same time taking the thought that this thing has this property to be true. So with every property of a thing there is tied up a property of a thought, namely truth.]

[B] Beachtenswert ist auch, daß der Satz 'ich rieche Veilchenduft' doch wohl denselben Inhalt hat wie der Satz 'es ist wahr, daß ich Veilchenduft rieche'. So scheint denn dem Gedanken dadurch nichts beigefügt zu werden, daß ich ihm die Eigenschaft der Wahrheit beilege. . . . [It is also worth noticing that the sentence 'I smell the scent of violets' has just the same content as the sentence 'It is true that I smell the scent of violets.' So it seems, then, that nothing is added to the thought by my ascribing to it the property of truth. . . ]

[C] Die Bedeutung des Wortes 'wahr' scheint ganz einzigartig zu sein. Sollten wir es hier mit etwas zu tun haben, was in dem sonst üblichen Sinne gar nicht Eigenschaft genannt werden kann? [The meaning of the word 'true' seems to be altogether unique. May we not be dealing here with something which cannot, in the ordinary sense, be called a property at all?] (‘Der Gedanke’, 61)
The logically strongest contention of this passage is the statement at the beginning of [B] which is surely meant to generalize. Thus understood Frege claims that every substitution instance of

(Identity ) the proposition that \( p \) the proposition that it is true that \( p \) is correct. We should beware of mistaking the displayed identity schema for the biconditional Denominalization Schema

(Den) It is true that \( p \), if and only if \( p \).

If you accept an instance of Identity you are committed to endorsing the corresponding instance of (Den), but there is no such obligation in the other direction.\(^8\) In [A] Frege maintains that you cannot take an object \( a \) to be \( F \) without thereby taking the proposition that \( a \) is \( F \) to be true. (If one 'recognizes' that \( a \) is \( F \), one takes a to be \( F \), that is, one believes that \( a \) is \( F \). Just as taking Helen to be beautiful is believing that she is beautiful, so taking a proposition to be true is believing that it is true; hence one doesn't explain the notion of belief by saying 'to believe a proposition is to take it to be true'.\(^5\)) The tenet in [A], which is weaker than and entailed by Identity, is certainly not meant to be restricted to those propositions that are expressible by simple subject-predicate sentences, and presumably it is not meant to hold only for belief.\(^8\) So let us put it this way: necessarily, if somebody \( V \)s that (whether) \( p \), she \( V \)s that (whether) it is true that \( p \), where '\( V \)' is a placeholder for verbs that are used to ascribe propositional attitudes/acts (such as 'believe' and 'wonder') or speech-acts (such as 'assert' and 'ask'). If one endorses this schema one subscribes to what I shall call Frege's Omnipresence Thesis.\(^11\)

In the second statement in [B] Frege highlights the Redundancy Thesis which is implicit in Identity: when you say that the proposition that things are thus-and-so is true, you say no more than if you had just said that things are thus-and-so.\(^12\)

Consider a philosophically uncontroversial example of redundancy: you would not add anything to the claim you can make by uttering, 'I foretold that', if you were to say instead, 'I foretold that beforehand': the adverb is content-redundant. Frege upholds a similar thesis for 'true'. What can be said to be redundant in 'it is true that I smell the scent of violets' is certainly not the predicate 'is true', but (at best) the sentential operator, or unary connective, 'It is true that'. (If you remove a predicate from a sentence, the remaining fragment is no longer a sentence.) So one way of capturing Frege's point is this: the result of prefacing a sentence with the operator 'It is true that' expresses the very same proposition as the original sentence. Alternatively, treating 'It is true that. . .' as a stylistic variant of 'That. . .is true'.\(^14\) we can render the Redundancy Thesis as follows. Attaching the predicate 'is true' to the nominalization of a sentence ('that I smell the scent of violets') cancels the effect of the nominalization: one and the same proposition is expressed whether we attach 'is true' to a that-clause or whether we simply erase the word 'that'.

In the final section [C], Frege claims that in view of the preceding reflections it is very dubious whether truth is a property at all.\(^15\) After Frege, and apparently quite independently of him, Ramsey (arguably) and Ayer (unequivocally) advocated the so-called 'Redundancy Theory of Truth':\(^16\)

[T]he question 'What is truth?' is reducible to the question 'What is the analysis of the sentence "p is true"?' And it is plain that this question raises no genuine problem, since. . .to say that p is true is simply a way of asserting p. (Language, Truth and Logic, 118-19)

On this view, the concept of truth can be explained just by appealing to Identity.\(^17\) This is definitely not Frege's view. He thought that the notion of truth cannot be explained at all, and he even took himself to be in possession of a proof that this is so.\(^18\) One can consistently accept what I have called the Redundancy Thesis and refuse to accept the Redundancy Theory.\(^19\) But since the Theory depends on the Thesis, by attacking the latter I shall also be attacking the former.
2.1.2 An Internal Conflict Within Frege's Theory?

At least prima facie there is a tension between Frege's Identity Thesis and another doctrine you find in his work. Like Geach and Strawson some decades after him, Frege held that (un-embedded) sentences containing (unquoted) 'empty', i.e. non-designating singular terms express propositions that are neither true nor false. If somebody were to utter the conjecture,

(K) Kant's wife was Protestant,

then, according to Frege, what is said falls into a truth-value gap. In his famous 1959 paper 'Truth', Michael Dummett argued that acceptance of all (non-pathological) instances of (Den) is incorrect if Frege's doctrine of truth-value gaps is correct. If this verdict of inconsistency is well-founded, then it will apply a fortiori to the combination of Identity with the latter doctrine. Since Dummett is certainly above any suspicion of rashly accusing Frege of inconsistency, we'd better look closely at his argument:

[A] Suppose that P contains a singular term which has a sense but no reference: then, according to Frege, P expresses a proposition which has no truth-value. This proposition is therefore not true, and hence the statement 1It is true that P will be false. P will therefore not have the same sense as 1It is true that P, since the latter is false while the former is not.

[B] It is true that 1It is true that P, is itself neither true nor false when the singular term occurring in P lacks a reference, since

[C] the oratio obliqua clause 1that P stands for the proposition expressed by P, and it is admitted that P does have a sense and express a proposition; the singular term occurring in P has in 1It is true that P its indirect reference, namely its sense, and we assumed that it did have a sense.

[D] In general it will always be inconsistent to maintain the truth of every instance of 1It is true that if p if and only if p while allowing that there is a type of sentence which under certain conditions is neither true nor false. ('Truth', 4-5)

The plea that is rejected in [B] looks very reasonable indeed: if the proposition I now express by (K) really is the same as the proposition I could have expressed now by

(TK) It is true that Kant's wife was Protestant,

then, of course, the truth-value status of what is expressed by (TK) (true, false, or neither) has got to be the same as the truth-value status of what is expressed by (K). This is just an application of the Leibnizian Principle of the Indiscernibility of Identicals. So, contrary to [A], what is said by (TK) cannot possibly be false if what is said by (K) falls into the truth-value gap.

The argument given in [C] for rejecting this reply assumes that the that-clause in (TK) designates the proposition expressed by the embedded sentence (K). This assumption may be entirely correct (and I think it is). But if Frege were to accept it, then he would have to acknowledge, without any reservation, that being true is a property of some propositions, just as he takes being an axiom, or containing the sense of 'the Morning Star', to be properties of some propositions. But as we saw, this is exactly what Frege refrains from doing. Hence we have not been shown that the consistency of Frege's views is threatened by his adopting both the identity claim and the truth-value gap thesis.

As to the second half of [C], it is by no means clear that the subject-term of (K) has its indirect reference in (TK). Frege ascribes indirect reference to a term in a context if its replacement by another term with the same ordinary reference in that context can affect the truth-value of the proposition expressed. But there is no such risk if the replacement takes place in the context of 'It is true that—'. Replacing 'Kant's wife' in (TK) by another empty singular term, e.g. 'the King of Switzerland in 1905', cannot affect the truth-value status of what is said.

But there are more data to be accounted for than this. If you replace the italicized singular term in either of the following sentences by another term with the same ordinary reference

(S1) That the Morning Star is a planet is true, but Ben does not believe it
(S2) Ben does not believe that the Morning Star is a planet, but it is true,

you might affect the truth-value of what is said. We can budget for this if the anaphoric pronoun 'it' in the second conjunct goes proxy for its antecedent, the nominalized sentence in the
first conjunct, understood in the same way. At first sight, this is evidence in favour of the claim Dummett makes in the second half of [C]. But it is far from conclusive. For consider the following 'reversal' of the argument concerning (S1). The anaphoric pronoun in the second conjunct of

(S3) Ben does not believe that the Morning Star is a planet, but it is a planet
refers to the ordinary referent of its antecedent, the italicized term in the first conjunct, for surely the second half of (S3) does not declare the indirect referent, i.e. the sense, of 'the Morning Star' to be a planet. Prima facie this is evidence in favour of the contention that this term must have its ordinary reference in the first conjunct. If we do not trust this (anti-Fregean) argument, we should not put much confidence in its precursor either.

The following reflection carries more conviction. Argument (A) is certainly valid:

(A) That the Evening Star is a planet is believed by Ben.
That the Evening Star is a planet is true.
Therefore, there is something which is both believed by Ben and true.

But its validity is unproblematic only if the italicized singular term makes the same contribution to the content of both premises, for otherwise the two

that-clauses would have to be understood differently, and the argument would not instantiate the form 'Fa, Ga ⊃x (Fx & Gx)'. But of course, if one defends Dummett's remark about indirect reference in [C] along these lines, or in the style of the last paragraph, one treats the that-clauses in (A), or in (S1) and (S2), as designating objects to which properties are being ascribed.

Several philosophers have presented an argument against combining the endorsement of the schema Identity with the admission of truth-value gaps that does not depend on taking 'It is true that p' to be an ascription of a bona fide property. This objection, too, does not invoke Identity directly, but the weaker schema (Den), and it assumes a similar equivalence schema for falsity:

(Den) It is true that p, iff p
(Falsity) It is false that p, iff it is not the case that p.

In the next lines of the putative proof I shall abbreviate 'it is not the case that' by 'not-'. Now let us assume that the proposition that Kant's wife was Protestant falls into a gap:

(Gap) It is neither true that K nor false that K.
Applying (Den) to the left half and (Falsity) to the right half of (Gap), we obtain:
(C1) Therefore, neither K nor not-K,
and from this we can immediately derive what looks like a flat contradiction:
(C2) Therefore, not-K and not-(not-K).
So it seems that we are bound to accept the verdict that (Den), (Falsity), and (Gap) form an inconsistent triad.

But perhaps this is a bit too quick. For one thing, it is by no means clear that (C2) is really false: as (K) is supposed to fall into a truth-value gap, one could claim that its (simple or double) negation, and hence the conjunction (C2), do the same. But this is small consolation, for under the standard understanding of validity an argument that starts from true premisses is not valid unless it has a true conclusion. So far the argument still seems to show that the three premisses cannot be jointly true. But there is a way of preserving the consistency of Frege's triad. The step from (C1) to (C2) is only correct if we interpret the conjunctive denial 'Neither A nor B' in such a way that its truth requires the falsity of the components 'A' and 'B'. But this interpretation is not obligatory.

Lest this move seem entirely ad hoc, consider the role that conjunctive denials sometimes play when philosophers try to draw a line between falsehoods and cases of Sphärenvermengung [confounding of types] or category mismatch. When Gilbert Ryle wants to drive home the point that two sentences 'F's are G' and 'F's are H' (where 'G' and 'H' are lexical antonyms) are both 'category mistakes', he tends to say, 'F's are neither G nor H'. Here is a philosophically uncontroversial example: some words are more difficult to spell than others, but letters are not the sort of things that can be spelled: 'letters are neither easy to spell, nor insuperably hard to spell.' Or,
slightly less uncontentiously: why is it a category mistake to say that Napoleon is the meaning of 'Napoleon'? Well, Napoleon sometimes wore boots, whereas 'meanings . . . never wear boots—or go barefoot either'. Obviously, Ryle does not take 'Neither A nor B' to mean 'It is false that A, and it is false that B'. Wanting to reject both components as non-significant, he must assume that the truth of the conjunctive denial requires only that its components lack truth. Another of Ryle's examples brings us even closer to the case at hand: 'Most epithets . . . are not appropriate to linguistic expressions. . . . Reptiles do or do not hibernate; adverbs neither do nor do not.' Clearly, he takes the last sentence to be tantamount to 'It is not true that adverbs hibernate, and it is not true that adverbs do not hibernate.' This suggests that there are two ways of rejecting 'Adverbs hibernate': asserting the internal negation, namely 'Adverbs don't hibernate', and asserting the external negation, viz. 'It is not true that adverbs hibernate', where the latter, but not the former, is taken to be compatible with 'It does not even make sense to say that adverbs hibernate'. If we can avail ourselves of the distinction between internal and external negation, we can define falsity as truth of the internal negation rather than as absence of truth. If the right-hand side of (Falsity) is understood as the external negation of 'p', then the schema (Falsity) amounts to 'It is false that p, iff it is not true that p', and the alleged refutation asumes at the outset that there are no truth-value gaps. After all, advocates of gappiness believe that a proposition may lack truth without being false. If Ryle is right, then one way of

being void of truth-value is being a category mistake.\(^32\) If Frege, Geach, and Strawson are right, then suffering from a radical reference-failure is another way. 'Kant's wife was Protestant' expresses a falsehood only if its internal negation, to wit 'Kant's wife wasn't Protestant', yields a truth. Since Kant was a bachelor, it is neither true that Kant's wife was a Protestant, nor true that she wasn't. Or so those philosophers could say.\(^33\)

2.1.3 Conditions of Propositional Identity

Frege's Identity Thesis may be compatible with his admission of truth-value gaps (as I have just now tried to convince you), and yet it may be implausible. So our question must be: is Frege's contention in itself plausible? Let us first look for Frege's general criterion of propositional identity. (This enterprise may be destined to the same frustration as looking for the philosophers' stone.) In a manuscript of 1906, entitled 'Kurze Übersicht meiner logischen Lehren [A Brief Surview of My Logical Doctrines]', Frege says:

Zwei Sätze A und B können in der Beziehung zueinander stehen, dass jeder, der den Inhalt von A als wahr anerkennt, auch den von B ohne weiteres als wahr anerkennen muss, und dass auch umgekehrt jeder, der den Inhalt von B anerkennt, auch den von A unmittelbar anerkennen muss (Äquipollenz), wobei vorausgesetzt wird, dass die Auffassung der Inhalte von A und B keine Schwierigkeit macht. [Two sentences A and B can stand in such a relation that anyone who recognizes the content of A as true must straightforward recognize the content of B as true, and conversely. . . anyone who recognizes the content of B as true must immediately recognize that of A as true (equipollence). It is here being assumed that there is no difficulty in grasping the content of A and B.] (in NS, 213 (197))

I prefer to call the relation which obtains between two sentences if and only if this condition is satisfied 'cognitive equivalence' (this being a more tell-tale term than 'equipollence'), and I suggest the following rendering of Frege's conception of this relation:

(CognE) Two sentences are cognitively equivalent if and only if, for any context c, nobody who fully understands them can take one of them to express a truth with respect to c without immediately being ready to take the other to express a truth with respect to c as well.

I have inserted a reference to contexts in order to ensure the applicability of (CognE) to indexical sentence pairs (such as '{I am now observing a drake'}.

'I am now observing a male duck}', where a certain speaker and a certain time would be the relevant components of c).\(^34\)

Now what is the relation between being cognitively equivalent and expressing the same proposition? According to Dummett, we have already found what we were looking for: Frege, he says, claims cognitive equivalence 'as a sufficient as well as necessary condition for identity of
sense'. Such a claim would indeed account for Frege's verdict on pairs such as '{Snow is white, 'It is true that snow is white'}', for their members are certainly cognitively equivalent. But if cognitive equivalence were to guarantee identity of sense, Frege would have to swallow some intuitively bizarre consequences which are certainly not acceptable to him. The sentences 'A rose is a rose' and 'No woman is her own mother' are cognitively equivalent, since the content of either sentence is such that (to use Frege's own words) 'it would have to be immediately recognized as true by anyone who had grasped it properly'. Hence, if cognitive equivalence were a sufficient condition of propositional identity, then our two sentences would express the same proposition. All sentences the contents of which simply defy disbelief would express one and the same proposition. In other words, there would be only one proposition which is 'self-evident [unmittelbar einleuchtend]'.

Surely Frege's conception of an axiom does not allow him to accept this result. Furthermore, any conjunction containing one such sentence would express the same proposition as the other conjunct by itself.

None of these consequences is forthcoming if Frege takes cognitive equivalence only to be a necessary condition for identity of sense. After all, as Dummett observes, Frege 'never applies [the cognitive equivalence criterion] save to prove that two expressions do not have the same sense.' Henceforth I shall endorse Frege's Necessary Condition for propositional identity, which I shall also refer to as the Cognitive Equivalence Criterion:

(F-Nec) Two sentences express the same proposition (with respect to c) only if they are cognitively equivalent (in c).

Propositions must be at least as fine-grained as is required by (F-Nec) if we want to make sense of our practice of ascribing attitudes and reporting speech by means of that-clauses. 'Ann believes that the Big Dipper consists of seven stars, but she does not believe that the Plough consists of seven stars' may very well be a correct report, and the same holds for 'Ben said that there was some water in the vicinity, but he did not say that there was some H₂O in the vicinity.' If the embedded sentences were to express the same proposition, such reports would be inconsistent.

Cognitive equivalence is only a component of what Frege takes to be a sufficient condition for identity of sense. We find the second component in the very same 1906 manuscript from which I took the passage cited on p. 42:

[Two sentences A and B express the same Thought if]
(i) anyone who recognizes the content of A as true must straightaway recognize the content of B as true, and conversely. . . anyone who recognizes the content of B as true must immediately recognize that of A as true (equivalence). It is here being assumed that there is no difficulty in grasping the content of A and B. . . [and]
(ii) [V]on jedem der beiden äquipollenten Sätze A und B [gilt], dass in seinem Inhalte nichts ist, was von jedem, der es richtig erfasst hat, sofort unmittelbar als wahr anerkannt werden müsste. [There is nothing in the content of either of the two equipollent sentences A and B that would have to be at once immediately recognized as true by anyone who had grasped it properly.] (NS 213 (197))

Frege insists on both (i) and (ii) when he says (a few lines later): the proposition expressed by two sentences is the same in 'equipollent' (cognitively equivalent) sentences 'of the kind given above [der oben erwähnten Art].' By adding clause (ii) Frege forestalls the intuitively bizarre results I mentioned. So what Frege takes to be a Sufficient Condition for propositional identity is this:

(F-Suff) Two sentences express the same proposition (with respect to c), if

1. they are cognitively equivalent
2. neither of them is, or contains a part which is, such that one cannot understand it without realizing that it expresses a truth.

Table 2.1. One Proposition, or Two?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zero</th>
<th>Plus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) p</td>
<td>It is true that p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) p</td>
<td>p and p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) p</td>
<td>p or p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) p</td>
<td>not-not-p</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There is, of course, a price to be paid for shielding off the various odd consequences of identifying cognitive equivalence with propositional identity: (F-Suff) is silent on sentences the content of which is, or contains a part which is, self-evidently true.\textsuperscript{43}

Now let us apply Frege's Sufficient Condition to pairs of sentences which exemplify the schemata presented in Table 2.1: do 'plus' sentences express the same proposition as their 'zero' counterparts? If we consider only those materializations of the schemata in Table 2.1 that can be understood without being assented to, then we can apply (F-Suff), and in all three cases it yields the verdict: yes, 'plus' sentences do express the same proposition as their 'zero' counterparts.\textsuperscript{44} Hence the four 'plus' sentences also have one and the same propositional content. (Because of the structural similarity between (1) and (4), Davidson calls the redundancy theory 'the double-negation theory of truth'.\textsuperscript{45})

In all three cases Bolzano's answer is an adamant 'no'. Here is what he says about the first pair:

Wenn der Satz: A ist B, wahr ist: so ist unläugbar auch [der Satz:] daß A B sey, ist wahr, ein wahrer Satz; und dieser ist seinen Bestandtheilen nach schon ein anderer, als der Satz: A ist B. [If the proposition A is B is true, then the proposition It is true that A is B is undeniable also true, and since the latter has different parts, it is a different proposition from A is B.] (WLI, 147)

[Wir finden], daß der Satz, welchen die Worte 'A ist wahr' ausdrücken, ein von A selbst verschiedener sei; denn jener hat offenbar ein ganz anderes Subjekt als dieser. Sein Subjekt ist nämlich der ganze Satz A selbst. [We see that the proposition expressed by the words 'A is true' is different from the proposition A, for the former obviously has quite another subject than the latter. The subject of the former is the whole proposition A.] (Paradoxien des Unendlichen, §13)

So, according to Bolzano, (1 plus) sentences have senses that contain the concept of truth, and this concept is (normally) absent from the senses of their less wordy counterparts. (Of course, the shorter sentence may itself already contain 'true'.) This non-identity thesis is presupposed in an important section of Bolzano's 'Theory of Science'. In his theory of the ground-consequence relation [Abfolge] he repeatedly asserts that the proposition that it is true that things are thus-and-so is a consequence [Folge] of the proposition that things are thus-and-so.\textsuperscript{46} This contention could not consistently be combined with the Fregean claim that 'it is true that' is propositionally redundant, since the ground-consequence relation is irreflexive.\textsuperscript{47} Bolzano would also contend that the propositions expressed by the other 'plus' sentences in Table 2.1 contain the concepts of conjunction, disjunction, or double-negation, which may very well be absent from the propositions expressed by the corresponding 'zero' sentences.\textsuperscript{48}

Russell repeated Bolzano's non-identity thesis when he wrote (in 1904 and 1910):

Consider. . .what it is that we mean when we judge. At first sight, we seem to mean that a certain proposition is true; but 'p is true' is not the same proposition as p, and therefore cannot be what we mean. ('Meinong's Theory of Complexes and Assumptions', 62)

The notion of truth is not part of the content of what is judged. (Principia Mathematica, 41)

In recent years Alston and Horwich also took Bolzano's side in this issue. (Like Russell, they did not know that they had been anticipated by Bolzano.) About the pair of sentences which Ramsey had used to illustrate the Redundancy Thesis,

\begin{align*}
(S^0) & \text{Caesar was murdered} \\
(S^+) & \text{The proposition that Caesar was murdered is true,}
\end{align*}

Alston says, '[S+] includes in its content the concept of a proposition, which it uses to set up a subject of predication; and the concept of truth is used in that predication. While [S^0] is about Caesar, [S+] is about a proposition.}^\text{49} Replacing 'proposition' in (S+) by 'statement', Horwich writes in the same vein, the claim that (S^0) and (S+) 'have exactly the same meaning. . .is implausibly strong; for after all, the words "true" and "statement" do have meanings, and those meanings would appear to be, in some sense, "components" of the meaning of [S+] but not of [S^0].}^\text{50}
The argument for non-redundancy should not make too much of the presence of the noun-phrase 'the proposition' in (S'). We should, rather, delete it, because the point at issue is whether 'p' and 'It is true that p' (or 'That p is true') express the same proposition. Nor should the argument rely on the contention that the subject of (S') differs from that of (S0). There are two reasons for this. First, the opponent can retort, (S'), purged of the first two words, is formed by applying a unary connective to (S0). As the case of the negation operator shows, such an operation does not always engender a change of subject. Why shouldn't the truth operator resemble the negation operator in this respect? Secondly, even if (S') and (S0) do have different subjects, that alone does not guarantee that their contents differ. Consider 'He is of unknown origin' and 'His origin is unknown': do these sentences not have the same content in spite of having different subjects?

From Bolzano's theory of Sätze an sich (propositions) and their constituents, one can distil the Bolzanian Necessary Condition for propositional identity, which I shall also refer to as the Conceptual Balance Requirement:

(B-Nec) Two sentences express the same proposition only if there is no concept whose mastery has to be exercised only in understanding utterances of one of them.

As used in (B-Nec), the term 'concept' applies to pieces of cognitive equipment a thinker may have or lack. To possess the concept of (an) F is to be able to think of something as being, or as not being, (an) F. I accept the Conceptual Balance Requirement, and I shall repeatedly invoke it in the course of this book. (I am not the first to appeal to such a principle in a discussion of Frege: (B-Nec) is a variant of a principle that Dummett invokes in his criticism of certain identity claims in Frege's Grundlagen.) Notice that by appealing to (B-Nec), one does not incur a commitment to Bolzano's 'structuralist' thesis that concepts are components of propositions.

As to the question how concepts are to be individuated, the following necessary identity condition will do for the purposes of this book: the concept of (an) F is identical with the concept of (a) G only if every sentence combining 'is (an) F' with a singular term is cognitively equivalent with a sentence combining 'is (a) G' with the same singular term. (Sometimes, even a far weaker condition will suffice: the concept of (an) F is identical with the concept of (a) G only if 'is (an) F' and 'is (a) G' have the same extension.) If the cognitive equivalence condition were also sufficient, there could not be several self-evidently co-applicable concepts. But surely we do not want to declare the concept of an object that is identical with itself to be the same as the concept of an object that is rectangular if it is square. (Consequently, we should not accept the thesis that concepts are discriminatory capacities.)

Of course, two sentences may meet the Conceptual Balance Requirement without expressing the same proposition: take '3 > 2' and '2 > 3', or the negation and the double negation of any sentence. So this criterion no more provides us with a sufficient condition for propositional identity than does its Fregean counterpart (F-Nec), the Cognitive Equivalence Criterion. But (B-Nec) is more demanding than (F-Nec) in that sentences which satisfy the latter may not satisfy the former. 'She has ten fingers' and 'The number of her fingers equals ten multiplied by one' comply with the Cognitive Equivalence Criterion. But mastery of the concept of multiplication is only required for understanding an utterance of the second sentence, so they do not comply with the Conceptual Balance Requirement. Propositions must be at least as fine-grained as is required by (B-Nec) if we want to make sense of our practice of ascribing attitudes and reporting speech by means of that-clauses: 'Our youngest daughter believes (said) that she has ten fingers, but she does not believe (did not say) that the number of her fingers equals ten multiplied by one' may be a correct report, but if the embedded sentences were to express the same proposition, such a report would be inconsistent.

Unfortunately, we cannot decide simply by appealing to (B-Nec) whether Frege's propositional identity claim concerning 'p' and 'It is true that p' is correct, because according to Frege such pairs actually fulfil that condition: for all utterances of declarative sentences, mastery of the concept of truth has to be exercised in understanding them. So the question remains:
2.1.4 Who is Right, Frege or Bolzano?

Frege maintains that 'It is true that p' expresses the same proposition as the plain 'p'. He also points out that prefacing an utterance of a declarative sentence with 'It is true that' (or a synonym thereof) is neither sufficient nor necessary for making an assertion. And he suggests that there is a close connection between content redundancy and force redundancy. But his point about force, which should be conceded on all sides, does not justify his controversial tenet about content. Surely one can acknowledge Frege's observation that adding the truth operator to an utterance of a declarative sentence does not change its force, or give it one if it had none, without thereby incurring a commitment to endorse his propositional identity claim.

Can one justify Frege's verdict on 'p'/It is true that p' pairs (and the other sentence pairs in Table 2.1 above) by appealing to his Sufficient Condition? If one accepts (F-Suff), one has to concede that sentences like

(H)  Hemlock is poisonous
(TH)  It is true that hemlock is poisonous
(BH)  Anyone who were to believe that hemlock is poisonous would be right in so believing.

These three sentences are cognitively equivalent, and none of them has a content that is self-evidently true or self-evidently false. But is the complex operator surrounding (H) as it occurs within (BH) propositionally redundant? Even if Davidson were right in claiming that one cannot believe anything without having the concept of a belief (which I find hard to believe), surely you can understand an utterance of (H) without actually exercising your mastery of the concept of a belief, whereas you certainly cannot understand an utterance of (BH) without doing just that. (In my formulation of the Conceptual Balance Requirement I presuppose an *occurent* sense of 'understand': in this sense you cannot understand an utterance of (H) without actually entertaining the thought that hemlock is poisonous, whereas, in the *dispositional* sense, you can at any time correctly be said to understand the type-sentence (H) provided your English is good enough.) The Bolzanian requirement seems to deliver the intuitively correct answer. After all, somebody might very well believe that H without believing that BH. By refusing to regard utterances of (H) and (BH) as expressing the same proposition, we give up Frege's Sufficient Condition of propositional identity. Hence we can no longer base a justification of Frege's treatment of the pair (H) and (TH) on his principle.

Here is another example which discredits (F-Suff). Suppose the next two sentences are uttered at the same time, while the same blackboard is being pointed at:

(D)  On that blackboard there is a diagram that is square.
(P)  On that blackboard there is a parallelogram that is square.

Two propositions, or only one? 'Only one' is the answer delivered by Frege's Sufficient Condition. 'Two' is the answer delivered by the Conceptual Balance Requirement: you can understand the utterance of (D) without knowing what a parallelogram is, but without bringing this conceptual knowledge into play you cannot understand the utterance of (P). (Obviously our weaker identity condition suffices to demonstrate that the concept of a diagram is not identical with that of a parallelogram.) Again, the Bolzanian requirement seems to deliver the intuitively correct answer. After all, somebody might very well believe that D without believing that P.

If Frege's verdict on 'p'/It is true that p' pairs cannot be justified by an appeal to his insight concerning force, and if his allegedly Sufficient Condition for propositional identity which would indeed legitimize his identity claim can be shown to be implausible anyway, one starts wondering why one should accept that claim.

As we saw, Frege upholds not only a Redundancy Thesis, but also an Omni presence Thesis. Here is another piece of evidence for this:
Das Prädikat 'wahr' unterscheidet sich von allen anderen Prädikaten dadurch, dass es immer mit ausgesagt wird, wenn irgend etwas ausgesagt wird. [What distinguishes 'true' from all other predicates is that predicating it is always included in predicating anything whatever.] (NS, 140 (129))

Now if 'true' (or rather, 'It is true that') were senseless, then, Frege argues, sentences containing it (unquoted) would be senseless too. Unless, one should add, 'It is true that p' and 'p' were to differ only with respect to what Frege calls 'colouration'. Consider an example: Frege maintains that elimination of 'alas' from, say, 'I've studied philosophy, jurisprudence, and medicine, and, alas, theology as well' would not affect the identity of the proposition that is expressed in 'It is true that'

Faust's monologue. So an expression's lack of Fregean sense, which is not a lack of conventional linguistic meaning ('alas' means the same as 'leider' in Goethe's original), does not always condemn utterances containing it (unquoted) to senselessness. But what a colouring feature of a sentence contributes to the complete content of an utterance of the sentence can be removed: there is no such thing as an ubiquitous colouration. So Frege's Omnipresence Thesis precludes characterizing the relation between 'It is true that' and 'p' (only) in terms of colouration. Unlike 'alas', the truth operator does have a sense, but, Frege claims, this sense somehow annihilates itself:

Das Wort 'wahr' hat einen Sinn, der zum Sinne des ganzen Satzes, in dem es als Prädikat vorkommt, nichts beiträgt. [The word 'true' has a sense that contributes nothing to the sense of the whole sentence in which it occurs as a predicate.] (NS 272 (252))

I find this doctrine hard to swallow. Isn't it possible to entertain the thought that it is raining without exercising one's mastery of the concept of truth? (When we say that the cat, or the baby, has noticed that it is raining, do we presuppose that the cat, or the baby, has mastered the concept of truth?) Young children can certainly understand lots of sentences without understanding the word 'true' or any synonym thereof. We can, and we often do, I think, explain to children what 'true' means by giving them instructions such as: 'If you say, "It is raining", and it is raining, then what you say is true. But if you say, "It is raining", and it isn't raining, then what you say is not true. Or if you say, "It is snowing", and it is snowing, then what you say is true. But if you say, "It is snowing", and it isn't snowing, then what you say is not true. Got it?' To understand such an explanation, the child must of course already understand sentences such as 'It is raining' and 'It is snowing'. Whether the child has 'got it' will become manifest in her or his future use of 'true'. Whether the child has 'got it' will become manifest in her or his future use of 'true'. (In Ch. 4.2.3, I shall argue that by 'getting' it the child has not yet completely mastered our concept of truth: she has not yet learned to envisage the possibility that an utterance she doesn't understand conveys a truth.)

Do we have to assume that in such lessons the child only acquires a word to express a concept which is already in his or her repertoire? The 'say' in such

lessons seems to amount to the same thing as 'assertorically utter'. So one might argue: 'As a person who makes assertions, you must be aware that you are expected to aim at truth. So you cannot make assertions if you lack the concept of truth.' But is the premiss of this argument really correct? Can a child not recognize her obligation as an asserter by coming to realize that she is expected to assert something only if she is justified in doing so? (After all, the injunction to make only true assertions cannot call for acts that are not already called for by the injunction to make only warranted assertions.) Of course, this reply needs to be supported by an argument to the effect that one can have the concept of justification without yet having acquired the concept of truth. Towards the end of this book, in Chapter 7.3.5, I shall present such an argument. So let us tentatively join Bolzanno in denying Frege's Identity Thesis.

2.1.5 Two Kinds of Truth Talk

It has often been complained, and rightly so, that Frege gives us no hint whatsoever how his reflections on the allegedly self-annihilating sense of 'true' are to cover its use in propositionally
unrevealing truth declarations such as 'Everything the Pope says ex cathedra is true' or 'Pythagoras' Theorem is true'—i.e. in sentences in which the relevant truth candidates are not revealed (expressed) by an embedded sentence.\textsuperscript{67} This problem is an urgent one, for we would hardly welcome the conclusion that 'true' as used in 'Pythagoras' Theorem is true' has a different sense than as used in a propositionally revealing truth declaration like 'The proposition that the square on the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides is true.' After all, there are intuitively valid arguments connecting both kinds of truth talk.\textsuperscript{68}

(P1) Pythagoras' Theorem is true.

(P2) Pythagoras' Theorem = the proposition that the square on the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides.

(C) Therefore, the proposition that the square on the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides is true.

Surely we do not want to condemn this nice little argument as an example of the fallacy of equivocation. As it stands, Frege's Redundancy Thesis can at best hold of the conclusion, not of the first premiss, and I hope to have convinced you that there are good reasons to doubt its plausibility even there. Ramsey was acutely aware that the use of 'true' in propositionally unrevealing contexts provides adherents of the Redundancy Thesis with a serious challenge. (We will consider his way of meeting the challenge in Chapter 6.2.2.) The nihilists who I am now about to interrogate are also ready to face this problem. We can bring the task they have set themselves into focus by completing the Frege quotation I gave on p. 34. It is worth completing for another reason as well: the continuation of [B] in that passage contains Frege's own example for propositionally unrevealing truth talk.

[B]. . . Und doch! ist es nicht ein großer Erfolg, wenn nach langem Schwanken und mühsamen Untersuchungen der Forscher schließlich sagen kann: 'was ich vermutet habe, ist wahr'? [. . .And yet is it not a great result when the scientist after much hesitation and laborious research can finally say 'My conjecture is true'?]

[C]Die Bedeutung des Wortes 'wahr' scheint ganz einzigartig zu sein. Sollten wir es hier mit etwas zu tun haben, was in dem sonst üblichen Sinne gar nicht Eigenschaft genannt werden kann? Trotz diesem Zweifel will ich mich zunächst noch dem Sprachgebrauch folgend so ausdrücken, als ob die Wahrheit eine Eigenschaft wäre, bis etwas Zutreffenderes gefunden sein wird. [The meaning of the word 'true' seems to be altogether unique. May we not be dealing here with something which cannot, in the ordinary sense, be called a property at all? In spite of this doubt I want first to express myself in accordance with ordinary usage, as if truth were a property, until something more adequate is found.] (Der Gedanke', 61)

The nihilists' task is exactly this: to find something more adequate.\textsuperscript{69}

2.2 Truth-Theoretical Nihilism

Nihilists declare that, even under the most generous reading of 'property', truth is not a property. Under that reading, (almost) every genuine predicate is such that its nominalization can be used to refer successfully to a property. Let me explain. A \textit{predicate}, whether genuine or not, is a sentence-forming operator on singular terms. By \textit{nominalizing} a predicate, one transforms it into an abstract singular term, e.g. 'is stupid' into 'stupidity', 'is courageous' into 'courage', 'is a friend of' into 'friendship', 'is a philosopher' into 'being a philosopher', 'exist(s)' into 'existence', or 'is true' into 'truth'. A fragment of a natural language sentence \textit{S} is a genuine predicate, a predicate in the logical sense, just in case a formalization of \textit{S} in the language of first-order predicate logic would be correct if that fragment were replaced by a predicate letter. Properties that are designated by nominalizations of genuine polyadic predicates are relations.\textsuperscript{70}

Focusing on syntactically simple monadic predicates, we can explain the prodigal conception of properties as follows: From a premiss of the form

\begin{itemize}
\item[(P)] a is (an) \textit{F},
\end{itemize}

in which \textit{F} is replaced by an adjective or a noun, we can infer its pleonastic equivalent
(C) a has the property of being (an) F,
and similarly, from a premiss of the form

(P*) a V$s$,
in which ‘V’ is replaced by a verb, we can infer its more verbose counterpart

(C*) a has the property of Ving (of being an entity that V$s$),

provided the predicates in (P) and (P*) are genuine (and don't engender paradox). Thus,

from a sentence in which no property is designated, one deduces a sentence that contains a
designator of a property. If one is inclined to take such steps to be a conceptual matter of course,
one endorses the prodigal conception of a property that is pertinent in this chapter.

The concept of a property which is explained in terms of a predicate's being genuine is very
broad indeed. The expression 'is red or green' is a genuine predicate. But to Australian ontologists
it seems laughable to say that blood and grass share

the property of being red or green. Or take the expression 'is grue', defined à la Nelson
Goodman: 'x is grue = Df. x is green before t₀, or x is blue at or after t₀'. This is a genuine
predicate, so grueness is a property. But friends of a more parsimonious conception of a property
tend to find this rather gruesome. Suppose 'grue' applies to a certain screen because, before t₀, it
was green all over. Then 'grue' remains true of the screen even if it has been white ever since.
Certainly, there is a reading of 'property' under which it would be bizarre to claim that the screen's
still being an instance of 'grue' entails that it has preserved at least one of its (accidental)
properties. Finally, a property in the broad sense is something you may first have and then lack
without yourself having changed. Take the expression 'is sadly missed': it is a genuine predicate, so
being sadly missed is a property. But you may acquire and lose this property without yourself
changing, and this development might even occur at a time when you are no longer alive.

But since not every predicate is a genuine predicate, even this prodigal notion of a property
excludes some contenders, most famously existence: the predicate in 'Tame tigers exist' isn't a
genuine predicate, because in the formalization of this sentence it would be replaced by the
existential quantifier; hence the term 'existence' (taken as the nominalization of the predicate 'exist' as
used in this sentence) does not designate a property. (It is to Kant's famous dictum that 'existence
is not a real predicate' that Grover, Camp, and Belnap are alluding in their tongue-in-cheek remark
which serves as the epigraph to this chapter. That remark even mimicks what is potentially
confusing in the original: for us, the point at issue is whether the expressions 'exist(s)' and 'is true'
are genuine predicates. Here is a very different kind of example. The expression 'was so-called
because of his size' clearly is a predicate: it takes a singular term, such as 'Little John' (the name of
one of Robin Hood's companions), to form a sentence. But it is not a genuine predicate, because it
could not correctly be replaced by a predicate letter. So there is no such thing as the property of
being so-called because of his size. Let us postpone (for a while) the question for what reasons
logicians refuse to treat either of these predicates as a genuine predicate.

I still owe you an explanation of the bracketed proviso concerning paradox-infected
predicates. In the overwhelming majority of cases, whenever 'is F' is a genuine predicate, the step
from (P) to (C) is valid. But, notoriously, some instances

of this move lead into trouble. Some people are courageous, but, whatever Plato may have
thought, courage is not the sort of thing that could be courageous. Some properties, such as
imperceptibility and self-identity, do exemplify themselves, but

(P₁) Courage is a property that does not exemplify itself.

Applying the standard move to this premiss, we obtain the innocent-looking conclusion

(C₁) Therefore, courage has the property of being a property that does not exemplify itself.

But what are we to say about the property apparently designated by the italicized description
in (C₁)? Does it exemplify itself? If it does, it doesn't, and if it doesn't, it does; which is logically
equivalent to a contradiction. This result is standardly taken to show that the predicate in (P₁)
does not signify a property. The very paradoxicality of the paradox is due to our inclination to endorse
all inferences of the form \((P) \implies (C)\) as a conceptual matter of course. In problematic cases we may have to resist this inclination, but this does not discredit standard inferences of that form as invalid. So let us bracket this problem, and return to nihilism.

According to nihilists, the predicate 'is true' is not a genuine predicate. So, in a way, they want to convince us that nothing, no thing, is true. Nihilists deem any attempt to tell us what all and only truths have in common to be fundamentally misguided: if 'is true' isn't a genuine predicate, we cannot explain truth talk by a universal biconditional \(\forall x (x \text{ is true } \iff \ldots x \ldots)\), for the left-hand side is only well formed if 'is true' is a genuine predicate. Let us now look at an early version of truth-theoretical nihilism.

2.2.1 The Performative Potential of 'True'

'Truth is not a property', Peter Strawson maintained in his first paper on the concept of truth. His point of departure was Ramsey's propositional identity claim:

'It is true that Caesar was murdered' means no more than that Caesar was murdered, and 'It is false that Caesar was murdered' means that Caesar was not murdered. They are phrases which we sometimes use for emphasis or for stylistic reasons, or to indicate the position occupied by the statement in our argument. (Ramsey, 'Facts and Propositions', 38)

Like Ramsey, the early Strawson held that a speaker who assertively utters either of the following three sentences

(A) Caesar was murdered
(B) It is true that Caesar was murdered
(C) That is true [said in response to an assertoric utterance of (A)]

does not make a statement to the effect that something has the property of being true: in assertively uttering (B) or (C), we state nothing over and above what is stated in an assertive utterance of (A). But then, why are we not always ready to tolerate substitution of (B) for (A)? Surely it would be rather odd to use (B) when one wished to inform somebody about the way Caesar died or to answer a query on this matter. Strawson's positive account of 'the actual use of the word "true"' can be described as spelling out what is only hinted at in the second half of Ramsey's remark.

Let us start with (C). Suppose you assert (A). If I were to react by (assertively) repeating (A), I would be open to the charge of parroting. I can easily avoid it by using (C). But no matter whether I use (A) or (C), Strawson contended, I am not talking about what you said. What then am I doing, over and above asserting what you asserted, in responding to your utterance by saying (C)?

I am agreeing with, endorsing, underwriting what you said; and, unless you had said something, I couldn't perform these activities, though I could make the assertion you made. ('Truth' (1949), 269)

If this is correct, then under certain circumstances (C) I endorse that

is an entirely appropriate substitute for (C). Now to say 'I endorse that' (in the right circumstances) is to make an endorsement. So here the performative potential of 'true' comes to the fore: sometimes the point of the utterance of a truth declaration can be captured by the utterance of an explicitly performative formula in Austin's sense, a first-person present-tense sentence with the main verb 'V', whose utterance (under appropriate circumstances) is an act of Ving.

It is due to his account of (C) that Strawson's early position has been dubbed 'the amen theory of truth'. This nick-name is rather appropriate: the expression 'amen' does not consist of a grammatical subject and a grammatical predicate, so there is hardly any temptation to say that in ending a prayer by saying 'amen', one is talking about what was said before. In the case of (C), because of its grammatical surface-structure, the temptation is far stronger, but Strawson wants us to resist it here, too.
Other uses of 'true' call for a different description. Assertive utterances of sentences like (B) are often followed by a but-clause. What is the producer of such an utterance of (B) doing, over and above asserting that Caesar was murdered?

The words 'It's true that...but...' could, in these sentences, be replaced by the word 'Although'; or alternatively, by the words 'I concede that...but...'. This use of the phrase, then, is concessive. ('Truth' (1949), 275)

In a manuscript (which was to be published many years after Strawson wrote his article), Ramsey had made the very same point about the use of this binary connective:

'We can use it rather like 'although' in conceding a point but denying a supposed consequence. 'It is true that the earth is round, but still...' ('On Truth, 12)

If this is correct, then (B) could be replaced (in the context under discussion) by (B²) Caesar was murdered. I concede that.

Since to say 'I concede that' (in the right circumstances) is to make a concession, this is another manifestation of the performative potential of 'true'. So far, Strawson's main positive contention is this: in assertively uttering truth declarations like (B) or (C), we are not just asserting that things are thus-and-so (e.g. that Caesar was murdered); we are also doing something else—endorsing what somebody said, for example, or conceding what somebody might say. (The claim that one and the same utterance is an instance of two different kinds of speech-act is not in itself problematic: after all, an utterance of 'There is a bull in that field' may be both an assertion and a warning.) The performative aspect which distinguishes an assertive utterance of (B) from an assertive utterance of (A) explains, Strawson would contend, why it would be odd to use (B) when one wished to inform somebody about the way Caesar died or to answer a query on this matter.

There is a striking resemblance between Strawson's account of the use of 'true' in (B) and (C) and the expressivist account of moral discourse as presented by Ayer: 84

The presence of an ethical symbol in a proposition adds nothing to its factual content. Thus if I say to someone, 'You acted wrongly in stealing that money,' I am not stating anything more than if I had simply said, 'You stole that money.' In adding that this action is wrong I am not making any further statement about it. I am simply evincing my moral disapproval of it. ('Language, Truth and Logic', 142)

Here is one possible way of developing this claim: in assertively uttering sentences like (E) You acted wrongly in stealing that money
You gave him some money. That was right
You stole that money. That was wrong
I only seem to be ascribing the property of wrongness, or of rightness, to somebody's action, for I might just as well say:

(E²) You stole that money. I reprove you for this.
You gave him some money. I praise you for this.

This theory has been called the *boo-bravo* theory of (what seem to be) ascriptions of wrongness or rightness. Again, the nick-name is quite apt: 'Boo!' and 'Bravo!' do not consist of a grammatical subject and a grammatical predicate, so there is hardly any temptation to say that in finishing my report on your deed by using one of these interjections, I should be ascribing a property to what you did.

How did Strawson account for truth talk in which what is said to be true is not revealed? 85

His paradigm case was

(D) What the policeman stated is true.

As a first step he maintained that assertive utterances of such a sentence 'may be regarded as involving an implicit meta-statement': 86

(d) The policeman made a statement.
Apart from making this meta-statement, what else may a speaker be doing by assertively uttering (D)?
What is this additional performance? Consider the circumstances in which we might use the expression [(D)]. . . Uttered by a witness, the sentence is a confirmation; wrung from the culprit, it is an admission. No doubt there are other cases. . . . To complete the analysis, then, of the entire sentence [(D)], we have to add, to the existential meta-assertion [i.e. (d)], a phrase which is not assertive. . . . We might, e.g., offer, as a complete analysis of one case, the expression:

\[ (D') \text{ 'The policeman made a statement. I confirm it'}; \]

where, in uttering the words 'I confirm it', I am not describing something I do, but doing something. Cf. also 'I admit it.' To say this is to make an admission. ('Truth' (1949), 272-3; bracketed letters inserted)

Is Strawson's so-called 'performative theory of truth' adequate? Let us split this question into three: (1) Are Strawson's descriptions of (some of) the uses of 'true' correct as far as they go? (2) How much light do they throw on the concept of truth? Do they elucidate the linguistic meaning (conventional significance) of 'true'? (3) Can they only be accommodated if one denies that truth is a property?

[1] There is some reason to doubt that Strawson's account of the uses of 'true' (even in unembedded sentences) casts the net wide enough. All the speech-acts he mentions as activating the performative potential of truth declarations—endorsing, conceding, confirming, admitting, etc.—share the following feature: if you perform such an act, you commit yourself to the content of a certain (actual or merely envisaged) utterance. Now, when you assertively utter (D), you may, unlike the witness and the culprit described by Strawson, not know what the policeman stated. You may state that D because you believe, strangely enough, that policemen always speak the truth, or because you think, what is more likely, that the policeman you are referring to always speaks the truth, or that a policeman in those circumstances could not but have spoken the truth. Suppose you now learn, to your surprise, that the policeman actually said, 'Most immigrants are potential criminals', and (as is to be hoped) this discovery immediately makes you withdraw your rash statement that D. You do not thereby withdraw your commitment to what the policeman said, since you were not committed to it in the first place.

[2] The 'performative theory of truth', on the assumption that it was intended to give an account of the linguistic meaning of 'true', multiplies meanings beyond necessity. First, (D') does not have the same meaning as ' . . . I admit it', but it is very implausible to assume that (D) has a different meaning in the mouth of the culprit than it has in the mouth of the witness. The same holds, mutatis mutandis, for sentences like (B) and (C). Secondly, the theory applies at best to uses of the word 'true' within a declarative sentence. But this word occurs also as part of non-declarative sentences:

(F) Is it true that Caesar was murdered?

(G) If only it were true that Caesar was murdered!

In utterances of (F) or (G) one does not activate the performative potential of 'true': one does not endorse, concede, confirm, admit, etc. what is stated in an assertive utterance of (A). But if 'true' had different linguistic meanings in (F) and (B), say, then it would be hard to understand how an utterance of (B) can serve as an answer to a question expressed by (F). Finally, and this is the standard objection, the theory cannot even account for all uses of 'true' in utterances of declarative sentences, since 'true' also occurs in embedded sentences, as in

(H) If it is true that Caesar was murdered, then a civil war is most likely

(I) Most historians believe that it is true that Caesar was murdered.

Certainly we do not activate the performative potential of 'true' in assertively uttering (H) or (I). Again, on the assumption that the theory was intended to give an account of the meaning of 'true', it multiplies meanings of 'true' beyond endurance: it is forced to condemn clearly valid arguments like
If it is true that Caesar was murdered, then a civil war is most likely. It is true that Caesar was murdered. Therefore, a civil war is most likely.

as committing the fallacy of equivocation, because the same truth declaration occurs first embedded and then free-standing.

[3] The anti-nihilist assumption that truth is a property is perfectly compatible with an acknowledgement of the fact that many uses of 'true' really have the performative aspect Strawson attributes to them. In asserting 'You are an idiot', one may insult somebody, and such a feat is performed by ascribing to the addressee a certain property. Similarly, in an assertive utterance of sentences such as (C) or (B), one endorses, concedes, confirms, admits, etc. something by ascribing to it the property of being true. This marks an important difference between those sentences and their counterparts (C*) and (B*), which should be as carefully registered as the similarity pointed out by Strawson. (I think the same holds, mutatis mutandis, in the case of moral discourse: in asserting 'You acted wrongly in stealing that money', the speaker reproves the addressee by ascribing the property of being wrong to his action, and this marks an important difference between that sentence and 'You stole that money. I reprove you for this.') So one can consistently acknowledge the performative potential of 'true' while rejecting truth-nihilism.

Let me summarize (part of) this criticism by using Strawson's own words:

In my earliest writings on this subject I made a mistake which I excluded from subsequent ones. The mistake arose from confining my attention to positive assertions to the effect that some proposition was true and thus being trapped into declaring that all uses of 'true' were instances of such speech-acts as confirming or endorsing or conceding etc. It was not wrong to draw attention to these uses of the word, but it was wrong not to distinguish this aspect of the use of the word from the question of its sense (thus perhaps encouraging confusion between them). This can be seen clearly enough, as

several commentators have pointed out, from the fact that 'true' can also occur, without any change of sense, in, e.g., a conditional clause or in one of the limbs of a disjunction. (Reply to Manrico Beuchot', 28)

[I have long come to admit that] truth is a genuine property, 'true' a genuine predicate. (Reply to John Searle', 402)

It is noteworthy that neither Frege's reservations, nor Strawson's early opposition, against taking truth to be a property, were coupled with a metaphysical aversion against propositions. Strawson's point was not that in an utterance of 'I endorse (concede, confirm, admit, etc.) that' no reference to a proposition is made, but rather that in such an utterance we do not attribute a property to the proposition designated by the demonstrative (and the same was supposed to hold for 'That is true').

By contrast, the varieties of truth-theoretical nihilism to be considered in the remainder of this chapter are reductionist. We are offered (what these nihilists deem to be) content-preserving translations or paraphrases of our ordinary truth talk which neither contain a component designating a truth-value bearer (a proposition) nor a component signifying the property of being true. The paraphrasability is taken to show that in truth declarations, contrary to surface appearances, no proposition is referred to and hence no property is ascribed to a proposition. But why should we suppose that the translation proffered by a nihilist is to be given priority over the original when it comes to characterizing the content they allegedly share? After all, the relation of having the same content is symmetrical. So why shouldn't we say that when the proffered paraphrase is used to make a statement the speaker is really, contrary to surface appearances, attributing the property of being true to a proposition? At this point, the nihilists we are now going to confront tend to praise the demythologizing power of their translations. They break the spell of some age-old metaphysical mysteries, we are told. Brandom gives voice to an attitude that is common to all advocates of reductionist truth-nihilism when he says about the camp he himself belongs to:

A feature dear to the hearts of the prosententialists is the metaphysical parsimony of the theory. For what in the past were explained as attributions of a special and mysterious property (truth) to equally mysterious bearers of
truth (propositions) are exhibited instead as uses of grammatical proforms anaphorically referring only to sentence tokenings that are their antecedents. (MIE 302-3)

(The technical details here alluded to will be explained in due course.) We should keep the promise of demythologization firmly in mind when we consider the way adherents of reductionist nihilism try to elucidate our common truth talk.

2.2.2 Introducing 'Somewhether' and 'Thether'
The central tenet of Christopher Williams's variety of nihilism is this: [nihilismw] A certain variant of English, which contains neither 'true' nor any synonym thereof but which is enriched by a prosentence and a sentential quantifier, has the same expressive power as English.

As we shall see, Dorothy Grover also builds her account of truth around the concept of a prosentence. She even calls her account 'A Prosential Theory of Truth', but the title would be equally appropriate for Williams's rather different view. (In Chapter 6.2 it will turn out that the concept of a prosentence is important not only for nihilists.) In order to introduce this concept, I need some grammatical stage-setting. (On the whole, questions of grammar have to loom large in the remainder of this chapter, for nihilists claim to have traced a fundamental philosophical mistake to a grammatical confusion. So I ask the reader to bear with me when it seems as though I am embarking on nothing more than exercises in grammar.) If in your utterance of the sentence

(1) Ann is fond of Vienna, and Ben is fond of Vienna

you refer twice to the same town, you could have saved a bit of breath or ink by using (what Geach calls) a pronoun of laziness:

(1a) Ann is fond of it, and Ben is fond of it.

The pronoun picks up the referent of its antecedent for which it deputizes. (As we shall see, this talk of pronouns of laziness is a bit too lazy. But the refinement can wait till the last section of this chapter.)

The pronoun 'it' plays a very different role when we infer from (1) by existential generalization:

(2) Ann is fond of something, and Ben is fond of it.

Here the word 'it' is a quantificational pronoun. According to (2) it is not only the case that there is something Ann is fond of and something Ben is fond of, but that there is at least one thing they are both fond of. A semiformal paraphrase makes this abundantly clear:

(2*) $\exists x (\text{Ann is fond of } x \& \text{Ben is fond of } x)$.

Now in (1) we are not only told that Ben has an attitude towards the same object as Ann, but also that she has the same attitude towards that object. So we can easily save even more breath and ink by saying

(1b) Ann is fond of Vienna, and so is Ben.

Here the proform 'so' deputizes not for a name, but for a predicate: it is not a pronoun, but rather a pro-predicate of laziness. (For the sake of euphony, and only in the present context, I am using 'predicate' in the pre-Fregean sense of 'general term'.) Now in ordinary language we can also quantify into predicate position: (1) implies not only (2) but also

(3) Ann is something, and Ben is so, too

where 'so' is a quantificational propredicate. According to (3) there is something Ann and Ben both are. Semiformally this becomes

(3*) $\exists F (\text{Ann is } F \& \text{Ben is } F)$.

Let us terminologically distinguish the quantifiers in (2*) and (3*) by calling the former 'nominal' and the latter 'predicational'. This terminology alludes to the substitution range of the variables bound by the quantifier in question: in

(2*) names and other singular terms, and in (3*) predicates. (Once again, 'predicate' is used in the old-fashioned sense, for in (3) and (3*) the copula 'survives' the
quantification.)

All this was only by way of prelude. It is time to get closer to truth talk. Consider

(4) Ann says that Vienna is large, and Ben says that Vienna is large.

Assuming that both speakers are talking about the same Vienna, we can shorten this to:

(4a) Ann says that Vienna is large, and Ben says so, too.

And by existential generalization we can infer from (4):

(5) Ann says something, and Ben says so, too.

If we understand the lazy 'so (too)' and the quantificational 'so (too)' in the last two sentences along the lines of (1a) and (2), then the proform is again a pronoun, the quantification is into name (singular term) position, and consequently the semiformal rendering would have to use what I have called a nominal quantifier:

(5*) \( \exists x (\text{Ann says } x \land \text{Ben says } x) \).

But then, remember, in (3) we also used 'something' plus 'so', and yet there the quantification was clearly not into singular term position. So perhaps the nominal reading of the English sentence (5) is not obligatory. And even if it is, we may be able to reformulate (5) in a certain variant of English in such a way that the quantification is definitely not nominal.

In order to provide a paraphrase of (5) that is unmistakably a quantification into sentence position, we need a further kind of proform, a pro sentence, and another kind of quantifier, a sentential quantifier. In search of a helpful analogy, Williams considers quantifications into adverbial positions. From 'Ann lives in Oxford, and Ben lives in Oxford' we can infer 'Ann lives somewhere, and Ben lives there', and from 'Ann left at midnight, and Ben left at midnight' we can infer 'Ann left somewhen, and Ben left then.' In these conclusions we have quantificational pro-adverbs ('there', 'then') which are bound by non-nominal, adverbial quantifiers ('somewhere', 'some-when'). Notice that these adverbial proforms and adverbial quantifiers rhyme with certain interrogatives: 'there' and 'somewhere' with 'where?', 'then' and 'somewhen' with 'when?'. This observation inspired Arthur Prior to a neologism. Declarative sentences can be used to answer yes-no questions. In English such questions are not introduced by a particular word, but are expressed by an inversion of word order. But in indirect speech we report such questions by using the word 'whether', and in Latin the word 'an' is used both to ask such a question and to report it. So we could simply concoct the sentential quantifier 'somewhether' and the prosentence 'thether', which rhyme with the (indirect) interrogative 'whether?'. Exploiting Prior's playful suggestion, Williams reformulates sentences such as (4a) and (5) in a variant of English I shall call 'Prior-English'—or 'Prenglish' ('Pr') for short. The vocabulary of Prenglish includes neither 'true' nor any synonym of 'true', but it has two entries that are not to be found in any English dictionary: the prosentence 'thether' and the sentential quantifier 'somewhether'.

If we translate (4a) and (5) into this target-language, we obtain:

Pr(4a) Ann says that Vienna is large, and Ben says that thether.

Pr(5) Ann says that somewhether, and Ben says that thether.

In the former sentence 'thether' is a prosentence of laziness, in the latter a quantificational prosentence. (Again, laziness should not be overdone, but, as before, I postpone the needed refinement till the end of this chapter.)

In his 1976 book Williams used a variant of Prenglish which does not shy away from logical symbols. In that semiformal target-language, to which I shall refer as 'Loglish' ('L'), the message of Pr(5) is conveyed by

L (5) \( \exists p (\text{Ann says that } p \land \text{Ben says that } p) \).

Like Prior, Williams wrote this in Polish notation, but I thought I should spare you this additional torment.

In Prenglish we can have quantification into all sentence positions, no matter whether free-standing or embedded. Thus from

(6) Vienna is large, but Ann does not know that Vienna is large

we can infer that Ann is not omniscient:
Pr(7) Somewhat, but Ann does not know that thether.
L (7)  ∃p (p & ¬ (Ann knows that p)).

Incidentally, contrary to what Williams says, it wasn't Prior who first used the term 'prosentence'. Ramsey anticipated him, and Franz Brentano had anticipated Ramsey. Brentano also pointed out that in German 'ja' is used as a prosentence (Fürsatz), and this observation can be easily adapted to (real) English as well. Here are two examples: 'Is it raining?' 'Yes.' (Notice that in this, and in the the next, example, the prosentence acts as deputy for the declarative counterpart of its antecedent.) 'Regnet es? Wenn ja, so bleibe ich lieber hier': in other words: 'Is it raining? If so, I'd rather stay here.' The advantage of Prenglish over English is that, unlike 'yes' and 'so', the prosentence 'thether' can be substituted for sentences (of the declarative type) in any context, and, unlike 'so', it can be substituted only for sentences.

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Williams burdens his theory with a certain syntactical hypothesis about English which Prior put forward. This hypothesis concerns sentences in which a verb of saying or thinking is followed by a that-clause. According to Prior sentences like 'Ben said that it was snowing' are not to be parsed as 'Ben said / that it was snowing' but rather as 'Ben said that / it was snowing.' By thus shifting the parsing line a bit to the right we take such sentences to be formed from a syntactically heterogenous operator like '[ ] said that ( )' by inserting a name and a sentence (in this order). Since such operators are 'as it were predicates at one end and connectives at the other', one might call them prenectives. According to Prior's parsing, the word 'that' goes with the verb, and the that-clause dissolves (thereby suffering from a somewhat similar fate as definite descriptions do under Russell's treatment). If Prior gets the syntax of English right, the sentence 'Ben said that it was snowing' contains the clause 'that it was snowing' not as a syntactical unit (let alone as a singular term designating a proposition), but only in the sense in which it also comprises the word-sequence 'said that it'. Consider a connective which results from inserting a name into the left slot of a prenective, e.g. 'Prior believes that'. In Prior's eyes the deep grammar of this phrase is the same as the surface grammar of 'in Prior's eyes': both belong to the category of sentence adverbials.

I think there are fairly strong syntactical objections against taking Priorese Syntax to be faithful to English. Passive and cleft transformations preserve the attachment of 'that' to the sentence following it: we have 'That it was snowing was said by Ben' (but not 'It was snowing was said-that by Ben'), and 'What Ben said was that it was snowing' (but not 'What Ben said-that was it was snowing'). Furthermore, the insertion of parenthetical expressions between verb and 'that' is possible, but it is not acceptable immediately after 'that': we have 'Ben said—as you very well know—that it was snowing' (but not 'Ben said-that—as you very well know—it was snowing'). Nihilists like Williams would presumably retort that people who put forward this kind of consideration are in the grip of 'superficial grammar'. But taking things really to be as they seem to be is not always a symptom of shallowness. Williams correctly observes that the 'that' of oratio obliqua can often be removed without loss of sentencehood. But he fails to notice that it is bound to reappear in passive and cleft transformations: thus 'Ben said it was snowing' does not go into 'It was snowing was said by Ben' nor into 'What Ben said was it was snowing'.

All this speaks in favour of the standard treatment of that-clauses in current linguistic theory: the word 'that' functions as a complementizer, i.e. it combines with a sentence to produce a special kind of syntactical unit, a complement. If that-clauses are not torn apart, then taking their replacement by 'it', 'everything', or 'something' to be a replacement by a pronoun and a nominal quantifier is a real option, and consequently an argument like

(A) Ann believes that Vienna is large,
but Ben does not believe it;
so Ben does not believe everything Ann believes

can be regarded as valid in the predicate calculus, for now we can assign to the conclusion of (A) the same quantificational structure as to 'Ben does not touch everything Ann touches,'
namely \( \neg \forall x (aRx \rightarrow bRx) \)\(^{110}\). But then the quantificational structure of (5) can also be represented by (5*).

Actually, nihilists should not, and need not, rest their case on the assumption that Priorese Syntax is correct for English. They should, rather, take it as correct for that variant of English which they claim to have the same expressive power as English with its predicate 'true'.

The question whether English also permits quantification into sentence position is entirely independent of the question whether it complies with Priorese Syntax. Taking that-clauses to be genuine syntactical units does not, by itself, prevent you from quantifying into the position of the embedded sentence. After all, unity does not imply atomicity. Here is an analogy: Frege, unlike Russell, takes definite descriptions like 'The capital of Austria' to be genuine singular terms, so the inference 'The capital of Austria is a charming town, therefore \( \exists x (x \text{ is a charming town}) \)' is formally valid. But that does not stop Frege from quantifying into the position of the embedded name and to deduce from the same premiss \( \exists x (\text{the capital of } x \text{ is a charming town}) \). Similarly, from 'A believes that Vienna is large' we may derive not only \( \forall x (A \text{ believes } x) \), but also \( \exists p (A \text{ believes that } p) \), if we can make sense of sentential quantification.

For the first three of these quantified conclusions we can easily provide translations from Loglish into English which preserve the quantificational structure, but can this be done at all for the last conclusion? I shall confront this question twice: with critical intent in the next sub-section 2.2.4 and with a positive proposal in the course of defending my own view in Chapter 6.2.3. For the moment, the question whether there is such a thing as sentential quantification in English can be put to one side.

Here, at last, is the crucial question: is Williams right in contending that Prenglish (or Loglish) has the same expressive power as English? Philosophers who deny the very intelligibility of sentential quantification would claim that Prenglish is at bottom incomprehensible. I suspect that this is an unjustified dogma of Quineanism. In any case, the alleged problem is not peculiar to nihilism, and I shall postpone its discussion, too, until it threatens to undermine my own position. Taking the comprehensibility of Prenglish for granted, let us examine Williams's main contention by considering a few test cases, first a propositionally revealing truth declaration and then some propositionally unrevealing ones. Of course, nihilists will not like my description of such test cases, since it suggests that truth talk is about propositions. Never mind the description: just look at the test cases. How do they fare with Williams?

When confronted with a propositionally revealing truth declaration such as
(R) It is true that snow is white.
Williams first gives an English paraphrase which moves the that-clause behind a verb:
What anyone who was to say that snow is white would thereby be saying is true.
Then he gets rid of 'true' by translating this into Prenglish or Loglish:
Pr(R) Anyone who was to say that snow is white would thereby be saying that
somewhether, and thether.
L(R) \( \exists p (\text{Anyone who was to say that snow is white would thereby be saying that } p \land p) \).
Somewhat surprisingly, Williams also embraces the Redundancy Thesis: 'we can simply lop off "It is true that" from [(R)] and it will make no difference to what we want to say',\(^{111}\) But surely we do not have to exercise our concept of same-saying in order to understand an utterance of 'Snow is white.' So the content of such an utterance is not the same as that of an utterance of Pr(R) or L(R). Since nothing can be identical with two different things, Williams must make up his mind here. Let us assume that his considered view is that it makes no difference to what we want to say whether we use the English sentence (R) or its Prenglish or Loglish counterpart. Is this correct? The locution 'thereby say' makes for a problem. It seems that every speaker who was to say that Joyce wrote *Ulysses* but not *Dubliners* would thereby be saying, among other things, that Joyce wrote *Ulysses*. But then Williams's paraphrastic strategy is in trouble, for although it is not true that Joyce wrote *Ulysses* but not *Dubliners*, the alleged paraphrase is true, for there is a true substitution-instance of
the matrix 'anybody who was to say that Joyce wrote *Ulysses* but not *Dubliners* would thereby be saying that p, and (indeed) p'. Williams could avoid this objection if he were to modify L(R) by inserting 'and vice versa' before '&'.

So let us proceed to our next question.

How does Williams explain propositionally *unrevealing* truth declarations? Explicitly quantified truth talk like

(Q) Ann said something true
is not much of a challenge:
Pr(Q) Ann said that somewhether, and thether
L(Q) ∃p (Ann said that p .&. p).

What about truth declarations that have a *name* (like 'Pythagoras' Theorem') for their grammatical subject? In Williams's books of 1976 and 1992 you will not find a single line about them. But in an earlier paper he did consider this kind of truth talk briefly:

Expressions like 'Utilitarianism' and 'the doctrine of transubstantiation'. . .function more or less like proper names. We do not, or should not, allow that a person understands what an expression of this sort refers to unless he can produce a proposition [sentence] which can express what it refers to: the sense of 'Tom believes in a', where 'a' is a referring expression of this sort, must also be expressible by a sentence of the form 'Tom believes that p.' Accordingly, with this sort of referring expression 'a is true' is always paraphrasable by a proposition [sentence] of the form 'It is true that p.' ('What does "X is true" say about X?", 124)

If this were correct, then names of propositions would have the same sense as nominalizations of sentences expressing those propositions. Every substitution-instance of the following schema would yield a truth:

If a is the proposition that p then to say that *a is true* is to say that *it is true that p*,

and the problem with name-involving truth declarations would boil down to that of accounting, in Prenglish, for propositionally revealing ones. But is it correct? Let us for a moment put truth talk aside. Williams seems to be right in maintaining that you cannot 'believe in' the First Law of Thermodynamics, say, without believing that p

1

(where 'p', something like 'Energy is never created or destroyed', expresses that law). But as soon as we consider other examples, we see that Williams's contention jars with our practice of attitude (and indirect speech) reports. Suppose that in her teens Ann had listened to public lectures by Helmholtz. Half a century later, in 1930, she is willing to tell anyone who might be interested in her reminiscences: 'The First Law of Thermodynamics was often referred to in Helmholtz's lectures', but now she is unwilling to assert, 'The law that p was often referred to in Helmholtz's lectures.' One could truly say about her:

(8) Ann believes that the First Law of Thermodynamics was often referred to in Helmholtz' lectures, but she does not believe that the law that p was often referred to in his lectures.

So the proposition that the First Law of Thermodynamics is thus-and-so is different from the proposition that the law that p is thus-and-so.

Soames would disagree, and Evans's views about abstract singular terms suggest a question, so let me briefly digress here. Soames's argument is based on two premisses: he takes names of propositions as well as that-clauses to be 'directly referential' terms, and he assumes that directly referential terms designating the same thing are intersubstitutable, outside quotational contexts, *salva veritate*. If 'logicism' and '(the proposition) that mathematics is reducible to logic' designate the same proposition, then, Soames maintains, the truth of (9), taken as a *de dicto* belief-ascription, guarantees the truth of (10):

(9) Ben believes that logicism was defended by Russell

(10) Ben believes that the proposition that mathematics is reducible to logic was defended by Russell.

I find Soames's comments on (9) eminently plausible: '[A] student attending his first lecture in the philosophy of mathematics . . . may be told that logicism is a proposition about the relationship between mathematics and logic, that formalism is a doctrine about the interpretation of mathematics, and so on. At this stage, the student may not be able to distinguish logicism from
other propositions about the relationship between logic and mathematics. . . . Nevertheless, he may acquire beliefs about logicism. For example, he may be told, "Russell was a defender of logicism," and thereby acquire the belief that Russell defended logicism.\textsuperscript{116} The student described by Soames may also ask, 'What does logicism say about the relationship between mathematics and logic?' and thereby give voice to his curiosity concerning logicism. But he may not yet be able to grasp the proposition that mathematics is reducible to logic, because he has not yet acquired the concept of reducibility. But then, pace Soames, this student cannot be the Ben of (10): nobody can grasp the proposition Ben believes according to (10) without grasping the proposition that mathematics is reducible to logic, and nobody can grasp this proposition without having the concept of reducibility.\textsuperscript{117} So something must be wrong with either or both of Soames's premisses.

According to Evans, one has a 'fundamental Idea of an object' if and only if one knows a true answer to the question 'What differentiates that object from others?' Do I contradict Evans's contention that 'proper names of abstract objects are typically such that understanding them requires a fundamental Idea of the referent'?\textsuperscript{118} In one respect, this is hard to say, since among his examples for such names there is none that (purportedly) designates a proposition, and one doesn't know which proper names of abstract objects Evans would regard as 'typical'. At any rate, Ben does have 'distinguishing knowledge' of logicism: it is that doctrine about the relationship between mathematics and logic which was referred to in yesterday's lecture as logicism. But this name-involving bit of knowledge seems to be parasitic rather than 'fundamental'. Ben, as described by Soames, is not able to distinguish logicism from other doctrines about the relationship between mathematics and logic as regards their content. So presumably Evans would have said that for the time being Ben has only a non-fundamental Idea of logicism. (Perhaps he would have regarded that-clauses as 'typical proper names' of propositions.) But this is compatible with my claims that (9) and (10) might differ in truth-value, or that (8) might be true.

Let us return to Ann and put truth into the picture. If in 1930 somebody had said about her:

\begin{equation}
\text{(11) Ann is convinced that the First Law of Thermodynamics is true, but she is not convinced that it is true that } p_1,\end{equation}

he would have been right, for at that time (let us assume) she was still willing to use the first italicized sentence assertively, but no longer ready to use the second italicized sentence assertively. So, contrary to Williams's contention, to say that the First Law of Thermodynamics is true is not to say that it is true that \( p_1 \).

Williams's claim that one cannot understand the name of a proposition unless one is able to express this proposition seems to me as implausible as the contention that one cannot understand a man's name unless one is able to recognize him when one sees him.\textsuperscript{119} But what cannot plausibly be said about names of propositions does hold of another type of terms that (ostensibly) designate propositions: whenever a sentence \( 'p' \) is free of context-sensitive elements, one cannot understand the term \( '\text{(the proposition) that } p' \) without being able to express the proposition it (apparently) stands for. As Russell might have put it, such a term is a \textit{logically proper name} of a proposition, understanding it provides one with \textit{knowledge by acquaintance} of a proposition. In this respect, 'the First Law of Thermodynamics' and 'logicism' are related to \( '\text{(the proposition) that energy is never created or destroyed}' \) and \( '\text{(the proposition) that mathematics reduces to logic}' \) respectively as 'alpha' is related to ' "a" '. You cannot understand the quotational designator without eo ipso knowing which object is designated by it.\textsuperscript{120}

In his later writings Williams no longer pursues the line he took in his 1969 paper, perhaps because he no longer accepts it. Unfortunately, in these writings he is entirely silent on the topic. But his book on truth is (from the first to the last page, mind you!) about another propositionally unrevealing truth declaration, namely

\begin{equation}
\text{(T) What Percy says is true.}\end{equation}
So I shall try to extrapolate from what he does say about (T) to what he might say about those truth declarations that we are after. Let us take (T) to entail uniqueness: 'The one and only thing Percy says (at the pertinent time) is true.' Williams first offers a provisional paraphrase of this:

\( (X) \; \exists p (\text{Percy says that } p \land q (\text{Percy says that } q \land (\text{that } p = \text{that } q)) \land p). \)

(Since Prenglish as described by Williams has only one prosentence and one sentential quantifier, its Loglish counterpart is better equipped to cope with sentences like (T). But of course, if we were to introduce a general quantifier and subscripts into Prenglish, 'everywhether \( _1 \)', 'somewhether \( _2 \)', 'thether \( _1 \)', 'thether \( _2 \)', the resources would be equalized.) Now for Williams, (X) can be only an intermediate step: in substitution-instances of the identity clause in (X) the combination 'that' plus sentence seems to function rather as a bona fide singular term which, together with a bona fide predicate, could form a truly predicative truth declaration. For the nihilist, this appearance must be deceptive. So he is bound to paraphrase the identity clause in (X) away. Williams suggests that the point, which is made in identity clauses of the form 'that \( p = \text{that } q \)' by nominalization and the identity operator, can be captured by a connective: 'anyone who was to say that \( p \) would thereby be saying that \( q \), and anyone who was to say that \( q \) would thereby be saying that \( p \).' Since this is rather cumbersome, let me abbreviate it thus: '\( p \Leftrightarrow q \)' (read: 'To say that \( p \) is to say that \( q \)'). Finally then, (T) goes into Loglish as

\( L(T) \; \exists p (\text{Percy says that } p \land \forall q (\text{Percy says that } q \longrightarrow (p \Leftrightarrow q)) \land p). \)

Now let us try to cope along these lines with

\( (U) \; \text{Pythagoras' Theorem is true.} \)

As a first step, (U) would be transformed into

\( (Y) \; \exists p (\text{Pythagoras' Theorem} = \text{that } p \land p). \)

Now a theorem cannot say anything, at least not in the way Percy does. And (U) is true although Pythagoras never said anything to the effect that the square on the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides.\(^{144}\) The trouble is that, unlike the definite description in (T), the grammatical subject of (U) does not contain any verb. In order to capture the point of identity clauses of the form 'x = that p', where 'x' is a placeholder for names, Williams needs a syntactically heterogenous operator, something like 'anyone who was to express x would thereby be saying that p, and anyone who was to say that q would thereby be expressing x'. Abbreviating this prenecive by '\( \Delta (x, p) \)', we obtain the following paraphrase of (U) into semiformal Prenglish:

\( L(U) \; \exists p [\Delta (\text{Pythagoras' Theorem}, p) \land p]. \)

This is scarcely a result an advocate of reductionist truth-theoretical nihilism can be happy with. After all, William contends:

\[ \text{The word 'true' has the job...of satisfying the need of bogus subject-expressions for a bogus predicate. (BIT 85)} \]

But L(U) obviously still contains a singular term which stubbornly resists Williams's paraphrastic endeavours. So there is nothing bogus about subject-expressions such as 'Pythagoras' Theorem'. Nor, it seems, about predicate-expressions such as 'is true'. We obtain a predicate from L(U) if we replace the singular term by a gap (or by a variable). So it rather looks as if L(U) saves the appearances: (U) really is what it seems to be— an application of a genuine predicate to a proposition, and L(U) is an honourable attempt to elucidate this predicate. Williams wanted his account of truth to steer clear of, as he puts it, mysterious entities called 'Propositions' or 'Sätze an sich'.\(^{122}\) But isn't this a bogus mystery by Williams's own lights? After all, in his attempt at explaining his favourite sentence 'What Percy says is true', he is ready to use the 'same-saying' connective '\( \Leftrightarrow \)'. So presumably he understands it. Now this connective is obviously hyper-intensional. (Necessarily, ABC is an equilateral triangle iff it is an equiangular triangle, but surely it is not the case that anyone who was to say that ABC is an equilateral triangle would thereby be saying that it is an equiangular triangle.) If Williams
understands this connective nevertheless, he must have already overcome most, if not all, Quinean worries about the lack of criteria of identity for propositions. But then, where is the mystery?

So in the end it seems to me that Williams made somewhat heavy weather of 'somewhether' and 'thether'. Perhaps we will find the American varieties of nihilism more convincing. So let us turn first to Grover and then to Brandom (whose theory is an offshoot of Grover's).

2.2.3 'True' As a Syncategorematic Expression

The central claim of Dorothy Grover's version of nihilism is this: A certain fragment of English, in which the word 'true' occurs only within prosentences and within some sentential operators, has the same expressive power as English.

Grover's and Williams's varieties of nihilism were developed independently of each other, but, considering my representations of their views, one can imagine Grover telling Williams: 'You did not look hard enough, there are prosentences available in English that can be substituted for sentences in any context.' Well, where are they?

This time, our target language is a fragment of English in which 'true' does not appear as a predicate (general term). So sentences like 'What Ann says is true' or 'Ben's favourite hypothesis is true' are excluded. As you might have expected, or feared, I shall call Grover's target-language 'Grenglish' ('Gr'). Notice that the characterization of Grenglish I just gave does not imply that the word 'true' does not appear at all in the sentences of this language.

Suppose, Ann says,
(1) Vienna is large,
and Ben agrees,
(2) That is true.

One is inclined to hear Ben's remark as an utterance of a subject-predicate sentence. Thus understood, the demonstrative 'that' in his utterance of (2) is used to refer to what Ann said (the proposition that Vienna is large), and 'is true' is employed to ascribe truth to this object. Hence, under this reading, (2) is not a sentence of Grenglish. Now Grover pleads for a different reading of (2). She regards the whole sentence 'That is true' as a generally available prosentence of laziness. If we understand this sentence as a prosentence, it no longer requires a subject-predicate analysis. Using the terminology of late medieval logicians, we might say that by Grover's lights 'true' is only a syncategorematic, or consignificative, component of 'that is true'. In Ben's utterance of (2) the prosentence deputizes for its antecedent, i.e. Ann's utterance of 'Vienna is large'. Hence nothing is referred to in the utterance of the prosentence which is not also referred to in its antecedent. After all, under Grover's reading of 'that is true', its utterance acquires all its content from its antecedent, so there cannot be any additional reference in 'that is true'. (Here again, talk of laziness can be misleading, as we shall see in the last section.)

Notice two major differences between the prosentences in Prenglish and in Grenglish. In Prior's target-language the prosentence is atomic and an addition to English, whereas the prosentence in Grover's target-language is neither. Her insistence that 'true' is not an isolable part of prosentences should not be mistaken for the claim that prosentences are semantically seamless wholes. (A comparison might help. The suffix of the name 'Mikhailovich' isn't isolable either, and yet it makes a distinct contribution to what is grasped in understanding Russian patronyms.)

It is not easy to believe what Grover tells us about 'That is true.' Consider the following comments on a claim that has come under attack:

(T1) That is true, so it cannot be inconsistent
(T2) That is true, even if it is incompatible with a dogma of the church.

In (T1) and (T2) a predicative reading of the second sentence is obligatory. So how does the anaphoric subject-expression 'it' acquire its referent? From
the demonstrative in the first sentence of (T1) and (T2), one feels inclined to answer. But then, that sentence, too, is a predication, and its grammatical appearance does not belie its logical structure.127

Furthermore, is it really beyond doubt that an utterance of 'That is true' has the very same content as the utterance of its antecedent? Suppose Ann says, 'Atlantis was engulfed by the Atlantic Ocean', and Ben confirms, 'That's true'. If what she said falls into a truth-value gap, then, according to Grover's theory (and Leibniz's Law), what he said cannot but share the same destiny. But one might reasonably doubt this: didn't he say something false? In the case of the concocted prosentence of Grenglish, such doubt can be excluded by stipulation. More interestingly, in the case of the uncontroversially authentic prosentence 'Yes', it simply does not arise: if Ann asks, 'Was Atlantis engulfed by the Atlantic Ocean?' and Ben replies, 'Yes' (or 'Yes, it was'), his answer must receive the same valuation as the proposition expressed by the interrogative.128 This difference can be explained if 'That's true' is used to ascribe a property to what is designated by the demonstrative. But of course, this explanation is not available to Grover.

Let us subdue all nagging doubts, at least for a while, and try to obtain a more complete picture of Grover's theory. So far, we have focused on one feature of Grenglish: its prosentence of laziness. What about quantificational prosentences? If Ben's comment on Ann's remark (1), 'Vienna is large', was correct, we may conclude:

(Q) Ann said something true.

This conclusion is rendered into Grenglish as

Gr(Q) There is a proposition such that Ann said that it is true, and it is true.

But here we stumble at once over another difficulty. Is this really a sentence of Grenglish? It is very hard to resist the temptation to read the word 'it' in Gr(Q) as a quantificational pronoun. After all, the quantifier phrase 'There is a proposition such that' contains the count noun 'proposition', and doesn't that impose on the following occurrences of 'it' a pronominal reading?129 This hits you in the eye if you translate Grover's formulation into a language with a gender system for nouns: 'Es gibt eine (!) Proposition, von der gilt: Ann sagte, dass sie (!) wahr ist, und sie (!) ist wahr.' But truth-nihilists should carefully avoid formulations that suggest, at least to the untrained eye, that propositions as truth-value bearers are here to stay. If the pronominal reading is obligatory, then 'is true' is a predicate, and if it is a genuine predicate, then we have to take Gr(Q) for the counterpart of the nominal quantification over propositions, '∃x (Ann said that x is true .&. x is true)'. But Grover wants us to read the whole sentence 'it is true' as a quantificational prosentence. The quantificational prosentence in Grenglish is no more susceptible to a subject-predicate analysis than the Grenglish prosentence of laziness. So in effect we are asked to interpret Gr(Q) as the counterpart of a sentential quantification in Loglish:

L (Q) ∃p (Ann said that p .&. p).

But invoking the assistance of L(Q) in order to understand Gr(Q) would be putting the cart before the horse. Grover began her pertinent work in philosophical logic with reflections on what she called 'propositional quantifiers', and originally she had been under the impression that 'there appear to be no faithful and perspicuous readings in English' for sentences such as L(Q). For the sake of making sense of quantifiers like the one in L(Q), she first thought of adding to English an atomic prosentence (apparently without realizing that Prior had already done this).130 But then, so she reports, 'Joe Camp pointed out that "That is true" seemed to do the work in English that I had described [the concocted prosentence] as doing.'131 So we are back with an unresolved tension between the intended reading of the quantificational prosentence in Gr(Q) and the prefixed quantifier phrase which binds it. But let us move on.

In English (as opposed to Grenglish) the verb in 'that is true' and 'it is true' is often modified, as for example in

(3) Ben denies that Vienna is large, but it might be true.

In order to cope with such cases, another bit of English is incorporated into Grenglish, namely sentential operators in which the word 'true' appears, e.g. 'it might be true that', 'it was true
that', 'it is not true that', etc. An utterance of 'It might be (was) true that' followed by the sentence 'Vienna is large' has the same content as the internally modalized (tensed) variant of that sentence: 'Vienna might be (was) small.' Prefixing 'It is not true that' to a sentence S, you obtain the contradictory of S, in the sense that they can be neither true together nor false together. Sometimes there is a less verbose contradictory of S available in English ('Nobody is perfect', if S is 'Somebody is perfect'), sometimes there isn't ('If Ben were to leave her, Ann would be very unhappy').

If you apply a truth operator to a prosentence, the result has the same content as the result of applying the operator to the antecedent of that prosentence. Let me try to insinuate the intended interpretation by writing the Grenglish translation of (3) like this:

\[ \text{Gr}(3) \quad \text{Ben denies that } \text{Vienna is large}, \text{ but } \text{IT MIGHT BE TRUE THAT } \text{it is true}. \]

Like prosentences, truth operators in Grenglish contain the word 'true' only as a syncategorematic component. In the case of these operators, and only in their case, Grover marks this feature by using hyphens. This is misleading. After all, 'true' is supposed to be non-isolable in prosentences, too. If truth operators were atomic, then the presence of 'true' in all of them (as well as in prosentences) would be just an orthographic accident. (Realizing that 'able' occurs both in 'stable' and in 'table' is no help in understanding either of these expressions.) In the remainder of this section, truth operators will play no role. But in Chapter 5.3.2 we shall have a close look at grammatically tensed truth operators like 'It was true that', 'It will be true that'.

Let me repeat what Grover calls the 'principle claim' of the nihilist theory of truth, this time using her own words (and her own sobriquet for Grenglish):

\[ \text{English can be translated without significant residue into its fragment English*. . .Such a translation is perspicuous and explanatory. . .Truth talk is wholly intelligible without truth bearers and truth characteristics. (Prosentential', 90, 105) } \]

Is Grover right in contending that Grenglish has the same expressive power as English? As with Williams, I shall assume that questions about the intelligibility of sentential quantification can be given satisfactory answers. Grover's treatment of the propositionally revealing truth declaration

\[ \text{(R) \quad It is true that snow is white} \]

is rather confusing. She says that in a translation into Grenglish it 'could be treated. . .by making the truth predicate disappear entirely'. (Obviously, she means that the truth operator could be made to disappear in the translation.) She then goes on to say that in some cases, which syntactically also admit of an eliminative treatment, the translation into Grenglish 'can be improved'. Her melancholy example is a sentence which contains (R):

\[ \text{(R+) \quad It is true that snow is white, but it rarely looks white in Pittsburgh,} \]

and she offers the following treatment:

\[ \text{Gr(R+) \quad Snow is white. That is true, but it rarely looks white in Pittsburgh.} \]

So in this environment (R) is given a paratactic treatment. Why is this supposed to be an improvement? Because the presence of the prosentence allows the speaker of Gr(R+) to do what the speaker of (R+) does, or can do, with the truth operator: explicitly grant someone's point. (Here Grover appropriates Strawson's description of the performative potential of 'true', which was examined in section 2.2.1 above.) But the performative potential which is thus preserved in Gr(R+) is not activated when (R) occurs as the antecedent of a conditional. Hence, we are confronted with an embarrassing ambiguity: sometimes (R) means the same as 'Snow is white', sometimes it doesn't. Surely a theory would be preferable which avoids this multiplication of senses.

Does propositionally unrevealing truth talk fare any better with Grover than with Williams? Her paradigm of a truth declaration which has a name for its grammatical subject is

\[ \text{(U*) \quad Goldbach's Conjecture is true.} \]

'It in order to get the effect' of such truth talk in Grenglish, she writes,

\[ \text{we need to invoke a connective like 'that—is-the-same-conjecture-as-that—', which we abbreviate by ' } \equiv ' \]

and we need also some device to keep straight the cross-referencing of our quantificational prosentences, on pain
of syntactical ambiguity. Perhaps we should have an infinite stock of prosentences 'It is true', 'It is true', '... plus a bunch of quantifying expressions with subscripts (for example). Then we would say

\[ \text{Gr(U*)} \text{ There is a proposition } _1 \text{ such that Goldbach conjectured that it is true } _1, \text{ and for every proposition } _2, \text{ if } \text{Goldbach conjectured that it is true } _2 \text{ then it is true } _1 \Leftrightarrow \text{it is true } _2, \text{ and it is true } _1. \]

That's messy, but the idea is obvious enough. ('Prosentential', 95)\(^1\)

Notice that this translation of (U*) into Grenglish has the same structure as Williams's more easily digestible translation of 'What Percy says is true' (T) into Loglish.\(^2\) By adding subscripted prosentences, Grover has extended Grenglish,

end p.82

of course. But she has a good reply to those who would take this fact to falsify the principle claim of her theory.\(^3\)

Nothing is going on here that is not already necessary for reading ordinary first-order quantifications into English... No one has ever provided a thorough translation of first-order quantification into English as it is, as opposed to English with a denumerable family of distinct pronouns and quantifiers. (ibid.)

Ardent extensionalists will take offence at the 'same conjecture'-connective ' \( \Leftrightarrow \) '. Grover is ready to admit that this connective awaits explanation, but she adds that 'those who set themselves the task of analyzing language must also account for such usage'.\(^4\) That's fair enough. But quite a few pressing questions remain. First of all, there is our complaint about Grover's use of the count noun 'proposition' in the quantifier phrase. Secondly, does Grover really want to have a special connective for each such noun-phrase as 'Goldbach's Conjecture', e.g. 'A.'s notorious contention', 'B.'s last statement', 'C.'s most cherished belief', etc.? Adoption of Williams' 'same-say' connective ' \( \Leftrightarrow \) ' would spare her such a crowd of operators. Thirdly, the admission that Gr(U*) is messy is somewhat disarming, but it should not make us forget that we were promised 'perspicuous' translations. The very messiness of the paraphrase arouses the suspicion that the availability of the sentence to be paraphrased might be a precondition of our thinking the thought which the nihilist then tries to capture in another idiom. (In a similar context Strawson has put such a suspicion into words which I cannot resist quoting: 'Committed in thought to what we shun in speech, we should then seem like people seeking euphemisms in order to avoid explicit mention of distasteful realities.')\(^5\)

Fourthly, it is extremely unlikely that Goldbach conjectured only one thing in his life, as Gr(U*) has it, and even if he did, the transformation of the grammatical subject of (U*) into the operator 'Goldbach conjectured that' is very dubious: the grammatical subject of (U*) is, so to speak, a retired definite description which has become a name, so (U*) could express a truth even if Goldbach had never entertained any thought to the effect that every even number greater than 2 is the sum of two prime numbers.\(^6\) Finally, often it is simply impossible to recover a verb from the noun-phrases which form

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the grammatical subject of a propositionally unrevealing truth declaration. Just recall

(U) Pythagoras' Theorem is true.

There are many more examples of this kind: 'the First Law of Thermodynamics', 'logicism', 'the doctrine of eternal recurrence', 'the principle of sufficient reason', 'Church's thesis', etc. So Williams's deadlock reappears. We seem to be stuck with singular terms which obstinately resist the nihilists' paraphrastic endeavours. So in spite of their hard labour, we still cannot help thinking that in (U) and (U*) a singular term is combined with a genuine predicate to form a predicative truth declaration. Contrary to what nihilists want us to believe, truth talk just doesn't seem to be wholly intelligible without truth-bearers and truth characteristics. This verdict can also be upheld, I think, in the face of the most recent version of nihilism.

2.2.4 'Is True' As a Prosentence-Forming Operator

Robert Brandom largely agrees with Grover's approach. Interestingly, he parts company with her when it comes to sentences like

(U*) Goldbach's Conjecture is true.

What matters in our context is this partial disagreement, but let me just mention in passing that Brandom's characterization of what he takes to be common ground starts with a blunder: 'So
"Snow is white is true" is read as a prosentence of laziness, having the same semantic content as its anaphoric antecedent, perhaps the token of "Snow is white" that it contains. The first string of words mentioned here isn't a prosentence of any kind, but plain nonsense, and I cannot for the life of me see how a proform could possibly contain its antecedent. Brandom accepts Grover's treatment of truth declarations which wear their quantifiers on their sleeves ('Ann said something true'). 'But it is not clear that it is a good idea to assimilate what look like straightforward predications of truth to this quantificational model. . . . Otherwise almost all sentences involving "true" must be seen as radically misleading as to their underlying logical form.'

Now in the mouth of a nihilist, this objection against Gr(U*) sounds rather strange: isn't the central claim of truth-theoretical nihilism that the grammatical form of truth declarations is radically misleading in each and every case? But let this pass. What modification of Grover's theory does Brandom propose in order to avoid a quantificational account of statements like (U*)?

'It would be preferable', he writes, 'to follow the treatment of sentence nominalizations suggested by disquotational generalizations of redundancy theories.' Since (U*) does not contain any sentence nominalization, let alone any quotation, you might well wonder how the treatment alluded to could possibly help. But we shall soon see that Brandom's use of the term 'sentence nominalization' is decidedly non-standard (and that the adjective 'disquotational' is best ignored).

He starts with the observation, repeatedly made in the course of this chapter, that 'simple redundancy accounts will not offer a correct reading of sentences like "Goldbach's conjecture is true." For this sentence is not interchangeable with "Goldbach's conjecture". For instance, the former, but not the latter, appears as the antecedent of well-formed and significant conditionals.' We hardly need such a substitution test in order to find out that a term isn't a sentence, but let us see how the so-called 'disquotational generalization' of 'simple redundancy accounts' is supposed to deal with (U*):

In the case of sentences such as 'Goldbach's conjecture is true', the claim with respect to which the truth-taking content must be determined by a two-stage process. First, a sentence nominalization is discerned. This may be a description like 'Goldbach's conjecture'. . . . Next, a sentence is produced that is nominalized by the locution picked out in the first stage. This is the sentence expressing Goldbach's conjecture. . . . It is this sentence that is then treated by theory as intersubstitutable with the truth-attributing sentence, whether occurring embedded or freestanding. (MIE 300)

Brandom now integrates this into his own brand of prosententialism by maintaining that the function of the term 'Goldbach's Conjecture' is 'just to pick out the antecedent on which the whole prosentence formed using "true" [i.e. U*] is anaphorically dependent, and from which it accordingly inherits its content.' So the idea is that ' . . . is true' is neither a predicate, i.e. a sentence-forming operator on singular terms, nor a syncategorematic fragment of a prosentence, as Grover has it, but rather a 'prosentence-forming operator'. When all the dust has settled you will experience a certain déjà vu. According to Brandom's version of prosententialism (U*) has the same content as (S) Every even number greater than 2 is the sum of two prime numbers.

This contention is obviously close to Williams as cited on p. 72. Confusingly (S) is described as what is nominalized by the term 'Goldbach's Conjecture', but this can be put aside as a terminological aberration. Certainly Brandom's account of (U*) is less messy than Grover's Gr(U*). Actually it is not messy at all, but it has the decisive disadvantage of being utterly implausible. It is open to the same kind of objections as those made against Williams. Suppose Ben has recently heard about Goldbach's Conjecture in his first lecture in the philosophy of mathematics. He is not yet able to distinguish it from other theorems about prime numbers, but he is able to acquire beliefs about it. This morning he read in a newspaper: 'American Mathematician Proves Goldbach's Conjecture', so he feels authorized to claim that U*. How could this claim possibly have the same content as an assertion that S? Ben might even deny that every even number greater than 2 is the sum of two prime numbers, while maintaining that U*. If
Brandom were right, Ben could not possibly fail to realize that these contentions cannot both be true.

Brandom calls the grammatical subject of (U*) a description. In section 2.2.3 I expressed my reservations about this. Let me conclude this section by inspecting Brandom's account of truth declarations, which really have definite descriptions for their grammatical subjects. He asks us to consider such examples as

(X) Hegel's most notorious remark about truth is true.

Suppose I assert this, relying on Brandom's authority in matters arcane. According to his theory, in order to understand (X), 'one must process the noun phrase to determine what sentence tokening (or class of such tokenings) it picks out as anaphoric antecedent(s)'\(^{147}\). Let us assume, again following Brandom, that Hegel's most notorious remark about truth is 'Das Wahre . . . ist der bacchantische Taumel, an dem kein Glied nicht trunken ist.' Do I really not understand (X) unless I am able to identify Hegel's remark? Do I really fail to comprehend (X) if, in assertively uttering it, I do not take myself to 'endorse', as Brandom has it, 'the claim that truth is a vast Bacchanalian revel with not a soul sober'?\(^{148}\) A sober reader may very well suspect that these consequences rebut Brandom's theory. Suppose I had taken a deeper breath and said

(X+) Hegel's most notorious remark about truth is true, but I have no idea what that remark is.

Can I only understand (X+) by falsifying the second conjunct of my utterance? Brandom's version of prosententialism does not seem to improve upon the original.

2.3 A Real Predicate, After All

Recall our earlier example of an intuitively valid argument in which propositionally revealing, and propositionally unrevealing, truth declarations are inter-locked:

(P1) Pythagoras' Theorem is true.

(P2) Pythagoras' Theorem = the proposition that the square on the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides.

(C) Therefore, the proposition that the square on the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides is true.

The nihilists vainly tried to dispel the impression that we need the predicate 'true' for making sense of the propositionally unrevealing first premise. If we take the propositionally revealing conclusion also to have a predicative structure, we can easily budget for the intuition that the argument is formally valid: it exemplifies the valid argument-pattern 'Fa, a = b \implies Fb'. In view of this striking advantage of taking grammatical appearances at face value, one needs very strong reasons for investing any further labour into the nihilists' project. But the reasons they give for declaring 'is true' not to be a genuine predicate are far weaker than the reasons one can give for saying this about 'exist' and 'was so-called because of his size'.

Let us put the philosophically contentious first case aside\(^{149}\) and content ourselves with asking: why is the predicate 'was so-called because of his size' not a genuine predicate? If an expression is a genuine predicate, it applies to an object regardless of how this object is designated. So if we were to treat 'was so-called because of his size' as a genuine predicate, we would have to declare the following argument to be valid:\(^{150}\)

(P1) Giorgione was so-called because of his size.

(P2) Giorgione is identical with Giorgio da Castelfranco.

(C) Therefore (?), Giorgio da Castelfranco was so-called because of his size.

This argument is invalid. (So the logician does not want it to be an instance of the valid argument-pattern 'Fa, a = b \implies Fb'.) Hence our predicate is not a

genuine predicate, and consequently there is no such thing as the property of being so-called because of his size. If there were, then Giorgione could not have it without Giorgio da Castelfranco having it\(^{151}\). How strong are the reasons for reductionist nihilism, as compared with this case?
Williams prides himself upon 'making many of the traditional problems about Truth disappear'.\textsuperscript{152} (Presumably the capital T is to surround the word with a kind of disreputable metaphysical aureole.) What are the riddles that can only, or best, be solved by embracing nihilism? The only 'traditional problems' which receive some critical attention in Williams's books are connected with correspondence theories of the Cambridge variety.\textsuperscript{153} Certainly \(\Leftrightarrow\) cannot claim to be the one and only truth-theoretical option which avoids those problems. In the pioneering paper that served as my main text, Grover contends that the presentential theory, 'eliminates some of the problems about truth',\textsuperscript{154} without specifying any of these alleged problems. In a later paper, though, she argues that her theory blocks the semantic antinomies.\textsuperscript{155} Whether it really succeeds is a matter of controversy,\textsuperscript{156} but in any case, nihilism \(\mathcal{G}\) cannot, and does not, claim to be the one and only defence against the menace of the 'Liar'.

As we saw above, the problem-solving power of the reductionist versions of truth-theoretical nihilism is supposed to consist, to a large degree, in its helping us to get rid of 'mysterious bearers of truth (propositions)'.\textsuperscript{157} I wonder whether the nihilists' reliance on the notion of anaphora is compatible with their ritual complaint about propositions' being mysterious. In earlier sections I have announced a certain reservation concerning lazy talk of proforms of laziness. The reservation I had in mind is this: we should not be misled by this kind of talk into thinking that simple repetition of the antecedent of the proform will always preserve the message. This affects already ordinary pronouns. Look at this little dialogue:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Ann:} My favourite male colleague is a philosopher with a snub-nose.
\textit{Ben:} He seems to be made in the image of Socrates.
\end{quote}

If one were to exchange the pronoun in Ben's rejoinder for its antecedent in Ann's remark, reference might not be preserved. Here the pronoun of laziness goes proxy for the second person counterpart of its antecedent.\textsuperscript{158} This observation also affects prosentences of laziness, as can be seen from the following exchanges in Prenglish and in Grenglish:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Ann:} I am ill.
\textit{Ben:} Sorry, I did not know that \textit{thether}.
\textit{Ann:} I am ill.
\textit{Ben:} Sorry, I did not know that \textit{that} is true.
\end{quote}

If either prosentence were replaced verbatim by its antecedent, these dialogues would be of doubtful coherence. By taking each proform to act as deputy for the second person counterpart of its antecedent, we preserve the propositional content of the antecedent.\textsuperscript{159} So it seems that nihilists cannot explain the notion of anaphora that is relied upon in their accounts of truth without appealing to a prior notion of propositional content as what is inherited by a prosentence of laziness from its antecedent. This notion allows for the possibility that sentences which differ in linguistic meaning are used to express one and the same proposition. Since the nihilists' accounts of truth depend on the notion of anaphora, they cannot without circularity explain the notion of propositional content in terms of truth. (Of all nihilists, only Brandom clearly faces the charge of giving an alternative account of this notion. This makes it all the more surprising that in the passage quoted on p. 64 he joins in the anti-propositionalist singing.) What matters here and now is that truth-theoretical nihilists have no right to complain about the mysteriousness of the concept of a proposition if their own theories rely on that very concept.

The predicate 'is true', I have argued, is a genuine predicate, hence truth is a \textit{property}, under that prodigal reading under which whatever is ascribable by a genuine predicate is a property. In so arguing, one does \textit{not} incur a commitment to a 'realist' view of such properties. In this respect the position defended in this chapter is metaphysically neutral: whatever ontological status properties prodigally conceived may have, truth has the same status. Furthermore, one can accept the central tenet of this chapter and yet deny that truth is a property in a more demanding sense. Philosophers who want to deny this are not always at

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their best when it comes to characterizing a more demanding sense. Truth is not, Wright avers, 'a property of intrinsic metaphysical gravitas'. The meaning of this locution, I have to confess, completely escapes me. I have found some consolation in Wiggins's comment: 'Intrinsic metaphysical gravitas sounds heavy and bad. So no doubt the reader who wants to avoid it, if only because he doesn't know what it is, is reassured to find that what he will be offered is truth. . . without that.' Horwich writes:

[1]It is not part of the minimalist conception to maintain that truth is not a property. On the contrary, 'is true' is a perfectly good English predicate—and (leaving aside nominalistic concerns about the very notion of 'property') one might well take this to be a conclusive criterion for standing for a property of some sort. What the minimalist wishes to emphasize, however, is that truth is not a complex or naturalistic property but a property of some other kind. (Hartry Field suggests the term 'logical property'). . . According to minimalism, we should. . . beware of assimilating being true to such properties as being turquoise, being a tree, or being made of tin. Otherwise we will find ourselves looking for its constitutive structure, its causal behaviour, and its typical manifestations—features peculiar to what I am calling 'complex' or 'naturalistic properties.' (Truth, 37-8)

Being a perfectly good English predicate may not be good enough for signifying a property, as witness 'is so-called because of his size'. But apart from this caveat, I agree with the spirit of Horwich's affirmative contention. What about his negative tenet? A philosopher who defines 'true' in terms of some kind of correspondence with some kind of entities apparently regards the concept of truth as complex: he does not think that it resists analysis. Does he take the property of being true to be complex? Pending an explanation of 'complex property', this is hard to tell. (Couldn't a complex concept be a concept of a 'simple property'? Couldn't a predicate signify a 'simple property' even though it has a complex sense? After all, the sense of the singular term 'the centre of mass of the solar system' is fairly complex, but that doesn't seem to be a good reason for taking the designated object to be complex. A structured designator of a property need not designate a 'structured property'. Is the property of being married somehow part of the property of being unmarried just because the sense of 'unmarried' contains that of 'married'? And for that matter, couldn't an unanalysable concept be a concept of a 'complex property'? Maybe the concept expressed by a certain colour predicate is simple, whereas the property of having that colour is 'complex'.)

At any rate, a correspondence theorist may have reasons to deny that truth is a naturalistic property. First, he might regard it as a property sui generis. Secondly, he may have a view about the bearers of this property which enforces that denial. 'Naturalistic' properties, I take it, are causal powers of, or bestow causal powers upon, their instances. (This nicely fits being made of tin, etc.) Now if truth is primarily a property of propositions, of sayables and thinkables (as I shall argue in Chapter 5.1 and as Horwich would be the first to admit), then truth-bearers are causally inert and, consequently, truth cannot be a naturalistic property. Even though the proposition that p is not causally efficacious, a propositional act like realizing that p may cause a heart-attack. This is no more mysterious, I think, than the fact that two earthquakes may completely destroy a town, although the number 2 has no causal impact on anything. But the observation that truth, unlike being made of tin etc., isn't a naturalistic property seems to leave it still in the wrong neighbourhood, as it were, for being a Wednesday and being a meridian do not seem to be naturalistic properties either.

Horwich also emphasizes that truth is a property which has no 'underlying nature'. What does having an underlying nature come to? Judging from Horwich's examples (such as having diabetes and being magnetic), the idea seems to be something like this. The property of being F has an underlying nature if and only if, for some G, the observable characteristics in virtue of which we identify something as F can be explained by a scientific theory according to which all and only F's are G. Certainly, truth does not comply with this condition (and one may wonder whether anybody ever thought otherwise), but the property of being a chair, and that of having a chair, do not comply with it either, so again the characterization is not very distinctive of truth. In Chapter 6.2 I shall argue that truth is a (broadly) logical property; which brings me close to Field's suggestion. Whatever '(broadly) logical property' may mean exactly (and we will of course have to go into this),
hardly anyone would be inclined to apply this label to being made of tin, being a meridian, or being a chair.

One thing should be conceded to Frege, and in accepting the central tenet of this chapter one is not prevented from doing so: truth is a very peculiar property indeed. It is the one and only property of any proposition to the effect that things are thus-and-so which allows us to infer directly that things really are thus. Truth is unique among all the properties propositions may have in being, so to speak, by itself transparent, enabling us to look through the proposition right to the (non-propositional) world. Note that the modifiers 'directly' and 'by itself' are needed to shield off apparent counter-examples which would otherwise be real counter-examples. Here is a list of properties of the proposition that the moon is round which also allow us to infer how things stand with the moon:

1. being such that anyone who were to believe it would be right in so believing
2. being held true by an omniscient God, if there is any such being
3. being deducible from truths
4. being true and referred to in this book.

Obviously, all these properties are truth-entailing, in the sense that if a proposition has any of them, it follows that it is a true proposition. They owe their transparency to the property of being true. The latter is the only property of propositions that is transparent in its own right. One can, and should, acknowledge the uniqueness of the property of being true rather than go to the nihilists' extreme of denying its propertyhood.

3 Varieties of Correspondence

It takes two to make a truth.
(John Austin, 'Truth', 124)

In this chapter I want to contrast and to assess three fundamentally different ways of conceiving truth as correspondence. So we turn now to Questions 2-7 on our flow chart. In the final section I shall enquire whether a kind of Correspondence Intuition (hinted at in the above epigraph) can be upheld even if the concept of truth cannot be explained, in either of those three ways, in terms of correspondence.

Let it be clear at once that you do not become a partisan of a correspondence conception of truth simply by assenting to the slogan that what somebody thought or said is true if and only if it agrees with reality. It all depends on whether you take the expression 'agrees with' in sentences like 'What Ann said agrees with reality' to be 'seriously dyadic'. A comparison may be helpful. From the premiss 'Ben fell into oblivion', nobody would seriously conclude 'There is something into which Ben fell', but everybody would be ready to infer this from 'Ben fell into the swimming-pool': only in the latter context is 'fell into' seriously dyadic. If you do not allow the step from 'What Ann said agrees with reality' to 'There is something with which it agrees', you have not committed yourself to a correspondence view of truth. But if you accept that inference, then assenting to the slogan is the first step towards adopting such a conception. Let us listen to a famous opponent of any such view:

Eine Übereinstimmung ist eine Beziehung. Dem widerspricht aber die Gebrauchsweise des Wortes 'wahr', das kein Beziehungswort ist. [An agreement is a relation. But this is incompatible with the use of the word 'true', which is not a relation word.] (Der Gedanke, 59)

I quote this, not because I consider it to be a strong objection, but because I think that it reveals how the correspondence slogan is to be taken if it is to have any philosophical bite: it must be understood as declaring truth to be a relational property (and as taking the implied relation to be irreflexive). As an objection, Frege's argument is rather weak. To be sure, unlike 'agrees with' or 'corresponds to', the predicate 'is true' is a one-place predicate, hence it does not signify a relation. But the predicate 'x is a spouse' is also a one-place predicate, hence it does not signify a relation either, and yet it is correctly explained as 'There is somebody to