TRUTH AS A PRETENSE:
A DEFLATIONARY ACCOUNT OF TRUTH-TALK

by

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For Corintha Sophia Seeley,
my favorite new thinker.
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This dissertation presents a new, superior deflationary account of truth. The first book I bought upon arriving in Ann Arbor to begin graduate school in the fall of 1990 was the one primarily responsible for the explosion of interest in deflationism over the past eleven years, Paul Horwich’s *Truth*. Although this book had intrigued me enough to inspire its purchase, my philosophical interests quickly fell on other topics and then ranged broadly, so it was years before I actually turned to the book in earnest. Still, I find it amusing that the long and circuitous path of my graduate school career ended, in some sense, where it began. Perhaps much time could have been saved if I had not strayed, but I think the end result, not to mention the journey, would have been less satisfying.

My interest in deflationism grew out of my dissatisfaction with attempts to understand truth as some sort of robust correspondence relation and my own attempts to make sense of epistemically constrained alternatives such as those pursued by Hilary Putnam, Michael Dummett, and Crispin Wright. What I thought was going to be a short, negative section on deflationism in a literature survey promoting epistemic conceptions of truth, quickly ballooned into a survey just on deflationism as I discovered the approach’s resiliency. In that survey I ended up championing Hartry Field’s pure disquotational account of truth as the most promising version of deflationism, but the stepping off point for my dissertation turned out to be a footnote briefly mentioning Robert Brandom’s version of prosententialism. As I began to recognize what the central problems facing deflationary views actually were (most importantly, the logical problem regarding generalization that has been emphasized by Anil Gupta), the prosentential approach seemed to me the most promising way of dealing with them. But as I came to
understand both Brandom’s view and these problems in more detail, I became dissatisfied with how the former attempted to deal with the latter and began to look for ways to modify Brandom’s account in search of better solutions.

It was at this stage that several pieces fell into place for me, and the present project emerged. Steve Yablo introduced me to C. J. F. Williams’ unified “pro-form” treatment of the different fragments of our talk involving the notions of being, identity, and truth. With the idea of a unified treatment of these notions in mind, I thought of Ken Walton’s solution to the problem of non-being in terms of a pretense-based account of existence-talk, and of Mark Crimmins’ new application of this approach to certain puzzles arising in identity-talk. I also recalled Leon Porter’s attempt in his dissertation to solve the Liar paradox with a fictionalist account of truth, and I began to wonder if specifically a pretense-based account of truth-talk similar to Walton’s approach to existence-talk and Crimmins’ account of identity-talk might provide not only a solution to the Liar, but also solutions to the logical problems peculiar to deflationary understandings of truth. When I began to develop my pretense-based view, I initially thought of it as a version of prosententialism; pretense was brought in as a modification to Brandom’s view. Eventually, however, Mark Crimmins suggested that my account could swing free from that basis and stand on its own as a new, original formulation of deflationism. The result is the view presented in this dissertation.

The first half of this project contains an examination of deflationism in general. Chapter 1 investigates the principle ideas behind this approach to truth and determines the best way to think of deflationism’s central commitment. I argue that deflationism about truth is best thought of as a metatheory of truth, i.e., as really an account of truth-talk. In particular, deflationism is a particular theory about truth-talk’s logico-linguistic functioning. This characterization avoids entangling deflationism with what are intuitively distinct philosophical issues concerning the existence and nature of properties, and issues surrounding the notions of explanation, causation, and normativity.
With the focus on truth-talk’s logico-linguistic functioning, certain motives for and challenges to deflationism become particularly salient. Chapter 2 examines some initial motives for deflationism that follow from certain unusual features that truth-talk exhibits. I argue that deflationism more effectively explains a certain duality of triviality and non-triviality that truth-locutions display. Even more significantly, deflationary accounts can deal with truth-talk’s propensity for paradox (e.g., in generating Liar sentences) in a more satisfactory manner than inflationary accounts can since there are serious doubts as to whether the inconsistency ordinary truth-talk exhibits can be eliminated without artificially restricting the talk.

In Chapter 3 I look at the most prominent formulations of deflationism currently in the literature, those offered by Paul Horwich, Hartry Field, and Robert Brandom. In each case, I first explain how the view fits both with my preferred characterization of deflationism and with the initial motivations for this approach identified in Chapter 2. I then examine how well the view deals with the central challenge to deflationary views that has been posed by Gupta—accounting for the generalizing role that deflationism takes as truth-talk’s primary function. I find each of the current formulations wanting in responding to this challenge, motivating a search for a new formulation of deflationism that answers the challenge effectively and thereby makes good on the benefits promised by deflationism in accounting for truth-talk’s unusual features.

In the second half of this dissertation I take up this pursuit by developing a new formulation of deflationism that explains truth-talk in terms of semantic pretense. Chapter 4 presents the basic ideas behind semantic pretense (especially its appeal to games of make-believe) as this approach has been developed by Walton, Crimmins, and Yablo. I also introduce a new distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic pretense that becomes important for deflecting certain objections when the pretense approach is applied to truth-talk. As a mental stretching exercise for the application to truth-talk, I consider the application of the pretense approach closest to it in structure, that made to existence-talk.
In Chapter 5 I present the core of my view, the pretense-based account of transparent propositional truth-talk. I begin with some observations suggesting that a pretense-based account fits especially well with the central commitments of deflationism, and then lay out and explain the operation of the rules for the game of make-believe behind the functioning of this fragment of truth-talk. Of particular interest here are what a pretense-based account allows one to say about the Liar paradox, and a kind of unification within general deflationism that such a view provides.

Chapter 6 extends the pretense-based account to cover forms of truth-talk beyond just the transparent propositional variety. Most importantly, I explain here how quantificational truth-talk operates according to my view. In doing so I show how this approach is able to respond successfully to the challenge of explaining truth-talk’s generalizing role, something the current formulations of deflationism are unable to do (or unable to do as well, anyway). In the process of extending the pretense-based account of truth-talk, I also touch on an application of the pretense approach to proposition-talk and explain how this goes a long way toward making sense of such talk. Similar merits are suggested for pretense-based accounts of our talk involving the other traditional semantic notions: reference and predicate-satisfaction.

Finally, I consider the main objections to my view that apply in virtue of its appeal to pretense in accounting for truth-talk’s functioning. The first two are easily blocked through reference to the details of semantic pretense and the distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic pretense. However, the third objection, that truth-talk cannot be explained in terms of pretense because pretense is explained in terms of truth, poses a more serious challenge. I approach this issue by sketching an account of pretending that “semantically descends” from the usual truth-involving characterization, showing that the only role the notion of truth plays in an account of pretense is the very generalizing role granted it by the pretense-based account of truth-talk. This blocks any vicious circularity, demonstrating that the benefits offered by the pretense-based account of truth-talk make for a genuine advance within deflationism and in accounting in general for the way the notion of truth functions in our talk and thought.
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CHAPTER 1
HOW TO THINK ABOUT DEFLATIONISM

INTRODUCTION

The main goal of this chapter is to explain the general position that is commonly referred to as “deflationism about truth.”¹ As the term “deflationism” suggests, this position in some sense “deflates” the subject of truth, in contrast with how this topic has been approached traditionally. The question is how to understand this deflation. It is important to get clear about this in order to assess the merits of this position properly, to distinguish, for example, between legitimate challenges it needs to meet and “objections” that miss the mark. My central aim here is to specify which commitments are best understood as central to or definitive of deflationism about truth. To this end, I distinguish three general approaches to understanding this position, argue that two of them are inadequate, and then determine which specific view from the third approach expresses deflationism’s constitutive commitments.

Part of what eliminating the first general approach turns out to involve is explaining how the “official” label for this position—“deflationism about truth”—is misleading. One of the main points I argue for here is that deflationism “about truth” (henceforth, simply “deflationism”) ¹

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¹Sometimes the general position I am concerned with is referred to as “minimalism about truth,” but I prefer the term “deflationism” since “minimalism” is too broad. There are theories that are called “minimalism” by their proponents but which are explicitly claimed not to be deflationary. (See Wright (1992) and Alston (1996).) And I suppose that every theorist would think of his or her theory of truth as minimal in the sense of including only what an adequate theory requires, but nothing more. I am interested specifically in the deflationary position. Specifying what this position involves is the aim of this chapter.
should not be thought of as primarily focused on some enigmatic thing—truth—but rather on truth-talk. The deflation of the subject of truth really comes down to a new understanding of the fragment of our linguistic (and cognitive) activities that involves terms (and their mental analogs) like “true”, “false”, “truth”, “falsity” and their cognates. The focus on truth-talk is something that has not been made sufficiently clear, even by some major proponents of deflationism.

Instead, on one very common general approach, deflationism is presented (at least casually) as a view on the property of truth, sometimes even as a theory of the nature of truth. This can make it seem like a theory on the same level as, and in direct competition with, traditional views like the correspondence theory, the coherence theory, and pragmatism. But these theories can all be considered different realizations of a single position on the subject of truth, a more general view addressing questions that these competing traditional views all answer the same way. Deflationism is best understood as engaged in a “meta”-level debate with this more general view (now typically called “inflationism”). Because deflationism operates at this meta-level, we can think of it as a metatheory of truth, that is, a theory of the concept of truth and of how we use that concept in our talk and thought. Deflationism has consequences for traditional concerns regarding “the nature of truth”, but these should not be considered its primary focus.

Even when deflationism is recognized as fundamentally a position in a meta-level debate, it is still not always characterized in the optimal way. This is because different sorts of

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2Truth-talk also includes (certain uses of) ordinary language notions like “being right/correct/so”. On a broad understanding, truth-talk also includes related notions like reference and satisfaction, but my focus here is narrow.

3The primary offender among proponents is Paul Horwich. He distinguishes between theories of truth-talk and theories of truth itself, but explicitly claims that his Minimal Theory (MT) is equally a theory of both, rather than taking it primarily as a theory of the first sort that has consequences for one of the latter sort. (See Horwich (1998), pp. 36-37, 135-136.)
metatheories arise if one focuses on different aspects of a concept or way of talking. Most philosophers who are clear about deflationism’s focus on truth-talk misguidedly present it as a view about the kinds of functions truth-talk serves (and the kinds it does not). But another sort of metatheory is also possible, one focused on truth-talk’s functioning rather than on its functions. This alternative type of metatheory is arguably more fundamental since the logico-linguistic functioning of a fragment of discourse determines which sorts of functions (e.g., descriptive, explanatory, normative, expressive, pragmatic, logical…) that way of talking can fulfill. The position I will argue for here is that deflationism is best understood as a metatheory of the second variety, one focused on how truth-talk works rather than what truth-talk does. Deflationism has consequences for the latter issue, but, again, this is not its primary concern.

I present my case for this understanding of deflationism by critiquing the two, more prominent, general approaches to the view. I do this by examining the most promising specific characterizations of deflationism belonging to these approaches, and arguing that neither they nor refinements of them address issues that can plausibly be taken as deflationism’s central or constitutive concerns. This strongly suggests that these general approaches are off-target. The general approach I favor, on the other hand, does address issues that can plausibly be considered central. Of course, since “deflationism” is a technical term whose meaning can be stipulated, it would be presumptuous to say that these other ways of characterizing deflationism are incorrect as opposed to just different from the one I prefer. However, my aim is to show that the way of

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4 The contrast is structurally analogous to the way that emotivism about ethics contrasts with utilitarian, deontological, and contractarian theories, i.e., by addressing ethical issues at a meta-level (as a position in metaethics) focused on analyzing ethics-talk.

5 This focus is probably stems from Quine’s descriptions of the truth-predicate as just a “device of disquotation,” that is, a means of canceling semantic ascent and “affirming some infinite lot of sentences.” (Quine (1986), pp. 11-12.) There has been little discussion of Quine’s claim about how the truth-predicate operates (how “disquotation” works), but his claims about the functions of the truth-predicate have generated much discussion.
characterizing deflationism I advocate—thinking of it as a position on the logico-linguistic functioning of truth-talk—is the best way of understanding this position. I end with an explanation of the particular view from this general approach that I take to present deflationism’s constitutive commitments.

CHARACTERIZING DEFLATIONISM

Across the three general approaches distinguished above, deflationism has been characterized with a variety of slogans, each purporting to offer at least a partial statement of what the position centrally claims. In order for a slogan to provide a full statement of this, it would have to present conditions whose satisfaction could reasonably be taken as necessary and sufficient for a view to count as a version of deflationism. To evaluate the different general approaches to deflationism I will examine various specific characterizations belonging to them, determining how well the particular conditions they offer would serve as necessary and sufficient conditions for deflationary status. If the conditions identified in a characterization are either unnecessary or insufficient, then that characterization does not capture deflationism’s constitutive commitments. Falling short of a full statement, a characterization might capture part of what is central to deflationism if it presents a necessary but insufficient condition. Alternatively, it might grant some indirect insight into deflationism’s constitutive commitments if it presents a sufficient but unnecessary condition. Since whatever satisfies merely sufficient conditions will

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6I take the “logico-linguistic” functioning of some expression or way of talking to include the logical role that it plays, e.g., in inference, but also things like its contribution to the speech acts employing it.

7A collection of merely necessary conditions might turn out to be jointly sufficient. However, a unified view is to be preferred if available since it would be simpler.
also satisfy any conditions that are both necessary and sufficient, the satisfaction of the former amounts to one possible way of meeting deflationism’s constitutive commitments.\(^8\)

The identification of a necessary condition (whether or not it is also sufficient) is significant for another reason as well: it also amounts to the identification of an issue on which genuine challenges to deflationism can be based. Taken from the other direction, this means that showing a condition expressed by a characterization is not necessary for deflationary status amounts to showing that putative objections based on it are off target and can be rejected. This is important to do in the debate over deflationism since it is easily entangled with other philosophical debates due to the centrality of the notion of truth in philosophy.

To facilitate the search for the characterization of deflationism that best expresses its constitutive commitments, it would help if all the candidates could be formulated in a single framework of expression. In sketching the three general approaches to characterizing deflationism, I contrasted two formulation frameworks: one in which deflationism is discussed in terms of the property of truth (as in the first general approach), and one in which it is talked about in terms of truth-talk (as in the second and third general approaches). Although I expressed a preference for the latter, at this stage both of these frameworks should be considered live options. If the characterizations from all three general approaches to deflationism were formulated in a single framework, then they could all be evaluated according to the same set of standards, which would simplify what might otherwise required cross-framework comparison. In addition, these two frameworks are orthogonal, in the sense that certain characterizations of deflationism can be fit into both. Placing all the characterizations into a single framework would therefore also streamline the evaluation process, preventing redundant evaluations of candidates that can appear in different guises in the different frameworks.

\(^8\)A number of these might allow us to triangulate on constitutive commitments.
The easiest way to put all the candidate characterizations from the two frameworks into a single framework would be to reformulate those from one so that they fit into the other. The overlap between the two frameworks for characterizations of deflationism is such that this can be done, but only one of the two possible ways. Not all characterizations of deflationism in terms of issues pertaining to truth-talk can be recast without distortion (e.g., loss of specificity) in terms of issues pertaining to a property of truth, but any characterization that presents deflationism as focused on truth-property issues can be recast without significant distortion in terms of truth-talk. More specifically, claims regarding a property of truth can be reformulated as claims about truth-talk’s property-attributing characteristics, e.g., what kind of property (if any) it attributes. Thus all characterizations of deflationism should be evaluated within the framework of truth-talk.

In looking for evaluation standards to apply within this single framework, we can begin by looking at our intuitive understanding of deflationism. I mentioned above that this position is supposed to “deflate” the subject of truth; relative to some standard, matters of truth are taken to “involve less” in some way. In the framework of truth-talk, this means that deflationary views take truth-talk to “involve less” than some other, standard way of talking, some paradigm *undeflated* fragment of discourse. The best candidate for this role is what I will call “everyday-talk”. Everyday-talk as I understand it consists of our talk of “medium-sized dry goods” and their observable features. As such it is the least problematic and most straightforward fragment of discourse in terms of how it is to be understood. This makes it a better choice than another potential standard sometimes cited—the language of mature science. Mature scientific theorizing is often considered the fragment of discourse to which others bear comparison, but it is not the best choice for the paradigm “undeflated” fragment of discourse since it is susceptible to instrumentalist or even fictionalist interpretations. In contrast, the only serious option for
interpreting everyday-talk is to take it realistically and factually. Characterizations of deflationism should therefore represent truth-talk as “deflated” relative to everyday-talk.

The conclusion just drawn offers a constraint on views for counting as deflationary, but it cannot be used as it stands to evaluate proffered characterizations of deflationism since it still involves vague talk of deflating. What exactly this talk of “deflating” or of “involving less” than everyday-talk amounts to is really the issue in question. However, generalizing that conclusion a bit so that these expressions are eliminated, we arrive at a criterion that can be used as a standard of evaluation. That criterion is expressed in what I will call the Talk-Difference Thesis:

\[(TDT) \text{ Truth-talk is in some way significantly (i.e., more than just lexically) different from our everyday talk of “medium sized dry goods” and their features.}\]

In the framework of truth-talk, the satisfaction of TDT is a minimum requirement for a view to count as a version of deflationism.\(^9\) It must be if deflationism is to be a position specifically on the subject of truth and if that subject is to be “deflated”, whatever this means exactly. In claiming the satisfaction of TDT is necessary in this way, I am not simply assuming that deflationism’s primary focus is truth-talk. TDT is a fairly open constraint that can be satisfied in a wide variety of ways, including ways that do not focus on truth-talk directly. It is still possible that the best characterization of deflationism is one that can and should be translated out of the framework of truth-talk.

Any characterization of deflationism that classifies views violating TDT as deflationary is inadequate. Other evaluation standards pertaining to the adequacy or inadequacy of a characterization follow from the idea that a constitutive commitment is concerned with necessary and sufficient conditions for counting as a version of deflationism. For instance, a

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\(^9\) Cartesian-demon or brain-in-a-vat scenarios and attempted reductions to sense-data notwithstanding.

\(^{10}\) TDT does not also amount to a sufficient condition for counting as deflationary since a view might take truth-talk as significantly different from everyday-talk in virtue of involving the attribution of a substantial
characterization’s denying deflationary status to views that satisfy TDT in an intuitively deflationary way tells against the conditions it identifies being necessary and thus against their being a concern of deflationism’s central commitments. Reason to believe that the issue specified in some characterization is really a consequence of some more basic point is evidence that the characterization is not focused on sufficiently fundamental matters. This tells against the conditions it offers being sufficient for deflationary status. Characterizations that make deflationism unacceptably austere in certain contexts are also inadequate. This indicates that the conditions they identify cannot be taken as necessary for deflationary status so long as those contexts are open possibilities. Characterizations suffering from any of these inadequacies should be rejected. Of course, a candidate characterization can suffer from more than one inadequacy.

I will begin my evaluation of the three general approaches to characterizing deflationism by examining specific characterizations from the truth-property approach (reformulated into the framework of truth-talk). Eliminating this approach is a crucial first step because it shows that the framework of truth-talk is more than just a means of uniform evaluation; it shows that truth-talk is the most suitable primary focus for a characterization of deflationism. The second approach I critique is focused on the right thing (truth-talk), but emphasizes the wrong aspects of it (the functions it serves). I devote the most space to this approach, and in particular to characterizations focused on truth-talk’s putative explanatory role, since this is the issue now taken as central by most participants in the inflationism/deflationism debate. After eliminating this second approach, I argue that deflationism should be characterized as a position regarding truth-talk’s logico-linguistic functioning. This third approach focuses on issues most reasonably taken as deflationism’s central concerns, providing for a characterization that captures the position’s constitutive commitments.

“superproperty” that is necessarily instantiated, e.g., a correspondence property that has instances (some propositions) in every possible world.
THE TRUTH-PROPERTY APPROACH

The thesis that is probably most often offered as a casual gloss of deflationism’s central commitment is what I will call the “No Property” Thesis:

(NPT) There is no property of truth.

To make it fit into the single framework employed here, we can recast NPT as the following claim about truth-talk.

(NPT+) Truth-talk does not attribute a property.\(^{11}\)

Although this thesis may be a consequence of certain presentations of deflationism, further reflection reveals that it should not be thought of as expressing the fundamental commitment of this position. If this thesis were deflationism’s central claim, then containing (including entailing) it would be a necessary and sufficient condition for a view to count as deflationary. But it turns out that the condition NPT+ offers should not be taken as necessary or sufficient for deflationary status.

The problem with NPT+ is that it is centered on the metaphysically contentious notion “property”. Because of this it would entangle deflationism with controversies that intuitively are beyond its scope. More specifically, NPT+ would categorize certain views as deflationary or inflationary automatically in virtue of their commitments regarding the existence or nature of properties, and some of the resulting categorizations would be counter-intuitive. In fact, some are unacceptable since they would violate TDT. Consider the problem with taking containing NPT+ as sufficient for counting as a version of deflationism. If it were, then any radically nominalistic view denying the existence of anything but concrete particulars (thereby denying there are any properties at all) would automatically qualify. But even in the context of this kind of nominalism

\(^{11}\)We might put this a bit more precisely by saying that the term “true” does not express or pick out a property. Versions of NPT (or NPT+) are suggested as characterizations of deflationism in Putnam (1983c), p. 278 and (1991), p. 265; Boghossian (1990), pp. 161, 180; Wright (1992), p. 15; Alston (1996), pp. 41-42; Tomberlin (1997), p. 155.
there can be interesting philosophical disagreements on the subject of truth, disagreements that intuitively track the contrast between deflationism and inflationism.\(^{12}\)

For example, consider two nominalists, one who claims that truth-talk is analogous to, e.g., talk of what is and is not metal—that “…is true” is every bit as much a predicate as “…is metal” is—and one who claims that truth-talk does not employ a “genuine” predicate the way metal-talk does. Even in the shared context of nominalism this issue is an open question. It also appears to be a translation of the general contrast between deflationism and inflationism into the context of nominalism where all issues about properties have supposedly been settled. Since these two disputants agree that there is no property of truth (there being no properties at all), and thus that truth-talk does not involve the attribution of a property (but neither, of course, does metal-talk), NPT+ would categorize them both as deflationists if it expressed a sufficient condition. But the views of the first violate TDT, so he should not be considered a deflationist in any interesting sense. This indicates that the existence or not of a property of truth is not really the definitive issue for deflationism.

It turns out that NPT+ should not be taken to express even a part of what deflationism centrally claims because satisfying the condition it offers should not be thought of as necessary for counting as deflationary either. There are several reasons for this. To begin with, its scope is unacceptably narrow since it would not classify Paul Horwich’s Minimal Theory (MT) or Hartry Field’s pure disquotationalism as deflationary views. Horwich’s MT explicitly claims that there is a property of truth, and Field refers to the notion of pure disquotational truth as the notion of a

\(^{12}\)Kirkham (1992), p. 311 makes this point about nominalism in an argument against taking NPT+ as the constitutive thesis of deflationism. However, because he does not identify TDT or explicitly recognize how NPT+ conflicts with it, he thinks we just need to reformulate NPT+ in a way that makes it “neutral” with respect to nominalists and platonists. His move to the thesis that “…is true” is not a genuine predicate accomplishes this and produces what is probably a sufficient condition for a view to count as a version of deflationism (more on this later). However, as a statement of deflationism’s central commitment this thesis is not sufficiently different from NPT+ to avoid certain awkward, revisionary consequences. I explain this point further below.
Both therefore would take truth-talk to attribute a property. Of course, as mentioned above, “deflationism” is a technical term, so one could stipulate that NPT+ is a necessary component of deflationism and deny that Horwich’s MT and Field’s pure disquotationalism are deflationary for this very reason. But this sort of stipulation would have awkward, revisionary consequences given the centrality of these two views in discussions of deflationism and given that Horwich and Field both explicitly call their views deflationary. In addition, Horwich more or less coined the term “deflationism” in the first place. It is better to avoid this kind of revisionism if one can when giving sense to the term.

What generates a more substantial obstacle to taking NPT+ to express a necessary condition for counting as a version of deflationism is again the way this thesis would entangle deflationism with metaphysical issues pertaining to properties. This generates problems similar to those NPT+ faces with respect to sufficiency: if NPT+ were taken as a necessary condition, certain views more plausibly classified as deflationary would automatically get categorized as inflationary because of what they say about properties in general. The objection is not as cut-and-dry as it is in the case of sufficiency since the supposed misclassifications here do not involve the violation of TDT. Instead they involve the satisfaction of this necessary condition in intuitively deflationary ways.

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13Horwich (1998), pp. 37-38, 141-144; Field (1994), p. 266. Given Field’s nominalistic tendencies, however, this may be just a manner of speaking in his case. Still, he is indicating that he thinks property-talk (however you understand it) applies to the subject of truth as much as it applies anywhere.

14Kirkham (1992) and Alston (1996) both opt for something like this strategy with respect to Horwich. Kirkham does explicitly acknowledge the need to shift the focus from NPT+ to a related claim about predicates, and much of Alston’s discussion of deflationism’s commitment to NPT+ focuses on the issue of whether “…is true” is a predicate. Still, both explicitly exclude Horwich’s MT from the class of deflationary theories, and would have to exclude Field’s disquotationalism as well, with or without the shift from property to predicate.


As a first example, consider views that admit sets and endorse the less radically nominalistic thesis that properties are just sets of individuals. Combine this with the thesis that the true utterances form a set. Add a similar thesis for any other sort of putative truth-bearer you countenance (beliefs, theories, propositions, etc.). The union of all of these sets is then the set of truths. Any view accepting all of this would be committed to the existence of a property of truth attributed in truth-talk, and so would automatically be denied deflationary status if satisfying NPT+ were a necessary condition for it. However, certain views of this sort are more plausibly considered deflationary than inflationary. For instance, someone could combine the above theses with the view that the set of truths is very unlike, say, the set of metal things. While the latter is a unified, elite class (in this case, a natural kind) whose members are grouped together in virtue of having certain objective similarities to one another, the set of truths is different in that there is no shared feature (or “family resemblance” network of features) that groups them together. Truth-talk still attributes a property of truth according to this view, since properties come cheap, but because of how it satisfies TDT, it is implausible to classify this view as inflationary.

Consider the difference on this view between claiming that something is metal and claiming that something is true. Each claim says of its subject that it has some property in the sense of belonging to some set. But in the former case, the explanation of why that thing belongs to the set of metal things is an explanation that also covers every other member of that set. Being in the extension of “…is metal” amounts (at least in part) to having the features that groups the metal things together objectively, so claiming that something has the property of being metal

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17 The view that there is a set of true utterances might presuppose that there is a solution to the semantic paradoxes. I discuss the bearing of the paradoxes on deflationism in Chapter 2, but for now I will note that there is no conceptual incoherence in a deflationist holding that they can be solved (although certain solution strategies—e.g., those appealing to truth-value gaps—may be unavailable to her).

18 There are even properties like the property of being a cow-or-shoe that consists of the union of the set of cows with the set of shoes, as well as a huge (perhaps infinite) variety of properties we do not have names for, corresponding to all the ways objects can be grouped into sets.
basically amounts to claiming that it has those features. In contrast, claiming something has the property of truth says nothing about it that bears on any other truths except that it is in the extension of “…is true”. This, after all, is the only thing that the truths have in common with one another on this view, there being no single, unified account explaining why all of the members of this set belong to it. As a result, truth-talk differs substantially from everyday-talk by attributing a comparatively “thin” property. It seems rather implausible to call this position inflationary.

There are even certain non-nominalistic views that are intuitively deflationary but would count as inflationary if satisfying NPT+ were a necessary condition for deflationary status.

Stephen Schiffer has developed what he calls a “pleonastic” view of properties according to which properties are distinct from the sets of objects exemplifying or instantiating them, but they are just the “ontological shadows” of predicates. On this view “every…predicate ‘F’ has its nominalization, ‘the property of being F’, which is seemingly guaranteed of reference.”

Prima facie, truth-talk is predicative; the expression “…is true” certainly functions as a predicate grammatically, and our inferential practices with the term support the thesis that it is a predicate. So, a view that involved both a pleonastic conception of properties and a face-value reading of truth-talk would be committed to the latter attributing a property of truth. Again, if satisfying NPT+ were a necessary condition for qualifying as a version of deflationism, all views of this kind would count as inflationary.

However, a view of this sort might also satisfy TDT in an intuitively deflationary way by holding, as before, that truth-talk attributes a property of a “thinner” kind than those attributed by everyday-talk. All properties have the same ontological status on this view in the sense that they

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19The pleonastic view of properties is presented in Schiffer (1994) and (1996). I have my worries about the coherence of the notion of pleonastic entities, but I will bracket them for now.


are all ontologically “shallow”, being deposited into our ontology by “something-from-nothing” linguistic transformations from sentences of the form “a is F” to those of the form “a has the property of being F”. Given that these transformations belong to our linguistic practices, the property of being F is added to our ontology as soon as we have the predicate “…is F”. But, although Schiffer does not discuss it, there is a sense in which at least some properties could be considered substantial, even on a pleonastic view. In the case of most “everyday” predicates, their development and application is based on empirical observations of the things they are applied to—certain systematic similarities are discovered between various things, and so a term, e.g., “metal”, is developed to express when something has those features, i.e., when it is that kind of thing. We become aware of (most of) the properties attributed with everyday-talk—they get into our ontology—at root, on the basis of substantial empirical discoveries we make about their bearers, namely, how they are affected by and causally affect other things (including how we use the terms that attribute them).

While maintaining that everyday properties are substantial in the sense just sketched, it is still possible to hold that the property of truth is not added to our ontology on any sort of empirical basis. The addition of the property of truth to our ontology could be seen as wholly a matter of “something-from-nothing” transformations. Sentences of the form “a is F” are pleonastically equivalent, not only to sentences of the form “a has the property of being F”, but also to sentences of the form “That a is F is true” via another “something-from-nothing” transformation. From the latter, of course, we get “That a is F has the property of truth”, so the

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23This is not to say that the property of truth itself is created in this way. According to this view, the property of truth is, like all properties, a mind- and language-independent entity that exists necessarily. But our knowledge of the property of truth is not empirical knowledge the way our knowledge of the property of being metal is, at least ultimately.

property of truth is introduced into our ontology via a chain of pleonastic equivalences. On the kind of view in question, truth is not an “empirically based” property; it is not discovered the way, e.g., the property of being metal is.\(^{25}\) No generalizations from observations of particular propositions (the true ones) are required; our awareness of the property of truth is just a matter of our going in for certain linguistic practices that include the “something-from-nothing” transformations.

Because of the difference it postulates between the properties attributed by truth-talk and those attributed by everyday-talk, the view just sketched satisfies TDT in an intuitively deflationary way. While the having of everyday properties may depend on the underlying natures of things and be susceptible to further empirical discovery, there is no more to the nature of truth on this view than what is revealed in the linguistic practices that introduce it, in particular, the pleonastic transformation that Schiffer claims deposits propositions into our ontology.\(^{26}\)

Although a view of this sort would violate NPT+ by claiming that truth-talk does attribute a property, it seems implausible to think of such a view as inflationary.

The unsatisfactory nature of various classifications that would be forced in the context of certain conceptions of properties makes taking NPT+ to express a necessary condition for deflationary status undesirable. As a result, it also should not be taken to identify an issue that could serve as the basis for serious challenges to deflationism. Specifically, arguments to the effect that a property of truth must be acknowledged miss the mark as objections to deflationism. This undercuts a well-known objection to deflationism made by Paul Boghossian. In brief, Boghossian claims that deflationism is “unstable” because NPT+ expresses its constitutive

\(^{25}\)I should note that whether the proposition that \(a\) is \(F\) has the property of truth is an empirical matter to the extent that whether \(a\) is \(F\) is an empirical matter, but our awareness of this property is not an empirical matter.
commit, yet it also entails that any significant declarative sentence is truth-apt and by extension that any significant predicate expresses a property, from which it follows that truth-talk must attribute a property of truth.27 But the possibilities that the moderate nominalist and pleonastic views of properties present for deflationary views that reject NPT+ show that this objection is not on target.28 The putative incoherence is resolved when we realize that NPT+ does not express a condition deflationary views must satisfy, and that in spite of its popularity as a summary slogan, NPT+ functions poorly as a statement of something deflationism centrally claims.29

Both of the views of properties considered in arguing against taking NPT+ as a necessary condition for deflationary status offer metaphysically “lightweight” criteria for the existence of properties. The problem that arises in both cases is that these criteria can be satisfied in both minimal and more-than-minimal ways. This allows for the possibility of two kinds of properties—call them “insubstantive properties” and “substantive properties”—and intuitively only the attribution of the latter would qualify a way of talking for inflationary status. This might appear to suggest that we can capture the core commitment of deflationism by refining NPT into the more precise “No Substantive Property” Thesis:

26Schiffer (1994), pp. 305, 307. I do not mean to attribute this understanding of the property of truth to Schiffer, although I think he would be sympathetic to it. I discuss pleonasticism further, especially regarding propositions, in Chapter 6.

27Boghossian (1990), pp. 180-181. (See pp. 163-164 for the second point, and pp. 166 and 181 for its extension to the issue of properties.)

28Plus, although Boghossian cites Brandom (1988), he seems to miss a central point of Brandom’s view that allows this formulation of deflationism to slip through his argument: on Brandom’s view “…is true” is not a predicate. Thus, even if all significant predicates must be taken to express properties, “…is true” is not among them and should not be taken to express one. So no contradiction with NPT+ is generated.

29This applies to deflationary theories of reference as well. This blocks Boghossian’s claim (p. 181) that if we try to avoid the incoherence by allowing an “innocuous” property of truth via the adoption of a deflationary view of reference, the incoherence will recur at the level of reference. His argument relies on making NPT+ central to a deflationary view of reference as well, but my point is that it is unnecessary for deflationism about any semantic notion.
(NSPT) There is no *substantive* property (or relation) of truth.\(^{30}\)

As before, in the uniform framework employed here this thesis gets recast as a related claim about truth-talk:

(NSPT+) Truth-talk never attributes a substantive property.\(^{31}\)

According to this characterization, the central commitment of deflationism is that truth-talk does not attribute a complex relation with any sort of underlying nature or essence that will admit of any type of unified complex analysis.

However, there are a couple of reasons why NSPT+ turns out to be unsatisfactory as a statement of deflationism’s fundamental commitment. Most importantly, with regard to offering a sufficient condition for counting as a version of deflationism, NSPT+ has the same trouble with radical nominalism that NPT+ has. If there are no properties at all (not even insubstantive ones), then there is no substantive property of truth attributed by truth-talk. So if satisfying NSPT+ were a sufficient condition for counting as a version of deflationism, then any radically nominalistic view would still automatically qualify, even if that view recognized no significant difference between truth-talk and everyday-talk. Since it does not offer a sufficient condition, NSPT+ does not express what it is that makes a view count as deflationary.

NSPT+ (as opposed to just NPT+) does fare better, however, as a statement of a necessary condition for deflationary status.\(^{32}\) In fact, it might be considered one way of providing

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\(^{30}\)This more specific thesis is used to characterize deflationism in Horwich (1998), Wright (1992) (where both NPT+ and NSPT+ are used—see pp. 14-15), and Shapiro (1998).

\(^{31}\)I have added “never” to ensure that NSPT+ distinguishes truth-talk from everyday-talk. Certain utterances that might be included in the latter could be thought not to involve the attribution of a substantive property on certain readings of “substantive”. For example, it is arguable that the claim “Your outfit is very hip” is an instance of everyday-talk and does not attribute a property that admits of any sort of reductive analysis or that plays any causal role. (Consider that being hip is more likely understood as caused or even constituted by than as the cause of people liking something.) But clearly not all instances of everyday-talk are like this. Consider the claim “The table is metal.”

\(^{32}\)Price (1998), p. 241 offers NSPT as a necessary condition (one of a pair of individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions) for deflationism, rather than a sufficient one, and argues that although this
a more precise version of TDT. This is a plausible way of looking at NSPT+, which means that one legitimate way of objecting to deflationism is to argue that truth-talk must be taken to attribute a substantive property. However, there are no direct arguments for this thesis.³³ Rather, it has to be established indirectly by arguing that truth-talk exhibits certain marks that supposedly indicate the attribution of a substantive property. This suggests that the real issue has to do with how truth-talk fares with respect to the criteria for substantive property attribution. Although satisfying NSPT+ is a necessary condition for counting as a version of deflationism, a likely explanation for this is that it is entailed by commitments that are more central to the view.

Consider the following. If there are both substantive and insubstantive properties, then there must be some set of criteria that underwrites this distinction—probably including the marks of substantiveness just alluded to. If deflationary views necessarily claim that truth-talk attributes no substantive property, but can allow that it attributes an insubstantive one, then deflationism must involve a deeper thesis about how being true fares with respect to the criteria distinguishing the two types of properties.³⁴ Since this deeper thesis would be the basis for the claim that truth-talk does not attribute a substantive property, it has a better claim to expressing deflationism’s central commitment. Whether this more basic thesis entails that there is no property of truth at all, or instead that there is a property of truth but only an insubstantive one, is really just a sideshow concerning how deflationism combines with the metaphysics of properties.

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³³Boghossian (1990) does not do this. At best it contains a direct argument for taking truth-talk to attribute a property of some sort (and I even question this since it relies on a particular formulation of non-factualism and an particular view about the functioning of “…is true”). It offers no argument for taking it to attribute a substantive property. Cf. Horwich (1998), pp. 142-143.

³⁴This is similar to one way of reading the charge in Devitt (1990), pp. 253-254 that the argument in Boghossian (1990) exhibits a confusion about deflationism. Boghossian claims that NPT+ expresses the constitutive commitment of deflationism; Devitt claims that the “real” issue is whether truth-talk ever provides explanatory information.
Moreover, given that the nature and even existence of properties is an open question, deflationism should not be thought of even as a view about how the \textit{property of truth} (being true) fares with respect to what would be the criteria of substantive propertihood, since deflationism and the metaphysics of properties might entail that there is no such property at all. The real focus of a deflationary view should be something known to exist and how that thing fares with respect to criteria relevant to satisfying TDT and NSPT+. The obvious candidate, of course, is truth-\textit{talk}. Thus, the framework of truth-talk should be considered essential to formulating deflationism, and the truth-property approach to characterizing deflationism should be rejected. Deflationism should be understood as a metatheory, one focused on aspects of truth-talk that bear on what would be criteria of substantive property attribution, if properties exist.

\textbf{THE JOB-DESCRIPTION APPROACH}

Claiming that deflationism should be characterized as a metatheory focused on certain aspects of truth-talk leads immediately to the question of which aspects of the talk are at issue. According to the second general approach to deflationism I want to consider, the relevant aspects are the functions that truth-talk serves. This approach sees deflationism as a particular kind of “job-description metatheory”, that is, a view about what sorts of jobs are included in the “job-description” associated with the concept of truth. This type of functional analysis in terms of a job-description derives from the work of Frank Ramsey and the technique of constructing

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Ramsey sentences for theories. Its best-known application is probably that of the analytic functionalists in the philosophy of mind, but more recently it has been applied more broadly, e.g., in investigations of such notions as normativity and rationality. The basic idea is to abstract a kind of theory from the uses we make of some notion (or network of notions), and then use that theory to define (in some sense) the notion in question. So, for example, according to this approach, pain is whatever it is that satisfies (most of or the central roles in) the job-description associated with the concept of pain.

If deflationism is understood as a job-description metatheory, the fundamental dispute between deflationists and inflationists is prior to the question of what satisfies the job-description associated with truth-talk. This latter question is how the traditional debate about truth would get reformulated on this general approach. The deflationism/inflationism debate is over the job-description itself, over what functions it includes. There is some common ground between the two sides. The agreement stems from the universal acknowledgment that a central aspect of the concept of truth is encapsulated in the instances of the equivalence schema

\[(ES) \text{It is true that } p \text{ iff } p \text{ (= That } p \text{ is true iff } p).\]

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38 See Lewis (1972) on defining mental-state terms by Ramsifying a theory that captures their use (folk-psychology) and Railton (1993) on the application of this approach in theorizing about normativity and rationality.

39 Note that given the way we (would be willing to) use the concept of pain (and folk-psychological notions generally), e.g., in cross-species explanations of behavior, the relevant job-description might emphasize functional features rather than substantive ones, leading us to say that what satisfies the job-description is itself a functional role. The state of being in pain would be understood as the state of being in some state that plays (causal) role P (which is abstracted from the folk-psychological platitudes involving the notion of pain). This (causal) role is extracted from the functions served by pain (e.g., discovering and avoiding structural damage), which are different from the functions served by the concept of pain (e.g., explaining certain sorts of behavior).

40 Holding these two forms of (ES) to be trivial syntactic variants of one another amounts to claiming that truth-talk plays the same logical role in both (most likely a predicative role, but see Brandom (1994), Chapter 5 for an alternative). Thus, the first form should be parsed on the model of “It is true, what Bob said.” This involves treating that-clauses referentially, but this should not be taken to require a serious
Both inflationary and deflationary job-descriptions include any functions closely related to the fact that truth-talk provides all the instances of (ES).\textsuperscript{41} I will call this kind of function “(ES)-related”.

One (ES)-related function truth-talk performs is the effecting of something like indirect assertion or commitment.\textsuperscript{42} This role is largely pragmatic: it allows us basically to repeat what someone else says while acknowledging our lack of originality on the matter. For example, if Bob says

(1.1) Crabapples are edible,

then because of the equivalence expressed by the relevant instance of (ES) (and because what Bob said is that crabapples are edible), I can take on and express the same commitments Bob did in claiming (1.1), but acknowledge that his doing so first is the source of my doing so, by asserting

(1.2) What Bob said is true.

Perhaps more importantly, this function also allows us to take on commitments even when, for whatever reason, we cannot express them directly in some claim. So, even if I did not hear Bob’s utterance, and my only access to the point he made is indirect (e.g., I can refer to it as what Bob said), I can still take on and express the same commitments indirectly by asserting (1.2).\textsuperscript{43}

ontological commitment to “heavy-duty” platonistic propositions. I discuss reasons for accepting all of this in Chapter 2.

\textsuperscript{41}This still leaves it open whether the supplying of the instances of (ES) is what implements these functions or whether these biconditionals merely reflect some deeper aspect of truth-talk (perhaps something about the property it attributes) that accounts for both the equivalences and the functions.

\textsuperscript{42}See Brandom (1983) and (1994), Chapter 3 on the commitment dimension of assertion.

\textsuperscript{43}It is sometimes claimed that without truth-talk one would have to resort, \textit{per impossibile}, to an infinite disjunction of all the instances of “Bob said that \(p\) and \(p\)” to do this. It is also sometimes claimed (by certain deflationists) that expressing such an infinite disjunction is precisely what truth-talk does here.
Another (ES)-related function truth-talk plays involves the performance of a kind of endorsing or commending. An utterance of (1.2), for example, is said to perform a special speech act of endorsing Bob’s claim that crabapples are edible. Acknowledging this function does not require holding that it is all that truth-talk does (that it performs this kind of speech act instead of making assertions). Truth-talk could play an endorsing role in addition to an assertoric role; in fact, the latter could be the basis of the former. For instance, the endorsement might be a product of the nature of a property truth-talk attributes in assertions describing other assertions and beliefs. However, the extremes of “endorsement without assertion” and “endorsement via property-attribution” are not the only possible positions regarding this function. One could adopt a middle view according to which the endorsing performed by an instance of truth-talk results from an act of asserting it performs, but not from any sort of “meta-assertion” about what is endorsed. Rather, the act of asserting that generates the endorsing is the indirect assertion truth-talk effects.

The endorsing could result from the indirect assertion as follows. In general, re-assertion (co-assertion) is agreement. It amounts to an endorsement of the kind of commitment-undertaking that the original assertion involves, through an undertaking of the very same

44My use of numbered examples here and throughout what follows exhibits a certain laxness about the distinction between types and tokens. In general, the focus is on tokens. Wherever the numbers seem to serve as labels for types they should be considered shorthand labels for tokens co-typical with the original examples. The laxness avoids awkward constructions and should not affect any of the arguments.

45A view that did hold this would be a crude version of performativism about truth-talk. Such a view maintains that “is true” is really just a device for complimenting sentences we are prepared to assert. (Boghossian (1990), p. 162 paraphrasing Rorty (1986), pp. 127-128. See also Rorty (1985), p. 24.) The more sophisticated performativism found in Strawson (1949) and (1950) emphasizes truth-talk’s endorsing function, but also allows that a claim like (1.2) makes an assertion. The assertion made just turns out to be a reassertion of what is said with (1.1) rather than a “meta-statement” about a “truth-bearer”. Even for Strawson, however, the commending speech act is truth-talk’s primary function.

46This position does not rule out the possibility that a direct meta-assertion is also made; it just agrees with Strawson that a meta-assertion is not required to provide truth-talk with an endorsing role. At the same time, this view disagrees with Strawson about the priority of the endorsing function, basically by
commitments. If the two assertions use the same words (or nearly the same, e.g., if they differ only by something like a shift in indexicals), then the agreement and endorsement expressed in the re-assertion is only implicit (which is not to say unapparent). So a direct re-assertion of what someone else has asserted directly amounts to an implicit endorsement of what the other person said.\footnote{Direct assertion is not essential here; the factor that makes for implicitness is the two assertions having the same “degree” of directness. So an assertion of “(1.2’) What Robert asserted is true” implicitly endorses what an assertion of (1.2) says (assuming Bob = Robert). Both (1.2) and (1.2’) explicitly endorse what is said with (1.1).} An assertion of (1.2), however, is not just a direct re-assertion of (1.1). It is an indirect re-assertion that presupposes the satisfaction of certain conditions, including that someone named “Bob” has made this particular assertion directly (or at least one “degree” more directly).\footnote{Again, this does not rule out the possibility that (1.2) also makes a different, direct assertion in which what Bob said figures as the subject rather than in the presuppositions involved in how the assertion gets made. The point is just that acknowledging such a meta-assertion is not necessary to account for an endorsing role played by truth-talk.} Since the assertion endorsed via this re-assertion is explicitly implicated in the truth-claim’s presuppositions, this turns what would otherwise be an implicit endorsement via re-assertion into an explicit endorsement. So by effecting indirect co-assertion, truth-talk performs an explicit endorsing of the implicated assertion.\footnote{In instances of transparent truth-talk like “That crabapples are edible is true” or “It is true that crabapples are edible” there is still a kind of indirectness to the co-assertion of what is said directly with (1.1), even though no actual prior act of assertion is implicated. In the transparent cases it is as if the assertion is first (transparently) displayed (by means of hypostatization) without being made, and then assertoric force is restored. The result here, as in (1.2), is an explicit endorsing of an assertion. The difference is that here there may be no actual direct assertion endorsed. The instance of truth-talk may be co-asserting with and endorsing a merely possible direct assertion. (See Strawson (1950), p. 131.)} Since this indirect co-assertion is an (ES)-related function, at least one endorsing role truth-talk plays is also (ES)-related.

 Probably the most important (ES)-related function truth-talk fulfills is its role in allowing us to generalize (in some sense) on sentence positions.\footnote{Cf. Quine (1986), pp. 11-12.} Ordinary quantification over objects inverting his claim that the co-assertion performed via truth-talk results from the endorsing performed. (See Strawson (1950), p. 148)

\footnote{This logical function greatly extends the expressive power of a language by allowing what amounts to the assertion or denial of an infinite set of claims all at once. In fact, this}
allows us to generalize on term positions (e.g., from “Socrates is mortal” to “All humans are mortal”), but generalizing on sentence positions is not something that can be done just with ordinary objectual quantifiers. For instance, in wishing to make an assertion that generalizes on the embedded sentences in the claim

(1.3) If the Pope asserts that crabapples are edible, then crabapples are edible
what one wants is a generalization that provides all of the instances of the schema

(1.4) If the Pope asserts that p, then p.
However, we cannot get a generalization of this sort by just prefixing (1.4) with an objectual quantifier like “For all p”. The result would be ill-formed since “p” would have to serve both as a variable for objects (due to the quantifier) and as a schematic variable for sentences in use as (at least in the consequent of (1.4)) sentential components of compound sentences.

The concept of truth is a solution to this problem since, as reflected in the instances of (ES), it makes available for every (declarative) sentence that would go in for “p” in (1.4), an equivalence sentence of the form “that p is true”. This means that for every instance of (1.4) there is an equivalent instance of

(1.5) If the Pope asserts that p, then that p is true.
But (1.5) can be bound with an objectual quantifier (most plausibly, a restricted one), as in

(1.6) For every (proposition) that p, if the Pope asserts that p, then that p is true. 51
We might express (1.6) in ordinary language by saying “For every proposition, if the Pope asserts it, then it is true” or, more naturally, “Whatever the Pope asserts is true.”

Both inflationists and deflationists can accept these (ES)-related functions because even with their close connection to these equivalences it is an open question how the functions are

function is so significant that even if it were the only function the notion of truth fulfilled, that would still justify the introduction of such a notion into a language that did not already include it (or some other means of expressing infinite conjunctions and disjunctions).
implemented. They may be fulfilled simply in virtue of the availability of the instances of (ES). Alternatively, these biconditionals may reflect some aspect of truth-talk that both generates them and implements the (ES)-related functions; this “common cause” might even be the underlying nature of a substantive property truth-talk attributes. Given the available options, the conflicting positions can agree that the (ES)-related functions belong in the job-description associated with truth-talk. In fact, since providing the instances of (ES) is a long-recognized necessary condition for any adequate position on the subject of truth, both inflationary and deflationary job-descriptions must include these functions. Where they can and do diverge according to the job-description approach is on the issue of what (or if) functions beyond these are included.  

Deflationism is largely a product of dissatisfaction with the results of the traditional approach to truth. Combined with the basic difference between deflationary and inflationary job-descriptions, this suggests that deflationary status is a matter of a job-description’s excluding certain functions traditionally included (by inflationary views). This thesis is too general to serve as a statement of deflationism’s central commitments, but it in turn suggests a strategy for narrowing in on a thesis that can: determine which specific functions a deflationary job-description excludes essentially. Call this the “specific-function strategy”.

Some initial direction for the specific-function strategy is provided by the fact that even when understood as a job-description metatheory, a deflationary view still has to satisfy TDT. Since a deflationary job-description must make for a difference between truth-talk and everyday-talk, the functions deflationism excludes are most likely certain functions performed by everyday-talk. Bracketing nominalistic approaches, one basic function everyday-talk serves is the

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51 Cf. Horwich (1998), pp. 3-4. Again, the use of proposition-talk does not necessarily entail a commitment to “heavy-duty” propositions.

52 Strictly speaking, this is not the only difference since, as just implied, they will also have different views of how the mutually acknowledged functions get fulfilled. This fact, however, is just more support for my claim that which functions are included in the job-description is not the fundamental issue.
attribution of properties to objects, but the previous section shows that deflationism need not deny truth-talk plays this role. The difference between a deflationary job-description and an inflationary one just needs to track whatever criteria would distinguish substantive properties from insubstantive ones, adhering to them in such a way that, whatever the metaphysics of properties might be, a deflationary job-description would not lead to truth-talk attributing a substantive property (i.e., it does not violate NSPT+).

Unfortunately, the specific-function strategy and these guidelines fail to produce a thesis that can be taken to capture deflationism’s central commitments while characterizing the view as a job-description metatheory. The problem is that this strategy runs into the same general problem that undermines the truth-property approach, namely, the entanglement of deflationism with independent philosophical controversies.\(^{53}\) Consider the specific function most often considered the main subject of dispute between deflationists and inflationists: truth-talk’s putative explanatory role.\(^{54}\) Characterized in terms of this issue, deflationism might be summarized with what I will call the “Non-Explanatory” Thesis:

\[
\text{(NET) Truth-talk never plays a genuine explanatory role.}
\]

*Prima facie*, this looks like a good candidate for a statement of deflationism’s constitutive commitment. Understood in terms of NET, deflationism takes truth-talk to differ from everyday-talk by claiming that the notion of truth never explains anything, whereas everyday notions like “metal” do. Explanatoriness is standardly associated (at least as a mark) with substantive propertihood, so if truth-talk is never genuinely explanatory, then (the thought is) it stands to

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\(^{53}\)Thanks to Robert Mabrito for helping me see this.

reason that it never attributes a substantive property. Perhaps more to the point, if truth-talk is
genuinely explanatory, then supposedly NSPT+ is violated and deflationism is false.

However, NET is not a satisfactory candidate for a statement of deflationism’s
costitutive commitment. The problem is that the notion it pins deflationism to—genuine
explanatoriness—is a philosophically thorny one, and some conceptions of this notion undermine
its usefulness in distinguishing deflationism from inflationism. Everyone acknowledges that
truth-talk appears in explanatory contexts. Consider its use in claims like “The (approximate)
truth of our [scientific] theories explains the instrumental reliability of our methods,” and “The
truth of our beliefs explains our success in attaining our goals.” Even in less philosophical
contexts I might appeal to truth-talk in explaining, e.g., Bob’s success on the stock market (or
better, his accomplishing what counts as success, say, buying low and selling high) in terms of his
\( \text{knowing} \) or at least \( \text{being right} \) about the future values of various stocks. Characterized via NET,
deflationary views must deny that any of these uses of truth-talk is genuinely explanatory. But
this position is unreasonably stringent on certain understandings of “explanatory”.

On at least one view of what explanatoriness consists in, everyone should acknowledge
the above uses of truth-talk as genuinely explanatory. An illuminating way of thinking about
explanations is as accounts of why something happened or is the case. Peter Railton has
developed a view of explanatoriness in terms of a relation to idealized accounts of this sort, what
he calls “ideal explanatory texts” \(^{56}\). An ideal explanatory text is the full account or complete
story answering a particular why-question; proffered explanations are attempts to provide
explanatory information—information that enables us to reconstruct sections of the relevant ideal

\(^{55}\) Michael Williams paraphrasing Richard Boyd and Hilary Putnam, respectively, in M. Williams (1986),
pp. 229, 232.

explanatory text or that otherwise illuminates its features. Explanatoriness is a continuum stretching between an explanandum’s ideal explanatory text at the top end, and a zero point at the bottom occupied by statements that provide no explanatory information. Any statement that moves us off the zero point—even if it gives information only about the form but not the content of the relevant ideal explanatory text—is explanatory to some degree.

For present purposes the crucial point is that no one should deny that truth-talk can be genuinely explanatory in this sense. Just by serving the sorts of functions acknowledged by inflationists and deflationists alike, truth-talk can provide information about the ideal explanatory text relevant to an explanandum. Even if all that the statement “Bob was able to buy low and sell high on the stock market because he had true beliefs about certain stocks” tells us about the relevant ideal explanatory text is that the argument in it contains premises of the form “p and Bob believed that p”, this still falls above the zero point on the continuum of explanatoriness, and so counts as explanatory. Any view acknowledging truth-talk’s logical role of generalizing on sentence positions would also have to view truth-talk as explanatory in this sense, meaning that to count as deflationary a view would have to deny that truth-talk played even this logical role if NET expressed deflationism’s constitutive commitment. But this generalizing role is an (ES)-related function, and so is one no acceptable view of truth-talk can deny. So, on this

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57Ibid., p. 167. Note that although Railton has a particular view (the nomothetic account) about what ideal explanatory texts are like (they contain arguments that subsume phenomena under laws), this general approach is neutral with respect to what is usually called the logic of explanation. So one can take the dispute between, e.g., Salmon’s causal-mechanistic account of explanation and Kitcher’s unification account as a disagreement about what the ideal explanatory text concerns itself with.

58Ibid., p. 173.

59This is not the same sort of information about form that Railton stresses (information about whether an ideal explanatory text is probabilistic), and so might be relatively less explanatory than a claim like “A random mutation—very rare.” However, it is still information about the ideal explanatory text.
understanding of explanatoriness, non-explanatoriness cannot be considered a necessary condition for deflationism.\(^{60}\)

A tempting move at this point is to claim that the problem with NET is its over-generality, and that the solution is to replace the broad notion of an explanatory role NET uses with the more specific notion of a causal-explanatory role employed in certain discussions of truth-talk.\(^{61}\) The central commitment of deflationism would then be expressed by what I will call the “Not Causal-Explanatory” Thesis:

\[(\text{NCET}) \text{ Truth-talk never plays a causal-explanatory role.}\]

The thought is that serving this kind of explanatory function involves something like presenting information about causal relations, and this would require more of truth-talk than just its playing the sort of logical generalizing role that cannot plausibly be excluded from a deflationary job-description. On the usual view, causal relations hold between particular phenomena in the world independently of how descriptions of those phenomena are related in explanations.\(^{62}\) All that the generalizing role in question can provide information about is the form of an explanation, which is not specific enough to be information about causal relations. However, this line of reasoning presupposes a disputable (though common) “bottom-up” conception of causal relations as objective and prior to explanatory relations. Alternative views on causation and its relationship to explanation are possible, and not all of them combine with NCET in ways that enable this thesis to capture deflationism.

\(^{60}\) I explain why it cannot be taken as a sufficient condition for deflationism below.


\(^{62}\) In fact, on the usual sort of view, causal relations between phenomena are considered to be the basis of explanatory relations between descriptions of them. This is an example of the general perspective on explanation that Jaegwon Kim calls “explanatory externalism”—the idea that explanatory relations between propositions are constituted by an “objective correlate” relation (causation being the relation of choice) holding between events in the world. (Kim (1994), pp. 57-58. Cf. Kim (1988), p. 226.)
Consider how the unification account of explanation developed by Philip Kitcher looks at explanatory and causal relations. On this view, explanatory relations hold between propositions from a body of knowledge in virtue of their being related as premise and conclusion by a member of the set of general argument patterns that systematizes the body of knowledge in the most unified way. Motivated in part by the difficulty of developing an epistemology for causal (and counterfactual) claims, Kitcher adopts a “top-down” understanding of causal relations that views them as derivative from unification-constituted explanatory relations. But if the bases of causal relations are the structural features imposed on an epistemic corpus by the systematization that most unifies it, then an appeal to the notion of causal-explanatoriness will be of questionable help in characterizing deflationism. If causal relations are just projections from the ways that phenomena are represented as ordered in explanations, then the sort of generalizing function mentioned above could very well suffice to make truth-talk violate NCET.

This logical role would allow truth-talk to provide information about one of the general argument patterns that establish explanatory relations, for instance, that it contains a premise of the form “p and Bob believes that p” and a conclusion of the form “Bob succeeded at A”. It would thereby also provide information (in the form of a schema) about the ordering structure that certain explanation-arguments impose on phenomena, in this case, that situations described by claims of the first form are prior in this ordering to situations described by claims of the second form. Because causal relations derive from this general ordering structure, this structural information amounts to information about causal relations, making truth-talk causal-explanatory.

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63 Kitcher (1989), pp. 430-434. This view is an instance of what Kim calls “explanatory internalism”—the idea that explanatory relations between propositions are a matter of factors within the body of knowledge containing them (usually formal or logical relations between the propositions) rather than any relationship between events in the world. (Kim (1994), p. 57. Cf. Kim (1988), pp. 226-227.)

64 Ibid., pp. 470-477.

65 A schematic argument is one component of a general argument pattern. See Kitcher (1989), p. 432.
In the context of this conception of causation, then, a deflationary job-description would still have to exclude the (ES)-related generalizing role described above, if satisfying NCET were a necessary condition of deflationism. As before, this would make deflationism implausibly stringent.

A possible objection to this reasoning is that information about causal relations cannot be schematic or structural in the way just sketched; it must specify particular elements of the causal history of some phenomenon. This requires the identification of causally efficacious factors—specific events that are the causal antecedents doing the work in bringing about the phenomenon in question. Schemata providing information about the structure of an epistemic corpus in the most unifying systematization do not supply what is required. However, this objection just presupposes the common “bottom-up” view of causation again. If this is not assumed, then although its generalizing role alone would not enable truth-talk to specify anything causally efficacious in the production of some phenomenon described in an explanandum, it would enable truth-talk to provide information that is explanatory and causally relevant in what Frank Jackson and Philip Pettit refer to as the “programming” sense.\(^66\) In virtue of its generalizing function, truth-talk would demarcate a range of phenomena by specifying a form of description they must satisfy, and ensure that some member from that range does the causal work.\(^67\) On a top-down view of causation, this would be enough to make truth-talk violate NCET.

If one tried to block this result by further refining NCET to the claim that truth-talk never plays a causal-\textit{efficacious}-explanatory role (NCEET), this would identify a function that could be excluded from a deflationary job-description without requiring the elimination of any (ES)-related functions. In fact, the thesis that truth-talk does not directly specify any causally

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\(^67\)Jackson and Pettit (1990), p. 114. Note that this can iterate through many levels before anything causally efficacious is reached (p. 115).
efficacious factor (NCEET) probably expresses another necessary condition for counting as deflationary. However, this thesis does not express a sufficient condition since it is not clear that everyday-talk is causal-explanatory in the strict sense of causal efficacy either. Perhaps only information about micro-physical phenomena satisfies this strict notion, and explanations employing everyday-talk are all just program explanations. If so, then a view could exclude this narrower causal-explanatory role from the job-description associated with truth-talk and simultaneously maintain that truth-talk is in no way different from everyday-talk. Because it is possible for a view both to satisfy this strict refinement of NCET and to violate TDT, the former cannot express a sufficient condition for deflationism. In addition, since one possible view of explanatoriness in general restricts it to causal-efficacious-explanatoriness, this also shows that NET does not express a sufficient condition for deflationism either.

A parallel argument undermines an alternative attempt to refine NET by characterizing deflationism in terms of what I will call the “Not Law-Like Explanatory” Thesis:

(NLET) Truth-talk never plays a law-like-explanatory role.

So understood, deflationary views would constitutively hold that truth-talk does not figure in any law-like generalizations. This understanding of deflationism is implicit in what is generally known as the “success argument” against deflationism, the original version of which is presented by Hilary Putnam. Putnam argues that explanations of successful behavior in terms of true beliefs involve the notion of truth in more places than just claims like “Bob had true beliefs about the stock market,” claims that can be replaced with (truth-talk-free) instances of “p and Bob believed that p”. These explanations also involve the generalization that people who act on true

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cf. Ibid., p. 116.

beliefs tend to achieve their goals.\textsuperscript{70} In a critique of deflationism, the idea is that this generalization plays a law-like role in the explanation, and a deflationary view of truth-talk cannot accommodate this role because NLET is (at least partly) constitutive of deflationism.

Even the standard deflationist reply to the success argument seems implicitly to assume that NLET expresses at least a necessary condition for deflationary status.\textsuperscript{71} However, in the context of the conception of laws connected with Kitcher’s theory of explanation, NLET should not be thought of as expressing a necessary condition. As it did with causation, Kitcher’s view inverts the usual understanding of the relationship between laws and explanations. He denies that generalizations figure in explanations because they express laws; instead he claims that generalizations express laws in virtue of appearing in explanations.\textsuperscript{72} So even if all that the notion of truth does in Putnam’s “law” is provide a way to generalize on sentence positions, thereby providing a claim that expresses all of the instances of the schema

\begin{equation}
\text{If } p, \text{ then people who use the belief that } p \text{ to achieve some goal tend to achieve that goal,}\end{equation}

this generalization could still have law-like status. All this would require is that it figure as a universal premise in explanatory derivations, and it could do this simply in virtue of truth-talk’s (ES)-related generalizing role. Thus, NLET cannot be constitutive of deflationism since on Kitcher’s account of laws a commitment to this thesis would require excluding truth-talk’s generalizing role from a deflationary job-description. As before, this would make deflationism an unacceptably austere position.


\textsuperscript{71}As a preface to his account of the role truth-talk plays in the generalization Putnam identifies, Michael Williams says, “I see no reason to think of [the generalization Putnam identifies] as a law.” (See M. Williams (1986), p. 232.)

\textsuperscript{72}Kitcher (1989), p. 447.

\textsuperscript{73}This is what deflationists usually say in response to the success argument (see M. Williams (1986), p. 232). As noted above, they just typically also assume that this entails NLET.
None of this is to deny that on certain conceptions of explanation, causation, and laws (and the relationships between them) deflationism should be taken to exclude causal-explanatory and law-like-explanatory roles from the job-description associated with truth-talk. However, the forgoing discussion suggests that excluding these functions is not fundamental to deflationism but rather is a consequence of a more basic commitment combined with certain views on these independent issues. A similar conclusion applies when the function identified as distinguishing a deflationary job-description from an inflationary one is the specific-function strategy’s second most popular option: a normative role. This way of characterizing deflationism is expressed in what I will call the “Non-Normative” Thesis:

(NNT) Truth-talk never plays a genuine (prescriptive) normative role.

The use of NNT to characterize deflationism occurs most often as an implicit part of critiques of the position arguing that deflationary views cannot account for the normative role the notion of truth plays.\(^74\) The assumption is that this sort of function involves more than just the endorsing and generalizing roles that everyone acknowledges truth-talk to play. In fact, this sort of critique generally assumes that a way of talking must attribute a substantive property if it is to play a normative role.\(^75\) So NNT appears to be (at least partly) constitutive of deflationism since its satisfaction is required for the satisfaction of NSPT+. However, although it follows on certain conceptions of normativity that deflationary views satisfy NNT, this does not hold on all approaches to normativity.

Consider, for instance, expressivist accounts. On this metaethical approach, normative language is considered a means of expressing attitudes of approval and disapproval rather than a particular way of describing certain situations or courses of action. A crude but simple example

\(^74\)Wright (1992); Putnam (1983a), (1983c) and (1991); Price (1988) and (1998) all object to deflationism on these grounds.

\(^75\)Price (1988) and (1998) are an unusual exception.
of this sort of view is the “Boo/Hooray” emotivist account of evaluative discourse.\textsuperscript{76} On this kind of view, to make an evaluative claim like “Slavery is wrong” is just to express the sort of disapproval more perspicuously expressed in “Boo for slavery!”\textsuperscript{77} If normativity is understood along these lines, then a claim like

(1.8) One ought to believe/assert that crabapples are edible

is more or less just a way of expressing the attitude of approval expressed in an utterance of

(1.9) Hooray for believing/asserting that crabapples are edible!

On this understanding of normativity, it is difficult to see how NNT could be a constitutive commitment of deflationism without again making the view implausibly stringent with respect to the functions included in the job-description associated with truth-talk.\textsuperscript{78} If a truth-attribute is normative in the sense that it indicates what ought to be asserted (or believed) regarding some issue, then on an expressivist account of normativity all this would require is that truth-talk play the endorsing function that both inflationists and deflationists must acknowledge. After all, as an endorsement of what he said, at least part of what a claim like

(1.2) What Bob said is true

expresses is approval for Bob’s assertion, something that might be more perspicuously displayed in an utterance like

(1.10) Hooray for Bob’s assertion!

\textsuperscript{76}For an example of this sort of view see Ayer (1952), pp. 107-108. (Cf. Blackburn (1984), pp. 167-171.)

\textsuperscript{77}Crude emotivism faces a substantial challenge in the embedding or Frege-Geach problem (see Blackburn (1984), pp. 189-191), but more sophisticated versions of expressivism offer ways of avoiding this problem. (See Blackburn (1984), pp. 192-196 and Gibbard (1990), pp. 94-97.)

\textsuperscript{78}Boghossian (1990) argues that if one is a deflationist, one cannot be an expressivist (non-factualist) about ethics (or about anything else for that matter) because deflationism leaves no room for denying that any significant declarative sentence is truth-apt. It seems right to say that deflationism rules out the traditional characterization of expressivism, i.e., as non-cognitivism, but this does not necessarily rule out maintaining ethical expressivism and deflationism together. (The conclusion that it does relies on taking NPT+ to express deflationism’s constitutive commitment.) Combining the two views requires that
or even in an utterance of (1.9), if it is common knowledge that what Bob said is that crabapples are edible. But if expressing this sort of attitude is all there is to playing a normative role, then a view would have to deny that truth-talk plays the sort of endorsing role discussed above in order to satisfy NNT. So, if NNT expressed a constitutive commitment of deflationism, this would again require deflationism to deny truth-talk plays a particular (ES)-related role, and this is an unacceptably stringent position.

It might be objected that the previous paragraph does not focus on the right kind of normative role. The point of NNT is not to deny that truth-talk can serve an evaluative function and can be used to express approval of statements through endorsement of them. To the extent that making this kind evaluation is normative, truth-talk plays a normative role. The kind of evaluative function NNT is concerned to deny truth-talk, however, is that involved in assessing statements and beliefs, i.e., indicating that they have or have not met some standard of correctness. More specifically, the issue is whether the concept of truth plays its own goal-indicating normative role in the regulation of assertion and belief by expressing a standard that can fail to be met even if standards of sincerity (for assertion) and warrant are.79 This sort of role is more clearly distinguished from the previous one in certain platitudes about the activities regulated, e.g., claims like “Belief aims at the truth” and “Assert only what is true.” The idea behind taking NNT to express something constitutive (even just partly) of deflationism is that this regulating sort of normative role involves more than the (ES)-related functions truth-talk cannot be denied.

This attempt to interpret NNT in a way that would make it useful in characterizing deflationism is unsuccessful because the idea behind it holds only on certain conceptions of norms. Hartry Field suggests a “thin” understanding of norms on which it would not. This view expressivism be characterized in a different way, but possibilities have been suggested. (See Horwich (1993), Field (1994a), O’Leary-Hawthorne and Price (1996).)
of norms has its beginning in the thesis that truth-talk’s role of effecting generalizations on sentence positions is enough to explain what is involved in someone’s desire that all her beliefs be true (in the sense of her believing something only if it is true). Field holds that this desire can be explained “disquotationally”, in other words, as just a generalization on, e.g., the desire to believe that crabapples are edible only if crabapples are edible. He further claims that if truth-talk’s generalizing function is enough to account for someone’s desire that all her beliefs be true, then it is enough to allow the notion of truth to play a normative role in the regulation of belief.

[T]here is no difficulty in desiring that all one’s beliefs be disquotationally true; and not only can each of us desire such things, there can be a general practice of badgering others into having such desires. Isn’t this enough for there to be a “norm” of asserting and believing the truth?  

On the view suggested here, a general practice of pressuring people (including ourselves) into regulating some type of activity is enough to establish a prescriptive norm for that activity. A general practice of this kind could consist in pronouncements of a general principle expressing how the activity is to be regulated. Therefore, a way of talking that allows for the expression of this sort of principle can make the institution of a norm possible—i.e., the talk can play a regulating normative role. Because the regulation of our beliefs and assertions according to principles like

\[(1.11) \text{One should believe/assert that crabapples are edible only if crabapples are edible}\]

is distinct from the regulation imposed by the norms of sincerity and warrant, a general practice of pressuring people to regulate their beliefs and assertions in this way would institute a distinct

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\[79\text{Cf. Price (1998).}\]

\[80\text{Field explains this “generalized” desire as desiring the infinite conjunction of all claims of the form “I believe ‘p’ only if p.” (Field (1994), pp. 264-265.) For present purposes I am bracketing concerns about the differences between infinite conjunctions of this sort and genuine generalizations as well as the issue of Field’s use of quotation names (“believe ‘p’”) rather than that-clauses (“believe that p”) to pick out the objects of the intentional attitudes. See Chapter 3 for discussion of these issues.}\]

\[81\text{Field (1994), p. 265.}\]
regulating norm. A general practice of this sort would be possible if there were a way of prescribing that all beliefs and assertions be regulated according to the instances of

(1.12) One should believe/assert that p only if p.  

Thus, a way of talking that allowed for the expression of a general prescriptive principle of this sort—a way of expressing all of the instances of (1.12) at once—would make it possible to establish a distinct regulating norm for assertion and belief.

Truth-talk provides a way of making the required prescriptive statement in the form of a single, universally quantified claim that has an equivalent instance for each instance of (1.12):

(1.13) For all propositions that p, one should believe/assert that p only if that p is true.

Without truth-talk (or some other way of expressing all of the instances of (1.12) at once), it would only be possible to institute separate norms regarding particular belief and assertion types. Because (1.13) and more colloquial variants like “Believe/assert only what is true” make possible a general practice of pressuring people to regulate their beliefs and assertions according to the instances of (1.12), they can establish a distinct norm regulating belief and assertion in general. Truth-talk therefore plays a regulative normative role on this view. Furthermore, it does so solely in virtue of its generalizing function. As a result, even the “regulating normative role” reading of NNT cannot be taken to distinguish deflationism from inflationism; both positions would have to reject the thesis on this conception of a regulative norm.

As in the case of explanatoriness, the issue of whether truth-talk plays a normative role turns out to be an unsuitable focus for a characterization of deflationism intending to capture something constitutive of the position. There are conceptions of normativity from which it follows that deflationary views exclude a normative role from the job-description associated with

82Because my assertion that p can be sincere (I believe that p) and my belief and assertion that p can be warranted (I have evidence that p) when ~p, the regulation of belief and assertion according to the instances of (1.12) amounts to a distinct regulative norm.
truth-talk, but as just discussed, there are conceptions from which this does not follow. Given that the proper understanding of normativity is an open question, denying that truth-talk plays a normative role should not be considered constitutive (even partly) of deflationism. Rather, as in the case of explanatoriness, this denial is more plausibly taken as a consequence of something deflationism is committed to more centrally, combined with certain views on the independent issue of normativity. This bodes poorly for the specific-function strategy—the attempt to characterize deflationism by identifying specific functions whose exclusion from the job-description associated with truth-talk could be considered definitive of the position. The two specific functions that offered the most promise for this tactic are both more plausibly considered secondary concerns of deflationism at best. The question is whether the job-description approach can succeed through some other strategy, i.e., whether there is some other way of characterizing deflationism as a job-description metatheory that can capture its constitutive commitments.

The failure of the specific-function strategy suggests the alternative strategy of characterizing deflationism in terms of a general category of function it excludes. Because of the connection between the job-description approach and the satisfaction of the necessary condition

(NSPT+) Truth-talk never attributes a substantive property,

one might be tempted to identify the general category of functions excluded from a deflationary job-description as the substantive functions. On such an approach the constitutive thesis of deflationism would be expressed by what I will call the “No Substantive Functions” Thesis:

(NSFT) Truth-talk never performs any substantive functions.

On this characterization, truth-talk is said to fulfill certain important “insubstantive” functions, but not to perform any substantive ones (though presumably everyday-talk does).

This characterization initially appears to hold some promise since intuitively it should generate the right results when combined with different views of explanation, causation, and normativity. Combined with views that take these things as substantive, deflationism so understood would exclude the functional roles related to them from the job-description associated
with truth-talk; combined with views that take these things as insubstantive, it would not. The problem, of course, is that while there may be some vague, intuitive sense attached to the notion “substantive function”, it is far too vague to provide an informative statement of deflationism’s constitutive commitment. When the substantive/insubstantive contrast came up within the truth-property approach, the need to give this distinction content by identifying criteria to underwrite it was part of what motivated the move to the job-description approach. Appealing to the general contrast again in the context of this approach leaves it uninformative.

This problem is not lessened by the attempt to refine the distinction along the lines suggested by characterizing deflationism as the view that truth-talk serves only expressive functions. The idea is to make the substantive/insubstantive contrast more informative by identifying functions of the latter sort as the ones that pertain to the expressive resources of a language. Unfortunately, this still leaves the problem of characterizing the contrast class of substantive functions. Typically, the notion of an expressive function is sharpened through a contrast with the notion of an explanatory function, but it has already been shown that denying truth-talk an explanatory role is not constitutive of deflationism. Without this contrast the notion of an expressive function would not rule out very much. After all, substantive property attribution is expressive. When new predicates attributing newly discovered substantive properties are added to a language (e.g., “HIV-positive”) this adds to the language’s expressive power; it allows speakers to express things they could not before. Thus, saying just that truth-talk serves only expressive functions does not rule out that these functions include the attribution of a substantive property. Nor can this be blocked by defining “expressive” as “not involving the attribution of a substantive property” since this would make all functions served by all fragments

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of discourse (including everyday-talk) count as expressive in the context of a radical nominalism.\(^{84}\)

A slightly more informative strategy for characterizing deflationism relative to a general category of function is suggested by the basic distinction between deflationary and inflationary job-descriptions: their divergence on the issue of what (or if) functions beyond the mandatory (ES)-related ones are included in the job-description associated with truth-talk. Note also that the argument against the specific-function strategy appeals to conceptions of the candidate functions on which they can be fulfilled just through the performance of (ES)-related functions. These data suggest the strategy of characterizing a deflationary job-description in terms of the category of (ES)-related functions. Such a characterization is expressed by what I call the “(ES)-Related Functions Only” Thesis:

(ESFO) Truth-talk performs only (ES)-related functions directly.

Characterized in terms of ESFO, deflationism holds that truth-talk performs any function it fulfills in virtue of playing some (ES)-related role in a particular kind of context. This characterization has the desired results with respect to other functional roles: on certain views of explanation, a deflationary view can consider truth-talk to play an explanatory role in virtue of fulfilling some (ES)-related function in an explanatory context; mutatis mutandis for the issue of what a deflationist should say about truth-talk playing a normative role.\(^{85}\)

I think that ESFO succeeds in demarcating the boundaries of a deflationary job-description: it is necessary and sufficient that a job-description contain only (ES)-related functions for it to count as deflationary. However, I do not think that ESFO captures

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\(^{84}\) The subjunctive mood is no help here either, since identifying functions that fall under “would not involve the attribution of a substantive property if there were any” amounts to the specific-function strategy taken from the other side.

\(^{85}\) This may also be a better way to understand the supposedly (ES)-related endorsing function since it is explained as a product of the more directly (ES)-related function of indirect co-assertion.
deflationism’s constitutive commitments. The reason for this is that the focus of this thesis is not sufficiently fundamental. A commitment to ESFO is something that cries out for explanation and justification. The satisfaction of ESFO requires more than just a restriction on what functions are included in the job-description associated with truth-talk. The (ES)-related functions are not self-segregating; fulfilling them does not automatically preclude truth-talk from playing other, unrelated roles as well.86 Even if the job-description associated with truth-talk contained only (ES)-related functions, this would not entail that whatever satisfies that job-description could serve only those functions. It is possible that the satisfier is “over-qualified” and fulfills the required functions in a way that also allows it to fulfill other functions beyond the necessary ones.

The possibility of an over-qualified satisfier is contained in the very notion of an (ES)-related function since this notion leaves it completely open how these functions are implemented. As noted above, one possibility is that they are they are fulfilled just through the generation of the instances of (ES) themselves, but another is that both the performance of these functions and the generation of the instances of (ES) result from some aspect of a substantive property that truth-talk attributes. Even if all that the notion of truth demanded were the performance of (ES)-related functions, if they were fulfilled in this second way there would be nothing to prevent truth-talk from performing non-(ES)-related functions as well. For instance, the substantive-property attribution it involves might provide information about matters of causal efficacy in certain contexts. The functional restriction ESFO demands requires that truth-talk satisfy certain prior conditions constraining how the (ES)-related functions are implemented, conditions that keep all doors to non-(ES)-related functions closed.

ESFO is the best option from the job-description approach to characterizing deflationism. It correctly demarcates the functions included in a deflationary job-description. But a view about

86Frege’s so-called “transparency argument” for the indefinability/unanalyzability of truth (in Frege (1918)) might be considered an (unsuccessful) attempt to argue that this precluding is automatic. See
truth-talk satisfies ESFO only if what it claims about how the (ES)-related functions are implemented satisfies certain conditions. Thus, how (ES)-related functions are implemented should be considered the more fundamental concern of deflationism; this is what characterizations of deflationism should focus on if they want to capture the constitutive commitments of this position. This is a change in focus from that of the job-description approach; issues of how functions are implemented are not about what truth-talk does, but about how truth-talk works. Since the job-description approach succeeds in identifying some necessary conditions for deflationary status (NCEET, and ESFO), a view about how truth-talk works must have certain consequences for the job-description associated with it if the view is to qualify as a characterization of deflationism. Still, the issue of how truth-talk works should be considered more fundamental to deflationism than any commitments regarding the functions truth-talk performs (and the ones it does not).

Careful consideration has revealed that attempts to characterize deflationism as a job-description metatheory do not focus on fundamental enough issues. This recommends a shift in focus. Deflationism should still be thought of as a metatheory, a position regarding certain aspects of truth-talk, but its central commitments concern aspects of truth-talk other than those emphasized by the job-description approach. These aspects must bear on the issues of what a deflationary job-description includes and whether truth-talk attributes a substantive property, but as discussed, they should concern how truth-talk fares with respect to more basic criteria. Recent considerations suggest that these criteria have to do with how truth-talk works, that this is the aspect of truth-talk deflationism focuses on most centrally. Thus, deflationism should be characterized via the third general approach mentioned at the start—as a metatheory about truth-talk’s logic-linguistic functioning.

FOCUSING ON FUNCTIONING

The claim that deflationism is a metatheory about truth-talk’s logico-linguistic functioning (a “functioning metatheory”) immediately leads to the question of what exactly deflationism claims about this. The previous sections provide some constraints on an adequate answer in the form of various propositions that must follow from it. What deflationism says about truth-talk’s functioning must entail that this talk does not attribute a substantive property (NSPT+), play a causal-efficacious-explanatory role (NCEET), or for that matter, perform any non-(ES)-related function (ESFO). This last condition in particular suggests a line of inquiry into what deflationism claims about truth-talk’s functioning. ESFO indicates that the instances of (ES) have some sort of special status on a deflationary view. In order for an account of truth-talk to satisfy ESFO, it must explain the implementation of the (ES)-related functions in such a way that truth-talk could not also play any non-(ES)-related roles.

Considering the alternative accounts of how the (ES)-related functions could be implemented, the need to restrict truth-talk’s functions to just these recommends taking them to be implemented just by means of truth-talk’s providing all the instances of (ES). Rejecting the “common cause” account closes off at least one door that non-(ES)-related functions might slip through. However, even if the implementation of the (ES)-related functions depends directly on the generation of (ES)’s instances, there is still the possibility that these equivalences are themselves explained in terms of the nature of some substantive property attributed on their left-hand sides. This “underlying cause” possibility must be closed off as well in order to rule out any over-qualified job-description satisfier.

The solution is to understand the special status deflationism attributes to the instances of the equivalence schema

(ES) It is true that p iff p (= That p is true iff p)

as the status of being fundamental, in a sense related to some ideas recently articulated by Horwich. Although he does not present his claims as part of a metatheory about truth-talk’s
functioning, Horwich describes deflationism as holding that the instances of (ES) neither require nor admit of any deeper-level explanations.\(^87\) The thought is that there is nothing underneath these equivalences because no conceptual analysis of the notion of truth or reductive analysis of a property of truth is possible. The instances of (ES) are understood to be conceptually and explanatorily basic.\(^88\)

The instances of this schema are considered conceptually basic in the sense that they do not follow from definitional relations holding between the notion of truth and more basic concepts. They are not explained in terms of some underlying meaning “true” has; there is no explicit definition of “true” in more elementary terms. Deflationary views either take the instances of (ES) themselves as brute, or (more effectively) as holding simply as a direct result of truth-talk’s logico-linguistic functioning.\(^89\) This makes the instances of (ES) more or less analytic (as well as necessary and \textit{a priori}) because, to the extent that “true” has a meaning, it has no more than what is captured by the instances of (ES). These equivalences are explanatorily basic in two senses. First, because there is no possible reductive analysis of what it is to be true in terms of the possession of more fundamental properties, there is no lower-level, unifying account of why these biconditionals hold, no single explanation of how they all get generated. Second, the use of truth-talk displayed in the instances of (ES) explains all other uses of truth-talk. So the instances of (ES) are the fundamental explainers of truth-talk.

\(^{87}\)Horwich (1998), pp. 50-51. Horwich views the instances of (ES) this way because he takes them, or rather the propositions they express, as the fundamental axioms of \textit{both} the theory of the concept of truth \textit{and} the theory of truth itself. (See Horwich (1998), pp. 17-18, 36-37, 135-136.) I discuss Horwich’s view in more detail in Chapter 3.


\(^{89}\)It follows that although the instances of (ES) must be taken as explanatorily and conceptually basic by a deflationary view, they do no have to be taken as \textit{logically} basic. They can be the logical consequences of other principles put forward by an account of truth-talk and still be fundamental in the relevant sense, provided that these other principles are at the same conceptual and explanatory level as the instances of (ES). I say a bit more about this below.
The fundamentality of biconditionals involving (what is taken to be) the basic instances of truth-talk on one side and free-standing occurrences of their embedded sentences on the other, has been a part of deflationary accounts of truth-talk for a long time. It is emphasized most explicitly in what are called “disquotational” views. Disquotationalism takes the basic instances of truth-talk to involve the application of a truth-predicate to some sentence picked out by its quotation name. The classical version of this view holds that the effect of affixing the expression “…is true” to the quotation name of a sentence is the cancellation of the effect of the quotation marks. Because it takes the basic instances of truth-talk to involve the quotation names of sentences rather than that-clauses, the biconditionals disquotationalism focuses on are the instances of the disquotation schema

(DS) “p” is true iff p

rather than those of (ES). Still, on a disquotational view, the instances of (DS) are explicitly understood to be fundamental in the same way I am describing the instances of (ES) to be.

According to Stephen Leeds, for instance, the reason languages have truth-predicates is because of the usefulness of “a predicate [T] with the property that ‘“__” is [T]’ and ‘__’ are always interdeducible” as a means of expressing infinite conjunctions and infinite disjunctions, and the instances of (DS) (the “Tarski sentences”) axiomatize the notion of truth. Crispin Wright characterizes deflationism “as classically conceived” by means of the claim that “the Disquotational Schema…is (all but) a complete explanation of the truth predicate”. In characterizing deflationism, Michael Devitt claims, “The idea is roughly that there is no more to

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92 Wright (1992), p. 14 (see p. 21, n. 15 for the label “deflationism classically conceived”). Note, however, that on p. 15 Wright identifies something like NPT+ or NSPT+ (depending on how one interprets “real property”) as the “distinctively deflationary corollary” of this attitude toward the instances of (DS), suggesting that one of these is what he takes to be constitutive of deflationism.
truth than the equivalence thesis.”\textsuperscript{93} Ignoring the common casual use of the term “truth” to pick out the concept of truth, Devitt’s account of the equivalence thesis,

\[ \text{…each instance of ‘Schema-T’,} \]
\[ s \text{ is true if and only if } p, \]

obtained by substituting for ‘p’ a sentence which is a translation of the sentence referred to by the term substituted for ‘s’, must come out true,\textsuperscript{94}

makes his characterization of deflationism amount to a commitment to the fundamentality of the instances of something like (DS).

Similarly, the fundamentality of the instances specifically of the equivalence schema has been at least implicit in various formulations of deflationism. Although Horwich has only recently made this commitment explicit, it has been a part of his view all along.\textsuperscript{95} This should be fairly obvious since his MT is like a disquotational view, except that it takes the basic instances of truth-talk to involve that-clauses where a disquotational view employs quotation names. That the instances of (ES) are fundamental is also implicit in the classical redundancy theory.\textsuperscript{96} This theory explains the functioning of truth-talk in terms of a redundant operator. On this view, the expression “It is true that…” is a transparent sentential connective, which means that its application to a sentence produces a new sentence with exactly the same content as the first.\textsuperscript{97}

The supposed synonymy between the instances of “It is true that p” and those of “p” makes each instance of (ES) equivalent to a logical truth of the form “p iff p”. Because this follows directly from the logico-linguistic functioning of truth-talk, rather than from some conceptual analysis of


\textsuperscript{94}Ibid., p. 26. Emphasis added.

\textsuperscript{95}See Horwich (1990), pp. 5-7, 18-19.

\textsuperscript{96}Dummett (1978), p. xx makes it explicit in characterizing this particular version of deflationism.

the notion of truth or reductive analysis of a property of truth, the instances of (ES) all have fundamental status on this view.

Taking the instances of (ES) to be fundamental in the sense just discussed solves the problem of making an account of truth-talk satisfy ESFO. The second aspect of explanatory basicness, that truth-talk’s role in the instances of (ES) explains all of its uses, eliminates the “common cause” account of how the (ES)-related functions get implemented and takes any function performed by truth-talk to be (ES)-related. The other necessary conditions for deflationary status also get satisfied. First, the general adequacy condition of providing all the instances of (ES) is satisfied, so all functions that can be fulfilled in virtue of this—the (ES)-related functions—are included in the job-description. Second, the other aspects of (ES)-fundamentality block the “underlying cause” account of why these equivalences hold, eliminating the possibility of an over-qualified job-description satisfier and ensuring the satisfaction of NSPT+ (and thus TDT) and NCEET. NSPT+ is satisfied because the instances of (ES) cannot themselves express the basis of a substantive property. For one thing, there are infinitely many of them, and they offer nothing that could be considered an explicit definition specifying a uniform set of necessary and sufficient conditions. NCEET is thus also satisfied because the absence of any uniformity among the necessary and sufficient conditions set by the instances of truth-talk means that truth-talk cannot itself specify anything particular enough to be causally efficacious.

Perhaps more important for the satisfaction of NSPT+ and NCEET is the fact that there are instances of (ES) generated from the famous Liar sentences like

(L’) The sentence labeled “(L’)” expresses something false.\(^\text{98}\)

\(^{98}\) Both theories: both hold that “It is true that…” is a redundant operator, but the former also holds that all truth-talk can be paraphrased into claims involving the use of only this operator.

\(^{99}\) (L’) is obtained from a more typical formulation of the Liar “(L) The sentence labeled ‘(L)’ is false” by shifting from an instance of truth-talk that directly describes a sentence to an instance of truth-talk that describes what the sentence expresses. This is necessary to obtain a formulation of the Liar that combines
The instance of (ES) attained by substituting (L’) in for the schematic variable “p” is

\[(ES_{L’})\] That the sentence labeled “(L’)” expresses something false is true iff the sentence labeled “(L’)” expresses something false.

That this instance of (ES) involves an inconsistency can be shown in the following way.

Intuitively, what the sentence labeled “(L’)” expresses is that the sentence labeled “(L’)” expresses something false. A substitution into \((ES_{L’})\) based on this identification yields

\[(1.14)\] What the sentence labeled “(L’)” expresses is true iff the sentence labeled “(L’)” expresses something false.

Assuming (L’) is not ambiguous, the sentence labeled “(L’)” expresses something false if, and only if, what the sentence labeled “(L’)” expresses is false. Combined with (1.14), this implies

\[(1.15)\] What the sentence labeled “(L’)” expresses is true iff what the sentence labeled “(L’)” expresses is false.

Given the standard assumption that truth and falsity are incompatible with one another, this last claim reveals that certain instances of (ES) involve an inconsistency. All of the instances of (ES) together, therefore, could not possibly be the basis of a substantive property or some causally efficacious factor. That would mean some real element of the world was inconsistent, and I take this to be impossible. One might try to get around this by somehow excluding the pathological instances of (ES), but if the instances of (ES) are taken to be fundamental there is not much one can appeal to in order to “sieve out” the problematic instances. Thus, NSPT+ and NCEET are satisfied by any view that takes the instances of (ES) to be fundamental.

A solution to the semantic paradoxes that eliminates all inconsistency would most likely involve regarding the instances of (ES) as products of the nature of the property of truth, which would be explained

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\(^{99}\)One might attempt to block this result by denying that (L’) expresses anything. However, this will not eliminate inconsistency from the instances of (ES) because truth-talk also allows for the formulation of a strengthened Liar of the form “(L’+)” The sentence labeled ‘(L’+)’ does not express anything true” which is immune to the “expressive failure” move. (See McGee (1991), p. 4.) I discuss this further in Chapter 2 when I consider the Liar and its bearing on deflationism in more detail.

\(^{100}\)A solution to the semantic paradoxes that eliminates all inconsistency would most likely involve...
Recasting the thesis that the instances of (ES) are fundamental as a functioning metatheory, deflationism should be understood in terms of what I will call the “Functioning Makes Fundamental” Thesis:

(FMFT) Truth-talk’s logico-linguistic functioning is such that it gives the instances of (ES) fundamental status.

Although the path to this thesis has been directed by consideration of what a deflationary view should say about the functions truth-talk performs, FMFT is a thesis about functioning not functions. Its immediate consequences also have to do with the functioning of truth-talk, namely, how the instances of (ES) are generated and how the (ES)-related functions are implemented. These consequences regarding how truth-talk works then have consequences for what truth-talk can and cannot do. If an account of truth-talk does not satisfy FMFT, then it leaves doors open to the “common cause” and “underlying cause” accounts of how the (ES)-related functions are implemented, and thus to the possible violation of ESFO. FMFT is therefore a necessary condition for deflationary status. If an account of truth-talk satisfies FMFT, then it satisfies ESFO and the other necessary conditions for deflationary status discussed above. FMFT is therefore a sufficient condition for deflationary status.

Having cleared the first hurdles for counting as definitive of deflationism, a potential objection to taking FMFT as constitutive is that it fails to specify a precise way that deflationary views understand truth-talk to function logico-linguistically. The thesis is somewhat open-ended, accommodating a variety of specific accounts that say very different things about this aspect of truth-talk. The apparent lack of unity between accounts at the level of functioning is probably what has led philosophers to approach deflationism at the level of functions via the job-

in such a way that the pathological instances of (ES) are revealed to be illegitimate in some sense (but see Grover (1977) for an attempt to do this without a property of truth). The point here is that deflationism as I conceive of it cannot make use of any solution of this sort. A Tarski-style formulation of deflationism (see below) might offer a deflationary strategy for excluding the problematic instances, but the more one builds into the axioms from which the instances of (ES) are derived on this kind of view, the less fundamental the equivalences are likely to seem.
description approach. A perceived need for a unified thesis is the only explanation I can think of for, e.g., Michael Williams’ claim that deflationism’s fundamental commitment is about what truth-talk does (“function”). He explicitly discusses various deflationary accounts of how truth-talk works (“mechanism”), but he claims this is only a secondary concern.\textsuperscript{101} This seems to get things backwards. Given the problems with attempts to characterize deflationism as a job-description metatheory, and the need for constraints regarding functioning in order to meet necessary conditions on functions, Williams’ ordering should be reversed. If possible, deflationism should be characterized as a functioning metatheory instead of a job-description metatheory.

This conclusion makes intuitive sense as well. After all, functioning is typically a determining factor in what roles a way of talking can play. Consider the consequences of the logico-linguistic functioning of the expression “not”. It is an operator that takes sentences to sentences. As a result, the use of “not” in generating a claim like “Crabapples are not edible” from “Crabapples are edible” does not itself fulfill any descriptive, explanatory, or normative function.\textsuperscript{102} In contrast, a term like “edible” functions as a predicate that attributes to objects the satisfaction of certain conditions. Thus, its use in a claim like “Crabapples are edible” serves descriptive and possibly explanatory and normative functions \textit{qua edibility-talk}. In both cases, which sorts of functions the expression can fulfill is determined by its logico-linguistic functioning. Functioning is the more fundamental matter, so a functioning metatheory addresses more fundamental concerns than a job-description metatheory.

While it is true that at the level of functioning (or “mechanism”) deflationism encompasses competing accounts, this does not mean that there is no thesis about logico-

\textsuperscript{101}M. Williams (1999), pp. 547-548.

\textsuperscript{102}Although, of course, negation can be employed in talk that fulfills these sorts of functions due to the logico-linguistic functioning of other notions the talk employs.
linguistic functioning common to all of them. FMFT is like a functional or a determinable thesis about functioning, something that can be implemented or satisfied in different ways by different realizers or determinants. Just as function implementation can be what is important while the particular realizer is not, what matters for deflationary status is the satisfaction of FMFT, whatever specific view of truth-talk’s functioning is put forward. Thus there is a common thesis at the level of mechanism, eliminating any need to go up to the level of functions performed to identify the constitutive commitment of deflationism in general.

It might be tempting to try to find a specific thesis on the logico-linguistic functioning of truth-talk that characterizes deflationism. Certain versions of deflationism focus explicitly on this aspect of truth-talk, so it might be thought that a more specific thesis can be distilled from them. One set of deflationary views explicitly concerned with truth-talk’s logico-linguistic functioning consists of the redundancy theory and its descendants: performativism and the prosentential theories. 103 These views all hold that the instances of truth-talk do not make statements about anything denoted by the expressions the truth-locutions are combined with, but instead involve the use of some sort of operator to make (in the declarative cases) assertions with the same content as assertions of the sentences they implicate. 104 The upshot is that on these views, truth-talk is not predicative. Perhaps, then, deflationism should be characterized via what I will call the “No Predication” Thesis:

(NPrT) Truth-talk’s logico-linguistic functioning is not predicative.

Any account of truth-talk satisfying NPrT (given its satisfaction of the general criterion of providing all the instances of (ES)) is a deflationary view. It expresses a sufficient condition in

103 See Ramsey (1929) on extending the redundancy theory. Strawson (1949) and (1950) present performativism; Grover, Camp and Belnap (1975), C. J. F. Williams (1992), Chapter V, and Brandom (1988) and (1994), Chapter 5 present versions of prosententialism.
this sense. However, contrary to some characterizations of deflationism,\textsuperscript{105} the discussion of NPT+ above has essentially already shown that NPrT does not express a necessary condition for deflationary status. Horwich’s and Field’s views are even more fundamentally committed to the thesis that truth-talk is predicative than that it attributes a property. In a certain sense, the former is all that they mean by the latter.\textsuperscript{106} More to the point, classical disquotational views have excellent deflationary pedigree—they focus on the functioning of truth-talk and give fundamental status to the instances of (DS), their analog of (ES)—but they are still best understood as taking truth-talk predicatively. This is shown in the fact that one way of expressing a disquotational view of truth-talk is with the following definition:

\[(DT) (\forall x) x \text{ is a true sentence} =_{df} (\Sigma p)(x = \text{“p”} & p).\textsuperscript{107}\]

The symbol “\(\Sigma\)” is the existential substitutional quantifier, understood as a means of encoding a (possibly infinite) disjunction formed by disjoining all the results of replacing “p” with each of the (potentially infinite number of) elements of its substitution class (here, the declarative sentences of English).\textsuperscript{108} The right-hand side of (DT) appears every bit as much as the left-hand side.

\textsuperscript{104}In the performativist case this is accomplished via the truth-locution effecting a speech act of endorsing or commending; in the prosentential case it is accomplished via the truth-locution establishing an anaphoric relation between the two sentence-tokenings as wholes.

\textsuperscript{105}The discussions of deflationism in Kirkham (1992), Chapter 10 and Alston (1996), pp. 41-51 shift from characterizations in terms of NPT+ to characterizations in terms of NPrT (explicitly in Kirkham’s case, but only implicitly in Alston’s).

\textsuperscript{106}Horwich’s arguments that truth-talk violates NPT+ are really just arguments that “true” functions as a predicate in inference (see Horwich (1998), pp. 39, 125, 141-142) in the context of a pleonastic view of properties. I take it Field would agree that the real issue is whether truth-talk is predicative given his protestations of unclarity about how to understand NPT and NSPT (see Field (1994), p. 265, n. 19), and given that Horwich attributes the label “logical property” to him.

\textsuperscript{107}This is a variation on the definition of sentence-truth offered in David (1994), p. 100.

\textsuperscript{108}Ibid., pp. 99-100. This account of substitutional quantification is intended to avoid any potential circularity in the usual account. The latter explains existential substitutional quantification in terms of some substitution into the schema from the substitution class yielding a true sentence (universal substitutional quantification involves every such substitution yielding a true sentence). Explained this way,
side to say something about whatever the variable “x” has taken as an argument, and that is reason to see this deflationary view as treating truth-talk predicatively. Thus, NPrT expresses a sufficient but unnecessary condition, leaving FMFT as the best choice for a statement of deflationism’s constitutive commitment.

One final worry about FMFT is that it too is overly restrictive about the views it classifies as deflationary. Certain intuitively deflationary views might appear not to make the instances of (ES) fundamental. The worry is not about disquotational views and the difference between (ES) and (DS). It is rather that on certain views the instances of (ES) are understood to follow from certain functions truth-talk performs or are derived from other claims. For instance, on a performativist view the instances of (ES) are the product of the co-assertions the instances of truth-talk effect by means of an endorsing function they perform. On a prosentential view the instances of (ES) hold because of the content redundancy established between the two sides by the relationship of content inheritance generated by an anaphoric linking function that truth-talk performs. Any account of truth-talk based on Tarski’s work makes the assignment of truth-conditions—e.g., that in the instances of (ES) and (DS)—a compositional matter, i.e., the product of the semantic and truth-functional contributions of the subsentential components. But Tarski’s work is one of the original inspirations for deflationism, and the basis of early disquotational views. Thus, Tarski-based views should not be deemed inflationary on the basis of their logical structure. The worry is that all these views will be classified as inflationary by a characterization of deflationism in terms of FMFT.

Substitutional quantification is of questionable use in defining “true” unless this account is taken as a shorthand for the account in terms of infinite conjunction and disjunction.

In Chapter 3 I discuss a way of understanding that-clauses recently suggested by Hartry Field that allows for an improved version of disquotationalism axiomatized by the instances of (ES) “instead” of those of (DS).

See Field (1972) on Tarski’s reduction of truth to “primitive denotation”.

For example, Quine (1986) and Leeds (1978).
Fortunately, this worry is misplaced; the understanding of deflationism offered by FMFT will not automatically classify any of the above views as inflationary. In the first two cases this is because the functions identified as producing or generating the instances of (ES) are logico-linguistic functions, that is, they are part of how truth-talk works when it engages in the sort of logico-linguistic functioning it involves. The particular worries articulated in the previous paragraph show that not all versions of deflationism take the instances of (ES) to be basic logically or logico-linguistically.\(^{112}\) However, this is not what FMFT demands. The notion of fundamentality employed in this thesis has to do with conceptual and explanatory basicness only, so even if a view fails to make the instances of (ES) logically basic, it can still make them fundamental in the relevant sense. This is the case with performativist and prosentential accounts of truth-talk.

The Tarski-based accounts comprise an especially interesting group for this issue because some of them turn out to be deflationary, while others do not. It all depends on how the principles that generate the instances of (ES) understand the semantic assignments made to the subsentential components. If a Tarski-style truth-definition is combined with a “list-like” account of denotation—one that essentially takes the instances of the reference schema

\[(R) \ (\forall x) \ “b” \text{ refers (if at all) to } x \text{ iff } x = b\] \(^{113}\)

to be fundamental—then the instances of (ES) derived still count as fundamental since the basic principles they are derived from are suitably “deflationary”.\(^{114}\) If the Tarski-style truth-definition is supplemented with something like a causal theory of reference, then the resulting account of

\(^{112}\)Horwich’s MT does, but this generates fatal problems pertaining to the adequacy of his view as an account of truth-talk. I discuss this in Chapter 3. Of course, MT’s deflationary pedigree is perfect.

\(^{113}\)Even though this is bound with a universal objectual quantifier, it is still a schema because of the use of the schematic variable “b”.

\(^{114}\)This is essentially the view presented in Leeds (1978). For an explanation of the view in these terms see Putnam (1978), pp. 15-16.
truth-talk does not make the instances of (ES) fundamental, and the view is inflationary.\textsuperscript{115} Part of what this shows is that deflationism is really a position on all of the traditional semantic notions at once; it should be understood as characterizing each of them with a thesis claiming that its logico-linguistic functioning makes the instances of the relevant schema fundamental.

With respect to deflationism specifically about truth-talk, FMFT should be taken as capturing the definitive and constitutive commitment of this position. This characterization’s focus on truth-talk’s logico-linguistic functioning emphasizes particular motivations for deflationism, and it makes a certain sort of objection to deflationism particularly salient. I will explore these issues in the next two chapters, and I will refine this understanding of deflationism as I develop my own formulation of this approach to the subject of truth in the chapters to follow.

\textsuperscript{115}This is essentially the view recommended in Field (1972). Causal accounts of reference are developed in Kripke (1980) and Putnam (1975).
CHAPTER 2
MOTIVATIONS FOR DEFLATIONISM

INTRODUCTION

I argued in Chapter 1 that deflationism should be understood as a metatheory about truth-talk’s logico-linguistic functioning, one that grants a special status to the instances of the equivalence schema

\[ (ES) \text{It is true that } p \text{ iff } p \text{ (= That } p \text{ is true iff } p). \]

More specifically, my claim is that the constitutive commitment of deflationism is best captured by the “Functioning Makes Fundamental” Thesis:

\[ (FMFT) \text{Truth-talk’s logico-linguistic functioning is such that it gives the instances of (ES) fundamental status.} \]

This thesis about functioning can be satisfied in a variety of particular ways, so there is no uniquely deflationary answer to the question of exactly how truth-talk functions logico-linguistically. So long as the particular account of its functioning has as a consequence that the instances of (ES) are explanatorily and conceptually basic, that account qualifies as a deflationary view.

Having explained why deflationism should be characterized in terms of FMFT, I now want to consider what reasons there could be for accepting an account of truth-talk that satisfies this thesis. I am not looking for knock-down arguments to the effect that accounts of this sort are “the only game in town” but just some initial incentive for thinking that deflationism is on the right track and worth pursuing. Some may feel that considerations of ontological economy
provide a motivation of this sort. Accounts satisfying FMFT do offer a certain measure of ontological economy. They entail that, regardless of the ontological status of properties, there is no substantive property attributed with truth-talk, e.g., no property that functions as a causally efficacious factor in the production of any phenomena. Similarly, naturalistic tendencies might incline one to deflationism if one thinks there can be no reductive analysis of a property of truth. Deflationism would prevent us from being saddled with an anti-naturalistic “semanticalism” (on the model of “Cartesianism” or “vitalism”\textsuperscript{116}) if truth turned out to be explanatorily necessary but irreducible. However, considerations of ontological parsimony and naturalism do not move everyone, and among naturalists, most probably think that truth will not evade reduction.

The discussion in Chapter 1 of the (ES)-related functions shows that truth-talk has, at the very least, important logical and pragmatic work to do; there is a real need for a notion fulfilling these functions. Hartry Field has turned this observation into a default position or attitude he calls “methodological deflationism”.\textsuperscript{117} His view is that the need for at least a deflationary notion of truth has been established, but we should not embrace a “more-than-deflationary” conception until a need for something satisfying this sort of view is demonstrated. Understood this way, however, Field’s position runs up against an objection lodged by Richard Kirkham. Kirkham claims that a general methodology of presuming predicates are “non-genuine” until proven genuine cannot be taken seriously since, given the present underdeveloped state of semantics, it would follow that we should consider most predicates non-genuine.\textsuperscript{118} Field is right that while a need for (at least) a deflationary notion of truth is well established, the need to move beyond such a notion is not, but his methodological deflationism seems to take a concern for ontological

\textsuperscript{116}See Field (1972), p. 358.

\textsuperscript{117}Field (1994), p. 263.

\textsuperscript{118}Kirkham (1992), p. 331.
parsimony and naturalism as overriding principles. While I find these commitments quite reasonable, it would be better if deflationism had motivations of a more independent sort as well.

Fortunately, motivations of the desired variety are provided by truth-talk itself because of certain features it exhibits in its functioning, features that render this way of talking philosophically suspect. This is an especially appropriate source for motivations for deflationism since the view is fundamentally a view about truth-talk’s functioning. Truth-talk’s deflation-motivating features are a certain duality it exhibits and its capacity for generating paradoxical statements. Its possession of these features supplies specific reasons for thinking that truth-predicates are not genuine predicates, at least in some sense. Thus, there is no appeal to the particular general methodology Kirkham finds objectionable. I discuss these two features in turn, explaining in each case how it provides initial motivation for adopting a deflationary account of truth-talk.

**TRUTH-TALK’S DUALITY**

The first of these features providing some initial incentive for pursuing a deflationary view involves a tension noted in an often-quoted passage by Frege.

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. And yet is it not a great result when the scientist after much hesitation and laborious researches can finally say ‘My conjecture is true’?¹¹⁹

There clearly is a difference between the two examples of truth-talk Frege offers:

(2.1) It is true that I smell the scent of violets.

(2.2) My conjecture is true.

¹¹⁹Frege (1918), p. 6.
As he points out, the first has an intimate connection to an utterance free of truth-locutions in a way that the second does not. Even if one rejects Frege’s claim that (2.1) has exactly the same content as

(2.3) I smell the scent of violets,

it is difficult to believe that the two sentences are only contingently materially equivalent. The biconditional

(2.4) It is true that I smell the scent of violets iff I smell the scent of violets appears to be a necessary and \textit{a priori} equivalence. The left-hand side is a trivial expansion of right-hand side at least in this sense, if not in the stronger sense of being analytically or conceptually equivalent to it.

Truth-talk’s duality is illustrated by the contrast between (2.1) and Frege’s second example,

(2.2) My conjecture is true.

A claim like (2.2) may be materially equivalent to some utterance free of truth-locutions, and this equivalence could be expressed in the form of a biconditional, as in

(2.5) My conjecture is true iff crabapples are edible.

However, (2.5) is not a trivial equivalence the way (2.4) is; no claim like (2.2) will be \textit{a priori} and necessarily equivalent to any sentence free of truth-locutions the way claims like (2.1) are. The question is how to explain this duality of triviality and non-triviality.

The need to explain this duality provides some initial motivation for deflationism because deflationary views have an easier time meeting this demand than inflationary views do. The more important facet of the duality for motivating deflationism over inflationism is the trivial side, an aspect of truth-talk sometimes considered under the label “transparency”\textsuperscript{120}. Accounting for this is the main issue in my discussion here, but it is important to take the whole duality into account
for two reasons. The first is that even if one holds that truth-locutions never make a genuine semantic contribution to the content of an utterance, one still must acknowledge that not all uses of the notion of truth are transparent.\textsuperscript{121} This is clear in Frege’s second example. In failing to give non-transparent instances of truth-talk equal weight one might place too much emphasis on certain aspects of truth-talk, sending one’s analysis off in the wrong direction.\textsuperscript{122} Plus, it seems clear that claims like (2.2), and to any even greater extent quantificational utterances like

\begin{equation}
\text{(2.6) Everything Bob says is true,}
\end{equation}

are really the more useful and important instances of truth-talk.\textsuperscript{123} But the way that truth-talk functions in claims like (2.2) and (2.6) precludes them from being trivial expansions of other utterances in the sense being discussed here (being an \textit{a priori}, necessary equivalence).

The second reason for starting with the whole duality rather than just the trivial side is that the non-trivial instances are what support developing a deflationary account of truth-talk over simply eliminating this way of talking. If all uses of truth-locutions were trivial, there would be no real point to truth-talk, other than, perhaps, fulfilling certain pragmatic purposes like acknowledging one’s unoriginality or adding a kind of emphasis to one’s point.\textsuperscript{124} But since truth-talk would then have no distinctive purpose, no function served by it alone, it would probably make sense to eliminate it in order to avoid philosophical confusion. Noting the non-trivial uses of truth-locutions, especially those in quantificational claims like (2.6), establishes a

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{121}Cf. Tarski (1944), p. 359 on how “true” is not directly eliminable from certain instances of truth-talk.
\textsuperscript{122}This sort of criticism might be made of the (strong) redundancy theory which is led by an emphasis on cases like (2.1) to conclude that all instances of truth-talk can be translated into utterances whose sole truth-locution is the supposedly redundant sentential connective “it is true that…” . But without the introduction of new logical devices like substitutional quantifiers and sentential variables, such a view will not be able to handle the more interesting instances of truth-talk.
\end{flushright}
need for at least a deflationary notion of truth and thus favors deflationism over strict eliminativism.

i) The Split-Function Approach

Truth-talk’s duality motivates deflationism over inflationism because fitting this duality into the broader context of our linguistic and inferential practices involves less of an explanatory burden on a deflationary view than on an inflationary one. This might not be obvious since it might seem as if there is an easy explanation of the duality available to inflationary accounts as well. This putative explanation involves what I call the “split-function” approach. This approach associates truth-talk’s duality with the distinction between the forms of Frege’s two examples:

A) It is true that p
B) N is true.

In generating the instances of these two forms, the schematic variable “p” in A) gets filled in with a sentence (here, of English); the variable “N” in B) gets filled in with a noun phrase (a name, description, or quantificational expression, here also of English). On the split-function approach this distinction in surface form is taken to mark a difference in logical form and thus to distinguish two different kinds of truth-locutions. Truth-talk’s duality is said to be a consequence of the different ways these two types of truth-locutions function logically. The truth-locution employed in type-A) utterances (“it is true that…”) is said to function logically as an operator; it

\[\text{\footnote{The crude performativist account of truth-talk mentioned in footnote 45 might be an example of a view maintaining this, but it is unclear that anyone really holds a view of this sort.}}\]
is considered a unary, sentential truth-functional connective. In contrast, the truth-locution employed in type-B) utterances (“...is true”) is claimed to function logically as a predicate.

This approach explains truth-talk’s duality as follows. The expression “it is true that...” turns out to be a trivial—perhaps even vacuous or redundant—operator. It applies the “null” truth-function, the one that maps true sentences directly to true sentences and false sentences directly to false sentences under all conditions. Prefixing a (declarative English) sentence with “it is true that...” yields a sentence necessarily equivalent to the original. This operator is even more innocuous than (classical) double negation, which at least can be thought of as a kind of two-step switching—first “off” then back “on”. Anyone who understands the operation of the expression “it is true that...” knows that a sentence of the form “it is true that p” is necessarily equivalent to the sentence that goes in for “p”. Because this knowledge is simply a matter of their grasp of how the operator “it is true that...” functions, the two are a priori equivalent.

Further, as nothing but a truth-functional sentential connective, the contribution this operator makes to the content of an utterance employing it is completely exhausted by its contribution to the truth-conditions of the whole utterance. But, in a sense, “it is true that...” makes no contribution to the truth-conditions of a type-A) utterance. Thus, these utterances have


126 Although the split-function approach might be inspired by the passage from Frege quoted above, Frege does not seem to hold it himself. He says of his first example “nothing seems to be added to the thought by my ascribing to it the property of truth” indicating that he takes type-A) utterances to involve a predicative truth-locution. He also does not seem to limit transparency to claims beginning with the expression “it is true that...” as illustrated in his claim that an utterance of “The thought, that 5 is a prime number, is true” says nothing more than an utterance of “5 is a prime number.” (Frege (1892), p. 64.) Cf. Soames (1999), pp. 46-47.

127 This is not meant as an endorsement of the thesis that content in general consists in or is fundamentally explained in terms of truth-conditions. But the use or conceptual role of truth-functional connectives is just to make the content of what they produce depend on the contents of what they are applied to in a way that can be expressed in terms of their contributions to the truth-conditions of the whole. Even a deflationist can allow that a statement of truth-conditions expresses the content of an utterance while denying that such a statement is in any way explanatory of why it has the content it does.
the same contents as those the sentences that go in for “p” have by themselves.\textsuperscript{128} The operator “it is true that…” thus appears to be not only trivial in the sense of producing sentences that are necessarily and \textit{a priori} equivalent to the sentences it is applied to, but to be redundant as well.

Matters are different, however, with the expression “…is true”. Functioning as a predicate rather than an operator from sentences to sentences, this truth-locution is obviously not redundant in the way that “it is true that…” appears to be. As is frequently noted, simply dropping the predicate “…is true” from a type-B) utterance does not leave something equivalent behind since in these cases this sort of direct elimination takes us from a sentence to a noun phrase.\textsuperscript{129} Plus, there does not seem to be any easy way to translate certain type-B) utterances (e.g., quantificational utterances like (2.6)) into utterances whose only truth-locution is the redundant “it is true that…”.\textsuperscript{130} In addition to not being redundant, uses of the predicate “…is true” do not (in general) exhibit the sort of triviality that the operator “it is true that…” does. Most utterances employing the predicate are not \textit{a priori} and necessarily equivalent to any utterances lacking the truth-locution.

To see this, consider the fact that knowledge of how “…is true” functions along with an understanding of all the other concepts involved is not sufficient for knowledge of the biconditional

\begin{equation}
(2.7) \text{Goldbach’s conjecture is true iff every even number greater than 2 is the sum of two primes.}
\end{equation}

\textsuperscript{\textit{128}} The split-function approach is thus naturally thought of as agreeing with Frege that sentences of the form “it is true that p” have exactly the same content as the sentences that go in for “p”. However, content redundancy is not necessarily the explanation of the necessary and \textit{a priori} nature of the equivalences between them rather than a co-consequence of the truth-locution’s functioning.


\textsuperscript{\textit{130}} The split-function approach is thus associated with a weak redundancy theory of truth-talk. This theory maintains that the truth-locutions in utterances of form A) are redundant, but that those in utterances of form B) are not. The contrast is with a strong redundancy theory, which claims that all truth-talk is redundant because every instance of it can be translated into some utterance that uses only the first sort of truth-locution, which is just a redundant operator. See Hugly and Sayward (1992).
One must also know that Goldbach’s conjecture is that every even number greater than 2 is the sum of two primes, and this is something one knows only a posteriori. So the biconditional is not a priori, in contrast with the biconditional

\[(2.8) \text{ It is true that every even number greater than 2 is the sum of two primes iff every even number greater than 2 is the sum of two primes.}\]

In addition, if “Goldbach’s conjecture” is not a rigid designator, then (2.7) is also only a contingent material equivalence. Thus, there being these two different kinds of truth-locutions generates a duality in truth-talk because the functioning of one makes its use trivial, while the functioning of the other makes its use non-trivial.

If the sort of split-function account just outlined worked it would provide an inflationist with an easy explanation of truth-talk’s duality. The problem for inflationism is that the logical distinction between truth-locutions that this approach postulates is difficult to fit with certain of our inferential practices. For instance, we take inferences of the following form to be valid.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{It is true that crabapples are edible} \\
\text{What Bob said is that crabapples are edible} \\
\text{Therefore, what Bob said is true}
\end{align*}
\]

Accepting this inference as valid requires taking the that-clauses in the first and second premises the same way. The most plausible way of understanding the that-clause in the second premise is

\[\text{Note that this is the case even if “Goldbach’s conjecture” is taken to be a rigid designator. The identity claim would then state an a posteriori necessity.}\]

\[\text{I should note that the split-function approach is not necessarily inflationist. One can recognize a truth-locution as non-trivial, in the sense of it not generating utterances that are necessarily and a priori equivalent to certain utterances that lack it, while still maintaining that the way that truth-talk functions makes the instances of the equivalence schema (employing specifically truth-talk of form A)) fundamental. For instance, even on a Tarski-style account of truth-talk that is combined with a deflationary theory of reference (in the way mentioned in Chapter 1), biconditionals like (2.7) are not a priori, while the instances of (ES), being fundamental, are. So a deflationary view based loosely on Tarski’s work could also accept the operator account of the truth-locution “it is true that…” given above to generate a deflationary split-function account of truth-talk’s duality. The advantage of a deflationary view, however, is that it does not have to explain the duality this way.}\]

\[\text{Horwich (1998), pp. 39, 125. Horwich clearly rejects a split-function account of truth-talk.}\]
as functioning as a referential expression.\textsuperscript{134} Thus, if the expression “it is true that…” functioned fundamentally as a redundant operator and did not involve the use of a predicate ostensibly to describe something denoted by a that-clause, the validity of this inference would be challenged since it would involve equivocation on the linguistic fragment “that crabapples are edible”.\textsuperscript{135}

One might attempt to account for the validity of the above inference in the context of the split-function account of truth-talk by viewing this presentation of the argument as an enthymeme. Fitting such an account with the preferred reading of the second premise would require deriving

\begin{enumerate}
  \item[(2.9)] That crabapples are edible is true
\end{enumerate}

as a separate claim in the inference. Because the split-function approach holds that the that-clause in (2.9) functions differently from the that-clause in the first premise of the inference, the derivation of (2.9) will require a suppressed premise of the form

\begin{enumerate}
  \item[(2.10)] It is true that crabapples are edible,
\end{enumerate}


and

\begin{enumerate}
  \item[(2.11)] Crabapples are edible iff that crabapples are edible is true.
\end{enumerate}

The full inference would proceed in something like the following way.

\begin{enumerate}
  \item It is true that crabapples are edible
  \item Therefore, crabapples are edible
  \item Crabapples are edible iff that crabapples are edible is true
  \item Therefore, that crabapples are edible is true
  \item What Bob said is that crabapples are edible
  \item Therefore, what Bob said is true
  \item However, such an account of the inference’s validity is implausible. To begin with, it maintains that the two utterances
\end{enumerate}

\textsuperscript{134}I will say more about the motivations for this reading of that-clauses below.

\textsuperscript{135}Hugly and Sayward (1992), p. 28 make a similar point in an argument for the opposite conclusion. In their example the second premise is of the form “Bob believes that crabapples are edible,” and they argue from the claim that the that-clause in this premise is not a referential expression to the conclusion that the truth-locution in the first premise is not predicative. One person’s modus ponens may be another’s modus tollens, but their arguments for denying the that-clause is a referential expression are weaker than those for claiming it is. Again, I will say more about this below.
It is true that crabapples are edible

That crabapples are edible is true

have a more complex relationship than that of being trivial syntactic variants of one another, a relationship that makes them inter-deducible only indirectly through a derivation of

Crabapples are edible

and the biconditional (2.11). In addition, this account of the inference’s validity brings with it the burden of providing a separate explanation for why we are entitled to biconditionals of the same form as (2.11).\(^{136}\)

One possible move in the face of the first objection is to acquiesce and say that utterances like (2.9) and (2.10), that is, utterances with the two surface forms

A) It is true that p

A’) That p is true

are just trivial syntactic variants of one another. This, however, generates the question of how they are both to be understood. The more plausible way of understanding them essentially amounts to giving up the split-function account of truth-talk’s duality and accepting the original inference above as complete and valid on its face. This follows from the point argued by Stephen Schiffer that the need to account for inferences like

I believe that crabapples are edible
Therefore, there is something I believe.

Bob asserted that crabapples are edible
Therefore, there is something Bob asserted
I believe that crabapples are edible
Bob asserted that crabapples are edible
Therefore, what Bob asserted is what I believe

\(^{136}\)On the split-function approach we are entitled to biconditionals of the alternative form “p iff it is true that p” in virtue of the trivial equivalence (perhaps even synonymy) between the two sides that follows from the functioning of “it is true that…”.
gives us independent reason for treating that-clauses as designative noun phrases (at least apparently). The first two cases give particularly strong reason for this since they involve quantifying into that-clause-positions, and thus indicate an ontological commitment to a kind of thing stood for by this kind of expression.

Treating that-clauses in this way would make type-A\(^2\) utterances amount to special cases of utterances with the form

$$B) \text{N is true,}$$

namely those in which the designative noun phrase that goes in for the “N” is a that-clause. If type-A) utterances are just syntactic variants of type-A\(^2\) utterances, then type-A) utterances are also really utterances that use that-clauses to designate things and describe them with the predicate “…is true”. So on this view there is no split in function; all instances of truth-talk really function predicatively at the fundamental level. On this approach, the validity of the original inference would be easily explained, but now no account of truth-talk’s duality is offered.

One might attempt to hold onto the split-function explanation of the duality while claiming that type-A) and type-A\(^2\) utterances are trivial syntactic variants of one another by

\[\text{137 Schiffer (1996), p. 150.}\]

\[\text{138 Davidson (1990), p. 283 notes in passing the possibility of reading type-A) utterances predicatively rather than as involving a truth-functional connective. This can be done on the model of “It is true, what Oscar said” or “She is happy, the actress who got the part.” (Horwich (1998), p. 16, fn. 1; Hugly and Sayward (1992), p. 27.) I should also note that taking that-clauses as designative expressions does not necessitate interpreting the expression “…is true” as a predicate. Brandom accepts this reading of that-clauses, but rejects a predicative understanding of “…is true”. See the discussion of Brandom’s views in Chapter 3.}\]

\[\text{139 This is not to say that the expression “it is true that…” is not a sentential connective syntactically. Clearly it is since type-A) sentences can be formed by adding the expression “it is true that…” in front of a sentence. However, on the present view, this possibility does not reflect the underlying logical form of type-A) sentences. At the fundamental level, this syntactic connective is constructed from the logically predicative truth-location in such a way that the syntactic combination of “it is true that…” and a sentence results in an utterance in which, ostensibly, something picked out by the that-clause thus formed is described via the use of a predicate. The same will hold for any syntactic sentential connectives of the form “it is F that…” (e.g., “it is not the case that…”, “it is surprising that…”, etc.). Our inferential practices with sentences employing such expressions indicates that we treat them as involving the use of the predicate “…is F” to describe something denoted by a that-clause.}\]
saying that neither functions predicatively, thereby contrasting both with type-B) utterances. However, this would require rejecting the view of that-clauses as designative expressions, which would generate a need for an alternative account of inferences like the three given above as indication that that-clauses do function referentially. This would also invalidate the seemingly valid (in fact, seemingly trivial\textsuperscript{140}) inference from “That crabapples are edible is true” to “That crabapples are edible has the property of truth.” In addition, we would need an alternative account of the second premise of the original inference and of our talk of the intentional attitudes in general, one that does not view such talk as ostensibly about relations between people and the referents of that-clauses. This option thus appears to involve an even greater explanatory burden.

Alternatively, one might attempt to retain the split-function account of truth-talk’s duality by biting the bullet with regard to the first objection and claiming that type-A) utterances and type-A’) utterances are not syntactic variants of one another. Beyond its intuitive implausibility, this move leads to the second objection, that pertaining to the problem of justifying biconditionals like

\[(2.11) \text{Crabapples are edible iff that crabapples are edible is true.}\]

If one attempts to do this by claiming that the right-hand side of this biconditional, although not a trivial variant of a type-A) utterance, is also trivially equivalent to the left-hand side, this goes against the central thesis of the split-function account of truth-talk’s duality.

On the approach being considered, it is not just in utterances with surface form A) that truth-locutions function trivially; now the truth-talk component of any type-A’) utterance is also a trivial addition to the sentence that goes in for the variable “p”. But we have already seen that, regardless of their relationship to type-A) utterances, type-A’) utterances are best understood as special cases of type-B) utterances. This would mean that some type-B) utterances exhibit the same sort of strong equivalence to utterances lacking truth-locutions as that exhibited by type-A)
utterances. But then the duality of truth-talk does not map neatly onto the distinction between utterance forms that the split-function approach takes as the core of the duality’s explanation.

As a last attempt to hold onto the split-function account of truth-talk’s duality, one might deny that type-A) and type-A’) utterances are syntactic variants of one another and also deny that the right and left-hand sides of biconditionals like (2.11) are trivially equivalent. This move is *prima facie* implausible since it involves claiming that

(2.9) That crabapples are edible is true

is not trivially equivalent to

(1.1) Crabapples are edible

while at the same time acknowledging that

(2.10) It is true that crabapples are edible

is. But the inferences between (1.1) and either (2.9) or (2.10) seem equally necessary and *a priori*. Beyond the issue of intuitions, however, someone who opts for this reply makes the burden of explaining why we are entitled to biconditionals like (2.11) a substantial one. This kind of biconditional is needed for the split-function approach to explain inferences like the first one considered above, but denying a trivial connection between the two sides of (2.11) raises the issue of its justification in a demanding way.

Perhaps some sort of Tarski-style approach (one modified to provide an account of the use of the truth-predicate in combinations with that-clauses) might explain why biconditionals like (2.11) can be used in inferences. However, because Tarski-style accounts explain truth-talk in terms of primitive denotation, an account of this sort really just relocates the entitlement question to why we are entitled to the instances of

141 Ibid., p. 159 claims that our linguistic practices make “That a is F is true” pleonastically (i.e., trivially) equivalent to “a is F.”
(R) $(\forall x) \, \text{“} b \text{” refers (if at all) to } x \text{ iff } x = b$.\(^{142}\)

The simplest explanation for why all the instances of (R) hold is that they are fundamental. Combined with this thesis, a Tarski-style account of truth-talk would provide the biconditionals needed to fit the split-function approach with our inferential practices, but, as explained in Chapter 1, the resulting account of truth-talk would be deflationary. If an inflationist appeals to a Tarski-style approach in order to explain why we are entitled to biconditionals like (2.11), his explanation will have to include a substantive account of reference, one explaining the instances of schema (R) in terms of the underlying nature of the reference relation. This is a much greater explanatory burden than that involved in the deflationary Tarski-style account just described. Thus, even if one could underwrite the split-function account of truth-talk’s duality via an appeal to Tarski-style methods, this would not detract from the initial motivation truth-talk’s duality provides for deflationism. Even in the context of this kind of this strategy, deflationary accounts of truth-talk have an explanatory advantage over inflationary accounts.\(^{143}\)

ii) Duality and Deflationism

The real advantage deflationism has over inflationism is that deflationary views can explain truth-talk’s duality in a much simpler way that completely rejects the split-function approach, and thus avoids all of the complications and implausible assumptions it requires. In rejecting the split-function approach, deflationary accounts of truth-talk are free to endorse the most straightforward explanation of why the inference

\[^{142}\]See Field (1972) and Putnam (1978), pp. 10-13 for explanations of how a Tarski-style account analyzes truth-talk in terms of primitive-denotation-talk.

\[^{143}\]It is important to keep in mind that I am considering only the question of initial motivation here. There could, of course, be other reasons why a deflationary account of truth-talk or reference-talk is inadequate, thereby making the additional explanatory burden involved in an inflationary view mandatory.
It is true that crabapples are edible.
What Bob said is that crabapples are edible.
Therefore, what Bob said is true.

is valid. The that-clauses in the first and second premises both function as designative expressions. The first premise is therefore just a trivial syntactic variant of the claim

(2.9) That crabapples are edible is true.

Generally speaking, any type-A) utterance is a trivial syntactic variant of the corresponding type-A’) utterance; really there is just one class of utterances: the type-A/A’) utterances. These utterances are trivial expansions of the sentences they embed, but not because they employ a special, trivial truth-locution, one different from that employed in type-B) utterances like

(2.2) My conjecture is true.

In terms of the logical functioning of the truth-locutions employed, there is no difference between type-A/A’) utterances and type-B) utterances. Logically speaking, truth-talk is univocal. This makes the most sense of our inferential practices involving instances of truth-talk.

Having rejected the split-function approach, deflationary views must explain truth-talk’s duality in some other way. The real issue now is accounting for the trivial side of the duality since the notion of a separate, trivial truth-locution is being abandoned. An attractively simple way of explaining the trivial side of truth-talk’s duality is to reverse the general direction of explanation employed by the split-function approach (and also by the redundancy theory). This direction explains the trivial equivalence of certain instances of truth-talk to utterances that lack the truth-locution they employ in terms of the triviality of the truth-locution. Having concluded that there is only one kind of truth-locution and that not all uses of it are trivial, we can explain the instances in which it is by starting instead with the triviality of the instances of the equivalence schema.
(ES) That p is true iff p.\textsuperscript{144}

Once these equivalences are recognized as at least necessary and \textit{a priori}, if not something like analytic, it becomes clear why the truth-locutions in type-A/A\textsuperscript{'} utterances amount to trivial additions to the sentences that go in for the variable “p”. The inference from any declarative (English?) sentence “p” to “that p is true” (and \textit{vice versa}) is trivial in virtue of there being a necessary and \textit{a priori} equivalence between them—the relevant instance of (ES).

The difference between type-A/A\textsuperscript{'} utterances and type-B) utterances, then, is not a deep, logical difference. The difference is simply that cases of the latter, for example,

(1.2) What Bob said is true

(2.2) My conjecture is true

do not figure in any necessary and \textit{a priori} equivalences with utterances lacking the truth-locutions they employ. Any equivalence that utterances of this sort appear in could only be attained from the utterances with the help of additional, \textit{a posteriori} premises. We could derive a biconditional like

(2.5) My conjecture is true iff crabapples are edible

from (2.2) only if we also had as a premise

(2.12) My conjecture is that crabapples are edible

(and the relevant instance of (ES)). Since the additional premise needed is not trivial (most importantly, not \textit{a priori}) the equivalences obtained will not be trivial in the way the instances of (ES) are. This difference makes for the duality truth-talk exhibits.

I should acknowledge that there is nothing inherent to this approach that prevents inflationary accounts of truth-talk from employing it. What I claim is just that this approach fits better with our linguistic and inferential practices and that deflationary views can meet the

\textsuperscript{144}Having argued for a referential reading of that-clauses, and a reading of type-A) utterances as trivial syntactic variants of type-A\textsuperscript{'} utterances, I will henceforth use the schema for the latter (“That p is true”) in
demands of this strategy more easily than inflationary views. The reason for this is that the main
demand of this approach is an explanation of why the instances of \( (ES) \) are trivial equivalences.
Deflationism has a distinct advantage over inflationism on this front because deflationary views
take on a considerably lighter explanatory burden. The central commitment of a deflationary
account of truth-talk is captured by the \textit{“Functioning Makes Fundamental” Thesis}:

\textbf{Functioning Makes Fundamental Thesis (FMFT)}: Truth-talk’s logico-linguistic functioning is such that it gives the
instances of \( (ES) \) fundamental status.

For a deflationist, the instances of \( (ES) \) neither require nor admit of any explanation at a “deeper”
level. These equivalences are conceptually and explanatorily basic (if not logically basic as well),
and this is what makes them \textit{a priori} and necessary.

Being conceptually basic makes the instances of \( (ES) \) \textit{a priori} because these equivalences
amount to something like an implicit definition of “true”. There is no explicit definition of “true”
in more elementary terms; there is no underlying meaning of “true” in virtue of which the
instances of \( (ES) \) hold. To the extent that “true” has a meaning, it has no more than what is
captured by these equivalences. Because these biconditionals more or less give the meaning of
“true”, \textsuperscript{145} anyone who understands the concept of truth will know, simply in virtue of his grasp of
the concept, that the instances of \( (ES) \) hold. Hence these biconditionals are known \textit{a priori}. The
near definitional status of the instances of \( (ES) \) also explains why they hold necessarily. Their
necessity is further underwritten by deflationism’s contention that that these equivalences are
explanatorily basic in the sense that they explain all of our uses of the notion of truth. Since the
instances of \( (ES) \) are the fundamental explainers of truth-talk, they account for our uses of this
talk in describing any possible world. Therefore, they must hold for every possible world,
making them necessary. Hence, the fundamental status that deflationary accounts of truth-talk

\textsuperscript{145}Cf. Soames (1999), p. 23 and Alston (1996), p. 27. The “more or less” comes in because of the
possibility of instances of \( (ES) \) formed from Liar sentences.
give the instances of (ES) makes them trivial in the sense relevant for explaining truth-talk’s duality.

Denied the split-function approach, it is unclear what an inflationist can say in explaining why the instances of (ES) are trivial equivalences. These biconditionals are not considered fundamental on an inflationary view; they hold in virtue of the underlying nature of the property attributed with the expression “…is true”, or at least in virtue of the natures of more fundamental properties picked out by more basic concepts in terms of which the concept of truth gets analyzed. An explanation in these terms of why the instances of (ES) are all trivial would require substantive theorizing, including analyses of the property and concept of truth and an account of the particular way that-clauses refer and the nature of what they denote. It might be possible to provide analyses of these things that establish the necessity and a prioricity of the instances of (ES) (although I think a prioricity will be especially difficult to accommodate), but it all adds up to a much greater explanatory burden. Deflationary views can account for truth-talk’s duality much more easily, so this duality provides initial incentive for developing a deflationary account of truth-talk.

**TRUTH-TALK AND PARADOX**

The second deflation-motivating feature that truth-talk exhibits is a prima facie propensity for paradox. In my discussion here I follow Alfred Tarski, Charles Chihara, Vann McGee, Hartry Field and others in assuming that ordinary (or “naïve”) truth-talk does allow for the formation of paradoxical utterances.\(^\text{146}\) This is essentially to acknowledge a distinction between the diagnostic problem of the paradoxes and the preventative problem: the explanation

of why certain instances of truth-talk appear paradoxical will not necessarily show the inconsistency to be illusory.\textsuperscript{147} Proposed solutions to the semantic paradoxes therefore amount to instances of a particular way of addressing the \textit{treatment} problem,\textsuperscript{148} one that recommends replacing our ordinary notion of truth with a “scientifically respectable” concept of that does not give rise to contradictions. A thorough discussion of the semantic paradoxes and the technical work that has been done on them is beyond the scope of this project. My aim in this section is much more limited: I want to explain the basic details of how truth-talk’s functioning gives it a capacity for paradox, and to summarize some of what has been said about the extent and seriousness of the resulting problem.

Recognition of the problem’s extent serves as the basis for my claim that this aspect of truth-talk provides incentive for deflationism. Roughly, the idea is that truth-talk’s propensity for paradox is broader and more tenacious than it might first appear, and the difference in presuppositions brought to the treatment problem by inflationary views and deflationary views makes for an important difference with respect to what counts as an adequate response to the problem. It is incumbent on inflationary views to provide analyses of the property and/or concept of truth that do not involve an inconsistency. Truth-talk must be rendered consistent; putatively paradoxical instances of truth-talk must be explained in such a way that they do not lead to contradiction (these instances turning out to be illegitimate or semantically defective in some sense). From a deflationary perspective, however, elimination of inconsistency is not the only adequate way of dealing with truth-talk’s propensity for paradox (though, obviously, any such elimination would qualify as an adequate response to the problem). On (most\textsuperscript{149}) deflationary

\textsuperscript{147}See Chihara (1979), pp. 590-591 on the diagnostic problem/preventative problem distinction.

\textsuperscript{148}See Ibid., p. 616 on the treatment problem.

\textsuperscript{149}Paul Horwich’s view (as presented in Horwich (1998)) is a notable exception. I discuss this further in Chapter 3.
views, a solution of this sort is supererogatory; fulfilling a less demanding task qualifies as a sufficient response to the treatment problem. Because deflationism makes dealing with truth-talk’s putative propensity for paradox easier (or perhaps even possible at all), this aspect of truth-talk provides initial incentive for deflationism.

i) The Significance of the Liar

Chapter 1 contains a brief examination of how ordinary truth-talk allows for the formation of a semantic paradox known as the Liar. The most basic formulation of this paradox is the “simple Liar” sentence

(SL) This sentence is false.

This presentation of the Liar has the merit of making the paradox easy to see. If (SL) is true, then it says how things are. But since (SL) says of itself that it is false, this means that (SL) being false is how things are. So (SL) is false if it is true. However, if (SL) is false, then since this is what (SL) says, things are as (SL) says they are, which means it is true. So (SL) is true if it is false. Thus (SL) is true iff (SL) is false. This is an inconsistency if not already a contradiction.

For present purposes, however, (SL) is not an optimal way of presenting the Liar. This formulation has two features that limit its value in a discussion of how the Liar paradox bears on deflationism as I characterize it. First, (SL)’s intrinsic self-referentiality is potentially distracting since this feature plays an important role in making this sentence paradoxical, but it does not figure in semantic paradox generally. Second, (SL)’s attribution of truth directly to a sentence makes it difficult to relate to the schema

(ES) That p is true iff p.

This in turn makes it difficult to relate the Liar paradox to deflationism characterized in terms of the thesis

(FMFT) Truth-talk’s logico-linguistic functioning is such that it gives the instances of (ES) fundamental status.
Truth-talk’s propensity for paradox can be brought to bear on an evaluation of
deflationism’s prospects because neither of these features of (SL) is an essential factor in the
generation of paradox. Mistaking the intrinsic self-reference employed in (SL) as necessary for paradox might lead to an underestimation of the extent of truth-talk’s propensity for paradox. It is therefore important to show the insignificance of this aspect of the example since recognizing the relevance of this aspect of truth-talk depends on realizing its extent. The irrelevance of intrinsic self-reference is shown by the availability of Liar sentences that do not involve it. Such sentences are easily generated; all one has to do to arrive at one is replace the expression “this” in (SL) with a definite description specifying a set of conditions satisfied by the resulting sentence itself. So, for instance, (SL) can be transformed into

(L) The sentence labeled “(L)” is false.

(L) is paradoxical because like (SL) it “says of itself” that it is false. But unlike (SL), (L) refers to itself only accidentally rather than essentially. It is important to recognize that the move from (SL) to (L) replaces intrinsic self-reference with extrinsic, empirical conditions that (L) satisfies only contingently (the label “(L)” not being part of the sentence so labeled). So an utterance’s paradoxical nature does not have to be a matter of anything intrinsic to the utterance.

This is perhaps easier to see in a case where the sentence’s satisfaction of the specified conditions is not explicit in the presentation of the sentence. Consider circumstances in which I go into a classroom and write the following sentence (without the label) on the clean blackboard:

(2.13) The only sentence written on the blackboard in Room 101 is false.

\[150\]

\[151\] Blackburn and Simmons (1999), p. 23 considers an example like this.

\[150\] Truth-talk has a related ability to generate utterances that “say of themselves” that they are true, for example, the Truthteller

(TT) The sentence labeled “(TT)” is true.

(TT) is problematic because its semantic status cannot be determined. Although not paradoxical, these sentences suffer from the same general problem as Liar sentences. (Kripke (1975), pp. 693-4.)

\[151\] Blackburn and Simmons (1999), p. 23 considers an example like this.
If the classroom I went into is Room 101, then the sentence on the board amounts to a Liar sentence (it “says of itself” that it is false). However, if I went into a classroom other than Room 101, then the sentence I wrote on the board could be straightforwardly true or false, depending on what is written on the blackboard in Room 101. Whether (2.13) is paradoxical or not depends on whether it satisfies the conditions it specifies in the definite description it employs, and this is an entirely empirical matter open to discovery either way. The possibility of instances of truth-talk like (2.13) being paradoxical indicates that this potential is not restricted to unusual or specially contrived empirical cases like (L).

In fact, the possibility of paradox extends even further than has been suggested thus far. Not only is intrinsic self-reference unnecessary for paradox, even the kind of contingent self-reference resulting from an utterance’s own satisfaction of the conditions it specifies in a definite description is unnecessary. Consider the case of (2.13) again, but now stipulate that the classroom I went into is Room 103, not Room 101. I said above that in these circumstances (2.13) could be straightforwardly true or false, depending on what is written on the board in Room 101. It could be either true or false, but this disjunction is not the only possibility. Even though (2.13) is written on the board in Room 103 and so does not refer to itself (i.e., it does not satisfy the conditions specified in its definite description), it is still possible for (2.13) to turn out to be paradoxical. This would result if the only sentence written on the board in Room 101 were

(2.14) The only sentence written on the blackboard in Room 103 is true.

Under the conditions just described, (2.13) and (2.14) would form a paradoxical loop. This can be made more explicit by presenting the sentences with their numerical labels and replacing the definite descriptions the two sentences employ with those labels. The result is

(2.13) (2.14) is false

152 I leave it open whether (2.13) is false or neither true nor false if nothing is written on the board in Room 101. Even on the latter approach (2.13) is not paradoxical in these circumstances.
(2.14) (2.13) is true

The paradox arises as follows. If (2.13) is true, then, given what it says, (2.14) is false. Since what (2.14) says is that (2.13) is true, this means that it is false that (2.13) is true. Since it is therefore not the case that (2.13) is true, it must be false.\(^\text{153}\) So (2.13) is false if it is true. But if (2.13) is false, then it is false that (2.14) is false. It is therefore not the case that (2.14) is false, which means that it is true. Since (2.14) is true, it is true that (2.13) is true, so (2.13) is true. It follows that (2.13) is true iff (2.13) is false.\(^\text{154}\) Thus an instance of truth-talk can turn out to generate a contradiction even if it does not refer to itself at all, either intrinsically or contingently via satisfying conditions it specifies itself.

The forgoing indicates that truth-talk’s propensity for paradox is not an isolated, esoteric aspect of this way of talking. Saul Kripke points out that because of the way extrinsic, empirical features can be what make an utterance paradoxical

many, probably most, of our ordinary assertions about truth and falsity are liable, if the empirical facts are extremely unfavorable, to exhibit paradoxical features.\(^\text{155}\)

The moral: an adequate theory must allow our statements involving the notion of truth to be risky: they risk being paradoxical if the empirical facts are extremely (and unexpectedly) unfavorable.\(^\text{156}\)

So, even if most instances of truth-talk are not actually paradoxical, most still possess a propensity for paradox since nothing about the utterances themselves prevents them from being paradoxical. Truth-talk’s propensity for paradox cannot be treated as a triviality—an amusing little puzzle, restricted to some small number of easily identifiable and isolable cases. This feature must be treated as a central factor in determining how truth-talk should be understood.

\(^{153}\)I assume bivalence at this stage of the discussion.

\(^{154}\)Parallel results can be derived for (2.14).

\(^{155}\)Kripke (1975), p. 691. The original is in italics.
Because it eliminates the distraction of intrinsic self-reference, presenting the Liar paradox by means of (L) instead of (SL) incorporates some recognition of the extent and significance of this issue into consideration of its bearing on deflationism. But (L) retains the other incongruous aspect of (SL); it still attributes truth directly to a sentence. If deflationism is understood in terms of (FMFT), consideration of how the Liar bears on deflationism’s prospects requires a formulation of the paradox that generates a contradiction in combination with (ES). Such a formulation is attained by replacing (L)’s attribution of truth directly to a sentence with an attribution of truth to what the sentence expresses.\textsuperscript{157} So (L) is replaced with

\[(L') \text{ The sentence labeled “(L’)” expresses something false.}\]

As explained in Chapter 1, when (L’) is substituted in for “p” in the schema

\[(ES) \text{ That } p \text{ is true iff } p,\]

making a few basic assumptions will generate the inconsistent (if not contradictory) biconditional

\[1.15 \text{ What the sentence labeled “(L’)” expresses is true iff what the sentence labeled “(L’)” expresses is false.}\]

Because the instances of the equivalence schema are intuitively the basic principles governing the ordinary notion of truth, the Liar paradox confronts deflationary and inflationary approaches to truth-talk alike; both positions have to deal with truth-talk’s propensity for paradox somehow. This commonality is often taken to indicate that the issue of paradox can be set aside in the debate between deflationists and inflationists, the assumption being that since the two sides share the problem they can share the solution to it.\textsuperscript{158} What is sometimes claimed, however, is that truth-talk’s propensity for paradox tells in favor of inflationism since deflationary accounts of

\textsuperscript{156}Ibid, p. 692.

\textsuperscript{157}One of the assumptions I am making here is that prefixing a declarative English sentence with “that” forms a referential term that ostensibly picks out what the sentence expresses. However, I do not mean to imply antecedent ontological assumptions about “things expressed by sentences”. In fact, the notion of what a sentence expresses should be determined by (and not a determiner of) an account of how that-clauses function. I say more about this in Chapter 6.
truth-talk are denied certain strategies for dealing with the Liar and therefore might be unable to do so.\footnote{I reject the first of these assumptions, but not because I endorse the second. Instead I turn the second sentiment on its head. I hold that the best strategy for dealing with truth-talk’s propensity for paradox involves rethinking what constitutes a solution to the problem it presents. If deflationism is at any disadvantage, it is only from the standard, more aggressive perspective on this issue, the one demanding that paradox be eliminated. However, there is reason to question whether this demand could ever be met while honoring the central aspects of truth-talk.}

\footnote{Horwich (1998), p. 42.}

\footnote{See Simmons (1999) and Blackburn and Simmons (1999), pp. 22-28.}

\footnote{Tarski (1944), pp. 349-352. This approach, like most attempted solutions, is directed at eliminating contradictions generated by certain attributions of truth to sentences. The parenthetical additions I have made are meant to point toward a version of this approach that fits with instances of truth-talk employing that-clauses, in particular, those whose instance of (ES) generates a contradiction. A version of this sort is}

ii) Attempted Eliminative Treatment

The past century witnessed an extensive amount of work aimed at eliminating truth-talk’s inconsistency, and it is likely that not all of it is compatible with deflationism. One attempt to eliminate paradox that is not beyond deflationism’s reach is the “traditional” approach to the Liar derived from Tarski’s work on defining the notion of truth for certain formalized languages. On this approach, consistency requires that no language rich enough to specify its own syntax contain its own truth-predicate. Rather, the truth-predicate applying to (what is expressed by) the sentences of a language is produced by a Tarski-style definition in an essentially richer meta-language (of which the object-language is a proper part).\footnote{Tarski (1944), pp. 349-352. This approach, like most attempted solutions, is directed at eliminating contradictions generated by certain attributions of truth to sentences. The parenthetical additions I have made are meant to point toward a version of this approach that fits with instances of truth-talk employing that-clauses, in particular, those whose instance of (ES) generates a contradiction. A version of this sort is}

This leads to an infinite hierarchy of languages (\(L_0, L_1, L_2, \ldots\)), each containing a separate truth-predicate (“\(true_0\)”, “\(true_1\)”, “\(true_2\)”,\ldots) that applies only to (what is expressed by) sentences of lower level languages. As a result, no paradoxical instances of truth-talk can be formulated. Because a Tarski-style truth-definition can
amount to either an inflationary or deflationary account of truth-talk (depending on what kind of account of denotation it is supplemented with), this approach to dealing with truth-talk’s propensity for paradox is available to both positions equally.

However, a deflationist can draw little solace from the fact that the traditional approach is as available to her as it is to an inflationist. The problem is that while this approach may be appropriate for formal languages, it cannot plausibly be taken as a description of the actual structure of any natural language, and the restrictions it imposes are too severe to serve as a reasonable recommendation for a revision of truth-talk. On the latter point, consider that these restrictions would block the account of truth-talk provided from applying to the claims made by the traditional approach itself. Since this approach makes general claims about the levels of the hierarchy of languages and the truth-predicates belonging to them, these claims themselves do not belong to any particular level in the hierarchy. As a result, no truth-predicate explained by this approach would apply to all the claims it makes, meaning that some of them could not be true.\footnote{See Porter (1995), p. 6 and Soames (1999), pp. 155-156.}

The traditional approach also faces a problem stemming from its assumption that every instance of truth-talk can be explicitly subscripted (or that the truth-predicate it uses can be) to a particular level in the hierarchy of languages. In many instances of truth-talk it cannot be known in advance what level of the hierarchy the claim must be set at, i.e., which level truth-predicate is required. Consider an utterance like

\[(2.6) \text{Everything Bob says is true.}\]

Which level truth-predicate (2.6) employs depends on the highest language level of Bob’s claims (which may in turn depend on the highest level of someone else’s claims, etc.).\footnote{Kripke (1975), pp. 695-696 and Soames (1999), p. 157.} In addition, it

more easily related to deflationism as I characterize it, and I do not think this modification affects the overall points made about this or other attempted solutions.


\footnote{Kripke (1975), pp. 695-696 and Soames (1999), p. 157.}
appears that some instances of truth-talk would not even be able to “seek their own level” because of their relationship to other instances of truth-talk. If Corey utters (2.6) and Bob utters

(2.15) Everything Corey says is true

it is unclear what should be said about the relative levels of these claims. Intuitively, they seem symmetrically placed, so it seems like we should say they are at the same language level. But then according to the hierarchical approach, (2.6) and (2.15) would each fail to attribute a truth-value what the other expresses. In that case, certain conditions could lead to counter-intuitive truth-value assignments. Imagine that, setting aside (2.15), all of Bob’s other claims are true and none of them employ the notion of truth. Imagine also that one of the claims Corey has made is

(2.16) Crabapples are not edible.

Since (2.16) is not about Bob’s claim and does not employ the notion of truth at all, it is natural to say that it is covered by Bob’s assertion of (2.15). Since (2.16) is false, this makes (2.15) false. However, since Corey’s assertion of (2.6) does not assess (2.15) and all of Bob’s other claims are true, (2.6) is true. This seems like the wrong result. But the problem cannot be fixed by taking (2.6) to be at a higher level in the hierarchy than (2.15) (or vice versa for that matter), since this maneuver will lead to other counter-intuitive results in other possible circumstances.163

Problems like these, along with the intuitive implausibility of an infinite hierarchy of languages and truth-predicates, have lead to the rejection of the traditional approach to dealing with truth-talk’s propensity for paradox. Newer approaches start with the idea that there is only one truth-predicate and that it is applicable to sentences containing the truth-predicate itself. The problem of paradox is addressed by supposing Liar sentences to be semantically defective in some way that blocks the reasoning that appears to lead to a contradiction. In the context of the discussion here, this raises two questions: are these newer approaches unavailable to deflationary views, and how successful are they in dealing with the problem? In many cases it is arguable that
the answer to the first question is, “Yes.” However, this should not be considered much of a disadvantage for deflationism since the answer to the second question is, “Not very.”

Because the problem with a Liar sentence seems to be that (what it expresses) turns out to be true iff it is false, a first pass on the nature of the semantic defect afflicting such a sentence might be to give up the principle of bivalence and view (what is expressed by) a Liar sentence like

(L’) The sentence labeled “(L’)” expresses something false

as suffering from a truth-value gap. Since relating truth-talk’s propensity for paradox to deflationism focuses on contradictions generated in combination with (ES), a natural way to implement this approach for present purposes is to bring the parenthetical portions of the above into the foreground and trace (L’)’s gappiness back to its expression of something that is neither true nor false.\(^\text{164}\) If what (L’) expresses is neither true nor false, the reasoning that would lead to a contradiction in combination with (ES) is blocked. Call this the “expressed gaps strategy”.

The expressed gaps strategy appears to be an approach to the Liar that is not available to deflationism, at least as a way of eliminating contradiction or inconsistency (without accepting some radical consequences anyway). The problem is that deflationary views do not seem to provide any way to make sense of the relevant sort of truth-value gaps. If a sentence being neither true nor false is a matter of it expressing something that is neither true nor false, then a fundamental statement of gappiness has the form

(2.17) That \(p\) is not true and not false.

An inflationary view might offer some way of attributing a truth-value gap to some significant declarative sentence subject to norms of correct utterance, as a noncognitivist might about

\(^{163}\)This example is based on Kripke (1975), pp. 696-697 and Soames (1999), pp. 157-158.
(2.18) Murder is wrong.

A proponent of such a view might hold, for instance, that what a declarative utterance expresses can be true or false only if what is expressed represents a possible state of affairs, and also maintain that “that murder is wrong” does not do this (perhaps for error-theoretic reasons).

Deflationism, on the other hand, seems to offer no way to allow what is expressed by any significant declarative sentence to be neither true nor false, since deflationary accounts of truth-talk take the instances of the equivalence schema to be fundamental. This means there is no conceptual or explanatory distance between the left and right-hand sides of the instances of

\[(ES) \text{ That } p \text{ is true iff } p.\]

Assuming that any significant declarative sentence can figure in a biconditional, there does not seem to be any way to maintain that what such a sentence expresses could fail to be truth-apt.\(^{165}\)

The only way a deflationist might hold onto truth-value gaps is to claim that what is expressed by certain sentences is neither true nor false, even though it is truth-apt. However, assuming a parallel account of “falsity-talk” attributing fundamental status to the instances of

\[(ES_F) \text{ That } p \text{ is false iff } \neg p,\]

the consequences of this position might be more radical than a solution to the Liar should be.

The expressed gap strategy is characterized above as explaining a sentence’s gappiness in terms of its expressing something that is neither true nor false. For example, regarding (2.18) as gappy amounts to holding

(2.19) That murder is wrong is not true and not false.

\(^{164}\)I am not sure anyone actually holds this view, but it may be close to a conception of gaps offered in Soames (1999), pp. 169-170, 193-194 where they are explained in term of propositions that cannot be evaluated for truth-value in certain circumstances.

\(^{165}\)This is similar to the view regarding truth-aptitude developed in Boghossian (1990), although there the issue is minimalism about truth-aptitude of sentences. Jackson, Oppy and Smith (1994) argues that a minimalist (i.e., deflationist) about truth does not have to endorse minimalism about truth-aptitude as well. The latter position does not seem to fit with my understanding of deflationism since my focus is the
However, the tight connection deflationary views see between the right and left-hand sides of the instances of (ES) and (ES$_F$) makes (2.19) equivalent to

(2.20) Murder is not wrong and it is not the case that murder is not wrong.

Because (2.20) is a contradiction, in the context of deflationism maintaining that (what is expressed by) some sentence suffers from a truth-value gap amounts to giving up classical logic by rejecting the law of non-contradiction

(LNC) $\neg(p \& \neg p)$.

Since the appeal to gaps itself leads to contradiction on a deflationary view, this strategy does not offer a deflationist the kind of solution desired. In this context the expressed gaps strategy just trades the contradiction generated by the Liar in for a different contradiction.

The deflationist’s situation is perhaps slightly improved if we adopt a weaker understanding of gappiness, one that does not involve asserting a counter-instance to what Michael Dummett calls “the principle of tertium non datur”,

(TND) No statement is neither true nor false.$^{166}$

Instead of declaring some sentence’s gappiness by asserting that what it expresses is neither true nor false, we might indicate its gappiness by denying that what it expresses is either true or false. The difference relies on the subtle distinction between rejecting TND and rejecting bivalence,

(BIV) Every statement is either true or false.

If we reject the latter but not the former, then claiming that (2.18) is gappy involves denying that what it expresses is either true or false, as in

(2.21) It is not the case that that murder is wrong is either true or false.

Given the fundamental status deflationism attributes to the instances of (ES) and (ES$_F$), for a deflationist (2.21) is directly equivalent, not to the contradiction (2.20), but to

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referents of that-clauses, but as mentioned in Chapter 1, this does not rule out the possibility of nonfactualist positions (e.g., in ethics) characterized in non-truth-theoretic terms.
It is not the case that either murder is wrong or murder is not wrong.

Classically speaking, of course, the contradiction (2.20) follows directly from (2.22). However, it is possible to block this inference by rejecting double-negation elimination. This is a radical maneuver in that it amounts to giving up classical logic (classical negation), but it is not much more radical than what a deflationist has already done if she appeals to truth-value gaps even in this weaker sense. In doing so, she has in effect already given up classical logic since giving up bivalence by asserting (2.22) amounts to rejecting the law of excluded middle

\[(\text{LEM}) \ p \lor \neg p.\]

So, although there may be an understanding of truth-value gaps that deflationists can appeal to in attempting to deal with the Liar, this appeal amounts to more than just a rejection of bivalence. It requires at least the rejection of LEM and classical negation, and so of classical logic. There is a sense, therefore, in which the deflationist is at a disadvantage in dealing with the Liar compared to the inflationist in the context of the expressed gaps strategy, even if this strategy is not completely unavailable to the former.

This disadvantage, however, might not be of much impact in the end since the expressed gaps strategy does not amount to a complete solution from the perspective on the Liar that demands the elimination of paradox. The claim that what a Liar sentence expresses is neither true nor false might block the derivation of a contradiction from

\[(\text{L'}) \text{ The sentence labeled “(L’)” expresses something false, but this does not eliminate truth-talk’s propensity for paradox. The problem reemerges in the form of a strengthened Liar sentence like}

\[(\text{L+’) The sentence labeled “(L+’)” expresses something not true.}

The expressed gaps strategy would attempt to avoid the generation of contradiction in this case by claiming that what (L+) expresses is neither true nor false. But if what (L+) expresses is neither

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true nor false, then it is not true, which is what (L+) says. So in combination with (ES), it follows from this sentence that what (L+) expresses is true iff it is not true. This is even more obviously problematic than earlier troublesome outcomes involving falsity, and the expressed gaps strategy plays right into the generation of the unwanted consequence.

At this stage it might be suggested that the expressed gaps strategy employs too simple an understanding of the defect exhibited by putatively paradoxical sentences. A better approach might be to say, not merely that what any Liar sentence expresses is neither true nor false, but that these sentences suffer from an even deeper semantic defect. With respect to truth-talk about sentences, this idea has been made precise in Kripke’s formalization of the intuitive notions of groundedness and ungroundedness in terms of the minimal fixed point for a language. Roughly, the minimal fixed point involves a pair of disjoint subsets of a language’s sentences generated by an iterative procedure of assigning sentences to the (determinate-)extension and (determinate-)antiextension of an initially uninterpreted predicate, \( T \). The assignments are made according to the intuitive evaluation standards associated with the truth-predicate: “we are entitled to assert (or deny) of any sentence that it is true precisely under the circumstances when we can assert (or deny) the sentence itself.”\(^{167}\)

The first stage of the procedure involves assigning sentences that do not employ \( T \) to either the predicate’s extension (if we can assert them) or its antiextension (if we can deny them); the second stage then assigns some sentences that do employ \( T \) based on how assignments of sentences in the first stage determine the assertibility of these new sentences given their relations to the former. More sentences are assigned in the third stage based on how their assertibility is determined by the truth-values assigned at the second stage, and so on. At some point, further iterations of this procedure no longer extend the interpretation of \( T \). If \( T \)’s extension

\(^{167}\)Kripke (1975), p. 701.
and antiextension are initially empty, the first pair of subsets with this property that is reached in this way is called “the minimal fixed point”.  

Kripke uses the concept of the minimal fixed point to provide a precise definition of the notion of groundedness as follows: a sentence is grounded iff it has a truth-value (is assigned to either the extension or antiextension of \( T \)) in the minimal fixed point. Any sentence not satisfying this condition is ungrounded and has no determinate truth-conditions in the minimal fixed point. Although Kripke’s work focuses on the notion of truth as applied to sentences, he does think it is also relevant for truth-talk ostensibly about what sentences express and that the truth-predicate of sentences he defines (\( T \)) can be read as the predicate “expresses a truth”. This reading fits with the presentations of the Liar that generate contradictions with (ES), for instance, the sentences 

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(L') } & \text{The sentence labeled "(L')" expresses something false} \\
\text{(L+')} & \text{The sentence labeled "(L+')" expresses something not true.}
\end{align*}
\]

Hence, on this reading Kripke’s work can be brought to bear on deflationism as I characterize it. On the Kripke-style strategy, these sentences are ungrounded since in each case the sentence’s assignment to either the extension or antiextension of \( T \) would have to be derived from a prior assignment of that very sentence. Being ungrounded, (L’) and (L+) both suffer not only from a truth-value gap, but also from a failure to express anything. This appears to prevent the reemergence of paradox that occurs with (L+) in the context of the expressed gaps.


\[\footnote{Ibid., p. 691, fn. 1.}\]

\[\footnote{This also holds for Truthteller sentences. However, while formulations of both the Liar and the Truthteller never get assignments to either the extension or antiextension of \( T \) in the minimal fixed point, and so are ungrounded, the Liar has no assignment in any fixed point (and thus is paradoxical) while the Truthteller does in some. (See Kripke (1975), p. 708.) Intuitively, the difference is that Truthteller sentences can be consistently assigned a truth-value; formulations of the Liar cannot.}\]

\[\footnote{Kripke (1975), pp. 699-700 says sentences like this fail to “make a statement” or “express a proposition”. However, Kripke also says that since in most cases there are specifiable conditions under}\]
strategy. The contradiction arises there because on that strategy the sentence expresses something not true in virtue of expressing something that is neither true nor false. If (L+’) does not express anything at all, then this reasoning and the contradiction are blocked.\textsuperscript{172}

Because the Kripke-style strategy appears to hold that Liar sentences do not express anything since they do not have determinate truth-conditions, this way of dealing with the paradox may presuppose that content is explained in terms of truth-conditions. To the extent that this is presupposed, it would put deflationism at a disadvantage in applying this strategy since according to deflationism the explanatory role played by the notion of truth in an account of content cannot be more fundamental than that fulfilled by its providing the instances of (ES). The extent of any disadvantage of this sort is unclear since something at least related to this strategy has been employed in a deflationary context, although without explicit discussion of how content is to be understood.\textsuperscript{173} However, whether deflationism is at a disadvantage compared to inflationism with respect to applying this strategy turns out to be a bit of a red herring in this case as well. The reason for this is the same as it is for the expressed gaps strategy; the Kripke-style strategy does not succeed in completely eliminating truth-talk’s propensity for paradox anyway.

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\textsuperscript{172}One might object that the reasoning is not blocked if one assumes a strong notion of truth rather than a weak one—or at least a strong notion of expressing something not true. (See Yablo (1985), p. 301 on strong vs. weak truth.) Since (L+’) appears to attribute the property of expressing something not true to a sentence, the fact that the sentence in question does not have this property (since it does not express anything) would seem to make (L+’) false, rather than neither true nor false. The Kripke-style notion of expressing something true rejects this intuition; it is a weak notion on which the attribution of the predicate “expresses something (not) true” to a sentence that does not express anything produces a sentence that does not express anything. (Cf. Grover (1977).) If (L+’) does not express anything because it is ungrounded, then it does not express that (L+’) has the property of expressing something not true. So the contradiction is blocked. However, if it turns out that the contradiction is not blocked because the strong notion of expressing something true is not to be ignored, that would just add support to the conclusion I draw below the ineliminability of the Liar.

\textsuperscript{173}See Grover (1977) for an appeal to the notion of ungroundedness in dealing with the Liar in the context of a deflationary (specifically, prosentential) account of truth-talk. I discuss this use of this strategy in relation to Brandom’s version of prosententialism (which is framed within an explicit account of content) in Chapter 3.
Contradiction reemerges in a strengthened form of the paradox that even this strategy cannot handle.

The strengthened Liar sentence that creates a problem for the Kripke-style strategy is

$$(L_2^+) \text{ The sentence labeled } "(L_2^+)" \text{ does not express anything true.}$$

In the context of the expressed gaps strategy, $(L^+)$ reproduces the paradox after $(L')$ is prevented from generating a contradiction. Similarly, $(L_2^+)$ reproduces the paradox in the context of the Kripke-style strategy after $(L^+)$ is shown not to generate a contradiction. The contradiction follows from $(L_2^+)$ in combination with the equivalence schema along the same lines of reasoning used to derive a contradiction from $(L')$ in Chapter 1. Substituting $(L_2^+)$ in for the schematic variable “$p$” in $(ES)$ yields

$$(ES_{L_2^+}) \text{ That the sentence labeled } "(L_2^+)" \text{ does not express anything true is true iff the sentence labeled } "(L_2^+)" \text{ does not express anything true.}$$

Bracketing any attempted solution, intuitively what the sentence labeled “$(L_2^+)$” expresses is that the sentence labeled “$(L_2^+)$” does not express anything true. A substitution into the left-hand side of $(ES_{L_2^+})$ based on this identification yields

$$(1.14+) \text{ What the sentence labeled } "(L_2^+)" \text{ expresses is true iff the sentence labeled } "(L_2^+)" \text{ does not express anything true.}$$

Recognizing that what the sentence labeled “$(L_2^+)$” expresses is true iff the sentence labeled “$(L_2^+)$” expresses something true, it becomes clear that this and $(1.14+)$ imply

$$(1.15+) \text{ The sentence labeled } "(L_2^+)" \text{ expresses something true iff the sentence labeled } "(L_2^+)" \text{ does not express anything true.}$$

As before, this conclusion is at least inconsistent if not already contradictory.

The obvious move to make in attempting to block the derivation of $(1.15+)$ is to appeal to the Kripke-style strategy and say that $(L_2^+)$ is ungrounded. If that is right, then it is false that what $(L_2^+)$ expresses is that the sentence labeled “$(L_2^+)"$ does not express anything true; there is

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\(^{174}\)This example and my discussion of it are derived from McGee (1991), p. 4.
nothing that \((L_{2^+}^+)\) expresses. So the derivation of \((1.15+)\) is unsound. However, it is not clear that this move can be coherently made in this case. There is a difference between claiming that a sentence expresses something not true and claiming that it does not express anything true. While it may be coherent to say that a sentence applying the predicate “expresses something not true” to an ungrounded sentence also fails to express anything, there is a problem with saying that \((L_{2^+}^+)\) is ungrounded and does not express anything. To say that \((L_{2^+}^+)\) does not express anything is to say that it does not express anything true and it does not express anything not true. But the first conjunct of this claim is just \((L_{2^+}^+)\) itself, so this attempt to deal with \((L_{2^+}^+)\) says of itself that it does not express anything. Because it is self-defeating in this way, it looks like the Kripke-style strategy cannot handle \((L_{2^+}^+)\).\(^{175}\)

The failures of the expressed gaps strategy and the Kripke-style strategy to remove the inconsistency from truth-talk are instances of a more general pattern, one that appears to plague all attempts to eliminate truth-talk’s propensity for paradox by explaining Liar sentences as suffering from some sort of semantic defect. A solution is proposed that seems to deal with certain formulations of the Liar paradox, but the paradox then reemerges in a strengthened formulation presented by a sentence that the solution cannot cover. Often the problem is that the proposed solution would be self-defeating if applied to the new Liar sentence; the solution’s attributions of semantic defect to the Liar sentence would themselves suffer from the very semantic defect supposedly attributed. At a minimum, the solution fails to provide any sense in which certain of its own proposals or consequences could be true.\(^{176}\) There is something like an informal method for turning a proposed solution to the Liar against itself by using the solution’s

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\(^{175}\) Kripke acknowledges that his account does not handle the strengthened Liar, that is, it does not explain the notion of truth involved in the claim that the Liar sentence is not true. See Kripke (1975), pp. 714-715.

own wording to form a strengthened version of the paradox. McGee calls this the “strengthened Liar response”. The resiliency of truth-talk’s propensity for paradox motivates a reexamination of the assumption that addressing the treatment problem requires eliminating inconsistency. Certainly, if paradox could be eliminated without interfering with truth-talk’s utility, making the notion of truth overly complex, or distorting it in implausible ways, then it would make sense to do so. But this might not be possible. The question is, what is the basis of the thought that elimination is required?

iii) Non-Eliminative Treatment

Although the need to eliminate the inconsistency is most often assumed as an unquestioned axiom, reflection on this demand reveals that the motivations for it stem entirely from inflationary presuppositions and the historical inertia behind them. Until the 20th century, an alternative to the standard assumption that truth-talk successfully attributes some sort of substantive property was an unnoticed possibility. The only question open for debate was what kind of property truth-talk attributes. With this assumption in the background, the failure to distinguish the diagnostic and preventative problems is easy to explain. The natural thought would be that truth-talk could not really be inherently inconsistent since inconsistent properties are impossible; no real property could be such that certain objects have it iff they do not have it. Hence, the paradoxical aspect of truth-talk must be an illusion based on some conceptual error, an illusion that the proper diagnosis will dispel by revealing the error involved.

So, for instance, rule-of-revision solutions are confronted by the sentence “(L₁⁺) The sentence labeled ‘(L₁⁺)’ is not stably true;” indeterminacy solutions are confronted with the sentence “(L₂⁺) The sentence labeled ‘(L₂⁺)’ is not definitely true;” and contextual/indexical solutions are confronted with the sentence “(L₃⁺) The sentence labeled ‘(L₃⁺)’ is not true in any context (or at any level of the hierarchy).” See Porter (1995), Chapter 1 for a discussion of how these strengthened versions of the paradox arise for these different approaches to the Liar.
Even though many philosophers now distinguish the diagnostic and preventative problems (though not always under those labels) and allow that ordinary truth-talk does generate paradoxical utterances, there is a residual inflationary assumption in most answers to the treatment problem. It is often assumed that the notion of truth must be rendered consistent because it has important explanatory work to do. This view is forcefully expressed by McGee in the following quotation.

There are scarcely any philosophical problems of greater urgency than the liar paradox, for there are scarcely any concepts more central to our philosophical understanding than the concept of truth. The notions of truth and references lie at the very center of all our attempts to understand how our language is linked to the world around us…the liar antinomy and the closely related antinomies involving reference show us, quite unmistakably, that our present way of thinking about truth and reference is inconsistent. Unless we can devise new ways of thinking about truth and reference which rise above the antinomies, we shall not have even the beginning of a satisfactory understanding of human language.\textsuperscript{179}

The thought underlying this statement is that the notion of truth does some explanatory work of a more substantive sort than anything accomplished through its performance of its (ES)-related generalizing role in explanatory contexts. However, this thought just assumes an inflationary understanding of truth-talk. Therefore, even if deflationism is at a disadvantage with respect to the elimination of truth-talk’s propensity for paradox, this has questionable bearing on the dispute between deflationism and inflationism. On the one hand, making elimination a requirement of an adequate answer to the treatment problem presupposes inflationism, and on the other hand it is highly questionable whether the goal being set is even attainable.

If we step back from inflationary presuppositions, then another way of dealing with truth-talk’s propensity for paradox comes into view, one that might involve a more reasonable (because


\textsuperscript{179}Ibid., p. vii.
attainable) goal. Chihara draws a contrast between the consistency view of truth and the inconsistency view of truth. Although Chihara draws this distinction primarily to distinguish the diagnostic problem of the paradoxes from the preventative problem, it can also be applied in distinguishing the treatment problem from the preventative problem. The consistency view is just the traditional view I have been discussing, i.e., the inflationism-inspired perspective requiring the elimination of paradox. The inconsistency view, however, is an alternative perspective that not only acknowledges the truth-predicate to be governed by rules or conventions involving a kind of inconsistency, but that also leaves it open whether this inconsistency must be eliminated. If we do not assume at the outset that truth-talk attributes a genuine property or has “causal-efficacious” explanatory work to do, then a non-eliminative category of treatment becomes a live option. Instead of eliminating truth-talk’s propensity for paradox, this alternative kind of treatment involves accepting the inconsistency exhibited and explaining it as contained in some way so that it does not trivialize truth-talk in general, or worse, vitiate our entire conceptual scheme.

Having moved beyond traditional inflationary assumptions, these different treatment options can be assessed on a more neutral ground. One question facing the alternative approach is whether the claim that truth-talk’s inconsistency can be contained or isolated conflicts with the point made above about the extent of truth-talk’s propensity for paradox. In fact, there is no conflict. The propensity for paradox is still widespread—truth-talk is still risky—but the instances in which paradox actually arises are comparatively rare, and (more importantly) when it does arise we are not led astray in harmful ways. As McGee acknowledges, there is a sense in which eliminative therapy is elective therapy practically speaking since the Liar paradox has been

\[180^{Chihara (1979), pp. 607-608.}\]
recognized for well over two millennia, and no one has died from it yet.\textsuperscript{181} The motivation for elimination is theoretical, and giving up inflationary background assumptions removes the theoretical or metaphysical pressure for eliminative therapy.

It is at this point that the resiliency of the Liar paradox summarized above becomes relevant. There is reason to doubt that the inconsistency can be eliminated from truth-talk—at least without significantly distorting the talk or artificially restricting the expressive capacity of natural language. Without any practical or metaphysical pressure for elimination, this makes the alternative approach to the treatment problem more attractive. But this point does bear on the dispute between inflationism and deflationism since inflationary views require that the inconsistency be eliminated from truth-talk whereas deflationary views are open both to treatments involving elimination and to treatments involving just the isolation or containment of the inconsistency. Reason for thinking the latter is the only available way of dealing with the inconsistency thus amounts to reason for thinking deflationism is correct.

None of this should be taken to suggest that containing truth-talk’s inconsistency is a trivial matter for a deflationary view. The diagnosis of the inconsistency is straightforward on such a view since all the instances of (ES) are taken to hold as a matter of truth-talk’s logico-linguistic functioning, and it has already been made clear how the instances generated from Liar sentences are inconsistent. Containing the inconsistency is another matter, however. Chihara’s own suggestions regarding the best way of dealing with truth-talk’s propensity for paradox are misleadingly underdeveloped on the issue of containment.\textsuperscript{182} His main focus is answering the diagnostic problem of the Liar and motivating the inconsistency view of truth; as far as containing the inconsistency is concerned, he relies on his diagnosis to do the job. This diagnosis explains truth-talk’s inconsistency as contained in the very rules or conventions that give the

\textsuperscript{181}McGee (1991), p. 3.
truth-predicate its meaning (roughly, the instances of (ES)\textsuperscript{183}), but he demonstrates that some

types of inconsistency do not undermine the applicability of rules across the board.

By contrasting two examples in which definitions or rules generate contradictions, Chihara shows that “…it is possible to lay down, follow, and operate with rules, conventions or definitions that have ‘singular points,’ without landing into practical difficulties rendering our behavior incoherent.”\textsuperscript{184} Truth-talk’s inconsistency, he claims, arises in this localized way. Further, the fact that these singular points of inconsistency arise out of the very features that provide truth-talk with its utility, combined with the logical complexity of elimination strategies and the new problems they generate, favors a treatment of “benign neglect” over one of elimination.\textsuperscript{185} While this all seems plausible, without more details about how the inconsistency is contained logically, a treatment of benign neglect seems to treat the issue too pragmatically. His diagnosis shows that as a practical matter we will still be able to apply the rules or conventions governing the use of the truth-predicate in most cases in spite of the inconsistency they involve, but there is still the theoretical concern that the inconsistency trivializes truth-talk and any conceptual scheme that includes the notion of truth.

In fact, explaining why the inconsistency is not trivializing in this way is going to require some fairly strong measures. The problem is that an inconsistent biconditional, e.g.,

\begin{equation}
(1.15+) \text{The sentence labeled ‘}(L_2+)\text{’ expresses something true iff the sentence labeled ‘}(L_2+)\text{’ does not express anything true,}
\end{equation}

is (classically) logically equivalent to a contradiction, in this case

\textsuperscript{182}At least as far as what he says in Chihara (1979) is concerned.

\textsuperscript{183}Chihara (1979), pp. 605-606, 611.

\textsuperscript{184}Ibid., p. 609. The examples contrasted are the definition of “glub” (p. 592) and the rules for the Sec Lib Club (pp. 594-595). The latter illustrates the possibility here being considered for the truth-predicate, namely, that of rules that work in general but which exhibit “singularities”.


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(2.23) \([\exists x \left( L_2 x^+ \right) \text{ expresses } x \land x \text{ is true}] \land \neg [\exists x \left( L_2 x^+ \right) \text{ expresses } x \land x \text{ is true}],\)

and as far as classical logic is concerned, contradictions entail everything. To avoid this kind of trivialization, a version of the “diagnose and contain” approach must include either some account of how the inconsistency does not generate a contradiction, or an account of how the contradictions generated do not entail everything. Either option involves some sort of departure from a completely classical treatment of truth-talk’s propensity for paradox, at the very least a refusal to interpret the instances of (ES) as classical biconditionals.

An appealing simple version of the “diagnose and contain” approach that addresses the theoretical concern directly is the dialetheic view developed by Graham Priest. Part of the simplicity of this approach is that it takes both ordinary truth-talk’s unrestricted application of the equivalence schema and our ordinary reasoning with Liar sentences to be correct. The basic move that makes this possible is also very simple. On a dialetheic view, the truth-evaluations “true” and “false” are not mutually exclusive. Some sentences receive the evaluation “true-only”, some “false-only”, but some—paradigmatically, Liar sentences—receive the evaluation “both true and false” (or “paradoxical”).186 On Priest’s view, the truth-tables for the logical connectives are extended in accordance with “normal reasoning” about the truth-functions to cover assignments of this truth-value “glut” (e.g., the conjunction of a sentence that is true-only with a sentence that is both true and false is itself both true and false since the truth of the second conjunct makes the conjunction true and the falsity of the second conjunct makes it false).187 The resulting truth-tables have the same forms as the tables proposed for systems involving truth-value gaps, but the difference in interpretation is important.188 For one thing, the “g-value” is not


\[187\] Ibid., pp. 226-227.

\[188\] Both the gaps approach and the gluts approach end up with truth-tables matching those of Kleene’s strong three-value logic. Compare Kripke (1975), p. 700 and Priest (1979), p. 227.
a designated value on a “gaps” view, but it is on a “gluts” view. Defining valid deductive inference in terms of “material designation-preservation,”\textsuperscript{189} this means that glut-preserving reasoning also counts as valid.

Taking the equivalence schema to hold unrestrictedly includes accepting the instance of (ES) generated from the Liar sentence

\[(L_2^+)\text{ The sentence labeled "}(L_2^+)\text{" does not express anything true.}\]

Our ordinary reasoning takes this instance of (ES) to lead to the claim

\[ (2.23) [(\exists x)(L_2^+) \text{ expresses } x \& x \text{ is true}] \& \neg[(\exists x)(L_2^+) \text{ expresses } x \& x \text{ is true}]. \]

If this attitude toward the equivalence schema and our ordinary reasoning are both correct, then (2.23) is a conclusion validly derived from a true premise, and so is true. More specifically, (2.23) is a true contradiction.\textsuperscript{190} Because (2.23) is a conjunction, it being true (still) means that both conjuncts are true. The right conjunct is just \((L_2^+)\) itself, but the left conjunct is the negation of \((L_2^+)\). Therefore, both \((L_2^+)\) and \((L_2^+)\) are true. However, since a sentence is false iff its negation is true, the fact that \((L_2^+)\) is true means that \((L_2^+)\) is false (in addition to being true).\textsuperscript{191} But now since one (or actually, both) of (2.23)’s conjuncts is false, the conjunction is false. Hence, the contradiction (2.23) is both true and false.\textsuperscript{192} Thus, accepting truth-value gluts and taking them to be designated values makes it possible for (ES) to hold unrestrictedly,

\\[\text{\textsuperscript{189}Priest (1984), p. 157.}\]

\\[\text{\textsuperscript{190}Dialetheism is often characterized (even by Priest) as the view that there are true contradictions, but this is a slightly misleading way of stating the view. For one thing, dialetheism does not hold that all contradictions are true, and (as we will see in a moment) any contradiction that is true is also false.}\]

\\[\text{\textsuperscript{191}By parallel reasoning \((L_2^+)\) is also false in addition to being true. Thus, the fact that Liar sentences are both true and false is in keeping with our ordinary reasoning about them.}\]

\\[\text{\textsuperscript{192}Although dialetheism involves denying the law of non-contradiction in the sense of admitting certain contradictions (since they are true), for any contradiction \(A \& \neg A\) that is admitted, \((A \& \neg A)\) is also admitted (since any true contradiction is also false). So, in fact, the latter form is still logically valid. See Priest (1979), p. 228.}\]
and for our ordinary reasoning about Liar sentences to be valid since its being glut-preserving means it is designated-value preserving.

Because dialetheism takes Liar sentences to lead to true contradictions, if it is to avoid making truth-talk (and any conceptual scheme that includes the notion of truth) trivial it needs to contain this inconsistency. This is accomplished by the notion of logical consequence that results from allowing truth-value gluts and taking them to be designated values. Because valid inference is designated-value preserving inference, the invalid inferences on Priest’s view are those in which it is possible for the conclusion to be false-only when the premises are all either true-only or both true and false. The important result for present purposes is that this renders invalid the inference pattern known as *ex contradictione quodlibet*,

\[(ECQ) \ p \ & \ ~p \ / \ q.\]

If \(p\) is both true and false, then \(q\) is their conjunction. But there is nothing preventing \(q\) from being false-only in this case. Since this inference form is invalid, not all contradictions entail everything. This rejection of what Priest calls “explosion”—the thesis that contradictions entail everything—means that the logic of Priest’s dialethic view is *paraconsistent* rather than classical.[^193] Since it is precisely contradictions like those generated from Liar sentences (those in which the conjuncts are “paradoxical”) that do not entail everything, this move away from classical logic effectively contains truth-talk’s inconsistency, addressing the theoretical concern about the containment aspect of the “diagnose and contain” strategy.

Although dialetheism is in some ways a simple approach to dealing with truth-talk’s inconsistency as far as its basic theses are concerned, it does have some fairly radial consequences. The paraconsistent logic it involves diverges from classical logic more severely than just ruling (ECQ) as invalid. The notion of logical consequence belonging to the view also

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classifies disjunctive syllogism, *modus ponens*, *modus tollens*, and hypothetical syllogism as invalid.\(^{194}\) This will strike many as too great a cost to accept the paraconsistent logic of dialetheism across the board. The cost can be mitigated somewhat by pointing out that these forms of inference are all “quasi-valid”, that is, they are truth-preserving provided the truth-values of the sentence involved are all either true only or false only.\(^{195}\) So provided paradoxical sentences like Liar sentences can be avoided, we can go on reasoning with *modus ponens*, etc.\(^{196}\)

However, this suggestion for mitigating the dialetheism’s radical consequences is threatened by the strengthened Liar that confronts Priest’s view. The relevant Liar sentence is

$$(LD+) \text{ The sentence labeled “}(LD+)\text{” is false only.}$$

The fact that (LD+) still leads to a contradiction in the “metalanguage” when Priest’s treatment is applied to it (when it is labeled paradoxical) is not a problem for the view since “the aim of the glut theorist in not to avoid contradictions, but precisely to allow them in a way that does not lead to disaster.”\(^{197}\) The problem is that the contradiction that is generated is

$$(2.24) (LD+) \text{ is paradoxical } \& (LD+) \text{ is not paradoxical.}$$

This casts a shadow on Priest’s suggestion that we can go on using *modus ponens*, etc. so long as the sentences involved are not paradoxical, since this does not rule out their being paradoxical as well. Priest maintains that nevertheless, “in a certain sense, quasi-valid inferences are

\(^{193}\)Priest (1998), pp. 412-413.

\(^{194}\)Priest (1979), p. 228.

\(^{195}\)Ibid., p. 231-232.

\(^{196}\)Priest (1998), p. 421 claims that it can be proven that any sentence that is grounded in Kripke’s sense behaves consistently.

\(^{197}\)Priest (1984), p. 159.
legitimately usable in consistent conditions.” More needs to be said about their legitimacy, but I do not have the space to pursue this further here.

In spite of its radical consequences, I find a great deal of appeal in the effectiveness of the move to a paraconsistent logic in containing truth-talk’s inconsistency, and in the simplicity of dialetheism in particular. However, I have concerns about accepting this view as an account of logic in general. I will return to this point in Chapter 5 when I discuss a version of deflationism that allows for restricted acceptance of this (or some other) paraconsistent approach just for the logic of truth-talk. In any case, the availability of this approach makes it clear that it is possible to diagnose and contain truth-talk’s inconsistency, whereas it is not clear that it is possible to eliminate it. Given that the former treatment strategy is available only to deflationary views of truth-talk, I take this as at least initial incentive for deflationism.

CONCLUSIONS

The burden of this Chapter has been to show that certain unusual features exhibited by truth-talk provide initial motivation for explaining it with a deflationary account. I have argued that acceptance of the “Functioning Makes Fundamental” Thesis:

(FMFT) Truth-talk’s logico-linguistic functioning is such that it gives the instances of (ES) fundamental status makes it easier to explain truth-talk’s duality of triviality and non-triviality and to deal with its propensity for paradox. This does not establish deflationism’s correctness, of course, since there are still further questions about whether any deflationary view can adequately account for other aspects of truth-talk. All I claim is that the results of this chapter provide incentive for trying to

198 Ibid., p. 160.
develop a deflationary view that can. In the next chapter I examine the most prominent formulations of deflationism currently in the philosophical literature in order to identify what other aspects of truth-talk are at issue. A subsequent aim is then to determine the extent to which the current formulations of deflationism give adequate accounts of these aspects and thereby make good on the initial motivations for deflationism that have been identified here.
CHAPTER 3
THE CURRENT FORMULATIONS OF DEFLATIONISM

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I consider the three most prominent formulations of deflationism presented in the recent literature: Paul Horwich’s Minimal Theory (MT), Hartry Field’s Pure Disquotationalism (PD) and Robert Brandom’s operator version of Prosententialism (OP). My aim in doing so is two-fold. First, I look to provide further support for the characterization of deflationism championed in Chapter 1. To this end, I will show how these three “current formulations” all qualify as deflationary when the constitutive commitment of deflationism is understood as what is expressed by the “Functioning Makes Fundamental” Thesis:

(FMFT) Truth-talk’s logico-linguistic functioning is such that it gives the instances of (ES) fundamental status.

My second purpose in examining these current formulations is to provide incentive for the development of a new and different formulation of deflationism. Chapter 2 argues that the duality and propensity for paradox truth-talk exhibits motivate attempting to account for truth-talk with a view satisfying FMFT. In showing the current formulations of deflationism to be accounts of this sort, I therefore implicitly present them as attempts to make good on the initial motivations for deflationism. However, examination of these views reveals them all to be of dubious success in this pursuit. They all face problems that cast doubt on their abilities to accommodate certain aspects of truth-talk. Most importantly, the current formulations of deflationism all have trouble accounting for the (ES)-related functions that truth-talk must be acknowledged to perform. In
addition, some of these views involve revisionary and contentious theoretical commitments, and
some even undermine part of what initially motivates the pursuit of deflationism. The new
formulation of deflationism developed in the chapters to follow is motivated by the failure of the
current formulations to make good on the initial motivations for deflationism.

**HORWICH’S MINIMAL THEORY**

Horwich’s MT is in some ways the current formulation most easily fit with my
characterization of deflationism. For a start, the idea that the instances of the equivalence schema
(ES) That $p$ is true iff $p$
are fundamental is a central aspect of MT. In fact, the fundamentality of these equivalences is
more straightforward on Horwich’s view than on any other formulation of deflationism because
he takes them to be *brute*. By this I mean that the instances of (ES) are not only explanatorily and
conceptually basic according to MT, but they are also logico-linguistically basic. They are not
derivative in any sense; they are not generated by any general aspect of truth, or even of truth-
talk. These equivalences themselves *constitute* the most basic core of any such account. Further
connections between MT and my understanding of deflationism result from the fact that
Horwich’s view is the source of the notion of fundamentality at work in FMFT.

There are also, however, ways in which MT can seem the most difficult formulation of
deflationism to fit with FMFT. The difficulty arises from a tension between some of Horwich’s
claims regarding what MT is a theory of, and the explicit focus of FMFT. Characterized in terms
of this thesis, deflationism is first and foremost a theory of truth-*talk*; for a view to qualify as
deflationary it has to hold that *truth-talk’s logico-linguistic functioning* gives the instances of
(ES) fundamental status. MT, however, is presented in places as a theory of truth itself, i.e., a
theory of the property of truth. According to this theory, the property of truth has no underlying nature waiting to be revealed in a reductive analysis; the full nature of this property is captured by an axiomatization in terms of the instances of (ES). Understood this way, MT seems to view the fundamental status of the instances of (ES) as a product of the nature of this property, rather than a product of the logico-linguistic functioning of truth-talk. This appears to conflict with FMFT’s suggestion that truth-talk’s logico-linguistic functioning is the basis of (ES)-fundamentality.

The apparent tension between MT and FMFT is resolved by the fact that Horwich also presents his view as a theory of the concept of truth, which he equates with the meaning of the term “true”. Because of Horwich’s use theory of meaning, this makes MT an account of truth-talk, and in particular an account of its logico-linguistic functioning. On Horwich’s understanding of meaning, the meaning of a term—the concept expressed in its use—is constituted by certain basic regularities of use, the ones that determine or govern the overall use of the term. In the case of the term “true”, the basic regularity of use is supposedly the one comprising the manifestations of our disposition to accept the instances of (ES) a priori, and to govern the use of “true” according to them. These equivalences are brute (i.e., completely underived) axioms of MT in its role as a theory of the concept of truth; they are the most basic principles governing the use of the term “true”. Principles governing a term’s use pertain to how the talk employing that term operates; it operates in accordance with those principles. As a view

\[\text{Horwich (1998), pp. 37, 136.}\]

\[\text{Although (ES) is a schema of English, and it is reasonable to assume that English is not currently (nor ever will be) expressively complete, Horwich suggests that we can get around this incompleteness by taking the instances of (ES) to include all the instances in all possible extensions of English. So although some instances of (ES) are not currently expressible, they are all held to be possibly expressible, allowing us to say that the axioms of MT are (what are expressed by) the instances of (ES). (Horwich (1998), pp. 18-19, fn. 3.)}\]

\[\text{Horwich (1998), pp. 36-37, 121, 126, 135-136.}\]
about the fundamental use-governing principles applying to the term “true”, MT amounts to a view about truth-talk’s basic functioning. It takes truth-talk to operate by providing the instances of (ES) as brute equivalences between the basic instances of truth-talk and other claims.\textsuperscript{203} Thus, MT amounts to an account of truth-talk’s logico-linguistic functioning according to which the instances of (ES) have fundamental (in fact, brute) status. As such, MT fits with my characterization of deflationism in terms of FMFT.

Horwich does not explicitly say it, but MT can even be seen as primarily a theory of the concept of truth and only secondarily a theory of truth itself. Horwich’s ascription of the latter role could really be considered a consequence of his further commitment to a “weak” conception of properties. Given his view that every predicate expresses a property, he holds that the predicate-term “true” expresses the property of truth.\textsuperscript{204} But his commitment to the thesis that the entire nature of the property expressed by “true” is captured axiomatically by the instances of (ES) could just be the product of his commitment to the thesis that the meaning of “true” is fundamentally axiomatized by these equivalences. Since these biconditionals are taken to be the axioms of MT, this leads him to say that MT is equally a theory of the concept of truth and a theory of truth itself.

This interpretation of MT is even suggested by Horwich’s recent reply to the question “Is truth a property?”

Minimalism does not involve, in itself, any particular answer to this question. For it may be combined with a variety of different conceptions of property, some

\textsuperscript{202}Ibid., pp. 93-94, 96, 126 (especially fn. 5). For the full account, see Horwich (1998a).

\textsuperscript{203}This explains the utility of the truth-predicate since it allows for inferences from premises involving only some sort of reference to claims (including reference by descriptions and quantificational expressions) to the claims themselves.

\textsuperscript{204}Horwich (1998), pp. 141-142. This “weak” conception of properties is related to the pleonastic conception of properties developed in Schiffer (1994) and (1996) and which I discussed in Chapter 1.
of which will yield the conclusion that the truth predicate does stand for a property, and some that it doesn’t.\footnote{Horwich (1998), p. 141.}

According to this reply, MT \textit{in itself} should not be considered a theory of the property of truth. Rather, it should be considered a theory of truth-talk that has with particular consequences for the subject of a property of truth when combined with particular views about properties. What is more, this is not merely one possible way of understanding MT; it turns out to be the interpretation that presents the view in the most favorable light. Taking MT to be a theory of truth itself drains it of certain motivational support it would otherwise have.

Considered either as just an account of truth-talk, or as one of truth itself as well, MT is equally well motivated by consideration of truth-talk’s duality. Because the instances of (ES) count as brute axioms no matter what MT it taken to be a theory of, it still explains this aspect of truth-talk along the general deflationary lines discussed in the previous chapter. Type-A/A’) utterances like

\begin{enumerate}
\item[(2.10)] It is true that crabapples are edible
\item[(2.9)] That crabapples are edible is true
\end{enumerate}

amount to trivial expansions (though not synonyms) of the sentences they embed according to MT because the instances of (ES) are necessary and \textit{a priori} (if not analytic) equivalences. However, in type-B) utterances like

\begin{enumerate}
\item[(1.2)] What Bob said is true,
\end{enumerate}

the role of the truth-talk is not trivial. This is so even though the utility of the truth-predicate is “non-descriptive”\footnote{Ibid., p. 138.} and the property being ascribed with it supposedly has no underlying nature. The truth-locution in (1.2) is non-trivial, first, because without it there is no sentence and so no assertion made and, second, because (1.2) is not necessarily and \textit{a priori} equivalent to any truth-
free utterance. We may be able to derive a conclusion like “Crabapples are edible” from (1.2) along with the premise “What Bob said is that crabapples are edible,” but no such conclusion is trivially equivalent to (1.2) since this second premise is at least \textit{a posteriori}, if not also contingent.

The motivation for deflationism that Horwich’s view does not receive if it is also considered a theory of the property of truth (“truth itself”) is that derived from truth-talk’s capacity for generating the Liar paradox. If MT is considered an axiomatic theory of truth itself, then it must exclude the inconsistent instances of (ES) generated from Liar sentences on pain of incoherence. If it did not, then the property of truth axiomatized by the instances of (ES) would be inconsistent, which I take to be impossible for any real property: no actual property (thick or thin) is such that some object has it if and only if that object does not have it. As a result, Horwich’s view reacquires the burden of solving the preventative problem (at least as part of the treatment problem) associated with the Liar paradox; MT faces this challenge every bit as much as any inflationary account of truth-talk.

Horwich explicitly acknowledges this burden, and even recognizes that it follows entirely from his claim that MT is a theory of truth itself.\textsuperscript{207} However, he does not register much concern about this; rather, he appears to assume that any strategy for eliminating truth-talk’s inconsistency available to an inflationist is equally available to him.\textsuperscript{208} But as the discussion in Chapter 2 indicates, deflationism is at a disadvantage compared to inflationism with regard to solving the preventative problem. Consider, for example, what is probably the leading strategy for eliminating paradox: an appeal to truth-value gaps. On Horwich’s own view, this strategy is

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{207} Ibid., pp. 40-41 and 136.
\item \textsuperscript{208} Ibid., p. 42.
\end{enumerate}
unavailable to MT because it cannot admit gaps.\textsuperscript{209} So, not only does MT lose any potential advantage it might gain from its deflationary status with regard to dealing with the paradoxes (and so any potential support from truth-talk’s paradoxical aspect), it actually takes on an additional theoretical burden compared with inflationism since MT’s solution to the preventative problem has additional constraints to meet.

Even if Horwich were to drop the problematic component of his view—the claim that MT is a theory of truth itself—it would still suffer from a defect serious enough to render it inadequate as an account of truth-talk. This defect is the theory’s inability to account for all of the (ES)-related functions that any adequate account of truth-talk must cover. In particular, MT does not provide a way for truth-talk to fulfill the generalizing function it performs. I will call the issue of accounting for this function “the generalization problem.” This problem is particularly difficult for Horwich’s view because MT takes the instances of (ES) to be completely underived, i.e., to be brute axioms. So MT contains all of the (non-pathological) instances of (ES), but it contains them only as individual instances.\textsuperscript{210} As a result, this view fails to give truth-talk any role that can be thought of as fulfilling the generalizing function truth-talk is supposed to perform. MT can provide each of the instances of (ES) that might be needed in an inference, but this is insufficient to account for any general claims employing the notion of truth.

The central utility of the special ((ES)-related) generalizing function that truth-talk fulfills is allowing for the formation of certain generalizations not involving the notion of truth that we

\textsuperscript{209} For Kripke’s approach to the paradoxes, see Kripke (1975). See Horwich (1998), pp. 76-77 on MT’s view of gaps.

\textsuperscript{210} Horwich (1998), p. 5 labels an open-ended list (i.e., not a conjunction) of the instances of (ES) as “(MT)”.

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could not otherwise formulate.\textsuperscript{211} For example, accepting the notion of papal infallibility, one
might wish to generalize on the embedded sentences in a claim like

(1.3) If the Pope asserts that crabapples are edible, then crabapples are edible.

The desired generalization is one that would provide all the instances (including those from all
possible extensions of English) of the schema

(1.4) If the Pope asserts that \( p \), then \( p \).

As discussed in Chapter 1, the problem is that the “variables” in (1.4) cannot be bound by
prefixing this open formula with an ordinary (objectual) quantifier since the second occurrence of
“\( p \)” is in a sentence-in-use position. The way that truth-talk helps here is by providing (via an
instance of (ES)) for each instance of (1.4) an equivalent claim in which all occurrences of the
embedded sentences are in nominalized (i.e., term) positions rather than sentence positions.

These equivalent claims are the instances of the schema

(1.5) If the Pope asserts that \( p \), then that \( p \) is true.

What truth-talk is supposed provide is a way of generalizing on a claim like (1.3) by gathering all
of the instances of (1.5) together under a single, general claim like

(3.1) Everything the Pope asserts is true.\textsuperscript{212}

The problem with MT is that since the instances of (ES) are individually brute (i.e., not
the product of any general aspect of truth-talk) it cannot account for this last step and so cannot
account for a generalization like (3.1). MT gives truth-talk a role that provides each instance of
(1.5) as a claim equivalent to an instance of (1.4), but this by itself is not enough to supply truth-
talk with any role that can generate a claim like (3.1) generalizing in the desired way on (1.3).

\textsuperscript{211}Field (1999), p. 533 calls these “fertile generalizations.”

\textsuperscript{212}Claiming that the instances of (3.1) are the instances of (1.5) involves assuming that anything someone
asserts is the referent of some that-clauses (at least from some possible extension of English). The variable
“\( p \)” may get filled with declarative sentences, but the result is an expression (“that \( p \)”)
ostensibly picking out an object. So in (1.5) the variables are all involved in picking out the “that \( p \)’s”.

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Anil Gupta has presented this objection to MT quite forcefully.\textsuperscript{213} The problem is that generalizations are not equivalent to the collections of their instances. For one thing, an explanation of the generalization cannot be constructed just out of the explanations of the instances. While each instance of a general claim like “Everyone on the boat died” may have some particular explanation, the general claim itself may be true by accident and have no explanation.\textsuperscript{214} More fundamentally, a generalization is logically stronger than its instances; the generalization implies all of the instances (a conjunction of them even), but the instances do not imply the general claim. So even if MT provided (and explained) all the instances of (1.5) (from those of (1.4)), this would not amount to a formulation (or explanation) of a generalization like (3.1). To derive a generalization from the conjunction of its instances you also need the additional premise that the conjuncts are all of its instances. But MT provides no way of deriving this generalization either.

MT turns out to be even more ineffective in dealing with the generalization problem than Gupta’s objection indicates. In addition to failing to provide truth-talk any way of obtaining a generalization on a claim like (1.3), MT also fails to provide truth-talk with any means of obtaining even just a conjunction of all of the instances of that generalization. The connection that MT provides between the instances of (1.4) and those of (1.5) is of no help here, even assuming that the latter are the instances of (3.1). MT only allows us to derive each instance of (1.5) from some instance of (1.4). To obtain a conjunction of all of the instances of (1.5) it would be necessary to derive every one individually and conjoin them. But this cannot be done directly because there are an infinite number of them. So, not only does MT not provide a way of obtaining a generalization like (3.1), it does not even provide a way of obtaining anything that expresses all the instances of the desired generalization all at once (e.g., in a conjunction).

Horwich has recently attempted to deal with the generalization problem. He claims that in the special case of propositions we have a truth-preserving rule of inference akin to an omega rule allowing us to conclude from the fact that each proposition (of some sort) has some feature, the general claim that every proposition (of that sort) has that feature, i.e., to draw a general claim as a conclusion from just the collection of its instances. Therefore, to account for a generalization like (3.1) all one need be able to do is derive the instances of (1.5). Because the instances of (1.5) make claims about propositions, a commitment to all of them is supposed to be enough to allow us to draw (3.1) as a conclusion. Horwich admits that his inference rule is not logically valid, since it depends on matters beyond the scope of logic (e.g., the nature of propositions), but he claims that we find it plausible and that it captures an inferential disposition we have.

This reply, however, is unsatisfactory. To begin with, it involves substantive commitments regarding the nature of propositions, something at odds with what Horwich says elsewhere. More importantly, it seems not so much to address the difficulties MT faces with respect to the generalization problem as simply to deny them. In the case of the natural numbers it may be that an omega rule gets justified by the principle of mathematical induction along with the fact that the natural numbers “are linearly ordered with each element having only finitely many predecessors.” But then the existence of an omega rule in the domain of arithmetic has

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216Ibid., p. 137.
217Ibid., pp. 16-17.
218Field (1999), p. 538. Field highlights this aspect of the natural numbers in an explanation of why formulas containing the truth-predicate can be admitted into the schema for the principle of mathematical induction. Because the natural numbers are as described, induction holds on any predicate that applies to them. Thus, the fact that the induction axioms for (arithmetic) truth hold follows from the nature of the natural numbers; “nothing about truth is involved.” (Ibid., p. 539, fn. 12.)
to do with very special features of numbers. Until it is explained how Horwich’s inference rule
follows from the nature of propositions (and presumably this will be very different from why an
omega rule holds in the case of numbers), it is unmotivated and ad hoc. Gupta’s objection stands
unanswered, indicating that MT cannot account for truth-talk’s (ES)-related generalizing
function. So although MT satisfies FMFT, in the end it is an unsatisfactory formulation of
deflationism because it is an inadequate account of truth-talk.

FIELD’S PURE DISQUOTATIONALISM

Prima facie, it appears that Field’s PD does not fit under a characterization of
deflationism in terms of FMFT. The latter is concerned with giving fundamental status to the
instances of the equivalence schema

(ES) That p is true iff p.

On this approach, the basic instances of truth-talk are those ostensibly describing objects denoted
by that-clauses. PD, on the other hand, is explicitly concerned with truth-talk as used ostensibly
to describe sentence-tokens (utterances and thought-states\textsuperscript{219}), and so takes the basic instances of
truth-talk to be those employing the canonical names of sentence-tokens—their quotation names.
PD therefore “deflates” truth-talk in terms of the instances of the disquotational schema

(DS) “p” is true iff p.

However, the distance between these two approaches is not as great as it may seem. They can be
fit together by first explaining how PD gives the instances of (DS) fundamental status, and then
explaining how this account can be reinterpreted in terms of the instances of (ES).

\textsuperscript{219}Field assumes that thought-states of the sort traditionally called “propositional attitudes” are primarily
states involving the manipulation of mental sentence-tokens in the manner described in Field (1978).
With respect to what PD is a theory of, it presents no problem for a fit with FMFT.

Field’s view is an account of the concept of truth, in particular, its role in our thought and talk. As such, PD is an account of truth-talk. Although he does not put it explicitly in these terms, we can think of Field as aiming to explain the operation of truth-talk in such a way that the cognitive and linguistic needs it serves get satisfied with a minimum of theoretical and ontological commitments. His view is that this can be achieved by accepting a purely disquotational notion of truth. The outline he gives of this notion amounts to an account of the functioning of truth-talk: on a purely disquotational understanding of truth, for an utterance \( u \) that a speaker understands, the speaker’s claim that \( u \) is true (true-as-he-understand-it) is cognitively equivalent (for the speaker) to \( u \) itself (as he understand it). The notion of cognitive equivalence Field employs here is a non-intentional one amounting to the intersubstitutability of the claims in all contexts except quotation marks and intentional attitude constructions (“extensional intersubstitutability”).

This outline of the purely disquotational notion of truth is an account of the truth-talk’s functioning according to which this cognitive equivalence relation (and the inference ticket it provides) plays a fundamental and central role. It is supposedly in virtue of this feature that truth-talk serves all the cognitive and linguistic purposes it does. The instances of (DS) play a central role.

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220 This is a bit quick since there is some ambiguity as to whether PD is supposed to be an account of the notion of truth we actually use, the “ordinary notion”, or an account of a more precise replacement notion. Most of what Field says supports the latter interpretation, the degree of fit with the former being of merely “sociological interest” (see Field (1994), p. 277). However, he also seems to hold that the “cash value” of many uses of the “ordinary” notion of truth—all that a speaker is trying to express with them—is just what PD says is expressed in those cases (Ibid.). Field himself claims that the ambiguity about how to think of PD is due to the lack of clarity in the supposed distinction between these alternatives. (Field (2001b), p. 143.) For present purposes, I am not much concerned with this distinction and where PD falls with respect to it.

221 Field (1994), p. 250. Field adds the qualification that the equivalence is relative to the existence of the utterance \( u \), “just as ‘Thatcher is self-identical and snow is white’ is cognitively equivalent to ‘Snow is white’ relative to the existence of Thatcher.”

222 Ibid., p. 251, fn. 2.
role in PD because they axiomatize the notion of pure disquotational truth by capturing the central cognitive equivalence relation. These biconditionals are not brute axioms on this view; they are not logico-linguistically basic. There is a sense in which they follow from the cognitive equivalence claim used to outline PD, which itself looks to be a generalization about a certain kind of sentence (those a speaker understands, i.e., those belonging to her idiolect).

Because “‘p’ is true” and “p” are intersubstitutable in all extensional contexts for a speaker, the instances of

(DS) “p” is true iff p

are trivial products of the cognitive equivalence that is fundamental to the functioning of truth-talk. However, this does not mean that they are not fundamental in the sense relevant to deflationism as I characterize this position. Appealing to the cognitive equivalence of the two sides of these biconditionals does not amount to offering an explanation of them at a deeper level. Conceptually and explanatorily speaking, the instances of (DS) are at the same level as the relevant notion of cognitive equivalence because they amount to an axiomatic expression of it. There is no underlying conceptual analysis of “true” (or reductive analysis of truth itself) explaining why the instances of (DS) hold; rather, together they capture the fundamental explanatory aspect of truth-talk. According to PD, then, truth-talk’s logico-linguistic functioning is such that the instances of (DS) are fundamental.

Before connecting this result to a characterization of deflationism in terms of FMFT, a problem PD faces at this point must be resolved. The problem is that the standard reading of (DS) does not give its instances the right modal and epistemic status for them to serve as fundamental axioms. As explanatorily and conceptually basic axioms, the instances of (DS) should be necessary, a priori, and hold of conceptual necessity. However, the standard understanding of quotation names takes them to pick out orthographically typed sentence-tokens. This would make the instances of (DS) contingent and a posteriori. The reason is that there are possible tokens of the orthographic types the sentences mentioned on the left-hand sides of these
biconditionals belong to in which the words employed are used very differently from how they are actually used, e.g., on the right-hand sides of the biconditionals.

Imagine, for example, possible circumstances in which English evolved very differently so that the word “snow” referred to coal. The sentence “snow is white” would then have been true if, and only if, coal were white. So, if the following sentence-token, “Snow is white,” were from this language it would be false even if snow were white. This suggests that the instances of (DS), e.g.,

(DS) “Snow is white” is true iff snow is white

are only contingently true. And since there is no guarantee about what interpretation attaches to the orthographically typed sentence-token named on the left-hand side, we cannot be sure that it gets the interpretation involved in the use of a token of the same orthographic type on the right-hand side. We could discover that the utterance named on the left involves a very different use of language as in the case just described. Therefore, the instances of (DS) are empirically defeasible and thus a posteriori.

For the instances of (DS) to serve as fundamental axioms, there must be a more intimate connection between their left- and right-hand sides. In his published writings, Field secures the required connection by stipulating a non-standard reading of (DS) that gives its instances the right modal and epistemic status. He holds that the quotation names involved in the instances of the schema are ones that refer to computationally typed sentence-tokens rather than orthographically typed sentence-tokens. This is intended to restrict the interpretations (in the sense of conceptual roles played) that can apply to the sentences mentioned on the left-hand side of the

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224 This typing in virtue of the interpretation the truth-attributer applies to the sentences is what Field means when he says “for a person to call an utterance true in this pure disquotational sense is to say it is true-as-he-understands-it”. (Field (1994), p. 250.) It is more perspicuous to attach the qualification to the
instances of (DS) to those actually involved in the truth-attributer’s use of the sentences on the right-hand side. Combined with PD’s central thesis of cognitive equivalence, the appeal to computationally typed tokens is supposed to make the instances of (DS) something like necessary and *a priori.*

Field’s strategy accomplishes its intended goal. Even in a possible world where tokens of the orthographic word-type “snow” refer to coal, the sentence “snow is white” as actually interpreted by me (now) is true if and only if snow is white. The purely disquotational notion of truth is rendered “use-independent” essentially by fixing all issues of use (interpretation) beforehand, thereby canceling any proffered shifts in interpretation. This blocks all scenarios that supposedly show the instances of (DS) to be contingent and *a posteriori.* However, one drawback of this strategy is that it involves a stipulated, non-standard reading of the instances of (DS) based on a non-standard understanding of quotation names. Thus, the proposal is somewhat revisionary, so the view could be misinterpreted, leading to confusion and off-target criticisms of PD based on the standard way of reading (DS).

In a more recent paper, Field considers an alternative way of expressing his account of truth-talk, one that provides him with axioms of the sort he wants without the revisionary and potentially confusing aspects of his earlier strategy. He combines his disquotationalism with what he calls “the linguistic view of meaning attributions” (LV). On this view of meaning-talk, to say that some sentence S means that p is just to say that S has the same non-intentional meaning-characteristics (which include things like computational role and indication relations) as utterance rather than the truth-predicate, saying instead “for me to call an utterance ‘p’ true is to say that ‘p’ (as I understand it) is true.” This is more explicit in Field (2001c), p. 158.

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225 Field (1994), pp. 250-251 and fn. 2. On the last point, Field claims in fn. 2 that cognitive equivalence in his sense implies that inferences between a sentence and its post-substitution counterpart (e.g., between “Snow is white and grass is green” and “‘Snow is white’ is true and ‘grass is green’ is true”) are empirically indefeasible and close to conceptually indefeasible as well.
“p”-as-I-actually-understand-it.\textsuperscript{226} On this view, the use of that-clauses amounts to a way for a speaker to talk about sentences of his own idiolect, computationally typed according to the interpretations (in the non-intentional sense) he gives them. This allows Field to take the instances of the equivalence schema

\[(\text{ES}) \text{ That } p \text{ is true iff } p\]

as the axioms of PD capturing the cognitive equivalence relation fundamental to truth-talk. After all, according to LV the instance of (ES) just amount to the instances of (DS) understood the way Field wants them to be understood.\textsuperscript{227}

Admittedly, using the instances of (ES) as axioms brings with it the possibility that PD will be misinterpreted as a theory of propositional-truth rather than one of utterance-truth. This worry leads Field to claim that there is an advantage to using (DS) rather than (ES) since the former “makes it unambiguously clear that it is our own sentences…that we are taking about, rather than special intentional [sic] entities.”\textsuperscript{228} However, the point just made is that this is not unambiguously clear; there is the problem at the other end, i.e., the possibility of the instances of (DS) being read as claims about orthographically typed sentences rather than “our own” sentences. One might think that the interpretation of that-clauses is more of an open question than that of quotation-names, so the new tactic might be considered somewhat less revisionary. Either way, however, PD turns out to be a fairly subtle view.

The understanding of that-clauses offered by LV makes the instances of (ES) what PD needs, claims about the sentences of the speaker’s idiolect (rather than about orthographically

\textsuperscript{226}Field (2001c), p. 159. See Field (1994), pp. 253-256 for details on the sorts of things he includes among non-intentional meaning characteristics.

\textsuperscript{227}Field (2001c), pp. 164-165.

\textsuperscript{228}Ibid.
typed sentences or intensional entities like propositions). The benefit of LV for my purposes here is that it connects PD to the characterization of deflationism in terms of the thesis

(FMFT) Truth-talk’s logico-linguistic functioning is such that it gives the instances of (ES) fundamental status.

What Field holds of the instances of (DS) on his non-standard reading applies to the instances of (ES) when they are understood according to LV. So PD can be understood as claiming that each instance of (ES) “holds of conceptual necessity, that is, by virtue of the cognitive equivalence of the left and right hand sides.” The instances of (ES) follow directly from (in fact, capture) the cognitive equivalence relation fundamental to truth-talk’s logico-linguistic functioning, and thus count as fundamental on this view. PD, therefore, fits with my characterization of deflationism in terms of FMFT.

Both of the motivations for deflationism discussed in the previous chapter apply to PD. Truth-talk’s duality is not explained actually in terms of the triviality of the instances of (ES), but rather in terms of that which gives these equivalences this status: the cognitive equivalence relation central to truth-talk. As a basic instance of truth-talk, a type-A/A’) utterance is cognitively equivalent to the sentence it embeds (computationally typed); they are necessarily and a priori equivalent. This makes the former a trivial expansion of the latter. Since the instances of (ES) capture the cognitive equivalence relation at work here, they capture what explains the triviality involved in one side of truth-talk’s duality. Their triviality makes them an expression of the way in which type-A/A’) utterances are trivial expansions of the sentences they embed. For reasons similar to those applying in the context of Horwich’s MT, type-B) utterances on the other hand are not trivially equivalent to any truth-free claim, generating the other side of the duality.

With respect to the Liar paradox, Field’s PD fares better than Horwich’s MT (at least if the latter is taken as a theory of truth itself). In his published writings, Field indicates a desire to

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Field (1994), p. 258. Field actually says this of the instances of (DS) understood his special way.
eliminate truth-talk’s inconsistency by excluding the inconsistent instances of (DS) from PD’s axioms.\textsuperscript{230} In his more recent writings, however, Field claims to be more tempted to endorse (DS) unrestrictedly and to pursue weaken the underlying logic of truth-talk so that the resulting inconsistency in the notion of truth is insulated. In fact, he now finds Priest’s dialetheic approach to the paradoxes attractive.\textsuperscript{231} This approach not only allows for an inconsistency in the notion of truth, but also for the generation of a contradiction from it, blocking the entailment of everything through the adoption of a paraconsistent logic.\textsuperscript{232} This means that Field now holds that PD does not have to solve the preventative problem, and this is correct so long as PD does not include a genuine ontological commitment to a property of truth being a genuine component of reality. Given Field’s nominalistic tendencies, it is plausible to interpret any property-talk he engages in as a non-committing \textit{façon de parler}, allowing PD to reap the full advantages deflationism offers with respect to dealing with the Liar paradox.

As in the case of Horwich’s MT, the main challenge facing Field’s PD is the generalization problem. PD fares better than MT on this front as well, mainly because PD takes the instances of (ES) to be claims about (computationally typed) sentences rather than propositions. Field claims that this allows the notion of pure disquotational truth to be axiomatized with a single formula that can be understood as a kind of “generalized” version of (ES).\textsuperscript{233} This “general” axiom is obtained by prefixing (ES) with a universal substitutional quantifier, yielding

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{230}Ibid., pp. 250, fn. 1 and 267.
\item \textsuperscript{231}Field (2001b), pp. 145-146.
\item \textsuperscript{232}Priest (1998), pp. 411-413.
\item \textsuperscript{233}Field (1994), pp. 259, 267, 268. Here, and in what follows, I am paraphrasing what Field says about (DS) in terms of (ES).
\end{itemize}
(GES) $\Pi p$ (that $p$ is true iff $p$).\footnote{Field also discusses an alternative (and weaker) way of obtaining a generalized version of (ES) by incorporating schematic sentence variables directly into the language. (See Field (1994), pp. 259, 267 and (2001b), pp. 141-143.) I consider this alternative below.}

The universal quantifier “$\Pi$” is to be understood as a means of encoding a (potentially infinite) conjunction formed by conjoining all the results of replacing “$p$” consistently with each of the (potentially infinite number of) elements of its substitution class (here, the declarative sentences of the truth-attributer’s idiolect).\footnote{David (1994), pp. 99-100. This understanding is intended to avoid a potential circularity in the traditional account of substitutional quantification in terms of the truth of all substitution instances.}

The use of the schematic variable “$p$” in a sentence-in-use position on the right-hand side of (GES) necessitates the assignment of a substitution class containing only sentences the truth-attributer understands; a speaker can use only those sentences he understands (and only with the understandings he attaches to them). The use of a that-clause (understood according to LV) on the left-hand side of (GES) dictates that the speaker’s use of truth-talk be understood as describing the sentences he understands only as he understands them (blocking possible shifts in how the sentence-token is interpreted). (GES) axiomatizes a speaker’s purely disquotational truth-predicate by capturing its functioning in terms of a (potentially infinite?) conjunction of all of the instances of (ES) generated from the sentences of the speaker’s idiolect. Thus, relative to an assignment of a substitution class, (GES) is a generalized version of (ES) for a speaker, at least in the sense that it provides every instance of the latter that the speaker can understand.\footnote{Of course, one must be careful with claims like this. A substitutionally quantified claim cannot be about the elements of the substitution class assigned to it in the same way that an objectually quantified claim is about the elements of its domain (even if the quantifier is restricted). In the latter case the quantifier itself is a kind of referential expression; in the former it is not. In the case of (GES), each instance happens to make a claim about some element of the substitution class because it employs a that-clause, and that-clauses refer to the sentences of the speaker’s idiolect (computationally typed). Even so, the generalized schema does not make a claim about all the elements at once the way an ordinary generalization does. So the claim that (GES) is a generalization must be taken with a grain of salt. How big a grain of salt I discuss below.}
Because the right-hand side of (GES) contains an occurrence of the substitution variable “p” in a sentence position, this generalized schema cannot be expressed informally in a natural language. Natural languages do not contain atomic sentence variable expressions (the way they do object variable expressions, i.e., pronouns). As a formal axiomatization of PD, however, it provides PD with something to say about the generalizing function truth-talk plays. In accounting for this function, the aim is to explain how truth-talk provides a way to make claims that generalize on the embedded sentences in statements like

(1.3) If the Pope asserts that crabapples are edible, then crabapples are edible.

On Field’s view, a kind of generalization on (1.3) can be obtained by using a substitutional quantifier to formulate a “generalized” version of the schema

(1.4) If the Pope asserts that p, then p.

The result is the formula

(3.2) (Πp)(the Pope asserts that p → p).

The problem is that (3.2), like (GES), cannot be expressed informally in a natural language because of a lack of (atomic) expressions playing the role of schematic sentence variables. Axiomatized by

(GES) (Πp)(that p is true iff p),

PD allows for the construction of a formula equivalent to (3.2) that can be expressed in a natural language, namely

(3.3) (Πp)(the Pope asserts that p → that p is true).238

237 I should acknowledge that in discussions with Field since writing this section he has made it clear to me that what follows is not the way he prefers to explain truth-talk’s generalizing function. This is hardly surprising since the strategy is, as will be revealed below, something of a Trojan horse. I discuss Field’s preferred strategy in comparison to my own in Chapter 6.

238 For this reason, one way of looking at truth-talk—even in the context of PD—is as a means of forming natural language expressions that function as sentence variables, i.e., prosentences. Acknowledging this does not make PD a prosentential account of truth-talk since it does not take truth-talk to operate
The reason this formula can be expressed informally is that in it the variable “p” occurs only in the nominalizing context of a that-clause. This means that the variable is used only as part of a variable term-expression, “that p”. As a variable nominal term, “that p” (and so every use of “p” in (3.3)) can be rendered informally with a pronoun, as in the “open” sentence

(3.4) If the Pope asserts it, then it is true.\textsuperscript{239}

Because in the context of LV the things picked out by the instances of “that p” in the instances of (3.3) are exactly what make up the substitution class of its substitutional quantifier, there is a sense in which the quantifier supplies all the different things that the occurrences of “it” in (3.4) take as values when the open sentence is bound with a quantifier.\textsuperscript{240} It is therefore not entirely unreasonable to claim that (3.3) can be expressed informally with a universally quantified claim like

(3.1) Everything the Pope asserts is true.

By interpreting the quantifier in a claim like (3.1) substitutionally, PD provides truth-talk with a role that can be seen as fulfilling the (ES)-related function it performs in generalizing on claims like (1.3). Truth-talk’s generalizing role is supposed to allow us to use a claim like (3.1) to express a “fertile” generalization of this sort, one that could not otherwise be formulated and that has an impact on matters not involving truth.\textsuperscript{241} (3.1) is said to be how we express (3.3) informally in English. (GES) establishes the equivalence of (3.3) and the truth-free “general” claim (3.2). Thus, (3.1) is an example of truth-talk playing its role of providing a way (the only

fundamentally via some sort of anaphoric content inheritance (akin to that at work in pronouns). Brandom’s OP (discussed below) is an example of an account of truth-talk that does.

\textsuperscript{239}This step involves the assumption that the things speakers assert are picked out by that-clauses, which on LV is somewhat complicated since that-clauses are also supposed to pick out sentences belonging to the idiolect of the person using them (interpreted as that person interprets them). But while I can assert (3.4) indiscriminately, much of what comes out of the Pope’s mouth are not sentences belonging to my idiolect. So really (3.3) needs to be loosened to something more like “(3.3’) (Hp)(Pope assertorically utters something that means that p → that p is true)” where meaning-talk is understood according to LV.

\textsuperscript{240}Although, again, it does not supply them referentially the way an objectual quantifier does.
way in our natural language) of expressing the fertile generalization (3.2), a way of taking on a commitment to all of its instances and generalizing in the desired way on (1.3).

Notice that because Horwich takes that-clauses to refer to propositions, this line of reasoning is unavailable to MT. In the context of MT, (3.1) cannot be taken as the natural language expression of (3.3) because the things supplied by the latter’s quantifier (sentences) and the things referred to in the antecedents and consequents of its instances (propositions) are not the same according to MT. Since the idea of a substitutional quantifier that supplies propositions for substitution into a schema makes no sense, the only way MT could be modified so that they were the same would be to take that-clauses to refer to the sentences the quantifier supplies (as in LV), rather than to propositions. But this is basically just to turn MT into PD. So Field’s PD offers an advantage over Horwich’s MT by providing truth-talk a role that can be seen as fulfilling the generalizing function truth-talk plays.

That said, given the details of how this function is fulfilled according to PD, it is not clear that it still deserves to be called a generalizing function. Gupta’s objection is directed not only against Horwich’s view, but against disquotational views like PD as well. There is a difference in the logical strength of (3.1) interpreted as having an objectual quantifier, and (3.1) interpreted as employing a substitutional one. Because substitutional quantifiers are understood as means of encoding infinite conjunctions and infinite disjunctions of schema instances, universal substitutionally quantified claims do not amount to real generalizations. Such a claim does not say something about all of the elements of its substitution class at once, the way a real generalization does. The former only asserts all of its instances as particular claims in a conjunction. But as Gupta has pointed out, even if one has all of the instances of a generalization together in a conjunction, this does not amount to the generalization. So one might think that interpreting the quantifier substitutionally does not account for the generalizing role truth-talk

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plays in claims like (3.1), but instead just turns a generalization into something weaker, and deprives truth-talk of its putative generalizing role. Since truth-talk is supposed to allow us to formulate generalizations we otherwise could not, this conclusion could lead one to reject the idea of interpreting the quantifiers in claims like (3.1) substitutionally.

Field’s alternative strategy of explaining truth-talk’s generalizing role by incorporating schematic variables into our language is not much help here. The idea is that a schema like (ES) is itself part of the language, rather than just having instances that are part of the language. Field claims that this formalism amounts to “a very weak fragment of the substitutional quantifier language, and is probably preferable to using the full substitutional quantifier.” However, one major problem with this strategy is that these schematic variables are understood to be governed by the following two rules of inference:

i) a rule that allows replacement of all instances of a schematic letter by a sentence;

ii) a rule that allows inference of $(\forall x)(\text{Sentence}(x) \rightarrow A(x))$ from the schema $A(“p”),$ where $A(“p”) \text{ is a schema in which all occurrences of the schematic letter } p \text{ are surrounded by quotes.}$

Rule ii) is questionable since it essentially allows for the derivation of a generalization like (3.1) (with the quantifiers understood objectually) just from the conjunction of its instances (as expressed by the generalized schema (1.5)). Just as Horwich’s appeal to a rule of inference akin to an omega rule is questionable, so too is the legitimacy of this rule. Even if an omega rule applies in the case of the natural numbers, it is unclear what would justify a rule like ii) involving the application of predicates to (computationally typed) sentences.

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243 Ibid.

244 Ibid.
One might try to justify rule ii) by relating it to an omega rule for the natural numbers via an appeal to the technique of Gödel numbering. This would involve altering rule ii) by replacing “A(’p’)” with “A([p])”, where “[p]” gives the Gödel number of the expression (here, sentence) that goes in for “p”, and axiomatizing the notion of truth, not with the disquotational schema, but with (the instances of?) the schema

\[(GS) [p] \text{ is true iff } p.\]

However, an account of truth-talk in terms of (GS) would be an account of the application of the truth-predicate to sentences picked out by their Gödel numbers, and given the nature of Gödel numbering this would be an account of truth-talk as applied to orthographically typed sentences. This kind of disquotationalism is undermined by the modal objections that show the instances of the truth-schema for such a view to be contingent and \textit{a posteriori}.

Without rule ii), the schematic variables approach appears to face the same challenges that the substitutional quantifier approach does as an account of truth-talk’s generalizing function. In fact the schematic variables approach might be worse off than the approach discussed above. For one thing, as revisionary as it may be to interpret certain uses of quantificational expressions substitutionally, it is more revisionary to incorporate schematic sentence variables into the language. The former involves a revisionary interpretation of (certain uses of) expressions already in our language; the latter involves the incorporation of a new logical apparatus into our language. This goes against the idea that truth-talk is our way of effecting the operation of schematic variables in our language without actually incorporating new, complicated logical.

\[245\text{The present context of discussion involves paraphrasing, “A(’p’)” as “A(that p)”, “Sentence(x)” as “Sentence-of-mine(x)” and the phrase “surrounded by quotes” as “embedded in a that-clauses”.}\n
\[246\text{It would also involve changing the phrase “surrounded by quotes” to “embedded in the Gödel-number generating device ‘[…]’”.}\]
If schematic variables or substitutional quantifiers are held to be only part a
formalism underlying our natural language, then again the substitutional quantifier approach
seems preferable since it offers a means of hooking this underlying formalism up to our ordinary
language in a way that provides something to say about claims like (3.1). However, on either
approach, it is unclear that PD accounts for truth-talk’s generalizing role adequately, casting
doubt on its adequacy as an account of truth-talk and therefore on its satisfactoriness as a
formulation of deflationism.\(^{248}\)

**BRANDOM’S OPERATOR PROSENTENTIALISM**

In terms of its explicit subject of analysis, Brandom’s OP is the easiest of the three
current formulations of deflationism to fit with a characterization of the approach in terms of
(FMFT) Truth-talk’s logico-linguistic functioning is such that it gives the
instances of (ES) fundamental status.

His theory is unmistakably an account of the logico-linguistic functioning of truth-talk. He
provides an account of the expression “…is true” according to which it is a special kind of
operator that when attached to an expression picking out some (set of) sentence-tokening(s),
results in a sentence that inherits its content anaphorically from the sentence-tokening(s)
designated.\(^{249}\) A sentence of this sort is called a *prosentence*, so according to Brandom’s view,

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\(^{247}\) Horwich (1998), p. 4, fn. 1 and pp. 32-33

\(^{248}\) PD faces further challenges that come from its restriction of the meaningful attributions by a speaker of
his purely disquotational truth-predicate to just those made to sentences from his idiolect. This is a serious
challenge, but not so important as dealing with the generalization problem. Field now addresses this issue
of truth-attributions to sentences a speaker does not understand by modifying his view in terms of his tactic
of making schemata themselves part of the language and the idea of accepting (DS) as a schema. Even if a
speaker has no (or virtually no) understanding of a sentence S, if he accepts S as a legitimate declarative
sentence he will accept the instance of (DS) generated from it as a way of tying “any future improved of
understanding of ‘true’ as applied to S to the future understandings of S.” (Field (2001b), p. 147.)

\(^{249}\) Brandom (1994), p. 305. A sentence-tokening is basically a sentence-token as used on some particular
occasion. This fixes the interpretation assigned to the sentence-token; for instance, the referents of any
indexical terms in the token are fixed in a tokening. (Ibid., p. 303.) The notion of a sentence-tokening is
truth-talk should be understood to function via the operation of a *prosentence-forming operator*, namely, the expression “…is true”. This view is a version of the prosentential approach to truth-talk, an approach descended from the redundancy theory of truth. Prosententialism claims that every use and aspect of truth-talk can be explained in terms of the role it plays in generating sentences that pick up their contents from other sentences, and more importantly from whole sets of other sentences (including *infinite* sets). Truth-talk is essentially a means of generating prosentences.

The notion of a prosentence is a member of the broader grammatical category of proform. To understand the category of pro-form in general, it is useful to look at the functioning of the most widely recognized member of the category, the pronoun. Pronouns are terms that can stand in for nouns in their various sentence-positions and which function by inheriting their contents (i.e., their referents) from some noun phrase. The relationship between the pronoun and the noun phrase it inherits its content from is known as anaphora. Anaphoric content inheritance allows us to use pronouns to say “Mary wanted to vacation in Europe, but she could only afford to go to the Cape” instead of having to use repetitious (and potentially ambiguous\(^{250}\)) sentences like “Mary wanted to vacation in Europe, but Mary could only afford to go to the Cape.” In the former, the pronoun “she” is linked to the noun token “Mary” in such a way that it inherits the content it contributes to the whole sentence from this anaphoric antecedent.\(^{251}\)

\(^{250}\)Grover, Camp, and Belnap (1975), pp. 84-85. The use of a pronoun makes it clear that the speaker is talking about only one Mary.

\(^{251}\)That the source of content for an anaphor is called its antecedent should not be taken to imply that this source must precede the anaphor. There are cases where it does not, such as “If she has the time, Mary will change the oil.” See Grover, Camp and Belnap (1975), p. 84.
Pronouns function in two different ways. On the one hand, there is what is called the “lazy” use of a pronoun. The “she” in “Mary went out, but now she is back” is a pronoun of laziness; it functions mainly to avoid repetition (and perhaps also ambiguity). As far as the claim’s content is concerned, one could just as easily use another token of the noun it stands in for and inherits its content from in its place. On the other hand, pronouns can be used in quantificational constructions. In the sentence “If anyone insults you, you should tell me about him,” the “him” is a quantificational pronoun. It is anaphorically linked to the quantificational noun phrase “anyone”. Unlike in the “lazy” case, this pronoun cannot simply be replaced by another token of this noun phrase. That substitution would change the claim to “If anyone insults you, you should tell me about anyone,” which clearly says something different. In a quantification use, a pronoun functions as a variable that takes as arguments each member of a set determined by the pronoun’s anaphoric antecedent, in this case, “anyone”. Because the pronoun inherits the contribution it makes to the content of the whole sentence from the quantificational expression, and this expression picks out a set of objects, the quantificational sentence makes a claim about all of the objects picked out by the quantificational expression.

The idea of a prosentence takes the kind of anaphoric functioning recognized at the sub-sentential level in the workings of pronouns, to the sentential level. The most developed attempt to analyze truth-talk in terms of prosentences is the theory put forward by Dorothy

\[252\] \[253\]

\[252\text{Ibid., p. 85 and Brandom (1994), p. 301.}\]

\[253\text{In addition to pronouns there are other recognizable sub-sentential pro-forms as well: “do” can function as a proverb (as in “Think of it the way we do”); “so” can function as either a proadjective (as in “Their objective was to make their opponents angry, and to keep them so”), or as a proadverb (as in “They spun wildly, and while so spinning, smacked into one another”). In each case the pro-form anaphorically inherits the content it contributes to the whole sentence from some antecedent token of the same general grammatical category. These different pro-forms are individuated by the sort of position they fill: nominal, verbal, adjectival, or adverbial (Grover, Camp, and Belnap (1975), pp. 86-87.) Like pronouns, proverbs at least clearly function in both the lazy fashion (as in the proverb example above) and the quantificational fashion (as in “Whatever Mary did, Bill did” (Ibid., p. 86)).\]
Grover, Joseph Camp, and Nuel Belnap.\textsuperscript{254} The view these authors present (GCB) extends the main theme of redundancy analyses of truth-talk, according to which the instances of truth-talk just have the same content as certain sentence-tokens to which they are related. Analyses in terms of the \textit{redundancy} of truth-locutions are applicable only to truth-attributions that display the sentences they supposedly share their contents with, for example, “It is true that snow is white” (and perhaps “‘Snow is white’ is true”).\textsuperscript{255} GCB makes the notion of content redundancy more powerful and more flexible by explaining it in terms of anaphoric content inheritance. The view maintains that all truth-talk can be accounted for with the use of two, non-decomposable prosentences: “that is true” and “it is true.”\textsuperscript{256} Both of these prosentences can be used in the “lazy” way to account for the cases covered by the redundancy theory, but perhaps more importantly, “it is true” can also be used as a \textit{quantificational} prosentence.

The availability of quantificational prosentences extends a redundancy-like analysis of truth-talk to cases involving opaque sentence nominalizations, e.g., instances like

(1.2) What Bob said is true,

and even to cases involving quantificational expressions, as in

(3.1) Everything the Pope asserts is true.

On GCB, (1.2) is more perspicuously rendered as

(3.5) For anything one can say, if Bob said that it is true, then it is true

and (3.1) is reformulated as

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{254}Grover, Camp, and Belnap (1975).
\item \textsuperscript{255}Ramsey (1927) applies the content-redundancy approach to sentences like the first example; Ayer (1952) applies it to sentences like the second (parenthetical) example.
\item \textsuperscript{256}Grover, Camp, and Belnap (1975), p. 83.
\end{itemize}
For anything one can assert, if the Pope asserts that it is true, then it is true.257

This last sentence inherits its content from a whole set of sentences, sentences there is no reason
to think share a single content. Truth-talk allows us to express all at once all of the instances one
would get if one systematically replaced the prosentence “it is true” in the open sentence bound
by the quantifier with each member of the set of sentences picked out by “For anything one can
assert”.

GCB holds that the two prosentences are, in terms of their underlying logic, non-
decomposable, meaning they are semantically atomic units.258 This blocks the interpretation of
the functioning of truth-talk suggested by surface grammar—the view that a predicate “…is true”
is being used to characterize something picked out by “it” or “that” in the prosentences.

Preventing this interpretation removes any motivation for hypothesizing about the underlying
nature of a property attributed with “…is true” and for theorizing about the nature of the bearers
of any such property. However, although taking “it is true” and “that is true” as semantically
atomic units does block a predicative interpretation of truth-talk, it does so at a cost. All
instances of truth-talk must be recast into some form employing one or the other of these
prosentences, and in some cases this generates awkward reformulations.

For example, even a simple truth-attribution like

(2.10) It is true that crabapples are edible

257Ibid., p. 92. The prosentence “it is true” functions in (3.5) and (3.6) simply as a sentential variable
(“p”). It can stand on its own (as in the consequents) or appear in nominalizing constructions like that-
clauses (as in the antecedents).

258They obviously are not syntactically atomic as they both involve more than one word. The thesis of
semantic atomicness for the prosentences is the basis of GCB’s characterization of a language the authors
call English*, a fragment of English in which “is true” appears only as part of either “it is true” or “that is
ture.” English has different grammatical conventions than English*, but GCB maintains that “English truth
talk is semantically and pragmatically like English* truth talk.” (Grover, Camp and Belnap (1975), p. 97)
This supposedly shows that we do not need a separable truth-predicate. If we have “it is true” and “that is
true”, then “is true” is redundant. (Ibid., p. 101) English*, which wears its deep structure on its surface, is
supposed to reveal the deep structure (i.e., logic) of English truth-talk, which does not wear its deep
structure on it surface. The claim is that English can be translated into English* without loss.
is problematic. GCB provides a two-part translation: Crabapples are edible. That is true. Of course, all that the truth-attribution says according to GCB is that crabapples are edible, but it appears to involve saying it twice, where (2.10) does not. In addition, any case like (1.2) in which the anaphoric antecedent is not on full display gets “officially” rendered in terms of a quantificational prosentence like (3.5), when they are more plausibly understood as “lazy” prosentences. This requires thinking of most cases of truth-talk as even more misleading about their underlying logical form: not only do they not really involve predication, but surprisingly they involve hidden quantification as well.

Brandom’s operator version of prosententialism (OP) is based on GCB, but his view avoids the awkward reformulations the latter postulates and other ad hoc seeming maneuvers it must resort to in order to handle modalized, tensed, and non-declarative instances of truth-talk. Brandom avoids these problems by rejecting the thesis that all truth-talk involves some use of either “it is true” or “that is true” at the level of underlying logic, and, perhaps more importantly, the thesis that prosentences are semantically atomic units. OP is a “disquotational or unnominalizing variant” of prosententialism. On this view, the expression “...is true” is a separable logical particle that combines directly with noun phrases that nominalize sentence-

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259 Grover, Camp and Belnap (1975), p. 103.


261 Accounting for modalized and tensed truth-talk requires the postulation of special operators like “It-might-be-true-that” and “It-used-to-be-true-that” and “It-is-not-true-that”. These operators are supposed to attach to the atomic prosentences at the level of underlying logic. GCB does acknowledge that in ordinary English we do rewrite the interior of “it is true” and “that is true”, but the point is that this is just surface grammar. The underlying logic supposedly involves connectives like these. Again, on this version of the prosentential theory, the surface grammar of truth-talk is even more radically misleading with respect to its underlying logic than initially supposed. See Grover, Camp, and Belnap (1975), p. 96.

tokenings, resulting in the formation of a variety of different prosentences. This is what Brandom means by calling “…is true” a prosentence-forming operator. As a result, the sentences

(1.2) What Bob said is true

(3.1) Everything the Pope asserts is true

are themselves prosentences; they are not awaiting translation into some use of “it is true” or “that is true.” This is less revisionary with respect to the underlying logic of the first claim, and it provides greater flexibility in accounting for different varieties of truth-talk since the “is” in “…is true” can be tensed, modified by a modal qualifier, and “reordered” to accommodate non-declarative instances of truth-talk (e.g., “Is that true?”).

Following disquotationalism, Brandom takes the expressions “…is true” combines with to be referential expressions, on this view, sentence nominalizations picking out sentence-tokenings. Unlike disquotational views of truth-talk, however, OP does not take the fact that combining “…is true” with these referential expressions results in sentences to mean that this expression functions predicatively. A claim like

(3.7) The last sentence Bob uttered is true

does not offer a description of, or say anything about, Bob’s last sentence-tokening. While the term “the last sentence Bob uttered” as used in (3.7) is referential, it does not supply the sentence-tokening it picks out as the subject of an assertion. Rather, the term performs anaphoric reference, a kind of reference that in this case supplies a sentence-tokening as the anaphoric antecedent from which (3.7) inherits its content. Truth-talk does not perform the logico-linguistic function of predication according to OP. Rather, on this view, truth-talk functions via the application of a special anaphora-inducing device (a prosentence-forming operator) to

\[263\] Brandom construes the notion of a sentence nominalization widely. It covers any term that picks out a sentence-tokening, including descriptions, quotation-names, demonstratives, that-clauses, “or any other sort of nominalization.” (Brandom (1994), p. 304.)
referential expressions picking out sentences (including quantificational expressions picking out infinite sets of sentences), resulting in the formation of sentences that are linked anaphorically to the sentences nominalized.

Brandom’s OP falls under my characterization of deflationism in terms of FMFT because it gives the instances of the equivalence schema

\[(ES) \text{ That } p \text{ is true iff } p\]

fundamental status. As on Field’s view, these equivalences are not brute according to OP because they are not logico-linguistically basic. Still, they are fundamental in the sense that they follow directly from truth-talk’s logico-linguistic functioning as OP explains it. According to OP, the left-hand sides of the instances of (ES) are prosentences that are the result of applying the prosentence-forming operator “…is true” to sentence nominalizations of a special sort: that-clauses.265 That-clauses are special in that they contain the sentence-tokenings they pick out, so their use in a prosentence brings the anaphoric antecedent into the prosentence itself. While this is perhaps something also achieved by the use of quotation-name sentence nominalizations, the use of a that-clause in a prosentence like

\[(2.9) \text{ That crabapples are edible is true}\]

puts an *explicit statement* of the content inherited into the prosentence itself. This is because of the role that-clauses play in the specification of propositional content.

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\[265\] Sentences of the form “It is true that p” also involve this, but the application is rendered indirect by the fact that each of these type-A) prosentences involves the application of the prosentence-forming operator “…is true” to a pronoun (“it”) that is anaphorically dependent on the sentence nominalization formed by filling in “that p”. This makes each resulting prosentence as a whole anaphorically dependent on the sentence-tokening picked out by the that-clause, but there is a kind of two-step anaphora. Still, this makes Brandom’s view fit with the rejection of the split-function approach to explaining truth-talk’s duality. No instances of truth-talk involve a sentential connective “It is true that” at the logical level. Rather, even type-A) utterances involve combining the expression “…is true” with that-clauses understood referentially. Given Brandom’s denial that the expression “…is true” is a predicate, this shows that one does not have to endorse a predicative analysis of truth-talk to reject the split-function approach.
Brandom’s understanding of content specification (that-clause use) is somewhat similar to the linguistic view of meaning-attributions Field now finds attractive. Both view that-clauses as a speaker’s means of picking out sentence-tokens according to the interpretations they get as used by him.\(^{266}\) Brandom’s version of this “interpretationist” understanding of content specification is clearest in his account of indirect discourse, which is derived from the work of Donald Davidson. Modifying the notion of “samesaying” from Davidson’s paratactic approach, Brandom explains that-clause use in indirect discourse as a speaker’s means of displaying a sentence-token whose assertoric utterance in his mouth (at the time of that-clause use) \(\textit{would}\) (according to him) commit him to whatever the utterer being quoted indirectly is committed to by the utterance of his that is being characterized by the that-clause.\(^{267}\) On this approach, the classic example

Galileo said that the earth moves

is to be understood as having the sense of:

Galileo said (something that \textit{in his mouth then} committed him to what an assertional utterance of this \textit{in my mouth now} would commit me to): The earth moves.\(^{268}\)

The use of the subjunctive is required here “because the displayed sentence-tokening is not being used assertively and so is not a ‘saying’…”\(^{269}\) in the sense that the utterance being characterized via indirect discourse is. It is therefore only a counter-factual assertoric uttering of the displayed sentence-token that enters into the samesaying relation with the characterized utterance.

\(^{266}\) Again, one important difference is that for Field the interpretation a sentence-token gets as it is used by a speaker does not amount to objective, interpersonal content, while for Brandom it (supposedly) does.

\(^{267}\) See Davidson (1968) and Brandom (1994), pp. 535-539 on the paratactic approach. The talk of what speakers are committed to comes from Brandom’s normative-inferentialist approach to content. This approach explains content in terms of inferential roles defined by structures of commitments and entitlements to commitments. See Brandom (1994), Chapter 3.


\(^{269}\) Ibid., p. 705, n. 27.
In the role of the sentence nominalizations of type-A/A’) prosentences like

(2.9) That crabapples are edible is true,

that-clauses serve a different purpose than they do in cases of indirect discourse. In a prosentence a that-clause is not used to characterize (ascribe content to) another utterance; rather, the that-clause provides the prosentence with its anaphoric antecedent. Nevertheless, on Brandom’s view, even when playing this role the that-clause still invokes a counter-factual assertoric uttering of the nominalized sentence. This is because Brandom’s normative-inferentialist account of semantics and pragmatics links content very tightly with specifically assertoric pragmatic significance; a sentence-tokening’s content is a matter of its inferential role in “the game of giving and asking for reasons,” and to give a reason just is to make an assertion. Thus, given how that-clauses function, the combination of one with the prosentence-forming operator “…is true” entails that the content inherited by the prosentence formed is the content that would have been put forward if the embedded sentence itself had been uttered assertorically in place of the prosentence.

Because of how the unnominalizing function of “…is true” works with that-clauses, any use of a type-A/A’) prosentence like

(2.9) That crabapples are edible is true

is pragmatically and semantically equivalent to a use of the sentence it embeds in the same context. So, even when embedded in a conditional, a tokening of

(1.1) Crabapples are edible

can be replaced with a tokening of (2.9). As a result, the instances of (ES) can be seen as the direct product of the logico-linguistic functioning of truth-talk when truth-locutions (and that-clause nominalization) are applied to the left-hand sides all of the logical truths of the form

(*) p iff p.

\[\text{Ibid., pp. 157-158.} \]
Because the instances of (ES) neither require nor admit of an explanation in terms of anything “deeper” than the logico-linguistic functioning of truth-talk, OP makes them fundamental in the sense relevant for a fit with a characterization of deflationism in terms of FMFT.

OP accounts for both of the unusual aspects of truth-talk the previous chapter claims motivate deflationism in general. As in the case of Field’s PD, Brandom’s view explains truth-talk’s duality not in virtue of the triviality of instances of (ES), but rather in virtue of what it is that makes these equivalences count as trivial. In fact, the account of how the prosentence-forming operator “…is true” functions with that-clauses makes especially clear that type-A/A’) prosentences amount to trivial expansions of the sentences they embed. It is necessary and a priori (knowable just given an understanding of how that-clauses and truth-talk function) that an utterance of such a prosentence has the same content and pragmatic significance as an utterance of the embedded sentence would have in the same context. In the case of a type-B) prosentence like

(3.7) The last sentence Bob uttered is true,

the sentence nominalization is opaque and picks out whatever sentence-tokening it does only contingently. Since there is no necessary and a priori connection to any particular truth-talk-free utterance, (3.7) is a non-trivial use of truth-talk. Hence, truth-talk exhibits a duality.

The anaphoric analysis of truth-talk’s logico-linguistic functioning provides OP with an interesting diagnosis of truth-talk’s propensity for paradox. Although prosentential views like OP, with their clear rejection of there being any property of truth attributed with truth-talk, would seem especially compatible with a treatment of diagnosing and containing truth-talk’s inconsistency, the diagnosis these views offer of the Liar paradox potentially explains the inconsistency away even in ordinary truth-talk, thereby integrating a solution to the preventative problem into its answer to the diagnostic problem. In diagnosing the “paradoxical” instances of truth-talk, OP can appeal to the grounded/ungrounded distinction as it applies in the context of
A grounded prosentence is one “connected by an ‘inheritance chain’ to an antecedent that can acquire its content independently.”\[^{271}\] An ungrounded prosentence is one whose inheritance chain does not connect it to any independently contentful antecedent.

Ungroundedness can result from a number of conditions, but one of the simplest is when an utterance’s only anaphoric antecedent is itself. This appears to be the source of trouble in

\[\text{(L+)}\] The sentence labeled “(L+)” is not true.

Further, (L+) can be considered a special (“very small”) case of a more general class of cases that Dorothy Grover calls “circles of discontent”—anaphoric loops like

\begin{align*}
\text{Harry: } & \text{What Hermione says next is not true.} \\
\text{Hermione: } & \text{What Harry just said is true.}
\end{align*}

in which there is no independent supplier of content.\[^{273}\] Ungrounded prosentences also result from infinite sequences of prosentences in which each one takes the next as its anaphoric antecedent. As these cases indicate, empirical circumstances like which sentence-token is labeled “(L+)”, what utterance someone else has made, or what sentence comes next in a sequence, can determine whether an utterance is an ungrounded prosentence.

A prosentential account of truth-talk might claim that the supposedly paradoxical instances of truth-talk all turn out to be ungrounded prosentences. If this is the case, then the semantic paradoxes are not really paradoxical. Rather, these utterances simply all lack content because they are ungrounded prosentences. On this approach, since there is nothing \textit{paradoxical} about lacking content, utterances like (L+) do not show even that ordinary truth-talk is inconsistent or contradictory. Of course, the success of this diagnosis in solving the preventative

\[^{271}\] Grover (1977), pp. 596-597. Grover is concerned with the distinction between grounded and ungrounded “sentential inheritors” formed with referring expressions and the use of “true”. She claims that these are not prosentences, but clearly they correspond to Brandom’s understanding of prosentences formed from sentence nominalizations with the prosentence-forming operator “…is true”.

\[^{273}\] Ibid.
problem is questionable. As in the case of all putatively eliminative solutions to the Liar paradox, there is the issue of the strengthened Liar response. For the diagnosis of the Liar offered in terms of this sense of ungroundedness the relevant strengthened Liar sentence is

\[(UL+) \text{ The sentence labeled “}(UL+)\text{” is either not true or ungrounded.}\]  

Although the ungrounded prosentence diagnosis may succeed in showing that “object-level” truth-talk is consistent, \((UL+)\) does seem indicate that truth-talk still has a propensity for paradox at a “meta-level”\(^{275}\). However, the ultimate failure of OP to completely eliminate truth-talk’s inconsistency does not count against the view; solving the preventative problem is completely supererogatory for any formulation of deflationism. The thought that truth-talk is inconsistent is not incoherent on this view (as it is on a property-ascribing view), and provided the inconsistency can be contained, it is not trivializing. The “diagnose and contain” approach to truth-talk’s inconsistency might require an alternative diagnosis, but the existence of paraconsistent systems of logic establishes that containment is possible.

At first glance, Brandom’s view seems to be better equipped to account for truth-talk’s (ES)-related generalizing role than either of the other current formulations of deflationism. As in the case of explaining truth-talk’s duality, OP does not attempt to explain this generalizing function in terms of the instances of (ES), but rather in terms of the aspect of truth-talk’s logico-linguistic functioning that accounts for these equivalences. OP’s explication of truth-talk’s logico-linguistic functioning gives truth-talk a role that can be seen as accounting for its use in the expression of fertile generalizations that could not otherwise be expressed, for instance, one that generalizes on the embedded sentence positions in

\[(1.3) \text{ If the Pope asserts that crabapples are edible, then crabapples are edible.}\]

\(^{273}\)Ibid., p. 597. The Truthteller and truthteller loops are also circles of discontent.

\(^{274}\)Ibid., p. 602.
As before, what is wanted is a generalization that covers all of the instances of the schema

(1.4) If the Pope asserts that p, then p.

Because type-A/A’) prosentences are trivially equivalent to the sentences they embed, the instances of (1.4) are each equivalent to some instance of the schema

(1.5) If the Pope asserts that p, then that p is true.

But this “lazy” prosentential functioning in the transition from the instances of (1.4) to those of (1.5) is not all that truth-talk is capable of according to OP. It also has the capacity to form quantificational prosentences that cover all of the instances of (1.5) at once, prosentences like

(3.8) For anything one can assert, if the Pope asserts it, then it is true,

or more colloquially,

(3.1) Everything the Pope asserts is true.

What makes OP appear to handle the generalization problem better than Field’s PD is that OP seems to give the quantificational expression in (3.1) an ordinary, objectual interpretation, rather than a substitutional one. Because the noun phrases employed in the instances of truth-talk are understood as referential expressions (performing anaphoric reference), the quantifier in an utterance like (3.1) can be understood referentially. This would seem to make it an objectual quantifier (probably a restricted one). The universal quantificational expression serving as the sentence nominalization in (3.1) picks out a set of sentence-tokenings (probably all

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275 Grover’s arguments on Ibid., p. 603 against the inconsistency of (UL+) seem flawed.

276 As a result of the unnominalizing aspect of Brandom’s OP, (3.8) differs from GCB’s rendering of the quantificational prosentence as (3.6) in that the antecedent of (3.8) employs just a pronoun (“it”) rather than a nominalized prosentence (“that it is true”). This pronoun functions in the antecedent and consequent as a variable sentence nominalization that takes the set of possible sentence-tokenings as values through its anaphoric link to the quantificational expression. So the anaphoric link between the prosentence consequent of (3.8) and these sentence-tokenings is more complicated than on GCB’s (3.6), being built on top of the pronominal anaphoric link between “it” and “anything one can assert”.

277 Given MT’s inability to handle the generalization problem at all, the only comparison there is to make among the current formulations of deflationism is that between how PD handles this issue, and how OP handles it.

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possible sentence-tokenings), each of which then generates an instance of the generalization by functioning as an anaphoric antecedent in the “lazy” way for the variable (conditional) prosentence

(3.4) If the Pope asserts it, then it is true.

The idea of picking out a set of objects and supplying all of them in the instances of the generalization fits with our ordinary conception of quantification.

The problem is, however, that because the sentence nominalizations employed in the instances of truth-talk perform anaphoric reference, the quantificational expression in a claim like (3.1) has to be understood substitutionally rather than objectually. Although the pronoun “it” may pick out sentence-tokenings due to an anaphoric dependence on “anything assertible”, in the consequent of (3.4) it cannot be supplying these tokenings as items to be talked about, but only as items that are one side of an anaphoric relation. Anaphora is a relation that holds between linguistic items; it is a kind of grammatical linkage. An item picked out as an anaphoric antecedent is being picked out as a linguistic item in use, not as an object to be talked about or described. As OP explains a claim like (3.1), it would be misleading to express its logical form as

(3.9) (∀x)(the Pope asserts x → x is true).

In (3.9), the variable “x” takes objects as arguments and presents them as items to be characterized in some way. In order for the truth-talk in the consequent the generalization to be understood prosententially, the sentence-tokenings picked out by the quantifier must be supplied as linguistic items that can be linked to the variable prosentence “it is true”. This means that OP, like PD, has to interpret the quantificational expression in (3.1) as a substitutional quantifier.278

The broader theoretical contexts in which OP is situated further supports this conclusion.

In the context of just a broader notion of truth-talk that includes the other traditional semantic
notions as well, OP is linked with a parallel account of reference-talk, one according to which the latter is also a means of forming anaphoric pro-forms, specifically anaphorically indirect definite descriptions like “the guy Bob referred to as ‘that idiot’” that function as lexically complex pronouns. Because all reference-talk has to do just with anaphoric linkage on his view, the claim that the sentence nominalizations employed in truth-talk are referential expressions does not incorporate an extra-linguistic relation into truth-talk. So in combination with the related account of reference-talk, OP provides no basis for an objectual interpretation of the quantifier in (3.1).

In the broader context of Brandom’s general normative-inferentialist approach to semantics (and pragmatics), all uses of quantificational expressions are understood substitutionally. This is forced on a normative-inferentialist by the fact that quantificational sentences are not otherwise compatible with compositionality since the components of these sentences are open formulas, which “are not the sorts of things to which one can be committed or entitled.” Rather, quantificational claims must be understood as composed out of conjunctions (for universal) and disjunctions (for existential) of their substitution instances, i.e., the quantifiers must be interpreted substitutionally. But if the broader context OP is embedded in takes all quantification as substitutional, then OP cannot provide for anything but a substitutional interpretation of the quantifiers employed in “generalizations” like (3.1).

Brandom attempts to avoid some of the standard objections to a general substitutional interpretation of the quantifiers by claiming that their substitution classes are not to be considered

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278 Given that one quantifier has to bind both occurrences of “it”, and the second one requires that the quantifier be substitutional, the first “it” must be read as a substitutional variable as well in order for (3.8) to condense into (3.1).


280 Ibid., pp. 434-435.
fixed and that new terms can always be introduced, so there is no worry that any particular object
that should be covered by a universal generalization of the form “(∀x)Px” is not covered by a
substitution instance of the form “Pa”. However, this still does not address Gupta’s point that
even if as a matter of fact a conjunction includes a conjunct for every instance of a generalization,
that still is not equivalent to the generalization since there is no explicit guarantee in the
conjunction that all the instances are covered (as there is on an objectual interpretation of a
universally quantified claim). In the end, then, OP does no better in handling the generalization
problem than PD does.

As an account of our actual truth-talk, OP faces several other objections as well, all
having to do with the fact that this account of truth-talk rejects the most natural reading of its
logical form—the predicative reading. To begin with, OP completely rejects the semantic
phenomenology of truth-talk. Claims like

(1.2) What Bob said is true
do not have the feel of claims that inherit their content anaphorically from other claims, the way
pronouns feel like terms linked to other terms. The instances of truth-talk feel like descriptions of
objects picked out by the singular terms they employ; they feel like claims with the logical form
“x is F”. A related objection has to do with OP’s inability to accommodate certain inferences
that are intuitively acceptable (intuitively valid even), but require that truth-talk be understood
predicatively. Consider, the inference

\[ \text{281Lance (1996), p. 486.} \]

\[ \text{282Brandom’s main concern here is that a substitutional interpretation of the quantifiers seems to preclude}
\text{us from making claims about all real numbers because of the stock of substituends has at most only}
\text{countably many members. He acknowledges that we cannot get separate terms for all the reals at once, but}
\text{claims we can always introduce a term picking out any particular real, and the substitution class for the}
\text{quantifiers should be considered to include all the terms that could be introduced into a language. So in}
\text{that sense all the reals are covered. (See Brandom (1994), pp. 434-435.)} \]

\[ \text{283I am borrowing the notion of semantic phenomenology from Crimmins (1998). See pp. 2, 16-17.} \]
What Bob said is true.
What Corey believes is true.
So, what Bob said and what Corey believes are both true.
So, what Bob said and what Corey believes have something in common.

Given that OP denies that the instances of truth-talk make claims about the sentence-tokenings picked out by their “subject” terms, a conclusion about those sentence-tokenings cannot follow from premises that are merely anaphorically dependent on them.\(^{285}\) Finally, because OP denies that “…is true” is a predicate, it must also reject the application of the “something-from-nothing” transformation exhibited in the following inference

What Bob said is true.
So, what Bob said has the property of truth.

Schiffer claims that for any predicate “is F”, an inference of this form is licensed simply by our linguistic practices involving the notion of property.\(^ {286}\) Even if these “something-from-nothing” transformations are not trivial, the inference just given seems correct. OP’s rejection of it looks more like a revision of our practices than a specification of how they already apply here.

These concerns about OP’s view of the logical form of the instances of truth-talk are not decisive objections. However, combined with worries about whether OP adequately accounts for truth-talk’s (ES)-related generalizing function these objections cast doubt on OP’s adequacy as an account of truth-talk. Therefore, as in the cases of Horwich’s MT and Field’s PD, Brandom’s OP should be considered less than fully satisfactory as a formulation of deflationism.

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\(^{285}\) Note that this is a different objection than the one in Horwich (1998), p. 125. Horwich claims there that a prosentential view cannot account for inferences like those considered in the previous chapter in the discussion of truth-talk’s duality. But this is incorrect. Given that what Bob said is that crabapples are edible, at least OP can explain the inference from this and “What Bob said is true” to “That crabapples are edible is true” (substitution of “equivalent” sentence nominalizations) and then to “Crabapples are edible” (trivial equivalence of type-A/A’) prosentences and the sentences they embed). This pattern of inference is not the problem, but inferences like the one just offered are.

\(^{286}\) Schiffer (1994) and (1996). See the discussion of pleonasticism about properties in Chapter 1.
CONCLUSIONS

The current formulations of deflationism are all accounts of truth-talk that satisfy FMFT. As such, they all receive the initial incentive that truth-talk’s unusual features provide for a deflationary view. However, each of these views also faces objections that undermine their adequacy as accounts of truth-talk, and so as fully satisfactory formulations of deflationism. This motivates the pursuit of a new formulation of deflationism, one that makes good on the initial motivations provided by truth-talk’s unusual aspects and that also accounts for the central, (ES)-related features that foiled the current formulations. In the next chapter I explain the theoretical machinery that provides for such a new formulation, and in the chapters to follow I apply this machinery in developing a new formulation of deflationism that combines certain merits of other formulations (including those examined here) with a few new merits of its own, all while avoiding the problems shown in this chapter to make the current formulations of deflationism unsatisfactory.
Deflationism has been explained (in Chapter 1) as primarily a view about the logico-linguistic functioning of truth-talk rather than as a view about what kind of property (if any) of truth there is, or even a view about the sorts of functions truth-talk serves. A deflationary account of truth-talk will have consequences for these issues, but they are not this approach’s central concerns. The thesis about the logico-linguistic functioning of truth-talk that is definitive of deflationism focuses on the instances of what is known as the equivalence schema:

(ES) That p is true iff p.

The central commitment of a deflationary view is that truth-talk functions in such a way that these equivalence are given fundamental status, i.e., that of being conceptually and explanatorily basic.

Because deflationism is a position about the way truth-talk functions, the most salient considerations for both motivating and critiquing it have to do with how this way of talking works. Chapter 2 presents arguments for taking certain unusual features that truth-talk exhibits as providing initial support for deflationism. More specifically, truth-talk’s trivial/non-trivial duality and its propensity for paradox are best accounted for by a view that takes the instances of (ES) to be fundamental, i.e., a deflationary view. Chapter 3 examines the current formulations of deflationism and explains how each amounts to a realization of the general thesis I claim is deflationism’s central commitment. As versions of the general deflationary approach, therefore,
these views each make good on the initial motivations for deflationism to some extent (some formulations more effectively than others). However, the current formulations each face problems that render them unsatisfactory as accounts of truth-talk. The main difficulty has to do with adequately handling the generalization problem, a task that is part of accounting for all of the (ES)-related functions truth-talk must be acknowledged to perform. This failure to make good on the initial motivations for deflationism provides incentive for an attempt at a new formulation of deflationism.

In this chapter I explain the central notions that I use in the following chapters to formulate a new, superior deflationary account of truth-talk. The main idea behind this new account is the notion of semantic pretense. One of the merits of accounting for truth-talk in terms of semantic pretense is that this allows the account to accommodate simultaneously apparently conflicting intuitions about truth-talk that serve as the dividing point between the current formulations of deflationism. This view combines part of what seems right about each of these accounts of truth-talk, avoiding the problems and costs of they face divided. My main aim for this chapter is to introduce the central notion involved in a pretense-based account of truth-talk, semantic pretense, and to explain some of the more important aspects of its functioning.

I begin here with a brief summary of a particular understanding of semantic pretense that has been developed, focusing in particular on how it is based on games of make-believe. In this chapter I will momentarily bracket my suggestion that truth-talk involves semantic pretense in order to make use of truth-talk (and semantic notions more generally) in the usual way in discussing the standard account of semantic pretense itself. In my explanation of this notion I make a new distinction between two different ways that that utterances can involve pretense. This distinction will be important in the final chapter for responding to certain challenges that
confront the pretense-based account of truth-talk. I then discuss the most developed application of the pretense approach (still making use of truth-talk in the usual way to do so), slightly modifying an existing pretense-based account of existence-talk in terms of the distinction I draw. In addition to illustrating the general approach, examining how semantic pretense functions in this fragment of discourse also serves as a useful preliminary to the development of a pretense-based account of truth-talk. This is in part because some of the motivations for applying the notion of semantic pretense in an account of existence-talk are similar to certain things that deflationists want to say about truth-talk. In addition, the way I lay out the use of semantic pretense in my discussion of this account provides a model for the pretense-based account of truth-talk to be developed in the chapters to follow.

**SEMANTIC PRETENSE**

i) Make-Believe and the Pretense Approach

The notion of pretense has been getting considerable philosophical work in the past decade, especially in recent years. Much of this gainful employment has been inspired by Kendall Walton’s account of the representational arts as presented in his book *Mimesis as Make-Believe*. Walton’s account of the role of pretense (specifically, of make-believe) in the representational component of various art forms has been fruitfully extended to applications in the philosophy of language and its intersections with metaphysics and the philosophy of mind.

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287 Eventually the use of truth-talk and proposition-talk in explaining semantic pretense will have to be eliminated so that the notion of semantic pretense can be used to explain truth-talk, but for now using these ways of talking simplifies matters by helping avoid awkward constructions.

Typically these applications involve offering pretense-based accounts of what (for lack of a better term) I call “ways of talking.”

A way of talking is a loosely bounded fragment of discourse (and thought) centered around some concept or family of concepts (e.g., modality, numbers, truth), or around some mode or figure of speech (e.g., metaphor, irony, hyperbole). On a pretense-based account of some way of talking there is both a distinction and a connection between the claims its instances appear to make and the genuine or serious claims they make about (things in) the world. Both the distinction and the connection get explained in terms of the role the utterance can play within a particular kind of pretense. Utterances explained in terms of semantic pretense are held to involve a kind of indirection; they manage to make one claim about the world by appearing to make a different claim.

Postulating semantic pretense in an account of some way of talking amounts to adopting a kind of fictionalism about that fragment of discourse, but one must be careful to specify exactly what sort of fictionalism is being adopted. What is distinctive about the pretense approach is that applying it to a way of talking does not preclude the declarative instances from that fragment

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289 Walton on existence-talk, talk about fictions, and metaphor; Mark Crimmins on attitude ascriptions and identity-talk; David Hills on metaphor; Frederick Kroon on existence-talk and identity-talk; Stephen Yablo on possible worlds-talk, ontology-talk, and talk apparently about “platonic objects” (e.g., numbers, models, propositions).

290 This general phenomenon is pervasive. Probably the most obvious sort of example of it is metaphor, as in “Juliet is the sun.” I take it that metaphors can be used to make genuine assertions capable of being true or false, but the assertion made is not what the utterance appears to claim (see Hills (1997), pp. 120-121, 126-127). Even among the less poetic of us, metaphor of a sort shows up in many idiomatic expressions like “I put it on the back burner” or statements like “He was stretched thinner and thinner, and then he just snapped.” Many seemingly unmetaphorical claims like “The table’s front legs are shorter than its rear legs” or “That bottle has a long neck” also have a lingering element of this phenomenon due to their employment of dead metaphors. Beyond the obvious case of metaphor (live and dead), there are other modes of speech with which speakers make the assertions they do by appearing to make other assertions. In the case of the ironic statement “Oh, that’s a great idea” (said of a bad idea) the speaker makes an assertion by seeming to claim its opposite. In the case of the hyperbolic statement “That is the worst idea ever!” the speaker makes an assertion by seeming to make an exaggerated claim.
of discourse from being used to make true assertions about the actual world. This aspect of semantic pretense contrasts with a common gloss on what fictionalism about a way of talking entails, namely that its claims are “true in the fiction” but are all actually false. Viewing all fictionalist accounts in this way focuses too much on literal truth, missing the possibility of an utterance’s being genuinely true even if it is not literally true (it might be contentless when taken literally). A pretense-based account holds that an utterance employing semantic pretense can be both “true in a pretense (fiction)” and actually true (although there is usually a difference between the fictionally true claim made and the claim that is actually true). The specific sort of pretense involved in the pretense approach is what allows for this possibility.

The kind of pretense involved in semantic pretense is related to the sort of pretending that is most familiar from children’s games of make-believe, such as games with mud pies. The notion of make-believe can be applied to a wide range of phenomena, including linguistic phenomena, because this sort of pretense typically (if not always) involves more than just willful imagining of unreal persons and events. What is distinctive about make-believe is that although it is based on (perhaps implicit) stipulations of what is to be imagined, some of what is to be pretended in the context of the game is determined by how the world really is. For instance, given stipulations to imagine that certain patty-shaped globs of mud are pies and that a certain hollow stump is an oven, it is to be imagined in the context of the game based on these stipulated pretenses that Corey has put a pie in the oven if and only if she has put one of the globs of mud inside the stump. We might capture the general idea by saying that although make-believe

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291 My concern here is that pretense-based accounts not automatically be considered error theories. This is especially important for the development of a pretense-based account of truth-tell (see Boghossian (1990), pp. 174-175). I will discuss this issue in detail in Chapter 6.

292 This error-theoretic understanding of fictionalism is common, but not required. See Field (1989), p. 2.

293 Another way of missing this possibility is exhibited in the discussion of how to interpret propositional-attitude-talk in Field (1978), p. 10. Field contrasts the options of assuming that attitude ascriptions are
involves a distinction between what is so and what is pretend-so, some of what is pretend-so is
determined by what is so.\textsuperscript{294}

Games of make-believe typically involve prescribed pretenses that are determined by the
actual features of real things—things that serve as \textit{props} in the game.\textsuperscript{295} Often what is pretended
is something about the props themselves, that they are some particular way (usually, but not
necessarily, some way other than how they really are), as when children pretend that certain globs
of mud are pies. Sometimes the pretenses prescribed are not about the props themselves, as when
the game of make-believe involved in appreciating a painting prescribes imagining not something
about the painting (e.g., that it is a veridical visual experience) but rather, e.g., that there is a
person standing before me.\textsuperscript{296} In either case, the games include stipulations of what is to be
imagined in the context of the game (henceforth, what is \textit{fictionally true}) as well as principles of
generation, prescriptions to pretend that determine how real-world facts (about the props)
combine with what is fictionally true to generate further fictional truths (which can then generate
still further fictional truths, etc.). We must, then, distinguish between two kinds of fictional
truths: those that are the stipulative ground of a game of make-believe—what is \textit{expressly made-
believe}—and those that are \textit{generated from reality}.\textsuperscript{297}

By understanding utterances as moves in games of make-believe, the pretense approach
can explain how utterances involving pretense still manage to make assertions about how the

\textsuperscript{294}Crimmins (1998), p. 3 marks the fundamental distinction as being between what is so and what is pretend-so.


\textsuperscript{296}It might prescribe a certain \textit{de se} imagining, e.g., that I am seeing/being offered a drink by Bacchus.

\textsuperscript{297}Crimmins (1998), p. 5.
world really is. Because some of the fictional truths belonging to a game of make-believe are generated from reality, there can be real-world conditions that must be met for it to be fictionally true that someone making the utterances speaks truly (henceforth, for the utterances to be fictionally true). So in making what amounts to a pretend assertion, a speaker also expresses a commitment to the obtaining of these required real-world conditions, thereby making a genuine, serious assertion about the world as well. Roughly speaking, there are two factors that determine whether an utterance is fictionally true: the parameters of the make-believe it belongs to, and how the world actually is. What serious assertion a speaker ends up making with a pretense-employing utterance depends on which of these factors is being emphasized.

Sometimes the serious assertion made is just that certain sorts of pretenses are appropriate in (made fictionally true by) the very game of make-believe to which the utterance belongs. In cases like this, how things actually are with the props that generate the game is treated like a background condition while the content of the make-believe (what it makes fictionally true) is explicitly discussed. Walton calls make-believe aimed at expounding on its own content “content oriented” make-believe. Very generally, the serious assertion made with an utterance that belongs to a content oriented game of make-believe is that to pretend in a certain manner (that displayed in the utterance) in a certain sort of game of make-believe (that implicated by the utterance) is fictionally to speak truly. So, for example, my declaring that I am making pies as I begin to form disc-shaped globs of mud is a way of seriously asserting something about

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298 I will be focusing (as is typical) on assertions, but the point holds more generally; pretense-employing utterances can be used to ask questions about how the world really is (“How many pies does Corey have?”) and to command people to make the world some way (“Give one of your pies to Nina!”).

299 Some real-world conditions have to do with the workings of certain pretenses. Contrast the real-world condition of it being appropriate in some game to pretend of the thing my hand is on that it is an oven with the fictional truth that the thing my hand is on is an oven (where my hand is on a hollow stump).


a particular game of make-believe, namely that (since this game makes it fictionally true that I speak truly in making my utterance) it makes it fictionally true that I am making pies.

Although the make-believe central to children’s games and to the appreciation of works of art is mainly content oriented, sometimes the point of employing make-believe in an utterance is not (or not only) to expound on the make-believe itself. Sometimes the point is to indicate the presence of circumstances that make some pretense appropriate rather than to state that the pretense is appropriate. In cases of this sort, the make-believe the utterance belongs to gets treated like a background condition while how the world is—in particular, how things are with the game’s props—is specified. Make-believe that functions with the aim of expressing facts about its props Walton calls “prop oriented” make-believe. Very generally again, the serious assertion a speaker makes via an instance of prop oriented make-believe is that the situation (primarily that of the props) is such that to pretend in the way exemplified (or indicated) is fictionally to speak truly, in a game of the relevant (implied) sort. So, for example, saying that a computer’s printer cable socket is male expresses the fact it has rows of pins rather than holes.

In making a pretense-employing utterance a speaker can assert that some pretense is appropriate, or she can declare the presence of the circumstances that make it appropriate. This “or” is not exclusive. She might make either sort of assertion without the other, or she might make both at once (or neither). There is, at least, a connection between the kinds of assertion. Someone who asserts that the conditions making some pretense appropriate obtain at least implies that the pretense is appropriate, and someone who asserts that some pretense is appropriate at least presupposes that the props are as they would need to be to make it appropriate. Which (if

303 Walton (1990), pp. 408, 412.
any) serious assertions, implications, and presuppositions get made is determined by the context of utterance, along with elements like the speakers’ states of mind and other factors.\textsuperscript{304}

The foregoing discussion reveals that taking an utterance as a move in a game of make-believe involves seeing the speaker as accomplishing two different things: on the one hand she makes a pretend assertion, on the other hand she makes a serious assertion about how the world really is. The pretend assertion is the claim “the speaker makes as if to make;”\textsuperscript{305} it is the statement that the utterance’s surface structure suggests is being made with it, the claim the utterance appears to make when it is taken at face value. The serious assertion is an expression of a commitment to the obtaining of the real-world conditions that would make the pretend assertion fictionally true. The utterance as a serious assertion is therefore genuinely true exactly when the utterance as a pretend assertion is fictionally true. The pretend assertion purports to say how the world should be pretended to be; the serious assertion purports to say how the world is.\textsuperscript{306} A speaker makes the serious assertion via pretending to make the pretend assertion. Ways of talking analyzed in terms of semantic pretense are therefore ways of engaging in “indirectly serious discourse.”\textsuperscript{307}

Because the pretend assertion made with a pretense-employing utterance is the claim suggested by the utterance’s surface structure, it is the pretend assertion rather than the serious assertion that is associated with a literal interpretation of the utterance. This is because taking an

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\textsuperscript{304}Ibid., p. 412.

\textsuperscript{305}Crimmins (1998), p. 7.

\textsuperscript{306}I am being somewhat loose here with the notion of saying. Strictly speaking, statements do not say anything; speakers say things by making statements by making utterances. This laxness (pretense?) here and elsewhere should not affect the points being made.

\textsuperscript{307}Crimmins (1998), p. 32.
utterance literally involves giving it something like a face-value reading. Since even when the serious assertion made with a pretense-employing utterance is true, the pretend assertion made is often not true, the claim associated with a face value reading of the utterance will often fail to be true when the serious assertion is true. Thus the serious assertion made is not the same as the literal claim made since they can differ in truth-value. There can be some confusion on this matter because the claim an utterance appears to make on a literal interpretation is sometimes called “the claim the utterance literally makes”. Since “literally” can be understood loosely as meaning “really” or “genuinely,” this singular term can be misunderstood as picking out the claim the utterance seriously makes, i.e., the serious assertion made. The confusion can be avoided by keeping “literal” in its proper adjectival (rather than adverbial) position.

ii) A Way to Say

Although the pretense approach takes a speaker to (pretend to?) make a pretend assertion in issuing a pretense-employing utterance, this should not be taken to imply that a speaker must be actively engaged in some sort of imaginative play whenever she employs semantic pretense. This is a misinterpretation of the role that pretense plays in accounting for how the utterance functions. The mistake manifests itself in a prima facie challenge that confronts the application of the pretense approach to many utterances, in particular, most utterances intuitively considered

308This is a bit quick for two reasons. First, it is probably more accurate to say that taking an utterance literally involves taking its components at face value and combining them compositionally in the way suggested by the utterance’s surface form. Second, the latter part of this process does not always match the former. Consider cases involving apparent substantives that are really quantificational terms, e.g., “Nothing is in the box.” However, even with these wrinkles the point still holds as a rough heuristic.

309A similar and perhaps trickier sort of confusion can arise in considerations of whether an utterance is literally true. This is best understood as a matter of whether the utterance is true when it is interpreted literally. However, it can be misunderstood as being a matter of whether the utterance is “genuinely” true, which it will be if the serious assertion made with it is true. Since this is possible even when the utterance is not true when interpreted literally, confusion can ensue. It is important to keep track of what “literally” is modifying, the truth-attribution or the interpretation.
literal or non-figurative. The challenge comes in the form of an argument that begins with the observation that in many cases speakers do not think of themselves as pretending anything when they employ the way of talking to be explained in terms of pretense. Pretending is not something one can do unintentionally, so a way of talking cannot involve pretense if the speaker using it has no intention to engage in make-believe or pretense. Thus, the pretense approach does not apply to any intuitively literal ways of talking.

The way to respond to this challenge is to reject the second premise. On one natural understanding of pretending, it is not something one can do unintentionally. Certainly actively engaging in imaginative play is not something one can do unintentionally. But this is not the only sense of pretending available. This becomes clear once the role of pretense in a pretense-based account comes to light. Mark Crimmins indicates this role in a summary of some of the basic goals of the pretense approach.

Part of postulating semantic pretense is to claim that the apparent structure of a sentence is misleading as to the claims made in uses of it. But we do not simply claim this; we explain the use of that sentence by its being structurally suited to perform a certain task within a pretense, and we explain how its performance of that task suits it for use in genuinely expressing what it otherwise has no business expressing. The aim is to provide satisfying accounts both of what we say and of how we can manage to say it like that.311

The primary point of accounting for some utterance in terms of pretense is not to explain what the speaker is doing. The main aim is to explain how it is that an utterance that looks like it serves to make one claim can be used to make a very different one. Pretense functions only in the account of how this gets accomplished, of why we can use this utterance to make the serious assertion we make with it. Because the utterance counts as an assertion in a game of make-believe,

it purports to say how that make-believe prescribes pretending the world is. The parameters of
the make-believe establish real-world conditions under which that pretense is prescribed, which
are thus necessary and sufficient for the utterance to be fictionally true. Thus the utterance also
functions to express a serious commitment to (i.e., make a genuine assertion of) the obtaining of
those real-world conditions. In viewing an utterance as a move in a game of make-believe in this
way we do not have to take someone making the utterance to be playing the game as opposed to
alluding to it or even just relying on it implicitly.

In making an utterance that employs semantic pretense, a speaker might pretend only in
what Crimmins calls a shallow sense. Shallow pretense is a level of pretense whose whole point
is simply to provide a way of making certain sorts of claims; it is not pretense in the service of
active imaginative play. Shallow pretense is related to what Walton calls unofficial games of
make-believe. What makes a game unofficial as opposed to authorized has to do with the
game’s parameters. Games of make-believe are authorized if the rules governing them are
authorized, that is, if they dictate using some object as a prop as it is intended to function in the
generation of games of make-believe (according to how it is supposed to function as a
representational fiction). If a game’s parameters employ objects as props in unintended ways,
then the rules and the game are unofficial.

That a kind of object is intended to function in the generation of games of make-believe
is a highly conventional matter, and the details of these conventions are highly dependent on

312 Ibid., pp. 10, 14-15.
314 Recall that Walton’s theory is first and foremost a theory of works of arts according to which
something’s status as a representational work of art is due to its having the function of serving (in a
particular way) as a props in certain sorts of games. (Walton (1990), p. 60.) Thus, a game authorized for a
realistic painting such as Leonardo’s Mona Lisa involves pretending that in looking at the painting we look
at a real person; a game authorized of a literary work of fiction involves a pretense that there is someone
(the “narrator”) telling the story as it is written down, and adopting an attitude toward the story—perhaps
cultural context. The purpose of the make-believe generated by an object of this sort will typically be to explore the possibilities the make-believe raises. Most authorized games are therefore instances of content oriented make-believe. Because the make-believe is content oriented, utterances that count as moves in these games will make serious claims about how the make-believe authorized for the props prescribes pretending the world to be. This is why these utterances can be prefixed with a phrase like “in the story…” or “in the world of the picture…” without seeming to alter the claim made. Walton calls statements of this sort “ordinary statements” concerning fictions. For example, an utterance of

(4.1) Mona Lisa is smiling enigmatically

is most naturally considered a move in a game authorized for Leonardo’s painting Mona Lisa. As part of a content oriented make-believe, this utterance makes a serious assertion about what is fictionally true in the make-believe the painting is intended to generate. The serious assertion made is that it is fictionally true that one who pretends as displayed in (4.1), in a game authorized for the painting, speaks truly. This is why prefixing (4.1) with “in the world of the picture…” does not significantly affect the assertion made. The prefix just makes this assertion more explicit.

The most obvious cases of ordinary statements about fictions are those that express pretenses that really are appropriate in authorized games, as in the case of (4.1). However, the taking it as an accurate historical report, perhaps as exaggerations or even reports of confused delusions—depending on what one is supposed to think of the narrator. (See Walton (1990), pp. 358-360.)


316 However, this sort of prefix still does not make the serious assertion entirely explicit since it does not explain the use of empty names in many ordinary statements about fictions, including (perhaps) “Mona Lisa”. This issue is a major problem for the standard understanding of ordinary statements about fictions which takes an ordinary statement “p” just to be elliptical for a claim of the form “In the story, p.” (See Lewis (1978).) The pretense approach reverses the order of explanation. On this sort of view a claim like (4.1) by itself is prior, and the equivalence of a claim prefixed with “In the world of the picture…” follows from the account of what (4.1) seriously says about a game of make-believe authorized for Mona Lisa. Because (4.1) functioning in a pretense is prior, the pretense approach can explain the use of empty names
expression of an inappropriate pretense does not make an utterance any less an ordinary statement. Consider an utterance of

(4.2) Mona Lisa is shouting emphatically.

Such an utterance is every bit as ordinary as an utterance of (4.1) so long as it would be possible to show the person who uttered (4.2) that he was wrong by demonstrating that games authorized for *Mona Lisa* do not make (4.2) fictionally true. If this is the case, then prefixing (4.2) with “in the world of the picture…” would not change the claim it makes either. In these circumstances, the utterance still claims that the pretense it displays is appropriate in an authorized game. Its not being appropriate does not prevent (4.2) from being a move in an authorized game; it just makes it a bad move.

Authorized games are typically content oriented, the make-believe being generated for the purpose of seeing what it includes. The props function in the service of the make-believe. This focus on the make-believe itself along with the highly conventional and culturally established manner in which authorized games are generated from their props makes make-believe of this sort fairly elaborate and extended. This is less the case for unofficial games of make-believe. Unofficial games are not tied to using objects as props in any particular way, and the props for unofficial games are not necessarily objects whose purpose is generating games of make-believe. Unofficial games are more likely to be focused on the real-world circumstances they would be played in than on the make-believe itself; they are more likely to be prop oriented than content oriented. These games are thus less likely to be extended and elaborate and so utterances counting as moves in them are more easily offered spontaneously for special purposes.

The parameters of unofficial games can be extensions of those governing authorized games, as in utterances of

(4.3) Sherlock Holmes is a better detective than Sam Spade.

in talk about fictions without resorting to postulating fictional entities as their referents. (See Walton
The game that (4.3) belongs to is an ad hoc make-believe that uses both the Holmes stories and certain of Dashiell Hammett’s writings as props together pretty much in the way each get used separately in games authorized for them. A speaker uttering (4.3) is most likely claiming that certain conditions obtain, namely that there is a degree X of detective skill such that the Holmes stories make it is fictionally true that someone uttering “Holmes has detective skill to degree X or higher” speaks truly, while Dashiell Hammett’s writings make it fictionally true that someone uttering “Sam Spade has detective skill to a degree less than X” speaks truly. The serious assertion talks about the two props, contrasting them by relating each to a degree of detective skill.

The prop oriented nature of unofficial games of make-believe is even more evident in games with rules orthogonal to those of authorized games. For instance, an utterance of

(4.4) Clinton nearly nixoned his presidency

belongs to a game whose parameters have us treat a name as a verb. Because a game of this sort is so remote from any authorized make-believe, it would typically be generated spontaneously for a specific purpose rather than as part of a larger project of exploring the content of the make-believe itself. Clearly the main interest of (4.4) is to make a serious statement about Clinton (namely, that he did things that nearly required that he leave office) rather than to flesh out the range of pretenses that this fairly contrived game of make-believe makes appropriate.

Utterances counting as moves in unofficial games are more likely to make serious claims about

(1990), pp. 401-404.)


318 Ibid., p. 413. (Cf. Crimmins’ account of the serious assertion made with his example “Ann is as clever as Holmes and more modest than Watson” on Crimmins (1998), p. 3.)

319 This is a case of the figure of speech known as anthimeria in which a term is pressed into service as a part of speech other than the one it is standardly used as. (See Preminger and Brogan (1993), p. 74.) The pretense approach accounts for this mode of speech well. (4.4) is part of a game governed by a rule according to which it is fictionally true that someone’s name can be used as a verb expressing an activity
situations in which these might be played, in general, that the circumstances that would make the pretenses they display appropriate obtain. Because unofficial games are spontaneous and special purpose in this way, “Many unauthorized [i.e., unofficial] games are fragmentary, our participation in them constituting a momentary turn in the course of a conversation.”

Because of their orientation toward circumstances and props rather than make-believe, and their potentially fragmentary nature as “momentary turns in conversation,” unofficial games of make-believe are often simply alluded to rather than actually played. This is the connection to the notion of shallow pretense mentioned above; a speaker does not have to actively participate in the make-believe to make utterances that count as moves in an unofficial game. When a pretense is shallow it is really nothing more than a figure of speech; it is a “way to say”—a means of making one claim by seeming to make a claim of a different sort. A pretense-employing utterance might be used to make some serious point because it is a clever way or perhaps the most convenient (or perhaps even the only) way to express a commitment to certain real-world conditions. Its counting as a move in some game of make-believe may be why an utterance can be used to make a particular serious statement, but someone making the utterance for this purpose need not be actively engaged in the pretense implicated. A speaker might put forward a pretense-employing utterance simultaneously to claim that the world is as required to make the utterance fictionally true, and to indicate the game in which it counts as a move.

characteristic of the person named (in this case, perhaps, doing something that requires that one leave elected office before one’s term is finished).


321Consider Crimmins’ example of using a shallow semantic pretense, the claim “Ann is as clever as Holmes and more modest than Watson.” (Crimmins (1998), p. 3.) This claim also qualifies as a move in an unofficial game, one that uses the Holmes stories as a prop in pretty much the way they are used in an authorized game but which extends that use to generate fictional truths about real people not in the stories.

322See Yablo (1998), pp. 250-254 and Yablo (2000), pp. 293-296 on essential metaphor—when metaphors have no literal translation. Given Yablo’s broad understanding of metaphor, it covers most cases of semantic pretense. In cases where the metaphor has no literal translation the only way we have to
Further, a speaker might rely on issuing what amounts to a pretend assertion in some
game of make-believe in order to make some serious assertions without even being aware that
any pretense is involved. This is a plausible circumstance when the customary, established use
of that type of utterance is to make that serious assertion (indirectly), that is, when there is no
established serious use of the utterance taken at face value. The speaker might produce some
pretense-employing utterance simply because she knows that doing so will make the assertion she
wishes to make even though she has never thought about how it manages to do so.\textsuperscript{323} If in
addition a speaker has no other way to formulate the serious assertion, no direct and wholly
serious means of making the serious claim she does, it would be quite easy for her to miss the fact
that there is something peculiar about her utterance taken at face value.\textsuperscript{324}

One does not have to know how pretense connects the serious statement made with an
utterance to the pretend statement offered with, or even be aware that such a gap exists let alone
how pretense bridges it, in order to use the utterance in this way and to understand the serious
assertion made with it.\textsuperscript{325} Even if it is part of the explanation of how the semantic redirection is

\textsuperscript{323}This is true of most uses of idiomatic cliché expressions (what are called “common metaphors” in the
\textit{Metaphor Dictionary}, cited in Yablo (2000), p. 292) of the sort mentioned in footnote 290. For example,
the claim, “I have butterflies in my stomach” is often used to indicate that the speaker has a certain
fluttering agitated feeling in her stomach, typically due to nervousness. This is not what the statement says
directly or literally, but we seldom have this fact in mind when we use expressions like this. The fact that
people using these expressions hardly ever think of themselves as indicating a pretense let alone engaging
in one does not mean that these phrases do not employ pretense. This is the best way to explain how these
phrases can be used to say what is really said with their use.

\textsuperscript{324}Think of statements like “I am running out of patience.” I do not think that we really have quantities of
some kind of stuff called “patience” that certain situations deplete. There may be a wholly serious way of
making the claim this utterance makes, or there may not. (“My patience is wearing thin” and “I am losing
my patience” certainly do not qualify.)

\textsuperscript{325}However, for full understanding (i.e., of what serious claim is made and how that is accomplished) of a
pretense-employing utterance or way of talking (particularly non-idiomatic, non-cliché ones) one must see
at least that its claims are not to be taken as seriously asserting what they seem to assert on the surface.
(Cf. Crimmins (1998), p. 3.)
pulled off, pretense does not have to be part of an account of what the speaker consciously or actively does, not even at the level of just indicating (rather than engaging in) some pretense.

The distinction between shallow speaking-as-if and engaged imaginative play thus blocks the *prima facie* objection to the pretense approach that people using some way of talking do not ordinarily take themselves to be involved in any active pretending. The speaker can employ a shallow pretense without intending to pretend anything simply by talking a certain way. Pretending shallowly is more like employing a figure of speech than playing a game; a shallow pretense is a figure of speech that happens to get explained in terms of an implied game of make-believe.

**iii) Extrinsic and Intrinsic Pretense**

To understand the role of pretense in a pretense-based account of truth-talk it is important to distinguish two different ways that utterances can invoke pretense. The basic difference has to do with whether pretense is applied to an utterance as from the outside, or whether pretense is integral to an utterance making any claim at all. In the first case the pretense is *extrinsic* to the utterance; in the second case it is *intrinsic* to the utterance. The difference can be most easily expressed through the use of proposition-talk. We might say that in cases of extrinsic pretense there is a proposition expressed directly (i.e., without the operation of any pretense) by the utterance and the pretense involves taking a certain attitude toward this proposition: we regard this proposition as true regardless of whether it is. Establishing real-world conditions under which the proposition directly expressed by the utterance is to be regarded in this way makes it

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327 This way of stating the difference should not be taken too seriously. In Chapter 6 I argue that proposition-talk should also be understood in terms of semantic pretense.
the case that the utterance produces an indirect serious assertion of some other proposition. In cases of intrinsic pretense there is no proposition expressed by the utterance directly, so the indirect assertion of some proposition effected is not a result of regarding a directly expressed proposition in any way. It is a pretense that the utterance asserts a proposition directly (and that the proposition is true) that brings about its indirect genuine assertion of some proposition.

For the sake of brevity and precision (particularly of scope) I will employ an artificially explicit metalanguage in discussing the involvement of pretense in utterances. The explicitness comes in the form of two notational conventions. The first is the star notation “*(…)***” which represents the application of extrinsic pretense to an utterance. This notation is really just shorthand for the application of a sentential operator of the form “in the context of the pretense...” or, more specifically, “(in the relevant game of make-believe) it is to be imagined/pretended that...” to utterances purporting to say how the world is. The resulting utterance offers as fictionally true the claim made by the embedded utterance. Application of this operator can be iterated, and it can also be applied to instances involving the second notation.

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328 This is David Velleman’s account of propositional imagining (imagining that p) from Velleman (ms.), p. 8. For present purposes, pretending can be considered a special kind of imagining.

329 The use of the “that” in the latter expression should make it clear that I am concerned only with what is usually called “propositional imagining.” Other distinct sorts of imagining might be possible, such as imagining a monster (rather than that there is a monster), imagining flying (rather than that one is flying), etc., but I will not be discussing these sorts of imagining (or whether they really are distinct from propositional imagining) here.

As discussed in footnote 139, the second expression is an operator only in the syntactic sense. Like “it is true that...”, it is a syntactic operator constructed out of an expression that functions logically as a predicate putatively describing the object picked out by the that-clause formed when the expression is prefixed to a declarative sentence.

330 A similar operator (borrowed from an earlier paper by Walton) is found in Evans (1982), p. 354. One important difference between Evan’s operator and mine is that he holds that the language that goes inside of it must all be taken literally. This would make the operator only a first-order extrinsic pretense operator. The way I employ it, “*(…)***” can be applied to any utterance that makes a serious claim about the world—directly or indirectly via some semantic pretense. Thus the operator can be iterated to produce higher-order levels of extrinsic pretense, and it can be applied to utterances involving intrinsic pretense. (More on these points below.) This makes “*(…)***” as I use it a general extrinsic pretense operator.
The second notational convention consists of the bracket notation “{...}.” These brackets are used to mark cases of intrinsic pretense. This is not really a sentential operator since what goes inside the brackets does not manage to say anything without the indicated pretense. Utterances that get marked with these brackets make no sense outside of them (sometimes not even grammatically). Therefore, utterances employing the bracket notation do not offer the assertions made with their embedded utterance as fictionally true; they tell us to pretend that the embedded utterances make assertions. Since it is not really an operator, this notation is not applied to utterances and therefore cannot be iterated. It also can never appear outside of the star notation (i.e., {*p*}). It can, however, appear inside of applications of the star operator (*{p}*{p}) as there is no bar to applying extrinsic pretense to assertions made indirectly with an instance of intrinsic pretense. Utterances presented without either the “{*(...)*}” or “{...}” notation are to be taken literally (i.e., more or less at face value).

Extrinsic pretense is the more straightforward of the two sorts. In the most basic cases, the pretend assertion made, the claim associated with a face-value reading of the utterance, could also, in some actual circumstances, be genuinely (i.e., seriously) asserted. Most ordinary metaphors of the form “A is B” involve extrinsic pretense. This is because the utterances used to express these metaphors can typically also be used to make a serious statement when taken at face value (i.e., literally). Consider the utterance

\[(4.5) \text{George W. Bush is the headliner of a bad lounge act.}\]

As a pretense-free utterance, \((4.5)\) succeeds in making a claim about how the world is. To take or offer an utterance of the form “A is B” as a metaphor one must see it as involving some pretense, most plausibly, as belonging to a particular game of make-believe.\(^{331}\) As a move in a game of make-believe there will be real-world conditions that would make the claim associated with a

\[^{331}\text{See Walton (1993) for the details of the role of prop oriented make-believe in (much) metaphor. What I am adding here is the specification of the type of pretense involved as extrinsic.}\]
literal reading of the utterance fictionally true. So, for instance, a metaphorical utterance of the same form as (4.5) involves a game of make-believe that specifies certain real-world conditions under which it is to be pretended that “Dubya” is as described in (4.5), that is, conditions under which

\[(4.6) \text{*George W. Bush is the headliner of a bad lounge act.*}\]

As in most straightforward “A is B” metaphors, the pretense involved in (4.6) is first-order extrinsic pretense. This consists in the application of the extrinsic pretense operator to a pretense-free utterance that is perfectly in order without it, thereby offering the literal claim made by the embedded utterance as fictionally true. Exactly which serious assertions get made with a metaphor employing this pretense depends on what real-world conditions the make-believe explaining the metaphor requires for the fictional truth of the utterance taken literally.\(^{332}\) It is quite natural to take the serious assertions made with first-order extrinsic pretense to be about the props involved in the make-believe. A game of make-believe involving the pretense displayed in (4.6) uses George W. Bush as a prop, and a metaphorical utterance employing this pretense is easily understood as making a serious claim about him. The utterance seriously asserts that Dubya has whatever features the game determines are required for it to be fictionally true that he is the headliner of a bad lounge act. Make-believe involving first-order extrinsic pretense is easily understood as prop oriented.\(^{333}\)

Higher-orders of extrinsic pretense are not so easily taken as prop oriented. Consider

\[(4.7) \text{**George W. Bush is the headliner of a bad lounge act.**}\]

This case of second-order extrinsic pretense does not say simply that Dubya is such that in some game he is fictionally the headliner of a bad lounge act. Rather, (4.7) says that it is to be

\(^{332}\)I do not mean to suggest that this is determinate or even finite rather than flexible and open-ended.
pretended that Dubya is such that in some game he is fictionally the headliner of a bad lounge act. Moving to higher orders of extrinsic pretense makes it more and more natural to take an utterance as making a claim about a pretense rather than one about its props. The real-world conditions that make (4.7) fictionally true are that it is appropriate to pretend that Dubya has the features that make him count (in some other game of make-believe) as the headliner of a bad lounge act.\textsuperscript{334} The application of extrinsic pretense to a pretense-free utterance can easily be seen as just changing how the same subject is seriously described. Further applications of extrinsic pretense appear to change the subject (to a pretense or game of make-believe) as well as how it is described.

Intrinsic pretense is a more complicated phenomenon than extrinsic pretense, and one not often distinguished and considered in its own right. For my purposes it is important to get clear on what this sort of pretense involves because on a pretense-based account, truth-talk is understood as invoking pretense intrinsically rather than extrinsically. Utterances involve intrinsic pretense when they can be used to make serious assertions indirectly, but there are no actual circumstances in which the utterances would make assertions directly. This situation can arise for a number of different reasons (I will distinguish a few below), but in general, taken at face value the utterance could only ever be a pretend assertion. Because a literal interpretation of an utterance is associated with a face-value reading of it, this means that on a literal interpretation an utterance involving intrinsic pretense makes no claim. The only claim there is to associate

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\textsuperscript{333}The connection between first-order extrinsic pretense and prop oriented make-believe makes for a good fit between my claim that much metaphor involves the former and Walton’s understanding of metaphor in terms of the latter.

\textsuperscript{334}Of course it is still possible to take (4.7) as seriously saying something about Dubya, viz., that he has certain features that make it appropriate to pretend that he has certain other features that make it appropriate to pretend (in some other game) that he is the headliner of a bad lounge act. The point is that it gets increasingly difficult with each level to keep track of what could be being said about Dubya (consider: ***George W. Bush is the headliner of a bad lounge act***). It is easier to take the utterance to say something about some make-believe (typically not the one being employed).
with the utterance is the one put forward in the serious assertion it makes indirectly through the operation of a pretense.

Like cases of extrinsic pretense, utterances that involve intrinsic pretense manage to make serious assertions indirectly because games of make-believe establish certain real-world conditions as necessary and sufficient for these utterances to be fictionally true in those games. The general form of these real-world conditions is: (the situation is such that) to pretend as displayed in the utterance (in games of a certain sort) is fictionally to speak truly. A game of make-believe can establish real-world conditions under which an utterance is fictionally true only if in the pretense the utterance makes an assertion. This means that in cases of intrinsic pretense it must be fictionally true that to pretend as displayed in the utterance is to make an assertion. In other words, the pretense that such an utterance makes an assertion directly (i.e., when taken literally) is a necessary part of the make-believe through which the utterance makes a serious assertion indirectly.

If a straightforward compositional combination of an utterance’s the linguistic components taken at face value generates an intelligible claim, then the utterance makes a claim when taken literally. In general, then, the reason why an utterance that invokes pretense intrinsically makes no assertion directly has to do with some sort of failure in one or more of the utterance’s linguistic components. So in order for some make-believe to make it fictionally true that the utterance makes an assertion directly, the make-believe has to include pretenses about the utterance’s “troublesome” linguistic components. These metalinguistic pretenses will have to do with how these linguistic components function and/or the extent of their success in functioning as they appear. At root, then, intrinsic pretense at work in an utterance is explained in terms of pretenses about its components. At this stage I will treat these pretenses about the components as
extrinsic. However, this classification should not be considered absolute as these pretenses will typically involve semantic notions like denotation or property-expression, and these should eventually get the same sort of analysis in terms of intrinsic pretense as truth-talk. But at this stage I am bracketing the thought that semantic notions involve pretense.

Many ordinary statements concerning works of fiction are made with utterances that involve intrinsic pretense. In particular, I have in mind utterances that employ fictional names, names that have been entirely fabricated as part of the fiction. These names are a special class of empty names, names that have no referents. This means that taken at face value, fictional names (and empty names generally) have no contribution to make to the compositional generation of a literal claim made with the utterance. An utterance employing a fictional name thus makes no assertion directly. However, if the utterance is understood to be an ordinary statement concerning a work of fiction, then it will be understood to make a serious assertion indirectly by invoking pretense. This pretense will involve make-believe about the fictional name employed.

Consider an ordinary statement concerning a work of fiction, for instance

(4.8) {Sherlock Holmes lives at 221B Baker Street, London.}

335 This amounts to assuming that uses of the “{...}” notation are ultimately explained in terms of uses of the “*(...)*” notation. This should not be taken as saying that all claims involving pretense can be given some literal paraphrase. I agree with Yablo (1998), pp. 250-251 that some pretense (Yablo uses the term “metaphor”) is representationally essential, that is, there is no pretense-free way to make the serious assertion made with some pretense-involving utterances.

336 Ordinary statements regarding fictional matters invoke pretense extrinsically if the utterance employs a (definite) description rather than a fictional name. This is because the utterance taken at face value could be used to make an assertion independent of any fiction. So while (4.8) invokes pretense intrinsically, the utterance “The most brilliant detective in England lives at 221B Baker Street, London” involves extrinsic pretense when offered as a claim concerning the Holmes stories. Compare the discussion on p. 401 of Walton (1990).

337 This assumes a Millian or direct reference account of names. See Kripke (1980), pp. 20, 26-29ff. and Braun (1993), pp. 449-450.
This utterance concerns the Holmes stories by Arthur Conan Doyle. The name “Sherlock Holmes” as used in (4.8) has this fiction as its source, which means it is a fictional name and has no referent. So there is no literal claim made with (4.8); the utterance makes no assertion directly. As an ordinary statement, however, (4.8) involves the use of the name “Sherlock Holmes” as a fictional name and purports to make an assertion only indirectly by counting as a move in an authorized game of make-believe. The serious assertion made is that to pretend as displayed in (4.8) in a game authorized for the Holmes stories is fictionally to speak truly. For the utterance to pull this off, the pretense must make it fictionally true that (4.8) makes an assertion directly. For it to be fictionally true that (4.8) makes an assertion directly it must be fictionally true that the name “Sherlock Holmes” refers to someone. So this pretense about the name is part of games authorized for the Holmes stories and part of how the utterance makes the serious statement it makes indirectly.

Although they lack the pretense-suggesting connection to works of fiction, knowing uses of empty (but not fictional) names can also be covered by something like this account. In discussing one now falsified 19th century theory of the perturbations in Mercury’s orbit, one might say that this theory identifies the cause as a planet named “Vulcan”. Elaborating further, one might say

(4.9) {Vulcan is a planet between Mercury and the sun.}

Here the source of the name “Vulcan” is a particular astronomical theory that is now recognized not to be true (largely because this name is now taken to be empty). This is somewhat analogous

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338 I will treat the collected stories as a single object. I am also being lax about type/token issues regarding stories. None of this should affect the points made here.

339 Non-ordinary statements can also involve intrinsic pretense in virtue of employing fictional names as fictional names. They make serious assertions indirectly by means of unofficial games of make-believe that include the pretense that the names employed refer. Consider Crimmins’ example “Ann is as clever as Holmes and more modest than Watson.” Crimmins’ account of how this utterance works explicitly mentions the pretense that the names “Holmes” and “Watson” refer (see Crimmins (1998), p. 6).
to the way a work of fiction supplies a fictional name. The name “Vulcan” as used in (4.9) is understood to have no referent and so to prevent (4.9) from making any literal claim. Such an utterance of (4.9) is understood as making an assertion only in virtue of being taken to belong to a pretense in which it is fictionally true that the name “Vulcan” does refer to something. In this case the game of make-believe involved is an unofficial game, so the make-believe is prop oriented. The serious assertion that (4.9) makes is thus about its prop, namely, the theory that supplies the name “Vulcan”. This serious assertion is that in a game of make-believe based on this theory in a certain way, to speak as displayed in (4.9) is fictionally to speak truly. Even when there is no worked-out theory that serves as a source for an empty name, if the name is employed as empty, then the utterance using it makes indirectly a serious assertion about whatever source the name has, by means of a game of make-believe that includes a pretense that the name does refer.

Another class of utterances that invoke pretense intrinsically due to “referential failure” consists of those that involve what I will call “empty quantifiers”. When an utterance has an empty quantifier it is really the putative domain assigned to the quantifier that is empty.\textsuperscript{340} I have in mind the kind of situation in which there is nothing for the quantifier to supply in the generation of a claim made with the utterance, rather than the sort of case in which nothing from the quantifier’s domain satisfies the open sentence the quantifier binds. Consider utterances like

(4.10) \{All of Sherlock Holmes’ relatives were intelligent.\}

(4.11) \{Some of Sherlock Holmes’ relatives were musicians.\}

\textsuperscript{340}I am obviously assuming restricted quantification rather than quantifiers whose domains include everything.
Both of these utterances involve restricted quantification that is putatively assigned Holmes’ relatives as a domain. An assertoric utterance of (4.10) makes as if to assert that all of the items in that domain are a particular way, and an utterance of (4.11) makes as if to claim that at least one item in that domain is some way. But there are no such items; the putative domain is empty.

As in cases involving names that fail to refer, when an utterance employs an empty quantifier it fails to make an assertion directly. But as before, when the putative domain is “assigned” as empty the utterance still makes an assertion indirectly via pretense. The pretense involved makes it fictionally true that the utterance makes an assertion directly, and so includes a pretense that the quantifier’s domain is not empty. As ordinary statements, what (4.10) and (4.11) make serious assertions about is the make-believe authorized for the Holmes stories. These utterances each seriously assert that to pretend in the manner displayed, in a game authorized for the Holmes stories is, fictionally, to speak truly.

A non-ordinary statement that knowingly involves an empty quantifier will get a similar explanation. For instance, an utterance of

(4.12) {Some of Santa’s elves are taller than Bob}

makes a serious assertion by belonging to an unofficial game of make-believe in which it is fictionally true that (4.12) makes an assertion directly, and which therefore involves a pretense that the putative domain of the quantifier is not empty. The game involved is unofficial in part

341In cases of this sort it makes more sense to take the quantifiers as restricted rather than kick the restriction out into the antecedent of a conditional (in the universal case) or into a conjunct (in the existential case). Kicking the restriction out of the quantifier would give all universal generalizations putatively about Sherlock Holmes’ relatives a false antecedent and all existential claims of this sort a false conjunct (in both cases, fillings of “x is a relative of Sherlock Holmes”). This would make all universal claims of this sort true and all existential claims of this sort false. But it seems implausible to take “All of Sherlock Holmes’ relatives are dwarfs” to make a true assertion and at least somewhat plausible to take “Some of Sherlock Holmes’ relatives were male” to make a true one. Taking the quantifiers as restricted and empty handles these sorts of cases better.
because it involves a combination of unrelated props: Bob and the “Santa Claus”-story. The make-believe is also prop oriented, so (4.12) makes a serious assertion about the props rather than the make-believe itself. The serious assertion made with (4.12) is something like

(4.12') Bob is such that there is a degree of tallness that exceeds his height, and the “Santa Claus”-story is such that it portrays there being elves who work for someone named “Santa Claus” and portrays at least one of these elves as having a height that exceeds that degree of tallness.

More generally, an utterance of (4.12) says that Bob is rather short, and if he is, then the utterance is true even though it makes no assertion directly since it employs an empty quantifier.

Utterances that knowingly employ fictional names, empty names, or empty quantification all invoke pretense intrinsically due to referential failure. They all manage to make assertions only via pretenses that certain of their components succeed in their actual functioning when they do not. A second way an utterance can invoke pretense intrinsically is when the pretense that the utterance makes an assertion directly requires make-believe about the very functioning of some of its components (as well as a pretense that they succeed in functioning as they are pretended to function). A good example of this sort of case is found in the figure of speech known as anthimeria. In this rhetorical mode, a term that standardly functions as one part of speech is pressed into service as a different part of speech.

Consider the following two utterances.

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342 The “Santa Claus”-story is the familiar, standard, culturally salient story in which the term “Santa Claus” centrally figures. This rules out deviant stories employing the name, and stories portraying someone with the same features as those the “Santa Claus”-story portrays someone named “Santa Claus” as having, but which are “about someone else” (i.e., which use a different fictional name with the intention of portraying a different (fictional) person). This is not intended to rule out stories in other languages or from other cultures (e.g., the French “Papa Noël”-story) from being the “same story” or from portraying the “same” (fictional) person.

343 Consider again Crimmins’ example “Ann is as clever as Holmes and more modest than Watson.” This utterance involves an unofficial (and therefore shallow) game of make-believe that relies on Ann and the Holmes stories both as props.

(4.4) {Clinton nearly nixon his presidency.}
(4.13) {Gödel had a lot of smarts.}[^346]

As a proper name, “Nixon” is a noun and does not express a kind of activity in any actual circumstances (really, there is no verb “to nixon” in English). Similarly, “smart” is not really a referential term.[^347] It can only be fictionally true that these terms function as they appear to in these utterances. In their apparent roles, then, “nixon” and “smarts” have no contribution to make to the generation of a literal claim, so (4.4) and (4.13) make no claims when they are taken at face value (literally). So these utterances make no assertions directly.

However, it must be fictionally true that (4.4) and (4.13) make assertions directly if they are to make serious assertions indirectly via a pretense. And it must be fictionally true that the terms “nixon” and “smarts” successfully function as they appear to function if it is going to be fictionally true that (4.4) and (4.13) make assertions directly. Thus, it is part of the game to which (4.4) belongs that it is fictionally true that the term “nixon” functions as a verb and that this verb expresses something that one can do. The game that (4.13) belongs to involves pretending that the term “smart” functions referentially and that it has a referent. These pretenses are necessary if these games of make-believe are going to make the utterances fictionally true under certain real-world conditions and so turn them into ways of making serious assertions indirectly.

The games of make-believe through which (4.4) and (4.13) make their serious assertions indirectly are unofficial games. The make-believe involved is prop oriented, so the serious assertions that get made are assertions about the props employed in the pretenses displayed in the

[^345]: My thanks to David Hills for the suggestion.


[^347]: In the case of “smarts” this might be too strong, but if that is so it is only because this expression is a case of dead anthimeria (on analogy with dead metaphor, as in “the stool has three legs”). Even if this term is now a referential English expression, it is employed with knowledge of its referential failure, and I claim that its path into the language involved the kind of pretense about its functioning that I describe here. After
utterances. In each case there are two kinds of props involved. The props for (4.4) are Clinton and the name “Nixon” (and possibly Nixon himself); the props for (4.13) are Gödel and the term “smart”. Given the actual meanings of the terms “Nixon” and “smart”, the serious assertion made indirectly with (4.4) is something like that Clinton nearly had to leave office before the end of his term because of inappropriate activities, and the serious assertion made indirectly with (4.13) is that Gödel was very intelligent.

Although (4.4) and (4.13) make no claims when taken literally, this does not impede our ability to understand them. We are actually quite good at spontaneously interpreting a lot of talk that involves pretense intrinsically; we do not need there to be a literal claim made by the utterance as a whole to serve as a basis for the non-literal but serious assertion made indirectly. It happens that in the cases of (4.4) and (4.13) (and anthimeria generally) the serious assertions made are still indirectly dependent on literal interpretations of the terms “Nixon” and “smart” when functioning normally. We understand (4.4) and (4.13) because we take “Nixon” to name someone who had to resign from office because of what he did, and we take “smart” to describe someone as intelligent. These terms contribute to the serious assertions (4.4) and (4.13) make in virtue of the contributions they make to claims in standard contexts. But even this indirect dependence on the literal is not necessary as there are ways of talking whose standard functioning invokes pretense intrinsically.

**WARM-UP: EXISTENCE-TALK**

In the introductory section of this chapter I mentioned that the pretense approach has been advantageously applied in accounts of existence-talk. The utterances belonging to this way all, it is not a complete neologism; its meaning is parasitic on the meaning of the adjective that is pretended to function as a noun. (*Mutatis mutandis* for the pretend verb “to nixon”.)

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348 This is somewhat similar to the way that the props for Crimmins’ example (see footnote 343) are Ann and the Holmes stories and those involved in (4.12) are both Bob and the “Santa Claus”-story.
of talking make serious assertions indirectly because a particular game of make-believe establishes real-world conditions as necessary and sufficient for these utterances to be fictionally true in that game. The pretenses involved in existence-talk are invoked by the utterances intrinsically, and in a way somewhat akin to how cases of anthimeria invoke it. The thought that existence-talk involves pretense at all is motivated by two observations. The first is that this way of talking can be used to make substantive (i.e., non-trivial) true and false assertions. An utterance of

\[(4.14) \{\text{Santa Claus does not exist}\}\]

can be extremely (and painfully) informative to a child. The second motivating observation is that although uses of “exists” appear to offer descriptions of objects picked out by the singular terms it is concatenated with, these apparent descriptions cannot be what we use existence-talk to convey.

It should be clear that by “existence-talk” I mean utterances that employ the verb “to exist” (positively or negatively) with some putatively referring expression. I do not mean utterances that employ ordinary language quantifiers, as in

\[(4.15) \text{Somebody is at the door.}\]

An utterance like (4.15) indicates the existence of some object through the use of an operator, but it does not purport to describe the thing as existing. Cases of existence-talk, e.g., (4.14), on the other hand, purport to offer descriptions of objects as existing. But this cannot really be what they do since any description of an object presupposes that the object is already on the scene—it must already exist if any description of it at all is going to be possible. Existence-talk can be used to make true substantive assertions, but it cannot be thought to do so directly or perspicuously.

The pretense approach serves to explain just this sort of case. A pretense-based account of existence-talk offers an appealing explanation of how it functions, one that not only acknowledges the gap between the apparent descriptions offered by its instances and the serious
assertions made them, but that also explains both how these utterances manage to make those serious assertions and why such apparently unsuitable utterances get employed to make them.

Existence-talk involves pretense intrinsically because its instances do not really function logico-linguistically the way they appear to function. These utterances appear to involve predications of “existence” to objects. Although “exists” functions logically as a predicate in existence-talk, the nature of its applicability conditions indicates that it should not be taken to function as a genuine predicate in the full logico-linguistic sense of serving to characterize or describe objects. \(^{349}\) In order to characterize or describe objects, an expression must require something of objects that satisfy it. Depending on the nature of the conditions required, the expression is either an analyzable predicate or a primitive predicate. If “exists” were an analyzable predicate there would be a non-trivial analysis of its applicability conditions of the form

\[(P) (\forall x) x \text{ satisfies } \text{“} P \text{” iff } x \text{ is } F.\]

However, there is no non-trivial analysis of this form. More specifically, “exists” is not an analyzable predicate because its applicability conditions admit of no substantive analysis of form

\[(E) (\forall x) x \text{ satisfies “exists” iff } x \text{ is } F.\]

One analysis of the expression’s applicability conditions that might be thought to indicate that “exists” is an analyzable predicate is

\[(E+) (\forall x) x \text{ satisfies “exists” iff } (\exists y) y = x.\]

This analysis basically says that something satisfies “exists” if and only if there is something that is identical to it. This is correct, of course, but it does not amount to a non-trivial analysis.

Necessarily, there is something identical to every object in the domain of a universal quantifier,

\[^{349}\text{Functioning logically as a predicate is a matter of how a term behaves in inference. That “exists” functions as a predicate logically is shown in inferences like that from “Santa Claus and the tooth fairy do not exist” to “Some things just don’t exist.” Functioning as a predicate logico-linguistically includes this inferential behavior, but it includes more as well.}\]
since everything is identical to itself as a matter of logical necessity. More importantly, the right-hand side of (E+) cannot be held to express a condition something has to satisfy in order to satisfy “exists.” It is also a matter of logical necessity that objects are identical to nothing but themselves. Since the right-hand side of (E+) offers being identical to something there is as a condition for something’s satisfying “exists,” it is presupposing that that very object already is, i.e., already exists. Existing is a precondition (though also sufficient) for an object’s being self-identical. The analysis offered in (E+) therefore amounts to a trivial analysis of the applicability of “exists” in terms of the existence of objects claimed to satisfy it. Thus, it is not really an analysis of form (E).

There being no analysis of form (E) shows that “exists” is not an analyzable predicate. So, if it is a predicate (logico-linguistically) it is a primitive one. Primitive predicates still place conditions on the objects that satisfy them, so the basic form of their applicability conditions is

\[(P^*) \ (\forall x) x \text{ satisfies } "P" \iff x \text{ is } P.\]

Of course, substituting the expression “exists” for “P” in (P*) yields a true generalization, but this alone does not establish that “exists” really fulfills the logico-linguistic function of predication.

The question is whether the analysans places conditions on the objects mentioned on the left-hand side of its instances, but in each case here the analysans is just an instances of existence-talk, and the whole question at issue is whether these utterances place conditions on the object putatively denoted in them. It might be reasonable to maintain that an expression is a primitive predicate if an analysis of form (P*) is both available and required (perhaps because it is all that is available). But even this would not show that claims employing “exists” involve genuine (primitive) predication since (E+) (an analysis ultimately of form (P*)) is not all that is available as an account of its applicability conditions. These conditions are fully accounted for with the statement
(E') (\forall x) x satisfies “exists”\textsuperscript{350}.

The availability of an “analysis” of form (E') in which no analysans is needed shows that “exists” is not a primitive predicate. According to (E') the applicability conditions of “exists” do not turn out to be conditions on objects picked out by the terms with which the supposed predicate gets concatenated. Since “exists” is neither an analyzable predicate nor a primitive predicate, it is not really a predicate (in the full, logico-linguistic sense of predication). According to this line of thought, contrary to appearances, “exists” does not really function to describe anything picked out by the terms with which it is combined. This indicates that in utterances like (4.14), “exists” does not function predicatively, at least not in the full linguistic or speech-act sense, even if our inferential practices give us reasons to treat “exists” as a predicate in the logical sense.

Postulating pretense at work intrinsically at the level of logico-linguistic functioning in the instances of existence-talk resolves the tension between the apparent and actual functioning of “exists”. It is fictionally true (but not actually true) that utterances employing this term function as they appear to at face value—as predications in which objects are picked out and described in some way (attributed some property). Because existence-talk makes serious assertions via appearing to perform some function that it actually does not perform, this way of talking invokes pretense in a way somewhat similar to cases of anthimeria, namely, at the level of logico-linguistic functioning. Existence-talk is unlike anthimeria in that it is the standard uses of “exists” that involve pretense; pretense is not invoked through “exists” being forced into non-standard uses. By counting as moves in a game of make-believe in which it is fictionally true that the instances of existence-talk can be taken literally (make an assertion directly), these utterances can be used to make certain serious claims of another sort indirectly.

\textsuperscript{350}This is similar to a point made in Evans (1982), p. 348. The important point here is that no analysans is needed.
Walton has applied his account of make-believe in a pretense-based account of existence-talk. This idea has been picked up and developed in a slightly different way by Gareth Evans, and in a still more different way by Frederick Kroon. These accounts are all primarily aimed at accounting for what are known as negative existentials, e.g., utterances like

(4.14) {Santa Claus does not exist.}

This kind of utterance presents the well-known problem of nonbeing. This problem provides the clearest demonstration of the point that, contrary to surface appearances, existential claims do not describe objects picked out by the singular terms they employ. We take it that claims like (4.14) can be true or false. But if true they cannot be taken as offering descriptions of things picked out by the employed names or singular terms because the upshot of an utterance like (4.14) is that there is no such object to describe. And even when false, utterances like (4.14) cannot amount to a genuine but false description of any objects picked out by their terms for reasons mentioned above.

On the surface, (4.14) appears to offer a description of an object picked out by the name it employs. Because of this one might be tempted to follow Meinong in trying to solve the problem of nonbeing by claiming that negative existentials make assertions about a class of objects with an unusual sort of being, a sort that is enough to allow them to serve as the subjects of assertions but not enough to count as full-fledged existing objects. This would account for the surface form of the utterance, but the ensuing metaphysics is unattractive. Consider that we can make claims like

(4.16) {Santa Claus is a fat guy who wears a red suit, but he doesn’t really exist.}

This would mean that the unusual, non-existing entities that have the postulated substandard kind of being could still have properties like being fat and being male, and could still do things like

See Walton (1990), Chapter 11; Evans (1982), Chapter 10; and Kroon (1996). None of their accounts involve the notion of intrinsic pretense, but I believe it at least fits with Walton’s account.
wear red suits. This is all in addition to the distastefulness of distinguishing different kinds of being.

Another less metaphysically contentious approach is to take a metalinguistic view toward negative existentials. The metalinguistic approach accepts that utterances like (4.14) do not literally or seriously assert the descriptions they appear to offer, but this approach maintains instead that negative existentials literally make claims about the names or singular terms that appear in them (or the concepts or ideas those names or singular terms express). On this account, names that appear in utterances like (4.14) are literally mentioned rather than used; alternatively, the literal role of names in this context is to refer to themselves (or to the concepts they usually express). But on a face value reading of (4.14), the name that appears in it is used, not mentioned. The utterance does not feel like an assertion about the name “Santa Claus” (or even one about the concept SANTA CLAUS). That should give us some pause in saying that what (4.14) is literally about, what it literally describes, is the name “Santa Clause”. The name “Santa Claus” is used in (4.14) ostensibly to pick out an object, in exactly the same way as it is in an utterance of

(4.16)’ {Santa Claus is a fat guy who wears a red suit.}

A Meinongian analysis takes the surface form of negative existentials too seriously, and a metalinguistic account does not take it seriously enough. One nice feature a pretense-based account of existence-talk is that it provides an appealing solution to this tension, one that respects the semantic phenomenology of existential claims, and does so without resorting to any strange

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352 This would involve rejecting a direct reference view of names.

353 Similar sorts of accounts are considered and rejected in Quine (1948). His own solution in terms of Russell’s theory of descriptions (pp. 6-8) is questionable, at least as an analysis of actual existence-talk involving names. It assumes that names are equivalent to definite descriptions—at the very least descriptions involving invented predicates like “santaclausizes”. The technique of converting names into definite involving these invented predicates is sound as a reform of language for use in an analysis of ontological commitment, but Quine himself notes that this device is “artificial” and that these predicates are
metaphysics of non-existent objects. The kind of pretense-based account I will discuss here also provides a unified account of existence-talk covering both positive and negative existential claims.

I will focus on Walton’s pretense-based account of existence-talk because it functions well as a model for the account of truth-talk I want to develop. Walton’s account of existence-talk is an extension of his account of talk apparently about fictional entities. Talk “about” fictional entities comes in two varieties: ordinary statements belonging to games of make-believe authorized for works of fiction, and non-ordinary statements belonging to unofficial games of make-believe. Authorized games are typically content oriented, so ordinary statements typically make serious assertions about the make-believe they belong to. For instance, an utterance of

(4.8) {Sherlock Holmes lived at 221B Baker Street, London}

makes a serious assertion about games of make-believe authorized for the Holmes stories. It does so because these games establish certain real-world conditions as necessary and sufficient for (4.8) to be fictionally true. The conditions for this established by an authorized game are that to pretend in the way displayed in (4.8) in a game authorized for the Holmes stories is fictionally to speak truly. So what (4.8) seriously asserts is that these conditions obtain, that is, that this pretense is appropriate in this kind of game.

This account allows us to take utterances like (4.8) as making genuine assertions capable of being true without appealing to “unreal” entities, e.g., the fictional character Sherlock Homes, in order to provide the assertion with a subject. Neither is the assertion about the name “Sherlock Holmes” (or the concept SHERLOCK HOLMES); it makes a serious assertion about the content of a particular pretense, one that is generated around using certain stories as a prop according to their function. To accomplish this, these games must make it fictionally true that the name “Sherlock

“imported” into the language. An assumption that names as we ordinarily use them are equivalent to definite descriptions runs afoul of the problems Kripke points out in Kripke (1980).
Holmes” refers to someone, but the utterance is not literally about the name “Sherlock Holmes”. It is not literally about anything since, taken literally, it uses a name that has no referent.

Non-ordinary statements apparently about fictional entities make serious assertions by counting as moves in unofficial games of make-believe. Since unofficial games typically involve prop oriented make-believe, utterances putting forward non-ordinary statements are typically about the props employed in the make-believe, rather than about the make-believe itself. For instance,

(4.3) {Sherlock Holmes is a better detective than Sam Spade}

makes a serious assertion comparing the Holmes stories and the Sam Spade stories in the manner previously explained. Again, no postulation of fictional beings that can do things like solve crimes even though they are not “real” is required. As part of a prop oriented make-believe, the utterance makes a serious assertion about the stories that serve as props in the make-believe it involves. The names employed in the utterance are parts of these stories, and they are perhaps more directly props themselves since the make-believe (4.3) involves must include the pretense that the fictional names it employs refer if (4.3) is to make any serious assertion. But again, the utterance does not make any literal claim about these names.

Because the unofficial game (4.3) belongs to is like a combination of two authorized games, this utterance puts forward a non-ordinary statement that is not too far removed from ordinary statements “about” fictional entities. The more interesting sort of non-ordinary statement “about” fictional entities are those aimed at making this very point—that the entities putatively being discussed are (merely) fictional. Consider an utterance of

(4.17) {Sherlock Holmes is a fictional character.}

Claims of this sort belong to unofficial games that are further removed from any authorized games. The unofficial game of make-believe suggested by (4.17) has two main parts to it. First,

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as in games authorized for Conan Doyle’s writings, the unofficial game that (4.17) belongs to makes it fictionally true that the name “Sherlock Holmes” refers to someone. As in (4.8), this pretense insulates the use of the name from its actual referential success or failure; it is used as if it successfully refers whether it does or not. Second, it is fictionally true that there are two kinds of things: “real” things and “fictional entities”.

It is this latter pretense that makes the game suggested by (4.17) unofficial; it is neither a parameter of games of make-believe authorized for works of fiction in general, nor part of the games authorized for the Holmes stories in particular. It is, however, part of some game of make-believe because really there are no such properties as “being real” or “being a fictional entity” that something can have or lack—“being real” is a prerequisite for having any properties at all. The make-believe suggested by (4.17) involves pretending that there are properties of this sort and that they are attributed with these apparent predicates. The real-world conditions that make it fictionally true that something (fictionally) referred to has the property of “being real” are that there actually is such a thing; if really there is no such thing, then it is fictionally true that the thing (fictionally) referred to has the property of “being a fictional entity.” The pretense thus involves pretending that there are more things in the world than there really are.

The second, unofficial part of the make-believe suggested by (4.17) interacts with the first part (that it is fictionally true that the name employed in the utterance refers to something) in two ways to determine the serious assertion made with an utterance like (4.17). The first function of the unofficial part of the make-believe is to reveal the semantic insulation induced by the first part. Pretending that one can refer to “fictional” as well as to “real” people reveals that these apparent acts of referring will be treated as successful regardless of whether there really is anything denoted. These apparent acts of referring are therefore exposed as pretended acts of referring.

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355 Neo-Meinongians notwithstanding.
referring. As Walton says, “By engaging in one pretense the speaker betrays [i.e., reveals] another.” The second function of the unofficial principle of generation governing the pretense suggested by (4.17) is to either *avow* or *disavow* all pretended acts of referring, and more fundamentally all pretended *attempts* to refer, of the sort displayed in the very utterance making this avowal or disavowal. A pretended attempt to refer (and act of referring) is avowed if the pretend-property of “being real” is pretend-attributed to the pretend-referent; a pretended attempt to refer (and so act of referring) is disavowed if the pretend-property of “being a fictional character” is pretend-attributed.

An utterance of (4.17) disavows the pretend attempt to refer that it itself makes. Thus, the serious statement made by such an utterance is that any attempt to refer with the name “Sherlock Holmes” of the sort displayed in (4.17) (and in (4.8) as well) will fail, hence all instances of this sort of apparently referential use of the name cannot be anything but a pretense. The pretended referent of the name is claimed to be merely pretend. It might not be necessary to use pretense to make the serious assertion made with (4.17); one might be able to do it by explicitly specifying the sort of attempt to refer one has in mind and then stating that attempts of that sort will all fail. “Pretense comes in only as a way of picking out the kind of attempted referring [the speaker] wishes to disavow; he specifies it by pretending to make such an attempt or by indicating this kind of pretense [by displaying it].” But even when unnecessary, pretense at least provides a kind of linguistic convenience since the relevant explicit specification might be complex and cumbersome.

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356 It is important to realize that pretended acts of referring can also genuinely succeed in referring. The effect of the pretense is just to make the actual success (or failure) irrelevant.


358 Again, the pretend-referent will also be the actual, real referent if the avowal is appropriate (correct).

Existential claims are connected to talk apparently about fictional entities through the obvious link between negative existentials and utterances purporting to claim that something is a fictional entity. The instances of existence-talk, in particular negative existential claims such as (4.14) {Santa Claus does not exist,} involve an intrinsic pretense explained by a game of make-believe similar to the one invoked by talk apparently about whether things are real or fictional entities. True negative existentials will involve a pretense that names being acknowledged as empty refer, but this is not the main source of their intrinsic invoking of pretense.\footnote{If this were the whole make-believe we would need different accounts for false negative existentials and true positive existentials, and there would be no such thing as false positive existentials.} The pretense approach offers a unified account of existence-talk. It allows for true and false cases of both negative and positive existentials because it takes these utterances to invoke pretense intrinsically due to their use of the pretend-predicate “exists” which functions to make a serious assertion only via a pretense that it characterizes objects.

Existential claims make serious assertions indirectly by counting as moves in an unofficial game of make-believe governed by the following parameters.

E-1) *All names and singular terms have referents.*

E-2) *“Exists” is a genuine predicate that functions to characterize objects denoted by the names or singular terms with which it is combined.*

E-3) *“Exists” expresses a genuine property (called “existence”) that some, but not all things possess (“does not exist” expresses its complement).*\footnote{Walton (1990), p. 424.}

\footnote{For analogous reasons, this holds for utterances that employ names in putative claims that the things named are fictional entities as well.}

\footnote{Not invoking pretense by acknowledging the name employed as empty, untrue positives would make no assertion at all.}
E-4) (Πn)(The pretenses displayed in an utterance of the form “{n exists (i.e., has the property of existence)}” are prescribed iff attempts to refer of the sort made by the displayed use of “n” are successful.)

Rules E-1) and E-2) prescribe pretenses about the linguistic components of existential claims. These rules are the basis of the intrinsic pretense existence-talk invokes, namely, the pretense that existential claims directly assert the descriptions they appears to offer. In particular, the latter rule and rule E-3) together show how “exists” involves pretense in its standard use. Thus, the way this expression functions in the generation of an indirect serious assertion cannot be parasitic on how it contributes to a literal claim in some pretense-free context associated with its standard use—there is no such context. Rule E-3) also demarcates what kinds of fictional truths are possible in the game behind existence-talk. Rule E-4) is the real principle of generation for this game. It is really a schematic principle “generalized” over some substitution class of term expressions via the application of the universal substitutional quantifier “(Πn)”. Without specifying a genuinely general condition, the rule thus provides a way to determine in each case (from the substitution class) the real-world conditions under which the game prescribes the pretenses displayed in an existential claim. The result is a specification of the real-world conditions that are necessary and sufficient for the fictional truth of an utterance invoking an instance of the pretend denoting introduced in E-1) and the pretend property attribution introduced in E-2) and E-3).

Like all cases of semantic pretense, an existential claim is true just in case it is fictionally true, and what it seriously asserts expresses the obtaining of the real-world conditions that the game establishes as necessary and sufficient for it to be fictionally true obtain. Thus, the serious assertion made by a positive existential is that the sort of attempt to refer displayed in the utterance is successful—that the name or singular term used as employed in the utterance actually does refer to something—and the serious assertion made by a negative existential is that the sort of attempt to refer displayed is unsuccessful. Negative existential claims invoke the unofficial (yet shared and conventional) game of make-believe governed by E-1) through E-4) in order to
disavow attempts to refer (and so acts of referring) of the very sort that they themselves pretend
to make; positive existential claims use it to avow the attempts to refer and acts of referring of the
sort that they pretend (and if correct also really manage) to make.

Because explaining existence-talk in this way allows a speaker to avow and disavow
particular sorts of attempts to refer, a pretense-based account accommodates the modal features of
existence-talk. The serious assertion made by an existential claim is not just that some name or
singular term picked out as an orthographic type refers or fails to refer. The serious assertion
made has to do with the referential success or failure of the name as used in particular sorts of
attempts to refer, the sort of attempt actually displayed in the utterance. This difference is
important because we do not want every possible situation in which the orthographic type refers
to make the corresponding positive existential claim true. A possible world in which the
orthographically typed name “Santa Claus” gets used to refer to my plumber is not a world that
makes an actual utterance of

(4.18) \{Santa Claus exists\}

true (or an actual utterance of (4.14) false). This possibility does not make (4.18) possibly true
even though it does make it only contingently false that the name “Santa Claus” does not refer.363
The pretense-based account agrees since on this approach (4.18) makes a serious assertion
avowing the sort of attempt to refer with the name “Santa Claus” that is displayed in (4.18), just
as (4.14) disavows the sort of attempt to refer it displays. The (successful) attempts to refer with
the name “Santa Claus” that occur in the world where the name denotes my plumber are not the
sort being avowed by (4.18) or disavowed by (4.14).

It might be possible to make directly (i.e., without employing any pretense) the avowals
and disavowals made indirectly with existence-talk. A speaker would have to specify the kind of
attempt to refer that she wishes to avow or disavow, and then declare of it that it either succeeds
or fails. But the explicit specification of the relevant sort of attempt to refer would most likely be complex and cumbersome, and stating that it either succeeds or fails would involve explicitly metalinguistic devices and terminology. Even if such a direct statement were available, the semantic pretense would still be extremely useful in that it avoids these complications by allowing us to make the serious assertion we want to make by seeming to make a different, more concise, and simpler assertion. The pretense lets us use the ordinary language of object-talk to make claims about the success or failure of attempts to refer made with certain kinds of uses of certain words.

This account of existence-talk has several attractive features to recommend it. In the first case, it solves the initial problem of showing how existential claims, especially negative existentials, can make true substantive assertions even though they cannot be thought of as really offering descriptions of objects picked out by the singular terms or names they employ. Existential claims make serious assertions about the success or failure of the sorts of attempts to refer that are displayed in the utterances themselves.\(^{364}\) In the second case, by taking elements from both the Meinongian and metalinguistic accounts and bringing them together in the parameters of a game of make-believe, the pretense-based account of existence-talk can extract whatever benefits each has to offer while avoiding the problems it faces.

A metalinguistic account would claim that the serious metalinguistic assertions made with existential claims are also the assertions the utterances make on a literal interpretation. This would mean that in the context of an existential claim, names and singular terms have the abnormal function of referring to themselves even though they appear to function normally. A


\(^{364}\)This claim will have to be modified to fit with a pretense-based account of truth-talk since ultimately on such an account claims about reference will also involve pretense. So the serious statement made with an existence claim can be expressed with a claim ostensibly about reference, but this too is only an indirect
metalinguistic account has little to say about how existential claims manage to induce this alternative function it postulates for names, or about how it works. In addition, it is not clear how a metalinguistic view can accommodate the modal aspects of existence-talk because it is not clear how this sort of account can limit the possibilities that pertain to the modal status of an existential claim to just the modally relevant circumstances of the employed name’s referential success and failure. A metalinguistic view cannot appeal to the actual circumstances of the name’s use in the existential claim itself since on this view the name is literally used to refer to itself, and that would make all positive existentials necessary truths and all negative existentials necessary falsehoods. Thus, beyond modal status, this approach would also get many truth-values wrong.

Although what the pretense-based account sketched here says about the serious assertions made with existential claims is similar to what a metalinguistic account says, the former account avoids the problems facing the latter. For a start, a pretense-based account honors the surface appearances of existential claims; it takes the names and singular terms employed in them as functioning to pick out objects—it is just that they do so in the context of a pretense. In this context (which is the only place existential claims have life), existence-talk is used to describe what the names and singular terms (fictionally) denote. A pretense-based account also aims to offer a substantive explanation of how existential claims manage to make serious assertions about the kinds of attempts to refer they involve while still (fictionally) using the names they employ in the ordinary way in an attempt to refer of that sort. On such an account, existence-talk is in part a device for turning a use of name into a mention of that kind of use of the name—but not literally,

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365 As mentioned above, the possibility that the name “Santa Claus” could refer to my plumber does not make “[Santa Claus exists]” only contingently false.

366 This should not be read as claiming that the existential quantifier has no directly serious use (although see Yablo (2000), pp. 292-293, 304 for the suggestion that some quantification is pretend). The claim is that there is no non-pretense use for the predicate-term “exists” the way there is for the phrase “I put it on the back burner” and its various parts.
only as what turns out to be the subject of the serious assertion made indirectly. Finally, because the pretense-based account does not take existence-talk to be literally metalinguistic it can appeal to existential claims themselves to pick out (by displaying) the sort of attempts to refer that are relevant to the claims’ truth-values. If the terms employed in existential claims literally referred to the attempts to refer they are used to make in those claims these attempts would all be successful, and this would give many existential claims the wrong modal status (as well as the wrong truth-value). The pretense approach therefore not only accommodates the modal aspects of existence-talk, but also offers an explanation of how it is accommodated.

The pretense approach also accommodates the intuitive semantic phenomenology of existential claims; these claims do not feel like metalinguistic claims about words or concepts (or even about attempts to refer), and within the pretense they are not.367 At the same time, the pretense approach avoids the metaphysical excesses that result from attempting to accommodate semantic phenomenology in a Meinongian fashion. The game of make-believe that explains existence-talk prescribes pretenses that look similar to what a Meinongian view claims seriously. The difference is that on the pretense-based account there is no actual ontological commitment to any ontology of unreal, subsisting—but not existing—objects, objects like Santa Claus who has the property of being male, but not the property of existing. Neither must we treat positive and negative existentials differently, taking the latter to be about metaphysically strange objects when true, while the former are about ordinary objects. The pretense approach provides a single account that applies to positive and negative existentials in the same way. We never have to resort to unreal or fictional objects to provide something talked about; rather, this way of talking is explained in terms of pretending to talk about something pretend-denoted by the name used in the utterance.

Accommodating semantic phenomenology is not, in the case of existence-talk, something done simply for its own sake; it serves a larger purpose here. The real focus of existence-talk is reality; what we aim to convey with this way of talking is what objects reality contains. We do not have to list off everything there is and then say “and nothing else” since existence-talk allows us to talk about the contents of reality “from the negative side” as well as “from the positive side”. It accomplishes this by serving as a surrogate for a kind of semantic ascent so that its instances make whatever serious assertions would be made by certain utterances ostensibly about the success and failure of various sorts of attempts to refer. However, the properties that certain linguistic (or cognitive) acts or particular bits of language have or lack is not the real point. Existence-talk keeps the focus on reality rather than on language and language use because it achieves the effect of an ascent to the level of talk about linguistic acts without explicitly or literally engaging in such ascent. Our eye stays on reality because existence-talk allows us to employ the linguistic devices of object-talk in order to make serious claims (that would also be made by certain utterances ostensibly) about the success or failure of certain sorts of attempts to refer in order to convey information about the contents of reality that cannot easily (or perhaps simply cannot) be directly stated.

Accounting for existence-talk in terms of semantic pretense allows us to satisfy our most important intuitions about this way of talking. It does so while avoiding problems concerning truth-value assignment and modal status, as well as contentious metaphysical commitments, that come with other attempted explanations of how existence-talk functions. In the next chapter I examine the application of the pretense approach in giving an account of truth-talk. Such an account amounts to a formulation of deflationism, but one that both avoids certain major problems that confront the current formulations of deflationism and fits well with other aspects of truth-talk.
CHAPTER 5
TRUTH AS A PRETENSE (PART I)

INTRODUCTION

The conclusion that was drawn at the end of Chapter 3 is that none of the current formulations of deflationism adequately account for truth-talk, and that this lack of success is incentive for pursuing a new formulation of this position. In this chapter I present the basic details of a new, superior deflationary account of truth-talk that makes use of the theoretical machinery explained in Chapter 4. The discussion there explains the notion of semantic pretense and the role it can play in an account of some way of talking, and examines an instance of the most expounded application of the pretense approach—that made to existence-talk. Here I use that account as a model for an application of the pretense approach to truth-talk. The result is an account that not only accommodates truth-talk’s duality of triviality and non-triviality and its propensity for paradox, but that also handles aspects of the talk the current formulations of deflationism find problematic—most importantly, truth-talk’s generalizing role.

As understood here, a pretense-based account of any way of talking explains its functioning in part by counting its instances as moves in a particular game of make-believe. The main task of this chapter is to lay out the details of the game of make-believe behind truth-talk, and to explain how an account based on a game of this sort understands the talk’s functioning. I also aim to show that this pretense-based account not only generates all the instances of the schema
(ES) That $p$ is true iff $p$,

but also satisfies the basic commitment of deflationism, namely, what is expressed by the

“Functioning Makes Fundamental” Thesis:

(FMFT) Truth-talk’s logico-linguistic functioning is such that it gives the instances of (ES) fundamental status.

I begin by considering some initial motivations for applying the pretense approach to truth-talk. These motivations are basically an extension of those that truth-talk’s unusual features provide for an account satisfying FMFT. Closer consideration of what (ES)-fundamentality entails reveals that reasons for thinking these biconditionals are conceptually and explanatorily basic amount to reasons for thinking that truth-talk does not really perform the logico-linguistic function it appears to perform. This suggests that truth-talk invokes pretense in its very functioning. The line of reasoning behind this thesis is similar to that offered in Chapter 4 as initial support for applying the pretense approach to existence-talk. This indicates that pretense plays the same sort of role in truth-talk as it does in existence-talk, and that the pretense-based account of the former can be modeled on that of the latter. Because Chapter 4 employs truth-talk in explaining the application of the pretense approach to existence-talk, this modeling cannot be exact. However, it is possible to modify the model in ways that allow the pretense-based account of truth-talk to be presented without explicit circularity.

Since the initial motivations for thinking truth-talk involves semantic pretense arise within the deflationary perspective, one way of looking at my position is as the claim that the best way to formulate a deflationary account of truth-talk is through an application of the pretense approach. Coming from the deflationary perspective, a pretense-based account of truth-talk focuses initially on the instances that deflationary views take as basic, the type-$A/A'$) utterances that appear in the instances of (ES). In laying out some of the background for the pretense involved in truth-talk, I start by explaining why the type-$A/A'$) utterances (and thus truth-talk more generally) should be understood primarily as offering at least apparent descriptions of
propositions. I then present the basic parameters of a game of make-believe that can function as
the core of a pretense-based account of truth-talk. The rules given govern a game that accounts
for the instances of what I call “transparent propositional truth-talk” (talk in which the
propositions apparently described are displayed as they are denoted).

With the parameters of the game of make-believe laid out, I explain what a view based on
this game says about the serious assertions made indirectly by type-A/A’) utterances. I then show
how this pretense-based account of truth-talk both generates all the instances of (ES) and satisfies
the central commitment of deflationism by making them fundamental in the relevant sense. Next
I discuss how the pretense-based account I offer accommodates truth-talk’s duality and deals with
its propensity for paradox in a deflationary manner. Finally, I indicate how this account of truth-
talk makes sense of the otherwise puzzling tension between the talk’s surface form and the idea I
claim is inherent in deflationism, namely that truth-talk’s logico-linguistic functioning is
something other than what it seems to be. In resolving this tension, the pretense-based view
combines apparently conflicting elements that have been taken to distinguish different
formulations of deflationism, thereby capturing what seems right about each of them within a
single account. In the next chapter I extend the basic game developed here to cover truth-talk that
does not purport to involve the transparent denotation of propositions, and I explain how this
account accommodates important aspects of truth-talk, in particular, its special generalizing role.

INITIAL MOTIVATIONS FOR PRETENSE

In Chapter 2 I explained the advantages deflationary views have over inflationary views
with regard to accommodating certain unusual features truth-talk exhibits. By taking the
instances of (ES) to be fundamental in virtue of truth-talk’s logico-linguistic functioning,
deflationary views can easily explain why they are necessary and a priori equivalences. This
then makes it easy to understand why the truth-locutions in certain instances of truth-talk (those
that appear in instances of (ES)) seem trivial while those in others do not. The deflationary
perspective also avoids the (probably unsatisfiable) demand for an elimination of truth-talk’s propensity for paradox. Taking the instances of (ES) to be fundamental makes metaphysically acceptable a diagnosis locating a genuine inconsistency in the rules governing truth-talk’s operation; it removes any worry that an inconsistent property of truth will emerge at a deeper level of explanation.

As mentioned above, I maintain that these motivations for pursuing a deflationary account of truth-talk—an account that makes the instances of (ES) conceptually and explanatorily basic—turn out to be motivations for pursuing a pretense-based account of truth-talk in particular. This connection is due to the motivation the deflationary perspective itself supplies for the thought that truth-talk involves pretense. Because deflationism involves taking the instances of (ES) as basic in the ways just mentioned, this perspective disallows any substantive, general analysis of the conditions of correct use for “…is true”, i.e., there is no analysis of the form

$$(\operatorname{Tr}) (\forall x) x \text{ satisfies “is true” } \iff x \text{ is } F.$$ \text{368}

Rather, in the basic uses of “…is true” these conditions (call them the “applicability conditions”) are in each case given by some instance of the schema

$$(\text{ES'}) \text{ That } p \text{ satisfies “is true” } \iff p.$$ \text{369}

Although the instances of (ES’) involve the semantic notion of predicate-satisfaction, they have the same sort of fundamental status as the instances of (ES). The traditional semantic notions of truth, reference and predicate-satisfaction are connected in such a way that a coherent

\text{368} Cf. Horwich (1998), p. 121. Horwich states his point as being that there is no reductive analysis of being true. I have changed the focus to the applicability conditions of “…is true” to fit with what was determined in Chapter 1 to be the most plausible central focus of deflationism—the functioning of truth-talk (rather than “the nature of truth”).

\text{369} Although (ES’) appears to treat “…is true” as a predicate (by presenting applicability conditions in terms of satisfaction of the term), one should not place too much weight on this. Truth-talk certainly appears predicative, and it is treated this way in our inferential practices, but as we will see, this is not the full story, nor one to be taken too seriously.
deflationism must be deflationist about all of them together.\(^{370}\) Regarding predicate-satisfaction, a view of this sort takes the instances of the schema

\[(S) \ (\forall x) \ x \text{ satisfies } "F" \iff x \text{ is } F\]

(where “F” is a schematic predicate variable) as fundamental in the sense that the instances of (ES) are fundamental. This status thus also applies to the special cases of (S) that make up the instances of the schema

\[(TS) \text{ That } p \text{ satisfies } "is true" \iff \text{ that } p \text{ is true.}\]

Since (ES’) is just a combination of (TS) and (ES), this means that the instances of (ES’) are all fundamental, trivial equivalences as well. There is nothing more to say about the applicability conditions for “…is true” in type-A/A’) utterances than what is said in the instances of (ES’).

This deflationary understanding of the applicability conditions for the basic uses of “…is true” is significantly similar to the view of the applicability conditions for “exists” offered in the preceding chapter. There I noted that the applicability conditions of “exists” neither admit of nor require any (non-trivial) analysis of the form

\[(E) \ (\forall x) \ x \text{ satisfies } "exists" \iff x \text{ is } F.\]

Rather, it turns out that what is available and all that is needed to account for the applicability of “exists” is a statement of the form

\[(E’) \ (\forall x) \ x \text{ satisfies } "exists".\]

The interesting feature of (E’) is that it places no conditions on any objects in order for “exists” to apply to them. This is at least part of what motivates the thesis that existence-talk is not genuinely predicative in the full logico-linguistic sense. There is a sense in which this way of talking does not say anything about the objects picked out by the singular terms it employs.

\[^{370}\] Cf. Horwich (1998), pp. 27-28, 113-116 and Field (1994), pp. 253, 261. Recall from Chapter 1 that (as others have noted) a substantive account of reference (an inflationary account of reference-talk) could be the basis of a substantive account of truth-talk (in a Tarski-style account à la Field (1972)).
Existence-talk does not really describe or characterize any particular objects, rather it describes all of actuality.

The status the instances of (ES') have on a deflationary view suggests a similar conclusion about truth-talk. Being fundamental, they specify applicability conditions for the basic uses of “…is true”. As in the case of (E’), the instances of (ES’) place no conditions on the objects offered as satisfying the expression in question. Thus, type-A/A’) utterances do not really function to describe or characterize any such objects. From a deflationary perspective, when considering whether, e.g., it is true that crabapples are edible (i.e., whether that crabapples are edible is true), the only question that arises is whether crabapples are edible. The question “Does this thing (that crabapples are edible) have this property (truth)?” does not really arise because the instances of (ES) are fundamental. The supposed satisfaction of “…is true” by something picked out by the expression “that crabapples are edible” involves nothing more than crabapples being edible. This indicates that in type-A/A’) utterances truth-talk does not involve predication in the full linguistic or speech-act sense, even if our inferential practices give us reasons to treat “…is true” as a predicate in the logical sense.371

The analogy I am drawing between existence-talk and a deflationary view of truth-talk is not perfect since it is based on similarities between (E’) and (ES’), and these two formulae differ in several respects. One difference is that while (E’) employs an objectual variable that can be bound by an ordinary objectual quantifier, (ES’) employs a variable (“p”) for sentences, in one instance for a sentence in use. Since this prevents it from being bound by an ordinary universal

371 I have here modified the account in Searle (1969), p. 122-127 of the question raised in the speech act of predication to descend from Searle’s semantically ascended talk of terms being true of objects. See Horwich (1998), pp. 39, 125 on reasons stemming from our inferential practices for treating “…is true” as a predicate logically.
quantifier (even a restricted one), (ES’) does not really amount to a genuine generalization.\textsuperscript{372} As a result, (ES’) is just a schema rather than a general analysis. But this difference actually works in favor of the idea that truth-talk is not genuinely predicative. If a schema is all there is at the most fundamental level of explanation of the basic applications of “…is true”, then there is no reason to think that this expression functions in those instances to describe or characterize objects as being some particular way. Like (E’), (ES’) does not specify a set of unified conditions for the applicability of “…is true”.

A second difference is that, although (ES’) does not provide a general analysis of the applicability conditions of “…is true”, each instance of the schema does specify correctness conditions for a particular use of “…is true”. In other words, the instances of (ES’) are still biconditionals with right-hand sides. (E’) offers no conditions for the satisfaction of “exists”, and the complete lack of an analysans plays an important role in supporting the idea that “exists” does not really perform the logico-linguistic function of predication, not even as a primitive predicate. But as already mentioned, (ES’) is still like (E’) with respect to what matters here. In each instance of (ES’), the right-hand side of the biconditional makes no mention of any object putatively picked out by the that-clause employed on the left-hand side. Because of this, (ES’) not only fails to specify a unifying condition that must be met by objects satisfying “…is true”, the instances of (ES’) never place any conditions on any such objects. Since there is no underlying account explaining the instances of (ES’), a deflationist sees the applicability conditions of “…is true” as like those of “exists” at this more general level. Thus a deflationist should deny that the most basic instances of truth-talk function to describe or characterize objects picked out by singular terms these utterances employ. From this perspective, truth-talk is not really predicative in the full logico-linguistic sense.

\textsuperscript{372}As discussed in considering the generalization problem in Chapter 2, even if (ES’) were prefixed with a universal substitutional quantifier (“\(\Pi p\)”), it still would not amount to a genuine generalization, but rather
Like existence-talk, however, even the basic instances of truth-talk appear to function predicatively, and (contra a crude performativist deflationism\(^{373}\)) this way of talking is most plausibly thought of as usable for making genuine, factual assertions.\(^{374}\) The success the pretense approach shows in reconciling this sort of tension in the case of existence-talk recommends an application in the case of truth-talk as well. In addition, the pretense approach appears to be a fairly natural strategy for a would-be deflationist, at least once some of the general purposes of semantic pretense are considered alongside some of the central deflationary ideas about the function of truth-talk. On the former, Crimmins points out a use of semantic pretense that is particularly suggestive for the project of developing a pretense-based account of truth-talk.

Semantic pretense might find use in a language for any number of reasons. A key one is to let us express using ready, tidy linguistic resources claims that, perspicuously stated would require cumbersome formulations or unfamiliar terminology.\(^{375}\)

The function of semantic pretense identified here makes it look tailor-made for use in a deflationary account of truth-talk. Consider this function in light of a claim Horwich makes about the operation of truth-talk in our language.

\(^{373}\) A crude performativist deflationism maintains that truth-talk is just a way of confirming or expressing approval for assertions or beliefs, not a way of saying that anything is the case. Occasionally (though perhaps uncharitably), this sort of view is attributed to such figures as William James, P.F. Strawson, and Richard Rorty. (See Boghossian (1990), p. 162.) This understanding of performativist deflationism is undermined by the embedding (or Frege-Geach) problem. (See Brandom (1994), p. 298.)

\(^{374}\) Note that this does not require that the assertions made with truth-talk be the meta-assertions its instances appear to make, which means that a more sophisticated performativist (Strawson?) does not have to deny this thesis. Also, it should be understood that the focus of this thesis is the use of truth-talk in declarative sentences. Emphasizing this use is not to deny truth-talk’s potential uses in questions (“Is that true?”) and commands (“Make it true!”). I should also acknowledge within the scope of declarative uses of truth-talk the qualification that a truth-attribute makes a factual assertion only to the extent that the sentence embedded or denoted in the attribution is factual. If ethical claims are not factual, then “attributions of truth” to them do not make factual assertions either. But this does not automatically mean that truth-talk cannot be applied to them—rather, it just implies that the factual/non-factual distinction cannot be characterized in terms of whether truth-talk can be applied to a fragment of discourse. See Field (1994a) for an account of how a deflationist might understand the factual/nonfactual distinction.

Notice that one could design an alternative way of putting the things that we actually express by means of the truth predicate. With the introduction of sentence variables, predicate variables, and substitutional quantification, our thoughts could be expressed awkwardly...

The advantage of the truth predicate is that it allows us to say what we want without having to employ any new linguistic apparatus of this sort. It enables us to achieve the effect of generalizing substitutionally over sentences and predicates, but by means of ordinary variables (i.e. pronouns) which range over objects. 376

Given deflationism’s commitment to the idea that the central use of truth-talk is the implementation of a kind of schematic generalizing (its (ES)-related generalizing role), 377 and the fact that in fulfilling this function truth-talk allows us to avoid unfamiliar logical and linguistic devices (somehow making familiar but seemingly unsuitable devices adequate for this task), semantic pretense appears well-suited for providing a deflationary account of truth-talk.

THE BASIC PRETENSE OF TRUTH-TALK

i) Preliminary Concerns: Modifying the Model

The analogy I have been drawing between existence-talk and truth-talk extends to using the pretense-based account of the former described in the last chapter as a model for a pretense-based account of the latter. Before proceeding on this model, however, I should note some ways in which it must be altered for an application to truth-talk. As laid out in the preceding chapter, the pretense-based account of existence-talk makes use of truth-talk in two ways. The first appears in the explanation of how semantic pretense functions in utterances to make serious assertions indirectly: the utterances are viewed as moves in games of make-believe that establish certain real-world conditions as necessary and sufficient for the utterances to be fictionaltrue.


A second way truth-talk is used is in the specification of the particular real-world conditions established for the fictional truth of existential claims. According to the game of make-believe behind existence-talk, the utterance

\[(4.14) \{\text{Santa Claus does not exist}\}\]

is fictionally true (and thus genuinely true) if and only if the kind of attempt to refer displayed in \((4.14)\)’s use of the name “Santa Claus” is unsuccessful. This use of reference-talk is an instance of truth-talk broadly understood because the notions of truth and reference are so tightly connected.\(^{378}\)

A pretense-based account of truth-talk cannot itself employ truth-talk in so blithe a manner without generating worries of vicious circularity. Upon consideration, the second use discussed turns out to be unproblematic since it is particular to existence-talk. At most what it shows is that if one endorses pretense-based accounts of both existence-talk and truth-talk (broadly construed so as to include reference-talk), then one might have to accept that the serious assertions made indirectly with these ways of talking cannot always be expressed in a pretense-free way.\(^{379}\) That certain semantic pretenses are essential, in the sense that the serious assertions made by means of them cannot be made directly, has been argued in certain other applications of

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\(^{378}\) The principles governing the game for existence-talk also make use of reference-talk inside the context of the pretense, as in E-1) which says that it is to be pretended that every name or singular term denotes something. Reference is only pretended here, but E-1) does mark this as first-order extrinsic pretense, which would mean that reference-talk attributes a genuine relation and the pretense is only about the extent of this relation. However, this is compatible with a pretense-based account of truth-talk. It just means that this rule actually involves the application of extrinsic pretense to a claim that employs an intrinsic pretense (i.e., it is a case that would be marked “\(*\{\ldots\}\*\)”). I say more about what this kind of situation involves in the next chapter.

\(^{379}\) The serious assertion made indirectly with certain instances of truth-talk (those employing that-clauses or quotation names) can also be asserted directly (unless the nominalized sentences employ existence-talk or ungrounded truth-talk). However, the serious assertions made with all instances of existence-talk (which is not to say all uses of the existential quantifier) and with the instances of reference-talk most closely linked to existential claims (e.g., utterances of the form “The name ‘Santa Claus’ does not denote anything”) can never be said directly (without pretense). In fact, existence-talk and reference-talk end up looking like something along the lines of inverses: existence-talk appears to provide a way to say
the pretense approach.  What I am suggesting here is that existence-talk and (at least some of) reference-talk are both essential pretenses in this way, and that they amount to alternative ways of making the same, otherwise inexpressible, serious assertions. Because I do not find this particularly difficult to accept, I do not take this use of truth-talk in the account of existence-talk to threaten a pretense-based account of the former (or to force a choice between accepting this sort of account for either existence-talk or truth-talk, but not both).

The first use of truth-talk specified, that found in the account of semantic pretense itself, is potentially more worrisome for a pretense-based account of truth-talk. In the preceding chapter, semantic pretense is explained as operating by counting utterances as moves in games of make-believe that establish real-world conditions under which the utterances are *fictionally true*. These utterances thereby amount to instances of indirectly serious discourse; they make serious assertions that are genuinely true exactly when the utterances are fictionally true, more specifically, when *it is fictionally true that* to pretend as displayed in the utterances is to speak *truly*. The use of “it is fictionally true that” here can be rephrased so as to avoid any overt use of truth-talk. It is really just the extrinsic pretense operator, “*(…)*”, which can be expressed in English as “in the relevant game of make-believe…” or as “(in the relevant game of make-believe) it is to be pretended that…”. Uttering a sentence prefixed with this operator amounts to putting forward (the serious content of) the embedded utterance as a prescribed pretense.

something about a term (or a way of using it) while actually using it; reference-talk appears to provide a way to use a term while merely mentioning it (as in “the guy Bob referred to as ‘that idiot’”).


381 Like the putative truth operator “it is true that…”, this second expression is not an operator fundamentally. Rather, it is a syntactic operator expression constructed out of the logically predicative expression “…is to be pretended (in the relevant game of make-believe)”.

382 My talk here and in what follows of pretenses being prescribed or of real-world conditions being prescriptive for a pretense should always be understood as relative to a particular game of make-believe. The sense of “prescribe” intended is just that in which, e.g., the game of basketball establishes being in motion as prescriptive for dribbling the ball.
The use of this operator in a pretense-based account of truth-talk threatens circularity only if the notion of pretending (and of being to be pretended) itself involves an antecedent notion of truth. This is a serious issue that I take up in the final chapter when I consider objections particular to explaining truth-talk in terms of semantic pretense.

The latter use of truth-talk, that occurring in the general statement of what gets pretended in cases of semantic pretense, is not so easy to explain away. That pretense is specified as follows.

(SP) The pretense prescribed under the real-world conditions specified by the relevant game is that to speak as displayed in the utterance is to speak truly.

This appears to be a context from which truth-talk cannot be eliminated, at least within natural language. The worry is that truth-talk might play a fundamental explanatory role in (SP), one it could not have if it were based on a pretense. However, ineliminability from natural language is not incompatible with deflationism. Even a deflationist will acknowledge that in certain contexts truth-talk performs a function that is not performed by any other means in our language, namely, its distinctive logical function of effecting schematic generalization on sentence positions. However, if this is all that truth-talk is doing in the explanation of semantic pretense—allowing for a kind of general statement of the pretenses that get prescribed in cases of semantic pretense—then acknowledging its ineliminability does not involve going beyond the roles truth-talk plays according to a deflationary account. The role truth-talk plays in the explanation of semantic pretense itself could be one attributed to the talk by the pretense-based account. Ineliminability would be a problem only if truth-talk were being used in some way that could not be explained as the pretense in action. I maintain that it is not.

In addition, truth-talk (in the form of the expression “truly”) crops up only in a general statement of semantic pretense. But in explaining the pretense behind truth-talk there is no need to appeal to a general notion of semantic pretense. Provided the particular pretenses that instances of truth-talk involve can be accounted for without relying on the notion of truth, there is
no worry of overt circularity. However, there may still be a worry similar to the one just mentioned in discussing the extrinsic pretense operator. If the pretenses involved in cases of semantic pretense cannot be explained without using truth-talk, then the claim that truth-talk is explained in terms of pretense entails that semantic pretense cannot itself be explained in a pretense-free way.\textsuperscript{383} This may, in fact, follow from a pretense-based account of truth-talk, but even if it does, this need not generate a vicious circle if it is merely a feature of our explanatory and expressive capacities and not an aspect of ability to pretend itself. I take this point up further in the next chapter as well.

Bracketing these extended worries for now, it is possible to modify the game of make-believe laid out for existence-talk in the last chapter and use it as a model for a game of make-believe explaining truth-talk. I turn now to the details of the pretense at work in the instances of truth-talk, starting with certain features of the content of the make-believe involved.

\textbf{ii) Starting Point: General Content of the Make-Believe}

The basic content of the make-believe behind truth-talk is as one might expect. The central component is a pretense that the expression “…is true” functions to describe objects picked out by the term expressions it gets combined with. So in the make-believe, truth-talk is predicative in the full logico-linguistic sense. This game thus includes a pretense that the instances of truth-talk make assertions directly by attributing a special property called “truth” to objects denoted by the terms they employ. Because part of this pretense applies at the level of the talk’s functioning, utterances putatively making attributions of the property of truth invoke pretense intrinsically. There is a definitional connection (in the pretense) between “being true”

and “having the property of truth”, thus uses of the expression “…is true” generate cases of intrinsic pretense.  

An aspect of the game’s content somewhat trickier to settle is that related to the traditional issue of truth-bearers. In the traditional context, this issue has to do with whether there is any sort of hierarchy among the different sorts of things that are said to be true: assertions, beliefs, propositions, theories, utterances, states of thinking, sentences, etc. The question is whether truth applies to all of these sorts of things equally directly, or applies only indirectly to some of them in virtue of more limited direct application. The issue cuts across the debate between inflationists and deflationists and arises within each of the two perspectives. On my understanding of deflationism the focus shifts from truth to truth-talk in this context, so the question of what sorts of things are the direct bearers of the property of truth is transformed to the question of whether truth-talk has a basic subject matter, and if so what it is. 

What a deflationist says regarding this issue is further constrained by the fundamental status she assigns to the instances of (ES). Because these equivalences are both conceptually and explanatorily fundamental, the form of truth-talk that occurs in the instances of (ES), namely,

\[ A/A' \{\text{It is true that } p\} / \{\text{That } p \text{ is true}\} \]

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384 *Mutatis mutandis* for “…is false” and the pretend property of falsity. 

385 Field (1986) claims in the context of what eventually amounts to an inflationary view of truth that utterances and thought-states should be taken as primary truth-bearers; Alston (1996) claims in the context of a putatively non-deflationary view of truth that propositions should be considered primary truth-bearers; Horwich (1998) claims in the context of a deflationary view of truth that propositions should be taken as primary truth-bearers; Field (1992) claims that in a deflationary context utterances and thought-states should be taken as the primary truth-bearers (or rather that utterance-truth and belief-truth should be considered directly and completely independently of talk of propositions, which should be avoided).

386 Looking at the issue this way involves rejecting the prosententialist’s claim that truth-talk is not predicative at all. In my discussion of Brandom’s view in Chapter 3 I mentioned that the predicative reading of truth-talk is the most natural one and fits best with our inferential practices. In promoting his operator version of prosententialism over the version from Grover, Camp and Belnap (1975), Brandom claims, “The account of truth talk should bear the weight of such divergence of logical from grammatical form only if no similarly adequate account can be constructed that lacks this feature.” (Brandom (1994), p. 304.) I agree, so the account I develop here takes the *logical* functioning of truth-talk to be predicative.
counts as the basic form. Since linguistic and inferential considerations suggest that these instances of truth-talk are best understood as (at least apparent) descriptions of objects denoted by that-clauses, deflationary views should claim that truth-talk does have (at least apparently) a basic subject matter: the referents of that-clauses. Although the standard view of that-clauses has it that these referents are propositions, the alternative treatment of that-clauses offered by Field and Brandom (discussed in Chapter 3) shows that this conclusion is not automatic. The question for a deflationist, then, is what that-clauses should be taken to denote (at least ostensibly). In answering this question a deflationist identifies truth-talk’s basic subject matter.

I should point out that on the pretense-based account developed here, there is a sense in which truth-talk qua truth-talk does not really have a basic subject matter because its basic instances (taken at face value) do not really describe anything. In more traditional terms, really there are no truth-bearers on this approach because really there is nothing to bear. In the context of the pretense, however, it is to be pretended that the instances of truth-talk (even the basic ones) function to describe certain objects as having a property called “truth”. This is part of the content of the make-believe behind truth-talk. Thus, there are still apparent truth-bearers, and in keeping with the deflationary perspective, the make-believe takes them to be whatever that-clauses are supposed to denote.

At least in the context of the make-believe, I agree with the standard view that that-clauses should be understood as denoting propositions. This view makes the most sense of our linguistic and inferential practices. A central use of that-clauses is in the specification of what people assert, deny, believe, etc. Examination of our uses of terms like “what Bob asserted” or “what I believe” reveals that they are most plausibly understood as purporting to pick out propositions. The alternative would be to take physical objects like the utterances and thought-

\[387\] See my discussion of Field’s disquotationalism in Chapter 3 for an explanation of why this applies even to his view.
states that implement assertions and beliefs as the referents of expressions like “what he asserted” and “what she believed”. But this alternative is implausible as an account of our linguistic practices. Consider claims like the following.

(5.1) What Bob asserted is what I believe.

(5.2) What she said in French is what he said in English.

It is difficult to read the “what” terms in these claims as denoting utterances or thought-states. These statements are best understood as identity claims. If what Bob asserted were just the sentence-token he uttered and what I believe were just my thought-state, there would be no way for them to be identical. Even if what I believe were understood as some sort of internal utterance (a mentalese sentence-token), it still could not be the same sentence-token as the one Bob uttered. In fact, it is highly unlikely that the two tokens would even be of the same type. And even if they were in the case of (5.1), we often make claims like (5.2) in which an identity is claimed between what two different people say although they employ type-distinct sentence-tokens from different languages.

In order to make sense of identity claims like (5.1) and (5.2) (as identity claims) we must move beyond utterances (sentence-tokens) and even beyond sentence-types. At the very least, these claims must be understood to be about equivalence classes of utterances (of different types). But the postulation of equivalence classes of utterances already introduces a notion that has been offered as an analysis of what propositions are.388 Further sorts of statements we make indicate

388See Ayer (1952), p. 88. Ayer denies that propositions so understood must be considered real entities, but he also denies that they are “fictitious objects” (Ibid., p. 63). He claims that propositions are logical constructions of sentences in the sense that logical empiricists held material objects to be logical constructions of sense-data. Talk of propositions is supposed to reduce literally to talk of sentences. However, the failures of the logical empiricists’ program of literal reduction casts suspicion on Ayer’s attempt to maintain that propositions are neither real nor fictitious entities. In addition, a commitment to the reality of propositions understood as equivalence classes of sentences requires a prior commitment to a notion of interlinguistic (interpersonal) synonymy, something that some philosophers (in particular, Quine) have found problematic. See Field (1986), p. 61.
that the putative referents of terms like “what Bob asserted” must be abstract objects of some sort.

Consider an utterance like

(5.3) \{What Bob asserted and what I believe would have been true even if no language users or thinkers had ever evolved.\}

Given what (5.1), (5.2) and (5.3) show about how we use expressions like “what Bob asserted”, what (if anything) they denote would have to be things that can be understood by more than one person and that different people can assert, deny, believe or disbelieve, things that can be expressed in different languages, and things that could have been true even if no language users (and hence no utterances or thought-states) had ever existed. Propositions are supposedly abstract, mind- and language-independent entities of precisely the implied sort.\textsuperscript{389}

What holds for expressions like “what Bob asserted” holds for that-clauses as well since the two sorts of expressions are used in what are ostensibly identity claims, for example

(5.4) What Bob said/believes/hopes is that crabapples are edible.

Our inferential practices with the kinds of expressions that flank the “is” in (5.4) indicate that both should be taken as referring expressions. So a claim of this sort is best understood as an identity claim. Since the first term in this claim supposedly denotes a proposition, the that-clause should be taken as putatively designating a proposition too (in particular, the same proposition).

So the standard view of what that-clauses denote is the one that makes the most sense of our practices. Because the instances of truth-talk that a deflationary view takes as basic employ that-clauses in the subject position, truth-talk is best understood by deflationists as at least appearing to have propositions as its basic subject matter.

The idea that propositions are truth-talk’s basic subject matter extends beyond the thesis that the instances employing that-clauses offer descriptions of propositions. The reasoning to this conclusion already shows that instances of truth-talk employing expressions like “what he

asserted/believes/hopes” also offer descriptions of propositions. Truth-talk apparently describing such things as assertions or beliefs are also best understood as purporting to describe propositions. Expressions like “Bob’s assertion” and “Bob’s belief” involve an act/object ambiguity. Thus, a claim like

\[(5.5) \{\text{Bob’s assertion/belief is true}\}\]

is ambiguous between two readings, those more perspicuously offered by the statements

\[(5.6) \{\text{What Bob asserted/believes is true}\}\]
\[(5.7) \{\text{Bob’s act of asserting/state of believing is true.}\}\]

The disambiguation best taken as basic is (5.6). Given our linguistic practices, truth-talk is not plausibly construed as fundamentally describing certain sorts of acts, acts of uttering or acts of thinking.\(^{390}\)

Propositions should also be considered the purported subjects of truth-talk that employs singular terms like “Goldbach’s conjecture” or “The continuum hypothesis”. These terms also seem to denote things that can be stated in many different languages, believed by more than one person, and could have been true even if no utterances expressing them had ever existed.

Finally, even in the case of truth-talk apparently describing utterances (sentence-tokens) and thought-states directly, propositional truth-talk should be considered basic. This is not to say that these claims should be interpreted as offering direct descriptions of propositions. Rather, truth-talk ostensibly about utterances or thought-states is best understood as offering descriptions of these kinds of items as being appropriately related to propositions that are true or false.\(^{391}\) The alternative would be to take the utterances and thought-states as what are directly described as true or false. But this approach is problematic. For a start, these things are just physical objects

\(^{390}\) Alston (1996), p. 14. Alston points out that notions of truth for the act/state readings of these terms can be constructed, but they are not plausibly taken as basic (contra Quine (1986), p.13).

\(^{391}\) Apparent attributions of truth to sentences are most plausibly read as putatively describing sentence-tokens rather than sentence-types, and sentence-tokens are included in the category of utterance. (Cf. Quine (1986), pp. 13-14; Alston (1996), pp. 9-11.)
like patterns of ink on paper, or patterns of sonic wave motion in the air, or particular brain-states (those that realize certain thought-states). Truth-talk is not plausibly construed as talk about physical objects like these taken just as physical objects. Utterances (in particular, those that count as assertions) and thought-states (in particular, those that amount to beliefs) are more plausibly seen as being true or false indirectly, in virtue of some relation to some other sort of object that is true or false directly. Bob’s utterance, for example, is true because what he said by means of his utterance is true. The term “what he said (by means of his utterance)” appears to refer not to the utterance he made, but rather to something else implicated by it—putatively a proposition.

Propositional truth-talk thus emerges as the basis of truth-talk in general. This conclusion does not necessarily conflict with the view that the goal of a theory of truth is “to explain what it is for an utterance and/or state of thinking to be true or false.” The ultimate purpose of the appeal to the notions of proposition and propositional truth could still be to characterize utterances and states of thinking. This is especially plausible for a view that explains the functioning of truth-talk in terms of make-believe; the putative fundamental bearers of truth could be part of the pretense. The account of how truth-talk works might center the make-believe on a game for propositional truth-talk, but one should not place too much weight on this, as the discussion of propositions and proposition-talk in the next chapter will make clear.

392 Even Hartry Field, who staunchly argues for taking utterances and thought-states as the primary bearers of truth (see Field (1986), pp. 55-56), cannot really be taken as meaning just the physical objects. As explained in Chapter 3, the deflationary account of truth that he endorses in Field (1994) is based on a claim that for someone applying “true” to an utterance $u$, “the claim that $u$ is true (true-as-he-understands it) is cognitively equivalent (for the person) to $u$ itself (as he understands it).” (Field (1994), p. 250, italics added) Thus it is not the physical object just as a physical object (an orthographic type) that a speaker applies the truth-predicate to, rather it is an interpreted utterance (a computational type). The understanding assigned to the utterance might have some claim to being called a proposition, although given Field’s conceptual-role notion of understanding, this notion of proposition will not make them out to be full-blown objective, intensional entities.

393 Field (1986), p. 55. For a deflationist this goal is better understood as explaining what it is for an utterance or thought-state to be called “true” or “false”.

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iii) The Structure of the Make-Believe: The Basic Game

The centrality of propositional truth-talk connects what are *prima facie* different species of truth-talk, linking, e.g., truth-talk apparently about utterances or states of thinking with truth-talk apparently about beliefs, assertions, theories, etc. In addition, the hierarchy simplifies the overall pretense: the different species of truth-talk all get explained in terms of one central pretense extended in different ways. Because ordinary truth-talk appears to be structured this way, the development of a pretense-based account can begin with the rules for a game of make-believe explaining just the basic instances of truth-talk, utterances of the form

\[ A/A' \} \{ \text{It is true that } p \} / \{ \text{That } p \text{ is true.} \} \]

Once the rules for this basic game have been laid out, new rules can be added, extending the game to cover other, non-fundamental, types of truth-talk. This is the approach taken here. As the core of a pretense-based account of truth-talk, consider a game of make-believe governed by the following parameters.

T-1) *The linguistic devices definitive of truth-talk (e.g., “is true” and “is false”) are genuine predicates that function to describe objects denoted by the singular terms with which they are concatenated.*

T-2) *There is a property attributed to objects by the expression “is true” (call it “truth”), and a property attributed to objects by “is false” (call it “falsity”).*

T-3) {Truth and falsity are properties of propositions.}

T-4) \{(\forall x)(x \text{ is true (i.e., satisfies the predicate “is true”)} =_{df} x \text{ has the property of truth}\}

T-5) \{(\forall x)(x \text{ is false (i.e., satisfies the predicate “is false”)} =_{df} x \text{ has the property of falsity})\}

T-6) \{(\Pi p)(\text{The pretenses displayed in an utterance of } \{\text{The proposition that } p \text{ has the property of truth}\} \text{ are prescribed iff } p)\}

T-7) \{(\Pi p)(\text{The pretenses displayed in an utterance of } \{\text{The proposition that } p \text{ has the property of falsity}\} \text{ are prescribed iff } \neg p)\}

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394 Cf. Horwich (1998), pp. 16-17, 133-135
A game of make-believe governed by these parameters immediately accounts for what I call “transparent propositional truth-talk,” truth-talk apparently describing propositions denoted with that-clauses, expressions that are thought to display exactly which propositions are supposedly being described. The first five parameters stipulate the foundational pretenses of the make-believe, that is, what is to be expressly made-believe in this game. Rules T-1) and T-2) prescribe pretenses about certain components of the instances of truth-talk, pretenses that explain how we are supposed to imagine that these utterances make assertions when taken at face value. The first rule involves a pretense about the functioning of truth-talk’s definitive expressions; the second rule stipulates a pretense regarding the extent to which those expressions succeed at the pretended functioning (making the game more than a pretense of an error theory of truth-talk). Rule T-3) then makes use of the metalinguistic pretenses instituted by T-1) and T-2) to stipulate that propositional truth-talk is basic. Rules T-4) and T-5) make explicit some pretense-bound definitional links (that is, ones that apply only within the make-believe) that hold between certain notions the pretense institutes: the notions of being true/false and those of having the property of truth/falsity. The upshot of these rules is that a putative claim that something is true/false makes the same pretend assertion as a putative claim that that thing has the property of truth/falsity. In other words, the pretenses involved in an utterance of the first sort are the same as those involved in the corresponding utterance of the second sort.

Rules T-4) and T-5) require some additional clarification due to their uses of the universal quantifier inside the pretense-indicating notation “{…}”. This placement of the quantifiers does not alter their functioning; they play their ordinary logical role, just in the context

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395 To simplify things I have presented these pretenses as cases of first-order extrinsic pretense. Again, this will have to be modified eventually since these statements of the pretenses involve semantic notions that also need to be explained in terms of semantic pretense. See footnote 378.

396 There is still the question of whether a pretense-based account of truth-talk really is an error theory, and if so in what sense. I take this issue up in the final chapter.
of a pretense about their domains here. In both cases the domain of the quantifier supposedly includes propositions. The quantifiers appear inside the pretense-indicating notation in anticipation of the pretense-based account of proposition-talk broached in the next chapter. Part of what this placement of the quantifiers means is that proposition-talk is an existentially creative pretense, not an existentially conservative one\textsuperscript{397}—it involves pretending that there are propositions, not just pretending of certain actual things that they are propositions. The quantifiers in T-4) and T-5) are unrestricted (this is necessary for certain extensions of the game I will explain in Chapter 6), but the domain they share is what we might call a “fictionally expanded universal domain.”\textsuperscript{398} This particular domain includes everything there is, but “in addition” it also (fictionally) includes things that are merely pretend, in particular, propositions. Because of the domain involved, rules T-4) and T-5) involve quantification in a way that invokes pretense intrinsically. Thus the quantifiers appear inside the pretense-indicating notation.

T-6) and T-7) are the key parameters of the make-believe. Like E-4) from the game behind existence-talk, these parameters are actually schematic principles of generation; the universal substitutional quantifier encodes a conjunction of all the individual, particular rules formed by the different fillings of the schematic variable “p”. These individual principles of generation anchor the make-believe to reality by making some of how the world should be imagined to be in the context of this game dependent on how the world is. These principles extend the pretenses involved in the game beyond just the stipulated imaginings offered so far by making the appropriateness of the pretenses displayed in certain utterances belonging to the game depend on certain game-independent, real-world conditions. The dependencies thus established

\textsuperscript{397}See Evans (1982), p. 358 on this distinction.

\textsuperscript{398}The parameters of the game explaining existence-talk presented in Chapter 4 also institute a fictionally expanded universal domain. The stipulation by rule E-1) that it is to be pretended that every name and singular term has a bearer generates a domain that (fictionally) includes more things than there actually are,
do not pertain merely to when these pretenses are warranted in the make-believe given what else a participant is imagining. Although the appropriateness of pretenses is here presented in terms of being to be imagined, this is not constrained by the awareness of the potential participants in the game. The force here is more along the lines of is correctly imagined, rather than should be imagined given what else the imaginer thinks.  

For convenience I will henceforth refer to the schematic parameters T-6) and T-7) as themselves principles of generation. This looseness of language will not affect any of the points to follow. The dependencies that T-6) and T-7) establish are what make certain utterances counting as moves in this game usable for making indirect serious assertions that are not just about what is included in the game’s content. The pretenses that principles T-6) and T-7) establish prescriptive conditions for are those displayed in the instances of the schemata

(PT) {The proposition that p has the property of truth}

(PF) {The proposition that p has the property of falsity}

(in which “p” is filled in by an English sentence). These utterances invoke pretense intrinsically by employing linguistic components (e.g., “the property of truth”) that are entirely creatures of the pretense. Principles T-1) through T-5) give the linguistic components uses in the make-believe, and make the instances of (PT) and (PF) count as assertions in the game, but these utterances have no life outside of the make-believe except that given to them by the make-believe.

but in the make-believe only some of them (fictionally) have the pretend discriminating property of existence.


400Utterances expressing stipulated pretenses belonging to the game, e.g., “{Propositions are the basic truth-bearers}” or “{Truth is a property of propositions},” can be used to make serious assertions, but the serious assertions made will just be that the pretenses displayed in the utterances are part of the content of the make-believe.

401I do not mean to imply that making utterances in English is an essential part of the pretenses identified in this way. One might engage in the relevant pretenses (those displayed in the resulting English utterances) by making utterances in some other language or by having certain thoughts.
Principles T-6) and T-7) are what do this; they make certain utterances that otherwise have no serious application usable for making serious assertions about non-game matters indirectly.

Simultaneously, T-6) and T-7) determine precisely what serious assertions get made with the instances of (PT) and (PF). In making a pretend assertion with an utterance of either of these forms, a speaker puts forward the intrinsic pretenses the utterance displays as appropriate or prescribed. Principles T-6) and T-7) stipulate in each case that the pretenses displayed are prescribed only under particular conditions. Part of what uttering an instance of (PT) or of (PF) accomplishes, then, is a serious assertion of the obtaining of the real-world conditions that the relevant instance of T-6) or T-7) specifies as required. Given the way these principles assign conditions as prescriptive for the pretenses displayed in these utterances, the serious assertion made with an utterance formed by filling the variable “p” in (PT) with a declarative English sentence is just the serious assertion that would be made with an assertoric utterance of the filling sentence by itself; the serious assertion made with an utterance of an instance of (PF) is just the serious assertion that would be made with an assertoric utterance of the negation of the sentence that goes in for “p” by itself.

In presenting and discussing principles T-6) and T-7) I have made use of phrases like “the pretenses displayed in the utterance”. This is done in part to keep the game of make-believe they govern applicable to more than just the particular English utterances used to identify the relevant pretenses (i.e., to allow for its applicability to utterances in other languages or to thoughts employing these same pretenses). But this is not the only reason this sort of phrase is used, nor the main one. The phrase is used mainly because direct statements of the pretenses in question are not possible. It may look as if the pretenses displayed in an utterance of form (PT) could be stated directly as follows: the pretense displayed in the utterance is that the proposition that $p$ has the property of truth. Or perhaps the pretense involved can be stated directly with a general statement along the lines mentioned above: the pretense involved is that to speak as displayed in the utterance is to speak truly. However, on the current view statements of both of
these sorts invoke pretense intrinsically; there is no direct (pretense-free) way to specify explicitly how the world should be imagined to be under the real-world conditions specified by T-6). 402

Rather, all that can be done to identify the pretenses that get prescribed is to display examples of them.

This is similar to the situation Walton describes while explaining what serious assertions are made when fictional names are employed in ordinary statements about works of fiction. Walton introduces the technical term “pretense of kind K” as a surrogate specification of the sort of pretense prescribed under certain conditions by the relevant game of make-believe. 403

However, the only way to fix the referent of this technical term is by providing examples displaying the relevant pretenses. There is “no informative individuating description that can be given of this kind of pretense.” 404 This point holds generally for utterances that involve intrinsic pretense (the knowing use of fictional names being just one variety of this type of utterance), and thus for the pretenses that principles T-6) and T-7) establish as prescribed under certain conditions.

Because the instances of the utterance forms mentioned on the left-hand sides of T-6) and T-7) invoke pretense intrinsically, they involve metalinguistic pretenses regarding components of the utterances. It is possible to construct statements that make the metalinguistic pretenses these utterances involve explicit, but one must be careful not to confuse the explicitly metalinguistic...

402 Contrast this situation with that involved in cases of (first-order) extrinsic pretense. In cases of the latter sort it is often possible to explicitly state what is to be pretended in a pretense-free way since the utterances displaying the pretenses prescribed can be used to make serious assertions when taken literally.

403 Walton (1990), pp. 400-403. Walton employs truth-talk in his account of these utterances, saying that someone who engages in a pretense of kind K in a game of make-believe authorized for the fiction makes it fictional of himself that he speaks truly. Semantically descending from this use of truth-talk we get that by engaging in pretenses of kind K the speaker pretends as is prescribed under the obtaining real-world conditions by a game of make-believe authorized for the work of fiction.

404 Ibid., p. 402. This is reminiscent of Wittgenstein’s distinction in the Tractatus between things that can be said and things that can only be shown or made manifest. In certain cases what is to be pretended cannot be said but can only be shown by displaying the pretense.
claims for statements of what is to be pretended. While the metalinguistic statements make the pretenses more explicit by displaying their structure more perspicuously, they still do not amount to direct statements of the pretenses prescribed. Moving to a metalinguistic statement does not eliminate the intrinsic pretense involved. What the instances of T-6) establish as to be pretended under certain real-world conditions is thus still only displayed in the instances of the metalinguistic schema

\[(PT^*) \{ \text{The object denoted by “the proposition that } p \text{” has the property expressed by the predicate “is true”.} \}\]

The instances of this schema clarify the dependency the displayed pretenses have on the foundational pretenses of the make-believe, but the pretenses being offered as prescribed are still only displayed since it is only part of a game of make-believe that “is true” is a predicate expressing a property.\(^{405}\)

Another aspect of principles T-6) and T-7) that needs some explanation is their use of a non-standard logical device—substitutial quantification and sentence variables. As explained in previous chapters, the universal substitutial quantifier “\(\Pi\)” and sentence variable “\(p\)” are to be understood here as means of encoding an infinite conjunction of all the instances of the schema to which the quantifier is prefixed. As conjunctions of schema instances, these principles do not offer general, unified conditions for the appropriateness of the pretenses displayed in the instances of

\[(PT) \{ \text{The proposition that } p \text{ has the property of truth} \}\]

\[(PF) \{ \text{The proposition that } p \text{ has the property of falsity.} \}\]

Instead, the individual instances of principles T-6) and T-7) each stipulate distinct conditions for the appropriateness of particular pretenses employing the notions of truth and falsity. This is in

\(^{405}\)Also, the instances of (PT*) simply trade in the truth-talk employed in the utterances mentioned on the left-hand side of the instances of T-6) for other semantic-talk (reference-talk and expressing-talk) which will eventually also need to be explained in terms of intrinsic pretense.
keeping with the general deflationary perspective, according to which for each sentence that goes in for “p”, there is nothing more to say about the putative referent of any filling of “(the proposition) that p” being true than what the relevant instance of the equivalence schema tells us. On the pretense-based account, it is only in the context of a pretense that there is such a thing as being true (= having the property of truth), so the issue of what there is to say about the putative referents of the instances of “(the proposition) that p” being true is the issue of when the pretenses displayed in the instances of (PT) are appropriate. According to T-6), there is nothing more to say about this than that in each case they are exactly under the conditions expressed by the sentence that goes in for “p” by itself.

Because truth-talk is the means natural language employ to form the equivalents of substitutional quantification and sentence variables, a statement of the rules governing a game of make-believe explaining truth-talk must make explicit use of these (or some other equivalent) devices if it is to avoid explicit use of the very way of talking being explained. This does bring up a further worry about the use of this non-standard logical device. It may avoid overt use of truth-talk, but there is the question of whether it still makes the account circular because truth-talk is necessary to explain the operation of universal substitutional quantification and sentence variables thus: every result of consistently substituting a sentence from the substitution class in for the variable “p” in the schema is true. But this only shows the interdependence of schematic sentence variables and truth-talk; each can be used in an elucidation of how the other functions. There may be a kind of circularity here, but if so it is not a problematic sort. The reason is that T-6) and T-7) are only recipes for assigning real-world conditions as prescriptive for particular pretenses; they are not definitions of “true” and “false” or accounts of the nature of truth and

406 Truth-talk is the only generally available means of forming sentential variables, but I should acknowledge that in certain contexts “so” is used prosententially, e.g., “if so, then…” and “not so”. Perhaps these are elliptical for uses of “so” that amount to truth-talk (as in “that is so”), but perhaps they
falsity. The fact that an explanation of the device used in presenting this recipe would employ truth-talk is not a problem, especially since the notion of truth that would be employed is precisely the one being explained. In accounting for quantificational truth-talk in the next chapter I will explain how truth-talk provides a means of employing standard logical devices to assert indirectly what would otherwise require the use of this non-standard logical device. This shows how we use the logically conservative semantic pretense of truth-talk instead of this unusual logical apparatus. It is the function of semantic pretense to provide just this kind of alternative in precisely this sort of situation.

A second front on which the use of “p” in T-6) and T-7) needs clarification has to do with the significance of the variable’s second appearance, that outside of the scope of any notation indicating the operation of pretense. Because “p” occurs outside of these notations it might seem that only pretense-free sentences can go in for this variable, or that any sentence going in for it must be taken seriously at face value. This is not the case. What goes in for “p” must express some serious commitment. However, this does not require that the sentence do so directly (i.e., without employing any pretense). This allows what goes in for “p” to include claims that themselves employ either extrinsic or intrinsic pretense, for example, metaphors, or (more are not. Still, “so” is not generally available for forming the equivalents of sentential variables unless it is working as a synonym for “true”.

407 I have tried to put this in a way that does not exclude by fiat utterances that are understood nonfactually from going in for “p”. This seems desirable since it is at least arguable that utterances like “It is true that genocide is wrong” are perfectly in order (even true), and that inferences like the one from “Everything the Pope says is true” and “The Pope said that genocide is wrong” to “It is true that genocide is wrong” and then to “Genocide is wrong” are valid. But this should not automatically entail that ethical claims are factual statements in the same sense that, e.g., the claims of physics are. Making a factual assertion is one way of expressing a serious commitment, but not the only way. Allowing pretense-employing utterances to go in for “p” might allow us to accept the linguistic and inferential practices just noted and nonfactualism about ethical (or other) discourse at the same time, if the latter can be explained in terms of semantic pretense. The trick would be to explain the game of make-believe involved in such a way that in putting forward a pretend assertion via the utterance the speaker does not thereby seriously assert, e.g., that she endorses a particular system of norms N (or that in the actual world some act is ruled out by some system of norms N), but rather just displays her endorsement of N. This endorsement of N would be the serious commitment expressed with the utterance, but not one made by means of a factual assertion. I will not pursue this further, but if it can be worked out, then understanding ethical claims in this way would allow
importantly here) instances of truth-talk. This is important among the things actual truth-talk purports to describe are instances of truth-talk itself. One illustration of this is truth-talk’s indefinite iterability. If it is true that snow is white, then it is true that it is true that snow is white. This consequent is itself true as well, and so on. This self-applicability is also the basis of truth-talk’s propensity for paradox and so must be accommodated if the pretense-based account is to provide a diagnosis of the Liar paradox.\footnote{As explained in Chapter 2, on a deflationary view this does not require solving the preventative problem. I discuss what the pretense-based account of truth-talk says about the paradoxes below.} The principles of generation governing the pretense must therefore allow the right-hand sides of T-6) and T-7) to get filled in with instances of truth-talk, and thus with pretense-employing utterances.

The game of make-believe governed by principles T-1) through T-7) accounts for all instances of truth-talk that appear to describe transparently denoted propositions. As cases of intrinsic pretense, these utterances do not make any serious assertions directly, i.e., when taken at face value. They do, however, make serious assertions indirectly by counting in this game of make-believe as making assertions directly. We have already seen how the game governed by T-1) through T-7) explains utterances like

\begin{equation}
\text{(5.8)} \{\text{The proposition that crabapples are edible has the property of truth.}\}
\end{equation}

This sort of utterance employs make-believe-generated linguistic devices in a way explicitly governed by the game’s principle of generation, T-6). According to this principle, the pretenses displayed in (5.8) are prescribed if, and only if, crabapples are edible. Since an utterance of (5.8) offered as a pretend assertion puts the pretenses it displays forward as prescribed, it also expresses a commitment to the obtaining of the real-world circumstances necessary and sufficient for their prescription. In other words, an utterance of (5.8) seriously asserts that crabapples are edible.

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\footnote{As explained in Chapter 2, on a deflationary view this does not require solving the preventative problem. I discuss what the pretense-based account of truth-talk says about the paradoxes below.}
Principle T-4) provides a connection between the sorts of utterances (and thoughts) explicitly dealt with by principle T-6), and certain other forms of truth-talk. Because in the make-believe instances of schema (PT) like (5.8) amount to instantiations of the right-hand side of T-4) \( \{(\forall x)(x \text{ is true (i.e., satisfies the predicate “is true”) } =_{df} x \text{ has the property of truth}\} \), this rule links those utterances definitionally (in the game) to utterances of another sort that also use a linguistic device generated by this make-believe, the instances of the schema

\( A'' \) \{The proposition that p is true.\}

The definitional link T-4) establishes in the game means that an instance of one schema makes (in the context of the make-believe) the same assertion as the corresponding instance of the other schema. These utterances therefore make the same pretend assertions, that is, they put forward the same pretenses as prescribed. Since those pretenses are the ones that principle T-6) establishes prescriptive real-world conditions for, utterances of the instances of \( A'' \) make the same serious assertions as utterances of the corresponding instances of (PT) make. Thus, an utterance of

\( (5.9) \) \{The proposition that crabapples are edible is true\}, seriously asserts just what an utterance of (5.8) does, namely, that crabapples are edible.

Accepting the hypothesis suggested above that that-clauses are referential terms denoting propositions, the expression “the proposition” is superfluous in \( A'' \); if they denote anything, the instances of “the proposition that p” and “that p” denote the same thing. This means that schema \( A'' \) is just a stylistic variant of the schema

\( A' \) \{That p is true\}

and its syntactic variant, the schema

\( A) \) \{It is true that p.\}

Thus, the account that the game governed by T-1) through T-7) provides explicitly for the instances of (PT) extends to truth-talk of form \( A/A' \) as well. Hence, an utterance of
(2.10) \{It is true that crabapples are edible\}
also seriously asserts that crabapples are edible. In general, the serious assertions made with
“positive” instances of transparent propositional truth-talk—utterances that appear to use truth-
talk to describe propositions denoted with that-clauses as “being true” (= “having the property of
truth”)—are just the serious assertions that would be made with utterances of the sentences that
appear in the that-clauses by themselves.\(^{409}\)

Given this relationship between the instances of the schema

\[A/A’) \{It is true that p\} / \{That p is true\}\]

and the sentences that go in for the variable “p”, it is not difficult to see that an account of truth-
talk based on this game of make-believe generates all of the instances of the schema

\[(ES) \{It is true that p\} \iff p (= \{That p is true\} \iff p).\]
The account thus satisfies a basic criterion of adequacy that any putative account of truth-talk
must satisfy.

**PRETENSE AND DEFLATIONISM**

A game of make-believe governed by principles T-1) through T-7) in the ways just
explained is the center of the pretense-based account of truth-talk I offer here. This account
amounts to a formulation of deflationism because it satisfies the central deflationary commitment
identified in Chapter 1. The pretense-based account makes the instances of (ES) count as
fundamental in virtue of truth-talk’s logico-linguistic functioning. The view’s satisfaction of this
condition allows it to account for truth-talk’s duality and to deal with its propensity for paradox in
a deflationary way. In addition, however, the pretense-based account of truth-talk offers a kind of

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\(^{409}\) *Mutatis mutandis* for putative attributions of falsity. The serious assertions made with utterances of the
form “That p is false” or “It is false that p” are the same as those made by the instances of (PF), i.e., the
serious assertions that would be made with assertoric utterances of the negations of the sentences that fill in
the variable “p”.

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unification within the deflationary approach by accommodating several seemingly conflicting intuitions thought to distinguish some of the current formulations of deflationism.

i) Pretense and Duality

The fundamentality of the instances of (ES) follows from the identity the pretense-based account establishes between the serious assertions made indirectly by the positive instances of transparent propositional truth-talk and the serious assertions that utterances of the sentences embedded in their that-clauses would make. The pretense-based account does employ the notion of a property of truth is establishing this identity, but here this notion is just part of the make-believe that is intrinsic to truth-talk’s functioning. The identity still follows simply from the way that truth-talk operates (which happens to involve pretense intrinsically), rather than from hidden aspects of a property of truth, aspects that would be revealed in a reductive or conceptual analysis.

The make-believe makes use of a notion of a property of truth as part of the pretense that truth-talk functions predicatively to describe objects. The use of predicates in descriptions seems to involve saying that the objects described have certain properties, so in pretending that truth-talk functions to describe objects denoted by the subject expressions it employs, the game involves pretending that this way of talking attributes a property to those objects. But in talking about a property of truth in the context of the make-believe, we are not pretending things about a real, game-independent property. The pretense is intrinsic to the notion; the property of truth has no life except that given to it by the make-believe. The use of this notion is not “more basic” than the use of the expression “…is true”. Recall that the notion of a property of truth is

410See the discussion of pleonasticism in Chapter 1 and Schiffer (1994) and (1996) on the “something-from-nothing” transformation that he claims connects property attribution to predicate use.
introduced in principle T-2)—a parameter that determines how certain linguistic components are to be used, including in the expression of further parameters—as the notion of a property attributed to objects with the (pretend-)predicate “…is true”. All there is to say about when the supposed basic truth-bearers have this property is given by the instances of T-6). There is thus no deeper analysis of truth or even of the notion of truth to be had on this account. The appeal to this notion in explaining the instances of (ES), therefore, does not amount to a deeper level of explanation underneath the level of truth-talk’s functioning.

By making the instances of (ES) fundamental in the right sort of way, this account of truth-talk also gives these equivalences the right sort of modal and epistemological status to account for the trivial side of truth-talk’s duality. The instances of (ES) all amount to trivial equivalences in the sense of being both necessary and a priori because of the connection the pretense-based account establishes between a type-A/A’) utterance and an assertoric utterance of the embedded sentence by itself. Because it is truth-talk’s logico-linguistic functioning that establishes an identity between the serious assertions made in both cases, it holds independently of any contingent and empirical circumstances (unlike, say, an identity between the assertions made by “Bob is hungry” and “The tallest person in the room is hungry”). So the equivalence between the two sides of every instance of (ES) is empirically indefeasible and holds in all possible circumstances.

Another way to see that the instances of (ES) are trivial equivalences on the pretense-based account offered here is to note that the sameness of the serious assertions made by the two sides of each of these equivalences makes the “serious logical form” of the instances of (ES) amount to

\( (*) \ p \iff p. \)

41 It is quite likely, however, that property-talk involves pretense as well. But even if it does, there will still be difference between “real” properties like being iron and “pretend” properties like existence.
The necessity of the instances of (*) means that, with respect to what is seriously said, the instances of (ES) are all necessary. These equivalences can also be known a priori since they are conceptually (and so empirically indefeasibly) connected (simply by the functioning of truth-talk) to the instances of (*), and the latter are known a priori.

On the account pursued here, type-A/A’) utterances are explained in terms of the instances of (ES). Rather, these equivalences capture the aspect of truth-talk that both generates the instances of (ES) and at the same time accounts for the type–A/A’) utterances. This is similar to the relationship between these utterances and the instances of (ES) found in Field’s and Brandom’s formulations of deflationism: the equivalences and the basic utterances are explained by the same central aspects of truth-talk’s operation.412 Utterances of form A/A’) are basic in the sense that they amount to trivial expansions of the sentences they embed simply in virtue of how truth-talk functions. This accounts for the trivial side of truth-talk’s duality while avoiding certain explanatory burdens inflationary accounts of truth-talk face.

A pretense-based account of truth-talk centered on a game of make-believe governed by principles T-1) through T-7) thus satisfies the deflationary perspective’s first set of commitments by making the instances of (ES) fundamental, trivial equivalences and counting utterances of form A/A’) as the basic instances of truth-talk. If truth-talk had only the use that occurs in the instances of transparent propositional truth-talk, then there would be nothing more to explain. But there also would be little reason for having this way of talking since one could just directly assert any serious assertions made indirectly with truth-talk.413 The “cash value” of truth-talk comes from its utility for making certain serious assertions that cannot be asserted directly, in

412 See the discussions of Field’s PD and Brandom’s OP in Chapter 3.

413 There might be pragmatic benefits provided by employing the semantic pretense, for instance emphasis, indication that the point has already been brought up, suggesting the objectivity of the point, but this portion of truth-talk does not let you say anything you cannot say without it.
particular, serious assertions effecting the equivalents of schematic generalizations on sentence positions.\textsuperscript{414}

\textbf{ii) Pretense and Paradox}

In Chapter 2 I explained above how an inconsistency in truth-talk is revealed when a Liar sentence is substituted into (ES). Consider the Liar sentence

\begin{quote}
(L*) \{The proposition expressed by the sentence labeled “(L*)” is not true.\}
\end{quote}

Making certain plausible assumptions about what proposition is putatively expressed by this sentence—namely, \textit{that the proposition expressed by the sentence labeled “(L*)” is not true}—substituting (L*) into (ES) and sifting a bit yields the inconsistent biconditional

\begin{quote}
(5.10) \{The proposition expressed by the sentence labeled “(L*)” is true iff the proposition expressed by the sentence labeled “(L*)” is not true.\}
\end{quote}

In classical logic, (5.10) can be rewritten as a conjunction of two material conditionals, each of which in turn can be rewritten in terms of negation and disjunction. Eliminating the double negations and collapsing the redundant disjunctions in the two conjuncts leaves the contradiction

\begin{quote}
(5.11) \{The proposition expressed by the sentence labeled “(L*)” is true & the proposition expressed by the sentence labeled “(L*)” is not true.\}
\end{quote}

As discussed in Chapter 2, the worry is that if truth-talk’s propensity for paradox is not dealt with in some way, it will be possible to derive a contradiction like (5.11) in any conceptual scheme including the notion of truth. The standard view is that this would make any such conceptual scheme trivial since (classically) contradictions entail everything. Traditionally, the only acceptable way of dealing with this issue is to make truth-talk consistent. The problem is that it does not look like this is possible. The inconsistency seems to reemerge in a strengthened form in the wake of any attempt to eliminate it that does not artificially restrict truth-talk’s applicability.

\textsuperscript{414}I explain this in the next chapter.
The advantage offered by deflationary views highlighted in Chapter 2 is the possibility of an alternative way of dealing with truth-talk’s propensity for paradox. Deflationary views can reject the demand for consistency and instead offer a metaphysically acceptable diagnosis of how truth-talk’s inconsistency arises along with an explanation of how it is contained in a way that prevents truth-talk and the conceptual schemes that include the notion of truth from being trivialized. The diagnosis offered by the pretense-based formulation of deflationism locates the source of truth-talk’s propensity for paradox in an inconsistency in the rules governing the game of make-believe that is the basis of truth-talk. An inconsistency in a set of rules is easy to understand and poses no metaphysical problems (the way an appeal to a real inconsistent property would).

Truth-talk’s inconsistency is also appropriately contained on the pretense-based account. The pretenses displayed in (L*) have no serious foundation since the utterance looks to itself to supply real-world conditions under which those pretenses are prescribed. But it invokes those very pretenses intrinsically, and no intrinsic pretense can supply its own real-world prescriptive conditions. Therefore, utterances like (L*) do not have any real-world prescriptive conditions. This lack of any serious foundation can be thought of as a translation of the informal notion of ungroundedness into the pretense framework.\textsuperscript{415} I will call utterances without a serious foundation “purely pretend” claims. Being instances of a pretense-employing way of talking that have no serious basis, (L*) and Liar sentences generally are all purely pretend claims. This is why the inconsistencies they generate are contained.

Because it is only in purely pretend claims that truth-talk exhibits an inconsistency, any contradiction like (5.11) derived holds only within the bounds of pretense as far as the parameters

\textsuperscript{415}See Kripke (1975) and Grover (1977) on ungroundedness. The idea here is close to Grover’s understanding of ungroundedness in terms of anaphoric inheritance chains that do not trace back to any independently contentful antecedents. See the discussion of what prosententialists can say about the Liar in Chapter 3.
of the make-believe are concerned. There is no serious contradiction connected to the contradiction in the pretense by the rules of the game. The remaining question is whether any serious contradiction is connected to the pretense-bound contradiction inferentially via the derivation of other contradictions within the bounds of the pretense whose components are not purely pretend claims. The worry is that the contradiction (5.11) entails everything within the make-believe behind truth-talk, so it entails a conjunction like

(5.12) \{That snow is white is true and that snow is white is not true.\}

If the pretenses displayed in (5.12) are part of what is to be pretended in this make-believe, then a serious contradiction arises. The conjuncts of (5.12) are not purely pretend claims. In fact, according to the parameters of the game (in particular, T-6) the serious assertion made with (5.12) is just what is asserted by an utterance of

(5.13) Snow is white and it is not the case that snow is white.

Classically, (5.13) entails everything, and not just within some make-believe. If truth-talk is to resist trivialization some step in this chain of thought must be blocked.

From the perspective of the view offered here, the place to block the trivializing reasoning is at the step from (5.11) to (5.12). On a pretense-based understanding of truth-talk, the situation with the Liar paradox bears comparison to cases of inconsistencies holding in works of fiction. There are two directions we can take this comparison. The first allows that in the context of the make-believe, Liar sentences generate contradictions. The situation is like that in a work of fiction that invites its audience to acknowledge a contradiction explicitly. The lithograph, \textit{Waterfall}, by M. C. Escher might be considered a case of this sort. We acknowledge in the make-believe that the water is running up hill and not running up hill, and enjoy the sensation of
paradox produced. On this approach to the Liar, given \( (L^*) \) and (ES) we can derive the contradictory conjunction (5.11).

The conjuncts in (5.11) are both purely pretend claims, so it is only within the bounds of a game of make-believe that there is a contradiction. As in the case of the Escher drawing, we take the contradiction to be part of what the make-believe prescribes pretending—that is, the contradiction is fictionally true—but this is not taken to entail that everything is to be pretended in the make-believe. The logic of the fiction is thus *paraconsistent*, that is, its relation of logical consequence is not “explosive”. More specifically, since in the make-believe there is a true contradiction, but the make-believe is not thereby trivial, the logic of the fiction is *dialetheic*. The logic of truth-talk might be considered dialetheic in a similar way, in which case the contradiction (5.11) would be true in the make-believe, but it would not entail everything, not even just within the make-believe. In fact, it might entail nothing further.

An alternative direction to take the comparison with inconsistencies in works of fiction is to disallow the explicit formation of the contradiction (5.11) in the first place. The inconsistency in truth-talk would remain in the form of a biconditional, but no conclusions at all are to be drawn from it. Situations generating biconditionals like this are to be avoided, but when they arise and are recognized they can be cordoned off as mistakes, even within the bounds of the make-believe. This is similar to how we treat accidental inconsistencies in works of fiction. For example, the Holmes stories as a whole are inconsistent about the location of Watson’s sole war wound. Readers are not, however, invited to draw the conclusion that this wound is in his leg and not in his leg. The contradiction is not part of what is to be pretended. If the Liar paradox were treated like an accidental inconsistency, we would not be allowed to draw even (5.11) as a conclusion.

416 Thanks to Ken Walton for the example.

Liar-like inconsistency would be something to watch out for, and recognition of it should be followed by revocation of the utterances involved and an attempt to sort things out at the object level. There is no algorithm for doing this, and in cases like (L*) about all we can do is reject the utterance. But like the inconsistency about Watson’s wound, even when no resolution to a particular case of inconsistency is forthcoming this is nothing much to worry about since it does not undermine the rest of the fiction. Taking this approach may amount to endorsing another type of paraconsistent logic (perhaps a non-adjunctive system\textsuperscript{419}), but in any case, what is to be pretended is not closed under classical logical consequence.

In both of the approaches the pretense-based account of truth-talk recommends taking to the Liar paradox, containing the inconsistency involves taking the underlying logic to be non-classical. However, the rejection of classical logic in this context does not require giving up classical logic everywhere. It makes sense to do so in the case of truth-talk because this way of talking involves pretense intrinsically (in fact, in its very functioning), and so there is a connection to fiction. Thus, one of the advantages of using the pretense approach to formulate a deflationary account of truth-talk is that it not only allows for a restricted adoption of a paraconsistent logic in order to contain truth-talk’s inconsistency, but it also explains why it makes sense to think of the logic of truth-talk as paraconsistent. Understanding the Liar paradox this way is just an instance of a general approach we already take to inconsistencies in fiction.

\textbf{iii) Unifying Deflationism}

Because deflationary views take the instances of (ES) to be conceptually and

\textsuperscript{418}Thanks to Steve Yablo for the example.

\textsuperscript{419}See Priest (ms.), pp. 13-15, 39-40 on non-adjunctive forms of paraconsistent logic. The treatment of the inconsistency in the Holmes stories regarding Watson’s war wound is more clearly a case of non-adjunctive logic since it rejects $A, \neg A \not\models A \& \neg A$. The treatment of the Liar being suggested is not clearly non-adjunctive since what it rejects is $A \equiv \neg A \not\models A \& \neg A$. 

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explanatorily basic, to be an adequate account of truth-talk a view of this sort must be able to explain all of our uses of “...is true” in terms of the aspects of truth-talk’s functioning it claims are captured by the instances of (ES). A particularly important component of this task is answering what was called the “generalization problem” in Chapter 3. The current formulations of deflationism have been found wanting on this front. So, showing that the pretense-based account of transparent propositional truth-talk offered here can be extended to cover other species of truth-talk as well—including quantificational truth-talk—would amount to showing that this view is both an adequate account of truth-talk and a superior formulation of deflationism. This is the first order of business I take up in the next chapter. For now I will just point out that the pretense developed here is essentially a means of reactivating in one’s own mouth, hypostatized asserting (possible or actual) by pretending to describe these postulated “objects” in a certain way. By extending the pretense to include ways of hypostatizing asserting beyond that-clause nominalization (e.g., via descriptions) and allowing quantification over these “objects” to supply the subjects of the pretend descriptions that “reactivate” the acts of asserting, the view can account for truth-talk’s generalizing role.

Before turning to the task of demonstrating the adequacy of my account of truth-talk, I first want to point out another aspect of it that recommends it over other formulations of deflationism. In the current literature, different formulations of deflationism can be distinguished according to the degree of emphasis they place on different thoughts about truth-talk that all seem intuitively correct but which appear to conflict with one another. One such thought is that certain instances of truth-talk, namely, utterances of the form

A) {It is true that p}

seem to say nothing more than is said by utterances of the sentences that go in for “p” by themselves. This is a stronger thesis than that recognized in the discussion of truth-talk’s duality (that the instances of (ES) are necessary and a priori), but it has been endorsed by a number of theorists, from Frege and Ramsey to Brandom. The redundancy theory and its prosentential
descendants are products of an emphasis on this thought. With a theoretical background assuming that truth-talk is completely literal, it does not seem possible to fit the thesis of content redundancy with predicative functioning. A commitment to the former thus seems to force an operator-analysis of truth-talk’s definitive locutions. But as noted in the discussion of Brandom’s view in Chapter 3, the cost of denying predicative functioning is a complete rejection of truth-talk’s semantic phenomenology and an inability to account for certain philosophically unobjectionable inferences we make involving the notion of truth.420

A competing thought about truth-talk follows from consideration of its inferential behavior. Emphasizing this aspect of truth-talk, along with its surface grammar, makes a predicative analysis of its logical functioning seem intuitively correct. Other inferential practices were shown in Chapter 2 to make an operator analysis implausible even for utterances of form A). This focus on inferential behavior is the source of Horwich’s commitment to the thought that truth-talk is predicative, that it makes claims about the objects (propositions) denoted by the term expressions it employs.421 Combined with the difficulty of squaring content redundancy with a predicative analysis against a background assumption of literality, this commitment seems to force a rejection of redundancy even for type-A) utterances. Thus, although these two different thoughts about truth-talk both seem correct, it appears that they are incompatible and that a literal-minded deflationist can endorse one of them at most.422 The divisibility of the set of

420 See Chapter 3, p. 149. I have in mind the inference from “What Bob said is true” and “What Corey believes is true” to “What Bob said and what Corey believes have something in common” rather than the more contentious (but I think still correct) inference from “What Bob said is true” to “What Bob said has the property of truth”.


422 Remarks in Ayer (1952), pp. 88-89 and in Quine (1960), pp. 24-25 and (1986), p. 12 suggest endorsements of redundancy within what are typically considered predicative analyses of truth-talk (disquotational views). The problem, however, is that they offer no account of how content redundancy could be combined with predicative functioning. Without any such explanation I suggest that to the extent that these views are taken as endorsing redundancy they must be seen as abandoning a commitment to predicative functioning. (What is it, after all, to be a “device of disquotation”?)
deflationary accounts currently available in the literature into two non-overlapping subsets according to which of these intuitive thoughts is endorsed seems to illustrate a fundamental split in the deflationary perspective. But given the intuitive correctness of both redundancy and predicative functioning, a view that accommodated both would offer something that other formulations did not—a unification of the deflationary perspective.

This unification is, in fact, one of the benefits that pretense-based account of truth-talk offers over other formulations of deflationism. This new view provides a unifying deflationary account by capturing what seems right about both sides of the split within deflationism. The identity between the serious assertion made indirectly with a positive instance of transparent propositional truth-talk and the serious assertion that would be made with an utterance of the embedded sentence provides a clear sense in which utterances of form A) say nothing more than what would be said by utterances of the sentences that go in for “p” by themselves. This captures the redundancy intuition, but not at the cost of rejecting the intuition that logically speaking truth-talk functions predicatively. On the pretense-based account, one of the prescribed pretenses belonging to the game of make-believe behind truth-talk is that this way of talking is predicative in the full speech-act sense. This entails that it is part of the make-believe that truth-talk is predicative logically. Because truth-talk invokes pretense intrinsically at the level of functioning, the only logical functioning that can be associated with it is that given to it by the

Among the “current formulations” of deflationism, there is a suggestion of combining redundancy and predicative functioning in Field’s explanation of the “pure disquotational truth predicate” (Field (1994), p. 258, italics added) in terms of a “cognitive equivalence” between the two sides of the instances of the disquotational schema. But this is not quite content redundancy. For one thing, Field makes cognitive equivalence an extension relationship explained in terms of intersubstitutability in all contexts except quotation marks and intentional attitude ascriptions. (Ibid., p. 251, fn. 2.) For another, the cognitive equivalence between an utterance u and the claim that u is true holds only relative to the existence of the utterance u. The comparison he makes (Ibid., p. 250) between this and how “Thatcher is such that she is self-identical and snow is white” is cognitively equivalent to “Snow is white” relative to the existence of Thatcher shows that the first (relative) cognitive equivalence is not sameness of content. Intuitively, the latter two sentences do not say the same thing. 

423 This holds for utterances of form “A’) {That p is true}” as well on the pretense approach.
make-believe. Thus, the only logical functioning truth-talk has is predicative. In this way, the pretense-based account truth-talk combines content redundancy (at least with regard to what is seriously said) with the predicative logical functioning reflected in its inferential behavior.

Still further, the pretense-based account of truth-talk is even able to accommodate an intuition that appears to conflict with content redundancy even more directly than the intuition of predicative functioning. I have in mind the thought that the instances of truth-talk, including those of form A), do say something more than utterances of the embedded sentences. Assuming predicative functioning, even truth-talk of form A) appears to offer descriptions that the embedded sentences do not offer. Bracketing the issue of functioning, the instances of truth-talk still involve a notion (the notion of truth) that (typically) the embedded sentences do not, and one that the non-trivial side of truth-talk’s duality seems to show has some significance. The intuition of content difference is also captured by the pretense-based account since in the make-believe even the basic instances of truth-talk put forward descriptions that are not offered by the sentences that go in for “p”—descriptions of objects as being true, i.e., having the property of truth. In the make-believe the truth-attributions and the embedded sentences are used to make different (pretend-)assertions.

The pretense-based account of transparent propositional truth-talk thus not only satisfies the central commitments of the deflationary perspective, it helps make sense of why the motivations for deflationism have been developed in seemingly conflicting ways. In the next chapter I discuss other aspects of the pretense-based account (stemming from how it gets extended to cover the rest of truth-talk) that make it an even more attractive way of formulating deflationism about truth-talk.
CHAPTER 6

TRUTH AS A PRETENSE (PART II)

INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapter I pointed out that if an explanation of truth-talk in terms of an application of the pretense approach is to claim adequacy, the account of transparent propositional truth-talk developed there must be extended to cover other varieties of truth-talk as well. This is what I take up in the first and larger part of this chapter. I will not, of course, be able to provide anything like exhaustive coverage here, but showing that the pretense-based account can explain many of the most common forms of truth-talk will go some distance in establishing its adequacy. It might also provide some theoretical background and strategies for dealing with other sorts of cases not explicitly considered.

Given the central role that the notion of proposition plays in the core pretense behind truth-talk, the most natural way to extend the account first is in a manner providing coverage of other forms of propositional truth-talk, i.e., utterances purporting to describe propositions without denoting them with that-clauses. The explanations of the pretenses employed in some of these other forms of truth-talk involve more explicit talk ostensibly of propositions than the account of type-A/A’) utterances does. In particular, explaining these other forms of propositional truth-talk involves attributions of the relation of being identical to a proposition. This brings out the need for further clarification of how proposition-talk is to be understood in the context of a pretense-based account of truth-talk. I argue that the tight connections between the notions of truth and
proposition make it the case that if the pretense approach is applied to truth-talk, then it must be applied to proposition-talk as well. However, taking this approach to proposition-talk is not a mere *ad hoc* demand of a pretense-based account of truth-talk. In a later section I discuss independent reasons for thinking that this is the way proposition-talk should be handled anyway.

Analysis of certain forms of propositional truth-talk reveals that they involve implicit quantification, leading quickly to the need for an account of how truth-talk functions in contexts quantifying over propositions. Of course, this is something that must be explained in its own right anyway, in order to cover instances of truth-talk that are explicitly quantificational. The most important cases of this sort are instances employing the notion of truth in explicit generalizations. In this form of truth-talk the demand for a pretense-based account of proposition-talk means that the quantifiers employed operate in the context of a pretense. This gives the pretense-based account of truth-talk a way of explaining quantificational instances without attributing any non-standard logical functioning to them, including any sort that might undermine their status as generalizations. As a result, this view provides what other formulations of deflationism cannot: an adequate account of truth-talk’s distinctive generalizing function from a deflationary perspective. This accomplishment establishes the pretense-based account’s superiority over the current formulations of deflationism.

In addition to these forms of propositional truth-talk, the pretense-based account of truth-talk must also be extended to cover putative attributions of truth to things other than propositions, most centrally, to utterances. In the last chapter I argued that cases of non-propositional truth-talk are best understood as putative descriptions of items as appropriately related to propositions that are true or false. The form of proposition-talk operating in this sort of case involves attributions of the supposed relation of *expressing* a proposition as opposed to the attributions of *being identical to* a proposition involved in some forms of propositional truth-talk. Other than this difference, however, the forms of non-propositional truth-talk parallel those of propositional truth-talk. It is therefore possible to extend the pretense-based account of truth-talk to cover non-
propositional instances simply by modifying the rules already offered for propositional truth-talk so that they can govern non-propositional truth-talk as well. This is accomplished by generalizing some of these rules in certain ways.

Given the understanding of that-clauses as transparently denoting propositions, the putative relation of expressing a proposition is what is supposedly attributed by the instances of the schemata “means that p” or “has the content that p”. Explaining non-propositional truth-talk thus demands at least a partial account of attributions of meaning or content. Although a full explanation of this is beyond the scope of the current project, an account of the serious assertions made with instances of non-propositional truth-talk requires some sketch of how talk of meaning and content are to be understood in the context of this view of truth-talk. In response to the demand my account of truth-talk generates for a similar account of proposition-talk, I explore some independent motivations for applying the pretense approach to the latter. I then offer a few parameters for a game of make-believe that could fund a pretense-based account of proposition-talk. Incorporating these rules into the game behind truth-talk explains the serious assertions made with non-type-A/A’) instances of propositional truth-talk, with quantificational truth-talk, and with different forms of non-propositional truth-talk. This then completes the extensions of the pretense-based account that presume to establish its adequacy as an account of the talk.

After dealing with the external criterion of adequacy pertaining to its range of application, the remaining question facing the pretense-based account of truth-talk is whether the view suffers from any internal problems that undermine its claim to explain truth-talk’s functioning. This is the issue I take up in the second part of this chapter. The objections I consider here are not generic anti-deflationary objections, but challenges peculiar to an attempt to explain truth-talk in terms of pretense. One such objection is based on the observation that most speakers employing truth-talk do not think of themselves as engaging in any pretense. Another objection maintains that, as a kind of fictionalism, a pretense-based account of truth-talk amounts
to an error theory, and is therefore incoherent. These challenges can be dealt with by referencing elements of the discussion of semantic pretense offered in Chapter 4.

The most serious challenge to a pretense-based account of truth-talk is a deeper kind of circularity worry. The charge is that truth cannot be explained in terms of pretense because accounts of pretense and the attitude of pretending rely on the notion of truth. Responding to this objection requires an examination of what pretending involves in the interest of accounting for it in a way that does not appeal to the notion of truth. I sketch such an account here, removing the threat of circularity from the application of the pretense approach to truth-talk, thereby clearing the ground for the pretense-based account of truth-talk developed here. This exoneration validates a new, superior account of truth-talk, one that is able to explain truth-talk’s modal and epistemic aspects, the unusual features (duality and propensity for paradox) it exhibits, and its distinctive generalizing function, all while avoiding the metaphysical and explanatory burdens inflationary views face. This account provides the advantages other formulations of deflationism offer, but by succeeding where they fail it makes good on the motivations for this position provided by truth-talk’s unusual features.

**EXTENDING THE BASIC GAME**

So far I have explained only how the pretense-based account of truth-talk covers utterances of the forms

(PT) \{The proposition that p has the property of truth\}

A/A’) \{It is true that p\}/\{That p is true.\}^{424}

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^{424}The account also explains utterances with the analogs of these forms involving “the property of falsity” and “being false”. My discussion here will focus on forms of truth-talk involving “the property of truth” and “being true”, but analogous points (and resulting rules) hold for the parallel claims ostensibly attributing falsity.
Instances of form(s) A/A’) are more relevant (because more often used), but like those of the first form they all count as cases of transparent propositional truth-talk. These cases amount to only a small portion of truth-talk, and not a very interesting portion at that. It has been frequently noted that if truth-talk’s role were exhausted by its operation in type-A/A’) utterances, there would not be much point in having this way of talking. It would be entirely eliminable since one could always just directly assert the sentence that goes in for “p” instead. The “cash value” of truth-talk, the expressive gain that it contributes to a language, comes from its operation in other forms of utterance, those in which the truth-predicate is combined with expressions like descriptions, demonstratives, names, and especially quantifiers. The real measure of any account of truth-talk—and, therefore, of the pretense-based account—is its ability to explain these more interesting, non-type-A/A’) instances.

i) Other Propositional Truth-Talk

Because propositional truth-talk is central, the obvious first extension of the pretense-based account offered in Chapter 5 is to forms of truth-talk that also purport to describe propositions, but without using that-clauses to specify them. Extending the game of make-believe to cover these other forms of propositional truth-talk requires explaining how the game would count these utterances as making assertions directly, and what real-world conditions it would establish as prescriptive for the pretenses those pretend assertions involve. The first step in this process is to clarify the pretend assertions made in the context of the make-believe. The pretend assertions made by some other forms of propositional truth-talk turn out to be closely related to those offered by type-A/A’) utterances, to the extent that they can be explained by the

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425 Pragmatic functions such as emphasis, suggesting objectivity, etc. could be (in fact, already are) fulfilled by other linguistic devices (e.g., italics, table-thumping, “really”, “yeah”).

game as it already stands. The pretend assertions made by certain other forms of truth-talk, however, are genuinely distinct from those made with type-Α/Α”) utterances and require a separate analysis from the one already given transparent propositional truth-talk.

Some other forms of propositional truth-talk have already been introduced indirectly. While that-clauses have a special status among expressions that putatively denote propositions (since ostensibly they not only name propositions, but also display exactly which proposition they name), there are other expressions that supposedly denote propositions as well. It has already been argued that expressions like “what Bob said (believes, asserted, hypothesizes…)” and even (for the purposes of truth-talk) “Bob’s belief (assertion, conjecture, opinion…)” also purport to denote propositions. Uses of these terms would not refer transparently since (typically) they leave open exactly which proposition(s) satisfies the criteria specified by the term. Even among expressions that, like that-clauses, do not leave it open metaphysically which propositions are supposedly denoted, some still purport to refer non-transparently. Although certain expressions, e.g., “Einstein’s Law” and “The continuum hypothesis”, are best understood referentially (rather than attributively) and as rigid designators, they still leave it open epistemically which proposition they supposedly denote in any possible world we talk about when using them. Thus, among the instances of propositional truth-talk there are opaque as well as transparent cases.

Before turning to forms of propositional truth-talk that require extensions of the pretense-based account, I first want to point out some forms that can be explained by the account as it stands. One such form consists of the propositional instances that employ demonstratives, as in

(6.1) {That is true.}

Demonstratives have certain qualities commonly attributed to names. They refer directly, making no conceptual contribution the content of any utterances employing them. They are rigid designators because they can only be used to pick out what they actually (putatively) denote on
each occasion of use. Bertrand Russell at one point even went so far as to consider demonstratives the only genuine proper names (in the strictly logical sense). In instances of propositional truth-talk, the effect of employing a demonstrative is essentially the same as using a that-clause name of a proposition, at least relative to the larger context of utterance.

Demonstrative identification requires some sort of “perception” of the object demonstrated. Thus, if (6.1) is taken (at least within a pretense) to involve demonstration of a proposition, the proposition putatively demonstrated must be “perceived by” the speaker. In demonstrative propositional truth-talk, then, the proposition putatively described must be “on display” for the speaker, perhaps as what has been expressed by some other utterance in the conversational context. Since the proposition is displayed in the larger context, this makes an instance of truth-talk like (6.1) a kind of transparent propositional truth-talk—something like an abbreviated type-A/A’) utterance relative to its context (and perhaps to the speaker’s interpretive activities). Such cases can be considered “contextually transparent” and thus covered by the pretense-based account as it is.

In certain situations, however, the proposition putatively described by an utterance like (6.1) are not on display for the speaker even in the larger conversational context. Although this sort of case may seem somewhat contrived, it is possible for an utterance like (6.1) to be offered in response to an utterance that the “truth-attributer” does not understand. The sorts of reasons usually offered to make this kind of case seem less contrived include such things as the speaker’s

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427 “Demonstration” of a merely pretend object can be made within a pretense. Really there is no object demonstrated, but there is pretend-demonstration if the speaker’s thoughts and assertions are guided and constrained by how some make-believe determines how one is to imagine some pretend object to be, in the kind of way thoughts and assertions would be guided and constrained if what the make-believe determined were genuine information about how the world is. (See Evans (1982), p. 361.)

428 Russell (1918), pp. 62-63. Of course, they functioned as proper names on his view only when they were used to pick out sense-data.

429 Evans (1982), pp. 145-146. Again, this should be understood to include “perception” of a merely pretend object occurring in the context of a pretense.
desire to express her faith in someone’s honesty or scope of knowledge without regard to what he says. To the extent that an utterance like (6.1) is taken to be an instance of propositional truth-talk in such circumstances, it does not amount to a demonstrative utterance. A speaker cannot demonstrate something she does not perceive, and not understanding an utterance amounts to not perceiving the proposition it expresses.

In these conditions of interpretive ignorance, an utterance like (6.1) should either be taken as propositional but non-demonstrative or as demonstrative but non-propositional. On the first option the utterance should be taken to express something along the lines of

(1.2) {What Bob said is true.}

In these circumstances the term expression has the sense of “whatever Bob said”. This expression gets analyzed as a description, making the utterance an instance of description-employing propositional truth-talk. I will explain how the game must be extended to cover this kind of case presently. In this sort of context, the use of an apparent demonstrative serves to disambiguate the description’s modal scope, rigidifying it to something like “the thing Bob actually said (at t)”. The second way of dealing with an utterance like (6.1) in conditions of interpretive is probably more plausible. On this approach the object demonstrated, and thus putatively described, is the utterance made (since this can be perceived) rather than the proposition expressed. Understood this way, cases like (6.1) are instances of non-propositional truth-talk, another topic I discuss below. The overall point for now is just that demonstrative propositional truth-talk is always transparent.430

430 In another sort of case, an utterance like (6.1) can be offered in reply to a question like “What is the status of Bob’s belief?” or “What is the status of the continuum hypothesis?” In this sort of situation the “that” functions pronominally (like “it”) rather than demonstratively or descriptively—it is anaphorically dependent on the term expression in the question. The instance of truth-talk employing it will thus be either contextually transparent or opaque, depending on whether the antecedent term displays the proposition.
A second possible form of propositional truth-talk that can also be explained without extending the account involves a special variety of expression with definite description surface form, i.e., with the form “the so-and-so”. The cases I have in mind are those like the following.

(6.2) {The incompleteness of arithmetic is true.}

(6.3) {The compositionality of language is true.}

(6.4) {The extensional definability of predicates is true.}

I call this a possible form of truth-talk because I am not entirely convinced that utterances like these are well-formed instances. If they are, then they purport to describe propositions; in these utterances what the term expressions putatively denote is something assertible in different languages that could also be assumed, doubted, etc. If taken to denote propositions, these definite descriptions should be thought to function referentially rather than attributively, that is, more like names of particular propositions rather than descriptions (even rigidified ones) denoting whatever (actually) satisfies them.431

The reason that the basic pretense-based account of truth-talk would already cover (6.2) through (6.4) is that the term expressions they employ would function as transparent referring expressions in the context of truth-talk. In fact, in these utterances the term expressions are really just variants of the that-clauses “that arithmetic is incomplete”, “that language is compositional”, and “that predicates are extensionally definable”, respectively. In the context of a truth-attribution, any supposedly proposition-denoting term of the form “the X of Y” in which X is a feature of Y (i.e., in which the term that goes in for “X” is a nominalization of an adjective phrase ostensibly describing something denoted by the term that goes in for “Y”) is just a variant of a

431 See Donnellan (1966) on the distinction between referential and attributive uses of definite descriptions.
Thus, an instance of truth-talk employing this sort of term is transparent and covered by the pretense-based account as it is.

The need to extend the pretense-based account becomes apparent when we turn our attention to forms of propositional truth-talk like

(1.2) {What Bob said is true.}
(5.5) {Bob’s assertion/belief is true.}

In instances like these, which propositions are supposedly being described as true depends on which ones supposedly satisfy the conditions the term expressions specify, and this is a contingent matter. These terms are thus best understood as attributive descriptions, but this introduces a complication into the explanations of instances of truth-talk employing them.

Following Russell, an illuminating way of analyzing attributive descriptions (in particular, definite descriptions) involves quantification. The complete account of instances of truth-talk like (1.2) and (5.5) must therefore include an account of quantificational truth-talk. I discuss this kind of truth-talk in the next sub-section. What can be provided in the meantime is an explanation of exactly how quantification is involved in the underlying forms of the pretend assertions utterances like (1.2) and (5.5) make. This brings up a pair of connected issues that were touched on in Chapter 5. The first has to do with the fact that the descriptions these instances of truth-talk employ are putatively descriptions of propositions, meaning that that the

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432 Note that these terms cannot always, or even usually, be taken to denote propositions. Consider “The compositionality of language is one of its most intriguing features.” Failures of intersubstitutability (as might be exhibited in moving from “Bob believes that arithmetic is incomplete” to “Bob believes the incompleteness of arithmetic”) put pressure on the idea that these expressions are variants of that-clauses, but in doing so they work equally against the ideas that these terms denote propositions and that (6.2) through (6.4) are well-formed instances of truth-talk to begin with. The point is just that if these terms can be used in instances of truth-talk like these, they should be supposed to denote propositions transparently in a way that makes utterances employing them equivalent to type-A/A’ utterances.

433 Actually, as the discussion of non-demonstrative cases of utterances like (6.1) suggests, I should note that “what Bob believes” and “Bob’s belief” in utterances like (1.2) and (5.5) possess an ambiguity between referential (rigid) and attributive (non-rigid) readings. Which reading applies depends on the context. That said, I will ignore the referential use as I think these terms are most often used attributively.
domain of the quantifiers they implicitly involve at least includes (if it is not restricted to) propositions. This raises the issue of where these quantifiers should be placed relative to the intrinsic-pretense-marking notation “{…}” bracketing instances of truth-talk. In the last chapter I mentioned that quantifiers supposed to range over propositions should be placed inside this notation. The reason for this has to do with the second, larger issue of how the notion of proposition and proposition-talk must be understood from the perspective of a pretense-based account of truth-talk.

It turns out that applying the pretense approach to truth-talk requires that proposition-talk be given a pretense-based account as well. This follows from the intimate connection between truth-talk and proposition-talk. They are almost like two sides of one coin; the introduction of the one seems automatically to involve the other. Consider the connection between truth-talk and proposition-talk suggested by the “something-from-nothing” transformation that Schiffer emphasizes. There seems to be a general license to move from a declarative utterance like “Snow is white” to an utterance of the form “The proposition that snow is white is true.” This kind of link is also suggested by the fact that as long as we treat the intentional attitudes such as belief, hope, desire, etc. as relations to propositions, then every instance of believing/hoping/desiring is automatically an instance of believing/hoping/desiring something (i.e., a proposition) to be true.

Because of the tight connection between truth-talk and proposition-talk, it would be difficult to maintain that the former involved pretense while maintaining that the latter makes serious assertions directly (i.e., when taken literally or at face value). For one thing, since certain instances of proposition-talk, e.g.,

434 Schiffer (1996), pp. 149-150. Schiffer does not take it to indicate that proposition-talk is a pretense, but he acknowledges that this might make one suspicious of propositions (p. 151).

435 Velleman (ms.), pp. 4-5.
(6.5) Bob and Corey each just asserted the same proposition, express ontological commitments to propositions, literal-mindedness about the talk would bring with it a serious ontological commitment to propositions. But if there were real things denoted by that-clauses taken at face value, and which were pretend-attributed the pretend-property of truth in the instances of truth-talk, then there would be a real property of being appropriately pretend-attributed the pretend-property of truth (and a parallel property of being appropriately attributed the pretend-property of falsity) that those real propositions could have.

A real “truth” property of this sort could be defined as follows.

$$(T*) \ (\forall x) \ x \ \text{is true*} =_{df} \ x \ \text{is appropriately pretend-attributed the pretend-property of truth in the game of make-believe behind truth-talk}$$

Given the rules for the game of make-believe behind truth-talk, there would be real-world conditions for the possession of truth* so defined, and it would be possible to specify those possession conditions for a particular range of cases with the instances of the schema

$$(ES*) \ \text{That p is true* iff p.}$$

Truth*, therefore, would have good claim to being considered a real property of truth in an intuitive sense, with truth*-talk available as a means of making directly serious assertions about real things having or lacking this property. In fact, since T-1) through T-7) along with (T*) entail

$$(T*2T) \ (\forall x)(x \ \text{is true*} \ \text{iff} \ \{x \ \text{is true}\}),$$

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436 Even an error-theoretic interpretation of the talk would involve this ontological commitment. The commitment is part of what would make the instances of the talk false on this approach.

437 Thanks to Jim Joyce for impressing this point on me.

438 Rules T-4) and T-5) would be modified so that the quantifiers appeared outside of the brackets marking intrinsic pretense.
ordinary truth-talk could serve as a means of attributing truth*. 439

It follows that a view denying any genuine property is attributed directly with truth-talk must also hold that the putative objects that are supposed to bear the (pretend-)property of truth are also merely pretend. As mentioned in Chapter 5, this makes the notion of proposition as it functions in the make-believe behind truth-talk an existentially creative pretense. It is not pretended of certain real objects that they have the (pretend-)properties of truth or falsity; it is pretended that there are objects that have these (pretend-)properties. Below I consider this claim in light of a context that is often thought to demand serious ontological commitment to propositions: the ascription of intentional attitudes. 440 My thesis is that examination of this context actually provides independent reason for applying the pretense approach to proposition-talk, demonstrating that this is not just an ad hoc consequence of a pretense-based account of truth-talk. For now, however, I will simply adopt the thesis that proposition-talk involves an existentially creative pretense as a working hypothesis.

Returning to the explanations of utterances like (1.2) and (5.5), the term expressions employed in both are ambiguous between several possible descriptions. In (1.2), one way of reading “what Bob said” is along the lines of the definite description “the thing Bob said (at t)”. Applying Russell’s analysis of definite descriptions (and symbolizing “is said by Bob (at t)” by “F”) we could then interpret an utterance like (1.2) as making a pretend assertion of the following form.

\[(6.6) \{ (\exists x)(Fx \& (\forall y)(Fy \rightarrow y = x) \& x \text{ is true}) \}\]

439 Actually, I am not so sure that this would undermine every sort of pretense-based account of truth-talk since this putative real property would still involve pretense essentially. However, accounts allowing such a real property might face difficulties with the Liar, so my preference is for accounts maintaining that property attribution is merely pretend in instances of truth-talk.

However, this reading of (1.2) would limit us to holding that only one thing was said. This is not necessarily what happens even when only one utterance is made. Eliminating the uniqueness clause from (6.6) to produce

\[(6.7) \{ (∃x)(Fx & x \text{ is true}) \}\]

would avoid this consequence, giving the singular term “what Bob said” the sense of “something Bob said (at t)”. This would allow both that more than one thing was said and that more than one such thing is true, but on this reading it would be sufficient for the truth of (1.2) that only one thing said is true. However, sometimes the point of an utterance like (1.2) is to endorse or co-assert everything someone has said.\(^{441}\) In situations of this sort it makes more sense to read (1.2) as putting forward a pretend assertion of the following form.

\[(6.8) \{ (∀x)((Fx \rightarrow x \text{ is true}) \}\}\]

This latter form also captures the sense in which (1.2) can be read as claiming that whatever Bob said is true. Context determines whether (6.6), (6.7), or (6.8) better represents the form of the pretend assertion made with an utterance like (1.2). In any case, the full account of the utterance (i.e., what serious assertion it makes) awaits an explanation of quantificational truth-talk.

This same analysis can be applied to utterances like (5.5), at least on one disambiguation of the kind of description-terms they employ. In Chapter 5 I discussed the act/object ambiguity exhibited by expressions like “Bob’s belief” and argued there that in instances of truth-talk these terms should be understood primarily on the object side. Thus, utterances like (5.5) should be taken as offering apparent descriptions of propositions asserted or believed (or hypothesized, suggested…). On this reading they amount to stylistic variants of utterances like (1.2): “Bob’s belief” is taken to be basically synonymous with “what Bob believes”. Similarly, a putative

\(^{441}\)Modifying a story about Hobbes I have heard from David Hills, consider a situation in which Bob gestures towards Quine’s gravestone and makes the twice-apt utterance, “Here is the true philosopher’s stone,” intending to assert both that this is the gravestone of the most genuine philosopher and also that the
description employing a term like “Bob’s favorite belief” can be understood as a variant of one employing the term “the belief Bob favors” in which “belief” picks out what is believed. An utterance of this sort also gets analyzed quantificationally along the lines of (6.6). A non-propositional reading of utterances like (5.5) in which acts or states of various kinds are taken to be what is apparently described as true should be considered derivative on this primary propositional reading. I will discuss this derivative reading in a later sub-section below when I consider non-propositional truth-talk.

Some instances of truth-talk superficially similar to (5.5) cannot be analyzed along the lines of (1.2), but not because the term expressions they employ purportedly denote something other than propositions. The reason is that the description-terms they employ function referentially rather than attributively. Consider

\[(6.9) \{\text{Goldbach’s conjecture is true.}\}\]

“Conjecture” has the same act/object ambiguity that “belief” has, so initially one might think that (6.9) can be understood along the lines of (5.5), i.e., as a variant of a claim like (1.2) putatively describing what Goldbach conjectured. But following Kripke’s Gödel/Schmidt thought-experiment, “Goldbach’s conjecture” cannot just be a variant of “what Goldbach conjectured” since there are possible worlds in which Goldbach conjectures something other than that every even number greater than 2 is the sum of two primes, or in which someone else made this conjecture.\(^{443}\) Nor does it help to rigidify the description to “what Goldbach \textit{actually} conjectured” since even a discovery that the rigidified description in fact denotes nothing (say, because it turns out that Goldbach never conjectured anything) would not affect the referential

only actual thing that qualifies as a philosopher’s stone is a gravestone. You can co-assert with Bob on all fronts just by uttering (1.2).

\(^{442}\) Like “what Bob said” and “Bob’s belief”, the term “Bob’s favorite proposition” also has a further ambiguity between rigid and non-rigid readings.
aspect of the term “Goldbach’s conjecture” (although we might want abandon it in favor of a new term).

Although there is an object-term/verb cognate pair of the “belief”/“believes” variety (viz., “conjecture”/“conjectures”) that applies to (6.9), this does not make the term expression equivalent to any description. Rather, this case is more like those in which no such cognate pair applies, e.g.,

(6.10) {Einstein’s Law is true}

(taking Einstein’s Law to be that energy and mass are exchangeable at a ratio of the square of the speed of light (E = mc²)). The term “law” is related to the verb “legislate”, but Einstein did not legislate what is putatively described in (6.10). Of course, we take it that Einstein did discover the law of nature in question, so this might suggest that we can take “Einstein’s Law” to be shorthand for “the law of nature actually discovered by Einstein”. However, the kind of potential referential divergence holding between “Goldbach’s conjecture” and “what Goldbach actually conjectured” is also possible here.

There are also expressions that are not variants of that-clauses but which are nevertheless better analyzed as referential expressions rather than attributive ones in spite of their having the surface form of definite descriptions. Consider

(6.11) {The continuum hypothesis is true.}

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444See Kripke (1980), pp. 83-84. Of course, Kripke’s point is that something’s being the referent of the name “Gödel” is not a matter of its satisfying any particular (cluster of) description(s).


446The situation with Einstein’s Law could be like that with Peano Arithmetic, the axioms of which were discovered by Dedekind not Peano. (See Kripke (1980), pp. 84-85.) Mutatis mutandis for attempts to treat terms like “Fermat’s Last Theorem” and “Gödel’s Incompleteness Theorem” as variants of “the last of what Fermat actually claimed to have demonstrated” and “what Gödel actually demonstrated about incompleteness” (the latter of which also seems incorrect). Descriptions along the lines of “the law of nature we actually believe (at t) to have been discovered by Einstein” and “the theorem we actually believe (at t) to have been proven by Gödel/Fermat” might get around my use of the Kripke point, but bringing
Here the term expression putatively refers to a particular proposition, and would be taken to refer to the same proposition no matter which possible world we were talking about when we used it. The same holds for term expressions like “the compositionality assumption”, “the second incompleteness theorem”, “the extensionality thesis”, etc. The fact that capitalization makes sense in all of these cases (and the earlier referential cases, including “Goldbach’s Conjecture”) is an indication that they are more names than descriptions.

In addition, Russellian (attributive) analyses seem to get utterance like (6.11) wrong. This claim is not about a hypothesis about the continuum, but about a hypothesis regarding all sets of real numbers. Even worse, a Russellian analysis seems to make all utterances employing these terms express false propositions. After all, surely more than one thing has been hypothesized about the continuum. Perhaps the problem of the description’s incompleteness can be avoided by restricting the quantifiers in the analysis, but their domains would have to be restricted to just the proposition that is supposed to be referred to, and this seems like just an overly complicated way of producing a referential expression. Unlike the referential definite descriptions employed in (6.2) through (6.4), however, none of the terms just considered indicate which proposition is denoted. Thus, along with (6.9) and (6.10), utterances like (6.11) amount to opaque propositional truth-talk and so require an analysis different from that given cases involving descriptions of propositions.

The way to understand these name-like cases is along the same lines as instances of propositional truth-talk clearly employing names, for example,

(6.12) {Incompleteness is true.}

Like these utterances, the instances of truth-talk discussed above have the form

(6.13) {a is true.}

“us” into the picture adds a complication that is not added in reading “Bob’s belief” as “what Bob believes”.

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Given that the game of make-believe presented in Chapter 5 (in rule T-4)) defines “being true” in terms of “having the property of truth”, the pretenses involved in utterances of form (6.13) are the same as those involved in utterances of the form

(6.14) \{a has the property of truth.\}

The question now is how to understand an utterance of form (6.14) in which “a”, being the name of a proposition, amounts to a fictional name.

Because of the primacy of propositional truth-talk, combined with the transparency of the naming performed by the instances of the schema “the proposition that p” and the definitional priority of the pretenses involved in “having the property of truth”, utterances of the form

(PT) \{The proposition that p has the property of truth\}

are fundamental with respect to the pretend assertions they make. There are no more basic pretenses belonging to the game that could further analyze the pretenses displayed in the instances of (PT). This is why the parameters of the make-believe assign this form of utterance prescriptive real-world conditions directly in the game’s principles of generation. Thus, the most natural way to extend the game to cover other forms of truth-talk is to connect these “new” forms of utterance with this basic form of truth-talk. In the case of (fictional-) name-employing propositional truth-talk, then, the strategy is to relate utterances of forms (6.13) or (6.14) with the form (PT). 446

This tack is supported by the account of fictional names discussed in Chapter 4. The use of a fictional name in an ordinary statement ostensibly about someone portrayed in a work of fiction shares with the fiction the pretense that a particular person is picked out by that name. In the case of fictional names purporting to denote propositions, the “fiction” such a name belongs to is proposition-talk. So an instance of truth-talk using a name of this sort employs the pretense

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446 Mutatis mutandis for utterances of the form “\{a is false\}” and “(PF) \{The proposition that p has the property of falsity\}”. 255
that a particular proposition is picked out by that name. Within the pretense of proposition-talk this is expressed without the complexity of semantic ascent with utterances of the form

\[(6.15) \{n = \text{the proposition that } p\}.\]

The pretense-based account of truth-talk can be extended to cover propositional instances of forms (6.13) or (6.14) by adding the following rule to the parameters of the game behind the talk.

\[T-8) (\Pi n)(\text{The pretenses displayed in an utterance of } \{n \text{ is true}\} \text{ are prescribed iff } (\Sigma p)(\text{The pretenses displayed in an utterance of the form } \{n = \text{the proposition that } p \& \text{ the proposition that } p \text{ has the property of truth}\} \text{ are prescribed})\]

In T-8) the variable “n” gets filled in by names and name-like expressions.\(^{447}\) The universal substitutional quantifier encodes an infinite conjunction of the instances of this schema.\(^{448}\) Each instance correlates the prescription of one set of pretenses with an infinite disjunction of prescriptions of different sets of pretenses (those displayed in the instances of the conjunction schema mentioned on the right-hand side). Assuming that the pretense-employing conjunction mentioned on the right-hand side can be broken up into a conjunction of two separate pretense-invoking claims, we can formulate a slightly more direct specification of the real-world conditions prescriptive for the pretenses displayed in an utterance of the form mentioned on the left-hand side. We can appeal to the rule

\[T-6) (\Pi p)(\text{The pretenses displayed in an utterance of } \{\text{The proposition that } p \text{ has the property of truth}\} \text{ are prescribed iff } p)\]

\(^{447}\)Note that this includes that-clauses as a special case. When “n” is filled in by a that-clause, the identity claim on the right-hand side of T-8) drops out as tautological, and leaves a meta-level statement of a definitional equivalence underwritten by the rule

\[T-4) \{(\forall x)(x \text{ is true (satisfies the predicate “is true”) } =_{df} x \text{ has the property of truth})\}].\]

\(^{448}\)Recasting T-8)—and any other from the make-believe that is presented with a universal substitutional quantifier—just in terms of schemata employing schematic sentence variables might avoid troublesome issues about the substitution class for the substitutional quantifiers. Truth-talk (and proposition-talk—see below) would then amount to ways of incorporating different uses of schematic sentence variables into a natural language along with ways of “accepting a schema” in an open-ended sort of way that “allows their scope to be automatically extended as the language expands.” (Field (2001b), p. 141.) I am open to this alternative, but there is a problem in that some of the rules I discuss employ an existential substitutional quantifier. It is less clear what attitude toward a schema could replace this device (rejection of the negated schema?).
and transform T-8) into

\[ T-8' \) \( (\Pi n)(\text{The pretenses displayed in an utterance of } \{n \text{ is true}\} \text{ are prescribed iff } (\Sigma p)[(\text{The pretenses displayed in an utterance of the form } \{n = \text{ the proposition that } p\} \text{ are prescribed}) \& p])^{449} \]

The remaining issue for specifying the real-world conditions that prescribe the pretenses displayed in the instances of utterances of form (6.14) is when instances of

\( (6.15) \) \( \{n = \text{ the proposition that } p\} \)

are prescribed. The details of this form of utterance are part of what a pretense-based account of proposition-talk would provide. I say more about this in the section on proposition-talk below.

**ii) Quantificational Truth-Talk**

Extending the pretense-based account to cover other forms of truth-talk purporting to describe opaquely denoted propositions is an important addition to the account. However, the really important extension is that covering *quantificational* instances of truth-talk. Not only is this second extension needed to complete the coverage of description-employing propositional truth-talk, but it is needed to explain the special way that truth-talk extends the expressive capacity of a language. It is truth-talk’s role in explicitly quantificational contexts—in particular, contexts involving universal quantifiers—that provides most of the real expressive gain via truth-talk’s special generalizing function. This is where this way of talking incorporates the equivalent of schematic sentential variables into a language, providing a way to generalize on sentence-in-use positions without resorting to any logical or linguistic devices beyond those readily available in a natural language in the form of its means of directly expressing the devices of first-order logic with objectual quantification. In this section I explain quantificational instances of *propositional* truth-talk. Quantificational instances of *non-propositional* truth-talk are explained
in the next sub-section when I extend the pretense-based account to non-propositional truth-talk in general.

Before turning to the form of utterance through which truth-talk implements its special generalizing role—the context of universal generalization—I first want to explain the form of quantificational truth-talk most often connected to the description-employing instances discussed above—existentially quantified truth-talk. Consider an utterance like

\( (6.16) \{\text{Something Bob asserted is true.}\} \)

Existentially quantified truth-attributions like this have the general form

\( (6.7) \{\exists x (Fx & x \text{ is true})\}. \)

For example, (6.16) is an instance of (6.7) in which “F” symbolizes “is asserted by Bob”.

As pointed out in the discussion above of utterances of the form

\( (6.13) \{a \text{ is true}\}, \)

the preferred way of extending the pretense-based account to cover additional forms of utterance—in this case, utterances of form (6.7)—is to relate them to the form of truth-talk explicitly provided for by the game, that is, with utterances of the form

\( (PT) \{\text{The proposition that } p \text{ has the property of truth.}\} \)

On the model of T-8’), existentially quantified instances of truth-talk can be linked to these basic utterances by extending the game of make-believe behind truth-talk with the following new rule.

T-9) The pretenses displayed in an utterance of the form “\( \{\exists x (Fx & x \text{ is true})\} \)” are prescribed iff \( \sum p \{ \text{(The pretenses displayed in an utterance of the form “\( \{\exists x (Fx & x = \text{the proposition that } p)\} \)” are prescribed) & } p \} \)

\[ \text{450} \]

An analogous rule, call it F-8’), replaces “true” on the left-hand side with “false” and “p” on the right-hand side with “~p”. This rule and all the additional rules for the part of truth-talk ostensible involving attributions of falsity are listed in the Appendix.

\[ \text{450} \]

I also take “F” to cover compound predicates like “Gx & (\forall y) (Gy \rightarrow y=x)” so that form (6.7) covers instances of truth-talk employing definite descriptions.
As above, the prescriptive conditions for the pretenses displayed in the form of utterance being explained are specified indirectly via correlation with, in this case, a (possibly infinite) disjunction of prescriptions of other sets of pretenses (those displayed in utterances of the form mentioned on the right-hand side). And like the rule covering name-employing instances of opaque propositional truth-talk, the correlated pretenses are those displayed in the instances of a form of proposition-talk, in this case the instances of the form

\[(6.17) \{ (\exists x)(Fx \& x = \text{the proposition that } p) \}. \]

This form of utterance (ignoring the additional factor of the first conjunct) is basically an existential generalization of form (6.15). It (and the connection between the two forms) will also be explained further in the section on proposition-talk below.

The most important extension of the make-believe behind truth-talk is the one that covers universally quantified instances of truth-talk, for example, claims like

\[(3.1) \{ \text{Everything the Pope asserts is true.} \} \]

This is the extension that allows the pretense-based account of truth-talk to deal with the generalization problem. The generalization (3.1) is an instance of the general form

\[(6.8) \{(\forall x)(Fx \rightarrow x \text{ is true})\} \]

in which “F” symbolizes “is asserted by the Pope”. It is in claims of this form, universally quantified claims like (3.1), that truth-talk plays its most important role. These utterances allow us to express “fertile” generalizations—generalizations about matters other than truth—that we could not otherwise express. For example, this form of truth-talk allows us to offer (3.1) as a generalization on the embedded sentences in a claim like

\[(1.3) \text{If the Pope asserts that crabapples are edible, then crabapples are edible.} \]

\[451\text{I have already made “\{the proposition that } p \text{ has the property of truth\}” a separate conjunct on the right-hand side and relied on T-6) to substitute “} p \text{ for the claim that the displayed pretenses are prescribed. Also, just as T-8’) has its falsity analog F-8’}, \text{T-9) has its analog F-9) obtained by making the same sorts of modifications. See the Appendix for details.}\]
From the deflationary perspective, fulfilling this function is truth-talk’s central purpose.

In order for the pretense-based account to cover claims of form (6.8), another parameter must be added to the game of make-believe considered so far. Claims of this form involve pretenses governed by the following parameter.

T-10) The pretenses displayed in an utterance of the form “\{∀x(Fx \rightarrow x is true)\}” are prescribed iff \((Πp)(\text{The pretenses displayed in an utterance of the form } \{∃x(Fx & x = \text{the proposition that } p)\} \text{ are prescribed}) \rightarrow p\)\(^{452}\)

As in the case of existentially quantified truth-talk, this rule correlates the pretenses displayed in universally quantified truth-talk with the pretenses displayed in the instances of a particular form of proposition-talk (in this case with a possibly infinite conjunction of them). The relevant form of proposition-talk is the same as in the existential case, namely

\[(6.17) \{∃x(Fx & x = \text{the proposition that } p)\} \].

Again, further details about the operation of this form of utterance await the sketch of a pretense-based account of proposition-talk I offer below.

One of the advantages I have claimed the pretense-based account of truth-talk has over other formulations of deflationism is its ability to account for truth-talk’s generalizing role. The main advantage my account offers on this front is that it avoids a substitutional interpretation of the main quantifiers in the relevant instances of truth-talk. According to the argument in Chapter 3, a substitutional interpretation is what Brandom and Field must resort to in order to offer anything that is even prima facie an account of truth-talk’s generalizing function.\(^{453}\) However, as discussed there, Anil Gupta’s point about the logical gap between what a substitutionally quantified schema provides (a conjunction of the instances) and a genuine generalization makes this approach to the generalization problem inadequate. This problem is unavoidable for

\(^{452}\)As for T-9), I have already relied on T-6) to substitute “p” in the consequent of the right-hand side for the claim that the pretenses displayed in “\{the proposition that p has the property of truth\}” are prescribed. And as for previous extension rules, T-10) has a falsity analog, F-10). See the Appendix.
Brandom’s OP, giving the pretense-based account a clear advantage over this view. It turns out, however, that the advantage over Field’s PD is not quite as clear since the latter also appears to be able to skirt this specific problem.

On a different understanding of how PD reads quantificational truth-talk (one urged on me by Field himself), this view also avoids interpreting the main quantifier substitutionally. However, I maintain that the pretense-based account still offers certain advantages to Field’s PD.

On the alternative approach to quantificational truth-talk, PD still does not take the logical form of a claim like (3.1) to be (6.8). Instead it is

\[(6.8') \forall x [Fx \rightarrow (\Pi p)(x = "p" \rightarrow p)].\]

The main quantifier in (6.8’) is objectual, so the logical gap mentioned above is avoided. But on this view truth-talk is understood to involve substitutional quantification in what is literally said. One merit of the pretense-based account is that it avoids postulating this complex, non-standard sort of logical device as part of natural language even to this degree.

The claim that the underlying logic of the truth-predicate involves substitutional quantification in the way Field suggests may not seem so different from the account I am offering. Rules T-9) and T-10), after all, do employ substitutional quantification in their specifications of when the pretenses displayed in the instances of quantificational truth-talk are prescribed. Thus, on my view these substitutionally quantified claims are the serious assertions

453 Horwich simply cannot account for it at all with his view.

454 Actually, Field’s preferred rendering probably excludes the substitutional quantifier, instead taking schematic sentence variables and schemata employing them as part of the language (see Field (1994), p. 259 and (2001b), pp. 141-142). My points here can be recast to apply to this still alternative reading of quantificational truth-talk without loss.

455 It also avoids the problems that follow from taking terms like “what Bob said/asserted/believes” as literally denoting sentences (or sentence-tokenings) rather than something else that is said, etc. by means of uttering sentences. These problems are easy to miss if the quotation-mark construction in (6.8’) is replaced by “that p”, but given Field’s acceptance of LV, a term like “what Bob believes” would literally denote a computationally typed sentence in his head (one with the same long-arm conceptual role as the one in my
made indirectly by quantificational truth-talk. So where Field postulates a different underlying logic, my view postulates a serious assertion with a complex, non-standard logical form made indirectly. The difference, however, is that Field’s view makes it a \textit{brute fact} that the apparently (logically) predicative expression “…is true” literally operates (logically) very differently from how it appears to function. The pretense-based account, on the other hand, offers an \textit{explanation} of how the seemingly unsuitable logical devices of objectual quantification and predication can implement this very different, non-standard logical role while functioning logically in their normal fashion.

The instances of truth-talk themselves do not involve substitutional quantification or sentence variables in any way (not even in their “underlying logic”). Rather, these new logical roles are implemented indirectly by the simpler devices readily available in a natural language, just by having those devices operate in the context of a particular pretense. The use of substitutional quantification in the specifications of the conditions under which the pretenses involved in quantificational truth-talk are prescribed is simply due to there being no (other) way to express those conditions directly. After all, one point I have emphasized here is that the only way these conditions can be expressed in natural language is \textit{indirectly} with pretense-employing utterances of the very sort being explained in these parameters.

On a pretense-based account including rule T-10), the quantifier employed in a claim like (3.1) operates in the ordinary, objectual way and the expression “…is true” functions like an ordinary predicate attributing a property. This closes the logical gap opened by attempts to deal with the generalization problem by interpreting the main quantifier in the utterance substitutionally. The reason my account remains deflationary in spite of taking the quantifiers as objectual and “…is true” as (logically) predicative is that in the context of truth-talk these logical devices are taken to operate in the context of a pretense about what the quantifier’s domain

head that I express by uttering “p”). Similarly, for Brandom, what Bob said is an utterance and what he
includes (one adding propositions) and a pretense about there being a property attributed with “…is true”. Because the pretense-based account deals with the generalization problem in this logico-syntactically conservative way, it fits especially well with one of the motivating thoughts behind the deflationary impulse: truth-talk allows us to effect schematic generalizations (e.g., a generalization on the embedded sentences in (1.3)) without having to incorporate new, complicated logical devices (like substitutional quantification and sentence variables) into our language. Field and Brandom have to abandon this thought in one way or another in order to offer anything in response to the generalization problem; the pretense-based account does not.

iii) Non-Propositional Truth-Talk

Certain instances of truth-talk cannot be read as purporting to describe propositions. Consider utterances like the following

(6.18) {The sentence “Crabapples are edible” is true.}

(6.19) {Bob’s utterance is true.}

(6.20) {Bob is in a true belief-state.}

(6.21) {Everything Bob uttered is true.}

The third example may seem somewhat artificial or contrived, but the others clearly purport to describe objects that are not propositions, namely, a particular sentence and certain utterances.

Much of what has been offered above in extending the make-believe behind truth-talk to cover other forms of propositional truth-talk can be modified to extend the pretense to parallel forms of non-propositional truth-talk. The general strategy pursued above involves relating “new” forms of truth-talk to utterances of the basic form

(PT) {The proposition that p has the property of truth.}

believes is something like an internal (assertoric) utterance.

This tack works in the cases of (6.18) through (6.21) because non-propositional instances of truth-talk like these should primarily be understood as purporting to describe objects as related somehow to propositions that have the property of truth. The relevant relation in these cases is not *identity* with some such proposition (as it is for non-basic propositional truth-talk); it is the less intimate relation of *expressing* a proposition.\(^{457}\) Thus, these utterances should be understood as follows.

\(6.18\)'\(\) \{The sentence “Crabapples are edible” expresses a proposition that has the property of truth.\}

\(6.19\)'\(\) \{Bob’s utterance expresses a proposition that has the property of truth.\}

\(6.20\)'\(\) \{Bob’s belief-state expresses a proposition that has the property of truth.\}

\(6.21\)'\(\) \{Everything Bob uttered expresses some proposition (or other) that has the property of truth.\}

In the rules for the basic game of make-believe behind truth-talk, rules T-4) and T-5) account for the uses of the expressions “…is true” and “…is false” with terms supposed to denote propositions by linking these predicates definitionally to the notions of having the property of truth and having the property of falsity. Since the make-believe stipulates that, strictly speaking, it is to be pretended that only propositions have these properties, these rules must be modified if they are to cover the uses of “…is true” displayed in (6.18) through (6.21) as well. These modifications should also connect these utterances to (6.18’) through (6.21’), allowing for explanations of the former on analogy with the extensions of the make-believe offered above to cover “new” forms of propositional truth-talk. This provides a unified approach to extending the pretense-based account, that involving relating “new” forms of truth-talk to the basic forms.

The appropriate modification involves generalizing on the notions of having the property of truth and having the property of falsity, replacing them with the notions of being appropriately

\(^{457}\) I assume that the expressing relation covers the relation belief-states have to propositions. This may be a bit strained, but it will not generate any problems.
related to a proposition that has the property of truth/falsity. Substituting these notions into rules T-4) and T-5) yields the following more general rules.

\[
\begin{align*}
T-4') (\forall x)(x \text{ is true (i.e., satisfies the predicate “is true”}) &= x \text{ (is appropriately related to a proposition that) has the property of truth)} \\
T-5') (\forall x)(x \text{ is false (i.e., satisfies the predicate “is false”) &= x \text{ (is appropriately related to a proposition that) has the property of falsity)}
\end{align*}
\]

These modified rules apply to both propositional and non-propositional truth-talk because both the relation of being identical to and the supposed relation of expressing count as ways of being appropriately (pretend-)related to a proposition. Because these rules still cover instances of propositional truth-talk, the quantifiers they employ must still be understood to have “fictionally expanded” domains that include propositions. As a result, these quantifiers still appear inside of the pretense-marking brackets. This does not, however, prevent them from supplying real objects as values for the variables, since their domains still “also” include everything there really is. So this placement of the quantifiers does not interfere with the application of these rules to instances of non-propositional truth-talk, even though the objects (utterances, sentences, belief-states, etc.) putatively being described in these utterances are real as well as (as opposed to merely) pretend objects.458

The modification of rules T-4) and T-5) just offered relates utterances like (6.18) through (6.21) to the basic form of propositional truth-talk

\[
(PT) \{\text{The proposition that } p \text{ has the property of truth}\}
\]

in a way that makes extending the pretense-based account to non-propositional truth-talk fairly easy. In the first example of non-propositional truth-talk offered above, a name (in this case the quotation-name of a sentence) is used to pick out something ostensibly described as appropriately related to a proposition that has the property of truth. Utterances like (6.18) can be explained on

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458 This is somewhat similar to how the objects picked out by the term expressions employed in true positive existential claims are both the pretend and real referents of those terms. See Chapter 4.
analogy with instances of name-employing *propositional* truth-talk because the only real difference is that the non-propositional cases trade in identity with a proposition for the putative relation of expressing a proposition. But this difference poses little problem for extending the pretense-based account of truth-talk to cover these examples. All it means is that the rule governing utterances like (6.18) relates the pretenses they involve to those of the basic instances of truth-talk via a slightly different form of proposition-talk. While the rule governing instances of truth-talk like

(6.9) {Goldbach’s conjecture is true}

appeals to instances of proposition-talk of the form

(6.15) {n = the proposition that p}

to relate utterances like (6.9) to utterances of form (PT), explanations of name-employing non-propositional truth-talk like (6.18) rely instead on proposition-talk of the form

(6.22) {n expresses (the proposition) that p}.

Accounting for additional forms of proposition-talk like (6.22) is the real explanatory task added by extending the pretense-based account to cover non-propositional truth-talk. For present purposes, however, this task can be set aside. The important aspect of (6.22) is that it is sufficiently similar to (6.15) to allow for a generalized form encompassing them both. This general formula is obtained by replacing “=” and “expresses” in (6.15) and (6.22), respectively, with the symbol “R”, understood to stand for either the identity relation or the putative expressing relation. The result can then be substituted into rule T-8') to generate the following rule covering name-employing truth-talk of both the propositional and non-propositional varieties.

T-8’’) (Πn)(The pretenses displayed in an utterance of “{n is true}” are prescribed iff (∑p)((The pretenses displayed in an utterance of the form “{n R (the proposition) that p}” are prescribed) & p))

The other examples of non-propositional truth-talk can be accounted for along the same lines. The next two cases, (6.19) and (6.20), involve definite descriptions, so the pretend assertions they make get analyzed quantificationally just as utterances involving the term’s
“Bob’s assertion” or “Bob’s belief” do. If the analysis of existentially quantified propositional truth-talk can be generalized so as to cover these non-propositional cases as well, then a single account covering description-employing truth-talk of both sorts can be produced. One potential obstacle on this front is again the issue of quantifier placement relative to the pretense-indicating brackets. The worry is that since the objects supposedly being described in the non-propositional cases are not merely pretend objects, the quantifiers need to appear outside of the brackets. But as explained in the case of rules T-4) and T-5) above, even the quantifiers involved in non-propositional truth-talk employing definite descriptions (as well as those of explicitly quantificational truth-talk) can be placed inside the pretense-marking brackets.

The thought is that both propositional and non-propositional cases of existentially quantified truth-talk can be considered to have the form

\[(6.7) \{\exists x)(Fx \& x \text{ is true}\}.\]

This might seem odd in non-propositional cases since the existence of the object in question and its satisfaction of the predicate “F” (e.g., “is uttered by Bob”) are, intuitively anyway, part of what is so, not merely part of what is pretend-so. This suggests that the following form should be thought to apply to non-propositional cases instead.

\[(6.7') (\exists x)(Fx \& \{x \text{ is true}\})\]

The reason form (6.7) applies to both propositional and non-propositional cases is that games of make-believe include in their general structure what Gareth Evans calls an “incorporation principle”. This general principle “permits the incorporation into the game any truth not ruled out by the initial pretense.”\(^{459}\) This is related to the feature of make-believe that distinguishes it from pure fantasy—its dependency on how things really are. As Evans points out, just because that p is part of the content of a game of make-believe, that does not entail that

~p (or even make it probable). This seems the right thing to say about make-believe. After all, when I make-believe I am the strongest man in the world, I am pretending to be male, but this does not contradict the fact that I am male. So, although a non-propositional case of existentially quantified truth-talk purports to assert seriously that there really is some object that is F, it can do so by pretending to assert that this object exists and is F (and is true). Thus, in representing the form of (virtually all cases of) non-propositional, existentially quantified truth-talk, the pretense-indicating brackets around “x is true” in (6.7’) can be pushed out to encompass the whole utterance, as in (6.7).

Because form (6.7) covers both propositional and non-propositional cases, here too the only significant difference between the former and non-propositional utterances like (6.19) and (6.20) is that the latter add the putative relation of expressing a proposition to the explanandum. As in the case of name-employing non-propositional truth-talk like (6.18), this difference poses little problem for extending the pretense-based account of truth-talk to cover these examples. As above, it simply entails that the rule governing utterances of these forms relate the pretenses they involve to those involved in the basic instances of truth-talk via a slightly different form of proposition-talk. So, instead of relying on claims of the form

\( (6.17) \{ (\exists x)(Fx & x = \text{the proposition that } p) \} \),

these non-propositional instances of truth-talk are explained in terms of claims of the form

\( (6.23) \{ (\exists x)(Fx & x \text{ expresses (the proposition) that } p) \} \).  

\[ \text{Footnotes:} \]

\[ ^{460} \text{Ibid., fn. 22.} \]

\[ ^{461} \text{It is even possible to pretend what is true explicitly. Consider the games of make-believe my wife Carrie and her younger sister Susan played as small children—games that began with the stipulation “Let’s pretend we’re sisters”.} \]

\[ ^{462} \text{Although it might seem more appropriate to link non-propositional cases to the basic instances of truth-talk with proposition-talk of the form} \]

\( (6.23’) (\exists x)(Fx & \{ x \text{ expresses (the proposition) that } p \}), \)
As mentioned above, this difference reveals the need for an explanation of this additional form of proposition-talk, but here too, that task can be set aside for the moment. The formal similarity between (6.17) and (6.23) makes it possible in this case as well to obtain a single formula that covers them both. As before, this is done by replacing “=” in the former and “expresses” in the latter both with the symbol “R”, understood to stand for either the identity relation or the putative expressing relation. With this general formula it is possible to formulate a single rule covering existentially quantified truth-talk both propositional and non-propositional.

Substituting this formula into T-9), we can modify it into the following more general rule.

\[ T-9') \text{The pretenses displayed in an utterance of the form } \{∃x\}(Fx & x \text{ is true}) \text{ are prescribed iff } (Σp)[(\text{The pretenses displayed an utterance of the form } \{∃x\} (Fx & x R (the proposition) that p)) \text{ are prescribed}) \& p] \]

Finally, in the last non-propositional example, (6.21), a quantifier is used ostensibly to offer a general description about a class of objects. The quantifier is again supposed to supply real items (Bob’s utterances) to be ostensibly described as related to propositions that have the property of truth, but as in the cases of (6.19) and (6.20), this quantifier (and the first conjunct) can still be placed inside the pretense-marking brackets.\(^{463}\) This allows for a single rule covering both propositional and non-propositional cases. And, on analogy with the propositional cases, universally quantified non-propositional truth-talk like (6.21) get related to the basic form of truth-talk (PT) via the same form of proposition-talk as existentially quantified non-propositional truth-talk, namely

\[ (6.23) \{∃x\}(Fx & x \text{ expresses (the proposition) that p}) \].

\(^{463}\)In other words, universally quantified non-propositional truth-talk can also, in virtue of the incorporation principle, be considered to have the form

\[ (6.8) \{∀x\}(Fx \rightarrow x \text{ is true}) \]

rather than a different form along the lines of
This parallel allows for the substitution of the same generalization on (6.17) and (6.23) into rule T-10) to generate the following, more general rule governing both propositional and non-propositional truth-talk involving universal quantification.

T-10’) The pretenses displayed in an utterance of the form “\((\forall x)(Fx \rightarrow x \text{ is true})\)” are prescribed iff (\(\Pi p\))[(The pretenses displayed in an utterance of the form “\((\exists x)(Fx \& x R (\text{the proposition}) that p)\)” are prescribed) \(\rightarrow p\)]

Thus, by modifying certain rules already offered as part of the game of make-believe behind truth-talk, the pretense-based account can be extended to cover a wide variety of non-propositional truth-talk beyond the propositional instances explained in Chapter 5 and the first portion of the present chapter. However, the rules developed here to provide the necessary extensions (both propositional and non-propositional) of the view are really all just partial accounts of the pretenses involved in the forms of truth-talk they govern. Each one explains those pretenses in terms of some form of proposition-talk, which in this context must also be explained in terms of pretense. So, to complete the extension of my account of truth-talk as necessary for its adequacy, I must examine the notion of proposition and determine how a pretense-based account of proposition-talk would explain at least the forms of utterance cited in the rules that have been added to the make-believe behind truth-talk in order to extend it as required.

**PROPOSITION-TALK**

According to the argument offered above, the connections between truth-talk and proposition-talk entail that an application of the pretense approach to the former requires that it be applied to the latter as well. However, this does not in itself show that proposition-talk should be understood in terms of pretense. The connection could instead work against a pretense-based account of truth-talk (one person’s *modus ponens* is another’s *modus tollens*...). Therefore,

\[(6.8’) (\forall x)(Fx \rightarrow \{x \text{ is true}\}).\]
before turning to the explanations of the forms of proposition-talk employed in the extensions of the make-believe behind truth-talk, I first want to offer some additional, independent motivations for applying the pretense approach to proposition-talk as well.

The motivations I have in mind stem from certain problems that arise with the notion of proposition, problems that cast enough doubt on these putative entities to make realism about them questionable. At the same time, however, eliminativism about proposition-talk is unappealing because it would deprive us of important expressive resources. The pretense approach offers an attractive alternative to both realism and eliminativism. It avoids troublesome ontological commitments as it not only preserves the talk, but in the process of doing so explains how the talk functions to extend the expressive capacities of a language.

I begin here with a brief sketch of some prominent worries initially associated with the notion of proposition. I then explain how an application of the pretense approach to proposition-talk would assuage these worries while accommodating certain other features of the talk. Finally, I lay out some rules from the game of make-believe at work in this application of the pretense approach, and explain how they govern the forms of proposition-talk explicitly employed in my pretense-based account of truth-talk.

i) Problems, Pretense, and Pleonasticism

According to arguments offered in Chapters 2 and 5, our linguistic and inferential practices indicate that the make-believe behind truth-talk involves taking certain linguistic expressions (including those like “what Bob asserted/believes” and that-clauses) as singular terms that at least purport to denote propositions. This position involves assigning to propositions certain roles, including those of being the contents of utterances or acts of assertion, the objects of belief and other intentional attitudes, the fundamental bearers of truth and falsity, etc. The supposition that these different roles are played by a single sort of entity simplifies and unifies our talk about our linguistic and cognitive activities, about how the world is, and about how the
world’s being some way bears on its being other ways as well. The success we have in using this talk for predictive, explanatory, and inferential purposes (mainly in the context of folk-psychological talk) might thus be taken as the basis for an abductive inference to the conclusion that propositions exist. On this line of thought, propositions are theoretical entities vindicated by a kind of inference to the best explanation.

This line of thought, however, is questionable. The problem is that beyond pointing to certain roles propositions are supposed to play, it is notoriously difficult to give a satisfying account of what they are (or are like), that is, to specify criteria for their identity and individuation (henceforth, their “identity conditions”). Probably the best-known rejection of propositions based on this point is that presented by W. V. Quine. Quine’s main reason for rejecting propositions is that they would make for an objective relation of interlinguistic synonymy—something he denies exists. Although I am tempted by Quine’s claim that interlinguistic (or, if we focus on idiolects, interpersonal) synonymy is not a factual matter, this is not the argument that underwrites my own suspicions regarding propositions. The reason for my hesitancy here is that I am not entirely convinced Quine is right in holding that the indeterminacy of translation is more than just a case of underdetermination of theory by the data. I do, however, find Quine’s general line of reasoning against propositions compelling. He combines arguments to the effect that there are no determinate identity conditions for propositions with the

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465 See Quine (1960), Chapter 2 on the indeterminacy of translation and nonfactual nature of interlinguistic synonymy. Quine (1960), pp. 200-206 and (1986), pp. 3-7 derives the nonexistence of propositions from this point.

466 *Pace* Quine, one might hold that although a radical translator has no access to any data other than the stimulus meanings of the sentences he wishes to translate, there may nevertheless be facts of the matter about what Junglese speakers “mean” by their utterances constituted by facts about how mental analogs of those utterances are processed in their cognitive systems. Interlinguistic synonymy could then be a matter of a match between the cognitive processing of the mental analogs behind Junglese utterances and that of the mental analogs behind utterances from the translator’s language. This could allow for a fact of the
ontological maxim “No entity without identity”. And I think it is particularly significant that the problem of proposition identity conditions is especially acute in the very context that is supposed to provide the basis for an abductive inference to realism about propositions: the ascription of intentional attitudes.

The context of attitude ascription is problematic for the notion of proposition because in different contexts different criteria of individuation apply to the putative propositions thinkers get described as being related to by the attribution of some intentional attitude. This leads to different theories of the identity conditions of propositions, and no real means of determining which theory is correct. In Chapter 5 I discussed some reasons for thinking that the notion of proposition presents them as abstract, mind- and language-independent entities (as opposed to concrete utterances, inscriptions, or thought-states), but this still allows for a wide range of possibilities regarding the further features that individuate them. Joseph Moore provides a tidy way of categorizing alternative theories of the identity conditions for propositions. He does it in terms of two aspects every theory of propositions must make a choice about: structure and opacity.

Regarding the first of these categorizing aspects, an account of propositions can either take them to be structured entities, or it can take them to be unstructured. Views of the first sort hold that propositions are constituted by particular arrangements of “sub-propositional” components (although propositions can figure as “sub-propositional” components of other propositions). On this kind of view, utterances whose component expressions or arrangements

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467 See Quine (1948), p. 4 and (1969), pp. 19, 23 on this ontological maxim.

468 Quine points this out in Quine (1969), pp. 144-146, but the reasons he offers are not the ones I will pursue here.

469 Moore (1999), pp. 5-6.
thereof differ in relevant respects necessarily express different propositions. This is not the case on a view that considers propositions to be unstructured. One and the same proposition can be expressed by different arrangements even of different linguistic components.

Our practices involving the notion of proposition establish at least a presumption in favor of the view that they are structured entities of some sort. The paradigm account of propositions as unstructured entities is the view that they are sets of possible worlds. However, this view seems (at least at first blush) to individuate propositions in too coarse-grained a fashion. On the possible-worlds account there is only one necessary proposition (i.e., one set of possible worlds containing all of them), so the proposition that Hesperus is Phosphorus turns out to be the same proposition as the proposition that water is H₂O. But intuitively someone can believe that Hesperus is Phosphorus while disbelieving that water is a complex substance, and can do so without thereby impugning his rationality. Assuming propositions are the things we believe, this indicates that they must be differentiated in more fine-grained terms, and this at least initially favors an account of propositions that takes them to be structured entities.

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470 I do not claim that proponents of the possible-worlds view have no response to this prima facie challenge. However, the modified versions of the view might still be subject to more general worries. (For instance, Bealer (1998), pp. 4-5 objects to the possible-worlds view based on its incompatibility with actualism.) And even if a possible-worlds account of propositions can stand up to these objections, it might turn out to be an application of the pretense approach to proposition-talk if the arguments for a pretense-based account of possible-worlds-talk presented in Yablo (1996) go through.

471 I am assuming the necessity of kind identifications as well as individual identities along the lines of Kripke (1980).

472 Cf. Schiffer (2000), p. 4. Schiffer’s point is more that propositions are opaque structured entities, but this still tells against their being unstructured.

473 Moore (1999), pp. 6-7 discusses circumstances that he claims support a “samecontent” judgment involving a view of propositions as unstructured. However, given that his argument stipulates that the judgment is made in the service of using the believer to learn certain worldly facts rather than in the service of predicting or explaining the believer’s behavior, the case could be explained as one in which the proposition attributed is distinct from, but logically equivalent to, the proposition believed. After all, for the purpose of getting at contingent worldly facts through what others believe, logical equivalence is close enough.
As is well known, however, our linguistic and inferential practices support different views about the kind of structured entities propositions are supposed to be. A division between two general perspectives can be drawn in terms of the other aspect Moore uses to categorize alternative views of propositions: opacity. He distinguishes between views that consider the identity conditions of propositions to be transparent and those that take them to be opaque. The general idea behind this distinction is that on the former, the propositions expressed by two utterances employing different terms are not automatically distinct, whereas on the latter kind they are (provided the difference is not just translation into a different language). To avoid confusion with the uses of these terms already made here for other purposes, I will co-opt some terminology developed by Crimmins and mark this distinction as between views taking the identity conditions of propositions to be notionally open and views taking them to be notionally loaded, respectively. On the former sort of view, how the items a belief or utterance is about get denoted is irrelevant to the proposition expressed; on the latter sort of view it is central.

In the debate over propositions, this has been the more important contrast. It tracks the traditional distinction between (naïve) Russellian accounts, according to which propositions are complexes of objects and relations, and (naïve) Fregean accounts, according to which propositions are arrangements of abstract constituents of the sort that concepts or modes of presentation are typically supposed to be. These components are held to determine which objects and relations a belief or an assertion is about (the ones that “fall under” the concepts composing the proposition believed or asserted). The problem that arises in the context of attitude ascription is that some attributions initially favor a Fregean (notionally loaded) conception of propositions, while others initially favor a Russellian (notionally open) conception.

Consider, on the one hand, a belief ascription like

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Crimmins (1998), pp. 10-12. My application of these terms to the identity conditions of propositions is slightly different from, but still related to, Crimmins’s application of them to attitude attributions.
(6.24) Corey believes that elves have magic powers.

We often hold that claims like (6.24) are true even when we know (as Corey does not) there are no elves and no such thing as magic. But presumably for (6.24) to be true there would have to be a proposition that Corey believes. Since this proposition cannot be a complex of the objects her belief is about (there are none), it seems it would have to be Fregean, i.e., one composed of concepts (in this case, empty ones). So the terms used in the that-clause refer to the concepts they express. Since different terms express different concepts, that-clauses employing different terms denote different propositions, making the identity conditions for the propositions cited in attitude ascriptions like (6.24) notionally loaded.

This point is further illustrated by our practice of distinguishing between the proposition Corey is claimed to believe in (6.24) and the one she is said to believe in

(6.25) Corey believes that unicorns have magic powers.

Because the difference between the two attributions cannot be a matter of the objects her beliefs are about (again, there are none), it must be a matter of the concepts involved, meaning that the identity conditions of the propositions picked out are notionally loaded. While examples involving reference failure are an obvious sort of case favoring a Fregean view of propositions, they might be thought a special case. However, a notionally loaded view of proposition identity conditions is also favored in more mundane examples, in fact, in any case that must be treated as de dicto. For instance, someone can believe that woodchucks are rodents and at the same time believe that groundhogs are not rodents without impugning her rationality (i.e., without believing and disbelieving the same thing), even though (unbeknownst to her) woodchucks just are groundhogs.475

The Fregean view does not capture the whole story, however, since there are also contexts of attitude ascription that do not seem to fit with this understanding of propositions.
Ascriptions of what are sometimes called *de re* beliefs seem to involve relating a believer to something best understood in a Russellian manner.\(^{476}\) Consider the (somewhat contrived) claim

\[(6.26)\] Regarding compassion, cancer specialists, and heart specialists, Bob believes that this feature is exhibited more often by the former than the latter.

Here the utterance is most naturally read as relating Bob to a complex of (sets of) objects and a feature rather than to a complex of concepts, that is, as relating them to a Russellian proposition rather than a Fregean one. The way that the objects are picked out in the attribution plays no role in determining what Bob is related to by (6.26); what matters is which objects are picked out, not how this is done. Different terms could be used to make the same attribution so long as they picked out the same objects—“cancer specialists” could be replaced with “oncologists” and “heart specialists” could be replaced with “cardiologists”. In addition, the way that Bob thinks of the objects his belief is about is also completely irrelevant to this attribution. Thus, the identity conditions for the proposition Bob is related to by (6.26) are notionally open.\(^{477}\)

A Russellian view of propositions also appears to be what fits best with the widely accepted Millian or direct reference conception of proper names. If the objects they denote really are all that names contribute to what is said with utterances employing them, then it appears that the only thing Bob could be related to by an utterance like

\[(6.27)\] Bob believes that Al Gore is taller than George W. Bush

is a complex of objects including Al Gore and George W. Bush (and the relation of being taller than). Of course, Frege-style puzzles involving the non-substitutability of co-referring names and examples involving fictional or empty names indicate that matters cannot be as simple as just

\[^{475}\text{Schiffer (2000), pp. 4, 10-11.}\]

\[^{476}\text{Horwich (1998), p. 91. The labels “de dicto” and “de re” might be better understood as indicating kinds of belief ascription rather than kinds of belief or even belief-content (see Brandom (1994), p. 503), but even so, the point still holds. As far as surface appearances go, de re belief attributions seem to relate the believer to (complexes of) things (res) rather than to complexes of concepts or modes of presentation of things.}\]
suggested. But even these problem cases do not completely cancel our initial semantic innocence, i.e., the feeling that names (and other expressions) function in their normal fashion even in contexts of indirect discourse. Naively, an utterance like (6.27) seems to talk about Bob comparing Gore and Dubya rather than Bob relating certain concepts of Gore and Dubya.  

Finally, to make matters more confusing, there also appear to be cases calling for some sort of mixed account. Consider, for instance, the claim

(6.28) Corey believes (of herself) that she is taller than any elf.

In this case, Corey seems to get related to a proposition composed of an object (since the particular proposition believed is individuated not by the sense or character of “she”, but by the particular object it picks out here, namely Corey herself), the concept ELF, and either the concept TALLER THAN or the actual relation that falls under it. Thus, even if we assume that our linguistic practices involve taking propositions to be structured entities, in different contexts our talk and inferential practices involving the notion of proposition suggest different understandings of what kind of structured entities propositions are. Some contexts seem to require thinking of them as Fregean and their identity conditions as notionally loaded, others that propositions are Russellian and have notionally open identity conditions, and still others that propositions are mixed complexes containing both objects and concepts, with identity conditions that are partially notionally open and partially notionally loaded. This indeterminacy in the identity conditions of propositions casts serious doubt on a full-blown realist view of proposition-talk.

478Ibid., p. 16-17.
480Many philosophers think that a separate category of de se attitude ascription must be recognized in addition to de dicto and de re cases in order to account for attributions of self-involving intentional attitudes like (6.28). A superior account of attitude ascriptions would dissolve the distinctions between these putative categories and provide a unified explanation.
The foregoing is not intended as anything more than a sketch of an initial problem facing any account of attitude ascription. There have been far too many different responses to this problem for me to attempt any kind of summary here. Instead, I am going to cut straight to consideration of the merits a pretense-based account offers in dealing with the initial situation just described. Although I will discuss one non-pretense view as well, detailed comparisons with other approaches will have to wait for another occasion. Crimmins applies the pretense approach in an account of attitude ascriptions and shows how this provides a way to accommodate both the Russellian and Fregean (and even mixed) aspects of this linguistic practice. On his view, all of the expressions in an ascription—even those embedded in a that-clause—function in their normal fashions, they just do so in the context of a shallow semantic pretense. The details of the make-believe involved allow us to maintain this intuitive semantic innocence even in contexts of attitude ascription that seem to undermine it.

The pretense in play is similar to the basic make-believe behind existence-talk in that every name or singular term is pretended to have a bearer. What gets added here is that in the context of an attitude ascription, each term or, more generally, each mode of presentation (linguistic or mental) picks out a distinct thing. The real-world conditions under which the pretenses displayed in an attitude ascription (namely, that a thinker bears an intentional attitude toward one of these distinct objects) are that she has a thought employing (something like) the mode of presentation used in the attribution. To accommodate cases of actual co-reference, the pretense also includes principles governing identity-talk, stipulating that the identity relation is to be pretended to be “promiscuous”—i.e., to be a relation that can hold between “different” (pretend) objects—and that the real-world conditions under which it is to be pretended that this relation holds between two or more of these pretend objects are that the modes of presentation
“generating” the different objects all present the same object.\textsuperscript{482} This pretense allows claims with Russellian logical form (i.e., that relate people just to (complexes of) objects and relations) to meet Fregean criteria of individuation demanded by certain contexts.

Crimmins talks about attitudes reports as describing people as related to objects and features rather than to propositions.\textsuperscript{483} But to accommodate the referential understanding of that-clauses underwritten by our inferential practices with them, Crimmins’s presentation must be rephrased in terms of relating thinkers to propositions. This can be done without much distortion, and without violating Crimmins’s aim of taking the Russellian semantic phenomenology of attitude ascriptions seriously, by taking the propositions thinkers are related to by the intentional attitudes to be complexes of objects and relations. The pretense involved allows a Russellian understanding of propositions to apply in all contexts of attitude ascription because in the context of the make-believe there are different Russellian propositions picked out whenever the ascriptions employ different expressions in their that-clauses. The identity conditions of propositions are always notionally open, but the pretense that every mode of presentation picks out a distinct object collapses the distinction between notionally open and notionally loaded. In the context of this pretense, the “notionally open” identity conditions of the Russellian propositions that intentional attitudes ostensibly relate thinkers to distinguish between propositions exactly as notionally loaded identity conditions would.

\textsuperscript{481}Crimmins (1998), pp. 9-10, 23. I will follow Crimmins and discuss the view only as it pertains to terms expressions, but presumably the same principles apply to different ways of attributing (even the same) features.

\textsuperscript{482}Ibid., p. 35.

\textsuperscript{483}See Ibid., p. 16 where Crimmins describes the belief ascription “Hammurabi believes that Hesperus is brighter than Phosphorus” as feeling like it simply talks about Hammurabi, believing, Hesperus, brightness, and Phosphorus. More explicitly, on p. 10 he describes a particular de re belief ascription as “designed for relating Hammurabi to Hesperus without entailing anything special about how he thinks of the thing” (italics added).
This collapse allows for a single account of proposition identity conditions that works in all contexts, eliminating the indeterminacy in these conditions suggested by our attitude ascription practices. The Quinean block to the existence of propositions is thus removed, but only in the context of a pretense. A connected reason for thinking that propositions exist only in the context of a pretense is that the objects “denoted” by the expressions employed in the that-clauses of attitude ascriptions are pretend. As a result, the putative Russellian propositions built out of them (the propositions thinkers are ostensibly related to in attitude reports) are pretend as well. This does not entail that really there are no Russellian propositions at all since, as in the case of existence-talk, the objects pretend-denoted by the expressions employed in attitude ascriptions are not necessarily merely pretend. However, the Russellian propositions ostensibly talked about in attitude ascriptions are pretend entities individuated in terms of the (pretend) objects they include.

Whether there are also real Russellian propositions is irrelevant; it would be useful to talk as if there were either way. Clearly, there are cases in which there cannot be any real Russellian proposition picked out in the attribution: any attitude ascriptions employing empty terms is like this. But even when none of the terms employed is empty, a real Russellian proposition is not what is seriously talked about indirectly. The situation is similar to that of true positive existential statements. The fact that the term employed in an existential claim has a real referent does not make the serious assertion made with the utterance an assertion about that object. Rather, it is about the kind of use of the term displayed in the utterance. Analogously, (here I diverge further from Crimmins’s account) I think that the serious assertions made with attitude ascriptions are about the use-features of the representations the thinkers employ in certain cognitive states.\textsuperscript{484} It turns out to be useful (perhaps even necessary) to do this indirectly by

\textsuperscript{484}Crimmins’s account is different because he wants semantic innocence to extend beyond the pretense as well. So if a term used in an attitude ascription has a real bearer he wants the ascription to make a serious
making as if to talk about thinkers bearing relations to mind- and language-independent structured entities, and this can be accomplished with ordinary thing-talk functioning normally (but in the context of a pretense) so long as those assumed entities are taken to have notionally open identity conditions.

A different approach that does not involve pretense but which has certain similarities to the kind of pretense-based account just outlined is Schiffer’s pleonastic view of propositions.\textsuperscript{485} This view is like one that takes propositions to be part of a semantic pretense in that it also contains an element of conceptualism about propositions, taking them to be “language-created” in some sense. As on his pleonastic account of properties (briefly discussed in Chapter 1), Schiffer holds that propositions are introduced into our ontology simply by the adoption of a manner of speaking—a language game based on a “something-from-nothing” transformation.\textsuperscript{486} The transformation that supposedly earns propositions a place in our ontology is the one Schiffer claims is the basis of our linguistic practices with that-clauses.\textsuperscript{487} It involves a generally licensed transition from any indicative sentence $S$, making no reference to any propositions, to a trivially or pleonastically equivalent sentence, “That $S$ is true” that does (assuming that-clauses refer to propositions).

On Schiffer’s view, propositions (the referents of that-clauses) are in some sense the products of this “something-from-nothing” transformation; they are “the ontological shadows of assertion about this bearer. As a result, he distinguishes between the truth-conditions of attitude ascriptions and their modal contents (Crimmins (1998), pp. 27-32). I am not convinced of the need to do this since it seems partly driven by an assumption that intentional-attitude-talk attributes real relations (albeit, more complex ones than the simple two-place relations it initially appears to attribute) between thinkers and real Russellian propositions. (See, for example, the version of the hidden-indexical approach developed in Crimmins (1992).) I am tempted by a more instrumentalist approach.

\textsuperscript{485}See Schiffer (1996) and (2000).


sentences. This is because, unlike rocks and trees, propositions have no hidden, substantial nature, awaiting discovery. Everything there is to the nature of propositions can be learned just by examining proposition-talk—our referential and quantificational practices involving that-clauses grounded on the “something-from-nothing” transformation that introduces them. One reason for thinking this is that assuming propositions are immaterial, abstract entities, there is no way we could discover propositions and then introduce a way of talking about them. Conversely, Schiffer claims that all it would take for speakers who are unaware of propositions to become aware of them and know what they are like would be for them to adopt the linguistic practices we engage in with that-clauses. Ontologically speaking, propositions derive from proposition-talk.

Nevertheless, Schiffer also wants to maintain that propositions are “language-independent” entities in the sense of having genuine, full-blown ontological status independent of the existence of any language users or thinkers. This is what is supposed to keep his view from being a completely conceptualist account, and it sharply distinguishes the pleonastic view from a pretense-based account. However, this commitment to “language-independence” is in obvious tension with the commitment to propositions being “language-created”, and I think it is less well motivated. As a fairly peripheral motivation, Schiffer makes the usual appeal to a purported important explanatory role the notion of proposition plays in our ordinary psychological explanations involving attitude ascriptions. The strength of this motivation is questionable, however, since, as Field points out, even assuming propositions, reference to a proposition is explanatorily idle relative to the use of a sentence one’s audience understands in denoting it.

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491 Field (2001c), p. 163. Field is assuming a non-intentional understanding of understanding.
However, Schiffer places less weight on the explanatory point than other propositional realists like Horwich and Moore, focusing instead on our linguistic and inferential practices.

The main argument Schiffer gives for realism about propositions is based on an analogy he draws between them and fictional entities. The latter, he maintains, are full-blown, language-independent abstract entities that are nevertheless created by certain uses of language. Works of fiction introduce fictional names via a kind of pretending use, one in which writers or speakers just pretend or make as if to refer to people with the names. So much is in keeping with the discussion in Chapter 4 of ordinary statements regarding works of fiction. Once fictional names are introduced in this way, however, Schiffer claims that there is another way they can be used—he calls it the “hypostatizing use”—that brings with it ontological commitment to fictional entities. This sort of use is supposedly exhibited in utterances like

(4.17) Sherlock Holmes is a fictional character.

This use of the name “Sherlock Holmes” is out of keeping with the pretending use introduced by the Holmes stories. It also functions in the making of a true assertion. Combining these thoughts, Schiffer concludes that this other way of using the fictional name “Sherlock Holmes” must generate a real thing, the fictional entity Sherlock Holmes, to be the referent the name must have if the utterance is to be true.

Schiffer wants to claim that although propositions are products of our linguistic and inferential practices involving that-clauses (most centrally, the “something-from-nothing” transformation), they are still language-independent, much in the way that fictional entities are language-independent in spite of being the product of the hypostatizing use of fictional names. The problem, however, is that the hypostatizing use of fictional names does not entail the language-independent existence of fictional entities. What Schiffer misses is that (4.17) can be understood as making a genuinely true assertion without taking the existence of any fictional
entity seriously. While the use of the name “Sherlock Holmes” in this utterance may not be the pretending use introduced by the Holmes stories, it does not follow that it is not some other pretending use. As discussed in Chapter 4, an utterance like (4.17) can be seen as belonging to an unofficial game of make-believe that is parasitic in certain ways on the game of make-believe authorized by the Holmes stories. One need not admit fictional entities into one’s serious ontology to explain Schiffer’s hypostatizing use of fictional names. The pretense approach can account for all uses of fictional names, explaining in the process how utterances that involve the so-called “hypostatizing” use can make true assertions even though the names do not really refer to anything in any context.

Similarly, it is possible to acknowledge the referential functioning of that-clauses and explain the truth of an utterance like

\[
\text{(2.9) \{That crabapples are edible is true\}}
\]

without taking on a serious ontological commitment to a referent for “that crabapples are edible”. The use of this expression invokes a pretense in which that-clauses count as referring expressions that denote propositions. The rules of the game of make-believe that (2.9) belongs to establish that the serious assertion made indirectly with this utterance is just what is seriously asserted with

\[
\text{(1.1) Crabapples are edible.}
\]

Since (1.1) is true, so is (2.9), as required by the intuition that they are pleonastically equivalent. As is the case for the “hypostatizing” use of fictional names, there is no need to posit a real referent for “that crabapples are edible” to accommodate its referential functioning in the making of true assertions. Thus, the analogy with fictional entities does not support the claim that propositions really are mind- and language-independent entities.

The other reasons Schiffer gives for thinking propositions are “language-independent” also give way under pressure. The general strategy is to try to show that propositions exist in all

\footnote{Schiffer (1996), pp. 154-156.}
possible worlds, and thus in worlds that contain no language-users or thinkers. One argument of this sort that Schiffer offers (almost as a throw-away line) runs as follows: in some thinkerless worlds it is a fact that rocks exist; since facts are true propositions, propositions exist in thinkerless worlds (and therefore are mind- and language-independent entities). But this argument does not apply to the pleonastic conception of propositions because this understanding of them is a Fregean view (Schiffer calls it “Pleonastic Fregeanism”). Since Fregean views hold that propositions are complexes of modes of presentation of objects and relations, true (Fregean) propositions are not facts; they represent facts. Another modal argument Schiffer offers is based on the law of excluded middle. Starting with the claim “Necessarily, $S$ or not $S$” we can derive its pleonastic equivalent “Necessarily, that $S$ is true or that $S$ is not true” and then “Necessarily, that $S$ is true or not true”, which he claims implies the existence of propositions in all possible worlds. But this argument is undermined by Schiffer’s own admission (in a footnote) that “we seem not to have any determinate way of understanding what [a claim like ‘Necessarily, Harry Truman is or isn’t dead’] comes to in possible worlds…in which Truman didn’t exist.”

Given the conflict between the conceptualist element of Pleonastic Fregeanism and its purported realist aspect, the lack of motivation for the latter supports dropping the thesis that propositions are “language-independent” and embracing a fuller conceptualism. But if conceptualism is the best general understanding of propositions, the pretense-based version of it outlined above has certain advantages over even a purified Pleonastic Fregeanism. With respect to resolving the indeterminacy in proposition identity conditions, the latter might cover the

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495 Ibid., p. 167, fn. 17.
different contexts of attitude ascriptions as well as the former. However, as a Fregean view it still undermines semantic innocence and ignores the semantic phenomenology of attitude ascriptions (and other uses of that-clauses). As Crimmins points out, the worry driving Fregean views—that of generating the intuitively correct truth-conditions for attitude ascriptions involving Frege-style failures of substitutivity—eclipses the basic implausibility of taking expressions to have a different function in that-clauses than they do out of them. The pretense-based Russellian view is able to accommodate all contexts of attitude ascription while taking the intuitive semantic phenomenology of proposition-talk seriously (so to speak).

Finally, many of the features propositions are understood to have on a pleonastic conception are the sorts of features Stephen Yablo has pointed out are characteristic of “creatures of make-believe”. At least in utterances of the form “That $S$ is true”, putative reference to propositions can be paraphrased away (in terms of just $S$) seemingly without loss of subject matter; the same holds for putative reference to make-believe objects like “smarts”. Pleonasticism takes propositions to be insubstantial, everything there is to them being determined by our linguistic and inferential practices with that-clauses; make-believe objects like the butterflies in one’s stomach also have no hidden substantial nature beyond what our talk ostensibly about them determines. The pleonastic view of propositions as “the ontological shadows of sentences” generates a degree of indeterminacy in their identity conditions when different languages are involved (given any degree of indeterminacy in translation); it is not clear whether the propositions expressed by the sentences of one language are the same propositions as

496 Schiffer explains how his Fregean view covers $de re$ contexts by introducing the notion of “object-dependent concepts”—concepts that depend for their existence on the existence of the objects they denote and that are partly individuated in terms of those objects. Putatively directly referring terms (pronouns, demonstratives, names) do still refer to their customary referents when they appear in that-clauses, but they do so only through referring to object-dependent concepts. (See Schiffer (2000), pp. 11-12.)


those expressed by the sentences of another. Similarly, it is indeterminate whether the butterflies in one’s stomach today are the same ones that were there yesterday. Talk putatively of propositions extends the expressive capacity of a language by allowing for generalizations about other things that could not otherwise be formed (at least easily), for example the “fertile generalizations” provided for by quantificational propositional truth-talk. Talk “about” make-believe objects like the average taxpayer or the general mood of the nation serve to extend a language’s expressive range in a similar way. This range of similarity suggests that taking propositions to be creatures of make-believe might be the best way to understand them along the lines that the pleonastic view presents them.

The pretense approach thus does a good job of accounting for the linguistic practices that constitute proposition-talk. It allows for an understanding of propositions that applies in all contexts of the notion’s central arena of application: attitude ascription. At the same time it makes sense of the semantic phenomenology of proposition-talk and fits well with other features plausibly attributed to propositions. This level of performance seems like enough to provide at least initial motivation for thinking proposition-talk should be given a pretense-based account, independently of the demand a pretense-based account of truth-talk generates for such a view.

ii) Proposition-Talk as a Pretense

I do not have the space here to develop a complete pretense-based account of proposition-talk. My current aim is the more modest one of explaining just the kinds of proposition-talk that figure in the extensions of the pretense-based account of truth-talk presented above. These include the following forms of utterance.

(6.15) \{n = the proposition that p\}

(6.17) \{(\exists x) (Fx & x = the proposition that p)\}

(6.22) \{n expresses (the proposition) that p\}

(6.23) \{(\exists x) (Fx & x expresses (the proposition) that p)\}
The kind of thorough-going application of the pretense approach that I prefer giving to proposition-talk takes the prescriptive real-world conditions for the pretenses displayed in utterances of these forms to involve coincidence in the use-theoretic features of certain linguistic items. The kinds of features I have in mind are those included in what are sometimes called “long-arm conceptual roles”. In addition to narrow computational or inferential role, these use-features include the sorts of causal connections to the world that Field calls “indication relations”. It is slightly easier to specify which real-world conditions of this sort are prescriptive for the pretenses displayed in instances of forms (6.22) and (6.23) since the subjects of these utterances—what are putatively attributed propositional content in them—are already linguistic objects. But even in utterances of the first two forms it is possible to specify “metalinguistic” conditions of the desired sort to serve as prescriptive for the pretenses they invoke.

For utterances of form (6.15), the prescriptive real-world conditions pertain to similarities between the linguistic expressions actually employed in the utterances themselves. The rule correlates the prescription of the pretenses invoked with a coincidence between the nominal (i.e., term) use-features of the expressions flanking the identity expression. This is captured by the following principle.

\[ P-1 \quad (\Pi n)(\Pi p)(\text{The pretenses displayed in an utterance of } \{n = (\text{the proposition that } p)\} \text{ are prescribed iff } \text{“}n\text{” is assigned (by the speaker) the same (singular term) long-arm conceptual role as “that } p\text{” as-the-speaker-actually-understands-it (on the left-hand side))} \]

My use of “linguistic” should be understood as covering both expressions of spoken language and their mental analogs.

Field (1994), pp. 254-255 and (2001a), pp. 75-76. Field maintains that including these sorts of “word-world” connections into one’s account of meaning does not make the account inflationary (in the sense of making truth-conditions centrally explanatory) because the connections are not systematic enough to provide a reduction of semantic notions. Brandom’s “broadly inferential” approach to content is similar in that it factors in causal connections to the world by allowing for perceptual “language entry transitions” and practical “language exit transitions” (Brandom (1994), pp. 119-120, and Chapter 4). And even with these factors Brandom still contrasts his view with a “representationalist” approach to content (Ibid., pp. 93-94, 130-131).
The notion of understanding at work in P-1) takes this to be a practical ability—a matter of using an expression in a certain way. This makes understanding non-intentional and a matter of degree, something on the order of giving an expression a computational or inferential role in a one’s cognitive system. If two expressions are treated as intersubstitutable (in at least extensional contexts) by a speaker’s inferential procedures, they can be considered cognitively equivalent for the speaker.\textsuperscript{501} According to rule P-1), an utterance of form (6.15) seriously asserts indirectly that some name is cognitively equivalent (for the speaker) to some that-clause.

This rule might appear to raise a worry regarding over-easy prescription of the pretenses involved in proposition-talk of this form. Without some sort of constraint on a speaker’s treating two expressions as cognitively equivalent, it seems as if utterances of form (6.15) would all be matters of stipulation, and therefore indefeasible. But there is a kind of external check, since speakers can be wrong about how they use expressions, especially if the long-arm conceptual role a speaker assigns includes “external” and “social” factors like matching the way others use the expression.\textsuperscript{502} This would be enough to prevent an utterance like

(6.29) Goldbach’s conjecture is that mathematics is difficult

from being indefeasible. Of course, it could be correct, but then the speaker would not be using “Goldbach’s conjecture” as a name for Goldbach’s conjecture (i.e., as English speakers use it).

An utterance of form (6.15) allows a speaker to attribute use-features to a particular term expressions she is using—the one that goes in for “n” in schema (6.15)—by identifying them as the same ones possessed by some other expression (the particular filling of “that p” she employs). However, by using this form of proposition-talk, the identification the speaker makes is not just the opaque sort that would be provided by a two-place metalinguistic claim like

\textsuperscript{501}Field (1994), p. 251, fn. 2. Cognitive equivalence is a matter of degree as well.

\textsuperscript{502}I have in mind the sorts of factors emphasized by causal-historical accounts of reference like those developed in Kripke (1980) and Putnam (1975).
(6.30) “Goldbach’s conjecture” has the same long-arm conceptual role as “that every even number greater than 2 is the sum of two primes”.

Although the serious attributions of use-features made with utterances of form (6.15) are still indirect, they are more transparent than those of claims like (6.30) because they display the features attributed in the course of identifying them.

This displaying of the use-features attributed occurs because the expression that determines which particular features are attributed is used rather than mentioned. Thus, the use-features are engaged when specified. In fact, because the feature-determining expression is a that-clause, the “specified while engaged” aspect of this manner of attribution also applies at a deeper level. It is not just the that-clause as a whole (i.e., as a block unit) that is in use; the component expressions making up the sentence that goes in for “p” are in use as well. Even though the sentence is embedded in a nominalizing construction, the use-features of its components are still in effect. Contrast this with the case where the term used to display the long-arm conceptual role being attributed to the filling of “n” is something like “the sentence ‘Crabapples are edible’”. In the latter case the components of the embedded sentence are not in use, even if the whole term is used. This deeper-level displaying of use-features implemented by proposition-talk of form (6.15) helps to reveal more details of the overall long-arm conceptual role that is indirectly attributed.

The function of displaying features while attributing them is also performed by the other forms of proposition-talk I am concerned with here. This is an important function because it provides a middle ground between the opaque specifications of use-features offered by two-place metalinguistic claims in which the relevant expressions are all mentioned, and what in all likelihood would be highly technical and complex statements required to make direct specifications of the kind of features being attributed (if this kind of specification can stated at all). Once again, this role is in keeping with one of the main purposes of semantic pretense—extending the expressive capacity of a language without incorporating new complex and technical
linguistic devices into it. The real expressive gain provided by talking as if there are special objects of the sort propositions are supposed to be is an ability to attribute generalized (i.e., schematic) use-features, as in

(6.31) Everything Bob asserts is something he believes.

This utterance attributes a generalized long-arm conceptual role to all the sentences Bob assertorically utters (as he uses them), one similar to a generalized long-arm conceptual role possessed by the mentalese sentences he believes*. The pretense of propositions avoids the need for new, complicated logical and linguistic devices, allowing us to attribute schematic use features of this sort with the linguistic and logical devices of ordinary thing-talk, most centrally predication and objectual quantification.

In the case of utterances of form (6.17), this “displaying while attributing” function serves to associate description expressions (including explicitly quantificational expressions) with particular sentential use-features. The rule governing utterances of this form cannot appeal to coincidence in use between the descriptions and that-clauses employed because the description terms are analyzed away (à la Russell) in terms of quantification. The rule for utterances of form (6.17) associates the descriptions with sentential use-features by making the prescriptive real-world conditions at issue partly a matter of how the speaker understands the embedded sentence. This dependency is captured in the following principle.

P-2 (Πp)(The pretenses displayed in an utterance of the form “{(∃x)(Fx & x = (the proposition) that p)}” are prescribed iff (∃y)[F*y & y has a long-arm conceptual role similar to that of “p”-as-the-speaker-actually-understands-it (on the left-hand side)])

In P-2, the predicate “F*” on the right-hand side is to be understood as related to the predicate “F” in a manner analogous to the how Field explains the notion of “belief*” to be related to the notion of “belief” in his divided approach to mental representation.503 The starred predicate is

503 See Field (1978).
something like a nominalized counterpart of the predicate used in the instance of proposition-talk. This counterpart applies to the sentential analogs of the putative propositions supposedly described by the original predicate. So, for instance, the starred counterpart to “is asserted by Bob” is something like “is uttered by Bob” since one supposedly asserts propositions by uttering sentences. According to P-2), then, an utterance like

(6.32) What Bob asserted is that crabapples are edible

seriously asserts indirectly that some sentence uttered by Bob has use-features similar to those the speaker gives to the embedded sentence, in this case, the sentence “crabapples are edible.”

Similarly, a claim ostensibly about what Bob believes would indirectly make a serious assertion about the sentence of mentalese that Bob believes*.

One *prima facie* worry about rule P-2) is its assumption that there is a nominalization of “F” and some sentence-token that is a candidate for satisfying this “F*”. Very few predicates putatively describing propositions have natural language starred counterparts the way “is asserted by Bob” does, or even Field-style counterparts the way “is believed by Bob” does (provided we are willing to assume a language of thought). So specifying the prescriptive real-world conditions of utterances of form (6.17) directly is rarely as easy as it is in the example above. In fact, certain “propositional” predicates do not seem to require the existence of any sentential vehicles at all. Consider a predicate like “is a theorem of the geometry of physical space”. Unlike “is asserted by Bob”, the use of this predicate in no way implies the existence of any sentence-token (linguistic or mentalese) that might satisfy some starred counterpart predicate. But then how could this be what the real-world conditions prescriptive for the pretenses displayed involve? Principle P-2) does not seem capable of governing all proposition-talk of form (6.17).

However, this worry is partially assuaged once we realize that if an utterance of form (6.17) has been made, there is automatically at least one sentence-token that is a candidate for satisfaction of some starred counterpart predicate, namely, the sentence that goes in for “p” in the utterance itself. Of course, since this sentence (as actually understood by the speaker) necessarily
has a long-arm conceptual role identical (and therefore similar) to the one it has itself, this realization generates a worry at the opposite extreme, namely, that utterances of this form will always be correct since the prescriptive real-world conditions specified in the instances of P-2) are always be satisfied. What prevents this is the fact that these real-world conditions also demand the satisfaction of the “F*-”-predicate by the sentence going in for “p”, and this is not trivial. It is not easy to say exactly what the starred counterpart is for predicates that seem to have no implications for the existence of sentence-tokens; there may be no general systematic way of constructing them. But given the commitment P-2) expresses to such counterparts, for this principle to work it must at least be possible to generate them on a case-by-case basis. Arguing for this is something that would need to be done by a more complete account of proposition-talk.

Turning to the latter two forms of utterance at issue here, I mentioned above that it is easier in a sense to provide rules governing proposition-talk of forms (6.22) and (6.23). The subject expressions of these utterances already pick out linguistic expressions, so they can also function (in the same way) in the specification of the real-world conditions prescriptive for the pretenses employed. In ostensibly attributing the relation of expressing a proposition, utterances of both forms purport to attribute propositional content to these linguistic items. Thus, in specifying their prescriptive real-world conditions and thereby determining the serious assertions these utterances make indirectly, the rules governing proposition-talk of these forms amount to the beginning of an account of meaning attribution, and derivatively of meaning. Utterances of form (6.22) purport to attribute propositional content to named linguistic items, as in

(6.33) “Holzapfel sind eßbar” expresses the proposition that crabapples are edible.

These cases of proposition-talk are governed by the following rule.

P-3) (Πn)(Πp)(The pretenses displayed in an utterance of “{n expresses (the proposition) that p}” are prescribed iff n has a long-arm conceptual role similar to that of “p”-as-the-speaker-actually-understands-it (on the left-hand side))
Utterances of form (6.23) purport to attribute propositional content to items picked out with description expressions (or, more generally, quantificational expressions). This is what is done in utterances like

(6.34) What Bob uttered expresses the proposition that crabapples are edible.

The rule governing proposition-talk of this sort is similar to that governing utterances of form (6.17), but without the complication of needing to determine some sort of counterpart for the predicate employed. Since the predicate already applies to linguistic items, no transformation to a linguistic counterpart is necessary. The rule governing utterances of form (6.23) is as follows.

\[ P-4) (\Pi p)(\text{The pretenses displayed in an utterance of the form "}\{ (\exists x)(Fx & x \text{ expresses} \ \text{the proposition that} \ p) \}\text{" are prescribed iff}\ (\exists y)[Fy & y \text{ has a long-arm conceptual role similar to that of "}p\text{"-as-the-speaker-actually-understands-it (on the left-hand side)}]) \]

Rules P-3) and P-4) provide a partial account of meaning or content attributions because the notion of propositional content is naturally understood in terms of expression of a proposition. A claim of the form “S means that p” function to make an indirectly serious attribution to S of a particular long-arm conceptual role that is identified via appeal to a sentence the speaker already understands (and as she actually understands it). Thus, the account begun here is close to the linguistic view of meaning attribution (LV) considered by Field and discussed in Chapter 3.504

Adding pretense to the mix provides a way of connecting Field’s technical considerations with our actual linguistic and inferential practices involving that-clauses. Plus, by showing how proposition-talk provides a way of displaying the use-features attributed, the pretense-based account also explains the expressive advantages of proposition-talk. The pretense approach provides an explanation of how it is that we manage to make serious assertions of the sort LV claims are being made, and do so more effectively by seeming to say something else.

504Field (2001c), pp. 158-160. The pretense-based account begun here also bears certain similarities to the account of propositional content attribution developed in Brandom (1994), Chapter 8.
REPLIES TO OBJECTIONS

I turn now to consideration of some objections to my view. As I mentioned above, the objections I consider here are not challenges to the deflationary aspect of my view, but rather to its appeal to the notion of pretense in explaining the functioning of truth-talk. I will consider three objections in their order of seriousness. The first two can be answered on the basis of what has already been said about semantic pretense in Chapter 4; the third objection requires further examination of what pretense and pretending involves.

i) Speakers Are Not Pretending

The first objection I want to consider is that my account of truth-talk contradicts the obvious fact that speakers making truth-attributions do not think of themselves as pretending anything, and pretending is not something one can do unintentionally. This criticism is addressed first by pointing out again that on my account employing truth-talk does not amount to pretending that something is true. Pretending that something is true involves intentionally applying a higher-order extrinsic pretense to something expressed indirectly with truth-talk via its intrinsic invocation of pretense. Any lingering worry about what speakers are doing can then be addressed by explaining how the pretenses involved in utterances understood in terms of semantic pretense are only shallow pretenses.

The point of calling the pretense employed in an utterance “shallow” is to indicate that a speaker’s use of it does not require that she actively engage in any pretending. The game of make-believe explaining a way of talking does not have to be actually played by speakers employing the talk. The pretense approach is a way of explaining how fragments of language work—how certain utterances can be used to make serious assertions indirectly—it is not an account of what speakers are doing. A speaker may be aware that pretense is involved somehow in an utterance, but she might only be alluding to the pretense that explains the utterance rather
than engaging in it. In fact, a speaker can make a pretense-employing utterance without even being aware that any pretense is involved. A speaker’s use of truth-talk involves a shallow pretense in this way. She might just know that an utterance of this form is a way of making some point without having much of an idea of how the feat is accomplished. A shallow pretense is more like a figure of speech than a game one is playing; it is a figure of speech that happens to get explained in terms of an implied game of make-believe. As such, it can be employed by speakers without their actively (and so intentionally or knowingly) pretending anything.

ii) The Status of Pretense

The second objection to my account stems from the observation that as an application of the pretense approach, my account of truth-talk is a kind of fictionalism. As I mentioned in Chapter 4, a common understanding of fictionalism has it that all statements from a fragment of discourse so understood are systematically false. The most positive thing we can say is that some of these utterances are “true in the fiction”. Paul Boghossian points out that this error-theoretic conception of fictionalism undermines itself when applied to truth-talk. The problem here is straightforward: an account of truth-talk based on the thesis that all truth-talk is false (or, more broadly, never true) seems to presuppose a non-error-theoretic notion of truth-conditions, and so of truth. I would add that even if it did not, the claim that all instances of truth-talk are false is itself an instance of truth-talk, and so would be false on this view. In fact, matters are more likely


506 Crimmins (1998), pp. 10, 14-15. Awareness of the shallow pretense is required, however, for a full understanding of both what is said and how it gets said. (Ibid., p. 3.)

507 In the case of truth-talk, this might be explained by the fact that it is the standard use of “…is true” that involves pretense, and that there is no pretense-free (literal) use with which this standard but non-literal use can be contrasted. See footnote 510.

508 See Boghossian (1990), pp. 167, 174-175.
even worse; this position would probably be *paradoxical* since it would say of *itself* that it is false. Understood this way, a fictionalist interpretation of truth-talk is a non-starter.

This objection is answered in two parts: first by reiterating an important difference between the pretense approach and the common gloss on fictionalism, and second by pointing out what follows from the way the instances of truth-talk invoke pretense. The points made on these fronts show that the pretense-based account does not amount to an error theory in any problematic sense. On the first point, Chapter 4 explains how applying the pretense approach to a way of talking does not entail that all of the declarative utterances from that fragment of discourse are false; some can still be used to make true assertions about the actual world. Utterances explained in terms of semantic pretense are a means of making serious assertions about the real world indirectly. These serious assertions can be either true or false: in general a pretense-employing utterance makes a genuinely true serious assertion (indirectly) exactly when the pretenses displayed in the utterance are prescribed in the game of make-believe to which the utterance belongs.

The foregoing holds for the instances of truth-talk as well—they make genuinely true serious assertions indirectly exactly when the pretenses they display are prescribed. For example, an utterance of

(2.9) {That crabapples are edible is true}

makes a genuinely true claim. According to the game of make-believe laid out in Chapter 5, the pretenses (2.9) displays are prescribed exactly when crabapples are edible. Thus, the serious assertion made indirectly with (2.9) is just that crabapples are edible. Since crabapples are edible, this assertion is true. Therefore, (2.9)—an instance of truth-talk—is true.

A more sophisticated version of the “error-theoretic” objection acknowledges that a pretense-based view would allow some instances of truth-talk to be genuinely true in this sense, but charges that this view still ends up being incoherent (or at least viciously circular) since it still entails that truth-talk is always *literally* false. There would have to be (the thought is) a notion of
falsity (and thus truth) available prior to that provided by the pretense-based account. My first 
point in reply to this objection is that this conclusion does not follow; it involves a confusion 
about the notion of being literally false. This notion is not a kind of falsity—“literally” does not 
modify “false”. As discussed in Chapter 4, the adverb “literally” primarily modifies how the 
thing ostensibly being described with the expression “is false” is to be taken (interpreted). \footnote{509} 
The most that can be said is that the notions of truth and falsity apply to the instances of truth-talk 
prior to the operation of any pretense in them. I will explain why I disagree with even this 
conclusion presently, but notice that it would not constitute a problem even if it were 
unavoidable.

Even if the instances of truth-talk all had to be evaluated as false when taken literally (in 
the absence of the operation of any pretense), this would not require that this evaluation itself 
operates in the absence of all pretense. It could be a pretense-employing utterance purporting to 
describe the instances of truth-talk (including itself) taken literally. The pretenses displayed in 

\begin{equation}
\text{(6.35) \{Taken literally, all instances of truth-talk are false\}}
\end{equation}

could be prescribed by the game of make-believe that (6.35) invokes given how the world 
actually is. This would not require any prior notion of truth because the fact that truth-talk 
applies to its own instances in this way would be a consequence of the definitive game of make-
believe behind the talk. It would not be a constitutive or explanatory thesis.

Any appearance of a problem in (6.35) probably stems from a failure to distinguish 
standard use from literal use.\footnote{510} Since my view has it that the standard use of truth-talk involves 
pretense, and that there is no non-pretense-involving use with which to contrast standard use, it is

\footnote{509}But see footnote 309. 

\footnote{510}Yablo (2000a), pp. 223-224 points out that when a way of talking has no literal content its standard usage is non-literal. Since standard usage is easily mistaken for literal usage, the fact that pretense is involved in the standard usage might go unnoticed, especially if there is no literal content with which to contrast the non-literal (standard) content.
easy to think of (6.35) as itself literal (i.e., operating prior to any pretense) and thus requiring an antecedent notion of truth. It does not. It would, of course, turn out to be false when taken literally itself (as would any utterance declaring that (6.35) is false when taken literally, and so on), but since that would not in turn make (6.35) true when taken literally, paradox would be avoided. It would be true (by making a true assertion indirectly) only when taken to invoke pretense.\(^{511}\) It would be more like an ambiguous claim, true on one reading and false on another. Keeping the two readings separate dissolves any appearance of paradox.

However, on my preferred response to the more sophisticated “error-theoretic” objection, these issues do not even arise. The fact that the instances of truth-talk invoke pretense

*intrinsically* steers a pretense-based account of truth-talk around them. There is a sense in which the instances of truth-talk are misleading. Since the basic functioning of the expression “…is true” is not really predicative (descriptive), it is not possible to make genuine claims of the sort that

\[(2.9) \{\text{That crabapples are edible is true}\}\]

appears to make on the surface. Taken at face value or literally, (2.9) says nothing. It is thus never correct to say that (2.9) taken literally is true. But a problematic sense of error theory is avoided because it is also never correct to say that (2.9) taken literally is false or even that (2.9) taken literally is not true. The point is that (2.9) cannot really be taken literally; it has *no* literal content at all. The only content there is to associate with (2.9) is the serious (but non-literal) content it puts forward as determined by the rules governing the pretense involved in the standard use of the expression “…is true.” As a result, (6.35) does not really make sense since the instances of truth-talk cannot be taken literally.

\(^{511}\) Of course, making these evaluations of the claim as false (when taken literally) or true (when taken as pretense invoking) involves employing truth-talk with the pretense in operation.
Because my account takes truth-talk to invoke pretense intrinsically, it does not amount to an error theory (in any problematic sense anyway). There is, however, a related worry about the need for a notion of truth prior to the operation of pretense. My application of the pretense approach to truth-talk extends the reach of semantic pretense beyond any previous application, and to a domain of discourse that might appear off limits—even to those who employ the approach elsewhere. The application to truth-talk might be thought illegitimate because of the apparently explanatory role that truth-talk typically plays in other applications of the pretense approach. However, the use of truth-talk in explanations of these other applications does not preclude applying the pretense approach to truth-talk itself. There is nothing inconsistent about using one semantic pretense to explain another. In fact, although it might be a surprising result, there would be no inconsistency if applying the pretense approach to truth-talk entailed that some (or even all) semantic pretenses could not be explained except indirectly through the use of some (other) semantic pretense.

iii) Pretense Presupposes Truth

The objection that still must be addressed is the one that poses the most serious challenge to a pretense-based account of truth-talk. The charge is that truth-talk cannot be explained in terms of pretense because the explanations of pretense and the attitude of pretending themselves rely on an antecedent notion of truth. If an account of pretense has to employ a notion of truth

\[ \text{\footnotesize 512} \] Actually, there are two versions of this presupposition worry: an extrinsic one connected to the use of truth-talk in explaining other applications of the pretense approach and an intrinsic one connected to the use of truth-talk in explaining pretense itself. My present concern is just the extrinsic version. I deal with the deeper, intrinsic worry in the next sub-section.

\[ \text{\footnotesize 513} \] Consider, for example, the use of “fictionally true” in the brief sketch of the pretense-based account of existence-talk given above. Truth-talk plays a similar role in Mark Crimmins’ discussion of the pretense approach and his applications of it to attitude ascriptions and identity-talk in Crimmins (1998). See also Stephen Yablo’s application of the pretense approach to possible-worlds-talk in Yablo (1996).

\[ \text{\footnotesize 514} \] This is the intrinsic version of the presupposition worry.
in a way that cannot be covered by the pretense-based account of truth-talk, then the attempt to provide a complete account of truth-talk in terms of semantic pretense would be self-undermining.\textsuperscript{515} This is a genuine worry because pretending is best understood as a special kind of imagining, and imagining that \textit{a} is \textit{F} is most neatly explained as regarding the proposition that \textit{a} is \textit{F} as being true, regardless of whether it is true.\textsuperscript{516} However, using this observation as an objection to a pretense-based account of truth-talk involves stretching the observation beyond its legitimate application. While it is the case that pretense \textit{can} be explained in a way employing truth-talk, it is also possible to account for the attitude of pretending without appeal to the notion of truth.

The relevant account of pretending stems from a claim often associated with deflationary views: truth-talk is just a device for denominalizing sentence nominalization (e.g., the expression “that \textit{a} is \textit{F}”). The idea is that we can attain a truth-talk-free account of what pretending involves by denominalizing within the available proposition- and truth-involving formulation of the attitude adopted. As a first pass at this, take pretending that \textit{a} is \textit{F} to be explained in terms of regarding the subject of the embedded sentence as being however it is said to be in this sentence, whether it is that way or not. So pretending that \textit{a} is \textit{F} is explained in terms of attempting to adopt the attitude prescribed in

\begin{equation}
(6.36) \textit{a} \text{ is to be regarded as being } \textit{F}, \text{ whether or not it is } \textit{F}.
\end{equation}

This obviously will not do as a general account of what pretending that \textit{a} is \textit{F} involves. When told to pretend that \textit{a} \textit{if} \textit{F} one will attempt to take an attitude toward \textit{a} only if one believes that \textit{a} exists, and one will regard something as being \textit{F} only if one thinks \textit{F} really is a way

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{515}This would be akin to the sort of the general objection to deflationism understood as a type of nonfactualism developed in Boghossian (1990).
\item \textsuperscript{516}Velleman (ms.), p. 8. On Velleman’s view, both imagining and believing involve accepting a proposition, that is, both are ways of regarding a proposition to be true. He claims that the difference is that
\end{itemize}
something can be. So at most what (6.36) amounts to is an account of the attitude one attempts to adopt when one understands pretending that \( a \) is \( F \) as the application of extrinsic pretense to a literal reading of “\( a \) is \( F \)”; that is, along the lines of

\[
(6.37) \,* a \text{ is } F. *
\]

If one does not believe both that \( a \) exists and that things can (literally) be \( F \), then one will understand the utterance “\( a \) is \( F \)” as involving intrinsic pretense, that is, along the lines of

\[
(6.38) \{ a \text{ is } F. \}
\]

In these circumstances, pretending that \( a \) is \( F \) will be understood as the application of extrinsic pretense to (6.38), that is, as

\[
(6.39) \,* \{ a \text{ is } F. \} *
\]

These observations indicate a need for a more general account of what pretending that \( a \) is \( F \) involves than the one offered in (6.36). Because pretending that \( a \) is \( F \) can be understood along the lines of (6.39) in which the claim “\( a \) is \( F \)” itself involves pretense, the idea that we regard the subject of the embedded claim as being as it is described there needs to be modified.

What pretending that \( a \) is \( F \) involves is regarding the serious subject of “\( a \) is \( F \)” as being as it is seriously described in that utterance, whether it is that way or not. This account of the attitude involved in pretense applies generally, both to situations in which pretending that \( a \) is \( F \) is understood along the line of (6.39) as well as to situations in which it is understood along the lines of (6.37). In fact, the first pass account given in (6.36) still works as an account of pretending that \( a \) is \( F \) understood as (6.37) because (6.36) is a special case of the general account for instances of first-order extrinsic pretense. A truth-talk-free account of pretending in general of this sort would address the circularity challenge and allow for the application of the pretense approach to truth-talk without threat of incoherence. What remains to be shown is whether this account of pretending is adequate.

unlike imagining, believing a proposition involves regarding it as true with the aim of so regarding it only if
In examining the adequacy of the general account just given I will consider only differences in attitude relative to belief in the existence of \( a \). What I say about this applies \textit{mutatis mutandis} to different attitudes one might have about the possibility of literally being \( F \). As a further simplification, I will consider just the cases of believing that \( a \) exists and believing that \( a \) does not exist.\textsuperscript{517} My reason is that this division maps fairly well onto the different ways one might take the name “\( a \).” One might take it either as a straightforward, referring name, or as some sort of non-referring name. In addition, apart from how one takes the name “\( a \),” either there is an \( a \) or there is not. These two factors determine four scenarios an account of pretending that \( a \) is \( F \) must cover: 1) one believes that there is an \( a \) when there is, 2) one believes that there is an \( a \) when there is not, 3) one believes that there is no \( a \) when there is none, 4) one believes that there is no \( a \) when there is. In discussing these different scenarios we can consider them in pairs: 1) together with 2), and 3) together with 4). The reason for this is that one’s beliefs about \( a \) (or about “\( a \)” ) are what is important in determining which attitude one will attempt to adopt in attempting to pretend that \( a \) is \( F \). Whether \( a \) actually exists or not does not directly affect what one attempts to do, rather it bears on the success of the attempt.

If one believes that there is an \( a \), then in attempting to pretend that \( a \) is \( F \) one will attempt to adopt the attitude presented in (6.37). For example, if one believes that George W. Bush exists, one will understand pretending what is said in

(4.5) George W. Bush is the headliner of a bad lounge act.

as the application of (first-order) extrinsic pretense to the serious assertion (4.5) makes directly as a literal utterance, as in

(4.6) *George W. Bush is the headliner of a bad lounge act.*

Understanding it this way, one will take the pretense to involve adopting the attitude prescribed in

\footnote{I thus ignore the further distinctions of not believing that \( a \) exists and not believing that \( a \) does not exist.}
(6.40) George W. Bush is to be regarded as the headliner of a bad lounge act, whether or not he is the headline of a bad lounge act.

Similarly, if one believes there is a Santa Claus, then one will understand an attempt to pretend that Santa Claus gets skinny every summer along the lines of

(6.41) *Santa Claus gets skinny every summer.*

As in the case of (4.6), if one believes that there is a Santa Claus to regard, one will attempt to pretend that Santa Claus gets skinny every summer by trying to adopt the attitude prescribed in

(6.42) Santa Claus is to be regarded as getting skinny every summer, whether or not he does.

The difference between the two cases (that is, between scenarios 1) and 2)) is that Dubya exists but Santa Claus does not. As a result, the attempt to adopt the *de re* attitude prescribed in (6.40) will be successful, but the attempt to adopt a *de re* attitude of the sort putatively prescribed in (6.42) will not. This is because there is no Santa Claus, no *res to direct the attitude toward. The believer might run various images or sentences involving the name “Santa Claus” through her mind, but they will end up being contentless so long as she takes the name as a straightforwardly referring name. Thus, while the person attempting to pretend that George W. Bush is the headliner of a bad lounge act does successfully pretend something, the Santa-believer’s attempt to pretend that Santa Claus gets skinny every summer ends up failing. She pretends nothing.518

If one does not believe there is an *a*, then one does not believe that the serious subject of the utterance “*a is F*” is what it appears to be. Exactly what the serious subject ends up being depends on how one understands the name “*a*.” Consider again the case of pretending that Santa Claus gets skinny every summer, but this time by someone who does not believe that Santa Claus

518This result is not as counter-intuitive as it may initially seem. Any seeming implausibility is most likely due to the misimpression that in pretending that Santa Claus gets skinny every summer one also *pretends* that Santa Claus exists. But that is not the situation I have described. I am assuming that the person genuinely *believes* that Santa Claus exists.
exists. Most of us in the know take the name “Santa Claus” to be a non-referring name taken from a fairly well-established fiction, that is, we take it as a fictional name. Utterances employing fictional names involve intrinsic pretense. So, taking “Santa Claus” to be a fictional name, in the pretense ostensibly about Santa’s girth the extrinsic pretense operator gets applied to

\[(6.43) \{\text{Santa Claus gets skinny every summer.}\}\]

As explained in Chapter 4, because (6.43) employs a fictional name ostensibly in a statement about a matter within the bounds of the fiction that supplies the name, this utterance makes an ordinary statement apparently about a fictional entity. The serious assertion made by an utterance of this sort is about the fiction that supplies the fictional name employed. In uttering (6.43) (i.e., in using the name as a fictional name), one pretends to make a claim about a person in order to make a serious statement about the “Santa Claus”-story. This serious statement is that the story is such that games of make-believe authorized for it prescribe the pretenses displayed in (6.43). Roughly, the utterance seriously claims that what it appears to say is part of the story. In these circumstances, pretending that Santa Claus gets skinny every summer, i.e., as displayed in

\[(6.44) *\{\text{Santa Claus gets skinny every summer}\}*

gets explained in terms of an attitude taken toward the “Santa Claus”-story, namely,

\[(6.45) \text{The “Santa Claus”-story is to be regarded as portraying a jolly, fat man called “Santa Claus” who lives at the North Pole, brings presents to good}\]

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519 Ordinary statements about fictions quite often deal with matters about which the story is quite specific, as in “[Santa Claus lives at the North Pole,]” but they can also concern matters that the story leaves unspecified, as in (6.43). The main point is that they could naturally be understood as moves in games generated from using the fiction as a prop according to its function.

520 See the discussion of content oriented make-believe in Chapter 4 and Walton (1990), pp. 400-402.

521 See footnote 342.

522 It is therefore possible to make incorrect ordinary statements apparently about fictions by claiming that something is part of the story when what it appears to assert explicitly contradicts the story. This is the case with the claim “[Santa Claus lives at the South Pole.]”
children on Christmas Eve, who rides a sleigh pulled by flying reindeer,..., and who gets skinny every summer, whether that is what the story portrays or not.

Note that it makes no difference for the adoption of this attitude whether Santa Claus exists or not. So long as one takes “Santa Claus” to be fictional name, (6.45) presents the attitude one will adopt in pretending that Santa Claus gets skinny every summer.

It is only slightly more difficult to account for cases in which one takes the name “a” employed in “a is F” to be, not a fictional name, but merely an empty name. In this case one does not take there to be a worked-out fiction or standard story that serves as the name’s source. We can still, however, understand attempts to pretend that a is F in which one takes the name “a” to be empty on the model of what is done when one takes “a” to be fictional. Although there is no story supplying the name, there is usually some body of lore surrounding its use. For example, the name “Vulcan” was used in the 19\textsuperscript{th} and early 20th centuries as the name for a putative planet between Mercury and the Sun that supposedly caused the perturbations in Mercury’s orbit. We now believe that there is no such planet, so we take the name to be empty.\textsuperscript{523} But there appears to be some body of lore associated with the name; at a minimum every empty name has some context of use in which the name was introduced (some “mini-theory” introducing the name). For example, there must at least have been some context of introduction for the name “Vulcan” along the lines of “Call the planet between Mercury and the Sun ‘Vulcan’."

In the case of empty names we can take the “standard lore” or “mini-theory” associated with or introducing the name to serve as the counterpart to the story that provides a fictional name. Someone putting forward an utterance as employing an empty name along the lines of

(6.46) \{Vulcan has the same mass as Mercury\}

\textsuperscript{523}Proponents of the Vulcan theory of course took the name to be a referring name, so their attempts to pretend things “about Vulcan” all turn out to be instances of scenario 2) and thus unsuccessful. In fact, their claims putatively about Vulcan all turn out to be contentless. Since we take the name “Vulcan” to be empty, our claims “about Vulcan” (e.g., the claim “Vulcan does not exist”) have content. (The one just mentioned is even true.)
ends up making a serious assertion about the “Vulcan”-lore, namely, that it portrays a planet between Mercury and the Sun (which is the cause of the perturbation in Mercury's orbit, etc.) as having the same mass as Mercury. The attitude involved in pretending what is said in (6.46) can therefore be understood along the lines of (6.45). So the pretending displayed in

(6.47) \{Vulcan has the same mass as Mercury\}*

gets explained in terms of the attitude prescribed in

(6.48) The “Vulcan”-lore is to be regarded as portraying a planet called “Vulcan” that orbits between Mercury and the Sun, which causes the perturbation in Mercury’s orbit,..., and which has the same mass as Mercury, regardless of whether that is what the lore portrays.

As in the case of fictional names, so long as one takes the name “Vulcan” to be empty, whether there really is such a planet is irrelevant for the attitude one adopts in pretending things “about Vulcan.” And as before, since there will be “Vulcan”-lore whether or not there is a planet Vulcan, the attempt to pretend involving this attitude will be successful.

The general account of pretending that \(a \text{ is } F\) just sketched explains this pretense in terms of regarding the serious subject of \(a \text{ is } F\) as being as it is seriously described by the utterance. I have shown how this account covers all four scenarios identified above without employing truth-talk or relying on an antecedent notion of truth. I claim that the account can also be applied to other scenarios and therefore serves as a sketch of a truth-free account of pretending in general. If I am right that a truth-talk-free account of pretending can be constructed along these lines, this would address the circularity challenge and allow the pretense approach to be applied to truth-talk without threat of incoherence. However, even if an account based on the points just made cannot avoid circularity completely, this does not automatically mean that a pretense-based account of

\[524\text{This is to be understood analogously to the account of the “Santa Claus”-story. See footnote 342.}\]
truth-talk is incoherent. It might just mean that the only way pretending itself can be explained is indirectly, through the use of some semantic pretense.525

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the preceding chapter and this one I have laid out the basic details of a pretense-based deflationary account of truth-talk and explained the advantages offered by this view, both over other deflationary views and over inflationary accounts of truth-talk in general. The account offered here constitutes an important start, but there is further work to do. What I have presented needs to be extended in at least two ways. First, a more complete pretense-based account of proposition-talk must be developed, one that further explains the motivations for such a view and fills in the gaps of and addresses the further issues raised by the partial account offered in this chapter. This is no small task, but as mentioned above, it is largely a version of the demand for a non-truth-theoretic account of meaning and meaning-talk that all deflationists face.

Second, the account must be extended to cover the other traditional semantic notions: reference and predicate-satisfaction.526 The pretense-based accounts of these ways of talking will parallel the account of truth-talk offered here in that they too will explain how the readily available linguistic resources of ordinary object-talk can be used to incorporate new, complex logical and linguistic devices into a natural language, extending the expressive capacity of the language by providing a way for us to make indirectly serious assertions we could not otherwise make. Much in the way that the pretense-based account of truth-talk relies on the schema

525See Yablo (1998), pp. 249, n. 50. This would not be a problem, so long as it is just a feature of our linguistic and explanatory capacities and does not entail that in order to begin pretending one must already be pretending.
in its principles of generation, the accounts of the other semantic notions will be based on the similar schemata that govern their use:

(R) \((\forall x) \text{ "n" refers to } x \text{ iff } n = x\)

(S) \((\forall x) \text{ "F" is satisfied by } x \text{ iff } x \text{ is } F\)

These extensions, along with their incorporation back into my account of truth-talk (and into the reply to the third objection considered above), are the issues that need to be addressed at the next stage of the larger project that embeds the one pursued here. Further work includes determining how pretense-based accounts of truth-talk and proposition-talk impact related subjects (e.g., propositional-attitude-talk, property-talk, pretense-theoretic accounts of existence-talk and identity-talk). However, the account of truth-talk offered here addresses some of the basic concerns raised by this way of talking, and can be considered the foundation of a suggestive line of inquiry into certain philosophical issues associated with the notion of truth.

\[526\] Pretense-based accounts of these notions receive initial motivation from the Berry Paradox involving expressions like “the least number not describable in less than eighteen syllables” and the Heterological Paradox involving predicates like “…is not true of itself”.

\[527\] The quantifiers appear inside pretense-marking brackets because certain uses of “refers” or “satisfies” might require us to take their domains to “include” merely pretend objects (e.g., fictional characters, propositions) in addition to the things that exist.
APPENDIX
APPENDIX

THE RULES FOR THE MAKE-BELIEVE BEHIND TRUTH-TALK

T-1) *The linguistic devices definitive of truth-talk (e.g., “is true” and “is false”) are genuine predicates that function to describe objects denoted by the singular terms with which they are concatenated.*

T-2) *There is a property attributed to objects by the expression “is true” (call it “truth”), and a property attributed to objects by “is false” (call it “falsity”).*

T-3) {Truth and falsity are properties of propositions.}

T-4') {(∀x)(x is true (i.e., satisfies the predicate “is true”) =ₐₑ x (is appropriately related to a proposition that) has the property of truth)}

T-5') {(∀x)(x is false (i.e., satisfies the predicate “is false”) =ₐₑ x (is appropriately related to a proposition that) has the property of falsity)}

T-6) (Πp)(The pretenses displayed in an utterance of “{The proposition that p has the property of truth}” are prescribed iff p)

T-7) (Πp)(The pretenses displayed in an utterance of “{The proposition that p has the property of falsity}” are prescribed iff ~p)

T-8') (Πn)(The pretenses displayed in an utterance of “{n is true}” are prescribed iff (∀p) (The pretenses displayed in an utterance of the form “{n R (the proposition) that p}” are prescribed) & p)

F-8') (Πn)(The pretenses displayed in an utterance of “{n is false}” are prescribed iff (∀p) (The pretenses displayed in an utterance of the form “{n R (the proposition) that p}” are prescribed) & ~p)

T-9') The pretenses displayed in an utterance of the form “{(∃x)(Fx & x is true)}” are prescribed iff (∃p) (The pretenses displayed an utterance of the form “{(∃x) (Fx & x R (the proposition) that p)}” are prescribed) & p

F-9’) The pretenses displayed in an utterance of the form “{(∃x)(Fx & x is false)}” are prescribed iff (∃p) (The pretenses displayed an utterance of the form “{(∃x) (Fx & x R (the proposition) that p)}” are prescribed) & ~p

T-10’) The pretenses displayed in an utterance of the form “{(∀x)(Fx → x is true)}” are prescribed iff (Πp) (The pretenses displayed in an utterance of the form “{(∃x)(Fx & x R (the proposition) that p)}” are prescribed) → p
F-10’) The pretenses displayed in an utterance of the form “{(∀x)(Fx → x is false)}” are prescribed iff (Πp)((The pretenses displayed in an utterance of the form “{(∃x)(Fx & x R (the proposition) that p)}” are prescribed) → ~p]

P-1) (Πn)(Πp)(The pretenses displayed in an utterance of “{n = (the proposition) that p}” are prescribed iff “n” is assigned (by the speaker) the same (singular term) long-arm conceptual role as “that p”-as-the-speaker-actually-understands-it (on the left-hand side))

P-2) (Πp)(The pretenses displayed in an utterance of the form “{(∃x)(Fx & x = (the proposition) that p)}” are prescribed iff (∃y)[F*y & y has a long-arm conceptual role similar to that of “p”-as-the-speaker-actually-understands-it (on the left-hand side)]

P-3) (Πn)(Πp)(The pretenses displayed in an utterance of “{n expresses (the proposition) that p}” are prescribed iff n has a long-arm conceptual role similar to that of “p”-as-the-speaker-actually-understands-it (on the left-hand side))

P-4) (Πp)(The pretenses displayed in an utterance of the form “{(∃x)(Fx & x expresses (the proposition) that p)}” are prescribed iff (∃y)[Fy & y has a long-arm conceptual role similar to that of “p”-as-the-speaker-actually-understands-it (on the left-hand side)]
**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


