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Abstract	In this paper, an enriched prosentential account of truth is sketched. An account of the meaning of truth has to pay attention to syntactical aspects, semantic contributions, and pragmatic roles. The enriched view has the virtue of placing together several ideas that proceed from different approaches to truth, and show how they can co-exist in a consistent and powerful proposal. The account put forward here is a consequence of the following three intuitions: (A) The syntactic job of the truth predicate is restoring sentencehood; (B) A sentence that has truth as its main predicate or its main operator is a *truth ascription*, and truth ascriptions are proforms of the propositional kind, i.e. *pro-sentences*. The semantic role of prosentences, as that of the rest of proforms, is threefold: to work (i) as vehicles of direct propositional reference, (ii) as vehicles of anaphoric reference, and (iii) as instruments for propositional generalization. Finally, the pragmatic role of truth ascriptions is the endorsement of information, i.e. the explicit acceptance of propositional contents as ready to be used in inferential exchanges. A practical derivation of the prosentential account is related to the place of truth in the debate between realism and antirealism. To say it directly: *none*. The truth predicate plays a variety of different tasks in natural languages, all of them essential to their expressive power, but both our comprehension of truth and the use we make of truth expressions are strictly independent of our views about the relation between mind and world.

Chapter 5
The Neutrality of Truth in the Debate Realism vs. Anti-realism

María J. Frápolli

5.1 Introduction

There is an essential aspect of Ramsey's account of truth that has been systematically neglected: his use of the term 'prosentence' to explain how truth ascriptions work (vid. [13]). An exception has been Engel and Dokic's book [12]. Ramsey's awareness of the fact that it is easy to understand what truth is, the real difficulty being to *say* what is is surprising. His explanation of the fact, that natural languages do not have enough expressions able to play the role that is played in artificial languages by propositional variables is even more surprising. This is an essential role, by the way, one that cannot be dispensed with. My aim here is not historical, though. The Ramseyian insight has been developed independently of Ramsey's works by some philosophers before and after him and credit to them will be paid below in the appropriate places. My concern here is systematic, and it also has a practical derivation. The systematic part is to offer a sketch of an enriched prosentential account of truth. It is a sketch because a completely thorough presentation would require too much material for a paper, although this sketchy presentation will, I hope, convey enough information so as to tempt the reader to move towards the theory. It is enriched because it pays attention to syntactical aspects, semantic contributions, and pragmatic roles. In the end, the enriched view will have the virtue of placing together several ideas that proceed from different approaches to truth, and show how they can co-exist in a consistent and powerful proposal.

The practical derivation is related to the place of truth in the debate between realism and antirealism. I will say it directly: *none*. The truth predicate plays a variety of different tasks in natural languages, all of them essential to their expressive power, but both our comprehension of truth and the use we make of the truth predicate are strictly independent of our *theories* about the relation between mind and world.

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5.2 Truth

The truth predicate works as a builder of prosentences. Prosentences are the natural language equivalent of propositional variables in artificial languages. An exhaustive account of the meaning of truth in natural languages can be offered by way of explaining the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic roles performed by the truth predicate, following the threefold traditional distinction, due probably to Peirce and recovered by Morris. Let's state the theory broadly:

A. The syntactic job of the truth predicate is restoring sentencehood.
B. A sentence that has truth as its main predicate is a *truth ascription* and truth ascriptions are proforms of the propositional kind, i.e. *pro-sentences*. The semantic role of prosentences, as that of the rest of proforms, is threefold: they work

   i   as vehicles of direct propositional reference,
  ii   as vehicles of anaphoric reference, and
 iii   as instruments for propositional generalization.

C. Finally, the pragmatic role of truth ascriptions is the endorsement of propositional contents, i.e. the explicit acceptance of propositional contents as ready to be used in inferential exchanges.

Prior's [23] and Horwich's [20] characterization of the truth operator as a denominalizer and also Quine's disquotationalism focus upon the syntactic role of the truth predicate as a mechanism of restoring an expression's syntactical category of SENTENCE.

What is currently known as 'the prosentential view' stresses the semantic purpose of truth ascriptions. Truth ascriptions are prosentences and prosentences are a special kind of proform. Proforms, as natural language variables, are dummy expressions that reproduce the role of any instance of the logical category they belong to. Pronouns are the best known among proforms, but they are not the only ones. Proadjectives, proadverbs, and prosentences are also proforms, and natural languages host many expressions that work as these not-so-well-known auxiliary expressions. When linguists qualify an expression as a 'pro-noun' they classify it in the category of singular terms. Indeed, a pronoun is a term that can be substituted by any singular term *salva gramatica*. Nonetheless, the perspective taken here is different, since we are classifying expressions according to their logico-semantic behaviour rather than according to their syntactic status. Some expressions that function as pro-nouns from a syntactic point of view turn out to be pro-adverbs, pro-adjectives or even pro-sentences whenever they are considered from a logical point of view. Words like 'it' and 'that' can inherit any content whatsoever, and are thus all-purpose (or *transcendental*) proforms. This will become clear in what follows.

The credit of the term 'prosentential theory' has to be given to several people that originally employed it without having any knowledge of its use by others. Bolzano

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was the first philosopher to use the expression '*Fürsatz*'[1] with the meaning that we give to the term 'prosentence' here and, as Ramsey [24] did some years later, he attributed the status of prosentences to the grammatical adverbs 'yes' and 'no'. Seventy years after Bolzano's use and almost 50 years after Ramsey's, Grover, Camp and Belnap [18], on the one hand, and Williams [29], on the other, developed the prosentential account independently.

The pragmatic ingredient of the enriched account presented here is not new either. Pragmatically oriented philosophers of language have recognized the pragmatic role of truth ascriptions in the act of endorsing a content. Strawson [28] offered a pragmatic view on truth in which the truth predicate works as a marker of illocutionary force. Nevertheless, Strawson's view cannot be reduced to this claim. Besides stressing its role as a force marker, Strawson recognizes other roles of the semantic notion *par excellence*. In his paper 'Truth', Strawson says:

> In many of the cases in which we are doing something besides merely stating that X is Y, we are available, for use in suitable contexts, certain abbreviatory devices which enable us to state that X is Y [...] *without* using the sentence-pattern 'X is Y'. Thus, if someone asks us 'Is X Y?', we may state (in the way of denial) that X is not Y, by saying 'It is not' or by saying 'That's not true'; [...]. It seems to me plain that in these cases 'true' and 'not true' (we rarely use 'false') are functioning as abbreviatory statement-devices of the same general kind as the other quoted.[2]

The British philosopher takes the truth operator to be a way of codifying ranges of statements and, in his view, it is neither exclusively a force marker nor a redundant expression. A few lines below the text quoted above, Strawson says:

> It will be clear that, in common with Mr. Austin, I reject the thesis that the phrase 'is true' is logically superfluous, together with the thesis that to say that a proposition is true is *just* to assert it and to say that it is false is *just* to assert its contradictory. 'True' and 'not true' have jobs on their own to do, *some*, but by no means all, of which I have characterized above.[3]

This is a crucial remark, for to say that an expression has a particular pragmatic significance doesn't preclude its eventual semantic meaning and its syntactic function.

Recently, Robert Brandom [4] has insisted upon the pragmatic role of truth ascriptions. Truth, Brandom maintains, helps to make the commitments and entitlements of our claims explicit. A truth ascription displays the speaker's endorsement of a propositional content. By qualifying a propositional content as true, the speaker commits herself to that content as something for which she is ready to give reasons, if required. By accepting that content as true, one is giving permission to use it as a premise in further inferential acts.

I endorse the semantic core of the prosentential theory of truth and propose completing it with the syntactic insights given by Prior, Quine, and Horwich, on the one hand, and with the pragmatic picture developed by Strawson and Brandom, on the other. Taking all this information into account, a comprehensive theory can be

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[1] See [3]. I owe this information and the reference in Bolzano to Göran Sundholm to whom I am deeply grateful.

[2] [28, pp. 174–75].

[3] [28, p. ivi].

concocted of how the truth operator works, i.e. a theory that explains its inferential behaviour, that answers the essential philosophical questions traditionally related to truth, and that serves as the point of departure of the declaration of independence of truth from metaphysical and epistemic disputes which is one of the main aims of this paper.

5.3 Realism and Antirealism

The realism/antirealism debate comes in (at least) two flavours: metaphysical and epistemic. The semantic formulation of the debate due to Dummett, who defines realism as related to classes of statements rather than to classes of entities, is reducible to one of the two.[4] The debate is patent in the philosophical disputes between the different proposals about the notion of truth. There are theories of truth that explain truth as a metaphysical notion (correspondence to facts), and some others that explain it in epistemic terms (the coherence of one's belief system, assertibility, etc.), and it is not uncommon that the realism/antirealism debate turns into the correspondence/coherence debate or into the truth vs. assertibility debate.

Metaphysical realism states the independence of reality from our thought and will. A realist statement about a particular domain (metaphysics, ethics, aesthetics, semantics, logic) is the acknowledgement of the existence of facts of the appropriate kind, i.e. it is the acknowledgement of the existence of metaphysical facts, moral facts, aesthetical facts, semantic facts, or logical facts. Once the existence of the appropriate kind of fact is assumed, truth is standardly defined as correspondence with facts of the kind in question. Truth is ascribed to a proposition if there is a fact that makes the sentence true. This fact is sometimes known as the sentence's truth-maker.

Epistemic realism, in turn, states the objectivity of knowledge. Since knowledge is traditionally understood as justified true belief, the notions of truth, knowledge and objectivity allegedly lie on the realist's side. Antirealism is then left with the task of defining diluted substitutes for these central concepts because, the classical story goes, there is no room in an antirealist context for robust notions of truth, objectivity, or knowledge. This is the standard view, and the view that I will challenge.

Truth is neither a metaphysical nor an epistemic notion, as Tarski has already claimed, and a complete account of truth able to explain the meaning and use of a truth operator is compatible with any particular position in metaphysics and epistemology. The debate between realists and antirealists doubtless raises profound philosophical questions, but none of the parties are justified in claiming exclusive rights on truth, knowledge and objectivity. Truth is generally involved in metaphysical and epistemic debates partially at least because the truth operator is

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[4] See Dummett, [9, p. 56] and [10, p. 564]. Semantic realism is not an independent brand. It relies either on metaphysical realism or on epistemological realism, depending on the way in which one assumes that meaning and content are reached at.

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an indispensable instrument of propositional generalization, and metaphysical and
epistemic discourse are classical contexts in which we deal with general thoughts.

Truth ascriptions play their role once some propositional contents have been
accepted. The home of the realism/antirealism debate is the justificatory level, i.e.
how and why we assume that some contents are claimable or, to put it another
way, the dispute between realists and antirealists emerges in relation to the ques-
tion of how to accept the truth-maker itself, i.e. the content of the truth ascription.
Only afterwards the truth predicate appears in the picture. This point is particu-
larly relevant for the realism/antirealism debate, for it shows that there can be a
neutral definition of truth that both parties, realists and antirealists, are allowed to
use. Besides, removing the question of truth from the metaphysical and epistemic
discussion allows us to sort out some the specific difficulties related to the definition
of truth in natural languages and some others concerning the structure of reality and
our access to it.

5.4 The Prosentential View

An account of truth is called 'prosentential' if it interprets the truth operator as a
means of forming natural language pro-sentences. A pro-sentence is a pro-form of
the sentential kind, i.e. a sort of propositional variable. A welcome consequence of
prosententialism is that it considers the truth predicate as a member of a general
kind, the kind of proform builders. It shows that the notion of truth is not resistant
to analysis, that a definition of it can be offered for natural languages, and that it
is possible to explain the role it performs while avoiding the two extreme views of
considering it either primitive, and hence indefinable, or else trivial, and therefore
also indefinable.

5.4.1 The Semantic Functions of the Truth Predicate

Let's begin with semantics since the semantic analysis of truth constructions has
been the trademark of prosententialism. Typically, pro-forms perform three seman-
tic tasks: they are vehicles of (α) direct reference, (β) anaphoric reference, and (γ)
generalization. Since most of our everyday universal quantifiers are binary opera-
tors, i.e. operators that need two concepts to construe a complete proposition, nearly
all cases of (γ) are also cases of (β). Let us consider some examples.

A. Pronouns

a.1 *This* is my car
a.2 I heard about this car and I bought *it*
a.3 If I own a car, I take care of *it*
[$\forall x(x$ is a car & I own $x \rightarrow$ I take care of x)]

These three are examples of pronouns working as cases of (α) – (a.1), (β) – (a.2) and (γ) – (a. 3). In (a.3), the pronoun 'it', and the last variable '*x*' in its logical form, are bound variables that permit generalization, and at the same time they are anaphorically linked to their heads, 'a car' in the natural language example, and the value of the first variable 'x' in the antecedent of the conditional, in the semi-formalized case.

Natural languages also contain pro-adverbs, pro-adjectives and pro-sentences. Most natural language expressions performing pro-adverbial, pro-adjectival and pro-sentential functions are not included into the grammatical category of adverbs, adjectives and sentences respectively. A difficulty that the prosentential view has to face is that natural languages paradigmatically use pro-nouns, i.e. expressions with the syntactic category of singular terms, to perform the logical roles of the rest of pro-forms.

B. Proadverbs

The following examples contain pro-adverbs:

>   b.1 I love being *here*
>   b.2 I will go to Miami and will be *there* till Christmas
>   b.3 Every*where* I go, I meet nice people *there*
>   [$\forall l$(I go to $l \rightarrow$ I meet nice people in l)]

Again, (b.1) is a case of pro-adverb in a direct referential use, (b.2) is a case of pro-adverb in an anaphoric referential use, whose head is 'Miami', and (b.3) is a case of pro-adverb performing a generalization function (and anaphoric reference).

C. Proadjectives

The following are examples of pro-adjectives:

>   c.1 What colour will you paint the house? I would like my house to be *this*
>   colour [pointing at a sample]
>   c.2 Granada used to be parochial, but now it is not *so*.
>   c.3 Victoria is some*thing* that Joan is not (*so*)
>   [$\exists v$(Victoria is v & Joan is not v)]

In (c.1), 'this' functions as a pro-adjective replacing a colour word. In (c.2) 'so' works as a variable that anaphorically refers to the adjective 'parochial', and in (c.3) 'something' is a quantifier that ranges over qualities, so that the instances of (c.3) have to include adjectives in the argument place.

That there are pro-forms other than pronouns in natural languages is something that has been widely recognized. A mere glimpse of Ramsey, Prior, Grover, and Williams will be enough. If we are convinced that the class of pro-forms is wider than the class of pro-nouns, then the acknowledgement of pro-sentences should be almost routine.

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D. Prosentences

Pro-sentences are typical pro-forms, and as such they perform the same three tasks performed by the rest of pro-forms. Let us see some examples:

d.1 What did she say? She said *this* [pointing to a sentence in a newspaper]

d.2 Zapatero said that *peace was close* and Rajoy denied *it*

d.3 Every*thing* President Obama says is ratified by Hilary Clinton

[$\forall p$(President Obama says that $p \rightarrow$ Hilary Clinton says that p)]

In examples (d.1)–(d.3), 'this', and 'it' have the syntactic category of pro-nouns, although the logical category of pro-sentences, and '-thing' in the quantifier also binds pro-sentences. A slight paraphrase of (d.3) will clarify this:

d.3* When President Obama says something, Hilary Clinton ratifies *it*.

There are some ready-made objections launched time and again against the analysis of pro-forms that we have put forward. The most 'obvious' is that this analysis requires higher-order quantification and that this obliges us to embrace an untenable ontology. First of all, proponents of the prosentential view are aware of this alleged obstacle, they just consider this objection untenable. There is no reason to maintain, *pace* Quine and his followers, that quantification exhibits our ontological commitments. In natural languages we use quantifiers related to all kind of expressions. We say that some skylines are more impressive than some others, that there are many ways of cooking rice, or that some of our most secret desires are hard to explain, without feeling that our ontology is overcrowded with skylines, ways of cooking rice, and secret desires together with our familiar medium size objects. And we are right. Ontology is signalled by referential expressions, and quantifiers and the variables bound by them are not of this kind.[5]

Using what has been said so far as theoretical background, let us now turn to the explanation of truth. Languages need pro-forms because they are the only means of anaphoric reference and generalization. Direct reference and the direct expression of a content can be achieved by proper names, in the case of reference to objects, and by genuine adjectives, adverbs or sentences, in the case of the non-mediated expression of a semantic value. But without proforms, i.e. without mechanisms for anaphora and generalization, the expressive power of languages would be considerably shortened. Some uses of pro-forms are acknowledgedly uses of laziness, but the vast majority of them are not; in cases of anaphoric reference and of genuine generalization[6] pro-forms cannot be dispensed with. Examples of pro-sentences used out of laziness are responsible for the widespread, false idea that the truth operator is

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[5] To a highly convincing and deeply informed defence of non-nominal quantification see [23, 30].

[6] By a genuine generalization I understand one that is not equivalent to a finite conjunction.

redundant.[7] Cases of anaphoric reference and genuine generalization show why it is not. In general, the truth operator is as redundant as any other kind of pro-form, and we have independent theories that explain that pronouns and demonstratives are essential to the expression of some kinds of first-person thoughts,[8] cross references, and general contents.

E. Complex Prosentences

In a formal language such as that of propositional calculus we have single propositional variables, the sentential letters. In other formal languages, in the first order predicate calculus for instance, we can interpret formulae as complex propositional variables of a certain kind. Different formulae correspond to natural language sentences with different structures. Natural languages[9] possess the same variety of expressions. They have single propositional variables, although unfortunately, there are only two of them, 'yes' and 'no'. Unlike 'it', 'this', 'what' and others that can act as proforms of different categories, 'yes' and 'no' are the only natural language proforms that are essentially prosentences. Grammar characterizes 'yes' and 'no' as adverbs, but from a logical point of view the type of pro-form a particular token belongs to does not depend on its syntactic category but rather on the kind of item from which it inherits its content. In this case, 'yes' and 'no' inherit complete propositional contents. These two unique single propositional variables are patently not enough to do all the work that pro-sentences have to do. Nevertheless, natural languages have other resources. In particular, they have means of building up a wide diversity of complex propositional variables. Some of these means are the formal predicates 'is true', 'is a fact' and others. In the following examples, the definite description 'What he said is true' works as a complex prosentence that inherits the content of the previous sentence that acts as its anaphoric head:

    e.1 He said that Americans are proud of their country. What he said is true
    e.2 "Victoria never lies", said John. What he said is true

The content of the truth ascription in (e.1) is that Americans are proud of their country; the content of the truth ascription in (e.2) is that Victoria never lies. In both cases, the prosentence does not have a content in itself, but serves as a vehicle of any propositional content that is contextually salient. This is compatible with the fact that the prosentence doesn't change its meaning from an occasion of use to another one. The truth ascription is not ambiguous; its linguistic meaning, i.e. its character, remains constant. The fact that a truth ascription can change its content

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[7] All proforms, prosentences included, have uses of laziness. The truth predicate has this use in all versions of the Tarskian T-sentences. This is the grain of truth behind the redundancy theory of truth.

[8] See for instance the explanation about quasi-indicators due to H–N. Castañeda [6, p. 74].

[9] We are referring to Indo-European languages, although it is not too risky to suppose that the use of variables of different categories is a semantic universal.

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from context to context without changing the meaning of the truth predicate has motivated the spurious debate about whether there are different notions of truth, i.e. the monism vs. pluralism debate on truth. The notion of truth is univocal from the point of view of the linguistic meaning, although a truth ascription can acquire different contents depending on the item from which it inherits its content. The situation here is hardly more puzzling than the fact that that the pronoun 'he' can be used to refer to my son, to my father and to the King of Spain.

In examples (e.1) and (e.2) the prosentence is performing anaphoric references. In (e.3) and (e.4) they act as mechanism for propositional generalization:

e.3 Everything that follows from a true theory is true
e.4 Everything the Pope says is true

That the truth operator is not redundant in natural languages obviously follows from the fact that general propositions cannot be expressed without proforms, pros-entences in this case, since proforms are the expressions that accompany quantifiers.

5.5 The Syntactic Function of the Truth Predicate

The truth predicate also performs an indispensable syntactic function. In the previous examples with the exception of those in the first group (a.1)–(a.3), the syntactic category of the pro-form does not coincide with its logical status. In (d.3)*, for instance, the expression that is a pro-sentence from a logical point of view has the status of a pro-noun. Nevertheless, there are situations that require pro-sentences to possess the syntactic status of sentences. That is, there are situations in which a pro-sentential use of, say, 'it' needs to be supplemented to become an expression with the syntactic status of a well-formed sentence to preserve the rules of grammar.

Imagine that Victoria utters 'I do not like Mondays' to express the proposition that she does not like Mondays. We can refer to her claim by different means. We can say that she really believed what she said, and here 'what she said' is the pro-sentence. When we refer to a proposition, we use an expression appropriate for referring, i.e. a singular term, and in these cases what is logically a pro-sentence is syntactically either a pro-noun or a definite description. A useful way of referring to propositional contents in the written language is using inverted commas.[10]

In the same way in which natural languages have mechanisms to squeeze complete propositions into singular terms (the use of syntactic pro-nouns as pro-sentences), they also have mechanisms to execute the opposite movement, i.e. to

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[10] Inverted commas have many other uses, not only this one, and when they are the mechanism of reference they do not always refer to a content. They can refer to the sentence itself, either type or token, or to some aspects of it. See, for instance, [5, 8, 19, 25, 27, Bennet (1986)] for different accounts of the way in which inverted commas function.

unleash a prosentence codified in a pronoun into a complete sentence. If we call the former mechanism 'nominalizer', we can also call the latter mechanisms 'denominalizer'. Recall that this is the function that Horwich [20] concedes to the truth predicate, and it is a generalization of the famous Quinean disquotationalism. The two functions of obtaining singular terms out of propositions, on the one hand, and propositions out of singular terms, on the other, end in what the Kneales [21] have dubbed as 'designations of propositions' and 'expressions' of them, respectively. Let us consider an example

Proposition (expressed by Victoria's utterance 'I do not like Mondays'): Victoria does not like Mondays.

Designation of the proposition (*exhibitive*): 'Victoria does not like Mondays'.

Designation of the proposition (*blind*): What Victoria said.

Expression of the proposition (*exhibitive*): 'Victoria does not like Mondays' is a true sentence.

Expression of the proposition (*blind*): What Victoria said is true.

The terms 'exhibitive' and 'blind' are intended here to stress that in some truth ascriptions the anaphoric head from which it is possible to recover the content of the prosentence is exhibited in the very ascription, whereas there are cases (the *blind* ones) in which this does not occur. There are other denominalizers in natural languages. '. . . is a fact' is a well-known one, a false friend that has nurtured the correspondence theories of truth. 'What Victoria said is true' is a prosentence (or a prosentence and the dummy truth predicate, it depends on the authors[11]) constructed out of a blind designation of a proposition and a denominalizer. Its content is dependent on the content of its anaphoric antecedent, i.e. the proposition to which it is anaphorically linked. In the previous example its content is that Victoria does not like Mondays, but in different situations it can inherit any propositional content whatsoever. 'What Victoria said is a fact' has exactly the same structure and function, and thus connecting the two expressions (or their contents) by an equivalence sign results in a true claim, 'What Victoria said is true *iff* it is a fact', but that does not take us closer to the understanding of any of the predicables involved.

Thus, the syntactic function of the truth predicate is converting designations of propositions into expressions of them, restoring the status of sentencehood to singular terms that already have propositions as their contents. As a historical curiosity, Frege assigned in his *Begriffsschrift*[12] the same syntactic function to the formal predicate 'is a fact'. And his intuitions were correct: 'is true' and 'is a fact' are exactly the same type of operator, with the same range of syntactic and pragmatic functions.[13]

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[11] Ramsey, Strawson, Horwich and Brandom offer a separate treatment of the truth predicate, while Grover, Camp and Belnap deal with complex pro-sentences like 'what he said is true' as a block.

[12] [15, p. 3].

[13] The semantic function of prosentences was completely alien to Frege's views.

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5.6 The Pragmatic Function of the Truth Predicate

We aim at truth when we produce assertions, and both notions, *truth* and *assertion*, belong to the same family of notions, they need each other. They are interdefinable, although their interdefinibility simply means that we are characterizing a particular linguistic game to which they both are constitutive. The pragmatic task of truth is making some of our inferential commitments explicit. But what kind of commitment does a truth ascription make explicit? It makes explicit that we are engaged in a speech act with the force of a claim, although this is not its only task. Austin was accused by Strawson[14] of reducing the meaning of truth to this expressive role. Since it brings into the open the force of a claim as a claim, the truth predicate makes explicit the appropriateness of using its inherited content as something for which reasons can be given and demanded. In ascribing truth to a proposition we are disclosing our doxastic commitments to it.[15] A truth ascription explicitly identifies a content as something to be counted among the available information, ready to be used in our inferential games. This can be done either by welcoming a proposition into one's beliefs system for the first time or else by transferring contents from some circumstances, in which they have been accepted as claimable, to some other circumstances (considered sufficiently relevant as to permit a safe transfer).

Truth ascriptions by which we directly refer to a salient proposition, i.e. ascriptions of the 'it's true' type, are cases in which we allow the referred proposition to enter the system of accepted information. The status of accepted information is highly context-dependent, and a proposition can be so characterized for some purposes, and thus welcomed as true, while in some other circumstances, or for different purposes it can be rejected, and its entrance to the system vetoed. Once propositional contents have entered into the system of accepted knowledge, it is possible, using the truth operator, to generalize about them. But recall that the truth ascription does not produce nor cause the epistemic status of 'accepted knowledge'. It merely sanctions it, makes it explicit and, by means of the rest of logical notions, the truth operator permits to handle propositional contents and possibly reorganize and project the information as in the case of generalizations.

5.7 Epistemology and Metaphysics

Depending on the particular theory of justification one favours, the reasons for the acceptance of some content vary. One can accept a proposition because, say, one considers that it has been reached in the aftermath of a reliable process, or because it coheres with the rest of our beliefs, or because the scientific community acknowledges that it has passed the standard procedures of justification in the corresponding

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[14] See [28, p. 182].

[15] Nowadays, Brandom [4] has put this notion of claim as something for which the speaker is responsible into the fore. The same insight is found in Frege [16, p. 281], where he contrasts assertion with what an actor does on stage.

discipline, or because the linguistic community at issue democratically accords its acceptability, and so on. This is the first step, the step that is subjected to epistemic discussion. The truth operator operates at a second stage, and it lies outside the epistemic discussion, i.e. it operates on the outputs of the justification processes. These processes can be positioned on any zone of the justificatory spectrum, they can be scientific procedures or assumptions of common sense, and they can be empirical or a priori, formal or informal. All this belongs to epistemology and pragmatics. And it is only subsequently that the result obtained by the epistemological processes will eventually be inherited by an explicit ascription of truth.

How linguistic or mental entities acquire content is another disputed subject, to which different theories offer different answers. The two wide paradigms that practically exhaust the spectrum are, at present, truth-conditional semantics, and its contextualist version, on the one hand, and inferential semantics, on the other.[16] At face value, truth-conditional semantics appears closer to metaphysical realism, whereas inferential semantics shows relevant points of contact with antirealism. Nevertheless, this impression is inaccurate. The core of a truth-conditional treatment of content is that the content of an utterance is its truth conditions. But this claim only means that the content of an utterance are the conditions under which it is true. What are the conditions under which Victoria's utterance of the sentence 'I don't like Mondays' is true? Obviously, that Victoria doesn't like Mondays. And what are the truth-conditions of the claim that through a point external to a straight line only passes one parallel? Well, that through a point external to a straight line only passes one parallel. What about the claim that water is H_2O? It will be true if, and only if water is H_2O, and so on. But again, one can affirm that Victoria doesn't like Mondays, that for a point external to a straight line only passes one parallel, that water is H_2O, and so on both from a realist view about how the world is constituted and also from an antirealist perspective. The discussion depends on how we reach a position in which we are allowed to make these affirmations and on our general understanding about the relation between humans and their surroundings. Similarly, the theoretical core of inferential semantics amounts to saying that the content of a linguistic or mental act with the force of a claim are the contents from which it follows and the contents that follow from it, i.e. the application conditions, entitlements, and their consequences, their commitments. Both realists and antirealists agree on the set of contents from which it follows and those that follow from it. Thus, strictly speaking, the four possible combinations—truth-conditional semanticist and realist, truth-conditional semanticist and anti-realist, inferential semanticist and realist, inferential semanticist and anti-realist—are all legitimate. Truth-ascriptions are means of endorsing contents, contents that are sometimes displayed in the very ascription, and sometimes are not; contents that are sometimes singular and sometimes general, but the meaning of the truth predicate is independent of these features, and it is involved neither on the debates about content, nor on the debates about realism and antirealism. Nevertheless, it is unquestionable that

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[16] An example of truth-conditional pragmatics is [26]; an example of inferential semantics is [4].

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the notion of truth appears profusely in epistemic and metaphysical discussions, and justifiably so. Nevertheless, the justification is not that truth is either an epistemic or a metaphysical notion. It is not. The notion of truth is not conceptually involved in these debates but it is, so to say, put to the test. Let me briefly explain this last claim.

Although truth is not an epistemic notion, the truth predicate is omnipresent in epistemological discourse; and not even the most basic theses in epistemology can be stated without essentially using the truth predicate. Besides, the endorsement role that the truth predicate performs in natural languages is applied in many cases to the items coming out of the justificatory filters sanctioned by epistemology. The prosentential account explains thus the insight that traces a connection between truth and justification. Besides, since the truth operator is a means of forming prosentences, i.e. propositional variables, it (or any equivalent operator) has to be around whenever propositional generalizations are needed. The truth operator, according to this use of building up general sentences, is the natural language counterpart of propositional quantifiers and proposicional variables in artificial languages. Epistemology and the philosophy of science are paradigmatic contexts in which we deal with packs of propositions, and natural languages can only deal with general contents by means of propositional variables, i.e. prosentences.

Truth is not a metaphysical notion either, although metaphysics is another context in which the use of prosentences is essential. The predicates 'is true' and 'is a fact' are both prosentence builders, and sentences like 'this is true' and 'this is a fact' are both propositional proforms. Being true, like being a fact, are natural language operators that convert singular terms, whose content is a complete proposition, into sentences; they also serve to construe both singular and general prosentences. It cannot be denied that something is true if, and only if, it is a fact. It cannot be denied because it is an instance of the principle of identity. As an instance of the principle of identity, it has no informational content, but the correspondentist slogan that truth is correspondence with facts is empty in a further sense; the two sentential arguments that accompany the equivalence operator, i.e. 'something is true' and 'it is a fact', are actually pro-sentences; they are not sentences that can be used in isolation to express a content, for they are proforms that need an antecedent, or a referent. In this sense, there is no contradiction in embracing an antirealist perspective in epistemology and metaphysics while accepting at the same time the T-schemes of the Tarskian theory of truth, or the Aristotelian dictum that to say of what it is that it is not is the false, and of what is that it is is true, or any standard formulation of the Correspondence theory. There is nothing wrong in saying that truth is correspondence with facts, and that something is true *iff* it is a fact. There is nothing wrong, although the correspondentist claim is neither an explanation nor a definition, it is merely a periphrasis. This situation explains why most people agree on the correspondentist slogan, and at the same time disagree on the details of a theory of correspondence. The slogan is tautological, but its implementations are not.

Mixing up the realism/anti-realism debate with the definition of truth is the effect of a poor understanding of the way in which the truth operator works. The realism/anti-realism debate unquestionably touches upon fundamental philosophical questions, but none that have any effect for a theory of truth.

My conclusion is that the realist has no exclusive rights on the notion of truth,[17] and that the antirealist concedes too much to his opponent by renouncing his own rights on this essential notion. The notion of truth can be completely defined in a self-contained theory as the prosentential view. The prosentential view explains how the truth operator works and why it is indispensable in contexts in which we focus on general claims. It also accounts for the cogent insights behind the correspondence theory of truth and theory of truth as redundancy. Furthermore, it shows that truth is neutral between realism and antirealism. So far the realists practice of reclaiming truth for their cause has been extremely successful, but it is as unjustified as the antirealist renouncement of their proud use of it.

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[17] With the notions of knowledge and objectivity the situation is similar, although an analysis of them lies outside the scope of this paper.

AQ2
AQ3
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Chapter-5

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