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DEFLATIONISM AND TRUTHMAKERS

*A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Bucharest in the fulfillment of
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Abstract

This thesis focuses on Horwich's deflationary theory of truth. The aim of this thesis is threefold. First of all, it will be analyzed a possible connection between truthmakers and deflationism. Secondly, it will be argued that a semantic deflationism does not imply a jump into metaphysics. Lastly, it will be provided an answer to the problem of mind-dependency of truth from a deflationary perspective.

In order to reach the aim of this research, a short presentation of the minimalist approach is going to be provided. A deflationary account is preferred to a substantive one (i.e. the correspondence or the coherence theory). Minimalism has its weak points. The main issues of minimalism will be sketched. Paradoxes pose a special problem to a deflationary account. It will be argued that an advocate of minimalism has a way out of paradoxes appealing to dialetheism.

This thesis offers a possible development of minimalism by linking this deflationary account with the notion of truthmaker. Truthmakers are often linked with theories based on correspondence. Minimalism aims to incorporate the correspondence intuition. The acceptance of this intuition leaves an open road for introducing truthmakers into discussion. The argument provided in this thesis for this question is based on the reading of the T-schema. It will be argued that a weak notion of truthmaker is compatible with Horwich's approach.

If a deflationary account is accepted for truth, other semantic notions should be analyzed in a similar manner. Amie Thomasson claimed that a semantic deflationism would necessary lead to a metaphysical one. Her deflationary account for existence is based on the interdefinability between 'there is' and 'exists'. Two sets of counterarguments will be provided. A first one regards the necessary jump from semantics to metaphysics. The second one focuses on Thomasson's deflationary approach of existence. It seems that a semantic deflationist is able to be metaphysically neutral. If a deflationist wants to commit metaphysically, an account based on the already mentioned interdefinability does not seem to be the best option.

Minimalism, being metaphysically neutral, may not be able to provide an answer to the question about the mind-dependency of truth. It will be argued that if further terminological remarks are made, at least a partial answer is possible. The type-token distinction can be used.

Type-truth can be considered mind-independent based on common sense realism. The tokens of truth may be considered mind-dependent. Minimalism is able to endorse the first answer. In order to accept the second one, a metaphysical account is needed.

On this basis, in this research is going to be argued that minimalism is a theory that it is worth being developed. A possible development will be provided and the core of the theory will be kept untouched.

Key words: deflationism, minimalism, metaphysics, truthmakers, dialetheism, Paul Horwich, Amie Thomasson

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Introduction

0.1 The general topic of the thesis

This thesis deals with a specific deflationary account of truth. Truth was always a central notion in philosophy. Many truth theories aimed to discover the underlying nature of truth. The correspondence theory considered truth to be a relation between truth-bearers and truthmakers. The truth-bearer is an entity that is assigned with a truth value, while the truthmaker is the entity in virtue of which the truth-bearer is true. The correspondence theory claims that the substantive nature consists in a relation of correspondence between truth-bearers and truthmakers. The coherence theory of truth understands truth being coherent with a specific set of beliefs or propositions. Because these – and other¹ – approaches claim that truth has a substantive nature that can be discovered through philosophical inquiry, they are called substantive theories of truth.

It is generally accepted that these theories have some weak points and the majority of them is not able to offer a universal perspective for the whole range of occurrences of truth. As a response to these issues, another class of approaches occurred. These ones – known as deflationary theories of truth – reject the idea that truth has a substantive nature. Truth either has no nature at all, or, at best, has a trivial one. Minimalism is among these theories. This deflationary theory was presented by Paul Horwich (1998a).²

Deflationary theories of truth, in general, tend to define this notion in a trivial manner. Some of them, including minimalism, use the Tarskian schema:

¹ An example can be Armstrong's truthmaker theory. This approach is similar with the correspondence theory of truth. It uses the main concepts and directions of the correspondence theory. Armstrong focuses on the truthmakers, rather than on the (correspondence) relation. Another theory that may be included is a form of the identity theory of truth. This theory considers that either facts are reduced to truth-bearers, or the other way around.

² In this thesis I am going to use deflationism and minimalism interchangeable. Most of the time I will use the term deflationism restricted to this specific approach.

(T): 'p' is true if and only if p (Tarski, 1944, p. 344; Horwich, 1998a, p. 6)³

Horwich claims that the T-schema and its instantiations exhaust the notion of truth. Minimalism aims to deal not only with the truth predicate, but with the concept of truth as well. If according to the substantive theories of truth, truth is strongly linked with metaphysics and epistemology; deflationary theories consider truth to be metaphysically and epistemologically thin.

Based on the T-schema truth is defined trivially and is independent of other notions, it might be considered redundant. Some of the deflationary theories of truth – as the redundancy theory (Ramsey, 1927) – claim that truth is eliminable. However, Horwich denies this. According to the minimalist approach truth has a function: it is a generalization device. Truth allows expressing some generalizations that are unreachable otherwise.

Despite the fact that minimalism presents a notion of truth that is far from substantive theories, such as the correspondence one, Horwich aims to incorporate the correspondence intuition. This intuition implies that truths correspond to facts. In order not to become a secret advocate of the correspondence theory, the minimalist has to leave the correspondence intuition out of the core of his theory.

Minimalism is an appealing theory. It offers a notion of truth that is easily usable, without having to develop a whole terminology in order to fully explain it. It succeeds in avoiding some of the issues of the classical theories of truth; but it has its own issues.

One issue that haunted truth theories in general is the problem of paradoxes. The Liar is one of them. Deflationists have a hard time offering a satisfactory solution for it, because they do not have the access to the terminological resources. However, they have a way out of this appealing to non-classical logic, as it was already suggested by Beall and Armour-Garb (Armour-Garb, 2004; Armour-Garb and Beall, 2003; 2005)

Because minimalism aims to incorporate the idea that truths correspond to facts, the notion of metaphysics is brought into discussion. A truthmaker is an entity that is often linked with substantive theories of truth and a strong metaphysical commitment. However, minimalism is compatible with many perspectives. It might be asked if this deflationary

³ This formulation is the one used by Horwich, the one provided by Tarski is quite different. However, the meanings of the two formulations are the same. I use this one, because it serves better the purpose of this thesis, being more obvious and easier to follow.

account may be linked with a notion as ‘truthmaker’. There are different answers to this question.

Truth is a semantic notion. If one accepts a deflationary view about truth, it seems he has to generalize this view for other semantic notions as well. There are some authors – Thomasson (2015a; 2015b), for example – that go even further and extend the generalization to existence. This means that a deflationist is, after all, reaching to metaphysics⁴.

Thus, in this thesis, I am interested in the possible link between minimalism and metaphysics. I am going to focus on the compatibility between Horwich’s theory and some notions that were strongly related with certain substantive theories about truth and metaphysical positions.

0.2 Background discussion

Minimalism must surpass at least some of the critiques that were raised against it. It has to be coherent and to be able to cover the whole range of facts about truth. Horwich offers an approach of truth which takes this notion to be a logical device. Thus, truth is trivially explained based on the T-schema and its instantiation. The view is quite appealing and has its success. However, it is not flawless. There are two⁵ main issues that haunt this theory.

A first one regards the truth capacity to fulfill its role. According to the minimalist theory, truth is a generalization device. It makes possible the formulation of some generalizations of the form ‘All propositions of the form ‘Everything is F or non-F’ are true’. But it seems that truth itself is not sufficient to derive a universal conclusion from the T-

⁴ Metaphysics is used here restrictedly. The idea is that there are perspectives that claim that semantic deflationism necessarily leads to deflationism about existence (Thomasson, 2015a; 2015b). Through the thesis I am going to use this term mostly in this narrow sense.

⁵ There are more than two, to be precise. Deflationism has to face other critiques. Other pertinent critiques were raised by Eklund (2012; 2017) and Field (1992). Some of them may have solutions; others seem quite hard to escape. I mention here only two of them, because these two are the ones that seem to be the most relevant ones, in the sense that they do the most harm to the theory. I am going to discuss the others in the thesis.

schema and its instantiations.⁶ This critique was raised by Gupta (1993) and Armour-Garb (2004; 2010). Horwich offers an answer, but it is not generally accepted. His answer implies adding an extra premise. This additional premise seems to imply circularity (Armour-Garb, 2010). In this situation, the minimalist risks losing the sole role of truth and has no arguments left to claim that truth is needed in a language.

The second issue does not pose problems only for the minimalist. The problem of paradoxes is quite significant for many truth theories. Likewise, minimalism seems to have a hard time rejecting paradoxical sentences as the Liar. The Liar may have the following form:

(L) This sentence is false.

Horwich⁷ provides two solutions, but they are quite problematic and heavily criticized. They are both based on restricting the applicability of the T-schema. The first one suggests that the T-schema should not be applied to the paradoxical truth-bearers, while the second one introduces some terminological remarks in order to sustain the restriction. The problem with both perspectives is that, if the T-schema is restricted, then truth does not have a chance to fulfill its function as a generalization device. For example, truth would not be applicable to sentences of the form ‘What Mary said on Friday is true’ if Mary uttered a paradoxical sentence. In this case, this kind of solution implies more restrictions than Horwich firstly anticipated, because sentences as the one already mentioned would lack an instantiation of the schema, without being paradoxical.

Facing these two problems, minimalism cannot be considered an acceptable theory of truth. Horwich’s solutions, both based on the rejection of the applicability of the T-schema for paradoxical sentences, received numerous and hard to reconcile objections. However, I will argue that minimalism has a way out of this. Only one solution is required to surpass both issues. I propose a strategy for saving the minimalist truth-theory by taking a different route. Horwich claimed that paradoxical sentences should not be assigned with a truth value and they

⁶ Starting from particular instances of the T-schema, one needs extra information in order to be able to prove a universal conclusion. It seems that an additional premise may be needed. Such a premise should state that the particular instances are *all* instances of that form – or at least, all *knowable* instances of that form.

⁷ Other advocates of deflationary approaches claim that different forms of deflationary accounts do not have to face the problem of paradoxes. Among these are Gupta (2005) and Grover (2005).

should not have an instance of the T-schema. However, following Armour-Garb and Beall (Armour-Garb, 2004; Armour-Garb and Beall, 2003; 2005), I suggest the opposite: a deflationist should accept dialetheism. Dialetheism claims that there are truth-bearers both true and false. Paradoxes are among those. My claim is that dialetheism would be able to solve both problems without raising the abovementioned issues. In this situation, there is no need to restrict the applicability of the T-schema. If the T-schema is applied unrestrictedly, then truth is able to fulfill its role.

If minimalism is able to solve the already mentioned issues, then it would be considered a viable truth theory. As I already mentioned, I strongly believe that minimalism can escape both the problem of generalization and the one regarding paradoxes. In this situation, future developments of the theory are possible. I am interested in how minimalism and metaphysics can be linked. There are three main discussions on this topic.

The first discussion deals with what kind of metaphysical theory is compatible with minimalism. Horwich aimed to present a notion of truth metaphysically thin. He claimed that his approach would be compatible with various metaphysical views, but would not be necessarily committed to any of them. If a deflationary perspective is adopted for a semantic notion, it has to be generalized to other semantic notions as well.⁸ Thomasson (2015a; 2015b) claimed that semantic deflationism would necessarily lead to a metaphysical deflationism. This idea is part of her easy-ontology project that has as a central point the idea of a meta-ontological deflationism. She claims that something is wrong with all recent debates about what exists. For her, existence questions have easy answers. In order to prove this point of view, it seems that Thomasson forgets one of the aims of the deflationary theories: making truth metaphysically thin.

It seems that Thomasson's view is not the best one for a minimalist. Horwich accepts the generalization of the theory to other semantic notions, but he claims that from a deflationary point of view, truth does not imply any metaphysical commitment. I agree with

⁸ Among these semantic notions are reference and satisfaction. Thomasson claims that meaning is also included. Deflationary perspectives have a hard time in explaining meaning. To avoid circularity these theories cannot explain meaning truth-theoretically. Horwich appeals to use in order to offer a perspective about meaning. He claims that the theory he proposed is deflationary. This might not be generally accepted.

both authors on the fact that accepting a deflationary account for one semantic notion leads to accepting a similar approach to other semantic notions. However, I do not see the necessary jump into metaphysics. I find it to be, if not implausible, at least extremely hard to argue for.

Horwich denies that the substantive theories are adequate for explaining truth. When it comes to the correspondence theory, he denies that this correspondence is what truth essentially is. What the author does not deny is that truths correspond in a way to facts. He calls this the correspondence intuition. Horwich aims to incorporate this intuition into his own theory. Thus, minimalism is compatible with the idea that truths correspond to facts. This is neither a part of the core of the minimalist theory, nor it is necessary to explain truth.

The second discussion deals with the possible connection between minimalism and the notion of truthmaker. If one accepts this correspondence intuition, he can also accept that truth is a relation.⁹ A relation takes place between two relata. One of them is a truth-bearer, while the other is a truthmaker. When it comes to the second relatum, the terminology is often linked with the correspondence theory of truth.¹⁰ It also implies a metaphysical commitment, especially to a form of realism. This is why it is generally accepted that a discussion about truthmakers is superfluous, if not even impossible from a deflationary point of view.

McGrath (2003), on the other hand, considers that deflationism and truthmakers are compatible. He admits that truthmakers can be analyzed from a deflationary perspective. However, he defines truthmakers differently. According to McGrath truthmakers may be existential and non-existential. The existential ones are used by a substantive theory, as the correspondence one, while, the non-existential ones may be used by a deflationary account. The existential truthmakers are considered to be something different than a truth-bearer. They are something from the world, as a state of affairs or fact. On the other hand, the non-

⁹ This relation has to be understood differently from the correspondence one. I take it to be as weak as possible. The way it can be defined is through its components. Thus, truth relation from a minimalist perspective occurs between two relata, a truth-bearer and a truthmaker.

¹⁰ This theory claims that truth is a relation. The relation takes place between two heterogeneous relata and, from the correspondence perspective, is a quite strong one. The truthmakers necessitate the truth of the truth-bearer. This theory is intimately linked with realism, because it considers truth to be mind-independent and objective. The truthmaker notion is taken to occur especially in this theory.

existential ones are still truth-bearers.¹¹ McGrath's account has many weak points in explaining the relevance of the distinction and in using the terminology. I found it to be both incoherent and implausible and I am going to provide arguments to support my view.

Rejecting McGrath's approach leaves us where we were before: truthmakers and deflationism seem to be incompatible. Based on the fact that minimalism wants to incorporate the correspondence intuition, I am going to offer some arguments to prove the contrary. I believe that a minimalist can incorporate into his theory a light talk about truthmakers without crashing his theory.

The third discussion deals with the mind-dependency of truth. If it is accepted that truth is a relation, one can ask if this relation is mind dependent or independent. The correspondence theory of truth considers truth to be mind-independent. On the other hand, pragmatic theories take truth to be mind-dependent. Deflationism – without being committed metaphysically – seems to be unable to provide an answer to this question. On the contrary, I think if further terminological distinctions are made, minimalism is able to provide at least a partial answer.

So far, it seems that there are multiple questions that need revised answers. First of all, it seems that Horwich does not provide satisfactory solutions for at least two main issues of his theory: paradoxes and the generalization problem. His answers seem to do more harm than good to his theory. Secondly, there are authors who link semantic deflationism with a similar approach for existence. This jump into metaphysics is unwanted and unnecessary. Such a jump would deny one of the main tenets of a deflationary account about truth or other semantic notions: that these notions are in no way linked to a metaphysical commitment. Thirdly, adding certain notions to minimalism may diminish its value, slowly transforming it into a substantive theory. It is often denied that truthmakers are compatible with a deflationary view about truth. There are some that accept this connection, but they do not present a credible and coherent account. A further analysis is needed to decide this problem. Lastly, deflationism may not be able to provide an answer to the question: is truth mind-dependent or mind-independent? It seems that in order to answer this question, one should be committed metaphysically. I think that at least a partial answer is possible.

¹¹ In other words p is a truthmaker for 'p is true'. A truth-bearer, according to this account, is its own truthmaker.

There are many other questions that are worth answering, but I found the already mentioned ones to be especially linked to deflationism and metaphysics. The existing literature on these topics seem to be unable to proper solve them, thus further research is needed.

0.3 Motivation

It seems that deflationism is a theory that deserves to be analyzed. When it comes to its link with metaphysical notions as truthmakers and existence, the opinions are divided. Some authors, as McGrath, consider that deflationism is able to talk about truthmakers, but truthmakers are understood as other truth-bearers. Even if Horwich claimed that his theory does not imply a metaphysical commitment, authors as Thomasson argue that a semantic deflationism necessary leads to a metaphysical one. Every side has its own arguments.

Deflationary theories of truth present an interest to philosophical and logical debate and this is to their benefit. However, because they have some weak points, they are also heavily criticized. On this split background, a possible development of a deflationary theory is welcomed.

I do not want to claim that a deflationary theory – especially Horwich's – is flawless and represents the best way of approaching truth. My main goal is to offer a possible development of such a theory, assuming the idea that minimalism may be of a great help in both philosophical and logical debates. I am going to underline the most relevant weak points. For some of them, I aim to sketch an answer, but others remain unsolvable from this point. The relevance of a deflationary theory consists in the ability to provide an account for truth that is usable and does not require a vast terminology. This makes truth a helpful notion that may be utilized not only in philosophy, but also in formal logic without requiring an elaborate explanation.

Through its aim, this proposed research may be able to offer a different perspective on contemporary debates on this topic. The last chapter offers a new way of approaching the link between minimalism and metaphysics. I do not aim to solve all the problems regarding the current topic. I am going to sketch a new outlook that could serve as a starting point for future researches.

0.4 Main and secondary aims

My main aim in this thesis is to provide a possible direction of development for the minimalist theory. In order to do so, I have to firstly analyze if this perspective has a proper solution to the Liar paradox, which is one of the most significant problems for truth theories. If it does not succeed in finding a way out, it should not be considered a viable truth theory. However, I believe there is a possibility for this approach to escape the problem of paradoxes; thus, it may be considered a viable basis for further developments.

I am going to provide a perspective about deflationism and metaphysics. Introducing a notion as ‘truthmaker’ into a deflationary terminology may look implausible. Truthmakers are used by substantive theories as the correspondence one. Because of this, the two notions – deflationary truth and truthmakers – seem to be incompatible. I am going to argue the contrary. A lighter notion of truthmaker may be compatible with the minimalist approach.

I will start my analysis based on the fact that the concept of truthmaker may be weakened in a way that does not imply a form of the correspondence theory. The notion would not be defined in a way that implies a certain metaphysical view. Thus, a truthmaker would be an entity that is linked with a truth-bearer, through a relation that is not essential in explaining truth. In this situation, the correspondence intuition may be incorporated without introducing it in the core of the theory. Also, the minimalist’s claim that his notion of truth is metaphysically and epistemologically thin is maintained.

This brings us to the second part of this aim. Even if Horwich claimed that his perspective is not committed metaphysically, there are some authors that generalize the semantic deflationism to a metaphysical one. I disagree with the latter perspective and I am going to provide some arguments against this view.

The last part consists in providing an answer to the question: is truth mind-dependent or mind-independent? The advocates of the correspondence theory of truth tend to claim that truth is mind-independent based on the fact that one of the relata shares this independency. However, their view is strongly linked with a metaphysical commitment. If a minimalism does not commit metaphysically, then it may not be able to provide an answer to the already mentioned question.

The main aim of this thesis is threefold. Firstly, I will present a possible way to link minimalism with a weaker notion of truthmaker. Secondly, I am going to provide some arguments to support the idea that the minimalist's conception of truth does not imply any metaphysical commitment. These two aims go hand in hand. The first objective presents a possible compatibility between a truth approach that introduces this notion as being exhausted by the T-schema, without any metaphysical commitment, and another notion that was, for a long time, strongly linked to metaphysics – truthmakers. The second aim is analyzing how, in this situation, the minimalist will be able to maintain his notion of truth independent of any metaphysical commitments.

Thirdly, a question that arises from the acceptance of truth as a relation¹² is: is truth mind-dependent or mind-independent from a minimalist point of view? If this specific deflationary theory is compatible with the idea that truth is a relation, then the previous question is an obvious consequence. At first sight, if truth is considered mind-independent, then the minimalist seems to adopt a strong form of realism. On the other hand, if a minimalist accepts that truth is mind-dependent, then he seems to not be able to incorporate the correspondence intuition.¹³ Thus, both of these solutions seem to be unreachable from a minimalist perspective. I am going to try to provide a proper answer that is compatible with this view and does not cause problems, or imply a metaphysical commitment.

I also have a secondary aim. I am going to present some arguments in favor of the idea that minimalism is a viable theory of truth. Despite the fact that, like many truth theories, it has its weak points, I consider minimalism to be able to surpass many of them and remain a possible candidate for a proper truth theory. There are some issues that are still unsolved, but they do not seem to demolish the coherence of the theory. When it comes to the problem of paradoxes, as the Liar, it seems that Horwich's solutions do not work. However, another solution may be possible. This solution may not be easily accepted, because it is not based on classical logic and it is quite far from what Horwich initially aimed for his theory. But this does not mean that minimalism is not compatible with this view. Furthermore, the proposed

¹² This acceptance is implied by the fact that minimalism wants to accommodate the correspondence intuition.

¹³ Also it might be considered that the minimalist adopts a form of anti-realism. This implies, once again, that it is committed metaphysically.

solution may solve other significant issues of the theory. One of these other issues is the generalization problem. Accepting the solution I am going to argue not only that it would solve the problem of paradoxes, but the problem of generalization as well.

Thus, in this thesis I am interested in the possible compatibility between deflationism about truth and truthmakers. This scope requires some discussions about adjacent topics as the notion of existence and the relation between truth and its mind-dependency.

0.5 The structure of the thesis

This thesis contains three chapters. The first chapter broadly presents the main tenets of minimalism. The chapter is structured on four sections. In the first section I am going to offer a short description of the main possible truth-bearers. It seems that sentences and propositions are the main candidates to be truth-bearers. Some theories choose one, while others opt for the other. Minimalism considers propositions to be the main truth-bearers.¹⁴ However, when the problem of paradoxes occurs, they tend to be expressed via sentences. The second section underlines some of the principal arguments against the classical truth theories. The substantive theories – such as the correspondence theory, the coherence one and a form of the identity approach – seem to be unable to explain all facts about truth. The third section sketches the main concepts of the minimalist theory of truth. Lastly, the fourth section underlines some weak points of this type of deflationary theory. Among these is the already mentioned generalization problem (Gupta, 1993; Armour-Garb, 2004; 2010), and a problem concerning the distinction between the truth concept and the property of being true (Eklund, 2017). I present some possible answers to some of the problems; but not to all of them. The aim of this chapter is not to present minimalism as the best theory of truth. My goal is to offer some arguments in favor of the theory, in order to prove that it is a viable truth theory. Deflationism is worth dealing with and it deserves attention and further developments.

The second chapter aims to analyze how minimalism can solve the problem of paradoxes. This chapter is divided in six sections. Firstly, I am going to shortly discuss the Liar: forms and possible approaches. The second section is concerned with the Tarskian

¹⁴ Horwich accepts that there are other truth-bearers. He even offers a development of his theory for utterances (Horwich, 1998a).

solution to this paradox. The third one presents the Kripkean solution, while the fourth one aims to offer a comparative analysis of the Tarskian and Kripkean solutions. The last two sections deal with how deflationary approaches tend to respond to the Liar. The fifth section presents two deflationary perspectives that reject the idea that paradoxes are a real problem. Gupta (2005) considers that the problem of paradoxes should be solved by the specialist. On the other hand, Grover (2005) claims that her deflationary theory does not have to deal with this issue, because sentences as the Liar are ill-formed. I find this way of approaching paradoxes to be wrong and to do more harm to the theory. I will provide some arguments to sustain my claim. Finally, the last section deals with the way minimalism answers this issue. As I already mentioned, Horwich's answers do not stand. I am going to provide a different answer, based on Armour-Garb and Beall (Armour-Garb, 2004; Armour-Garb and Beall, 2003; 2005). I believe that the best way out for a minimalist is to accept dialetheism.

The last chapter focuses on the main aim of this thesis. It deals with the link between deflationism and metaphysics. The first main section presents the possible relation between truthmakers and deflationism. The second one aims to offer some arguments in order to prove that a deflationist does not have to commit metaphysically. The last section deals with the problem of mind-dependency of truth relation. The first section is structured in three more subsections. The first subsection offers a short presentation of Armstrong's truthmaker theory, in order to provide a better understanding of the notion. The following subsection deals with possible understandings of the T-schema from a deflationary perspective. Finally, the last subsection offers a possibility for the minimalist to incorporate truthmakers into his theory. The second main section is also divided in three subsections. The first of them briefly presents a possible development of the deflationary theory about truth for other semantic notions. The next subsection presents Thomasson's (2015a; 2015b) perspective. Thomasson claims that a semantic deflationism necessarily leads to a metaphysical one. The last subsection presents some of my counterarguments. I do not agree with Thomasson's view and I argue that a deflationist is able to remain metaphysically neutral. The last section, as it was mentioned, deals with the mind dependency or independency of truth. In order for a deflationist to be able to answer to this question, at least partially, a distinction should be made. This distinction would allow the minimalist to provide a partial answer, without having to commit metaphysically.

As it was already mentioned, this thesis aims to provide a possible development of the minimalist approach and at the same time keep the core of the theory untouched.

Chapter 1 Why minimalism?

Introduction

This chapter's aim is to present the main concepts of the minimalist approach and to argue that such a theory is preferable to a substantive theory of truth.

Some theories of truth consider that this notion has a substantive nature that is hard to discover. This nature may be understood as correspondence with facts, or as coherence with a specific set of propositions. These substantive theories of truth received some heavy critiques. Deflationary theories appeared as a reaction to the other class of approaches. Deflationists reject that truth has a substantive nature and explain or define it trivially. These theories consider that truth is not a genuine property.

Minimalism is Paul Horwich's (1998a) deflationary theory. This theory considers that truth is exhausted by the T-schema and its instantiation. In this thesis I am going to use deflationism and minimalism interchangeable.¹⁵ Minimalism differs from other deflationary theories in some aspects. One of them is that it does not consider truth to be redundant. Secondly, Horwich aims to incorporate the common sense correspondence intuition: the idea that truths correspond to facts. I am going to return to this second idea.

Among the substantive theories of truth are also the correspondence one and a development of this approach realized by Armstrong (2004), known as the truthmaker theory. Both of these approaches consider that truths correspond to something worldly. A proposition is true if and only if it states something that exists, and false otherwise. This portion of reality may be understood as facts or states of affairs.

Theories based on the correspondence between truth-bearers and truthmakers have some issues in pointing out the specific truthmakers for some truths. In the case of negative existential propositions – as 'Pegasus does not exist' – there is no specific state of affairs that corresponds to them.¹⁶ The problem gets even worse in the case of necessary truths. If in the

¹⁵ This thesis focuses on minimalism. I am going to introduce another deflationary theory into discussion in the second chapter. Most of the time, when I am going to state something about deflationary theories, I refer to Horwich's minimalist theory.

¹⁶ It might be argued that 'the state of affairs that Pegasus does not exist' is a possible candidate as a truthmaker. I am going to return to this.

case of contingent truths, as the negative existential ones, an advocate of the correspondence approach could use the world as a whole as a truthmaker, in the case of necessary truths he does not seem to have a solution. It cannot be accepted that necessary truths depend on something contingent, as is the case of everything that exists.¹⁷ It seems then, that those theories do not succeed in explaining all the occurrences of truth and providing truthmakers for every true proposition.

The coherence theory has issues when it has to explain error and falsity. Every proposition is coherent with a set of other propositions, independently of its truth value. Even false propositions are coherent with a specific set of propositions. In this situation, coherence with a certain set of proposition regards both true and false propositions. This means that coherence is not sufficient to determine the specific truth value of a proposition; thus, this theory is unable to properly explain truth and what truth consists in.

Deflationary theories do not have to face these issues, because they deny that truth has a substantive nature. This means they do not have to explain truth in terms of correspondence or coherence. Truth is explained trivially. The T-schema and its instantiations exhaust the notion of truth. Horwich claims that his theory deals not only with the concept of truth, but also with the predicate. He does not deny that truth has a nature. It can also be accepted that truth is a property, but not a genuine one. However, despite these, truth has a function; it is not a redundant notion. Its role is of a generalization device. Truth is considered a logical device that makes possible some generalizations that are unreachable otherwise. This means that truth is not a redundant notion.

Minimalism aims to incorporate the correspondence intuition. This means that this deflationary theory accepts that truths correspond to facts.¹⁸ However, this idea is not a part of the core of minimalism; but they are compatible. Deflationism presents a notion of truth that is metaphysically and epistemologically thin. This leaves open many possibilities for further developments. It seems that these all are some arguments in favor of deflationism.

¹⁷ If a specific metaphysical view is adopted, one can escape this critique. I am going to develop this.

¹⁸ If this is the case, it may be asked why minimalism does not have to face the same problems as the correspondence theory of truth? I am going to sketch an answer to this possible critique later in this chapter.

Horwich's theory has its own weak points. As it was pointed out by Eklund (2012, 2017) this theory does not succeed in explaining both the truth concept and the property only using the T-schema and its instantiations. A minimalist aims to exhaust the property of being true as well, but in order to do so, he would need concepts as 'essence' to fulfill its aim. In this situation he would need metaphysics of essence and this would be quite far away of what his deflationary theory would have initially aimed for.

Another possible critique was presented by Field (1992). Field claims that the theory should also present a theory of truth for utterances and mental states. Horwich (1998a) provides such an account. However, Field finds it unsatisfactory. I am going to try to save Horwich's solution, linking it with the theory of meaning he provided.

The main issue that haunts this approach is strongly linked with the function of truth. It seems that the T-schema and its instances are not sufficient to reach the aimed universal conclusions. To solve this issue, Horwich (2010) offers one additional premise. The premise states that if one is disposed to accept that for any proposition of a certain type, it is G – where G may also be 'is true' – then, the person will be inclined to accept that every proposition of that specific type is G (Horwich, 2010, p. 84). This solution is not generally accepted. There are some authors (Armour-Garb, 2010) that consider the premise circular. Armour-Garb (2004) offers his own solution to this problem. In this situation, it seems that deflationism is able to provide answers to some of its issues. Thus, it might be concluded that it is preferable to any substantive theory of truth.

This chapter will have the following structure. In the first section, I am going to offer a short presentation of the main truth-bearers. Some theories take sentences to be these entities, other prefer propositions. Sentences are composed of words that are governed by grammatical rules of a specific language. Propositions are linked with the meaning of a declarative sentence. Tarski (1944) and Kripke (1975) take sentences to be the primary truth-bearers. Horwich (1998a) considers propositions on this position. For this chapter, propositions will be considered the main truth-bearers.

The second section sketches some arguments against some of the substantive theories of truth. The third section would contain the principal concepts of minimalism and some arguments in favor of this theory. The last section of this chapter offers a presentation of some of the critiques against deflationism.

1.1 The main truth-bearers

I am going to start with a brief distinction between some possible candidates for the role of truth bearers.¹⁹ Different truth theories consider different entities to be the main truth-bearers. It seems that the main candidates are sentences and propositions.²⁰

A sentence is defined as a string of words put together by the grammatical rules of a language. It is a grammatical unit of one or more words that may express an independent statement (declarative sentences), question, request, command, exclamation, etc.²¹ There are sentences which may be grammatically well formed, but they do not express anything.²²

A proposition is a part of the meaning of a declarative sentence which describes a state of affairs. In short it can be said that it is the meaning of a sentence. A proposition does not depend on a certain time, it is a timeless entity.²³

Some sentences are quite ambiguous because they may express more than one proposition, others may express none. Thus, they do not stand in a one-to-one correspondence to propositions. Different sentences may also have the same meaning.²⁴ It might be considered that because of this ambiguity sentences do not seem suitable to be truth bearers. Notwithstanding this some theorists believe that sentences are the main truth-bearers.

In the case of propositions are other ambiguities. These have an intension and an extension. The intension of a proposition is its sense, connotation²⁵, while its extension is represented by its reference, or denotation. Two propositions may be extensionally equivalent and intensionally distinct, but if they are intensionally equivalent, they must be also

¹⁹ The discussion focuses on the primary truth-bearers. To express this I am also going to use ‘main truth-bearers’ or ‘proper truth-bearers’, or just ‘truth-bearers’.

²⁰ Statements can also be considered truth-bearers. They can be understood as meaningful-declarative-sentences, but also as what is asserted by such a sentence.

²¹ Only declarative sentences are considered truth-bearers.

²² For example: ‘All yellow thoughts rain peacefully.’ This sentence may be considered to be simply false, without introducing meaning into discussion.

²³ This might not be generally accepted.

²⁴ “It rains” and “Plouă” are two sentences with the same meaning.

²⁵ It might also be claimed that propositions are just senses.

extensionally equivalent. In the first case one person may believe one of the propositions, and deny the other one. A well-known example is:

- a. Hesperus is the second planet from the Sun.
- b. Phosphorus is the second planet from the Sun.

In this case Hesperus and Phosphorus are names that denote the same planet, to be more specific, the morning star. Propositions a and b are extensionally equivalent, but intensionally distinct. Thus, a person that knows that Hesperus is the name for the morning star, but does not know that Phosphorus is another name for the same star, may believe the first proposition to be true, and the second one false.

The idea that propositions are the truth-bearers is criticized especially because it is not clear when two or more propositions have the same meaning.

Both Tarski and Kripke consider sentences to be the truth-bearers. Tarski states that:

“By ‘sentence’ we understand here what is usually meant in grammar by ‘declarative sentence’; as regards the term ‘proposition’, its meaning is notoriously a subject of lengthy disputations by various philosophers and logicians, and it seems never to have been made quite clear and unambiguous. For several reasons it appears most convenient to *apply the term ‘true’ to sentences*, and we shall follow this course.”
(Tarski, 1944, p.342)

According to Tarski the truth notion should be related, like a sentence, to a specific language. A sentence can have different truth values in different languages, or even can be considered meaningful in some and meaningless in others (Tarski, 1944, p. 342).²⁶

Similar to Tarski, Kripke accepts that sentences are the main truth-bearers. When it comes to giving a proper argument for his decision, Kripke claims that:

“The main reason I apply the truth predicate directly to linguistic objects is that for such objects a mathematical theory of self-reference has been developed.” (Kripke, 1975, p. 691, footnote 1)

²⁶ There are authors that link truth with meaning, as Davidson (1985). His view is not generally accepted; for a critical analysis of Davidson’s approach see Dumitru (2004)

The idea that sentences are assigned with truth values, in Kripkean view, does not contradict the view that the truth predicate is also applied to propositions. According to Kripke a sentence may be true or false only if it expresses a proposition. In this case, a sentence is not assigned with a truth value unless it expresses a proposition. It seems that Kripke focuses on sentences because those have the possibility to be self-referential, and the case of propositions is unclear (Burgess, 2011, p. 142).

Horwich considers propositions to be the main truth-bearers. According to Horwich, there are four main candidates as truth-bearers: utterances, sentences, statements (beliefs, suppositions) and propositions. He defines them as it follows:

“(a) *utterances* – individual sounds and marks located in particular regions of space and time (e.g. Oscar’s saying the words ‘I am hungry’ at midday on 1 January 1988); (b) *sentences* – types of expression in a language: syntactic forms that are exemplified by particular utterances (e.g. the English sentence ‘I am hungry’); (c) *statements, beliefs, suppositions*, etc. – individual, localized actions or states of mind (e.g. Oscar’s state at midday of believing that he is hungry); (d) *propositions* – the things that are believed, stated, supposed, etc.; the contents of such states (e.g. *that Oscar was hungry at midday on 1 January 1988*).” (Horwich, 1998a, p. 16)

Horwich’s main argument for accepting propositions as the main truth-bearers is that he wants to stay as close as possible to ordinary language. The author rejects sentences and utterances as being proper truth-bearers.²⁷ However, he accepts that statements, beliefs and suppositions may be assigned a truth value, but this happens while still considering propositions as the main truth-bearers.²⁸

In order to keep his theory as deflated terminologically as possible, Horwich does not go in depth with the analysis of propositions. Minimalism presupposes “very little about the *nature* of propositions” (Horwich, 1998a, p. 16). The notion of proposition is independent of

²⁷ The argument provided by Horwich is that the English sentence given as an example (i.e. ‘I am hungry’) cannot be true, because it might be false in a specific moment. Utterances are rejected because the truth predicate is not assigned to noises. For more see (Horwich, 1998a, pp. 16-17)

²⁸ At the end of the book, Horwich presents how his theory is able to assign truth values to those specific truth-bearers. For more see (Horwich, 1998a, pp. 86-103)

the one of truth. Because truth is explained appealing to the T-schema, the notion of proposition is already included. The T-schema contains the notion of proposition. Thus, proposition cannot be explained in terms of truth, because it would imply circularity, both being defined appealing to each other. In this situation, these two notions cannot be linked, because it will lead to a vicious circle. According to Horwich this leaves open many possibilities for the minimalist:

“(...) propositions could be composed of abstract Fregean senses, or of concrete objects and properties; they could be identical to a certain class of sentences in some specific language, or to the meaning of sentences, or to some new and irreducible type of entity that is correlated with the meanings of certain sentences. I am not saying that there is nothing to choose amongst these answers. The point is rather that the minimal theory does not require any particular one of them. So that someone who wishes to avoid commitment to ‘propositions’ of any specific sort need not on that score object to the conception of truth that will be elaborated here.”(Horwich, 1998a, p. 17)

Therefore, it seems that opinions differ. While Tarski and Kripke take sentences as main truth-bearers, Horwich considers propositions to have this role. Tarski seems to be more precise in his presentation and Kripke accepts that truth may be a predicate not only for sentences, but he uses the other truth bearers only in an informal way; he is not as precise in his exposition. Horwich, on the other hand, rejects sentences as being suitable as truth-bearers. However, he accepts that statements, beliefs and opinions may be assigned a truth value.

In this situation, I am going to use propositions as the main truth-bearers when I will present the minimalist view. In this chapter and in the last one I will be talking about propositions. In the second chapter, where I am interested in different solutions to the Liar, I am going to introduce sentences in the discussion. Thus, in the second chapter I am going to switch and consider sentences to be the preferred truth-bearers.²⁹

²⁹ When it comes to the discussions about paradoxes, sentences are the one used. Because of this, I am going to keep the terminology and I will refer to sentences as being assigned a truth value in the second chapter.

1.2 Why not a substantive theory of truth?

In the previous part I presented the main concepts of minimalism and I offered some arguments for the theory. In this part of the chapter I am going to give some arguments against some classical theories of truth – as the correspondence theory and the coherence one – these arguments are meant to support a deflationary perspective about truth.

One of the well-known theories of truth is the correspondence one. Aristotle was the one that first mentioned the idea that is the basis for the correspondence theory:

“To say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, or of what is not that it is not, it is true.” (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1011b25)

The correspondence theory demands that a sentence has to be in agreement with reality in order to be true. In this case, a sentence is true if it designates an existing³⁰ state of affairs³¹, or fact. This theory is often considered to be committed to an ontology of facts (or states of affairs). The theory may be understood claiming that:

“(a) (...) propositions are true or false by virtue of how things stand in extra-propositional reality (except when they are about other propositions)” (Eklund, 2012, p. 199).

In this situation there the theory would face some issues in explaining the existence of negatives and hypothetical facts. However, it seems that one is able to accommodate this view, without reaching to ontology. According to Eklund:

“(...) one can say, consistently with (a), that what makes true a given proposition, say that *a* is not F is simply that *a* fails to be F. There is no *obvious* need to appeal to such entities as facts” (Eklund, 2012, p. 200)

Another problem that arises is that the correspondence theory of truth was often linked with metaphysical realism. Even if one accepts (a), one can still think extra-propositional reality is mind-dependent (Eklund, 2012, p. 200). This is far away from realism. This form of the correspondence theory is not as strong as others.

³⁰ Reality is composed of what actually exists. This also follows from the Aristotelian idea of correspondence. If truth-bearers that express what exists are considered true, and the ones that do not do so are considered false, then it can also be said that a proposition is true if it designates an existing state of affairs or fact.

³¹ States of affairs are the truthmakers used by Armstrong.

The idea that every truth corresponds to exactly one fact is the one that was accepted by many theorists.³² However, the idea that different truths correspond to different facts is the one that may be easily rejected. If both of them would be accepted, then the correspondence between truths and truthmakers would be of one to one. This isomorphism is left behind because it is quite hard to be accepted and argued for. Theorists like Armstrong rejected the isomorphism between truths and truthmakers. In his truthmaker theory (TM), Armstrong (Armstrong, 2004, pp. 26-27) seems to deny even the first of the two claims. TM denies the isomorphism between truth-bearers and truthmakers, but keeps the main idea that truth is a correspondence between reality and truth-bearers. For example, there might be some truths made true by several truthmakers, or the other way around, there might be truthmakers that make true more than one truth (Armstrong, 2004, p. 19).³³

TM may be considered a development of the correspondence theory of truth. Because of this strong link between TM and the correspondence theory, Lewis's arguments against the latter one are applied to the TM too. Lewis argues that the correspondence theory of truth is not about truth at all. Following Lewis' example (Lewis, 2001, p. 275; MacBride, 2013, p. 3):

(1) It is true that cats purr iff there exists something such that the existence of that thing implies that cats purr.

And using the redundancy biconditional:

(2) 'Cats purr' is true iff cats purr.

It can be obtained that:

(3) Cats purr iff there exists something such that the existence of that thing implies that cats purr.

According to Lewis (3) cannot be about truth because the concept does not occur in it, (3) is about "the existential grounding of the purring of cats" (Lewis, 2001, p. 279). The other instances are not about truth either, because the concept may be omitted using the redundancy biconditional. Lewis claims that the only reason why truth is used in those cases is to be able to make a long story short, to express shortly an infinite conjunction.

³² This strong form of correspondence can be found in Russell's theory. For more see (Russell, 1912).

³³ 'There is at least one dog' is made true by the existence of any dog.

'There is at least one brown dog' is made true by the existence of a brown dog; therefore, that brown dog might be a truthmaker for both truths.

If Lewis would be right, the instances of the TM should be credible without the use of truth. MacBride argues that the TM instances are plausible because they are derived from the TM, rather than the TM is plausible because of its instances. If the TM would lack the truth concept, (3) would mean that there is something which guarantees the purring of cats. Conceived *eo ipso*, without truth, biconditionals like (3) lack credibility (MacBride, 2013, p. 5).

On the other hand, Marian David (2004) considers erroneously Lewis' identification of the correspondence theory with the following biconditional:

(4) It is true that cats purr iff the proposition that cats purr corresponds to fact. (Lewis, 2001, p. 275; David, 2004, p. 43)

David denies that (4) summarizes in the right way the main idea of the correspondence theory, that truth is correspondence to fact. (4) is just a bundle of correspondence biconditionals. In order to express the core of the correspondence theory, there is a need for a general claim, not a bundle of particular ones. The mentioned theory may be summarized by:

(5) A proposition is true iff it corresponds to a fact.

According to David its immediate instance should be:

(6) The proposition that cats purr is true iff the proposition that cats purr corresponds to a fact.

In this case, (4) can only be used as a mediate instance to reach:

(7) The proposition that cats purr is true iff it is true that cats purr.

According to David the correspondence theory and its instances go beyond the redundancy theory because they have logical consequences that are not consequences of the redundancy biconditional.

Therefore, it seems that not only the correspondence theory is about truth, but also that TM has to be about truth. Without the truth concept, both will lack credibility. Even if this critique may be rejected, there are other that seem to weaken the correspondence theory and the other theories that have as a core the idea of correspondence between truth-bearers and truthmakers.

These two theories claim that the relation between truth-bearer and truthmaker is a strong one. The truthmaker necessitates the truth of the truth-bearer. However, there are some stronger variants of these theories. Armstrong's truthmaker approach is one of them.

According to Armstrong the truthmaker necessitates not only the truth of the truth-bearer, but the truth-bearer itself. The relation between these two entities (truth-bearer and truthmaker) is a strong one, it is internal and necessary. This means that:

“(...) given just the terms of the relation, the relation between them is necessitated.”
(Armstrong, 2004, p. 9)

The problem is that, the truthmaker principle he provides, may be understood in two senses. The principle is:

“ p (a proposition) is true if and only if there exists a T (some entity in the world) such that T necessitates that p and p is true in virtue of T .” (Armstrong, 2004, p. 17)

This formulation leaves open the possibility to understand that the truthmaker necessitates the truth-bearer as an entity. This understanding implies a strong realist view that is applied not only to the world, but also to propositions. In this situation, such a perspective implies the existence of Platonic propositions. Realism about entities as propositions is quite hard to argue for. In this situation, it seems that TM and correspondence theories that claim that the truth relation is mind-independent and that truth-bearers are necessitated by the truthmaker have a lot of work to do in order to prove the existence of such entities.

The truthmaker theory is unable to point out the exact truthmakers for some kinds of propositions. For example, the existential negative propositions are quite problematic for those theories. What truthmaker can a proposition as: ‘Unicorns do not exist’ have? One possible answer is that there is a maximal state of affairs –for example, the world as a whole – which can be a truthmaker for those propositions. This answer may imply that the world may be the truthmaker (and in a way it is) for all true propositions.³⁴

It can be considered that ‘the state of affairs that unicorns do not exist’ may be a possibility to escape this critique. This might be the case. But I think that if one accepts this, that specific state of affairs cannot be something else than a consequence of what actually exists, a consequence of the actual existing states of affairs. There seem to be two possibilities. Either this state of affairs is a consequence of the world as a whole, or of the conjunction of all

³⁴ There are some truthmakers theories that consider that the world is the one and only truthmaker. For more see (Schaffer, 2010).

existing states of affairs.^{35,36} The conjuncts of existing states of affairs do not include a state of affairs about the existence of unicorns, thus, it might be considered that it includes – or, better, it implies – that there is a state of affairs that unicorns do not exist.³⁷ In this situation the state of affairs that unicorns not exist does not differ too much from the state of affairs that Pegasus does not exist. They are both consequences of the conjunction of all existing states of affairs. After all, the world as a whole is a maximal truthmaker for every truth, including the negative existential ones. In this situation it can be considered that the world, being a maximal truthmaker for all truths, necessitates the negative existential truths as well. In this situation, a truthmaker theory fails only to find a minimal, respectively a relevant truthmaker for negative truths, not only for negative existential ones. I think that accepting this would damage the TM. The world understood as a whole would be a trivial truthmaker for all truths. The theory would lose the idea of relevant truthmakers and the relation between truthmakers and truth-bearers would be weakened. In the case of the correspondence theory this seems harder, because the truthmaker should reflect and refer to that exact portion of reality.

Necessary truths are another issue for both the correspondence theory and TM. It seems none of the two theories is able to explain necessary truths. It is quite hard to find a specific state of affairs or fact that corresponds to a necessary truth. It can be assumed that such a truthmaker is found. There would still be the problem of grounding necessary truths on contingent facts.³⁸

³⁵ Both possibilities converge. After all, the conjunction of actual existing states of affairs may be considered the world as a whole, or the other way around.

³⁶ Armstrong (2004, pp. 54-60) considers that a truthmaker for negative propositions is a conjunction of *all* states of affairs that actually exist. Such a conjunction would be a totality fact. I think this might be understood as the world as a whole.

³⁷ The same argument applies for the world as a possible truthmaker for negative truths.

³⁸ It might be argued that deflationism faces a similar issue. This might be the case. However, it is far from being as problematic as for the correspondence theory and for TM. In the case of the last two approaches the relation between truth-bearers and truthmakers is a strong one. It is considered that the truthmaker necessitates the truth of that proposition. However, in the case of deflationism this relation – if it is accepted that there is a relation – is extremely weak and it might even not be defined. In this situation, I strongly believe that deflationism could offer a simple answer based on the reading of the

It can be argued that there are two possible directions to solve this critique. First of them is to accept a strong form of realism. For example, if it is accepted the existence of numbers, then, one may offer a truthmaker for necessary truths about numbers. A second possible solution is to adopt necessitarianism: the idea that everything necessarily exists. These metaphysical views come with their issues, but I accept that they might represent a solution for this problem. It might be suggested a third solution, a possible truthmaker that is necessarily existing, but which is not linked with a specific metaphysical approach. Thus, there might be considered an existing necessary state of affairs independently of necessitarianism. I believe that if necessitarianism is not accepted a necessary state of affairs seems to be impossible.³⁹

Another problem that may raise some issues for these two theories regards paradoxes. The self-referent sentences⁴⁰ that include the truth predicate are problematic for these theories, even if some of them are not paradoxical at all. The notion of groundedness may be introduced. Following Kripke (1975) a sentence is grounded if and only if it does not assert anything about the truth or falsity of another sentence. An advocate of the correspondence theory would accept only grounded sentences to have a truth value. However, there may be found many counterexamples to this view. One may be:

(X) X is either true or untrue.

According to Eklund the advocate of the correspondence theory has three possibilities to face this issue:

T-schema. A deflationist might say that a proposition is necessary true if and only if all of its instances of the T-schema are true.

³⁹ One may consider that there are necessary states of affairs when it comes to necessary objects as numbers. This implies a strong form of realism. However, leaving this aside, this view is not sufficient to explain all necessary truths. Such a view can, at best, explain necessary truths from logic and mathematics.

⁴⁰ The problem of paradoxes is formulated in terms of sentences. I am going to adopt this terminology in order to maintain the coherence of the arguments. Some of the claims I present or make here are not applicable to propositions.

“One is to take the argument at face value, as refuting the correspondence idea (...). A second one is to hold on to this correspondence idea and eject the intuitive judgments about these propositions (Maudlin 2004). A third is to insist that the truth of some ungrounded sentences is after all fully consistent with the correspondence idea. For instance, one can perhaps hold that a sentence saying of itself that it is not both true and untrue is made true by the general feature of non-propositional reality nothing can both be and fail to be the case.” (Eklund, 2012, p. 207)

The no-no paradox is another argument against the theories based on correspondence. This paradox has the following form:

(P₁): P₂ is not true.

(P₂): P₁ is not true.

These sentences are not paradoxical for all truth theories. There is an easy way out of this paradox: assigning different truth values to these sentences. It does not depend which of them is true and which is false, both cases stand. The problem arises when truth is explained using correspondence. According to this theory, a truth-bearer is true in virtue of a truthmaker. That truthmaker is something worldly. In the case of this paradox, any of the two sentences may be considered true. Giving the symmetry between the two sentences there is no reason to decide which of the sentences is true and which is false. The decision seems to be arbitrary. However, a theory based on correspondence considers that truths are necessitated by truthmakers. TM or the correspondence theory cannot point out the exact truthmaker that makes any of the given sentences true. This would mean that they are paradoxical for both already mentioned accounts. Hence, this paradox is problematic for theories that explain truth in terms of correspondence. In this situation:

“But since they are perfectly symmetric, there is nothing in reality that determines one rather than the other to be true, so given their difference in truth value we have a counterexample to correspondence.” (Eklund, 2012, p. 207)

Thus, it seems that theories based on the correspondence between truthmakers and truth-bearers have their weak points. They are unable to provide a specific truthmaker for different kinds of true propositions, as negative existential or necessary ones. When it comes to paradoxes, both the correspondence theory and TM seem to be unable to solve some of

them. Even more, there are some sentences that are paradoxical especially for these theories, as it was the case of the no-no paradox.

The coherence theory claims that truth is defined in terms of coherence with other propositions. One obvious critique occurs immediately. The Bishop Stubbs objection⁴¹ is an example provided by Russell (1910, pp. 150-169). Every proposition is coherent with some set of other propositions. This means that even the false propositions are coherent with some other ones. Thus, coherence is not sufficient for truth. However, at first sight the coherentist may have a way out of this:

“(...) insist that truth consists in coherence with a privileged collection of propositions. The question is whether that is a workable way out. (...) what accounts for the truth of the proposition that a given collection of propositions is privileged?” (Eklund, 2012, p. 200)

It seems that the coherence theory of truth has problems in explaining error and falsity. The same problem occurs for a form of the identity theory. The identity theory considers true propositions and facts to be identical. If this is understood as taking facts to be primary – in this situation, true propositions would be considered facts – then it is obvious that false propositions cannot be considered facts (Eklund, 2012, p. 201). The second interpretation of the identity theory is to consider propositions to be primary. In this case, facts are reduced to true propositions. This approach does not have a problem explaining false propositions. This interpretation has another weak point. If one is taking the identity theory to be understood in the second sense, then the truth is not obviously intrinsic to the truth-bearer. This leaves open the possibility to be understood based on “how things stand in propositional reality” (Eklund, 2012, p. 201).

To sum up, the correspondence theory of truth and TM do not seem to have a truthmaker for both necessary and negative existential truths. These theories have a hard time giving a proper explanation for paradoxes. The no-no paradox is able to raise some serious issues for both theories. The coherence theory of truth has a problem in explaining falsity and error. A form of the identity theory that takes facts to be primary has to face the same issue. Another form of the same theory that takes propositions to be primary loses the main idea of the theory. Taking facts to be just true propositions does not support the idea that truth is intrinsic to the truth-bearer.

⁴¹ ‘Bishop Stubbs was hanged for murder’ is the example of a false proposition.

In conclusion, it seems that all these theories have to face some serious problems. However, I did not mean to try to prove that they are mistaken and that they are not utilizable, or that they do not have their good parts. My aim was to prove that there are situations when these theories fail. When it comes to the minimalist theory, it does not have to face these specific issues. This, however, does not mean it does not have its own weak points. I am going to present those in the last part of this chapter.

1.3 The main concepts of minimalism

Deflationism about truth appeared as an alternative solution to classical theories about truth. As I mentioned in the previous section, all these theories have their weak points. Deflationism solves almost all of them. It might be argued that it does not properly solve some of them, because they do not even occur in such a theory. This might be the case. What a deflationary account aims is to provide a truth theory that is usable and free from any metaphysical or epistemological commitments.

The classical theories claim they want to discover the hidden nature of truth. On the contrary, deflationism claims that truth does not have any hidden or substantive nature. This claim may be understood in two ways. Simmons (1999, footnote 2) presents two ways of understanding the idea that truth has no substantial nature. A stronger one is that it has no nature at all. I think the advocates of the redundancy theory – as Ramsey (1927) – or the prosentential one – as Grover (Grover, Camp Jr., Belnap Jr., 1975) – would accept this. A weaker interpretation is that it has a nature, but it is trivial. Among the ones that accept this is also Horwich.

There are many approaches of truth that are considered deflationary: redundancy theory, prosententialism, disquotationalism⁴², performative approach⁴³, and minimalism. According to Horwich there are some advantages of the minimalist theory and those other theories mentioned above. First of all, minimalism deals with the actual truth concept, the one used everyday. Also, it does not explain truth using notions that should at their turn be

⁴² For more see (Quine, 1970)

⁴³ For more see (Strawson, 1950)

explained in terms of truth. This theory admits that there is no explicit definition of truth and considers the role of truth as a device of generalization (Horwich, 2010, pp. 35-36, note. 1).

Horwich's theory of truth has as a central claim the idea that all that can be said about truth consists in the T-schema and its instantiations.

The T-schema:

(T): 'p' is true if and only if p

In this formulation, 'p' abbreviates 'the proposition that p' and if and only if (\leftrightarrow) is the material biconditional. Horwich does not provide an explanation about why the T-schema holds. When Schantz presented Horwich's account, he claimed that:

“(...) we should neither expect not desire a deeper explanation of why it is that the equivalence schema holds. The search for a finite body of general principles that explain the minimal theory is a forlorn hope. The propositions of the minimal theory are much too simple to require any explanation. And yet, he (*i.e. Horwich*) asserts that the minimal theory provides, in combination with theories of other phenomena, a satisfactory explanation of all facts involving truth.” (Schantz, 2002, p. 88)

It might be argued that minimalism is an account that does not deserve to be considered philosophically valuable. However, Horwich claims that the minimalist conception does not seem too weak to be philosophically significant. According to Horwich:

“(...) our thesis is that it is possible to explain all the facts involving truth on the basis of the minimal theory. (...) most of the interesting fact to be explained concern relations between truth and certain other matters; and in such cases it is perfectly proper to make use of theories about these other matters, and not to expect all the explanatory work to be done by the theory of truth in isolation. When this methodological point is borne in mind it becomes more plausible to suppose that the explanatory duties of a theory of truth can be carried out by the minimal theory.” (Horwich, 1998a, pp. 6-7)

In this situation, minimalism together with accounts for other notions is able to explain all the facts about truth.

Deflationary theories of truth have two main parts: one that presents the meaning of the truth concept, and another that describes its role. The meaning of the notion is expressed by the T-schema, and as stated by Horwich, that is all that can be said significantly about truth. The function of truth is “to enable the explicit formulation of schematic generalizations” (Horwich, 1998a, p. 37). The idea that if someone knows and accepts all the applications of the T-schema does not refer to the infinite conjunction of those applications, but rather to the fact that the language users have to know the T-schema and be willing to apply it every time they recognize a proposition. Horsten considers that from a deflationary perspective knowing the meaning of truth can be similar with knowing a rule (Horsten, 2011, p. 61).

Minimalism does not aim to provide necessary and sufficient conditions for the applicability of the truth predicate, but it offers an analysis of the meaning of the truth predicate (Horwich, 1998a, p. 33). Horwich claims that:

“The minimalist account of what it is to know the meaning of the truth predicate does not provide an *analysis* and does not enable us to specify in non-circular terms the *content* of attributions of truth. This is precisely what distinguishes it from traditional approaches.” (Horwich, 1998a, p. 36)

The minimalist approach is interested in both the concept of truth and the truth predicate. According to Horwich, his approach will provide the meaning and function of the truth predicate, and also the grasp upon the concept (Horwich, 1998a, p. 37). I believe that Horwich’s theory is more interested in the truth predicate, rather than the concept. The theory seems to be more plausible applied to the predicate; even the main points of the theory seem to follow this idea. The theory approaches truth extensionally and I find it to be more suitable to deal with the predicate, rather than the concept.

Often predicates are linked with properties. The fact that minimalism is more inclined to be used as an approach of the truth predicate, does not imply that truth is considered to be a genuine property. This does not mean that the deflationist jumps to the other extreme conclusion – that truth is not a property. Minimalism denies that truth is a genuine property and that it is not a property at all. The only left possibility is to accept that truth is a trivial property. According to Horwich:

“What the minimalist wishes to emphasize, however, is that truth is not a *complex* or *naturalistic* property but a property of some other kind. (Hartry Field (1992) suggests the term ‘*logical property*’.)” (Horwich, 1998a, p. 37)

A property that is not genuine may be considered transparent. Metaphysically transparent properties:

“(…) have no underlying nature that isn’t revealed in our grasp of the concept; grasping the relevant concept tells us the whole essence of the property.” (Lynch, 2009, p. 106f, apud. Eklund, 2017, p. 9).

Deflationary theories tend to make three types of claims (Eklund, 2017, pp. 2-4). The first one is *exhaustion*; this represents the idea that truth is exhausted by the T-schema. A second one is that truth is just an *expressive device*, or a logical one and it does not have other function. Finally, the third one is that truth is not a *genuine property*. These can be found in Horwich’s account too.

Horwich (1998a, p. 5) accepts the equivalence between:

(8) p

(9) The proposition that p is true

In his opinion nothing more about truth needs to be assumed. As I already mentioned, Horwich considers that truth is applied to propositions. He does not deny the fact that utterances, mental attitudes and other types of entities may also be assigned a truth value.

Propositions are independent of a specific language. This may be one reason why Horwich prefers propositions over sentences as truth-bearers. A theory of truth is often applied to a specific language. In this situation, a non-English speaker who knows the T-schema would be able to apply it to an English proposition. Thus, that person will know that the schema expresses a truth, but will not know *what* truth it expresses unless it will be translated (Dumitru, 2004, p. 37). He will have a correct application of the truth predicate, but not the meaning of the truth-bearer.

From a minimalist point of view, the truth function is to enable the explicit formulation of some generalizations.⁴⁴ These generalizations would be impossible to be achieved without

⁴⁴ It was argued that truth is not sufficient to fulfill its function. Truth is not enough to reach those general conclusions. This is one of the main critiques that the deflationist has to face. I am going to return and develop this in the last section of this chapter.

the truth predicate. As Horwich stated it, the *raison d'être* of the truth notion is expressive simplification, it shortens some infinite formulations. For example (Horwich, 1998a, pp. 3-4):

(I₁) Everything is red or not red, happy or not happy, alive or not alive... etc.

May be expressed using a finite formulation as follows:

Starting with the first conjunct:

(C₁) Everything is red or not red

Applying the equivalence schema:

(C_{1T}) 'Everything is red or not red' is true.

The other instances may be treated similarly, in the end, a general claim may be formulated (the law of excluded middle):

(EM) Every proposition of the form: 'everything is F or not F' is true.

Because truth has no underlying nature and his only function is to make possible some generalizations, it seems obvious to ask if it is possible to be removed. Horwich answers negatively. There are some cases in which it is clear that truth cannot be removed. Those examples were used especially as critiques to the redundancy theory of truth. However, minimalist theory does not apply "only in those cases in which truth is attributed to an articulate proposition" (Horwich, 1998a, p. 31). For example:

(10) Pythagoras' theorem is true.⁴⁵

In this situation 'true' cannot be removed.⁴⁶ If the truth predicate would not be useful it would fall out of use. This does not imply that truth has other functions. Its only function is to be used to reach some generalizations. Truth is understood as a logical device.

⁴⁵ This example follows Horwich's one: 'Einstein's law is true' (Horwich, 1998a, p.31).

⁴⁶ It might be argued that a reformulation of the proposition from which 'true' would be removable is possible. I agree with this. A possible one could be:

(x) (If x is a proposition of the form (If Pythagoras' theorem is the proposition that p, then p), then x is true), or even more general: (x) (If x is a proposition of the form < ... p... >, then x is true) (following Horwich, 1998a, p. 33)

Because of this main function the truth predicate is not considered redundant; whence, the difference between minimalism and the redundancy theory of truth. The redundancy theory considers that ‘it is true that p’ and ‘p’ mean the same thing. On the other hand, Horwich considers something similar (but he keeps the truth predicate in the language because it has a function): that ‘p’ and ‘it is true that p’ are necessarily and a priori materially equivalent (Horwich, 2004, p. 9, note 3). To sum up, a minimalist would claim that the truth predicate is necessary and it cannot be removed from the language without diminishing the expressiveness of that language.

In order to be able to complete its role, the T-schema seems to have to be applicable unrestrictedly. But there are some problematic instances; those are not accepted in the theory. For example, those uses of T-schema that lead to paradoxes are considered not to have an instance of the T-schema. This class of excluded instances should be as small as possible, according to Horwich (1998a, p. 31).⁴⁷

Horwich’s theory wants to accommodate the *correspondence intuition*.⁴⁸ This intuition is the idea that truths correspond in some sense on reality. The correspondence theory of truth involves, as Horwich mentioned (Horwich, 1998a, pp. 116), two claims:

- (1) Truths correspond to reality.
- (2) This correspondence is what truth essentially is.

What deflationism does is to reject the second, but tries to accommodate the first one (naming it the *correspondence intuition*). In this case, there is no contradiction between the idea that in a way truth depends on reality and the minimalist theory of truth. This dependency is not a part of the core of the theory, but it may be added to it. The extra notions used by the

However, there are some propositions that cannot be reformulated in this way. For example, the general claims as: ‘Everything that Mary said on 3rd of September 2018 is true’. In this situation, the conjunction of everything that Mary said on that specific date would be too long to be expressible. Because of propositions like this, truth has a specific function in a language that cannot be fulfilled without it. Thus, Horwich’s conclusion is that truth cannot be removed.

⁴⁷ Horwich’s solutions to paradoxes are quite problematic. I am going to return to them in the second chapter.

⁴⁸ This *correspondence intuition* does not commit to a full correspondence theory, or to a certain metaphysical approach. I am going to develop these ideas in the third chapter.

correspondence theory are not necessarily needed, they tend to “introduce unnecessary complexity” (Horwich, 1998a, p. 117).

One question that might rise is if minimalism accepts that truths correspond to facts, why it does not have to face the same problems as the correspondence theory? A first possible answer is that minimalism does not define truth based on this correspondence; thus, it does not have to go in depth with the explanations. A second one is that the correspondence theory is quite different from the correspondence intuition. The correspondence theory is stronger than the intuition. It is quite similar with the distinction between realism as a proper metaphysical view and a form of common sense realism. The correspondence intuition expresses the idea that truth-bearers and truthmakers are related, that the truth value of a truth-bearer is not assigned arbitrarily – in most of the cases. This does not imply that this relation is what truth essentially is, or that truth has to be defined appealing to the idea of correspondence. It also does not state how strong or weak this relation is. In this case, I do not think that a minimalist should face the same problems as an advocate of the correspondence theory of truth. The minimalist accepts the intuition that truths are not independent of truthmakers, but he is not interested in going in depth with this. For a minimalist, this is just a common sense intuition, not a basis for defining truth.

Minimalism is suitable as a starting point for many approaches. This may be one of the reasons why it should be preferred to a substantive theory of truth. According to Horwich (2008, p. 261) and Asay (2013, p. 126) truthmaker theories do not aim to articulate the concept of truth, they rather already assume such a concept.

“The thought that truths are made true by reality cannot reveal the nature of truth because it must already take for granted some antecedent notion of truth, and there is no reason why that notion cannot be deflationary.” (Asay, 2013, p. 125)

In this case, there is not a problem to consider that truthmaker theories might assume a truth as it is viewed by the deflationism. Even more, both authors consider that the best way to develop a truthmaker theory might be to assume a deflationary truth and build on it the rest of the theory. This might be one more reason to prefer a deflationary theory, rather than a substantive one.

Thus, minimalism might be used as a basis for many developments. Starting with a deflationist basis one might accommodate the correspondence intuition, or the idea that truths

depend (in a way) on reality. This only means that deflationism is compatible with different perspectives and it can be used as a starting point. A substantive theory of truth seems to raise too many problems and might be unable to solve them, as it was already presented. Accepting a deflationary theory of truth, one escapes from all the problems that haunt the substantive theories, but this does not mean that a deflationary theory of truth does not have its own issues. For all that, it seems that deflationism is more permissive and leads an open road for different perspectives and further developments; thus, it seems plausible to accept a deflationary theory of truth against a substantive one.

To sum up, minimalism aims to deal both with the concept and with the truth predicate. The T-schema provides the meaning of the predicate and a grasp of the concept. Truth does not have a hidden or substantive nature. It might be considered a property, but not a genuine one; it is rather a transparent one. Even if the minimal theory explains truth trivially, and does not require an elaborate terminology, it is impossible to formulate. This is because of the infinite instantiations of the T-schema. Deflationary theories – including Horwich's one – claim that truth may be defined without appealing to any metaphysical or epistemological commitments.

Linking this section with the previous one, someone could ask: should minimalism be considered a better choice than a substantive theory of truth? In my opinion there are some strong arguments to sustain a positive answer to this question. First of all, minimalism succeeds in offering an account of truth that is easy to use. Deflating the terminology used to explain truth, makes the concept easy to be incorporated in a philosophical discussion or account. From a logical perspective, truth becomes easy utilizable.

Secondly, from the same reason, the concept is compatible with many views. This leaves open many possibilities to develop the minimalist approach and to link it with other and different approaches. Truth is metaphysically and epistemologically thin. Because of this, the minimalist theory may be compatible, for example, with realism, or anti-realism.

Thirdly, it seems that minimalism is able to avoid the issues that occur for the substantive theories. This approach does not have to offer a specific truthmaker for truths and because of this the problem of the negative existential and necessary truths seems to vanish. Minimalism can easily be extended with a similar T-schema for falsity, thus, it does not have a problem to explain falsity. Because truth is not linked with any other notions, it does not have

to explain error in terms of knowledge. It might be argued that minimalism is able to pass these challenges because they do not occur in a deflationary theory. This might be the case, but I do not think that this diminishes the conclusion.

This does not mean that minimalism is flawless. This theory has its weak points. I am going to discuss some of them in the next section. My aim was to underline the fact that between a substantive theory and a deflationary one, the second one seems to be the better option. This does not mean it is perfect. Despite those weaknesses, minimalism keeps its virtues and remains a better option than a substantive theory of truth.

1.4 Some critiques of minimalism

In this section I am going to point out some issues that may arise in a deflationary theory of truth. Even if this theory is able to avoid many of the problems that haunt the classical theories, it seems that it has its own problems. I would not try to prove that minimalism is able to avoid all of its issues. My aim for this section is just to point out some of the matters that may occur if truth is understood from a deflationary point of view.

A first issue that may occur is linked with the claim that the T-schema exhausts the notion of truth. If this is taken to mean that it exhausts the concept of truth, then from this it does not seem to follow that the property of being true is not a genuine one. Quoting Eklund:

“(...) it is generally not the case that if a predicate is introduced by the stipulation that it makes such-and-such sentences true or such-and-such schemata valid, the predicate does not stand for a (full-blooded) property. Instead the natural conclusion is simply that the predicate stands for a property which satisfies the conditions mentioned.” (Eklund, 2012, p. 202)

Thus, from the minimalism’s claim – that truth is exhausted by the T-schema – does not seem to follow the conclusion that truth is a trivial or logical property. If this claim is understood in the sense that was mentioned above, then this is compatible with the correspondence theory (Eklund, 2017, p. 6).

On the other hand, the idea of exhausting the notion may regard the property of truth. In this situation it seems that the claim does not succeed in exhausting the property, because

there are other facts about it that are not entailed by the T-schema and its instances (Eklund, 2012, pp. 202-203)

The notion of revelation may be brought into discussion in order to clear the issue. However, it seems only to complicate the problem. It might be said that the property of truth is fully revealed by the grasp of the concept (Eklund, 2012, p. 203). Revelation is understood either too narrow, or too broad. The way out may be to appeal to the notion of ‘essential feature(s)’. This notion of essence is not the same with the metaphysical necessity. Thus, the truth concept may be considered revelatory regarding the essential features of the property. In this situation, it seems that the notion of revelation is not needed anymore; the one of essential features may do the whole work. Sadly, this does not solve all the problems for the minimalist:

“Deflationism is often supposed to make truth metaphysically innocuous and safe. But understood as proposed, deflationism carries ideological commitment to a metaphysics of essence.” (Eklund, 2012, p. 203)

Thus, it seems that the minimalist cannot consider that the T-schema exhausts only the concept of truth, because his claim would be compatible with views as the correspondence theory when it comes to analyzing the property. If he is adding that the already mentioned schema also characterizes the property, then he has to face the problems already mentioned.⁴⁹

As I already mentioned Horwich takes propositions to be the main truth-bearers. He does not deny that utterances and mental states can also be considered true and tries to provide a minimalist account for these truth-bearers too. Field (1992) underlines some weak points of the approach Horwich provides for utterances. There is an adaptation of the T-schema for utterances:

(T_u) Utterance u is true if and only if p.

⁴⁹ I fully agree with this critique. However, I also think that the minimalism may have a way out of this by adding to his theory the claim that the property of being true is just a logical one. This claim should not necessary follow from the initial one that the T-schema and its instantiation exhaust the truth notion. In this situation, it might not be the case that a minimalist has to reach to essence or revelation. By doing this, it is true that he – in a way – inflates his theory, adding this extra claim. I find this solution to be less damaging than using notions as essence.

Where ‘p’ is the translation of the utterance ‘u’ into a specific language.⁵⁰ This schema, as the one applied to propositions, exhausts the notion of truth for utterances. Also, a similar one may be constructed for mental states.

The notion of translation is introduced, such as:

(CS) If ‘p’ translates u then u is true if and only if p (Field, 1992, p. 324)

Translation has to be explained without reaching to truth to avoid circularity. If truth would be used, then:

“The notion of truth would be needed to determine which are the appropriate instances of the schema that is supposedly explaining what truth is.” (Field, 1992, p. 324)

The notion of ‘sameness in overall use’ that can be employed in order to solve the issue has its own problem. According to Field this kind of notion is strongly linked with theories as the correspondence one. Horwich aims to develop the minimalist theory for propositions in order to incorporate utterances in his theory. He does so starting from the minimalist approach and some ‘uncontroversial assumptions’ (Field, 1992, p. 325). However, it seems that the view he provides has many problems and it is not found to be satisfactory.

The main issue seems to be explaining the notion of translation. It seems that the notion of use is not the best attempt to solve the problem. Horwich claims that two utterances express the same proposition if and only if they have the same ‘use’ (Field, 1992, p. 327).

I think Horwich considers ‘use’ as strongly linked with his theory of meaning. It was argued that a deflationist cannot explain meaning using truth. Because of this, Horwich considers meaning to be use and develops such an account.⁵¹ In this situation, if ‘use’ is understood as offering a meaning, then it seems that translation is explained appealing to meaning. Horwich provides a theory of meaning that is explained independently of truth, thus the definition is not circular. To conclude, the minimalist theory for utterances and mental states may be derived from the minimalist theory for propositions. In order to be deduced from the minimalist theory for proposition, the notion of meaning may be used. In this situation, minimalism may be extended to other truth-bearers. However, it should be accepted that it is not as ‘minimal’ as the approach for propositions.

⁵⁰ This is the language in which the truth value is assigned.

⁵¹ I am not going in depth with this here. I am going to discuss the problem of meaning in a deflationary theory in the third chapter.

One of the most significant critiques against minimalism regards the role of the truth predicate. As I already mentioned, a deflationist considers that the sole role of truth is to make possible some generalizations. Truth is a logical or generalization device. Minimalists claim that truth is able to express generalizations based on their instantiations. This idea was heavily criticized. Gupta claims that deflationists do not make a distinction between the instances of a conjunction and the universal statement. According to Gupta, one should draw such a distinction, because the instances of a conjunction and the universal statement do not always imply the same things (Gupta, 1993, p. 63). According to Gupta:

“Horwich’s argument presupposes that a generalization is equivalent to the conjunction of its instances in a sense strong enough to guarantee that an explanation of one is an explanation of the other. (...) We can explain each instance of the generalization ‘everyone on the boat died’ by providing a separate explanation for the death of each person on the boat (...). But these separate explanations do not necessarily explain the generalization. The generalization may in fact have no explanation at all – it may be true accidentally. Or it may have an altogether different explanation (...). In any case, an explanation of the instances is not necessarily an explanation of the generalization” (Gupta, 1993, p. 67)

It seems that in order to be able to reach these generalizations the minimalist would need more than the truth predicate. Starting with some instances of a conjunction, in order to derive a universal claim, one would need an extra premise. Going back to Horwich’s example:

- (a) ‘Everything is red or not red’ is true.
- (b) ‘Everything is black or not black’ is true.

.
.
.

Extra premise: (a), (b), ... are *all* the propositions of this form.

C: Every proposition of the form ‘F or not F’ is true.

Adding the extra premise would make the jump from the instantiations to the general claim to be correct. It might be argued that the added premise is too strong. It might be weakened in order to incorporate a form of epistemicism.⁵² It could be something of the form:

Extra premise_e: (a), (b), ... are *all* the *knowable* propositions of this form.⁵³

Horwich offers a different formulation for the extra premise. The idea behind his formulation is the same. Minimalism is able to explain the acceptance of every instance of the conjunction, but does not have the resources to explain the acceptance of the generalization. Horwich is well-aware of this problem. He provided a response, adding the following additional premise:

“Whenever someone is disposed to accept, for any *proposition* of type K, that it is G (and to do so for uniform reasons) then he will be disposed to accept that every K-proposition is G.” (Horwich, 2010, p. 84).

This should be applied restrictively. The restriction is based on epistemicism. This might be formulated as it follows:

C: “We cannot conceive of there being additional Ks – beyond those Ks we are disposed to believe are Gs – which we would not have the same sort of reason to believe are Gs” (Armour-Garb, 2010, p. 699)⁵⁴

These two claims would be the solution proposed by Horwich. It should be noted that the first one must not contain truth, to avoid circularity. Horwich seems to solve the problem that could damage his theory.

One could ask why is this such a big problem for a minimalist? There are many reasons. First of all, Armour-Garb (2010) considers that a theory of truth has to explain all facts about truth. The generalizations that involve the truth notion are among those facts about truth that have to be explained. Explain – in this situation – means derive. It might be considered that if a theory fails to do so, it is too weak (Armour-Garb, 2010, p. 697).

⁵² I discuss more about epistemicism in the second chapter, as a solution to the Liar. For more about this see (Armour-Garb, 2004) and (Armour-Garb and Beall, 2005)

⁵³ Or: There cannot be conceived that there are additional propositions of this form.

⁵⁴ Armour-Garb uses a different formulation. His formulation is about F-propositions. In order to keep the coherence of the discussion, I maintain Horwich’s initial formulation.

This might not be the case. It can be accepted that for every true claim, there is a fact about it. For example, for ‘Dogs are mammalians’ it is a fact about this specific truth. The fact is applied to the proposition already mentioned. However, it does not follow that a truth theory has to explain this. A truth theory does not have to say anything about biology.⁵⁵ In this situation, Armour-Garb’s claim fails. This does not mean that the generalization problem is not a serious issue for minimalism. The argument I am going to present next seems to be more than enough to endorse the idea that the generalization problem raises some serious issues for minimalism.

Secondly, minimalism differs from the redundancy theory of truth by offering truth a specific function. The truth predicate is a generalization device. If it fails to fulfill its function, then minimalism does not have any reason to keep the predicate into the language. In this situation, it would be extremely similar with the redundancy theory of truth.

Some authors do not accept Horwich’s solution for the generalization problem. Armour-Garb (2004, 2010) is among these. The author considers that this deflationary theory fails to explain the acceptance of a priori truth-involving propositions (Armour-Garb, 2010, p. 698). The T-schema does not contain any universal claim. According to the author:

“(…) there cannot be a valid derivation of a universal generalization from a set of particular propositions unless that set is inconsistent.” (Armour-Garb, 2010, p. 698)

The additional premise that must be added to make possible the jump from those particular instances to the general claim should not mention the word ‘true’ (Armour-Garb, 2010, p. 699). Armour-Garb claims that the extra premise fails to avoid circularity, because it needs to contain a truth predicate. The extra premise does not seem to be able to work by itself. One would not be inclined to accept that all K-propositions are G from the fact that any K-proposition is G. One may accept this in the following situation:

(P₂) “For any K-proposition, whenever someone is disposed to accept that it is G (and to do so for uniform reasons) and is aware of the fact that, for any K-proposition, she is disposed to accept that it is G then she will be disposed to accept that every K-proposition is G.”(Armour-Garb, 2010, p. 700)

⁵⁵ I have to thank Matti Eklund for this idea.

In the new formulation ‘being aware’ occurs. According to Armour-Garb ‘being aware’ is connected with truth. Because G may also be replaced with ‘true’, then (P₂) could have the following form:

(P₂^{*}) “For any K-proposition, whenever someone is disposed to accept that it is true (and to do so for uniform reasons) and is aware of the fact that she is disposed to accept that every K-proposition is true then she will be disposed to accept that every K-proposition is true.” (Armour-Garb, 2010, p. 700)

In this situation, the extra premise is obviously circular. It starts with the awareness that for any K-proposition, one is disposed to accept that it is true. The reached conclusion is that one is aware that he is disposed to accept that any K-proposition is true. According to Armour-Garb, this proves that Horwich’s solution is ‘viciously circular’ (Armour-Garb, 2010, p. 701).

In a previous paper, Armour-Garb (2004) considered that Horwich’s solution might work if the Liar paradox would not pose an issue. The minimalist could also express these generalizations if he is willing to apply unrestrictedly the T-schema. Horwich denies this because of the paradoxes like the Liar. Horwich offers two solutions for the Liar paradox.⁵⁶ Both of them are based on the idea that the paradoxical instances of the T-schema should be banned. Thus, paradoxical sentences would not have instances of the T-schema.

If the T-schema would be applied restrictedly, then some of the truth-bearers would lack instances of it. This applies to the general claims as well. For example, ‘Everything Mary said yesterday is true’ would lack an instance of the T-schema if one of its conjuncts would lack it (i.e. if Mary uttered a paradoxical sentence yesterday). In this situation, the extra premise would not be able to solve the generalization problem. Any solution based on the restriction of the T-schema would ban more than the paradoxical instances. In this situation, truth would not be able to fulfill its role even with the help of an additional premise. Armour-Garb considers that the best way for a minimalist is to accept dialetheism and be able to apply T-schema without any restriction. In this situation, the additional premise would not pose any

⁵⁶ I am going to return to this in the next chapter.

special problem. The instantiation of the T-schema would be unrestricted, thus, truth would be able to fulfill its role.

In the next chapter I am going to develop the solution proposed by Armour-Garb. I consider his solution to be the best one when it comes to facing paradoxes. In this situation, it seems that minimalism is able to solve two problems with one solution.

To conclude, it seems that minimalism has its own issues. A first one would focus on the idea that the T-schema and its instantiations exhaust the notion of truth. It seems that minimalism has to understand this to explain both the concept and the property. In this situation, an advocate of this deflationary theory has to reach to notions as ‘essence’. This step is quite hard to be made because minimalism aims to present a notion of truth that is independent of metaphysics.

A second problem is how a minimalist can deal with other truth-bearers. When it comes to explain truth for utterances, Horwich appeals to translation. He explains translation based on use. Field argued that the notion of use is strongly linked with substantive theories, as the correspondence theory. However, I believe that Horwich’s notion of use is rather linked with his theory of meaning. In this situation, I do not see a problem for a minimalist to explain translation based on meaning. At best, it could be argued that the theory is not as ‘minimal’ as the one for propositions. But it should be noted that the theory of truth for utterances is a development of the initial theory for propositions.

Thirdly, a minimalist has a hard time explaining how truth is able to fulfill its role and reach general conclusions. Horwich’s response to this is to add an additional premise. Authors like Armour-Garb argued against this response. The premise may be considered circular. It seems that the best way for a minimalist would be to apply unrestrictedly the T-schema and embrace dialetheism. Thus, minimalism is able to avoid many – but not all – of the critiques that are raised against it. As I already mentioned, my aim is not to argue for minimalism or to prove it is the best truth theory. My aim is to provide a basis for further developments of the theory. In order to be able to develop a theory, one should admit that it is coherent and is able to solve a majority of its problems.

Conclusion

In this first chapter I presented the main points of the minimalist theory of truth. The first section was focused on different possible truth-bearers. While Tarski and Kripke consider sentences to be the most suitable truth-bearers, Horwich takes propositions to be the main truth-bearers. The discussion of paradoxes is often formulated in terms of sentences. Minimalism is primarily a truth theory for proposition. However, Horwich does not deny the fact that there are also other possible candidates for this function. The author presents a development of his theory for utterances and mental states. I referred to propositions as truth-bearers in this chapter. In the next one, because I am going to present how different truth theories aim to solve the Liar, I will move the discussion to sentences. In the last chapter, I am going to focus again on minimalism, thus, I am going to return to propositions. The discussion does not change. Deflationism would remain a truth theory for propositions. Its coherence does not suffer if it is also applied to sentences.⁵⁷

The second section aimed to offer some arguments against the substantive theories of truth. Theories as the correspondence one, Armstrong's truthmaker theory and the coherence theory of truth have to deal with some issues. The first two have a hard time pointing out the exact truthmaker for some truths. For example, for necessary truths and for negative existential ones. They also have issues in solving different paradoxes. The no-no paradox is often used as an argument against these theories. The coherence theory has some problems in explaining error and falsity. All these theories have their weaknesses and they do not seem to be able to explain the whole range of facts about truth.

The main concepts of minimalism are presented in the third section. This theory claims that the notion of truth is exhausted by the T-schema and its instantiations. Horwich considers that his theory deals with both the truth concept and truth predicate. Truth does not have a substantive nature. However, this does not necessarily imply that it does not have a nature at all. It might be considered that truth has a trivial nature. If this is accepted, then it also might be accepted that truth can be a property. Such a property is not a genuine one, but rather a trivial one. Truth might be considered a metaphysically transparent property. Horwich's

⁵⁷ Sometimes minimalism is considered a deflationary theory for propositions. A similar theory is used for sentences – disquotationalism.

theory differs from the redundancy theory of truth because it considers truth not to be eliminable from a language. Minimalism offers truth a function. From a deflationary point of view, truth is a generalization device. It makes possible some generalizations that would not be reachable without it. Horwich wants to accommodate the correspondence intuition. This means that minimalism does not deny the fact that truths correspond to facts. This leaves open many possibilities for deflationism. This theory is compatible with many other approaches and this permits different further developments. It also should be added that minimalism does not suffer from the same problems as the substantive theories. These are some of the arguments in favor of deflationism, rather than a substantive theory of truth.

However, this does not mean that deflationism is flawless. The fourth section deals with some of the critiques that were raised against minimalism. I presented three main issues. The claim that the T-schema and its instantiations exhaust the notion of truth is the first of them. If this is understood as exhausting only the concept of truth, then it is compatible with substantive theories of truth, as the correspondence one. On the other hand, if it is also accepted that it exhausts the property as well, then it seems that minimalism has to introduce some further concepts. One possible concept is 'essence'. This is quite problematic, because it implies a metaphysical commitment about it. A second critique is raised by Field (1992) and it is about other possible truth-bearers. Field claims that utterances and mental states are the main truth-bearers. Horwich offers a development of minimalism for these. The notion of translation is introduced. It is explained appealing to 'use'. Field claims that use is often linked with substantive theories. I think that the notion of use is rather linked with Horwich's theory of meaning. In this situation, it does not seem to be problematic. Thirdly, the most common critique against minimalism focuses on the generalization problem. Truth may not be sufficient to reach some general conclusions. Horwich's answer – adding an extra premise – is not generally accepted. Armour-Garb (2004) argues that Horwich's solution might work if the T-schema is not restricted. The solution suggests that a minimalist should also accept dialetheism. In this situation, the T-schema is applied unrestrictedly and this also solves the problem of paradoxes.

It seems that deflationism is able to avoid some of these issues. Adding to this that it was already argued that such a theory is preferable to a substantive one; it seems that it is worth to try to develop this theory. However, as I already mentioned, I do not want to claim

that this theory is flawless. I think that it deserves attention and it is quite interesting because of its possible developments. There is one more issue that a minimalist has to face: paradoxes. This brings us to the next chapter.

Chapter 2 Semantic Paradoxes and Deflationism

Introduction

In this chapter I am going to discuss what is the best solution for the minimalist in order to solve the Liar. All truth theories face the problem posed by the paradoxes. A possible way to choose between different theories of truth may be through their solution to the well-known self-referential semantic paradox: The Liar.⁵⁸ There are many semantic paradoxes, but in this chapter I am going to focus on the minimalist's approach of the Liar. In order to fulfill my aim I will start by presenting the Tarskian (Tarski, 1944) and Kripkean (Kripke, 1975) approaches to the Liar. Both approaches are part of the basis of the minimalist's response for this paradox. They will facilitate the understanding of the latter one. It should be mentioned that the minimalist approach will be addressed not only based on Paul Horwich's answer, but also through further developments of the theory.

The Tarskian theory of truth presents the truth predicate as a semantic one. Semantics is concerned with the relation between signifiers (e.g. words, symbols) and their denotation. A semantic predicate cannot be used in a semantically closed language⁵⁹, because it leads to paradox. His approach starts from the stratification of language. This leads to a hierarchy of languages; every single one with its own truth predicate presented in the next language which acts as a meta-language. The Kripkean approach maintains the Tarskian hierarchy. However, there are some main differences between these two theories. One is that Kripke proves that a language can contain its own truth predicate. Kripke's solution to the Liar, using truth-value gaps, incorporates the idea that some sentences may not have a truth value. There are some pros and cons for both Tarski's and Kripke's approaches. They are going to be presented in a section that aims to briefly compare these two theories.

⁵⁸ The reason I chose to focus on the Liar is that many forms of deflationism (i.e. minimalism, the prosentential theory of truth) discussed this particular paradox. In order to be able to offer a comparative perspective, I decided to limit the discussion here to the Liar. This does not shade the importance of other semantic paradoxes for a theory of truth. But I think the Liar is enough to provide a general view over the possible responses of different truth theories to paradoxes.

⁵⁹ A semantically closed language is a language that contains not only its expressions, but names for these expressions and semantic terms referring to those expressions.

Deflationary theories of truth had two different responses to the Liar. A first class of deflationists considers that this paradox does not represent a problem for their theories. On the other hand, other deflationists, among who is the minimalist approach, find the Liar to be a serious issue. Dorothy Grover (2005) is an advocate of the prosentential theory of truth. This theory considers that truth works as a prosentence; similarly with predicates. The sentence resulted by adding the truth predicate to a referring expression, has the same content as the sentence picked out by the initial referring expression.⁶⁰ A prosentence does not have a meaning by itself; it takes its meaning from its antecedent. Grover considers that the truth predicate used in the Liar fails to pick up an antecedent, thus it does not have operative meaning. The operative meaning comes from using a word in a specific context.

Gupta (2005) considers that a specialist – not a deflationist – should give the proper answers to the paradoxes. A deflationist should not be concerned of how the paradoxes can be avoided. His only interest is how the T-schema should be interpreted in order to give the meaning of the truth predicate and how the deflationary conclusions are reached. Paradoxes do not count in as an issue for deflationists, because they are able to answer to their main questions without facing paradoxes. Therefore, the Liar is not a real issue for the deflationist.

To conclude, both Grover and Gupta consider that the Liar does not represent a problem for a deflationary theory of truth. For Grover, the paradox is demolished through the construction of the theory and for Gupta, the Liar is not the problem of the deflationist, but rather it concerns a specialist.

Horwich (1998a) considers that the instantiation of the Liar using the T-schema is problematic. Because of this, he excludes those paradoxical instantiations from his theory. The solutions he provided face some serious criticism. The main problem seems to be that he limits the generalization of the T-schema and this generalization is the main reason why truth – according to minimalism – is not redundant and has a function. Following this line of criticism Beall and Armour-Garb (2003, 2005) argued that a deflationist should also be a dialetheist. A dialetheist accepts that some contradictions are both true and false. A minimalist seems to be

⁶⁰ Let us consider ‘S’ (the referring expression) the name for ‘Snow is white’ (the denotation of the referring expression). According to the prosentential theory of truth, ‘S is true’ means nothing more than ‘Snow is white’.

able to solve the Liar only by accepting truth value gluts or truth value gaps.⁶¹ Both Beall and Armour-Garb consider that T-gluts are more suitable for a minimalist. In the last section I am going to present Horwich's approach to the Liar and also some criticism that was raised against his answers. In the end I am going to try to find a suitable solution for the minimalist among those already presented.

Thus, in the beginning, in order to understand these different attempts to solve the Liar paradox, the first section of this chapter focuses on the Liar, different variations of it and possible positions. The next two sections present the Tarskian approach, respectively the Kripkean one. A comparative perspective of those two theories is going to be briefly presented.⁶² The next section is going to analyze the way different deflationary theories faced the Liar. Finally, the minimalist's response will be presented in the last section.

There are many solutions to the Liar paradox, but are they all suitable? This chapter aims to see if the minimalist is able to provide a solution to the well-known paradox.

2.1. The Liar Paradox: Forms and Approaches

Different truth theories tried to offer a solution to the Liar paradox. This paradox is a semantic and self-referential one. A paradox is a sentence or inference that seems sound, but

⁶¹ It seems that other possible solutions to the Liar are not suitable for an advocate of minimalism because of the function he establishes for the truth predicate. In order to keep this function – the one of a generalization device – the T-schema has to be applied without restriction. This is the main critique raised against the solutions provided by Horwich. The same problem arises when T-gaps are taken into consideration. It might also be argued that T-gluts suffer from a similar problem. I am going to return to this.

⁶² It might, at first sight, seem unfair to compare Tarski's and Kripke's theories of truth. The Tarskian approach did not aim to talk about the truth predicate for natural languages, on the other hand the Kripkean one aimed to cover the problem of natural languages too. Because of this, those two theories might seem incomparable. However, my aim is to see which of those two theories gives a more appealing solution to the Liar. I am not interested in deciding which one is a better theory of truth. I will, therefore, compare them exclusively from this point of view.

leads to a contradiction. Self-reference is utilized to denote a statement that refers to itself. Semantic paradoxes rely on the semantic notions, in this case on truth.

The Liar antinomy may have different forms. The most common one is (L) ‘This sentence is false’. If we assume that the sentence is false we will have: if (L) is false, then because of what it said, it is true, thus (L) is true. Therefore, starting from the assumption that (L) is false, it is determined that (L) is true.⁶³ On the other hand, if it is assumed that (L) is true, then, again, because of what it said, it is false; hence (L) is false.⁶⁴ Consequently, starting from the assumption that (L) has a certain truth value; the conclusion is that it has the other truth value.

The self-reference is preserved even if, for example, Epimenides, who was a Cretan, said: ‘All Cretans are liars’. In this case his affirmation is true if and only if it is false, and vice versa. In this form, the antinomy is solvable if we assume that the statement is false. If the statement is false, and Epimenides is lying, there must be at least one honest Cretan. That one Cretan does not have to be Epimenides. If he is lying, while knowing at least one honest Cretan, the sentence is false. To invalidate ‘All Cretans are liars’ is not necessarily to validate ‘All Cretans are honest’, it is sufficient and necessarily to prove that ‘There is at least one honest Cretan’.⁶⁵ In order to have a paradox there should not be an honest Cretan. If it can be ascertained that there is at least one honest Cretan, then Epimenides’ utterance is not paradoxical anymore, it is just false.

However, the antinomy may be slightly changed, thereby not allowing this kind of simple solution. For example, a form of the Liar that cannot be resolved in the way presented above is: ‘What I am saying now is a lie’.

⁶³ $(\neg L \supset L) \supset L$

⁶⁴ $(L \supset \neg L) \supset \neg L$

⁶⁵ ‘All Cretans are liars’ can be formalized using the universal quantifier:

(L_C) $(\forall x)(Cx \rightarrow Lx)$

In order to invalidate this sentence is sufficient to validate the following sentence:

(~L_C) $(\exists x)(Cx \ \& \ \neg Lx)$

There is no need to validate a sentence of the form (‘All Cretans are honest’):

(H) $(\forall x)(Cx \rightarrow \neg Lx)$

Another⁶⁶ contingent Liar paradox can be found in Field (2008, p. 24), and has the following form:

‘What is being said by the person in this room with the lowest IQ is not true’

In this case the antinomy arises only if the one who says the sentence is the person with the lowest IQ in the room and that is all that is said by that person. The antinomy can also be obtained by multiple sentences:

(P₁) The next sentence is true.

(P₂) The previous sentence is false.

Assuming that (P₁) is true, then (P₂) becomes true, but this means that (P₁) is false, then (P₂) is both true and false. On the other hand, if it is assumed that (P₁) is false, then (P₂) is false, thus (P₁) becomes true, concluding that (P₁) is both true and false. Different variations of this paradox can be obtained.^{67, 68}

There is also an interrogative version of this paradox: ‘Is the answer to this question no?’ The Pinocchio paradox (‘My nose will be growing’) is similar to the Liar antinomy, but does not employ a semantic predicate.⁶⁹ The idea of the paradox remains even in the case of self-referent inferences, as in the following example (Keene, 1983, p.430):

\mathcal{A} stands for this inference:

All unsound inferences are either invalid or have a false premise.

\mathcal{A} is an unsound inference.

$\therefore \mathcal{A}$ is either invalid or has a false premise.

If this is a valid inference, it is sound if and only if all its premises are true, even the second one, consequently it is sound if and only if it is unsound.

⁶⁶ The original version presented above – the one involving Cretans – is also a contingent one.

⁶⁷ For example:

P₁: P₂ is false.

P₂: P₃ is false.

P₃: P₁ is false.

Some variations imply the utilization of infinite number of sentences.

⁶⁸ There are versions of the Liar that do not imply self-reference, for example Yablo’s paradox (Yablo, 1985, 1993).

⁶⁹ I am going to return to this paradox later.

Some authors consider that the Liar may have a pragmatic solution. According to this class of authors, the Liar does not refer (Keene, 1983), or is a joke or exercise that does not require a proper truth attribution (Levi, 1988), or even should be analyzed related to the purpose of the act of speech (Martinich, 1983). All these solutions try to prove that the Liar fails in a day to day situation. They argue that the Liar fails to represent a proper sentence with a certain truth value. They all face a serious problem when it comes to the contingent Liar or some risky cases that occur starting from the natural everyday language.

Firstly, G. B. Keene holds that a sentence – as opposed to a use of a sentence – cannot refer; therefore the paradox should be generated in another way. His opinion is that there is no paradox in an assertion of the Liar. In Keene’s words:

“It makes no sense to talk of commenting on what has not yet been (completely) said. In short: you can comment on anything you are doing while you are doing it, as long as what you are doing is not commenting. Otherwise commenting would not be what it is.” (Keene, 1983, p. 433)

In my opinion, Keene’s point of view has some weak points. The idea that sentences refer is not generally accepted. However, I do not think this problem – if sentences refer or not – has a real relevance for the Liar. The Liar still arises even if the whole discussion is left aside.

Secondly, it seems that self-reference has a long history, and it does not imply all the time paradoxical situations.⁷⁰ There are self-referent sentences that do not lead to paradoxes. One well-known example – extremely similar to the Liar – is the Truth-Teller: ‘This sentence is true’.⁷¹ The majority of self-referenced sentences do not end in antinomies, but the Liar sentence does and denying it, seems a step backwards.

Thirdly, it seems that the two-sentenced Liar escapes Keene’s argument because it does not imply direct self-reference. In this case, we can still have a form of the Liar, even if it is accepted that (direct) self-reference is banned. Even more, there are forms of the Liar that do not

⁷⁰ Tarski’s response to the Liar faces the same critique. I am going to return to this in the next section.

⁷¹ This sentence is not paradoxical, but it is problematic. It accepts any of the two classical truth values.

imply self-reference at all. Yablo's paradox (Yablo, 1985, 1993) is such an example. Yablo's paradox has the following structure:

S_1 : For all $m > 1$, S_m is false.

S_2 : For all $m > 2$, S_m is false.

S_3 : For all $m > 3$, S_m is false.

...

S_n : For all $m > n$, S_m is false.

On the same pragmatic line, both Levi and Martinich argue that the Liar either is not a proper sentence that accepts a truth value, or it requires a pragmatic solution. Both approaches fail when it comes to the contingent Liar. Don S. Levi considers that the Liar paradox is rather a joke, than a serious issue. Levi's idea is that the Liar sentence was used as an example, similar to some translation exercises.⁷² In this case, it does not admit truth or falsity, it only requires assignation of those truth values in order to discover the loop it offers. Thus, such a sentence can be assigned with a truth value, without admitting truth or falsity. Therefore:

“(...) the Liar also is a logical joke. If the logic problem is supposed to have a solution, then it fails as a problem when *reductio* proofs give conflicting results.” (Levi, 1988, p. 49)

Levi's conclusion is that a sentence which is not taken from the actual discourse may not be a sentence per se, because nothing can prove if it is or not; is no criterion to verify it. His example is of 'This is a sentence'. The main question is that this example is really a sentence. I think that a more relevant example would be 'This is not a sentence', in order to follow the Liar's form.

The main problem with Levi's perspective is that different forms of the Liar may be understood as the starting point of a discourse – for example, a philosophical one. If, however, this is not the case, there is a stronger counterargument for Levi's view: the contingent Liar. There are many forms of the contingent Liar: the one mentioned by Kripke presented below, or, even the one already mentioned by Field (2008, p. 24). Those contingent examples of the Liar are taken from the actual discourse, thus, his idea – that such a paradox cannot be found in the actual discourse, only in exercises or jokes – seems to fail.

⁷² Levi's example is: 'John is at a party'. This sentence used as a translation example does not have a truth value, because it is not relative to a system, or states of affairs (Levi, 1988, pp. 46).

Finally, there are some opinions that argue that semantic paradoxes are not semantically based, but they have a pragmatic cause, therefore they also need a pragmatic solution (Martinich, 1983, p. 63). The essential condition of a speech act should be the purpose of that act, therefore by making a statement the speaker wants to be believed, and Martinich considers that nobody could want to utter ‘This statement is false.’ In this case, the problem is a pragmatic one.

Once again, the same critique mentioned for Levi works for Martinich too. For example, it may seem that his idea cannot be used in the case of contingent Liar sentences, as the ones expressed by Kripke (1975, p. 691):

(1) Most of Nixon’s assertions about Watergate are false. – Said by Jones

(2) Everything Jones say about Watergate is true. – Said by Nixon

If Nixon made an equal number of true and false sentences about Watergate and all that Jones said about Watergate is (1); both (1) and (2) are paradoxical. Kripke refers to statements that involve truth as risky; Martinich extrapolates riskiness to statements as speech acts, because those imply actions and failure. Therefore, the paradox has a pragmatic cause, to be more specific, the nature of statements. It can be accepted the Liar may have a pragmatic basis, but in order to reach the aim of this chapter, I am going to treat the Liar as a semantic paradox.

2.2. The Tarskian solution⁷³

Tarski claims that the basis for his theory of truth is the Aristotelian correspondence theory. The correspondence theory asserts that a sentence must be in agreement with reality in order to be true. Having this as a starting point, Tarski’s conception of truth places this notion in the domain of semantics, which “deals with certain relations between expressions of a language and the objects (or ‘states of affairs’) ‘referred to’ by those expressions” (Tarski, 1944, p. 345). From this, Tarski states the well-known T-schema:

(T): ‘S’ is true if, and only if, S

The first occurrence of the sentence, ‘S’, is the name of the sentence, and the second one is the sentence itself. If something has to be said about a sentence, the name of the sentence

⁷³ A small part of this subsection was published (Tomi, 2015a)

must be used, not the sentence itself. ‘S’ is the name of the sentence, and can be replaced only by a name, noun or an expression that functions as a noun (Tarski, 1944, p. 344).

This schema does not represent a proper definition of truth; it is only a particular definition of this concept. A general definition of truth may be obtained by an infinite conjunction of those particular instances of the T-schema. The formulation of this infinite conjunction is practically impossible to achieve. Beside the impossibility of the infinite conjunction, the paradoxes are another problem. The most representative one is the Liar. Applying the T-schema to it, the following is obtained:

- (i) ‘This sentence is not true’ is true if, and only if, this sentence is not true.
- (ii) (L) = ‘(L) is not true’
- (iii) (L) is true if, and only if, (L) is not true
- (iv) (L) is true and not true.

This contradiction seems to be grounded, according to Tarski, in the language in which it is constructed. Because the language is semantically closed, it contains not only its terms and expressions, but the names for these expressions, and semantic terms – as ‘true’ – applied to the sentences of the same language. Languages that the one described above leave open the possibility to formulate self-referential sentences using semantic notions, as the Liar.

In order to avoid a semantically closed language, two different languages will be used. The object language is the one which is ‘talked about’. In this case, the truth definition will be applied to the sentences of this language. The other language is the meta-language in which the first one is talked about. In this language the truth definition for the object language will be constructed. The first language should be contained by the meta-language as a part. The second language should contain logical terms – as ‘if and only if’ – names for the terms and expressions of the first language. The essential richness of the meta-language is a must and it refers to the logical character of this language. The idea that the language where the first one is talked about has to be essentially richer than the one which is talked about is necessary and sufficient for the construction of a satisfactory definition of truth (Tarski, 1944, p. 352).

The role of each language is relative. This means that a meta-language (L_1) for a specific language (L_0) may become an object language for a larger language (L_2), which becomes the new meta-language. This might continue, if the rules are reapplied. If L_0 is a formal language, of the first order predicate, this language cannot contain its own truth predicate. In this case a

meta-language, L_1 , contains a truth predicate for L_0 , which can be named $T_1(x)$. This process can continue and the result is a sequence $\{L_0, L_1, L_2, L_3 \dots\}$ of languages, each one contains the truth predicate for the preceding (Kripke, 1975, p. 694).

The original task was to find a truth definition that is both materially adequate and formally correct. The truth definition formulated in meta-language must have as consequences all the instances of the truth schema, in order to be materially adequate. The infinite conjunction makes impossible the formulation of this specific definition, but an inductive one may be possible. The starting point for an inductive definition is composed of the simplest sentences, which do not have other sentences as component parts. The truth condition is determined directly for these ones, using the T-schema. By applying syntactic rules the definition may be extended to any composed sentence of the language. Tarski offers a recursive definition of truth. Using the notion of satisfaction, a definition which respects the clauses of formal correctness and material adequacy may be obtained.

It seems that T-schema generally holds, but there are some cases when it seems it cannot be applied properly. For example: 'Every sentence Aristotle spoke was false', or 'What you said last Tuesday was true' (Davidson, 1985, p. 65). The truth value of a sentence like the ones presented above depends on the truth values of the sentences that compose it. For example, the truth value of 'What you said last Tuesday was true' depends on the truth value of the sentences uttered by the person 'you' refers to. Among those sentences one could utter a sentence that contained the truth predicate, or another composed sentence. Because in the natural language the stratification of the languages is not as strict (in some cases this stratification does not exist at all) as in a formalized language, there is no possibility to determine the exact level of those sentences. Sentences as the one already presented are interlinked with other composed or similar sentences. This means that there is no possibility to determine exactly to which language they belong to. In situations like those, the Tarskian theory fails. In order to decide the truth value of such a sentence, it has to be higher in hierarchy than any other sentence that composes it. However, Tarski did not aim to cover the generality of a natural language. His aim was regarding the formalized languages. Thus, I do not think this should be taken as a proper critique for the Tarskian approach.

Tarski's main goal was to show that the truth notion may be used consistently in a formalized language.⁷⁴ He believes that the 'true' word of everyday usage is vague and it seems impossible to assign it an exact meaning. In this case, it looks that Tarski gives up to the truth notion of the everyday language and focuses on formalized languages. It must be noted – as it was already mentioned – that Tarski's task was not concerning the common usage of truth; he was focused on the formalized languages. In this sense, I think it seems incorrect to accuse Tarski of something he did not aim for. I find Kripke's generality to be a good point for his theory, but I do not blame Tarski for not reaching this generality he did not aim for.

2.3. The Kripkean solution

Kripke considers that “many, probably most, of our ordinary assertions about truth and falsity are liable, if the empirical facts are unfavorable, to exhibit paradoxical features” (Kripke, 1975, p.691). Therefore, a truth theory has to allow statements involving this notion to be risky, to be more precise, they risk being paradoxical if the empirical facts are unfavorable. Kripke's point of view is that neither syntactic, nor semantic rules may divide the paradoxical sentences of the 'good' ones.

The problem with the 'orthodox approach' (i.e. Tarski's approach) according to Kripke is that our language contains just one predicate of truth, and it does not have distinct levels, phrases as [true_n] applying to sentences of higher and higher levels. Even if someone wants to use the Tarskian hierarchy to common language, it is impossible to know, for example, all the levels needed to determine the truth value for a sentence as (1).⁷⁵

It seems that the main issue with the Tarskian hierarchy approach is that each sentence is fixed at a certain level, determined by its syntactic form. Thus, its assignation of a truth value depends on that level. The Kripkean approach continues the idea of using levels, but not in

⁷⁴ It should be added that some authors consider that Tarski did not reach his aim. Heek Jr, argues that Tarski's theory is no good as a semantic theory. Even more, joining Putnam, they think that Tarski's theory is neither good as a philosophical theory of truth (Heek Jr., 1997).

⁷⁵ As I already mentioned, I am interested in this aspect only regarding the paradoxes. For example, this might interfere in the problem of the contingent Liar, to be more specific, in Kripke's formulation of the paradox.

such an explicit form. At every stage the truth predicate is not fully defined, it is only partially defined, this means that it applies only to some sentences of the language.

Kripke uses a semantic scheme to deal with partially defined predicates. For this, partial models should be defined. Starting from a nonempty domain D , a monadic predicate $R(x)$ is interpreted by a pair (S_1, S_2) of separate subsets of D . In this case, S_1 is the extension of $R(x)$ and S_2 is the anti-extension. To be more specific, in S_1 there are the objects that satisfy the predicate, in S_2 are those objects which fail to satisfy it. Those two sets cannot overlap, but there may be things that are absent in both S_1 and S_2 . Therefore, $R(x)$ is true about the object of S_1 and false about those of S_2 , undefined otherwise (Kripke, 1975, p.700). In this way, any atomic sentence may be true, false or undefined in this model.

It should be mentioned that Kripke accepts T-gaps. A T-gap is an absence of the classical truth values.⁷⁶ In this case, there are sentences that are true, false and undefined. Undefined is taken to be a lack of a truth value, rather as a third truth value; even if it seems to work as a third truth value. The idea of a T-gap is possible because the extension and anti-extension of a predicate may not cover the whole domain. It is said that a predicate for which its extension and anti-extension does not perfectly overlap the domain, is just partially defined. This is the case of the semantic predicates, for example the truth predicate.

Another important point for Kripke's presentation is that he uses Kleene's strong three-valued logic in his demonstration. Thus, $\neg Q$ is true if Q is false and undefined if Q is undefined. A disjunction is true only if at least one disjunct is true, false if both are false and undefined otherwise if at least one disjunct is undefined and none is true. A conjunction is true if both conjuncts are true, false if at least one is false and undefined if at least one conjunct is undefined and none is false. The other operators may be defined using disjunction,

⁷⁶T-gaps may be used in the following situations:

- a. In the case of failure of existential presupposition. An example may be: 'The King of France is bald.' – uttered after the abolition of monarchy in France.
- b. The case of vagueness can be exemplified as: 'The King of France is bald.' – uttered under the monarchy, when the king lost a lot of his hair.
- c. Finally, the case of nonsense was exemplified by Burgess as: 'The King of France is a boojum.' All these sentences cannot be considered true or false, they suffer from a truth – value gap (Burgess, 2011, p. 146).

conjunction and negation. Quantifiers may also be defined. Thus, the universal quantifier is false if and only if at least one instance is false and undefined if at least one instance is undefined and no instance is false. On the other hand, the existential quantifier is true if and only if at least one instance is true and undefined if and only if at least one instance is undefined and no instance is true.⁷⁷

In some cases, undefined may be understood as a formula which has a truth value of bivalent logic, but it was not fixed yet; but, at a first sight, there are some sentences that are undefined, without being able to have a proper truth value (i.e. one of bivalent logic). It seems that Kripke abandoned bivalence, but he claims that his logic is standard. Because of this it might be understood that a sentence which is undefined, failed to express a proposition. Thus, there are two truth values (true and false) the third one is not a (proper) truth value; it is an absence of one. For example, a perfect rational being would be capable to assert every sentence that expresses a proposition with a truth value; and those sentences that lack one of those two truth values, failed to express a proposition. In this way it is possible to understand the Kripkean approach as a standard one, which accepts that only those sentences that do not express propositions lack a truth value.

There is a sequence of partially interpreted languages ($\mathcal{L}_0, \mathcal{L}_1, \mathcal{L}_2$) and those differ only in their interpretation for the truth predicate. The first language, \mathcal{L}_0 , has the extension and anti-extension of $T(x)$ empty; thus, it is the null interpretation. In \mathcal{L}_0 $T(x)$ is completely undefined. The next step is the ascension to \mathcal{L}_1 , at this point some sentences may be evaluated. After this, the jump to \mathcal{L}_2 is possible, and more sentences may be evaluated. In this case, at every higher level more and more sentences are defined as true or false, but when a sentence is assigned with a truth value, that truth value is constant at any higher level. Thus, the extension and anti-extension of $T(x)$ increase from \mathcal{L}_α to $\mathcal{L}_{\alpha+1}$. The process may continue, but there appears a point of saturation. In the case of transfinite sequences, at one point those will stabilize. It will be obtained, for any ordinal γ , and $\mathcal{L}_\gamma = \mathcal{L}_{\gamma+1}$. In this case, the fixed point is reached. \mathcal{L}_γ is also a

⁷⁷ Van Fraassen's interpretation differs of Kleene's one especially in the part where Van Fraassen takes any instances of the form $p \& \sim p$ to be false, independent of the values of the atomic sentences. On the other hand, Kleene accepts that $p \& \sim p$ may be undefined if p is undefined.

language that contains its own truth predicate (Kripke, 1975, p. 705). In this case, in a three-valued logic it is possible for a language to contain its own truth predicate.

Sentences that say about themselves that they are not true do not represent a problem at this point. A sentence A is considered grounded if it has a truth value in the smallest fixed point, ungrounded otherwise.⁷⁸ According to this definition any sentence of the Liar's form is ungrounded, that means it suffers from a truth-value gap, as evaluated at the minimal fixed point. There might be some ungrounded sentences which are not paradoxical. In Kripke's view a sentence is considered paradoxical only if it does not have a truth value in any fixed point.⁷⁹

In conclusion, it seems that after all a language can contain its own truth predicate. Even if Kripke's approach used the Tarskian one as a starting point, it differs of it. First of all, Kripke uses only a truth predicate that increases in interpretation. Secondly, adding a third truth value, Kripke proves that a language may contain its own truth predicate, even if it cannot contain its own 'undefined' predicate. Thus, it seems that, even if both theories use the hierarchy of languages, their insights differ quite a lot.

2.4. Comparing Tarski's and Kripke's approaches⁸⁰

Both theories already mentioned incorporate, in one way or another, the hierarchy of languages. Even so, there are some main differences between them. First of all, it seems that Kripke's approach is more comprehensive and is able to differentiate between ungrounded but non-paradoxical sentences and ungrounded and paradoxical sentences. Burgess (2011, pp. 152-153) offered some examples in order to make explicit this insight of the Kripkean approach. There are many kinds of ungrounded sentences:

(3) (3) is false.

(4) (4) is true.

⁷⁸ The minimum (smallest) fixed point is contained in all others. In this one all and only grounded sentences have truth values, this is why this smallest fixed point it is used as a rigorous definition for 'grounded' (Kripke, 1975, p. 706).

⁷⁹ I am going to develop this idea in the next section.

⁸⁰ The main ideas of this subsection were sent for publication.

(5) (4) is true or not – (4) is true.

(6) (6) is true or not – (6) is true.

These are all ungrounded; the first one represents the Liar and (5) is the only one dependent of another self-dependent sentence. Thus, (3) is paradoxical, it does not have a truth value in any fixed point. (4) can have any truth value, to be more specific, it has a truth value in every maximal fixed point, even if it can have different truth values.⁸¹ (5) and (6) are both true in all maximal truth fixed points. (5) can have a truth value only after (4) was assigned with a truth value, but it does not matter what truth value (4) was assigned with. The last one, (6) is intrinsically true – this means it is true based on its logical form.⁸²

The Tarskian approach banes all self-referent sentences with semantic predicates. In this case, both the Liar and the Truth-Teller (and other sentences similar with those) are considered ill-formed. Tarski's response to the Liar seems to cut too deep. It blocks not only the paradoxical sentences, but also some non-paradoxical ones. As it was already mentioned, the Kripkean approach is able to sort between those sentences and differs from paradoxical sentences and ungrounded or self-referential ones.

It seems that there are some weak points of the Kripkean approach. First of them is the revenge of the Liar. The rejection of bivalence may be the escape for the Liar paradox. But the problem reappears if 'false' is replaced with 'not true'; in this case the Strengthened Liar arises. The Strengthened Liar may have the following forms:

(SL₁) This sentence is not true.

(SL₂) This sentence is neither true nor false.

Suppose (SL₂) is neither true nor false (it is undefined in Kripke's words), but because this is exactly what it says about itself, it is true. If it is supposed that (SL₂) is true, then it must be the case of what it says. Thus, it is neither true nor false (undefined). It seems that if the Liar is solvable in this approach, the revenge problem occurs and does not have a solution. The revenge problem seems to be an issue for any tree-valued solution for the Liar. However, Kripke is able to reject the Strengthened Liar in a similar manner as Tarski – considering it ill-

⁸¹ Assigning a truth value in the maximal fixed point implies arbitrariness.

⁸² This might be linked with the idea of maximum intrinsic fixed point. This kind of fixed point does not make a sentence true, if another fixed point made it false.

formed. In the Kripkean approach, the Liar and the Strengthened Liar do not have the same solution, but they are solvable.

The second issue with this approach is that there is no possibility for a language to express its own undefined predicate, in this case, in Kripkean object language a sentence as ‘The liar sentence is undefined’ is impossible to state. In order to express such a sentence the meta-language must be used. Kripke was aware of this weak point of his theory, this is why he said:

“The necessity to ascend to a meta-language may be one of the weaknesses of the present theory. The ghost of the Tarski hierarchy is still with us.” (Kripke, 1975, p. 714)

The Kripkean approach allows a language to contain its own truth predicate and even its own satisfaction predicate, but – as it was already mentioned – there are some insights impossible to state in the object language. This is mainly because the minimal fixed point is defined in the meta-language, not in the object language. The third truth value, ‘undefined’, is strongly related to the minimal fixed point. Thus, ‘The Liar sentence is undefined’ and other insights can only be expressed reaching to the meta-language. Kripke does not aim to offer a universal language⁸³, because – as he claims – this is impossible. There will always be assertions about the object language impossible to be expressed in the same language

It is not fair to consider the second issue just a problem of the Kripkean theory; in fact, the Tarskian approach is not able to express even the truth predicate in the object language. From this point of view, this might not be considered a weak point of the Kripkean approach. If it is to be considered so, the same issue follows the Tarskian theory; even in a stronger way, as it was already mentioned. Thus, compared exclusively from this point, Kripke’s theory seems superior to the Tarskian one.

If Tarski proved that a bivalent language cannot contain its own truth predicate, Kripke argued that if a language is not bivalent and if it accepts T-gaps, then it may contain its own truth predicate. Even if the Liar says about itself that it belongs to the anti-extension of a truth predicate, it does not belong to the extension, or the anti-extension. It is true that, in order to be able to express this, the meta-language is needed, but this is far from being an issue.

⁸³ Such a language would not need the distinction between object language and meta-language. It would be a language in which the hierarchy of languages would be superfluous. Thus, it would have an unlimited (the ideal universal language) power of expression.

Tarski does not ban self-reference. He sketches a difference between semantic predicates and syntactic ones. The Tarskian conclusion is that semantically closed languages are impossible, in other words are not consistent. On the other hand, Kripke argues that if a language accepts truth-gaps, and rejects bivalence, it may contain its own truth predicate. The semantic paradoxes based on self-reference, as the Liar, are gappy, they are not assigned a truth value. Those do not have a truth value in any fixed point, they are undefined.

Sentences as:

(7) What Mary said about John is true.

do not have an intrinsic level, and because of this they are not allowed on the Tarskian approach. On the other hand, Kripke allows them because they are going to find their own level on extrinsic ground depending on the levels of the things Mary said about John. Kripke's approach allows sentences to have truth values even if in the Tarskian theory they could not have one. Also, Kripke allows ungrounded meaningful sentences, and does not ban sentences because they are risky. This generosity and generality of Kripke's theory are important differences between the two mentioned theories.

There are other examples that underline the differences between those two approaches. Let us consider the following one (Reigner, 2001, p. 200):

If A says only:

(A₁) 3+3=6

(A₂) Everything B says is false.

B says only:

(B₁) Something A says is true.

There is no problem evaluating (A₁) as true, and (B₁) as also true, therefore (A₂) as false. The Tarskian hierarchy cannot solve such a problem, because (A₂) has to be higher in hierarchy as everything B says, at the same time (B₁) has to be higher in hierarchy as everything A says, including (A₂). On the other hand, Kripke's approach supports formally the intuitive answers.

The Pinocchio paradox⁸⁴, which is a version of the Liar, but does not employ a semantic predicate, seems to block both theories (Eldridge – Smith and Eldridge – Smith, 2010, p. 214).

⁸⁴ That could have the form:

(P) My nose will be growing now. – uttered by Pinocchio

This version of the Liar uses a non-semantic paradox, thus according to Tarski's approach it can be expressed in the object language. On the other hand, according to Kripke, the predicate is fully defined. Because the predicate is fully defined, all sentences that contain it must have a truth value. Thus, it might seem that this version of the Liar is unsolvable in both the Tarskian and the Kripkean approaches. One may suggest that the problem arises because the predicate is loaded with a semantic charge, to be more specific, a non-semantic predicate is used in a semantic way, as a substitution for the truth predicate.⁸⁵ In this case, both theories should be able to avoid such a paradox. It is still unclear how those two theories could be able to select a semantically charged predicate from those that are semantically free. In this situation, I think that the Tarskian theory really has an issue.

On the other hand, I think that Kripke might have a way out of this. Even though at first sight this sentence seems grounded, going back on the line of grounded sentences it is based on, one of them would be found to link the false predicate with the non-semantic predicate (in this case with 'to grow'). Formally, Kripke defines groundedness in relation with the smallest fixed point. Thus:

“Given a sentence A of \mathcal{L} , let us define A to be *grounded* if it has a truth value in the smallest fixed point of $\mathcal{L}\sigma$; otherwise, *ungrounded*.” (Kripke, 1975, p. 706)

This definition accommodates the intuitive understanding of this concept:

“If some of these sentences themselves involve the notion of truth, their truth value in turn must be ascertained by looking at *other* sentences, and so on. If ultimately this process terminates in sentences not mentioning the concept of truth, so that the truth value of the original statement can be ascertained, we call the original sentence *grounded*; otherwise, *ungrounded*. (...) whether a sentence is grounded is not in general an intrinsic (syntactic or semantic) property of a sentence, but usually depends on the empirical facts.” (Kripke, 1975, pp. 693-694)

It can be said that a sentence is grounded if its truth value can be determined without interfering with another sentence that contains the truth predicate. Therefore, it can be demonstrated that the sentence that expresses the Pinocchio paradox is not grounded, even

⁸⁵ I would like to thank Adrian Ludușan for the discussion and idea.

more, it is paradoxical. It should be noted that this solution works without the idea of a non-semantic predicate which is semantically charged. One of the sentences on the chain of considered grounded sentences will be found to be ungrounded. For example, it might be a sentence of the form:

Pinocchio says:

(P_{conditional}) Whenever I say something false, my nose will be growing.

Here the ungrounded sentence is the antecedent.

In such a situation, the sentence uttered by Pinocchio depends on something that is ungrounded (its antecedent). A possible counterargument for this might follow the notion of dependence.⁸⁶ It might be considered that the relation between the ungrounded sentence and the sentence that expresses the paradox is not dependence. It is rather something weaker, for example, correlation. The paradox is still solvable even in this situation.

In the case of correlation, there would be a universal claim as:

(C) Every time when I say something false, my nose will be growing.

In a world where Pinocchio utters paradoxical sentences, (C) would not hold, because it would not be true. Hence, Kripke's approach is able to give a solution to the paradox appealing to the notion of dependence or correlation, both based on the concept of groundedness.

Thus, it seems that Kripke's theory is able to avoid a paradox that could compromise the Tarskian one. This might be explained appealing to the contingent Liar. Kripke is able to solve the contingent Liar, while Tarski says nothing about it. Because Kripke is interested in developing a truth theory compatible with the natural language, he has to extend his theory for risky cases that can lead to paradoxes. A sentence as 'My nose will be growing now' is risky in the beginning. Uttered by Pinocchio it is paradoxical.

If the Tarskian solution restricts the use of truth predicate in the object language, the Kripkean one restricts the interpretation of truth predicate, to be more specific, those uses which are pathological cannot be assigned with truth value, thus they are not interpreted. The Liar may be in the object language, but that does not imply it is in the extension or anti-extension of its truth predicate. The truth predicate is a partially defined semantic predicate.

⁸⁶ I have to thank Matti Eklund for this. Both the counterargument and its possible solution were suggested by him in a discussion.

In conclusion, the Kripkean approach incorporates the hierarchy Tarski proposed but with some main differences. Tarski's result is an infinite hierarchy of languages; each one (starting from the second one) contains the truth predicate for the previous one. In Kripke's approach the different levels of hierarchy are not the main step; they all lead to the minimal fixed point. Only when the minimal fixed point is reached a model of truth is possible. The Kripkean hierarchy contains only a single truth predicate increasing in interpretation. At this point, their theories differ: if the Tarskian theory of truth considers a new truth predicate at every new level of stratification, the Kripkean one increases only the interpretation, but the truth predicate remains the same.

Thus, in Kripke's approach, it may be said that truth is a property of grounded sentences and paradoxes appear because we attempt to apply truth predicate to ungrounded sentences (Fitch, 2004, p. 145). Even if Kripke's theory solves some problems which were unsolvable by the Tarskian one, it still has its own weak points. For instance, it cannot solve the revenge of the Liar and it needs the meta-language to express some insights.

So if one has to choose between those two theories, can a choice be made? I am tempted to say yes. Kripke's theory seems more suitable (to solve the Liar) than Tarski's. Even if it must be accepted that the Tarskian one is able to solve the Strengthened Liar, but this seems to be the only point where Tarski's approach exceeds the Kripkean one. Tarski solves both paradoxes in the same way: they are both considered ill-formed and are banned. The solution provided for the Liar is suitable for the revenge problem too. They both have the same structure. The solution Tarski is providing is based on rejecting that specific structure. Hence, they are both solved in a similar manner.

On the other hand, Kripke's solution cannot be extended to the Strengthened Liar. Kripke is well-aware of the fact that the revenge problem occurs in a three-valued logic. However, because 'undefined' cannot be expressed in the object-language, it seems that the Strengthened Liar in the Kripkean theory has the same solution as in the Tarskian one: it is considered ill-formed. Thus, Kripke is not able to give a proper solution – similar with the one provided for the Liar – but the paradox does not crash his theory, it is simply banned.

Why should we consider the Kripkean approach better than the Tarskian one? Firstly, the Kripkean approach maintains a single truth predicate that increases in interpretation and does not use a new truth predicate for every language of the hierarchy. Secondly, Kripke

managed to prove that a language can contain its own truth predicate if it accepts T-gaps and a third truth value. Thirdly, that he offers a better solution to the Liar. It might also be added that Kripke's approach seems to be able to avoid the Pinocchio paradox, while Tarski's one is unable to do so.

In conclusion, comparing those two theories only under the aspect of the way they solved the problem of semantic paradoxes, I consider Kripke's solution to be better because he does not interdict the Liar; he does not simply consider it ill-formed. Tarski's solution seems to do that, while Kripke's accepts the Liar in the language, but does not assert it a truth value.

2.5. Deflationism and the Liar – the denial of the problem

There are two main deflationary attitudes towards the Liar. One is claiming that the Liar does not represent a real problem for a deflationary theory of truth. On the other hand, some deflationists accept that the Liar raises a serious problem for their concept of truth. In this section I am going to develop the first approach using Grover's (2005) and Gupta's (2005) responses. In the next section I will focus on the minimalist's response. The minimalist approach for truth considers the Liar a problem for the theory and tries to solve it without rejecting the aim of the theory (i.e. deflating truth).

Dorothy Grover is an advocate of the prosentential⁸⁷ theory of truth⁸⁸. According to this theory truth is not a property-ascribing predicate (Grover, 2005, p. 196), it is considered a predicate which has a prosentential function. Prosentences' role is quite similar with the role of pronouns. For example:

(8) Mary is at the grocery store. *She* is buying apples because *she* believes *they* are delicious.

In this case, 'she' stands for 'Mary'; respectively 'they' stands for 'apples'. The meaning of those anaphors is not fixed, it is relative. In the already presented example, the meaning of 'she' and 'they' is taken from the previous nouns used in the sentences. It seems that the same

⁸⁷ The structure of the theory's name is following the structure of other anaphors, as, for example, pronouns. Pronouns are used to refer to previous used nouns, in the same way as 'true' is going to be used to refer to previous sentences.

⁸⁸ The theory was first presented in (Grover, Camp, Belnap Jr., 1975)

situation is applicable for ‘true’ and ‘false’. When truth is added to a referring expression it does not add anything more than the reiteration of the sentence or sentences picked out by that referring expression. Let us imagine a conversation between Andrew and Anna. Andrew states ‘Snow is white’; then, Anna says ‘This is true’. In this situation what Anna is saying – according to the prosentential theory of truth – is nothing more than exactly what Andrew said, that is ‘Snow is white’.⁸⁹ This means that ‘this is true’ has the role of a prosentence and it inherits its content from the antecedent statement, in the same way as a pronoun takes its reference from the previous singular term (or noun). This theory is considered a deflationary one because ‘x is true’ and ‘x’ always have the same content.

This means that those anaphors do not have a content of their own. Neither pronouns nor prosentences have a meaning without a specific context in which they are used. At this point, the prosentential theory of truth seems quite similar with the redundancy theory. Even if the first theory claims that there is no difference in the semantic content between the two already mentioned sentences, the theory considers that there is a pragmatic difference. In this case, if Anna, instead of saying ‘This is true’, would have said ‘Snow is white’, then she would have said the same thing semantically. On the other hand, pragmatically, she would have not acknowledged Andrew’s previous sentence. Instead, using the prosentence she expressed her agreement with what Andrew said. In this case, the main difference between the prosentential theory and the redundancy one is that the first one claims that there are cases when the truth predicate cannot be eliminated without loss. In the already presented example, the loss would be Anna’s acknowledgement of what Andrew had said.

By claiming that the truth predicate is not (always) eliminable without losing something and that it might add a pragmatic difference, Grover and the advocates of the prosentential theory do not aim to ascribe that truth has a substantive nature and that it is a genuine property. The truth predicate does not say something about sentences; it says something about the world. This idea is a Quinean one and it suggests that in those cases when the antecedent is

⁸⁹ The prosentential theory of truth can easily be extended to falsity. In this situation, ‘This is false’ is also referring to an antecedent sentence and it has the same (semantic) content as the denial of that sentence. Keeping the same example, if Anna would have said ‘This is false’ she would have meant that ‘Snow is not white’. Thus, Anna’s sentence has the same (semantic) content as the negation of what Andrew said.

reiterated or the truth predicate is used, reality remains the main focus. Thus, as it was already mentioned, the prosentential theory is a deflationary one.

According to the advocates of this theory, it is the Liar that fails to pick a specific antecedent, for this it is neither true nor false. As it was already mentioned, a prosentence takes its content from its antecedent. Thus, (L) has content only if its antecedent does. In this case, because (L) is its own antecedent, it has content if and only if (L) has content. But prosentences do not have independent content, in this situation, (L) lacks content. Thus, the relation between an anaphor – in this case a prosentence – and its antecedent is a non-reflexive one; therefore, it holds only between two distinct things.

When it comes to the Liar, Grover considers that “there is no threat; there is nothing to resolve” (Grover, 2005, p. 177). In order to give a proper counterargument to the Liar, she makes a distinction between dictionary meaning and operative meaning. The dictionary meaning is based on the history of uses of a specific word.⁹⁰ On the other hand, the operative meaning is “the use that a token of a word has in its context” (Grover, 2005, p. 183). This means that if a word (or sentence) is not used in a specific context in a communicatively significant way, it does not have an operative meaning, even if that specific word (or sentence) has a dictionary meaning.

Grover states that the Liar is not used in a communicatively significant way. Even if its component words have dictionary meaning and it is well-formed, this does not contribute to its operative meaning. This means that the sentence that expresses the Liar is not used. The token ‘it is false’ can be used. But to be in accordance with the prosentential theory of truth it can be used only with a correlated antecedent. That specific antecedent must be different from the prosentence, because, as it was already mentioned, this relation holds between two different things. This means that ‘this is false’ may be used only to refer to another sentence with the scope of affirming the negation of that specific sentence.

In order to be able to determine if the Liar has operative meaning, one must know something about the context of the discourse in which such a sentence was uttered. Grover based this part of her argumentation on the distinction between formalized and natural languages. Even if both of them were created by humans, they have different purposes. The natural language has an openness and flexibility that lack when it comes to the formalized

⁹⁰ As the name suggests, is the meaning that can be found in a dictionary.

ones (Grover, 2005, p. 179). The formalized languages are used for specific tasks and they are not suitable for an everyday use. In this situation, the Liar, being a part of the natural language, should have a meaning when it is used in a specific context. It seems that when the Liar is uttered in the natural language it is not properly used, it is only mentioned. In this situation, it does not have an operative meaning.

There might be some counterarguments against Grover's point of view. For example, she mentioned the Kripkean risky cases and the use of the Liar in inferences (Grover, 2005, starting with p.185).

It might be argued that the Liar might be used in inferences⁹¹, such as (Grover, 2005, pp. 185-186)^{92, 93}:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1. $L = \text{'L is false'}$ | (stipulation) |
| 2. $L \text{ is false } \vee L \text{ is true}$ ⁹⁴ | (classical logic) |
| 3. $L \text{ is false}$ | (hypothesis) |
| 4. $\text{'L is false' is false}$ | (3, substitution) |
| 5. $\text{'p' is false iff } \sim p$ | (falsity schema) |
| 6. $\text{'L is false' is false iff } \sim(L \text{ is false})$ | (5, substitution) |
| 7. $\sim(L \text{ is false})$ | (4,6, classical logic) |
| 8. $L \text{ is true } \vee L \text{ is false}$ | (classical logic) |
| 9. $L \text{ is true}$ | (7,8, classical logic) |
| 10. $L \text{ is true } \& L \text{ is false}$ | (3, 9, classical logic) |
| 11. $L \text{ is true}$ | (hypothesis) |

⁹¹ Grover drew a sharp line between inferences in natural languages and in formalized ones. An inference in a natural language is more complex than just a syntactic structure that is required by a formalized language.

⁹² A similar demonstration is given for the Strengthened Liar. For more see (Grover, 2005, pp. 191-192)

⁹³ The content of the demonstration is the same with Grover's; however, I changed the form of the demonstration in order to make it easier to follow.

⁹⁴ This seems rather an instance of bivalence, which is not generally accepted as a principle of the classical logic. The law of excluded middle is such a general accepted principle. Both (2) and (8) are rather instances of bivalence, not of the law of excluded middle. The problem may be solvable, because they may be deduced from the law of excluded middle, bivalence and modus ponens.

- | | | |
|-----|-------------------------------------|--|
| 12. | 'L is false' is true | (11, substitution) |
| 13. | 'p' is true iff p | (truth schema) |
| 14. | 'L is false' is true iff L is false | (13, substitution) |
| 15. | L is false | (12, 14, classical logic) |
| 16. | L is true & L is false | (11, 15, classical logic) ⁹⁵ |
| 17. | L is true & L is false | (disjunction elimination, 1-15) |
| 18. | (L is false) & ~(L is false) | (5, 13, ⁹⁶ 17, classical logic, substitution) |

In order for the Liar to be able to lead to contradiction, it must have operative meaning. Stipulating 'L is false' in the inference does not imply it has operative meaning. In order for it to have such a meaning, it must not only be used, but also the terms that compose it have to be used in the way they have been used historically in other contexts (Grover, 2005, p. 187). Only if those conditions are fulfilled, it can be said that (L) has operative meaning in (1)-(18).

In this situation, accepting both (1)-(18) and that (L) has operative meaning, leads to contradiction. The solutions – according to Grover (2005, pp. 189-190) – are either to reject a line from (1) to (18), or to reject that (L) has operative meaning. All the lines from (1) to (18) are based on rules of classical logic; in this situation they are generally accepted. The only remaining strategy is to deny that (L) has operative meaning. Going even further, this means that at least one of the words in the Liar is used in a new way, differently from how it was used in other past contexts; or that (L) is not properly used in presented inference. Grover adopts the second alternative. Thus, (L) is not used; this means that it does not have operative meaning.

If it would be accepted that (L) has operative meaning, it would have also been accepted that the syntactic structure reflects the semantic structure. Because Grover claims that syntax can outstrip semantics, she denies that the Liar could have operative meaning (Grover, 2005, p. 190). The Liar paradox may be associated with division by zero. If either the Liar or

⁹⁵ This seems to be obtained similar to (10), through the rule of conjunction introduction. Thus, (16) is obtained from (11) and (15) using classical logic.

⁹⁶ (5) and (13) are the lines of the truth schema and the falsity one. Grover decided to use them even if they were part of the sub-proofs. This does not represent a problem, because they could have been reintroduced at any line.

division by zero is used in a natural language, it leads to incoherencies. Thus, Grover concludes:

“We do not regard division incoherent on the ground that inconsistency would seem to threaten if we were to counterfactually assume we could divide by zero. So, also, we should not regard truth-talk incoherent on the ground that inconsistency would seem to threaten, if we were counterfactually to assume the liar could be used in inferences.” (Grover, 2005, p. 201)

An anaphor is considered ungrounded if there is not an appropriate antecedent. In this situation, as it was already said, the anaphor fails to have operative meaning. The Liar is supposed to affirm the contradictory of its antecedent, but it is its own antecedent. This means it is ungrounded. This happens because there is no proper antecedent with operative meaning. Because the Liar cannot be used to say anything, it does not represent an issue for the prosentential theory of truth.

Let us conclude what Grover achieved so far. She answered the first possible counterargument for her theory: the use of the Liar in inferences. Her answer is twofold. She showed that the Liar is not used in inferences not only from a prosentential perspective, but also from a property-ascribing perspective.⁹⁷ From both perspectives the whole criticism is around the fact that the Liar does not have operative meaning. To conclude:

“Given openness in word-usage, a token that is not used does not have operative meaning. If no token of the liar has operative meaning, it does not contribute to dictionary meaning. So there is nothing hidden in the liar that contributes to our concept of truth.” (Grover, 2005, p. 198)

The main question regarding her argument is: what does it mean for a word or sentence to be used in an inference? The example she provided is a formalized one, even if she claims that she is not interested in the formalized languages. In that specific demonstration she states that (L) is not properly used. I think (L) is used in (1) in a similar way the falsity schema is used in (5), or the truth one in (13). There seems to be no difference between those uses. It might be a difference outside this demonstration. Such a possible difference might imply that

⁹⁷ In other words a ‘property-ascribing perspective’ means a substantive theory of truth. Such a perspective accepts truth to be a genuine property of sentences.

both the falsity schema and the truth one have operative meaning outside those formal utilizations. This seems to restrict the operative meaning to natural languages. If this is the case, her argument stands. But I do not think that this is the case, because she rejects the demonstration on the basis that (L) does not have operative meaning. Given that the demonstration is a quite formal one, this means that the idea of operative meaning intervenes in formal languages as well. In this situation, the question I asked remains. To conclude, what is the difference in using the (L) in that specific demonstration and using, for example, the falsity schema? As far as I am concerned, I cannot see any observable difference.

Risky cases represent another possible counterargument for the answer the prosentential theory of truth provided to the Liar. The way Grover faces those is similar with the pragmatic responses to the Liar (for example: Keene, Levi, Martinich). Grover passed it and focused on another one:

“It is said that Russell once asked Moore whether he always told the truth, and that he regarded Moore’s negative reply as the sole falsehood Moore had ever produced. (...) Yet he apparently failed to realize that if, as he thought, all Moore’s *other* utterances were true, Moore’s negative reply was not simply false but paradoxical.” (Kripke, 1975, p. 691-692)

Grover’s answer to this kind of situations is that even Russell would clarify his assumption, or that it was a mistake. In the case of mistakes, most of the time, the context provides enough information for the audience to be able to figure out what a speaker intended to say. The fact that one is able to guess what a speaker really wanted to say, despite his mistake, does not imply that his words had operative meaning. Applied to the situation presented by Kripke, Russell’s words lacked operative meaning.

This might be the case. The real difficulty seems to be the other example Kripke provided. The problem with this answer is similar with the issue faced by the already mentioned answers from the first section (Keene’s, Levi’s and Martinich’s). In this example, both Jones’ and Nixon’s statements seem to have operative meaning. They both imply a prosentence and they also both have a proper antecedent from which they take their meanings. In this case, from a prosentential point of view, it must be accepted that they have operative meaning. In this situation, it seems that Grover’s argument fails. It might be suggested that

there is no proper antecedent at least for Jones's statement because it implies another proposition. If this is the case, then, similar situations that do not imply paradoxes should be rejected. For example:

‘What Anna says right now is true’ – said by Andrew

‘What Andrew says right now is either true or false’ – said in the same time by Anna

In this situation, there is no paradox involved. I assume that an advocate of the prosentential theory of truth would accept such a situation. If she would accept this, it means she accepts that propositions used in it have operative meaning. If this is the case, on what grounds she could reject a similar situation that involves paradoxes? If the paradoxes are the cause, then the Liar is far from being inoffensive for the theory. It seems then that they have to solve it. If the Liar is not the cause of rejecting these situations, then they must accept that those situations – paradoxical or non-paradoxical – must be rejected based on the fact that the implied propositions do not have operative meaning. In this case, it seems that their theory leaves outside a lot more than it intended and that it is quite restrictive. The theory is restrictive also because it requires that the antecedent should be different from the proposition – banning sentences as the Truth-Teller.

In conclusion, it seems that Grover's arguments have their weak points. I think that her answer might work – with some further distinctions in order to avoid being too restrictive – if it is accepted as a solution to the Liar. If the distinction comes outside the scope of solving the Liar, it seems that it might be too restrictive. On the other hand, if it is taken to reject only the paradoxical situation, then I found it to be quite plausible. But in this situation the Liar must be accepted as a problem for the theory. This problem might have quite a satisfactory solution through the distinction between the dictionary and operative meaning.

According to Gupta (2005) paradoxes do not represent a special threat for deflationism. A deflationist does not have to try to solve these paradoxes. He can and should let them be the specialist's concern.

The T-schema represents the central claim of many deflationary views about truth. Gupta argues that the Closure principle implied by the T-schema is undoubtedly true. Therefore:

“The Closure principle: The following two rules of inference, TI and TE, hold for categorical affirmations:

(TI) A; therefore 'A' is true

(TF) 'A' is true; therefore A" (Gupta, 2005, p. 134)

This principle does not hold in the case of hypothetical reasoning. Because of its weakness, the principle does not yield inconsistencies when it comes to paradoxes. If the Closure principle would not be restricted to categorical situations, it would definitely imply inconsistencies. Supposing 'The Liar is not true' would imply 'The Liar is true' and the other way around. But this is not a categorical context, it is a hypothetical one. Consequently, Gupta claims that:

"The Closure principle ought, therefore, to be respected by all theories of truth, deflationist and non-deflationist alike." (Gupta, 2005, p. 135)

In order for the Closure principle to work, a notion of weak truth is needed. Assuming this notion of truth, the two sides of the biconditional have always the same truth value. This notion of truth considers that if A has a specific truth value, "'A' is true' has the same truth value.⁹⁸ In this situation the biconditional is correct for the unproblematic instances. When it comes to the paradoxical ones, Gupta considers that there are enough reasons to accept both of the possibilities: the biconditional may or may not be correct. This is because the Liar has a special type of semantic instability. According to Gupta:

"The Liar remains puzzling even after we recognize that its T-biconditional is not true. Our attitude towards the Liar paradox is quite different from that towards other popular puzzles and paradoxes. With the latter, our perplexity disappears completely once we concede that some crucial idea or presupposition that we brought to the puzzle is false. But with the Liar this is not so." (Gupta, 2005, p. 136)

It seems that a possible solution could be to reject the T-schema for the paradoxical situations.⁹⁹ The problem with this solution is that, if some instantiations of the T-schema are considered illicit, then the truth predicate cannot stand anymore for its generalization function. Gupta argues that a theory of truth needs all the instantiations of the T-schema, thus, the

⁹⁸ For example, if A is true, then "'A' is true' is also true. On the other hand, if A is neither true nor false, then so is "'A' is true'.

⁹⁹ This solution was the one that Horwich endorsed. I will return to this in the next section.

previous solution is rejected. The only remaining¹⁰⁰ solution is to accept all the instantiations of the truth biconditional. This might be realizable through a better understanding of the connective ‘if and only if’. The solution should sustain the Closure principle. It should also imply the material biconditional for non-paradoxical instances and should not imply contradiction.¹⁰¹

Deflationists consider that the T-schema fixes the meaning of ‘true’. Meaning may be understood as extension, intension or sense. The first one is considered a weak manner of understanding meaning. The second one is an intermediate way. Finally, the last one is a strong understanding. It seems that deflationists take the meaning in a relatively weak sense. The problem is that if one takes meaning as extension, he cannot point the objects of which the predicate is false. This issue develops if the predicate is gappy or n-valued.

Gupta introduced the Signification thesis.

“The Signification Thesis: The T-biconditionals fix the signification of the weak notion of truth. Or, more fully, given the non-semantic facts that obtain in the actual world, the T-biconditionals fix the actual signification of truth.” (Gupta, 2005, p. 140)

This means that the instances of the T-schema fix the total extensional information about a term. It includes the extensional meaning, but it is richer. This thesis should also be preserved by a theory of truth and paradox. From this point, if a deflationist wants to adopt a stronger reading of meaning, he does not have to worry. Paradoxes – according to Gupta – do not threaten the Signification thesis, thus they also do not threaten meaning taken as intension or sense. If Gupta’s claim is accepted, then the Liar does not represent a problem for the deflationary claim that T-schema fixes the meaning of the truth predicate.

Gupta claims that a theorist of truth and paradox should not let the Liar dictate him a specific logic. Such a theory has to be given from a neutral position regarding logic. Moreover, Gupta says:

¹⁰⁰ Gupta also rejects the Inconsistency View. This view wants to keep the intuition that the instances of the T-schema are correct. In order to do so, this kind of approach states that the principles governing truth are inconsistent. (Gupta, 2005, pp. 137-138)

¹⁰¹ This means that the instantiation of the T-schema for the Liar should not imply the corresponding material biconditional. (Gupta, 2005, p. 139)

“(...) an account of the paradoxes (...) should not attribute a special logic to sentences containing ‘true’. Logical resources (e.g. negation, conjunction, and quantification) should interact with ‘true’ in just the way that they do with the other predicates. In our ordinary reasoning with sentences containing ‘true’, we do not hold them to be above the usual logical laws.” (Gupta, 2005, p. 143)

Thus, the author points out some desiderata which have to be satisfied by truth theorists. To sum up, those are:

1. T-schema and its instantiations are correct and they fix the meaning of true.
 2. The instantiations of non-pathological sentences imply the corresponding material biconditionals.
 3. The Closure principle must be maintained.
 4. The instantiations of the T-schema must not imply contradictions.
 5. The instantiations must be logic neutral.
 6. The logical rules of the language apply uniformly to sentences containing ‘true’.
- (Gupta, 2005, p. 144)

In conclusion, Gupta’s approach sustains that deflationists have to be concerned only about the interpretation of their claim. They need an interpretation that establishes the conclusions they reach for. Also they have to verify if the initial claim is correct, assuming that specific interpretation. The paradoxes and the list of desiderata mentioned above are not their problem. The specialist should try to give answers to those.

The generalization problem forces minimalists to deal with the Liar. In order for the truth predicate to fulfill its function as a generalization device, it has to be applied unrestricted. In this situation, I do not see a way out for a deflationist, except facing and trying to give a solution for the paradox. I do not think that such a deflationary theory of truth may be built around the paradox, without trying to give at least an explanation for it. I strongly believe that rejecting the instantiations of the T-schema that imply paradoxes is not the right solution for the deflationist and I am going to return to this in the next section. On the other hand, the situation when the deflationist completely ignores the paradox seems even worse. In the first case, the deflationist was able to avoid the paradox, but he lost the generalization he aimed for. The whole function of the truth predicate – according to minimalism – is its generalization function. If some instances of the T-schema are rejected, truth seems to lose his role. In

Gupta's solution, not only the role of truth was lost, but the whole theory seems to collapse.¹⁰² The theory seems to fail because if the problem of paradoxes is put aside and they are not considered a real issue, then the truth predicate will be applied unrestrictedly. There is no explanation for the paradoxical sentences¹⁰³ and because of this they have to be treated in the same way as the unproblematic ones. If this is the case, according to the minimalist approach, they have to be assigned with one of the two classical truth values. This would lead to contradiction. Thus, the coherence of the theory would be destroyed. In this situation, far from being perfect, any of the deflationary solutions seems more appealing. The deflationary theory of truth provides two possible solutions to the Liar. The first one is to restrict the application of the T-schema to the paradoxical sentences. The second one – also based on the idea of restricting the instantiations of the T-schema – applies the T-biconditionals only to grounded sentences. I am going to discuss these solutions in the next section.

Secondly, I do not fully understand what Gupta means referring to 'the specialist' that should be concerned with giving all the answers. It might be accepted that a deflationist is not interested in fulfilling all the desiderata mentioned by Gupta. But he should at least explain how his theory avoids the Liar paradox. If the theory cannot avoid it, then it should either cope with it (as the dialetheist did), either solve it.

Thus, the idea that the Liar paradox does not represent a problem for the deflationist does not seem to be sustainable. The prosentential theory of truth seems to give a solution to the Liar without accepting it as a real problem. Gupta's approach, on the other hand, aims to ignore the paradox and let the 'specialist' to handle it. This 'specialist' has a lot of work to do; he has to check many desiderata in order to be able to give an account of truth that solves the problem of paradoxes. The deflationist, however, is freed of this job. I tried to argue that both theories have weak points.

¹⁰² A possible solution would be for a deflationist to accept the Inconsistency View or dialetheism. But Gupta rejects both of them. I will return to the possibility that suggests that a deflationist should be also a dialetheist in the following section.

¹⁰³ The explanation is given outside the theory, by the specialist – according to Gupta. This means that the core of the theory does not provide any explanation regarding the paradoxes. The problem is just ignored.

So far, it seems that all these theories have their issues. The Tarskian approach is not able to solve the Pinocchio paradox and also it rejects as ill-formed some sentences that are neither paradoxical, nor pathological. Even if the Kripkean theory is able to avoid both of these, it cannot reject the Strengthened Liar in the same manner. The only solution for the revenge problem provided by the Kripkean approach is following the Tarskian line: considering it ill-formed. The last two approaches (i.e. the prosentential theory and Gupta's approach) do not work. The prosentential theory is too restrictive, especially when its distinction between dictionary and operative meaning is going to be accepted outside the scope of giving a solution to the Liar. On the other hand, Gupta's answer is moving the problem outside the deflationary account. However, the deflationist is not able to avoid as easily the Liar. These being said, a step further can be made. The next section is going to analyze if and how the minimalist can solve the problem of paradoxes.

2.6. Deflationism and the Liar – the acceptance and solutions

Those that accept the Liar as a genuine problem for a truth theory tend to adopt one of two main positions. The first of them is an ad hoc solution that tries to avoid the paradox. It implies some restrictions which aim to block the paradox. The other solution is a constructive one, for example one similar with Kripke's that was already presented. Deflationists seem to embrace the first class of solutions and they impose different restrictions of the T-schema in order to block the paradox.¹⁰⁴ However, it seems that both types of solutions are problematic for a minimalist. The constructive solutions seem to be unreachable for minimalists and the ad hoc solutions raise different problems for their theory.

As it was already mentioned, some deflationists accept that the Liar is a serious problem for the theory and try to find a proper solution. Among these is also Horwich. Horwich provides two answers to the Liar. The first one was presented in *Truth* (Horwich,

¹⁰⁴ The second solution provided by Horwich is based on and it is similar to the Kripkean approach. This does not mean it is considered a constructive one. Adopting the Kripkean terminology, Horwich aims to block the application of the T-schema for some sentences. I am going to return to this solution.

1998a) and the second one in a *Truth Meaning Reality* (Horwich, 2010).¹⁰⁵ Both answers seem to go in the same direction; they both aim to interdict the application of the T-schema for the paradoxical situations.

In *Truth* the author presents his theory – minimalism – and tries to give answers to some possible critics. Because of the way this theory sees the truth predicate¹⁰⁶, minimalism has to face the problem of semantic paradoxes. According to Horwich, there are four ways of dispatching this issue. The first possibility is to reject classical logic. But the author finds this solution inappropriate because it “cuts too deep” (Horwich, 1998a, p. 41), being too radical. A second possibility would be to consider the Liar ill-formed, as Tarski did; thus, the truth predicate could not be applicable to sentences as the Liar. This solution is rejected because it is considered too costly. Thirdly, it can be said that the Liar fails to express a proposition. This possibility is also rejected:

“(…) for any condition C, one might happen to believe that the proposition¹⁰⁷ meeting that condition is not true – which (since any object of belief is a proposition) would imply that ‘The proposition meeting condition C is not true’ expresses a proposition. And this will be so even if it happens to turn out that the proposition it expresses is the one meeting C, so ‘#’ (*i.e. the Liar*) does express a proposition.” (Horwich, 1998a, p. 41)

The only option that stands is to reject some instantiations of the T-schema. In this situation, the T-schema would not be applicable for some sentences, as the Liar. This solution is accepted under the condition that the class of excluded sentences to be as small as possible.

¹⁰⁵ The article presented in *Truth, Meaning and Reality* (“A Minimalist Critique of Tarski”) is a version of the one with a similar name (“A Minimalist Critique of Tarski on Truth”) which was published in *Deflationism and Paradox* (ed. Beall and Armour-Garb, 2005). I am going to refer and quote the first version of the article. There are no main differences between those two.

¹⁰⁶ Minimalism considers the truth predicate to have only a logical function, truth is a generalization device. Because of this, I think (following Armour-Garb and Beall) that minimalism has to face the problem of paradoxes. Horwich seems to consider the same.

¹⁰⁷ Horwich considers propositions to be the main truth-bearers. In order to keep the coherence of the chapter I will maintain sentences as the main bearers of truth.

Another request is to be provided a “constructive specification of the excluded instances that is as simple as possible” (Horwich, 1998a, p. 42).

This solution is not a constructive one, but it is in accordance with the minimalist view. Thus, it is a simple one, without implying a large terminological resource. Horwich claims that such a solution is suitable for the minimalist’s purposes. Even if he does not deny the fact that a constructive solution may be found, the author considers that the questions a minimalist aims to answer are answerable independently of a constructive solution to the Liar.

Horwich’s way of solving the Liar is known as *semantic epistemicism* (Armour-Garb and Beall, 2005, p. 90). There are two main clauses of this conception:

(SE₁) The Liar is either true or false.

(SE₂) It is conceptually impossible to know that the Liar is true and it is also conceptually impossible to know that the Liar is false.

The first thesis is formulated in such a way that it is incompatible with views as dialetheism. If Horwich’s semantic epistemicism works, then it solves the Liar.¹⁰⁸

This solution was heavily criticized. The main issue with it was underlined by Anil Gupta (1993, 2005) and Beall and Armour-Garb (2003, 2005). Putting it briefly, Gupta’s main critique on the minimalist solution to the Liar is that if this is to be accepted, then the main function of the truth predicate fails. According to the minimalist approach the sole role of the truth predicate is its generalization function.¹⁰⁹ If some of the instances of the T-schema would be rejected, then, the predicate cannot work anymore as a generalization device. Horwich was aware of this issue and mentioned it in a footnote. But he considered that the cases implying paradoxes “are few and far between; so the utility of truth as a device of generalization is not substantially impaired by their existence” (Horwich, 1998a, footnote 21). I agree with the

¹⁰⁸ However, it seems that the semantic epistemicism is not able to solve the revenge problem.

¹⁰⁹ Some of the already mentioned authors consider that this function cannot be fulfilled even if the T-schema would be applied without restrictions. The main idea is that the universal conclusion cannot be entailed by particular premises without an additional premise. This problem was already discussed in the first chapter. For the purpose of this section, I am going to assume that the truth predicate can realize its role. In this situation, the problem moves to the restricted instantiations. In this situation, truth needs to range unrestrictedly, in order to be able to accomplish its function.

already mentioned authors that this problem is not as simple as Horwich sees it. I am going to return to this issue after presenting the second solution provided by Horwich.

Even if the minimalist approach has as a starting point the Tarskian schema, Horwich rejects the Tarskian solution for the Liar. A minimalist would reject both the Tarskian approach of truth and the Tarskian solution for the Liar. The Tarskian theory of truth is rejected because it is misdirected, ill-motivated, not workable and pointless (Horwich, 2005, p. 79). Thus, Tarski's semantic conception of truth is misdirected because it does not deal with the actual concept of truth. Secondly, it is ill-motivated, according to Horwich, because it aims to provide an explicit definition of truth. Thirdly, it is not workable because it does not deal with the concept of truth for the natural languages, being interested only in the concept for the formalized languages. Finally, it is pointless because it does not address the main questions, which are worth answering.

It has to be remembered that those heavy critiques are made from a deflationary point of view. Those seem to hold only if it is already accepted that a deflationary approach is the most suitable one. A truth approach would decide the main questions that are worth answering, the main goals and directions a theory of truth should follow. For any truth theory those differ. One can judge on those only from a point of view of a specific theory. Outside a specific theory already elected all these critiques fail. The Tarskian theory had its own aims. As I already mentioned, Tarski did not aim to provide a theory of truth for the natural languages. Anyone who is interested in doing so should not consider the Tarskian approach as a rival one, but rather as a parallel one.

These being said, Horwich moves on to criticizing the Tarskian response to the Liar. According to Horwich there are four main issues with this solution:

“(1) that it is implausible to suppose that we cannot – using a *single* sense of ‘true’ – say of an attribution of truth that it is not true; (2) that it is objectionable for there to be no sense of ‘true’ in which we can assert, for example, ‘All instances of ‘ $p \rightarrow p$ ’ are true’ – where ‘ p ’ can be any sentence, containing any truth predicate; (3) that it is counterintuitive to claim that we could not reflect on the hierarchy of truth predicates and then say of a sentence that it is not true in any of these senses; and (4) that the collection of new concepts and principles needed to implement Tarski's solution is undesirably complex.” (Horwich, 2005, p. 81)

Once again, the fourth critique seems to hold only if one wants to deflate his terminology. The other three critiques are indeed some weak points of the Tarskian approach and implicitly to his solution to the Liar.

The second solution that Horwich provides links both the Tarskian approach and the Kripkean one. The minimalist starts from the T-schema and the hierarchy of languages, but rejects the idea of multiple truth predicates. The Kripkean solution that adopts one truth predicate that increases in extension is preferred. In this situation, there would be infinite languages (L_0, L_1, L_2, L_3). The first language, L_0 , does not have a truth predicate. L_1 has a truth predicate that is applied to the sentences from L_0 and so on. The idea that the meta-language has to contain the object language is also kept.

The restriction – and the solution for the Liar paradox – is implemented using the Kripkean concept of grounded sentences. Horwich's definition for grounded sentences is as follows (Horwich, 2005, p. 81):

Grounded =_{df} sentences, together with their negations, that are entailed by L_{previous} 's non-truth-theoretic facts in conjunction with the immediate results of applying the equivalence schema to them (truth-theoretic facts immediately entailed by non-truth-theoretic facts).

In this situation, the truth predicate is going to be applied only to grounded sentences. The Liar – as in the Kripkean approach¹¹⁰ – is not considered grounded and because of this does not have an instance of the T-schema. Hence, the contradiction is not derivable. It should be noted that this does not mean the rejection of the Excluded Middle or the Principle of Bivalence. In other words, it is not the case that the Liar does not have a truth value, but rather that we cannot know that exact truth value.

Thus, the new minimalist solution to the Liar is extremely similar with the Kripkean approach. The main difference between those two is that the minimalist approach does not want to use the compositional principles that were also used by Tarski. An observable difference is that Horwich did not mention the idea of fixed points and he maintains the Principle of Bivalence.

¹¹⁰ Both Kripke's and Horwich's definitions for groundedness are coextensive. They pick out the same sentences as grounded, respectively ungrounded. The difference between those two theories is that minimalism is not able to differentiate between paradoxical and non-paradoxical sentences. On the other hand, the Kripkean approach is able to make this distinction.

Horwich claims that his approach can deal with sentences of the form ‘What Anna said is true’ and that the instantiation of the equivalence schema for examples like the one already mentioned would be accepted. The only request is for the sentence to be grounded. In order to determine if such a sentence is grounded, one has to go back to everything that Anna said. If, for example, Anna uttered ‘Everything that John said is true’, then another investigation should be made in order to determine if the last sentence is also grounded. It seems like a heavy work. That may not be such a big issue, but let us imagine that John was the one that uttered the first sentence (i.e. ‘What Anna said is true’). In this situation, both sentences are ungrounded. This means that the T-schema cannot be applied for them and their truth value cannot be decided. It should also be mentioned that those sentences are far from being paradoxical. It seems, then, that minimalism is banning not only the paradoxical situations.

Considering that not all ungrounded sentences have an instance of the T-schema, Horwich leaves outside of his theory some non-paradoxical sentences. It might be true that some ungrounded sentences may not be paradoxical, but they are pathological (i.e. ‘This proposition is true’). However, in the previous case, Anna’s and John’s sentences were not even pathological; at best they were – as Kripke would call them – risky. If this is the case, then the own request that the author imposed in his first approach – that the exclusion should be as minimal as possible – is not fulfilled.

The idea that this approach is going to ban even more sentences brings us back to the problem of generalization. According to the minimalist approach, the sole role of truth is one of generalization. Truth predicate is just a logical one, a generalization device. Truth makes possible some generalizations that would not be possible without it.¹¹¹ If this is the situation, it seems that it would not be able to fulfill its role anymore. If some instances of the T-schema are left outside the theory, then the whole purpose of truth fails. Horwich comments on this very briefly – as it was already mentioned. He considers that not only the banned instances would not be many, but also that because of this, the role of truth is not substantially weakened. I do not believe this is the case, as I already argued. It seems that minimalism rejects the instantiation of the T-schema for too many sentences. Thus, the Liar represents a real problem for minimalism and Horwich’s solution is not satisfactory at all.

¹¹¹ Horwich’s main example is the Excluded Middle: Every sentence of the form ‘F or non-F’ is true. Another example he uses is ‘Every instance of $\langle p \rightarrow p \rangle$ is true’

In order to solve the problem of paradoxes and maintain minimalism, some authors provided quite different answers. Even if their solutions are distinct in many aspects, they convey in one: the application of the T-schema should not be restricted. If the T-schema is applied unrestrictedly, then, there is a chance for the truth predicate to be able to fulfill its job. Beall and Armour-Garb presented a solution together, and Beall (2001) presented another possibility alone.¹¹² Both authors consider that a deflationist should accept paradoxes as being both true and false, thus, a deflationist should also be a dialetheist. Beall's first solution is to consider paradoxes as meaningless.

Firstly, I am going to present the meaninglessness strategy. Beall considers that sentences as the Liar, the Strengthened Liar and even the Truth-Teller are meaningless, even if, at a first sight, they look as they have meaning. According to the author, deflationism would accept that truth is eliminable from the meaningful sentences. In this situation:

“(…) ‘true’ may be very important, perhaps even essential, in our aim to describe reality; however, any such importance or essential role of ‘truth’ – for example, in making generalizations over many sentences – is due solely to our finite, contingent circumstances. Our aim is always to describe reality; in this quest, as Quine would put it, we may semantically descend.” (Beall, 2001, p. 127)¹¹³

Even if Horwich claims that truth is not always eliminable, Beall holds that the author of the minimalist approach would accept that this is the case only because our finite resources. But, in principle, truth is eliminable from any meaningful sentence. In this situation, the solution becomes pretty clear. If the truth predicate is not eliminable from a sentence, then it does not have meaning. If someone says ‘It is true that today is raining’, he says nothing more than ‘Today is raining’. Thus, ‘Today is raining’ has a proper meaning after the elimination of the truth predicate. On the other hand, if someone is uttering ‘This sentence is true’, what

¹¹² The possibility presented by Beall was criticized by Armour-Garb (2001).

¹¹³ It should be noted that there are rather the uses of a sentence that are grounded or not. For example, a sentence as:

(Y) Everything Mary said today is true.

may be grounded or ungrounded depending on the circumstances. However, for pragmatic reasons, I am going to express shortly this idea by saying that sentences are grounded or ungrounded.

remains after the possible elimination of the truth predicate is ‘This sentence’. This does not seem like a proper or at least complete sentence. ‘This sentence’ cannot be considered a proper meaningful sentence, thus, so would be the one obtained by adding the truth predicate.

In order to accommodate the minimalist approach, Beall claims that an advocate of minimalism does not have to eliminate the truth predicate from the language. He must only accept that *in principle* it can be eliminated. This being said, when it comes to the paradoxes, the truth predicate is not eliminable, not even in principle (Beall, 2001, p. 128).

To conclude, there seems to be a better solution than the one that bans the application of the T-schema to some meaningful, but problematic sentences. According to Beall this solution is to consider that the T-schema is universally applicable to all meaningful sentences. However, there are some apparently meaningful sentences that are, in fact, meaningless. This is the case of sentences from which the truth predicate is not eliminable, not even in principle. It seems that in this way, the role of truth as a generalization device is kept.

Armour-Garb names – following Kripke – the sentences from which the truth predicate is not eliminable ungrounded. Beall’s argument, in this situation, would be that: a minimalist considers that the truth predicate is eliminable from any meaningful sentence and it is not eliminable from ungrounded sentences, thus, all ungrounded sentences are meaningless. To sustain that a sentence is meaningful only if it is grounded is a strong thesis and it seems quite implausible. There are four main reasons why such a claim may be considered implausible (Armour-Garb, 2001, p. 284). First of all, there are some ungrounded sentences that are, without a doubt, grammatical. A possible example can be ‘This sentence is true’. Secondly, they do not seem to imply a category mistake. This means that the right kind of predicate is applied to the right kind of object. Thirdly, - as Beall himself accepts it (Beall, 2001, p. 126) – no one has trouble reasoning with them. The fourth one implies contingency. This means that there are sentences which express a proposition under some specific circumstances. This is the case of the contingent Liar. For example:

(9) At least one sentence written on this page is false.

This sentence is meaningful. It may be also true, if a different sentence from this page is false. I will assume – for the sake of the argument – that there is no other false sentence on this page. In this situation, one may start and eliminate sentence by sentence in order to find the false one. If none would be found, then (9) becomes paradoxical. Nevertheless, at the

beginning (9) was understood as being meaningful. It is quite hard to see in which way the sentence had changed in order to lose its meaning.

For Kripke there are two senses in which a sentence is meaningful. A first one is that a sentence is meaningful because there are circumstances under which it expresses a proposition. A second one is when a sentence actually succeeds in expressing a proposition. Following Armour-Garb notation (Armour-Garb, 2001, p. 284), the first case can be abbreviated to meaning_p and the second one to meaning_a .¹¹⁴ In the Kripkean account, a sentence does not have a truth value if it is neither meaningful_a , nor meaningful_p . A grounded sentence is meaningful_a , while an ungrounded one is meaningless_a .

Meaningless_a is indissolubly linked with truth conditions. Sadly, a deflationary approach does not have access to such a view about meaning. If a deflationist would be able to define meaning in such a way, then he:

“(...) presupposes the meaningfulness of the sentences that are used and mentioned in those instances; hence, the meaning of such sentences could not then be constituted (even partly) by the truth condition laid down by those instances. (...)As should be clear, the deflationist cannot recognize a notion of meaning_a .” (Armour-Garb, 2001, pp. 285-286)

The problem arises because deflationism takes the T-schema and its instantiations as the core of the theory. When the minimalist does so, he already presupposes the meaningfulness of the truth-bearer used in that specific instantiation. If a minimalist would try to explain meaning in terms of truth conditions, then he would be caught in a vicious circle.

A deflationist is able to explain meaning use-theoretically, not truth-theoretically.¹¹⁵ Beall’s approach seems to be more suitable when meaning is explained truth-theoretically. In this situation, a deflationist would hold that all and only meaningful sentences have

¹¹⁴ Meaning_a – The sentence actually expresses a proposition

Meaning_p – The sentence potentially expresses a proposition

¹¹⁵ A use-theoretically understanding of meaning analyzes the concept based on its conceptual role, regularities of use and verification conditions (Armour-Garb, 2001, p. 286).

corresponding instances of the T-schema. Armour-Garb considers that a deflationary meaning would accept some ungrounded sentences to be meaningful. In this situation:

“(...) since the deflationist holds that a sentence gets a corresponding instance of (TS)¹¹⁶ if, and only if, it is meaningful_u¹¹⁷, and since, on her account, to have a corresponding instance of (TS) is to have a truth condition, it follows that the deflationist should allow that such ungrounded sentences have truth conditions. This means that the deflationist is actually in a far *worse* position with respect to the Meaningless Strategy than are those of a more inflationist orientation.” (Armour-Garb, 2001, pp. 287-288)

Thus, the minimalist cannot consider equivalent meaningless and ungrounded sentences. In this situation, he seems not to be able to accommodate the meaninglessness strategy.

If this is the case, what a deflationist can do? Some authors consider that the way out for a minimalist is to accept dialetheism. Dialetheists – as Priest – hold that some truths also have their negations true. Thus, there are sentences that are both true and false. This is the case of some contradictions. In order to avoid trivialism – the approach that considers any truth-bearer true – dialetheists consider themselves paraconsistentists. One is considered a paraconsistentist if and only if his consequence relation is not explosive.

The consequence relation is considered explosive if and only if for all p and q:

$(p \& \sim p) \vdash q$

Where \vdash expresses the consequence relation. (Beall and Armour-Garb, 2003, p. 305)

If a dialetheist adopts a paraconsistent logic, then he avoids the problem of trivialism and accepts only some contradictions as being true.

Deflationists are constrained to accept that truth is applied in a maximally unrestricted manner. This means the truth predicate might be applied to any well-formed declarative sentence. The delimitation problem¹¹⁸ cannot be solved by an advocate of deflationism, which

¹¹⁶ This is Armour-Garb’s notation for the T-schema.

¹¹⁷ The notation the author uses to express a deflationary account of meaning.

¹¹⁸ The delimitation problem targets the issue of deciding the proper truth-bearers in a theory of truth.

could help him to solve the Liar. In this situation, deflationists cannot escape paradoxes. They seem to be forced to apply the T-schema for sentences that lead to paradox. The ad hoc solution that restricts some instantiations of the T-schema is not workable for minimalism. As it was already mentioned, a minimalist considers that the truth predicate is a device of generalization. If this is the case, then the truth predicate must be unrestrictedly applied in order to fulfill its function.

Beall and Armour-Garb argue that the cost of imposing some restrictions to the T-schema is bigger than the one implied by adopting dialetheism. If a minimalist would impose that the T-schema is not applied for paradoxical sentences, then he would not be able to explain the paradoxicality of those specific sentences. In this situation:

“(...) the cost of ad hoc restrictions is greater than that of dialetheism; the former, unlike the latter, requires giving up the hope of explaining the status of the very sentences for which the option (the ad hoc restrictions) was selected. Admittedly, some may not think this cost so terribly high; however, if the alternative – namely dialetheism – leaves deflationism ‘pure’ and otherwise uncompromised, then it is difficult to see what would motivate choosing the ad hoc (costly) option over dialetheism.” (Beall and Armour-Garb, 2003, p. 316)

On the other hand, some advocates of minimalism consider that epistemicism is the best answer to the Liar. In this situation, the nonparadoxical instances of the T-schema are taken to determine the extension of the truth predicate. There is no need for the minimalist to answer which are the specific nonparadoxical instances. It also cannot be known which the exact extension of truth is. According to Restall:

“As far as we can tell, non-paradoxicality determines that ‘true’ has *some* extension, constrained by certain T-biconditionals. That means truth has some extension of other. Exactly which extension we can never know, for the only rules governing ‘true’ don’t tell us enough to decide the matter. Some instances are genuinely paradoxical (...) so we know that the biconditional cannot apply to *them*.” (Restall, 2005, p. 99)

It seems that this is all that a deflationist can say about the extension of truth. Restall does not see a problem in the fact that there is no algorithm to distinguish between paradoxical and nonparadoxical instantiations of the T-schema. The collection of all instances of the T-schema – as a whole – governs the meaning of truth. The paradoxical sentences vary in truth value from a stage to another.¹¹⁹ Thus, their concrete truth value is unknown. Truth is governed by a revision rule¹²⁰ which is applied at every stage.

Restall's answer to the Liar seems to have the same weak point as the ad hoc ones. If the paradoxical sentences vary in truth value, then this is the same for composed sentences. For example, any conjunction (with all other conjuncts true) that has the Liar as one of its conjuncts would vary in truth value. In this situation, the law of excluded middle would be true only relative to stages, it would not hold in general. If this is the case, it seems that the role of the truth predicate is not as easy to accomplish. The truth predicate may fulfill its function only relative to stages, not in general.

If this solution is rejected, then T-gluts¹²¹ and T-gaps¹²² approaches may be the remaining solution for the minimalist. Even if those theories consider themselves opposites, they have some convergent points. There is a form of isomorphism between T-gaps and T-gluts. It seems that both theories consider the same sentences as lacking truth values, respectively as being both true and false. Both theories are non-classical¹²³ and they use the same understanding for the logic operators, as pointed out by Parsons (1990, p. 337):

¹¹⁹ (L) occurs at a specific stage, call it S_1 . At the next stage, S_2 , (L) is true. Because this is the negation of (L), at S_3 it becomes false. This process continues. The grounded sentences, on the other hand, do not vary in truth values. This process is similar to the one exposed by Kripke.

¹²⁰ The instantiations of the T-schema are taken as revision rules.

¹²¹ If there are sentences that are simultaneously true and false, there are *truth value gluts*.

¹²² If there are sentences that are neither true, nor false, there are *truth value gaps*.

¹²³ They admit that there are sentences that are not just true or false.

A	$\sim A$ ¹²⁴
-	-
T	F
F	T
T,F	T,F

A	B	A&B
-	-	-
-	T	-
-	F	F
T	T	T
T	F	F
F	F	F
T,F	T,F	T,F
T,F	T	T,F
T,F	F	F
T,F	-	?

Both dialetheists and gappers agree on the fact that the last line is not possible, because they do not accept that the other approach is viable. There are other similarities between those

¹²⁴ Both gappers and deflationists use a weaker negation. Let us consider ‘ \sim ’ to be the symbol for strong negation (or Boolean negation). Strong negation operator is defined (Armour-Garb, 2004, footnote 44; Priest, 1990, p. 207, Parsons, 1990, p. 348):

A	$\neg A$
-	T
T	F
F	T
T,F	F

two approaches. Firstly, the definition of a valid inference is the same for both theories.¹²⁵ Secondly, they both suffer from the same issues. There are two major issues for these theories. The first one is that they cannot express truly their insights about the Liar. The second one is that the revenge of the Liar may occur.

Gappers consider that there are some sentences that are neither true, nor false. However, they are unable to express this truly (i.e. through a sentence that is true according to their approach). This is obvious for the Liar.

The Liar:

$a = \sim Ta$

Let us suppose a gapper wants to assert that the Liar is not true, then:

(1) $\sim Tb$ where b is the name for the Liar sentence, for a .

(2) $a = b$

(3) $\sim Ta$

The solution is to consider both ' $\sim Ta$ ' and ' $\sim Tb$ ' as gappy.

Dialetheists have to face a similar issue. If gappers have a hard way to assert what they think, a dialetheist has problems when he has to express disagreement. If the Liar (β) is kept as an example, then:

“‘ β is not both true and false’, i.e. ‘ $\sim (\beta \text{ is true} \ \& \ \beta \text{ is false})$ ’. This, however, gets us nowhere, since if β is the liar sentence, it *is* a dialetheism, yet this statement about it is true. (If β is the liar sentence, then it is both true and not true. Since it is not true ‘ β is true’ is false, and so is the conjunction ‘ β is true & β is false’. Thus the negation of this conjunction is true. [It is also false, but that is not relevant to the point at issue].” (Parsons, 1990, pp. 345-346, footnote 10)

It seems that when a dialetheist is stating ' $\sim A$ ' one cannot distinguish if he means simply false or both true and false. A dialetheist has to differentiate between denying a sentence and asserting its negation (Parsons, 1990, p. 346). According to Parsons, if this distinction stands, then both gappers and dialetheists are able to express their insights.

¹²⁵ $\alpha \vdash \beta$ if every sentence in α is true, then β must be true.

The second problem for these approaches is that the revenge of the Liar occurs. At a first glance, both theories seem to be able to solve the revenge. The argument for the paradox is as follows (Parsons, 1990, pp. 347-348):

(0) $a = \sim Ta$	
(1) Ta	Assumption
(2) $T \sim Ta$	1 and 0 by substitution of identical
(3) $\sim Ta$	2 by Disquotation based on the T-schema
(4) $\sim Ta$	1-3 by Reductio ad Absurdum (RAA)
(5) $T \sim Ta$	4 by Disquotation based on the T-schema
(6) Ta	5 and 0 by substitution of identical
(7) $Ta \ \& \ \sim Ta$	4 and 6 by conjunction introduction

The gappers would reject the argument based on the jump from 1-3 to 4 and the use of RAA. The subproof shows that initial assumption is not true. The weak negation used by gappers requires that ' Ta ' has to be false, in order for ' $\sim Ta$ ' to be true, but all that can be proven is that ' Ta ' is not true. Also, Reductio ad Absurdum is not a valid mode of inference in a logic that accepts truth-value gaps. On the other hand, dialetheists would accept the proof; they would not consider it fallacious. What the proof shows is that the Strengthened Liar is both true and not true, according to their theory.^{126,127}

¹²⁶ Priest offers a more detailed argument for the Strengthened Liar (Priest, 2006, p. 287).

Let us consider there is a sentence that says about itself it is false and not true (the Strengthened Liar constructed for dialetheism), call it α . Then:

(α) $F\alpha \ \& \ \sim T\alpha$

α is either true or false, then $T\alpha \vee F\alpha$.

Assuming that α is true, then because of what it says, it is false and no true: $T\alpha \ \& \ F\alpha \ \& \ \sim T\alpha$.

On the other hand, if it is assumed that it is false, then its negation has to be true. Thus, $\sim F\alpha \vee T\alpha$ would be true. If the Exhaustion Principle ($\sim Ts \rightarrow T \sim s$) (Priest, 2006, p. 79) is applied, then it is obtained $\sim F\alpha \rightarrow T\alpha$.

Because $T\alpha$ is obtained in both cases, the conjunction between it and the initial sentence can be introduced: $T\alpha \ \& \ F\alpha \ \& \ \sim T\alpha$ (respectively $\sim F\alpha$ in the second case). This is the exact kind of conclusion a dialetheist would want, it proves that the initial sentence is both true and false.

¹²⁷ The Boolean negation may cause problems for both approaches. Parsons offers a way out for both dialetheists and gappers. The stronger negation can be defined as following:

Both T-gaps and T-gluts approaches are able to find a way out for both of the issues they have to face. The most important step is that they are able to solve the revenge of the Liar. Thus, it seems that the best way a minimalist can face the problem of paradoxes is to accept that there are some true contradictions or that there are some sentences that suffer from a truth-value gap. At a first sight a deflationist can choose either one as a solution. However, T-gluts seem to be the preferred solution. Why should a deflationist accept one and reject the other? I believe the answer is linked to the way a minimalist understands the function of truth and the way these theories solve the revenge of the Liar. A minimalist considers the sole role of truth to be a logical one, truth predicate is a generalization device. Both for a T-gaps or a T-gluts approach the truth is able to maintain its function. The T-schema can be applied unrestrictedly.

Each of these approaches has a weak point. The solution provided by the gappers would consider more than only the paradoxical sentences as suffering from a truth value gap. A similar issue shadows the other approach. The approach provided by Armour-Garb and Beall as a solution for minimalism considers more sentences to be both true and false. In the case of the ad hoc restriction the composed sentences that had a paradoxical sentence as one of their constituents would lack an instance of the T-schema.¹²⁸ For gappers and dialetheists the T-schema will be applied, but the sentence would be considered truth-valueless or both true and false.

It seems that those two theories are extremely similar and it might be believed that a deflationist does not have to choose between them. However, I incline to believe that a T-gluts

$$T \text{ '}\neg\text{'s} =_{df} (\sim T\text{'s} \ \& \ \sim F\text{'s}) \vee (\sim T\text{'s} \ \& \ F\text{'s})$$

$$F \text{ '}\neg\text{'s} =_{df} (T\text{'s} \ \& \ \sim F\text{'s}) \vee (T\text{'s} \ \& \ F\text{'s})$$

In this case, using these definitions, an advocate of T-gaps or T-gluts may substitute the Boolean negation with the already mentioned definitions. Both theorists would be able to keep their counterarguments for the Strengthened Liar in this manner. Thus, according to Parsons the change of the weaker negation with the stronger one, would not affect these responses to the Liar and the Strengthened Liar.

¹²⁸ For example, a conjunction with one of the conjuncts that is a paradoxical sentence would be in this situation. It should be noted that for both ad hoc restrictions and T-gaps, respectively T-gluts approaches the conjunction would be considered false if and only if at least one conjunct would be false. In this specific situation, it would not matter anymore if another conjunct would be paradoxical.

approach is more suitable. One possible argument would be the way those two theories solve the Liar and the Strengthened Liar. Gappers reject the argument and the Liar on the basis it is truth-valueless. On the other hand, dialetheists accept both the argument and the Liar sentence. By accepting those into the theory, I strongly believe they are able to reach more and different insights. In this situation, paradoxes can be used in a formal approach without blocking it. Another argument can be that a deflationist would be more inclined to consider a sentence both true and false, rather than without a truth value. In order to consider a sentence valueless one has to provide a criterion for this. Sentences that fail to have a truth value, have to have something in common. It might be possible that this goes beyond the deflationist's possibilities and resources. If a deflationist is not able to present such a criterion, then he is unable to use the approach. For truth value gluts, such a criterion might be provided through a formal demonstration. The sentences that are both true and false would be discovered on the way, there might be no need for a proper criterion and theory to differentiate them. If this is the case, then, it seems that the best option for a deflationist would be to accept dialetheism as a way out.

To conclude, the advocates of deflationism are divided in two main classes when it comes to adopt a position in facing paradoxes. A first class considers paradoxes not to represent a proper problem for their truth theory. On the other hand, a second class would try to give a solution, considering paradoxes a real problem. Grover and Gupta are representatives for the first class. Horwich and his commentators – Beall and Armour-Garb – are part of the second one.

I presented some arguments in order to reject the first class. It might be possible for a theorist of truth to consider paradoxes not an issue. However, this is not the case for a minimalist. As long as this form of deflationism considers the truth predicate to be a generalization device, it has to accept that paradoxes seem to block their theory. In this situation, Horwich adopts two forms of ad hoc solutions. In both cases, he blocks the application of the T-schema to the paradoxical situations. Following Armour-Garb and Beall, I consider that his solutions are not suitable for minimalism. In order to be a device of generalization, the truth predicate should range over all sentences. Thus, it cannot be restricted.

It seems the only possible solutions for a minimalist are t-gaps or t-gluts. T-gluts are the preferable solution. A deflationist becomes, in this situation, also a dialetheist. This approach still has a weak point that seems to shadow all answers that try to give a proper solution to the Liar. This issue is that not only the paradoxical sentences would suffer from t-gluts, but also some of the complex sentences that have as their parts an atomic sentence with a t-gluts. However, in the case of t-gluts the role of the truth predicate is not obstructed, thus I do not consider this to be a real problem. In this situation, I consider dialetheism to be the best solution for a minimalist.

Conclusion

This chapter focuses on different approaches to the Liar. The Liar represents a serious issue for various truth theories. The Tarskian solution is based on the stratification of the language. Truth is considered a semantic notion and it occurs only in the meta-language. Tarski claims that a language cannot contain its own truth predicate. From the Tarskian perspective, the Liar is ill-formed.

Kripke, on the other hand, accepts that sentences involving truth can be risky. His solution uses the distinction between grounded and ungrounded sentences. The Liar is considered to be ungrounded. Because it is also paradoxical, it does not have a truth value in any minimal fixed point. In the minimal fixed points only grounded sentences have truth values. Kripke is able to draw a distinction between ungrounded sentences and ungrounded and paradoxical ones. If one has to choose between the Tarskian and the Kripkean solution, I argued that the latter one is preferable.

Deflationists have divided opinions when it comes to the Liar. Some of them consider that paradoxes do not pose a special problem for their theory, while others consider the opposite. Both Grover (2005) and Gupta (2005) consider that paradoxes are not an issue for a deflationary account of truth. I argued that their views have some weak points. Grover seems to offer a solution to the Liar, while claiming it is not a problem for her theory. Gupta considers that a minimalist does not have to worry about the Liar; the paradox should represent the problem of the specialist.

Horwich, on the other hand, accepts that the Liar pose a serious issue for his theory. He aims to provide two solutions for it. Both of his solutions are based on blocking the application of the T-schema. I argued that by doing this, Horwich does not allow the truth predicate to fulfill its function as a generalization device. If the T-schema is applied unrestrictedly, then either T-gaps or T-gluts have to be accepted. Following Armour-Garb and Beall I argued that T-gluts are preferable. Thus, a minimalist should also be a dialetheist.

By accepting dialetheism, a minimalist is able to solve two problems with one solution. In the previous chapter I argued that the generalization problem represents a serious issue for this theory. If dialetheism is accepted, it seems that the additional premise proposed by Horwich in order to solve the generalization problem may work. On the same note, if dialetheism is accepted, then the Liar does not pose a special issue for minimalism. Thus, the most significant issues of minimalism are solvable based on dialetheism. It is true that this view is far away of what Horwich aimed for. However, this solution does not change the core of minimalism and maintains the main aims and claims of this theory.

Chapter 3 Truthmakers, Metaphysics and Deflationism

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present a possible development for the minimalist's approach. The main question I am going to answer is: can a deflationist incorporate in his theory a light form of the concept of truthmaker? I strongly believe he can. In this situation there are two important questions that follow. The first one is concerned with the fact that the truthmaker notion is often linked with what exists in the world, thus, it might be the case that a minimalist is forced to adopt a metaphysical position. The minimalist can accept that truth is a relation. In this situation, the second question that arises is: what kind of relation¹²⁹ is between a truth-bearer and a truthmaker.

Horwich's minimalist theory claims that the T-schema and its instances represent all that can be said about truth. Armstrong's truthmaker theory (TM) (Armstrong, 2004) is strongly linked with the correspondence theory of truth. TM argues that a truth-bearer is necessitated by a truthmaker and that every true proposition has such a truthmaker. A truthmaker is a state of affairs, according to Armstrong and it is taken to be mind-independent. In this situation, the compatibility of truthmakers with minimalism seems to reach a dead end.

There are two main interpretations to the T-schema (Young, 2009): a minimalist one and a substantive one. The minimalist interpretation claims that the T-schema links two entities of the same category, two truth-bearers. The substantive one is associated with theories as TM or the correspondence theory. This reading of the schema links two entities of different categories: a truthmaker and a truth-bearer. A deflationary theory of truth is considered to use the first interpretation.

The minimalist aims to incorporate the correspondence intuition. This means that he accepts that truths depend on reality, but denies that this is what truth essentially is. In this situation, it seems that a minimalist would not deny that truth is a relation. This relation does not seem to link two entities of the same category, but the minimalist is not concerned with

¹²⁹ I am concerned only with the mind-dependency or mind-independency aspect of the truth relation.

what those entities are.¹³⁰ The two parts of this relation may be called truth-bearers and truthmakers. In this situation, it does not seem impossible for a deflationist to incorporate into his theory a concept as ‘truthmaker’. This does not mean that he becomes an advocate of the correspondence theory, or TM. A minimalist does not have to develop this idea, it is sufficient for him to accept that truth is a kind of relation.

If a deflationary theory is accepted for truth, it has to be generalized for other semantic notions, too. Amie Thomasson (2015a, 2015b) argues that a semantic deflationist has to commit metaphysically and accept a similar theory for existence. The main aim of deflationary theories was to separate the truth concept from any metaphysical and epistemological commitments. Thomasson seems to link back the semantic notions with the necessity of adopting a metaphysical approach. I think that a minimalist is free to remain neutral. He does not need metaphysical view. However, if he wants to commit metaphysically, then it seems that his only option is a form of deflationism. In order to maintain the coherence of his semantic theory, he has to accept to treat existence in the same manner.

Accepting that truth is a relation raises another question for the deflationist. The coherence theory of truth and Armstrong’s theory accept truth to be mind-independent, adopting a form of strong realism. Pragmatists, which are the opposite group, consider that truth is mind-dependent. On the other hand, the minimalist may not be committed metaphysically. In this situation, can he decide if truth is mind-dependent or mind-independent? It seems that the best choice would be to be somewhere in between. A deflationist may accept that truth as type is mind-independent, in order to keep the objectivity of truth relation. However, the instantiations, the tokens, of the truth relation are mind-dependent.

In the first section of this chapter I am going to focus on the possibility for a deflationist to incorporate truthmakers into his theory. In the first subsection I will shortly present Armstrong’s truthmaker theory (Armstrong, 2004). The following subsection aims to see how a deflationist understands the T-schema. Following Young (2009), there are two ways

¹³⁰ He may be concerned with what kind of entities are the truth-bearers. A minimalist can say that truth is a relation between a truth-bearer and a truthmaker. He is interested in using the truth predicate without losing himself in terminological remarks. In this situation, he may leave aside the other relatum and focus on the truth-bearer and the role of the truth predicate.

of understanding the T-schema. In order to incorporate the correspondence intuition, an advocate of Horwich's theory needs more than the minimalist interpretation of the T-schema. The substantive interpretation is too strong for a deflationary theory. In this situation, it seems that the minimalist is somewhere in between those two interpretations. In the last subsection I am going to see how a weaker version of the truthmaker concept and deflationism can be linked. I strongly believe that a deflationist can understand truth as a relation. In this situation, he may introduce truthmakers as one of the parts of the relation.

The second section focuses on the relation between semantic and metaphysical deflationism. Amie Thomasson (2015a, 2015b) claims that metaphysical deflationism is a necessary jump from semantic deflationism. I argue against her thesis. Her deflationary approach for existence is quite problematic and I am going to give arguments in order to sustain this. Her approach for existence is quite similar with Russell's (2004). Both approaches consider that the existential quantifier has ontological import and that there is no need for a predicate in order to express existence. I am also going to use one of McGinn's arguments (McGinn, 2000) against the Russellian approach. The first subsection deals with semantic deflationism. The second one presents shortly Thomasson's approach. The last one contains my counterarguments. Those are structured in two main classes. A first one deals with the necessary jump from semantics to metaphysics and the second one with Thomasson's approach for existence.

Finally, the last section aims to see how a deflationist would consider the truth relation. The correspondence theory of truth and TM consider truth to be mind-independent. In order to do so, one has to accept a strong form of realism and take propositions to be mind-independent too. If the existence of Platonic propositions is rejected, then the objectivity of truth may suffer. A middle solution can be found. Accepting that truth as a relation is objective and mind-independent, does not have to mean that truth instances are the same. A minimalist may accept such a solution without adopting a metaphysical position and without inflating his terminology.

3.1 Deflationism and Truthmakers: Truth as a relation

In this first part of the chapter I am going to analyze how a minimalist can incorporate truthmakers into his theory. According to minimalism, all that can be said about truth is the T-schema and its instantiations. Horwich claims his theory does not deny the correspondence intuition – the idea that truths correspond to facts – even more, he wants to accommodate it. In this situation, the jump to accept a weaker version of the concept of truthmaker seems possible.

The first subsection aims to present a truthmaker theory that follows the ideas and directions of the correspondence theory of truth. Armstrong's theory is a substantive theory of truth and it is way different from any deflationary account. However, Armstrong's understanding of the truthmaker concept is too strong for a deflationist.

A deflationist uses the T-schema as the core of the theory. The schema may be understood in different ways. In the second subsection two different interpretations of the schema are presented (Young, 2009): the minimalist interpretation and the substantive one. As the names suggest, the minimalist interpretation should be compatible with a deflationary view. On the other hand, the substantive interpretation should be used by theories as Armstrong's. I argue that the minimalist interpretation – which considers that the T-schema links two truth-bearers – is too weak for the minimalist's purposes.

There are some authors that argue that a minimalist can accept truthmakers if he understands them as propositions (McGrath, 2003). This understanding of the concept of truthmaker is not able to accommodate the correspondence intuition and also raises many problems. The third subsection presents McGrath's approach, some arguments against it and a solution to the main problem. A minimalist is able to accept truthmakers but in a weaker sense. In this way, he reaches his initial aim and does not become an advocate of the correspondence theory in disguise.

It should be added that incorporating this terminology into the theory does not change anything to the core of the theory. The minimalist approach remains as Horwich presented it. What changes is the fact that something is built on it. Minimalism is used as a basis. Adding the light version of the truthmaker concept to it does not change its statute; it remains a deflationary theory about truth.

3.1.1 Truthmakers and a substantive theory of truth

The truthmaker concept is associated with truth approaches that are somehow linked with the correspondence theory of truth. Even if there are many approaches that incorporate this notion, in this paper I am going to focus on Armstrong's theory about truthmakers (TM) (Armstrong, 2004).¹³¹

In the first part of this section, I am going to briefly present the main concepts of Armstrong's theory.¹³² There is no need to go in depth with this, because, in order to reach the aim of this chapter I am only interested in those concepts and parts of the theory which are, in a way, linked with the problem I am concerned with.

As Armstrong himself stated it, Aristotle was the first one who suggested the intension of the truthmaker concept, even if he did not use the exact terminology. Aristotle stated:

“(…) if there is a man, the statement whereby we say that there is a man is true, and reciprocally – since if the statement whereby we say that there is a man is true, there is a man. And whereas the true statement is in no way the cause of the actual thing's existence, the actual thing does seem in some way the cause of the statement's being true; it is because the actual thing exists or does not that the statement is called true or false.” (Aristotle (Cat) 14 b 13. Cf. (Met) 1011 a 25 apud. Weingartner, Paul, 2000, p. 109)

Armstrong considers his theory to be situated between the correspondence theory of truth and Horwich's deflationary theory of truth. The link with the correspondence theory of truth is obvious. Armstrong keeps the core of the correspondence theory. His theory accepts that truth is a relation between truth-bearers and truthmakers. This means that truths depend on something that is in the world. There are few differences between the correspondence theory and TM and they do not seem to be radical ones. On the other hand, the link with Horwich's minimalist approach is not as clear. I think it can be understood in three directions. A possible

¹³¹ For different truthmaker theories see: (Rodriguez – Pereyra, 2005, 2009) and a more recent development of the theory based on truthmakers can be found in (Jago, 2018)

¹³² I am going through them quickly. I already mentioned the theory in Chapter 1. For more details see (Armstrong, 2004).

one is that Armstrong does not want to load neither the terminology, nor the ontology of his theory.¹³³ The same is applied for the already mentioned deflationary approach. A second direction might be that both Horwich and Armstrong start their theory from a claim they take for granted, without proper arguments for it. In Horwich's case it is the T-schema and in Armstrong's one is the idea that truths depend on truthmakers. In other words, both theories assume the basis for their approach. A third one, and maybe the most plausible one, is that the T-schema may be compatible with both theories. From a deflationary perspective it might be understood as a disquotational scheme. From Armstrong's perspective it is rather understood as linking two different entities.¹³⁴ However, I find it more plausible to compare and associate TM with the correspondence theory of truth, rather than with minimalism.

TM does not give a definition for truth; it gives a necessary and sufficient truth-condition (Armstrong, 2004, pp. 17). TM states that for any true proposition¹³⁵, there must be (at least) a thing (state of affairs, in Armstrong's terminology) that cannot exist without the proposition being true (Armstrong, 2004, p. 5). Formally this can be expressed:

$$(TM): \forall p (p \text{ is true} \rightarrow \exists x \square (x \text{ exists} \rightarrow p \text{ is true}))^{136}$$

Truthmaking relation is different from any type of entailment, because entailment is a relation between two propositions; on the other hand truthmaking is cross-categorical. The relation between truth-bearers and truthmakers is between propositions and states of affairs.

Armstrong's theory has two central points: its Necessitarianism and its Maximalism. Truthmaker Necessitarianism stipulates that truthmakers necessitate their truths. Armstrong

¹³³ I think it might be considered that Armstrong succeeded with the first one, but not with the second. Armstrong's ontology is based on a strong realist view, thus it is quite inflated.

¹³⁴ I am going to return to the possible readings of the T-schema from a deflationary point of view in the next section.

¹³⁵ Armstrong, like Horwich, takes propositions to be the main truth-bearers.

¹³⁶ In a paper where Williamson argues against TM, he gives another formulation for Armstrong's theory:

$$(TM)_w: \square (A \rightarrow \exists x \square (\exists y x=y \rightarrow A))$$

Williamson's aim is to save the Barcan formula, and in order to do this, $(TM)_w$ must be false. The truth from our intuitions is that if A is true, there must be something whose existence is strictly sufficient for A, or formally:

$$(TM^*): \square (A \rightarrow \exists p (p \ \& \ \square (p \rightarrow A))) \text{ (Williamson, 1999, pp. 254-258)}$$

offers a proof using *reductio* for this part of his theory. Suppose that T is a truthmaker for a truth p and it fails to necessitate it. Therefore, it will be a possibility that T exists and simultaneously p is false. In this case, there must be another condition that needs to be satisfied in order to make p true. There are only two possibilities: another truth q , or another entity U. If it is the case of U, then the other entity U altogether with T (therefore, T+U) becomes a truthmaker for p . If we consider the case with q , the new truth, has V as a truthmaker, or it may not have a truthmaker. If V is its truthmaker, then the truthmaker for p is T+V, similarly with T+U. In case that q does not have a truthmaker; it means that there are truths without truthmakers that ‘hang’ ontologically (Armstrong, 2004, p.7).

I think this demonstration is fallacious. It assumes not only that all truths have a truthmaker, but also that truthmakers necessitate their truths, in other words, the thesis that should be demonstrated; hence, the demonstration is based on a vicious circle. The demonstration might work without assuming Necessitarianism. However, it does not work if Maximalism is rejected.

For the other part of his theory, for Maximalism, Armstrong does not give a proper demonstration. Maximalism claims that for every truth there is a truthmaker. Some theorists reject this part of Armstrong’s approach. There are some truth-bearers that seem to lack truthmakers. The most eloquent example is a negative existential proposition. For example, what truthmaker may the proposition ‘There are no unicorns in this world’ have? Armstrong says that for negative truths (e.g. John is not flying) a conjunction of the positive properties of the subject (of John, in this case) is a necessary part of a truthmaker, but not a sufficient one. Hence, this conjunction may be a truthmaker for the negative proposition in case, but the relation is not based on necessity; therefore it does not satisfy the Necessitarianism part of the theory.

In order to respect this clause and also solve the problem of existential negative truths, there must be a conjunction of *all states of affairs*, which is a limit and implies that there are no other states of affairs. This general state of affairs represents a truthmaker for all particular truths. It seems that the ultimate truthmaker for a negative existential proposition is nothing else but the world itself, or as Lewis would say, the world *qua as it is*.

In this case, the entire class of existential negative propositions seems to have the world as a minimal truthmaker. If T is a minimal truthmaker for some truth p , then nothing

can be subtracted from T and the remainder will still be a truthmaker for p . The world, however, is a truthmaker for all truths, but not a minimal one.¹³⁷

Returning to the demonstration Armstrong provided for Necessitarianism, if Maximalism is not accepted, there may be some truths without truthmakers, for example q , and, in this case, the demonstration fails. Therefore, it can be concluded that both truthmaker Maximalism and Necessitarianism lack a demonstration.¹³⁸

In order to conserve Maximalism, Armstrong has to offer truthmakers for the false propositions too. False propositions cannot have truthmakers, because they are not true, therefore, they have falsemakers. In this case, any truthmaker for p is also, implicitly, a falsemaker for $\sim p$, and the other way around. If there is a falsemaker for q , that specific state of affairs is a truthmaker for $\sim q$ (Armstrong, 2004, p.10).

The relation between truth and what exists is an internal one, therefore necessary. Armstrong's example is based on the analogy with the relation 'bigger than'. In this case, if there are two numbers, for example, 7 and 5, given in this order, the relation 'bigger than' occurs necessarily. An internal relation holds necessarily if both of its relata exist, but it also holds between any entities having the same intrinsic properties as its relata (Stenwall, 2016, p.60). In other words:

“An internal relation is an universal that has such a nature that its relata can exist independently of one another but is such that when, in fact, the relata exist simultaneously, then the relation is necessarily instantiated.”(Johansson, 2004, p.155)

The simplest truthmaking relation is between a truthmaker T, which is a portion of reality, a state of affairs, and the proposition 'T exists'. The truthmaking relation is not a relation from one to one; it is a relation from many to many. There are truths that are made true by more than one truthmaker, but also truthmakers that make true more than one truth. For example, the proposition 'there is at least one human being' has more than one minimal truthmaker; any human that exists is a truthmaker for it. On the other hand, the fact that John,

¹³⁷ As I already mentioned in the first chapter, I do not find this solution satisfactory.

¹³⁸ I am not going in depth with this. Armstrong's theory suffers from many weak points. However, providing a proper criticism for this theory goes beyond the scope of this paper. A short argument against the correspondence theory of truth that also applies to Armstrong's approach was already provided in Chapter 1.

for example, exists is a truthmaker not only for the previous proposition, but also – assuming that John is a man – for the proposition ‘there is at least one man’.

Therefore, this theory seems to have a complicated ontology, but a minimal ideology.¹³⁹ The principle that rules this theory is considered an ontological principle about what grounds truths.¹⁴⁰ Armstrong considers his theory to be a realist theory of truth, because the truth of a proposition relies on something that lies outside that proposition. Even more, his approach accepts in the ontology only actual states of affairs. Therefore, the idea that there may be truthmakers in some possible worlds is rejected. According to Asay, Armstrong extends his realism to any domain of thought where any truth or falsity can be found (Asay, 2012, p. 376).

Armstrong’s theory and the correspondence theory of truth are extremely similar. Even if there are some differences between those two, Armstrong claims that his approach and the correspondence theory of truth are ontologically equivalent (Johansson, 2004, p. 154). Both theories consider that truth is a relation with something worldly. The main difference between the correspondence theory of truth and TM is that the second one rejects the isomorphism between truth-bearers and truthmakers.¹⁴¹ In other words, there is not a one-to-one relation between these two classes according to TM (Armstrong, 2004, p. 16).¹⁴² Because of these similarities, TM might be understood as a development of the correspondence theory of truth (Armstrong, 2004, pp. 26-27; MacBride, 2013, p. 2).

Armstrong’s theory is a substantive one. It considers that truth has a substantial nature. The truth predicate is assigned to those propositions that correspond to reality. For every true

¹³⁹ The Lewisian truthmaker theory, on the other hand, has an elaborate possibilist ontology, but a minimal ideology.

¹⁴⁰ It seems that Armstrong’s theory offers the possibility that contingent states of affairs necessitate necessary truths. In order to avoid this, the necessity has to run in both directions, for example as in:
(TM^R) a is a truthmaker for p : $p \& \Box (E! (a) \leftrightarrow p)$ (Smith and Simon, 2007, p. 9)

¹⁴¹ This is Armstrong’s claim (Armstrong, 2004, p. 16). Not many correspondence theories adopt this isomorphism, because it is quite hard to be argued for.

¹⁴² This is Armstrong’s claim. I think that the isomorphism between truths and truthmakers is quite hard to be sustained. Russell may be considered to claim such an isomorphism. The claim that is most often used by the advocates of the correspondence theory is that every truth corresponds to exactly one fact. This, however, does not mean that two truths cannot correspond to the same fact.

proposition there is (at least) a truthmaker that necessitates the truth¹⁴³ of that specific truth-bearer. At this point, there is obvious that deflationism and truthmakers are incompatible. The truth predicate – as minimalists see it – can have a nature, but it is just a trivial one. On the other hand, truthmakers are the core of a substantive theory of truth.

A possible solution could be to weaken both concepts (the deflationary truth and truthmakers). The problem is that it is quite hard to weaken the minimalist approach. I do not see a possibility to weaken the minimalist approach in a way that it becomes compatible with such a strong concept as ‘truthmaker’ understood in the way Armstrong does. The other problem that arises in this situation is that it is extremely hard to change something to the account provided by Horwich and still keep and consider it deflationary. The other way around may work. If the truthmaker concept is weakened, I think it may be incorporated in a deflationary account. I am going to return to this in the third subsection. The next subsection is concerned with the way a minimalist can understand the T-schema.

3.1.2. Understanding the T-schema in a deflationary manner

The T-schema represents the core of the minimalist approach. Deflationists present the instantiations of T-schema to be analytic truths, both trivially and necessarily true. Young considers that T-schemas are neither necessary, nor analytic. They may be false in some interpretations (Young, 2009, pp. 564, 567). This means that Young and minimalists have different interpretations of the schema.

A first interpretation is that the T-schema expresses only that the truth values of two truth-bearers are the same. In this case, the truth predicate does not add anything.¹⁴⁴ Young calls this interpretation the *minimalist*¹⁴⁵ one. The schema may be written:

(T_M) ‘p’ is true’ iff ‘p’

¹⁴³ I argued in the first chapter that Armstrong’s formulation can indicate that the truthmaker necessitates not only the truth of the truth-bearer, but also the truth-bearer itself.

¹⁴⁴ This interpretation is the one used by the redundancy theory. For more see (Ramsey, 1927)

¹⁴⁵ The name is used to suggest the fact that this interpretation is the one adopted by minimalists. I am going to argue later that this interpretation is not sufficient for what a minimalist aims.

In this case, adopting Tarski's example, 'Snow is white' is true' has the same truth value as 'Snow is white'. According to this interpretation the T-schema expresses a relation between two entities of the same category. There are two entities that can be assigned with a truth value, in other words, two truth-bearers. This minimalist interpretation considers all instances of the T-schema to be trivial and necessary truths.

A second interpretation considers that T-schema is linking a truth-bearer with something that does not accept a truth value. This is named the *substantive interpretation*¹⁴⁶ (Young, 2009, p. 567). According to this second interpretation the right part of the biconditional is seen as a description for the truth-conditions on the left side. The schema may be rewritten:

(T_S) 'p' is true iff the world is such that p

Using the Tarskian example again: 'snow is white' is true if and only if the world is such that snow is white. In this case, it is clear that the truth value of the truth-bearer depends on something that is in the world. In this interpretation, the truth-bearer is made true by a particular state of affairs or portion of reality. This understanding is the one adopted, for example, by the correspondence theorists.

This reading might raise confusion. The main operator is a biconditional. Thus, it can be read in both directions. The left to right direction is not problematic, it expresses the fact that the truth of a truth-bearer depends on reality. On the other hand, the right to left direction might raise some problems. It can be understood that reality depends, in a way, on the truth of a truth-bearer. Young considers that the use of the biconditional is the source of the confusion. He claims that the T-schema should be understood as "stating a relationship of covariance between two sentences (namely, 'Snow is white' is true' and 'The world is such that snow is white')" (Young, 2009, p. 568).

Even in this situation the problem is not totally avoided. In order to solve this issue, Young proposes to use 'because' instead of the biconditional. Thus, an instance of the T-schema would be:

(T_B) 'Snow is white' is true because snow is white.

¹⁴⁶ The name suggests that this reading of the T-schema is adopted by some substantive theories of truth, as TM or the correspondence theory. Even the coherence theory of truth may accommodate (with small changes) this interpretation.

In my opinion, replacing the biconditional with ‘because’ raises other issues. What does ‘because’ mean? What kind of relation expresses ‘because’? The one already mentioned in T_B is similar with the one in ‘Take your umbrella, because it is raining’, or rather with ‘She would lie for him, because she loves him’? The use of ‘because’ might be philosophically problematic.

On the other hand, if the biconditional is used, what does the T-schema say? It says that: if ‘Snow is white’ is true, then snow is white; and if snow is white, then ‘Snow is white’ is true. This can be acceptable. The truth-bearer is true in virtue of reality, but also if something is true, the reality is the way it is described by that truth. The so called ‘problematic’ part sustains the unproblematic one (the one that stipulates that a truth-bearer is true in virtue of reality¹⁴⁷). It might look circular, but I think the biconditional is used in order to give a strong claim.

Maybe an example could help. Let there be two friends, one from Ecuador and the other from the Alps. The one from Ecuador says:

(E) Where I live the average temperature is over 20 Celsius degrees.

The one from the Alps, even if she never went to Ecuador, if she understands what the other says and if she knows that her friend is saying the truth, will know that the reality is that in Ecuador the average temperature is over 20 Celsius degrees.

The problem raised by the substitution of the biconditional with ‘because’ is a long one and does not have an answer generally accepted. I will stick with the Tarskian use: the biconditional will be used to express the T-schema and it will be taken in a logical manner.

Returning to the two interpretations already presented. The minimalist interpretation does not explain truth; it just asserts that the truth value of a truth-bearer co-varies with the truth value of another truth-bearer. On the other hand, the substantive interpretation seems to be the one accepted by those who give a substantive theory of truth (Young, 2009, p. 568). The acceptance of the substantive interpretation means that the right part of the T-schema is accepted as a description of a portion of reality (state of affairs) and that it explains the truth of

¹⁴⁷ I am well aware of the fact that terms as *in virtue of* might raise similar problems as *because*. I do accept them both when they are used to express a more language-friendly form of the T-schema (to express it informally). What I find problematic is the substitution of the T-schema (to be more precise, of the biconditional) with one of those, denying the first one and accepting the second.

the left side of the T-schema. The use of the biconditional is not problematic for the first interpretation, because it is taken strictly logical. On the other hand, it can be problematic for the second interpretation, because it might be understood that reality is the way it is in virtue of what is true.

In the second interpretation (the substantive one) T-sentences are not necessary truths. Their truth value depends on the theory of meaning and truth one is adopting (Young, 2009, p. 573). In this case, a coherentist can consider T-schemas understood in a substantive manner to be false, while the same coherentist can consider the minimalist interpretation to be true.

If the right part of a T-schema represents a description for the truth-conditions of the truth-bearer from the left, a coherentist, for example, can change the right part in a way that accommodates his theory:

(T_{COHERENCE}) 'p' is true iff the belief that p coheres with other beliefs

In this case, he might accept this reformulation of the substantive interpretation, but reject the other one.¹⁴⁸ On the other hand, someone who accepts the correspondence theory of truth would accept that T-sentences are true, not taken only in the minimalist sense, but also in the substantive one.

Having these two interpretations of the T-schema, which one is more suitable for a deflationist? Young considers that the minimalist interpretation is the one Horwich adopts. I think that this interpretation of the T-schema is too weak for what Horwich aims through his theory. As I already mentioned in the first chapter, Horwich wants to incorporate in his theory the correspondence intuition.¹⁴⁹ This means that a minimalist would not deny that truths depend on reality. What he would not accept is that this correspondence is what truth essentially is. A minimalist considers that the traditional theories, as the correspondence theory, employ too many ontological and conceptual resources. Because of this, a deflationist would rather focus on the logical aspect of truth. From a deflationary point of view, the T-schema can be understood to express that the right part of the biconditional explains constitutively why the proposition from the left part is true (Horwich, 2008, footnote 10).

¹⁴⁸ He can reject this: (Ts) 'p' is true iff the world is such that p.

¹⁴⁹ There is a distinction between the correspondence intuition and the correspondence theory of truth. The first one means that a proposition has a specific truth value in virtue of a fact, while the second one claims that this is what the essence of truth is. Horwich accepts the first one, and rejects the second.

A minimalist would accept a reading of the T-schema situated between the two readings provided by Young. If the minimalist interpretation is too weak, the substantive one seems too strong. A slightly weaker version of the substantive interpretation can be accepted. The substantive interpretation compatible with deflationism would not commit him to a specific ontology and would not inflate his terminology. Thus, the minimalist can accept that the T-schema suggests that truth is a relation, but what he aims is to be able to work with the truth predicate. Even if a deflationist claims he deals not only with the truth predicate, but also with the truth concept, I am rather inclined to believe he is more interested in the first one.¹⁵⁰

To conclude, it can be accepted that a deflationist would need more than the minimalist interpretation of the T-schema. He would be more inclined to accept an interpretation more similar with the substantive one. However, this should not coerce him to develop his terminology or to commit ontologically, or link truth with other notions. Accepting this understanding of the T-schema seems to leave an open road for truthmakers into deflationism.

If deflationists are committed to the substantive reading of the T-schema they seem to allow into their theory entities that do not accept a truth value. In the next subsection I am going to analyze how a minimalist would be able to incorporate in his discourse a concept as ‘truthmaker’. Adding such a concept in a deflationary account should not destroy the coherence of the theory. This means that a deflationary account that accepts to incorporate concepts as ‘truthmaker’ should not become a substantive theory of truth, or even worse a correspondence theory of truth in disguise.

3.1.3. The Link between Truthmakers and Deflationism

As it was already mentioned, if the minimalist accepts that truths depend on reality, they seem to be able to incorporate in their discourse concepts as ‘truthmaker’. In this subsection I am going to argue that they are able to do so without losing their statute of deflationists.

Some advocates of the minimalist approach argued that the concept of truthmaker can be incorporated into the theory only if it is understood as another proposition (McGrath, 2003). I am going to argue against this theory. A minimalist is able to accept that a proposition

¹⁵⁰ This aspect of Horwich’s approach was discussed in the first chapter.

is true in virtue of something worldly, but he is not able to develop this idea. Thus, a truthmaker can be taken as different from a proposition, but it cannot be explained much more than that, at least not from a deflationary point of view.¹⁵¹

At first sight a deflationary truth is not compatible with a concept as ‘truthmaker’. Some authors (Thomas, 2011) consider that deflationists are unable to give an answer about what truths depend on. Thomas considers that truth theories do not have a proper answer to this question. Because deflationists are able to incorporate the common intuition that truth depends on reality, this leaves a possibility to accommodate other concepts into their discourse.

The deflationary theory of truth uses the T-schema as the core of its theory. The main idea of minimalism is that all that can be said about truth is assumed by the T-schema and its instances. The minimalist perspective considers that “the entire conceptual and theoretical role of truth may be explained” using the T-schema (Horwich, 1998a, p. 5).

There are some objections against deflationism¹⁵² which imply that the theory is not able to express what the truth of a proposition depends on. If a deflationist is asked ‘on what does the truth of ‘snow is white’ depend?’ she will be able to give only a short answer based on the respective instance of T-schema:

(1) ‘Snow is white’ is true iff snow is white

A simple answer would be that the truth of ‘Snow is white’ depends on snow being white.

If this answer does not imply a dependency¹⁵³ between truths and reality, then what kind of dependency would be between the left and the right side? Maybe snow being white is necessary and sufficient for the truth of ‘snow is white’. If this is the case, there is no

¹⁵¹ A deflationist may be able to develop this idea a little bit more; he may be able to decide what kinds of entities are truthmakers. But in order to do so, I think he has to commit metaphysically. I already mentioned that this development of the theory does not want to change the core of the approach.

¹⁵² This critique does not apply only to deflationary theories. TM and, implicitly, the correspondence theory are susceptible to the same critique.

¹⁵³ A dependency between truths and reality – in this situation – is understood in a strong sense. The correspondence theory of truth uses such a strong relation based on dependence between truth-bearers and truthmakers.

argument against the fact that the use of the biconditional implies that also the left side is necessary and sufficient for the right side. Therefore, if it is not assumed a dependency between reality and truths, then another kind of dependency (maybe a logical one) would be allowed. In this situation, if it is accepted that the left side is a different kind of entity from the right side, then a problem appears. Because the biconditional is used in a logical manner, the dependency works in both ways. The biconditional links a relation between truths and something that it is not a truth (the right side of the biconditional). Thus, reading the T-schema, it can be deduced that a proposition is necessary and sufficient for something that is not a proposition.

Minimalists seem to be unable to deny that T-schema and its instances imply dependencies. This is because of the context in which they are used, the context that aims to provide an explanation of truth. Thomas (2011, p. 118) considers they are asymmetric because they imply a dependency of truth on reality, but not vice versa. As I mentioned before, I do not think that reality depends on truth; but I argued that the usage of the biconditional is suitable and may be understood in a sense that does not imply this unwanted consequence.

The question is what kind of dependency implies the usage of T-schema in a deflationary manner? It might be said, following Thomas (2011, p. 117, note. 12), that it is an ‘explanatory dependency’, in the sense that the latter explains the former. We have an intuition that truth depends on reality, and deflationism – using the T-schema – accommodates our intuition. Deflationism stops here; it does not want to go further with this explanation.

Instances of the T-schema provide an analysis of truth, they express *via an implicature* (Thomas, 2011, p. 121) that the truth of ‘Snow is white’ depends on snow being white. Deflationism does not give a proper answer to the question ‘what it is for truth to depend on reality’. According to Thomas this problem cannot be solved by appealing to another theory of truth, because such an account is not available.

It must be underlined that a deflationist does not aim to give such an answer. It cannot be considered that he fails, when he does not even try. The basis for a minimalist is the one already mentioned before and this basis does not provide an answer to the question mentioned by Thomas. Therefore, deflationists cannot be accused of not being able to give such an answer, when they are not interested in going in depth with the truth analysis. According to

minimalism, truth does not have a hidden nature. The T-schema and its instantiations are necessary and sufficient to explain the truth predicate.

If it is accepted that the T-schema explains via implicature what truths depend on, then a deflationist seems to be able to label the right side of the schema as ‘truthmaker’. The left side already could be called ‘truth-bearer’. In this situation, what does a truthmaker mean for a deflationist? And how can he accept such a concept without losing his statute?

One way to accommodate deflationism with truthmakers is to consider both truth-bearers and truthmakers to be entities from the same category. McGrath (2003) considers that deflationism is compatible with truthmakers. This idea seems to contradict the converse of Armstrong’s idea that someone who is drawn to the TM should also accept the correspondence theory of truth.

According to McGrath there is no need for facts, in order to accommodate truthmakers, an ontology for propositions is enough (McGrath, 2003, p. 666). Even more, it seems that intuitions about truthmakers are better accommodated under deflationism.

According to McGrath, the right part of the biconditional in an instantiation of the T-schema picks out what the first one does: a proposition (McGrath, 2003, p. 670). In this case, what a deflationist wants to say is that a proposition makes itself true. McGrath considers that if a deflationist accepts that the right side is different from a proposition, then he has to admit that it represents an entity (i.e. a worldly fact). In this situation a minimalist has to appeal to the correspondence theory of truth.

McGrath considers that propositions make themselves true, but this does not mean that all propositions do so. This applies only to true propositions. In this case, when ‘p’ is true, what makes ‘p’ true is the truth that p. In other words, what makes ‘p’ true is ‘p’ itself. McGrath accepts the idea that some truths make themselves true.

The T-schema used by deflationists may be T_M , the minimalist reading of the schema according to Young. As a result, deflationism may be formulated using truthmakers:

($TM_{\text{DEFLATIONISM}}$) Necessarily, for all propositions P, if P is true, then what makes P true is P, and if P is false, then what makes P false is the negation of P. (McGrath, 2003, p. 671)

This theory is similar to the identity theory. The identity theory considers truth-bearers identical to facts.¹⁵⁴ $TM_{\text{DEFLATIONISM}}$ is not an analysis of truth, but it might be considered a theory of truth. In this case, a deflationist may say that:

“(..) in any world W in which ‘ p ’ is true, what accounts for the truth of ‘ p ’ is that p , i.e., is ‘ p ’ itself, not ‘ p ’ plus something else. So, in particular, since snow is white, what accounts for the truth of ‘snow is white’ is ‘snow is white’” (McGrath, 2003, p. 676).

McGrath distinguishes between two notions of truthmakers: *existential* and *non-existential*. A non-existential truthmaker that accounts for the truth of a proposition can only be a proposition, because the relation *accounting for* holds only between propositions. In this case, it seems unproblematic to say that a proposition is its own truthmaker. According to McGrath, there is no circularity involved. Thus, ‘snow is white’ accounts for ‘‘snow is white’ is true’. On the other hand, an existential truthmaker is an entity whose existence accounts for¹⁵⁵ the truth of a proposition (McGrath, 2003, p. 680).

In this case, deflationism is compatible with truthmakers in the sense that it offers non-existential truthmakers. *Accounting for* is a relation between propositions, therefore the truthmaker for a truth must be the truth itself. Thus, true propositions make themselves true. However, this does not mean that the sole existence of true propositions makes them true.

This form of deflationism¹⁵⁶ does not have to face the problem that facts may depend on truths. According to McGrath his theory is not only better than the standard deflationary one, but also than the correspondence theory of truth.

In this situation, someone may wonder what is the role of the existential truthmakers? According to McGrath, if the existential truthmakers are needed, they may only be indirect ones. In other words:

“the worldly fact of a ’s being F is an existential truthmaker of ‘ Fa ’ insofar as the existence of that worldly fact accounts for ‘ Fa ’, which, in turn, accounts for the truth of ‘ Fa ’. Thus, the direct truthmaker for ‘ Fa ’ would be ‘ Fa ’ itself.” (McGrath, 2003, p. 687)

¹⁵⁴ According to McGrath this theory could not be applied to propositions, but restricted to truth-bearers different of propositions, the identity theory is consistent with $TM_{\text{DEFLATIONISM}}$.

¹⁵⁵ I am going to return to the fact that McGrath uses *accounts for* for both existential and non-existential truthmakers.

¹⁵⁶ This can also be named TM theory. I think it can be named either way.

I do not find this account plausible. I think McGrath's theory has some weak points. First of all, if he accepts the T-schema in the minimalist reading, he cannot accept a difference between 'p' and 'p is true'. McGrath distinguishes between those. This is extremely obvious when he considers the existential truthmakers the indirect ones. Another issue that occurs in this situation is that, by stipulating a difference between those two, he does not have a basis for claiming that the asymmetry expressed using the biconditional disappears. His approach still has to face the problem of the right part of the biconditional depending on the left part. It has to be accepted that it might not be as serious as in the case of the correspondence interpretation of the T-schema.

Secondly, the whole distinction between existential and non-existential truthmakers seems problematic. It seems that a proposition can be a non-existential truthmaker only after it is grounded on an existential truthmaker. In this situation, there is an obvious need for the existential truthmakers. McGrath's approach of deflationary truthmakers seems to ignore how 'p' becomes a truthmaker in the first place. Maybe $TM_{\text{DEFLATIONISM}}$ deals only with the relation between 'p' and 'p is true' and so on, but does not aim to explain how 'p' was obtained. This might be the case, but in this situation, the generality of the theory has to suffer.

Furthermore, how does a truth account for its own truth? As I already mentioned, it might be accepted only after 'p' already depends on something. In this situation, another theory is needed. Let us assume that x is a truthmaker for 'p'. X can be only an existential truthmaker. This means that the distinction makes the story even longer: we have something in the world that accounts for a proposition, and that proposition accounts for its own truth.

Finally, it seems that McGrath wants to ground his argument on the use of *accounting for*. He says that *accounting for* is used only to express a relation between propositions. The problem is that he uses it to express the relation between propositions and their existential truthmakers too. Those truthmakers are not propositions; they are entities that do not accept a truth value. In this case, his whole distinction seems to break down because McGrath's terminology is inconsistent.

McGrath's approach does not seem to help the minimalist to develop his theory. Deflationism needs more than a relation between two truth-bearers. Horwich does not accept that the truth predicate is eliminable from the language, but adopting McGrath's position, he becomes an advocate of the redundancy theory of truth. I do not agree with McGrath that

truthmakers are compatible with deflationism in the sense that the T-schema links two truth-bearers. I think that deflationism, as Horwich stated it, accommodates the correspondence intuition, but not the correspondence theory of truth. Accommodating the correspondence intuition, truthmakers are included in the story, but not in a direct manner.

As I mentioned before, there is a difference between the fact that Horwich's deflationism tries to accommodate the correspondence intuition and the correspondence theory of truth. The theory claims that the correspondence between truths and facts is what truth essentially is. The relation between these two classes is a strong one: the truthmaker necessitates not only the truth of a proposition, but the proposition itself. There is no way in which a deflationist could incorporate in his theory the strong claims of the correspondence theory of truth without losing his statute of being a deflationist.

On the other hand, the correspondence intuition is weaker: it only assumes that there is a relation¹⁵⁷ between truth-bearers and truthmakers; in other words that truth is a relation. In order to be able to accommodate the correspondence intuition, all that a minimalist needs is to accept that truth is a relation. This relation is as weak as needed. A deflationist does not have to define it. There might be other theories that can do so, but there is no need for a minimalist to inflate his terminology. The best way this relation can be understood is that of explanatory dependence. For a deflationist, it does not matter what entities are the truth-bearers, or the truthmakers. As Horwich states it:

“(...) minimalism does not *explain what truth is* in any such way. But it does not deny that truths *do* correspond – in *some* sense – to the facts; it acknowledges that statements owe their truth to the nature of reality; and it does not dispute the existence of relationships between truth, reference and predicate satisfaction. Thus we might hope to accommodate much of what the correspondence theorist wishes to say without retreating an inch from our deflationary position. (...) Thus we can be perfectly comfortable with the idea that truths are made true by elements of reality. Since this

¹⁵⁷ That truth-bearers are made true by truthmakers.

follows from the minimal theory (given certain further facts), it need not be an explicitly stated part of it.” (Horwich, 1998a, pp. 104-105)¹⁵⁸

At this point, the deflationary theory that Horwich defends seems to slowly transform into a correspondence theory of truth. I strongly believe that this is just an illusion. What Horwich accepts is a general intuition; the one that claims that truths are in a relation with reality, that there is an explanatory dependence between those. The starting point can be the minimalist interpretation of the T-schema.¹⁵⁹ It may be supplemented in order to accommodate this intuition. Thus, the basis of the theory is still the T-schema and its instantiations. Starting with this core a further analysis of the truth may be done – including the generally accepted idea that truths depend on reality.

Horwich accepts that ‘p’ is made true by x’ as ‘x explains (constitutively) why ‘p’ is true’ or ‘p’ is true in virtue of x’. When it comes to TM, Horwich argues against it. He finds it to be:

“(…) too long, too complex, too theoretical, and too heterogeneous to be plausibly regarded as an account either of what we mean by ‘true’ or of the nature of truth itself.” (Horwich, 2010, p. 320).

Horwich does not deny that true propositions correspond to the world; he even accepts that his theory is compatible with the fact that true propositions are made true by the existence of a corresponding fact (Schantz, 2002, p. 89). Deflationism is not compatible with the aim to explain truth in terms of correspondence, for example.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ Horwich himself presented a way to incorporate the idea that truths correspond to facts into his theory. He used the notions of reference and satisfaction, in order to do so. Having the notion of reference and satisfaction, one could easily deduce:

(C_D) ‘Fa’ is true iff (∃x) (‘a’ refers to x & ‘F’ is satisfied by x)

¹⁵⁹ I think that the starting point can be the substantive interpretation as well. In this situation, the interpretation should be weakened in order to be compatible with minimalism. I choose to start from the minimalist interpretation only for terminological criteria. I do not see any difference between these two possibilities.

¹⁶⁰ Horwich’s deflationism explains truth independently of notions as correspondence, truthmaking, reference or satisfaction. Those concepts are not taken as explanatorily basic. (Schantz, 2002, p. 89; Horwich, 1998a, pp. 110-112)

In this case, as it was already mentioned, it is obvious that deflationism is in no way compatible with TM as it was stated, for example, by Armstrong. There is a huge difference between TM and minimalism. Even if a deflationism, which is a truth theory, cannot be compatible with a substantive theory of truth (e.g. TM), it can accommodate an intuition that assumes truthmakers. Horwich considers that the correspondence intuition follows from the minimal theory, but does not need to be a part which is explicitly stated. An advocate of minimalism can accept that truths are made true by elements of reality, because it follows from the minimal theory – adding some further facts (Horwich, 1998a, p. 105).

So, in the end, are deflationism and truthmakers compatible? I argued that they are, because the core of the deflationary theory of truth (T-schema) may be supplemented in order to accommodate the correspondence intuition; in this case truth is a relation and this relation links a truth-bearer with a truthmaker.

I strongly believe that a deflationist does not have to go in depth with the analysis of the relation between the truth-bearer and the so-called truthmaker. In this case, the simple fact that a minimalist does not reject the generally accepted intuition based on the correspondence between truths and reality, means that they silently accept that truth is a relation. As I said it before, it does not matter what kind of relation, what entities are the truthmakers, even more, this does not have to be in the core of a minimalist theory. The main idea is that those two are compatible.

Do deflationists need all this terminology? No, they do not. Are they still deflationists even if they accept this? I think they are as long as they do not start to analyze those concepts, because in order to be a deflationist one must accept that all that can be said about truth is the T-schema and its instantiations. This means that they do not want to discuss what makes a truth-bearer true, or what kind of entity is the truthmaker, they do not even need to use those terms.

Therefore, in this subchapter I tried to give an answer to the question: can deflationism be compatible with truthmakers? After I rejected McGrath's truthmaker minimalism, I concluded that those two can be compatible.¹⁶¹ It seems that even minimalists need the relation between truth-bearers and truthmakers if they want to reach their aim and incorporate

¹⁶¹ This answer cannot be generalized to all deflationist theories. It is applied only to minimalism. It might be compatible with other forms of deflationism, but I focused on Horwich's theory.

the correspondentist intuition. Does it need to be defined and developed? No, it may only be assumed. Does it need to be as strong as Armstrong's relation? Not at all, I do find Armstrong's relation quite problematic and I already presented some arguments against it. Deflationism needs a weaker understanding for truthmakers: a truthmaker is an entity (it does not matter what kind of entity) that makes a proposition true. The relation between truthmakers and truth-bearers is weaker than the one stipulated by the correspondence theory, but it is a relation.

Taking all these into consideration, does a deflationist become an advocate of the correspondence theory? I do not think so. A minimalist does not have to deny the relation between reality and truth-bearers; he only denies that it represents the core of truth. The T-schema assumes this relation, but Horwich's idea that all that can be said about truth is this schema and its instantiations stopped the discussion there. There is no need to go in depth with other clarifications about the nature of the relation between truth-bearers and truthmakers, or what kinds of entities are truthmakers. An advocate of the correspondence theory has to be committed to a metaphysical position, but a minimalist does not have to do this.¹⁶² A minimalist is free from any metaphysical commitment and in order to accommodate a stronger theory (as the correspondence one, or TM as Armstrong presented it) one must have a metaphysical position.

3.2. Deflationism and Metaphysics

This section targets to see if a semantic deflationist¹⁶³ must adopt a metaphysical position, or if he has the possibility to remain neutral. I am going to start by sketching the relation between semantic notions treated deflationary. A short presentation of Thomasson's answer will be provided. In the end, I am going to bring my arguments against Thomasson's answer and my answer to the main question.

If a deflationary theory of truth is accepted, it seems that such a theory must be adopted for other semantic notions too. In this case, *meaning*, *reference* and *truth* form a

¹⁶² There are some authors that claim the opposite. In the next section I am going to discuss this and argue that a deflationist is free from any metaphysical commitment.

¹⁶³ Semantic notions – as truth, meaning, reference – are treated in a deflationary manner.

family-circle, and one may be defined using the others. In the first subsection, I am going to analyze the link between the semantic notions in a deflationary theory. Following Horwich (1998a, 1998b, 2004) and Thomasson (2015a, 2015b)¹⁶⁴, it seems that those notions are interdefinable and adopting a deflationary theory about one of them leads to the necessity of adopting a similar theory about the others.

Amie Thomasson considers that starting from a deflationary theory for the semantic notions the next necessary step is to adopt a similar theory for metaphysics. My opinion is that her answer must be weakened. As Horwich stated it, a deflationist about truth is freed from any metaphysical or epistemological commitment¹⁶⁵; in this case, a deflationist can also be metaphysically neutral. In the second subsection, I am going to shortly present Amie Thomasson's arguments in order to prove the fact that a metaphysical deflationism is a necessary step from a semantic one.

In the last subsection I am going to sketch my counterarguments. I believe that Thomasson's answer is too narrow, and does not leave open the possibility for a semantic deflationist to remain metaphysically neutral. It also seems that her form of metaphysical deflationism may raise some issues. This approach considers the existential quantifier and existence to be equivalent. A similar view was sustained by Russell (2004). McGinn (2000), on the other hand, argued against the Russellian approach. I am going to present one of his counterarguments because it raises some problems for Thomasson's view too. Thus, my arguments against Thomasson will be structured in two main classes. One deals with the necessary jump from semantics to metaphysics and the other one with the approach on metaphysical deflationism she provided.

¹⁶⁴ This is the view Thomasson is arguing for. It is stronger than Horwich's. Horwich does not include meaning through those semantic concepts that are interdefinable. He talks about reference, truth and satisfaction (being true of). I am going to return to this.

¹⁶⁵ The substantive theories tend to define truth through metaphysical or epistemological notions. Minimalism rejects this and explains truth appealing to the T-schema, without any other notion involved.

3.2.1 Semantic deflationism

Truth deflationism may be defined vaguely as the denial of the idea that truth is a substantive property, in other words the rejection of the idea that truth's function is to attribute a rich, substantial property to a proposition (Horisk, 2008, p. 271). Therefore, truth is superficial, does not have an inner nature and may be explained in a trivial manner. Different views may fall under this definition. The most well-known ones are: disquotationalism, prosententialism, the redundancy theory, and, of course, minimalism.¹⁶⁶

In other words, to say that truth is treated in a deflationary manner, it might be said that truth is not a metaphysically robust notion, is not a sparse property, but rather an abundant one¹⁶⁷ (Asay, 2013, p. 105).

Minimalism considers that all that can be said about truth is assumed by the T-schema and its instances. The main role of the truth predicate is to make possible some generalizations which are difficult or impossible to be made without it (the other generalization devices are not sufficient). Truth, according to this theory, is nothing more than a logical device. Therefore, from a deflationary perspective, the importance and role of truth is exhausted by its expressive function. Horwich's theory aims to provide the meaning and function of the truth predicate; in this case, it explains the truth itself.¹⁶⁸

Minimalism about truth does not need any other semantic notion – as satisfaction or reference – in order to exhaust the talk about truth. It means that none of those concepts are needed in the core of the theory of a deflationary truth. However, the minimal theory of truth may be extended with those notions.¹⁶⁹ Thus, a minimalist needs nothing beyond the

¹⁶⁶ I am not going in depth here with the analysis of those variations of deflationism. For further information and details see (Horwich, 2010, chapter 2).

¹⁶⁷ The sparse properties account for the genuine resemblances between objects, on the other way, the abundant ones can be shared between objects without any resemblance upon them. (Asay, 2013, p. 105)

¹⁶⁸ It was also argued that minimalism may fix the extension of 'true', but does not explain what truth is. This might be the case; however it does not change the discussion. At best, this can be extrapolated to the deflationary perspectives about the other semantic notions.

¹⁶⁹ These concepts are not taken as explanatory basic. The understanding of truth is independent of concepts as the one mentioned above. This goes hand in hand with the fact that these concepts make

deflationary account of truth in order to analyze those concepts. When it comes to the minimal theory of truth and its relation with other semantic notions, it may be expressed in two clauses. Firstly, an account of truth may be given independently of those other notions. Secondly, accounts of those other notions require only a deflationary account of truth (as a starting point).

It seems that semantic notions are interdefinable; this means that starting from any of them, if a certain theory is accepted, then it must be accepted for others too. In this case, if deflationism is accepted when it comes to truth, it must be accepted for satisfaction and reference too. It does not matter the starting point, the conclusion would be the same; to be more specific, it does not matter if it is accepted a deflationary theory about truth, or satisfaction, or reference as a start, the necessary next step would be the acceptance of the same theory for the other two notions.

Quoting Horwich:

“The deflationary conceptions of *truth*, *being true of*, and *reference* go hand in hand with one another. These notions are interdefinable, so any substantive analysis of one would imply substantive analysis of the others. And any argument for deflationism with respect to one of the notions will be convertible into an argument for deflationism about the other notions too.” (Horwich, 2004, p. 74)

Thomasson claims that meaning is among those semantic notions. The family circle, in this situation, extends.¹⁷⁰ Deflationism about truth denies that there is any deep and substantive answer to the question of what the property of truth consists in. Deflationism about reference denies that there is a substantive answer to the question of what the reference relation consists in. Deflationism about meaning denies that there is any special (non-semantic) property of meaning.

possible the formulation of the correspondence intuition. As I mentioned before, this intuition is not used to explain truth.

¹⁷⁰ Thomasson claims that meaning, reference and truth are interdefinable; she does not mention satisfaction. However, satisfaction goes hand in hand with truth; thus, it is indirectly and tacitly included.

Truth and reference are strongly linked.¹⁷¹ Therefore it may be easily accepted that:
 (Ref₁) $\langle n \text{ is } P \rangle$ is true iff $\langle n \rangle$ refers to n and $\langle P \rangle$ is true of n (Thomasson, 2015b, p. 188)

Or using Horwich's formulation:

(Ref₂) $\langle n \rangle$ refers to something iff it is identical to n (Horwich, 2004, p. 73) or

(Ref₃) $\langle Fa \rangle$ is true iff $(\exists x)(\langle a \rangle$ refers to x & $\langle F \rangle$ is satisfied by x) (Horwich, 1998a, p. 112)

All these are used to express the link between truth and reference in a deflationary theory. (Ref₃) is derived from the minimalist theory accepting the notions of satisfaction and reference.

(S') $(x)(x$ satisfies $\langle F \rangle$ iff Fx)

(R') $(x)(\langle a \rangle$ refers to x iff $a=x$)

In this case, the right side of (Ref₃) is equivalent to Fa and given the T-schema it is equivalent to the left side, ' Fa ' is true' (Horwich, 1998a, p. 112). Those formulations are used by Horwich to prove that the correspondence intuition may be deduced from the minimal theory adding some further facts, but without going back to the correspondence's terminology. In this case, the intuition is formulated using only semantic notions, without calling to metaphysics, as it was already mentioned.

Shortly, a reference deflationist considers that:

(Ref_{deflationist}) x refers to y iff x is the singular term $\langle n \rangle$ and y is the thing n

$(\forall x)(\langle n \rangle$ refers to x iff $n=x$)

When it comes to meaning, Thomasson and Horwich split sides. Thomasson claims that meaning, truth and reference are interdefinable. On the other hand, Horwich (1998a, p. 68) and others¹⁷² claim that meaning cannot be expressed appealing to truth-conditions from a deflationary point of view. If truth conditions would be used to define meaning, then "we would be faced with something like a single equation and two unknowns" (Horwich, 1998a, p.

¹⁷¹ There are authors that do not accept that reference may be defined as a purely formal or logical concept, as deflationists do. In this case, reference is a robust notion; it must be explained differently, in naturalistic terms, strongly linked with the correspondence theory of truth. For further information see (Schantz, 2002).

¹⁷² For example, Armour-Garb (2001)

68). If a deflationist accepts as the core of his theory the T-schema and its instantiations, then he already presupposes the meaningfulness of the truth-bearers. Then, if he uses the same instantiations to explain the meaning of those truth-bearers, he seems to be captive in a vicious circle. In this situation, it is obvious that deflationists cannot explain meaning appealing to truth-conditions.

On what both Thomasson and Horwich agree is that a theory of meaning compatible with semantic deflationism is the use theory. In this case, the use of a predicate determines (weakly) its extension¹⁷³ (i.e. does determine to what we may truly apply it), and does, therefore, determine (weakly) the infinite many contexts to which it ought to be attributed (Horwich, 2005, pp. 83). Therefore, if *x* means <dog>, then *x* is true of all and only dogs (Horwich, 1998b, p. 110).¹⁷⁴ Because meaning determines extension, any two expressions that share their meaning must also have the same extension.

As in the case of truth, the meaning theory may be explained by an infinity of conjuncts of the form ‘*x* means *F*’, because there is no general claim able to express this.

“‘*x* means DOG’¹⁷⁵ consists in something or other, ‘*x* means ELECTRON’ consists in something else and so on – but there is no general account of the structure ‘*x* means *F*’. We might call such a view of meaning ‘deflationary’, both because it is a parallel to, and because it is justified by the deflationary view of truth” (Horwich, 1998b, p. 113)

According to the use theory provided by Horwich, what explains a word having a particular meaning property is that it also has a certain use-property. Thus, the world *x* from ‘*x* means DOG’, has a use-property *u*(*x*).

I strongly agree with the fact that meaning cannot be explained in terms of truth-conditions in a deflationary theory. Because of this, I am going to talk about interdefinability of semantic notions excluding meaning. However, I believe that a semantic deflationist has to accept a (quite) deflationary view about meaning too, if he wants to keep the coherence of his theory. The meaning of deflationary here, may be understood in multiple ways. For example,

¹⁷³ There are some authors that argue against Horwich claim that his theory of meaning determines extension. For more see (Schantz, 2002)

¹⁷⁴ Formally: *x* means *F* → (∀*y*)(*x* is true of *y* iff *Fy*)

¹⁷⁵ Horwich uses capitalization in order to name a concept expressed by a linguistic form (expression). For example, ‘CAT’ means CAT and it is the meaning of ‘cat’.

it might be argued that Horwich does not offer a proper deflationary approach for meaning, because it links the meaning of a term with a substantive property – even if it is based on use. The deflationary part for Horwich appears because he is able to provide an explanation for meaning without linking it to other notions. This is why, it might be accepted that the use theory of meaning is compatible with a deflationary view, but it is not a proper deflationary approach.

Therefore, Thomasson considers that deflationism theories about these semantic notions go hand in hand. Horwich underlines once again truth, reference and satisfaction. However, he claims that the use theory of meaning is compatible with deflationism and the way he presented it – even if not generally accepted – it is a quite deflationary theory. Thomasson claims that the acceptance of a deflationary theory about any of these concepts necessarily implies the acceptance of a similar theory for the other two. This claim may be questionable when meaning enters the discussion. Semantic deflationism represents the idea that these semantic notions (truth, reference, and satisfaction) are metaphysically and empirically neutral;¹⁷⁶ their uses are not linked to any metaphysical or empirical commitments (Hill, 2001, pp. 291). This leads to the next subpart of the chapter.

3.2.2 From semantic deflationism to a metaphysical one

Using the semantic deflationism as a basis, Amie Thomasson argued that the next necessary step is to accept a metaphysical deflationism; therefore, one about existence. It seems that existence does not add anything. Thinking about ‘a cat’ and about ‘an existing cat’ does not make any difference.¹⁷⁷ Similarly with truth deflationism, existence deflationism claims that existence does not have any hidden nature, or a substantive interpretation which can be discovered by a philosophical inquiry.

¹⁷⁶ Semantic deflationism also means these concepts are epistemologically neutral.

¹⁷⁷ This might not be generally accepted. An existing cat can be different from a cat, or a possible cat. When it comes to existence, it limits the possibilities to the actual ones. A (possible) cat – that does not have the property of existence – can be imagined to have different properties, for example, it might be bright pink. Even if, following Hume, it is accepted that what is possible is based on what exists, the difference consists in the way we combine properties with objects.

It seems that ‘exists’ does not name a property of objects, it rather has a “formal, topic-neutral role of enabling application of any (material) predicate” (Thomasson, 2015a, p. 64). Thus, existence seems to make no addition to the intension of an object. It does not explain what kind of object it is, or how it is.

Following Frege, Thomasson considers that the affirmation of existence is nothing more than the denial of the number zero:

“To say ‘Ps don’t exist’ is equivalent to say ‘the number of Ps is zero’, which is equivalent to saying ‘there are no Ps’, or ‘for everything whatsoever, it is not a P’”. (Thomasson, 2015a, p. 66)

In this case, ‘exists’ is not a first-order predicate, because it does not add anything to the idea of an object, and it cannot be used to distinguish between objects. Following Frege and Russell, it might be said that ‘exists’ is rather a second-order predicate (Thomasson, 2015a, pp. 65-67, 84, 127).

Deflationism about existence considers that ‘exists’ is a formal term. According to Thomasson, this goes hand in hand with the idea that questions about existence have easy answers, and ontological debates are superfluous.

If ‘exists’ does not add something, what might be its function? It seems that existence, but even more, nonexistence is used to emphasize errors, mistakes that one is making without moving to the meta-language. Thus, existence’s function is to correct mistaken assumptions about when terms do and do not really refer (Thomasson, 2015a, p. 88).¹⁷⁸

Thomasson (2015b, pp. 194-195) gives a formal demonstration to prove that trivially truth and existence are linked. According to the author, both singular and general existence claims may be derived from a simple truth claim, given the T-schema:

1. $\langle n \text{ is } P \rangle$ is true
2. $\langle n \text{ is } P \rangle$ is true iff n is P
3. n is P

¹⁷⁸ It seems that, in this case, existence may be a redundant concept. I think its function may be assumed by the semantic notions as truth, reference, meaning and satisfaction. However, in order to use the semantic notions, one should jump to the meta-language. In this situation, the existence predicate is not redundant only for the object language. When the meta-language is reached, it seems that there is no need for this predicate.

4. n is P iff $(\exists x)((n=x) \ \& \ Px)$
5. $(\exists x)((n=x) \ \& \ Px)$
6. $(\exists x)((n=x) \ \& \ Px) \rightarrow (\exists x)(n=x)$
7. $(\exists x)(n=x)$
8. $(\exists x)(n=x)$ iff n exists
9. n exists
10. $(\exists x)((n=x) \ \& \ Px) \rightarrow (\exists x)Px$
11. $(\exists x) Px$
12. $(\exists x)Px$ iff Ps exist
13. Ps exist

In 9. and 13. are the singular and general existential claims. Therefore, starting from a true statement, it can be derived the existence of its parts. For example, starting from ‘‘the table is brown’ is true’, it may be derived that there is¹⁷⁹ something that is a table and something that is brown. The same will be achieved if someone would start from something like ‘‘5 is an odd number’ is true’.

If the relation between truth and existence is a trivial one, the relation between reference and existence seems to be a deeper one.

For singular concepts: $\langle n \rangle$ refers iff $(\exists x)(n=x)$ and based on the assumption of interdefinability between existence and the existential quantifier it may be deduced that $\langle n \rangle$ refers iff n exists.

For general concepts: $\langle P \rangle$ refers iff $(\exists x)Px$ and based on the same assumption it may be derived that $\langle P \rangle$ refers iff Ps exist.

Thomasson (Thomasson, 2008, p. 65) formulates a strong schema that links reference with existence:

E: Ks exist iff $*K*$ refers.

Therefore, according to Thomasson those concepts form a family-circle. Not only that semantic deflationism leads to a metaphysical deflationism, but the latter one leads to a meta-ontological deflationism. This meta-ontological deflationism states that something is wrong with the vast majority of recent debates about what exists.

¹⁷⁹ Thomasson seems to use as a basis for her arguments the assumption that the existential quantifier and existence are interdefinable. I will return to this later in the paper.

Those entities, to which we become committed based on the strictly logical approach of existence, should not be considered thin or even that their existence is understood in a deflationary manner (Thomasson, 2015a, p. 146). What can be said is that those entities exist and they are treated using a simple realist view. ‘Simple realism’ can be understood as:

“a straightforward, out and out, realism about the entities in question. (...) What is deflated is not the entities but rather the *ontological debates* about the entities.” (Thomasson, 2015a, p. 154)

To sum up Thomasson’s theory, treating existence deflationary implies not only the rejection of the idea that this concept may have a substantive analysis, but it also follows necessarily from a semantic deflationism. Thus, what follows from this deflationary position about metaphysics is not only a ‘simple realism’, but also a meta-ontological deflationism that asserts that there is a problem with the majority of debates about existence. According to Thomasson, starting with a deflationary view about a semantic notion, as truth, would necessarily imply to adopt a similar position for other semantic notions, then for existence. In the end, a simple deflationary view about truth would coerce the minimalist to accept a meta-ontological deflationism. This seems to be a much bigger project than the one aimed by Horwich.

3.2.3 Counterarguments

I will structure my counterarguments on two levels. First of all, I will try to prove that the necessary jump from semantics to metaphysics is not a must; therefore, one should not feel constrained to adopt a metaphysical deflationism just because he is a semantic deflationist. Secondly, I will try to sketch an argument against Thomasson’s own deflationary position¹⁸⁰; to be more precise, I do not find her approach the most suitable one. For the second class of counterarguments, I am going to present one of McGinn’s arguments (McGinn, 2000) against the Russellian theory of existence. Russell’s theory of existence (Russell, 2004) has as a central point the interdefinability between existence and the existential quantifier. In this situation, one of the counterarguments for the orthodox approach works for Thomasson’s one too.

¹⁸⁰ The arguments based on McGinn critique on Russell were accepted for publication (Tomi, 2015b).

I will now proceed with the first issue. I do agree with the fact that accepting a deflationary theory for a semantic concept, it leads to generalizing the theory to the other two concepts. I do not see the jump from semantics to metaphysics. A deflationist about truth accepts the T-schema and its instantiations. Even if he wants to accommodate the so-called correspondence intuition, he does not need metaphysics.

Let us return to the two interpretations of the T-schema presented by Young (2009). Assuming that a deflationist accepts the T-schema in its minimal reading, it is clear that he does not need a metaphysical approach. In this interpretation, the schema links two truth-bearers. At most, such a deflationary account may use metaphysics of propositions. On the other hand, assuming that a minimalist accepts the T-schema in its substantive reading, as I already argued for, it needs to be weakened. As mentioned in the previous section, a deflationist may accept that truth is a relation, but he does not want to go back to the correspondence theory. Therefore, if a deflationist accepts that truth is a relation, that the T-schema may not link two entities of the same category. A deflationist may accept that reality influences truths, but he is not interested in the way it does so, or what kind of entities from reality do the job. It must be so because otherwise he would be a hidden advocate of the correspondence theory.

It does not matter how the T-schema is understood. It is clearly that the T-schema does not say anything about what things do exist, or even more, about a meta-ontological level of the discussion. What the T-schema is about truth, and a deflationary truth is not linked with metaphysics. There are no metaphysical implications derived from the T-schema. Let us return to the formal demonstration provided by Thomasson. She derived in lines 9 and 13 the singular and general claims for existence. The author claims that both lines were derived from the T-schema. But they are not derived from the T-schema alone. In order to be able to derive those, some further premises or assumptions are needed. These assumptions may be found at lines 8 and 12. Those lines are based on the interdefinability between existence and the existential quantifier. If the existential quantifier would not have an ontological import, then the demonstration would not hold. Thus, the general and singular claims for existence were derived not only from the T-schema. They were derived from the schema and some further assumptions.

If it is accepted that T-schema and existence are linked, then it must be also accepted that T-schema is linked with every predicate from its instantiations. Starting with the following example:

‘Max is a lion’ is true iff Max is a lion

It can be accepted that this instance is about lionhood as much it is about existence. They are both similarly linked with the schema.¹⁸¹

Horwich claims that minimalism is neutral when it comes to realist and antirealist debates, but also when it comes to any metaphysical and epistemological approach.

“our conception of truth is epistemologically and metaphysically neutral.” (Horwich, 2004, p. 32)

I think Horwich understands neutral as independent. This means that deflationary truth is not linked with notions as knowledge or existence. When I claim that a deflationist about semantics is able to be neutral metaphysically, I mean the same. Metaphysical neutrality is the possibility not to adopt any metaphysical position. In other words, a semantic deflationist has the possibility to remain silent when it comes to existence. If such a deflationist is willing to commit metaphysically, it might be the case that his only possibility is a form of deflationism for existence too. I found it difficult to understand how a semantic deflationist could have a substantive theory about metaphysics. I think that a form of deflationism about existence is needed, as long as a semantic deflationist wants to have a metaphysical position.

What the T-schema is saying is that there is a sort of equivalence between those two sides, but not how those two sides depend on reality. To accept the T-schema and its instantiations is different from accepting that “their conditions are ontologically loaded” (Asay, 2013, pp. 134-135). Deflationary truth is metaphysically thin. Minimalism does not rely on the relation between truths and reality; it also does not deny this relation. A deflationist considers that this relation is not essential. The T-schema and its instantiations are essential. On this deflationary core, one may build a lot because there are few restrictions.

Because the truth predicate has only a logical function, a deflationary view about truth does not have to imply a metaphysical position. If truth is deflated, it does not have any metaphysical implications, especially not in the main parts of its theory. Those implications

¹⁸¹ I have to thank Matti Eklund for the idea and discussion.

may be added, but they do not represent a necessarily step for a deflationary view about truth and other semantic notions.

I do think that if a deflationist wants to adopt a metaphysical position, he has to find a (quite) deflationary one.¹⁸² Therefore, Thomasson's thesis should be weakened: there is not a necessary step from deflationist semantics to deflationist metaphysics; but if a deflationist wants to commit metaphysically, it seems that the only way he would be able to do this is by accepting a deflationist approach about metaphysics. On the other hand he still has the possibility to remain both metaphysically and epistemologically neutral.

According to Thomasson, the next necessary step – from a metaphysical deflationism – would be a meta-ontological deflationism. This meta-ontological deflationism suggests that there is something wrong with the most debates about what exists and that ontological questions have easy answers. I do not think there is such a necessary step from metaphysics to meta-ontology. If a term is understood in a formal way, this does not mean that the questions around it are trivial. A good example would be truth. Tarski understands truth in a formal manner, but this does not trivialize all the questions about truth. It is the same for Horwich's minimalism. Truth is considered a formal term, however there are plenty of questions worth to be answered from such a perspective.

Secondly, I find Thomasson's theory about metaphysical deflationism quite problematic. Even if her approach can easily face the counterargument which claims that the distinction between concrete and abstract objects vanishes, it has other issues. The main one is that her argumentation is based on the equivalence between 'there is' and 'there exists'. I tend to accept Parsons' idea, that this assumed equivalence is quite problematic. This interdefinability assumption weakens her arguments. It seems to be a difference between:

(E) Books exist.

(A) There are books.

Even if formally both (E) and (A) are symbolized using the existential quantifier: $(\exists x)Bx$. As Parsons stated it:

¹⁸² This might be understood in different ways, as in the case of meaning. It is either that existence does not have a substantive nature, or that it is independent of any other concepts. I think Horwich considers the use theory of meaning deflationary in the second sense. It might be the same for existence. The label of 'deflationary view' should not be taken as extremely strict or strong.

“Symbolizing both (...) in the same way amounts to equalizing the quantifier ‘there is’ with the quantifier ‘there exists’, an equation which makes sense only if what exists exhausts what there is.” (Parsons, 1980, p. 6)

Thomasson is not the first one that argued for the interdefinability between existence and the existential quantifier. The idea that existence is a second order predicate, a property for a property that can be expressed using only the existential quantifier started from Russell (2004). According to McGinn, existence should be considered a proper predicate. In this case, it cannot be equated with the existential quantifier. Being on two different positions, McGinn (2000) argues against Russell’s approach.¹⁸³

In order to give some arguments to prove that the interdefinability assumption has some weak points I am going to focus on one of the critiques McGinn raises for the Russellian approach of existence. Russell’s theory is similar with Thomasson’s. However, the first one has an inflated terminology; therefore, I do not think it should be considered a deflationary one. Since the main ideas are the same, one of the main critiques McGinn offers for the orthodox approach, can be raised for Thomasson’s too.

According to Russell’s account, existence is not attributed to certain objects, because it is not a property of objects. Existence suggests that some specific property is instantiated. In this situation, if someone says ‘Lions exist’, he means that the property of being a lion (lionhood) is instantiated. Hence, if something exists, is not understood as an attribution of a specific property (i.e. existence) to a specific object. It is rather understood that a certain property has an instance.

An existing object means nothing more or less that a specific property has instances. The concept of existence is linked to the one of instance and possibility. Thus, saying that ‘Lions exist’ means that the sentence ‘x is a lion’ is possible. According to this approach existence is defined through terms as ‘propositional function’ (or ‘property instantiation’) and ‘sometimes true’ (or ‘possible’). This definition is meant to be non-circular. McGinn considers that:

¹⁸³ It seems that these theorists disagree on a premise from which their discussion starts. While Thomasson and Russell agree on the fact that everything exist – $(\forall x)(x \text{ exists})$ –, McGinn denies it – $\sim(\forall x)(x \text{ exists})$. The ‘everything’ used in my formulation can be restricted to a specific domain, as an actual world, or concrete (actual) objects.

“In a perfect language the word (*i.e. existence*) need never occur, its job always being done by ‘sometimes true’ and its adjuncts.” (McGinn, 2000, p. 20)

The orthodox approach, as Thomasson’s, puts an identity between the existential quantifier and existence. In other words, the existential quantifier has ontological import. There is no need for a different predicate in order to express existence; the already mentioned quantifier does the entire job. Thus, ‘existence’ means ‘there is an x such that’. This interpretation seems easy to use, especially in a formalized language. On the other hand, it also seems to have its limitations and some weak points.

McGinn offers some harsh critiques on this view.¹⁸⁴ The one I am going to focus on may be applied to Thomasson’s approach too. McGinn points out that there are some

¹⁸⁴ There are three more arguments presented by the author. The first of them regards the concept of instantiations. Existence is defined through the phrase that a predicate ‘has instantiations’. This can be understood in an objectual or substitutional sense. Taking into consideration the first sense, it means that in order for something to exist there have to be objects that are instances for some certain predicate (McGinn, 2000, p. 21). Returning to the example already used: ‘Lions exist’. According to the objectual analysis, there have to be some objects that instantiate the property of lionhood. This means that those objects exist, in order to be considered instances for lionhood. In this situation, how should the second occurrence of ‘exist’ be understood? McGinn considers this occurrence is presupposed, without a proper explanation. In order for an instance to be considered, it must already exist. Only existing objects can be proper instantiations. In this situation, if the orthodox view understands the idea that a property has instantiation in an objectual sense, it seems to be doomed to circularity.

On the other hand, the substitutional one seems to be the one that Russell preferred. In this situation, instances are propositions or sentences, rather than objects. But, according to McGinn, this interpretation suffers from the same weakness. The propositions or sentences that represent instances for the existing property have to be true. In order for a truth-bearer to be true, there must be at least an existing object referred to by the name used in the truth-bearer and the specific object has to satisfy the predicate it is attached to.

It seems that, in every case, an instance of a property means nothing more than at least one existing object that instantiates that specific property. In this situation, it seems that the definition of existence through instantiations of a property and possibility is circular.

The second objection considers the generality of the orthodox approach. According to McGinn the theory is not able to analyze the application of existence to the properties. The author claims that

properties or propositional functions exist in the same way as other things, even if they are abstract objects. In order to analyze that the property of being a lion exists, one should refer to some further property. It is obvious that the needed property cannot be the property itself, because lionhood is not itself a lion. In this situation, a new property that represents a description of the first one is introduced. Hence, the second property needs an instance. From here, there is a requirement for another existing object.

The real problem, thus, arises because for every existing property another one is needed. This means that existence could not be used for properties. In this situation, the orthodox approach is not able to cover the whole range of the utilizations for existence. McGinn considers that a proper theory of existence should be able to explain all the uses of the concept it is supposed to define. Thus, the approach proposed by Russell is not able to prove that properties exist. If this is the case, then it also fails in explaining that objects exist. In order for an object – x – to exist, there must be some existing property – P – such that x instantiates P .

Finally, the third counterargument focuses on the fact that whatever exists must have at least one property. Thus, the orthodox approach rejects ‘bare existence’. According to McGinn bare existence might be metaphysically impossible, but it does not seem to be a logical impossibility. But the orthodox view makes it impossible not only metaphysically, but also impossible to be expressed.

Some of these arguments do not seem to stand. The first one is quite problematic for the advocate of the orthodox approach; I do not see a way out of it. This might be the main issue for Russell’s theory. The second counterargument is raised from a perspective that adopts realism or even a strong form of realism. Russell could easily avoid this by claiming that properties cannot exist in the same way as other objects do. He could also claim that his notion of existence is a strong one, one that implies the property of concreteness.

The third argument seems self-contradictory in its formulation. The idea of bare existence might raise some paradoxes. Bare existence is defined as an existing object that does not have any other properties than existence. It seems that the definition already presents two more properties: ‘is an object’ and ‘does not have any other properties (than existence)’. Hence, bare existence is quite hard to be expressed without reaching for other properties and producing inconsistencies. Even more, if the second property – the property of ‘not having other properties (than existence)’ – is accepted to be a genuine one, then a form of paradox occurs. In other words, the object that does not have any other property, but existence, already has the property of ‘not having any other property’. Thus, it has two different properties.

sentences¹⁸⁵ that cannot be (formally) expressed using this approach. It seems that singular attributions of existence are quite hard to be analyzed by the orthodox approach. For example, sentences as ‘Natalia exists’, raise some problems for the approach. A sentence as the one mentioned cannot be analyzed without appealing to a description theory of reference and such a theory was heavily criticized.

The other possible option is to accept that there are two interpretations of ‘exist’. Thus, there is a predicative interpretation, as in the example presented above – in the case of singular sentences – and for general sentences as ‘Lions exist’ it is not taken predicative. This solution seems even more unattractive than the first one.

Sentences as ‘Something exists’ are even more problematic for these approaches. This sentence is clearly meaningful and true, but it cannot be properly expressed without a predicate for existence. If it would be expressed symbolizing existence with the existential quantifier, then it will be something of the form ‘ $(\exists x)$ ’ with no predicate added. Thus, such a sentence might be considered only meaningless from the orthodox point of view. The problem is that it follows from sentences as ‘Lions exist’, being a logical consequence of any sentence of that form. Therefore, McGinn considers that;

“(...) the orthodox view does not have the generality we should expect of a theory of existence.” (McGinn, 2000, p. 28)

This objection is not easy to escape. However, there might be some solutions, at least for the first part of the counterargument. The critique implies that if existence is to be taken as equivalent with the existential quantifier, then singular claims about existence cannot be handled by such a theory. McGinn argues that the possible escape from this is to accept a theory about reference that uses definite descriptions and such a theory is problematic. This is right, an approach of definite description is quite hard to support. On the other hand, Kripke’s theory of rigid designators might work. Returning to the previous example – ‘Natalia exists’ –

The fact that some of McGinn’s arguments do not stand, does not mean that the orthodox approach does not have its issues. I did not try to support the orthodox approach here. My aim was to present a critical analysis of McGinn’s counterarguments. I strongly believe that the remaining arguments are more than enough to raise some serious problems for the orthodox approach.

¹⁸⁵ I am going to use sentences, instead of propositions for this part. In the discourse of existence, propositions are entities that might raise some issues.

the name that occurs in the sentence could be understood as a rigid designator. In this case it could be treated not as a constant, but rather as a predicate that is satisfied by only one object. Formally this sentence could be $(\exists x)Nx$. This seems to fulfill all the claims imposed by the orthodox approach. However, if one does not want to treat names as predicates, the other possibility – also following Kripke's theory – could be to reach for the essential property, as origin. But this would complicate the solution. These being said, I strongly believe that singular claims can be handled by the orthodox approach.

On the other hand, there might be some sentences that raise issues for this view. For example:

- (1) Something exists.
- (2) Nothing exists.
- (3) Not everything exists.

A possible solution could be to use the predicate 'is a thing' in order to escape the problem. However, this might not be generally accepted and it seems not to work for (3), because it leads to paradox. In this situation, McGinn's argument stands. This issue does not weaken only the Russellian and Thomasson's approaches; any view about existence that considers existence to be expressed only by the existential quantifier seems to have the same problem. For example, Lewis' approach (Lewis, 1990) takes existence in a weaker sense but faces the same issue.

In conclusion, the already mentioned approach seems to be able to solve only a limited number of cases and leaves outside many others. Some perfectly meaningful and sometimes true sentences are considered ill-formed and are impossible to express. It seems that these approaches cannot handle the full range of existential statements.

It might be considered that this deflationary view about existence cancels the distinction between concrete and abstract objects. In this sense, it might be possible to consider that Santa Claus exists in the same way as goodness exists and as a human being does. This does not seem to be a problem for Thomasson. She moves the discussion in the field of fictionalism.

I do not consider this critique to be a problematic one for Thomasson's theory. There is no need to develop a substantive theory of existence and analyze the predicate as Moltmann (2010; 2017) does; using multiple predicates to differentiate kinds of being, as exist, happen

and obtain. Those distinctions are superfluous in a deflationary theory. However, a basic distinction between concrete and abstract entities seems to be needed.

This issue may be easily avoided. Such a metaphysical deflationism has two possibilities to escape this critique. There should be a difference between how a *cow* exists, how 2 does, or how *happiness* does – if we accept that those entities exist. In this case, it can be adopted a similar position with the one used in a parallel dispute about possible worlds. There the problem was between actual and non-actual entities. Shortly, Lewis' modal realism seemed to vanish the distinction between the objects that existed in the actual world (w^*) and those that existed in the other worlds (u, v). The existing objects in u or v are not actual, thus, they lack the property of concreteness. To solve this problem, Lewis uses two different quantifiers: one restricted and one unrestricted. The unrestricted one ranges over all possible objects (\exists), and the other one only over the objects of the actual world (\exists_a). A similar approach may be used in order to solve the problem of abstract and concrete objects.

Another solution, and maybe a more deflationary one, is to add some predicate for concreteness (the negation may be considered abstractness). In this way, the distinction is kept and the theory does not have to appeal to many terminological remarks; thus, it remains a deflationary approach.

Thomasson claims that there is a strong link between existence and reference:

E: K s exist iff $*K*$ refers.

In this case, there is no difference between saying that a term $*K*$ exists and that its reference, K , does the same; because this theory is unable to make such a distinction. Even more, does '2' have a reference? If not, does that mean that it does not exist?

The fact that existence is defined in terms of reference – and only reference¹⁸⁶ – seems quite problematic, not to mention the use of the biconditional; that only adds issues. Reference is a semantic notion; that means it links something from the world with (a) language¹⁸⁷, in this case, a referent with a name. To say that this relation is not only necessary, but also sufficient

¹⁸⁶ McGinn also rejects the idea that existence can be defined based only on reference. (McGinn, 2000, p. 16; 32)

¹⁸⁷ I do not intend to say that a language is not a part of the world. What I wanted to underline is that semantics (at least for a realist) links something mind-independent (something from the world) with something mind-dependent (a language).

in order to conclude that something exists, may raise some serious problems. It seems that there do not exist objects that do not have names, thus, it exists only what we conceive to exist, which is a strong restriction. In this case, existence becomes mind-dependent. The other direction of the biconditional is problematic only if it is accepted that - in a loose way – empty names refer. If this is accepted, then the ontology is inflated. The idea that existence may be restricted to reference, may be appealing, but does not seem to work as well.

It might be argued that Thomasson may use the universal quantifier to formulate her claim and in that situation, she may be able to escape these problems. She may use something of the form:

$$(\forall x)(x \text{ exists iff } (\exists *x*) *x* \text{ refers})$$

I fully agree with this. However, the formulation needs a predicate for existence in order to be well-formed. x cannot be double quantified: once using the universal quantifier and once using the existential one as a substitute for existence. It seems that Thomasson's approach of existence does not have all the resources needed to appeal to such a solution.

Thus, not only that there seems to be no necessary jump from semantics to metaphysics. A semantic deflationist can remain metaphysically neutral. I also tried to underline some issues raised by her view that may be enough to suggest that another theory for existence would be more suitable.

Truth deflationism leads to accepting a similar approach for the other semantic notions (reference and satisfaction). This semantic deflationism is metaphysically neutral. This means that it does not require a metaphysical position.

Thomasson considers that a deflationist about semantics must be a deflationist about metaphysics. In other words, that semantic deflationism necessarily implies a metaphysical deflationism. I tend to agree with the first part: that a semantic deflationist has to accept a form of deflationary theory about existence in order to keep the coherence of his theoretical system. The latter part should be weakened in a way that leads open the possibility of metaphysical neutrality. In other words, a deflationist about semantics may or may not adopt a metaphysical position.

Thomasson's perspective seems to miss the deflationist's point: that truth is separated from any metaphysical implications. In this case, this may be generalized for other semantic notions. Those semantic notions form a family-circle and may be defined using the others, but

they do not need any metaphysical perspective in order to give a deflationary theory for them. Thus, it seems that Thomasson's approach is not deflating semantics, but rather inflating those notions with the need of a metaphysical approach.

In conclusion, deflationism aims to treat some notions as trivial, without having a hidden nature. When it comes to semantic deflationism it seems that by adopting such a theory for any of the semantic concepts, one must do the same for the rest of them. This does not mean, however, that there is a need to jump into metaphysics and do the same for existence. A semantic deflationism is not linked to metaphysics. Thus, a semantic deflationist may be metaphysically neutral. On the other hand, the approach provided by Thomasson is quite problematic. It is unable to express some meaningful (and maybe true) sentences. The main issue of this view is that it links the existential quantifier with existence, considering the first one to have ontological import.

3.3. Truth as a relation from a deflationary perspective

From a correspondence point of view, the truth relation is mind-independent. The advocate of this theory considers truth to be objective and independent of any rational mind. On the other hand, pragmatists consider truth to be mind-dependent and subjective. Minimalism seems to be somewhere between these two theories. Considering truth mind-independent on the basis that one of its relata shares this independency seems quite problematic. The opposite view is susceptible of the same critique: the generalization from the mind-independence or mind-dependence of one of the relata to the whole relation is illicit. Claiming the existence of the truth-bearers in a Platonic sense also raises some issues. To avoid reaching a dead end, a distinction should be made. A useful one would be to differentiate between the intension and extension of the truth, or between the type and the tokens.

If Armstrong's theory is accepted, with both its Necessitarianism and Maximalism, then:

“*p* (a proposition) is true if and only if there exists a T (some entity in the world) such that T necessitates that *p* and *p* is true in virtue of T.” (Armstrong, 2004, p. 17)

Necessitarianism may be understood in two different ways: the truthmaker may necessitate only the truth of the truth-bearer, or it can also necessitate the existence of that truth-bearer. The former reading admits that there may be possible worlds where the truthmaker exists, but the truth-bearer fails to be true, because it does not exist. On the other hand, the latter reading does not allow this possibility, because in every world where the truthmaker exists, the truth-bearer also does (Stenwall, 2016, p. 67).

Even if Armstrong rejects the idea of possible worlds, he claims that a truthmaker necessitates not only the truth of a proposition, but also the existence of that proposition. Because of its Maximalism and Necessitarianism, the truthmaking relation needs to be applied to unexpressed propositions too. The conclusion that can be inferred from this is that truthmaking is not only an internal relation, but also a mind-independent one. The mind-independence is based on the fact that not only does Armstrong use unexpressed propositions, but he also offers to truthmakers the power to necessitate the existence of truth-bearers.

The correspondence theory of truth considers that a truth-bearer is true when it corresponds to a certain associated state of affairs and false when it does not. It seems that, as TM, the correspondence theory is also bound to the idea that truth is mind-independent. According to Ingthorsson this theory is rooted in the idea that:

“(...) necessarily, if the world is objectively speaking in a certain way, then it is true that it is that way, independently of anyone thinking or speaking about the way the world is.” (Ingthorsson, 2006, p. 53)

It may be noticed that both Armstrong’s truthmaker theory and the correspondence one convey that truth is a relation and this relation is mind-independent. It seems that both these theories deem that truth-bearers are also mind-independent and truthmakers necessitate not only the truth of the truth-bearers, but also their existence. The correspondence theory considers truth as mind-independent, the relation between truth-bearers and what exists does not depend on the fact that someone utters something about the world, or even if a rational mind exists. Armstrong’s truthmaking theory asserts, as I already said, that a truthmaker necessitates not only the truth of a proposition, but the proposition itself.

One of the two relata of truth relation, in both cases (TM and correspondence), is mind-independent. This independence is generalized for the whole relation. What happens with the truth if it is accepted that the other relatum is mind-dependent?

Ingthorsson calls the mind-independence intuition, the belief that truth is mind-independent based only on the fact that one of its relata is mind-independent. The truth independency of mind is sustained by the idea that some propositions may exist without having a linguistic expression, because there are more propositions than linguistic expressions (Soames apud. Ingthorsson, 2006, p. 55).

Firstly, it seems that the fact that there are less linguistic expressions than propositions does not represent a proper argument for the idea that we should accept the existence of some propositions without a linguistic expression. It may represent an argument for the idea that the natural language is limited and some realities may not be expressed by linguistic expressions. This does not represent a problem for truth theories if it is accepted that there may be truthmakers without truth-bearers and vice versa. In this case, truth-bearers and truthmakers can exist independently, but when they both exist, the truth relation occurs.¹⁸⁸

Secondly, if the limitation of the language does not seem a proper solution, it may be accepted that the world complexity may be expressed using a less complex structure (as the natural language) by mixing various linguistic expressions. Hence, the point presented above does not represent a proper argument for the conclusion that some propositions have no linguistic expression.

Thirdly, the acceptance of propositions with no linguistic expression is dependent on the idea that propositions exist independently of minds. If it is accepted that propositions exist in the same way as reality does, in an objective and mind-independent way, the fact that there are no linguistic expressions to utter those propositions should not be a problem. The existence of Platonic propositions implies the existence of propositions that lack a linguistic expression; even more, if there would be no thinking beings, no propositions would have a linguistic expression. On the other hand, if we deny the existence of Platonic propositions, we link them to a linguistic form in order to exist.

The conclusion is that Soames' argument is not a solid one for the existence of propositions (in a non-Platonic manner) that lack a linguistic expression. The fact that we

¹⁸⁸ This also stands if Maximalism is kept. It might be accepted that only truthmakers can exist without the existence of truth-bearers, but not the other way around. In other words, every truth-bearer that exists has to have a truthmaker if it is true or a falsemaker if it is false.

reject the existence of this kind of propositions completes the rejection of Platonic propositions.

Another assumption taken for granted in order to prove the mind-independence of truth is expressibility. Ingthorsson understands by this:

“(...) the assumption that for all being, there is a proposition (not necessarily thought by anyone) that truly renders the nature of this being.” (Ingthorsson, 2006, p. 55)

The Maximalism part of TM says that for every truth there must be a truthmaker, the corollary says – as it was cited above – that for every truthmaker there must be a truth. As Ingthorsson states, we may accept the first one, but not the latter. The first one is based on the idea that truth is determined by reality, while the other is based on the assumption of expressibility.

If we want to accept the idea that for all states of affairs there is a proposition, I suggest introducing the possibility. Therefore, for any state of affairs there is a possible proposition. In this case, the existence of that proposition is contingent, relative to the existence of a thinking being. The idea that all that exists can be captured using a linguistic expression is kept by this modified form of expressibility. This is also compatible with the rejection of Platonic propositions.

If it is accepted that propositions cannot exist in a Platonic manner, it must also be accepted that they are mind-dependent. Truth-bearers and truthmakers can exist independently, but when they both exist, the truth relation must occur. If there would be only one of the relata, there would also be a possibility of truth, but no actual truth.¹⁸⁹ Because one of the relata is mind-dependent, the truth relation cannot occur without the existence of a thinking being. Does this mean that truth is mind-dependent?

All these seem to sustain the conclusion that truth is mind-dependent. However, the idea that truth is mind-dependent, based on the fact that one of its relata shares this dependency, may raise some problems. The first one is that the starting point to reject the mind-independence of truth was to argue that only one of the relata shares that property. The same counterargument may be applied to the mind-dependency of truth. Thus, the mind-

¹⁸⁹ Ingthorsson admits that in a world without thinking beings there would still be the possibility of truth, in the same way there would be the possibility of thinking beings; but, “the possibility is not equivalent to an actuality.” (Ingthorsson, 2006, p. 63)

independency of truth was rejected because not both parts of the relation are mind-independent. In this situation, it seems that the mind-dependency cannot be generalized to the whole relation, on the same line of argumentation.

Another issue could be that by denying the mind-independence of propositions, the mind-independence of reality is also denied. This worry is not plausible. I already admitted that truth-bearers and truthmakers can exist independently. Therefore, in a world without thinking beings, there would still be truthmakers, but they would not have truth-bearers. A world without thinking beings would still exist in a determinate objective way, but it would be a world in which the truth relation could not take place, because there would be nothing to correspond to the reality, or as Ingthorsson stated it:

“The conclusion that unless there is truth there is no determinate reality does not follow from the correspondence theory, because although truth is intimately connected to how the world is, it is not *equivalent* to how the world is. Truth (...) is a property of propositions *about* the world (...); truth is not a property of the world itself.” (Ingthorsson, 2006, p. 58)

A third problem that may occur is whether truth keeps its objectivity; if it is in a way dependent on a rational mind. The fact that truth is determined by the world does not change. If we go back to Armstrong’s Necessitarianism a truthmaker was supposed to necessitate not only the truth of a proposition, but also its existence. The part that is accepted now is that a truthmaker necessitates only the truth of a proposition. It is denied that the existence of the truth-bearer depends on the truthmaker; its existence depends on a rational mind. Hence, a proposition is still true in virtue of reality, but it does not exist in virtue of that reality.

A fourth problem that is raised is if the truth relation is still an internal one despite the fact that it is not mind-independent. It may seem problematic that if the truth relation is mind-dependent it is also internal. Considering Johansson (2004, p.155), it can be accepted that truth is cognition-independent. It is possible to have a cognition-independent internal relation between mind-dependent entities. Thus, it is possible to have a similar relation between a mind-dependent entity and a mind-independent one. In this case, if someone thinks a proposition, even he or she is not concerned about its truth value, the truth relation occurs; the relation occurs even if the cognizing subject does not think or perceive the relation between

truth-bearers and truthmakers. Because of this independence of truth, sometimes we assign wrong truth values to propositions.

It seems that three of four issues are solvable, but the main one remains. The main problem is that, if the mind-independence of truth is denied because it was a wrong generalization based on the fact that only one of its relata was mind-independent, the mind-dependence of truth may suffer the same criticism. It may be said that the mind-dependence of truth is applied only to one relatum (truth-bearer) and truth remains cognition-independent. This may partially solve the problem, but not totally. At this point if the mind-dependence is accepted, even only in the sense that one of the relata suffers this dependency, and also is accepted that truth is cognition-independent, it may be concluded that truth is both mind-dependent and mind-independent. This raises serious problems.

In this situation, it can be accepted that truth is neither mind-independent, nor mind-dependent. This perspective does not seem to solve the problems, because nothing was gained. I think there is a way out of this. I strongly believe that there should be made further linguistic delimitations. In order to avoid using a confusing terminology, the type-token distinction may be used.¹⁹⁰ In this case, it can be accepted that the truth instantiations (truth-token) are mind-dependent; on the other hand the nature of truth (truth-type) is mind-independent. Another distinction that can be made is intensional-extensional. In other words, truth relation is mind-independent, but its instantiations are not.

Both TM and the correspondence theory of truth are substantive theories. They claim that the relation between truth-bearers and truthmakers is a quite strong one and they provide explanations and definitions for it. This does not mean that they are not compatible with considering the instantiations of truth to be mind-dependent and keeping the relation mind-independent. Hence, both TM and the correspondence theory of truth are compatible with the rejection of Platonic propositions, but they have to restrict the mind-independence of truth; therefore truth occurs only if both of its relata exist. This can be expressed formally by:

$$(TM)_R: \forall p (p \text{ is true} \rightarrow \exists x \square [(x \text{ exists and } p \text{ exists}) \rightarrow p \text{ is true}])$$

As I argued in the previous section, minimalism does not have to be committed metaphysically. In this situation, can a minimalism say something about the truth relation? I think a deflationist can, at least, accept that truth – as type – is mind-independent. Accepting

¹⁹⁰ I have to thank Matti Eklund for the idea of using the type-token distinction.

that the instantiations of truth are mind-dependent implies to reject the existence of Platonic propositions. This rejection may not be among the deflationist's interests. Through his writings Horwich seems to incline to adopt a more realistic view. In this situation, I do not think he would reject that truth as a relation is mind-independent. In order to accept that the instantiations of truth are mind-independent too, one has to adopt not only a substantive theory of truth, but also a substantive theory about existence and a quite strong form of realism. The conjunction of all these, and the unwanted implications that follow from such a strong view, are not what a deflationist would want. Thus, tacitly, a minimalist would accept the second claim too – that the instantiations of truth are mind-dependent. If a deflationist wants to explicitly state that truth-tokens are mind-dependent, he has to, at least, provide a metaphysical view for truth-bearers. However, I am not sure if he would have the will to inflate his terminology in order to support this view.

To conclude, truth is a relation which links heterogeneous relata. Because one of its relata is mind-dependent, there is a temptation to say that the whole relation shares this dependency. On the other hand, the relation, being an internal one, occurs without being necessarily cognized; using Johansson terminology, it might be said that the relation is cognition-independent.

The apparent problem can be easily solved with some terminological remarks. By saying that truth is both mind-dependent and mind-independent almost nothing is gained. Thus, it may be accepted that truth (type, or as a relation) is mind-independent, but its instantiations (tokens) are mind-dependent. Therefore, extensionally speaking truth is mind-dependent, but intensionally it is mind-independent.

Therefore, the truth relation may keep its objectivity, but it is relative to the existence of a thinking being when the existence of Platonic propositions is denied. The correspondence theory of truth is compatible with this view. In this case, the correspondence relation is between propositions with a linguistic expression and states of affairs from the world. Armstrong's view is also restricted to expressed propositions. Truthmaker Maximalism is applied in this case only to those propositions which have a linguistic expression. Truthmaker Necessitarianism does not imply that a truthmaker necessitates the proposition itself; it necessitates only the truth of that proposition. Minimalism can accept that truth-type is mind-independent. In order to prove that truth-tokens are mind-dependent he needs some concepts

and insights that may not be wanted in a deflationary perspective, but they are not incompatible with it.¹⁹¹

Accepting the distinction between type-tokens allows keeping the objectivity of truth and the possibility of error, but also the mind-independence of reality. In this situation, both the advocates of the correspondence theories and the ones of pragmatic approaches would be able to accept it. These upshots are situated between a strong realism and anti-realism.¹⁹² An advocate of the correspondence theory would be able to maintain the objectivity of truth he aims for. On the other hand, pragmatism would be able to claim that truth is subjective, relative to the instantiations of truth. A minimalist does not want to have the truth predicate linked to any epistemological or metaphysical concept. In this situation, he may remain silent when it comes to define the truth relation in these terms. However, he may easily accept that truth-type is mind-independent starting from the correspondence intuition he wants to incorporate.

Conclusion

In conclusion, in the first part of this chapter I tried to offer a possible development for the minimalist theory. It seems that after all, this deflationary theory of truth is compatible with a light talk about truthmakers. Because Horwich aims to incorporate in his theory the correspondence intuition, this leaves an open road for concepts as ‘truthmaker’. This possible addition to the minimalist theory does not change his statute; the approach is still a deflationary one. The core of the theory is not changed. Introducing the truthmaker concept into the theory, does not change the fact that the T-schema and its instantiations are

¹⁹¹ They would not destroy the theory. It would be still a deflationary one. What I am trying to suggest is that such a development of the theory does not follow from the aim of the approach. In order to be able to use the truth predicate, one does not need all these distinctions and all this terminology. However, if one is interested in doing so, I do not see an incompatibility between this view and the deflationism Horwich proposed. From this point of view I consider these insights to be a possible development of the already mentioned theory and they do not change the core of the theory.

¹⁹² It must be noted that this view is closer to realism than to antirealism. I would call it a form of weak realism, or common sense realism.

explanatory basic. Nothing is added to the main points of the theory. These are some further facts compatible with Horwich's deflationary view.

In the second part of the chapter my main aim was to argue that a minimalist is not coerced to adopt a metaphysical position. Thomasson claims that starting from a semantic deflationism, there is a necessary jump to a similar metaphysical approach. Her arguments are based on the interdefinability between existence and the existential quantifier. Following McGinn, I argued that there are some sentences that cannot be expressed and are considered meaningless if such a view is adopted. Also, because of this, Thomasson's deflationary approach for existence has some weak points. The T-schema is not linked with existence, more than is linked with any other predicate used in the instantiations of the schema. In this situation, it does not seem to be a necessary jump from semantics to metaphysics. In this case, a semantic deflationist is able to remain neutral and refuse to adopt a certain metaphysical approach. However, if one wants to commit metaphysically, Thomasson's approach does not seem to be the most suitable one.

Finally, in the last section I tried to provide an answer to the question: is truth mind-dependent or mind-independent? The correspondence theory of truth and TM consider truth relation to be mind-independent. According to these perspectives the truthmaker necessitates not only the truth of a proposition, but also the proposition itself. If one is rejecting the existence of Platonic proposition, then the statute of truth remains uncertain. It might be considered that it is mind-dependent, because one of its relata shares this dependency. I consider this generalization to be illicit. In order to solve the problem I propose a distinction. Truth-type can be considered mind-independent and truth-tokens are mind-dependent. A deflationist is able to accept the first claim from a point of common sense realism. This can be made without adding something to his theory and without adopting an explicit metaphysical theory. In order to accept the second claim, a minimalist may need to commit metaphysically, or at least provide a metaphysical approach for truth-bearers.

Conclusion

The main aim of this thesis has been to offer a new perspective about minimalism and some questions regarding metaphysics. This scope is composed of three principal questions. One of them focuses on a possible link between truthmakers and deflationism. The other one deals with the relation between semantic deflationism and metaphysical deflationism. The third one deals with the mind dependency or independency of truth.

In order to fulfill my aim, I firstly have presented the main concepts of the deflationary theory this thesis was concerned with. Horwich's minimalist theory (Horwich, 1998a) considers that the truth notion is exhausted by the T-schema and its instantiations. I briefly provided some arguments in favor of a deflationary theory, rather than a substantive one. Even if minimalism is preferred to a classical theory – as the correspondence one – it has its weak points. In order to reach my aim I tried to provide solutions to some of the most significant issues of minimalism, as the generalization problem (Gupta, 1993; Armour-Garb, 2004; 2010) and the problem of other truth-bearers raised by Field (1992). There have been pointed out some issues that are unsolvable for the moment as the ones brought forward by Eklund (2012; 2017). This was the content of the first chapter.

There are specific problems that are common to many truth theories. One of them concerns paradoxes and how a truth theory is able to escape them. Deflationary theories tend to have two positions when it comes to paradoxes as the Liar. Some of them as Grover (2005) and Gupta (2005) consider that paradoxes do not represent a special problem for the theory. On the other hand, deflationists as Horwich accept that their theory has to suffer because of the Liar and try to offer solutions. Horwich provides two answers (Horwich, 1998a; 2010) for this. They were heavily criticized. Both of his solutions aim to restrict the applicability of the T-schema, excluding the paradoxical sentences. A solution based on this kind of restriction is raising a serious problem for minimalism. Because minimalism takes truth to be a generalization device (Horwich, 1998a), it has to be applicable to all sentences in order to fulfill its role. This leaves minimalism with two possibilities: either it is accepted that paradoxical sentences lack a truth value, or that they are both true and false.

Following Armour-Garb and Beall (Armour-Garb, 2004; Armour-Garb and Beall, 2003; 2005) I argued that the best way out for a minimalist is to accept dialetheism.¹⁹³ This solution is far away from what Horwich aimed for. Horwich claims that minimalism accepts not only the law of non-contradiction, but the principle of bivalence as well. Both of these are rejected by a dialetheist. I strongly believe that rejecting the rules mentioned above is less costly than losing the coherence of a theory. If a minimalist would not be able to provide a proper solution to the Liar, he would lose his theory on the basis that it is inconsistent according to a classical logic. By accepting dialetheism, minimalism is able to solve two of its main issues. Beside the problem of paradoxes, a minimalist can also provide an answer based on dialetheism for the generalization problem. All these have been the topic of the second chapter.

The main aim of this thesis was discussed in the last chapter. I offered a different point of view of a possibility to link deflationism to truthmakers. The starting point was a brief presentation of the main concepts of a truthmaker theory, Armstrong's one (Armstrong, 2004). The proposed truthmaker theory is a development of the correspondence one. A truthmaker is considered a state of affairs in virtue of which a truth-bearer is true. According to Armstrong, the truthmaker necessitates the truth of a truth-bearer. A minimalist uses the T-schema as a core for his theory. There are two possible ways of understanding this schema (Young, 2009). A first one is to interpret it as linking two truth-bearers, two entities of the same category, called the minimalist interpretation. A second one – the substantive interpretation – is to consider that T-schema links two different entities, a truth-bearer and a truthmaker. It is generally considered that deflationary theories tend to appeal to the minimalist interpretation. I argued that this interpretation is too weak for Horwich's aims. In order to incorporate the correspondence intuition, a minimalist needs more than considering truth a relation between two truth-bearers. Thus, I claimed that a minimalist would be more inclined to a substantive interpretation of the T-schema. It should be noted that this interpretation does not commit him to a substantive analysis of truth; it is different from a substantive approach.

¹⁹³ I argued that t-gluts (dialetheism) are preferred to t-gaps. One of the main arguments was that the rejection of the paradoxical sentences may be problematic for t-gaps from a deflationary point of view. The terminological resources that are needed may not be reachable from a minimalist account.

Accepting the second interpretation would allow accommodating the correspondence intuition, this goes hand in hand with explaining on what a truth depends. Thomas (2011) claims that deflationism explains via implicature on what truths depend. Accepting this, would mean that a minimalist is able to label the right biconditional as being a ‘truthmaker’. When it comes to defining the notion, authors as McGrath (2003) go back to the minimalist interpretation. McGrath considers that deflationary truthmakers are truth-bearers as well; in other words, that a truth is a truthmaker for itself. I argued that his theory has many weaknesses to the point where it is incoherent.

The notion of truthmaker may be incorporated into a deflationary theory. I have claimed that it does not have to be a part of the core of such a theory. In order to accommodate the correspondence intuition, a deflationist can extend his theory with such a notion. I claim that a minimalist does not have to go in depth with this analysis. Accepting the right side of the biconditional with the label of truthmaker, would help the minimalist to accommodate the idea that truths correspond to something worldly. There is no need for a detailed analysis, or an additional terminology. Thus, I have presented some arguments in order to sustain these ideas in the first part of the last chapter.

The second part of the main goal was to discuss the possible jump from semantic deflationism to a metaphysical one. Amie Thomasson (2015a; 2015b) argued that a semantic deflationism necessarily leads to a metaphysical one. Existence is not a genuine property; it is rather a formal term. I structured my counterarguments on two levels. Firstly, I argued against the idea that semantic deflationism necessarily leads to a metaphysical one. Secondly, I offered some arguments against Thomasson’s own deflationary theory about existence.

One of the arguments I presented for the first class of counterarguments was based on the two possible understandings of the T-schema. If the schema is understood in a minimalist perspective, as linking two truth-bearers, there is no need for metaphysics. On the other hand, if it is understood in a substantive manner, then, it depends on what theory is using it. Metaphysics are needed in a correspondence theory of truth. But Horwich’s theory is far from that. His theory does not aim to provide certain truthmakers for truths. He uses truth as a logical device and accepts that truths correspond to something worldly. Horwich does that without going in depth with this idea. He has no need to define what that truthmaker is or say something about its existence. Thomasson argues that the existence claims are derivable from

the T-schema. If this is the case, then from the T-schema may be derived almost everything. Starting from an instantiation of the T-schema for the true proposition that ‘Lions exist’; this would be about existence in the same way it will be about lionhood. This cannot be considered a strong argument to accept a metaphysical deflationism based on a semantic one. I do agree with Thomasson that, if a semantic deflationism wants to commit metaphysically, it seems that he has to endorse a similar view for existence too. I do not think that semantic deflationism is compatible with a substantive theory about existence.

When it comes to Thomasson’s own deflationary approach for metaphysics, it has some weak points. The main one I have been pointed out is based on the fact that her view is relying on the interdefinability between ‘there is’ and ‘exists’. If this is accepted, then there are some occurrences of ‘exists’ that cannot be formalized, or explained appealing to this approach. Formally, existence is expressed using the existential quantifier. ‘Something exists’ cannot be formalized in this manner. This means that such an account cannot explain the whole range of instances of existence. This critique makes a deflationary account for metaphysics that is based on this interdefinability quite problematic. This represented the second part of the third chapter.

Lastly, in the final part of this chapter I presented a possible answer to the question: is truth mind-dependent or mind-independent? This also represents the last part of my main goal. I aimed to answer this question from a deflationary perspective. The classical truth theories, as the correspondence one or the truthmaker theory provided by Armstrong, consider truth mind-independent. This independency is the result of a generalization. Because one of the relata – the truthmaker – is considered mind-independent, the whole relation is taken to share this independency. I consider this to be an illicit argument. I provided some arguments to support my view.

As a solution to this problem, I propose a distinction. Truth-type can be considered mind-independent, while truth-tokens are mind-dependent. I claimed that a deflationist can easily accept the first claim. This can be made without any terminological additions or without adopting an explicit metaphysical theory. When it comes to the second claim, I argued that the minimalist does not have all the needed resources to support it. In order to accept this second claim, an advocate of minimalism has to either commit metaphysically, or at least, provide a metaphysical approach for truth-bearers.

My main aim has been threefold. Firstly, I argued that a minimalist is able to incorporate into his theory a light notion of truthmaker; offering in this way a possible direction of developing this deflationary theory. Secondly, I offered some counterarguments for Thomasson's idea that semantic deflationism leads to a metaphysical one. I also presented some critiques for the deflationary theory of existence proposed by Thomasson. I pursued to offer the minimalist the possibility to remain metaphysically neutral. I understand this neutrality as the possibility to not commit metaphysically. I strongly believe that a minimalist is able even to accommodate the correspondence intuition without having to commit metaphysically. In this thesis I aimed to support this view and to offer a possible development of the minimalist theory. Finally, I provided a conceptual distinction in order to solve the problem of mind-dependency of truth, from a deflationary perspective. My proposal uses the type-token distinction. Truth-type is mind-independent, while truth-tokens are mind-dependent. I argued that deflationists are able to support the first view without adding something to their theory, but in order to accept the second claim, they have to commit metaphysically.

I have to admit that this thesis has its weak points. One of them is that some of the arguments and counterarguments I provided should be developed and are perfectible. A second one is that I proposed dialetheism as a way out for deflationism and this theory has its weak points too. I think that Horwich would not endorse such a solution. His approach is more classical. I believe that dialetheism is the best way out for minimalism from two of its main critiques. But I also accept that dialetheism is not a theory easy to embrace.

This thesis offers an original perspective about the possible link between deflationism and truthmakers and argues for the metaphysical neutrality of deflationism. One of its strong points is that when it comes to the main aim, I tried to respect Horwich's ideas and to support them with arguments. Horwich claims that his theory is not committed to a specific metaphysical view. I took Horwich's part and I provided some arguments in favor of his claim. Minimalism is compatible with many metaphysical views and I argued that this theory can also be metaphysically neutral.

Another strong point is that it offers a possible explanation on how a minimalist incorporates the correspondence intuition. That explanation goes hand in hand with introducing the notion of truthmaker. This notion may be used to provide an answer to how

the minimalist is able to incorporate the already mentioned intuition without becoming a secret advocate of the correspondence theory.

The relevance of the thesis consists in offering a new perspective on deflationism and metaphysics that is up-to-date with the contemporary discussions on this topic. This research presents a new way of approaching some of the relevant questions about truth and metaphysics. The thesis offers a clarification of the problem of mind dependency and independency; it also offers new possibilities of development of the already mentioned deflationary theory. I argued that deflationism is compatible with a notion as truthmaker. This opens many directions of research and developments, offering arguments to consider deflationism an appealing theory. Lastly, it provides arguments in order to keep truth metaphysically thin, from a minimalist point of view. Because of this, the truth predicate remains usable in different fields of philosophy and logic, without inflating the terminology. The originality of this thesis consists not only in the way I approached the topic, but also in the direction I choose and the arguments I provide in order to support my view.

The present thesis offers a basis for future developments and may have implications for future researches. The direction I am most interested in is to provide a concrete deflationary account for existence. I am interested in how such an account could be formulated; especially in a more formal manner. As I already mentioned, I do not consider that Thomasson's approach is suitable. I find the interdefinability between 'exists' and 'there are', between existence and the existential quantifier quite problematic. Thus, this aspect is worth exploring.

Another direction that could be examined is how my conclusions work with other deflationary accounts. I focused on Horwich's one for various reasons. But I would be more than interested to be able to apply this perspective to other deflationary accounts, especially Field's. As far as I know, at least some of the answers will differ.

A final line of development could consist in linking and developing the main ideas of this thesis in order to provide a new deflationary approach based on a non-classical logic. Such an account may be generalized to other semantic notions, even existence. I would opt, once again, for a more formal approach.

To sum up, this thesis had as a goal to provide an original perspective about minimalism and metaphysics. I aimed to present a possible development of this specific

deflationary theory, incorporating a notion as truthmaker. I also argued for the metaphysical neutrality of a deflationary theory. I finished by providing an answer from a deflationary perspective to the question of mind dependency or independency of truth.

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