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Truth Dependence against Transparent Truth

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Abstract: Beall's (e.g., 2009, 2021) transparency theory of truth is recognized as a prominent, deflationist solution to the liar paradox. However, it has been neglected by truth theorists who have attempted to show that a deflationist theory of truth can (or cannot) account for *truth dependence*, i.e., the claim that the truth of a proposition depends on how things described by the proposition are, but how these things are doesn't depend on the truth of the proposition. Truth theorists interested in truth dependence have, instead, been focused on Horwich's Minimalism (e.g., 1998). The goal of this paper is twofold. First, I construct what versions of the transparency theory would say about truth dependence. Second, I argue that even the best version of transparent truth ultimately fails to account for truth dependence. On the assumption that accounting for truth dependence is an adequacy condition on any theory of truth, the paper rejects transparency theory as an adequate theory of truth.

Keywords: truth, truth dependence, deflationism, transparency theory, Beall

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Introduction

In *Categories* (14b, 14-22), Aristotle presents us with an intuition concerning the relation between truth and reality. For example, while it is acceptable to say that <the man exists> is true because the man exists, it is not acceptable to claim that the man exists because <the man exists> is true. The reason for this is that truth dependence is an *asymmetric explanatory relation*.

Truth dependence: The truth of a proposition depends on how things described by the proposition are, but how these things are doesn't depend on the truth of the proposition.[1]

Assuming that accounting for truth dependence is an adequacy condition on any theory of truth, there seems to be a special problem for deflationism about truth, given that all deflationists share the view that 'true' is just a device for, say, denominalization/disquotation. It seems that 'true' must be more than that for us to be able to account for truth dependence. Truth must be substantive.[2] But there are different brands of deflationism, and some are more hardcore than others. For example, there are transparency views (e.g., Beall 2009, 2021, Field 2008), which are more hardcore than Horwich's Minimalism (e.g., 1998). Transparency views are more hardcore than

[1] Note that we're interested in a specific *kind* of dependence, namely, *truth's dependence on reality* (i.e., truth dependence). There are other forms of dependence such as *ontological dependence* (e.g., electricity's ontological dependence on electrons) that we're not interested in because these other forms of dependence are typically concerned with things other than the property of truth. Truth dependence is also to be distinguished from *grounding*, which typically concerns a relation between two truthbearers or two facts, and not a relation between the *truth* of a truthbearer and the world. For example, the fact that grass is green grounds that something is green, and so on. Now, there is also *truth*-grounding, i.e., how the property of truth is grounded in reality. For example, the truth of 'grass is green' is grounded in the fact that grass is green. And that sort of grounding might just be what is referred to as *truth dependence* in this paper. Truth dependence can also be understood in terms of truthmaking (see e.g., Jago 2018), but while the latter is a way of accounting for truth dependence, truth dependence must not necessarily be understood in terms of truthmaking. To say that the truth of 'grass is green' depends on grass's being green must not amount to the claim that 'grass is green' is *made true* by grass's being green. This can be easily seen when truth dependence is formulated via a 'because'-clause such as ' 'grass is green' is true because grass is green'. As we can see, there is no talk of truthmaking here, and therefore no apparent reason to assume that truth dependence must be understood in terms of truthmaking.

[2] There are various accounts of what 'substantive' means, see e.g., Edwards (2013), Wyatt (2021). One view is that a substantive property is a naturalistic property that can be given a non-semantic reductive analysis. Yet another is that a substantive property plays an explanatory role, in the case of truth, for phenomena such as reference, meaning, successful action, etc. Horwich denies that truth is substantive in any of these senses, see, for example, p. 37-38 of his 1998-book. According to Horwich, truth is *insubstantive* in the sense that it is not a naturalistic property, and in the sense that it doesn't play an explanatory role for reference, meaning etc. For more on insubstantivity, see, e.g., Wyatt (2021).

Minimalism because the former claim that truth doesn't add anything to the sentence to which it is ascribed.[3] Beall (2021, 367) talks about transparent truth as *see-through*, in the sense that

> an ascription of transparent truth to a sentence is completely intersubstitutable with the given sentence.

Complete intersubstitutivity suggests that 'is true' is not a genuine property ascription. But for Horwich 'is true' is a genuine property ascription. He (1998, 38; his italics) says:

> the underlying issue is still with us in the form of whether or not applications of the truth predicate engender *statements* about the propositions to which it is applied. The thesis that they *do* distinguishes the present view [so Minimalism] from certain more radical formulations of deflationism.

According to Horwich's Minimalism, truth consists in the instances of the equivalence schema '<p> is true iff p', but, as we can see, Horwich is clear that the truth-predicate is not redundant. It ascribes a property to propositions even if truth is not a substantive property. In that sense, Minimalism is less hardcore than other deflationist views of truth such as transparency theory.[4]

One recent and well-developed account of transparent truth is Beall's (2021).

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[3] The strongest degrees of deflationism are the redundancy theory (e.g., Ramsey 1927), the tautology theory (e.g., Zalta (2014) and the transparency theory (e.g., Beall 2021, Field 2008). They all seem on a par with respect to the degree to which they're deflationist even if there might be a difference between redundancy/tautology vs. transparency in the sense that the former take 'true' to not add anything to the *meaning* of a sentence or proposition, whereas transparency theory is claiming that truth is transparent in virtue of *entailment relations* between, e.g., 'snow is white' and ' 'snow is white' is true'. But they all are hardcore to the same degree, and certainly more hardcore than Minimalism.

[4] As Armour-Garb et al. (2023, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, section 3.1.) point out, Horwich does agree that truth is *logical* in the sense of allowing generalizations, etc., and that that's the *main function* of the truth-predicate. But, as they say, Horwich doesn't deny that there is a sense in which truth is a genuine property ascription.

According to Beall (2021, 371-372), truth is insubstantive in the following sense: It is what he calls 'an emergent logical property' – a property correlate of the truth operator that plays a logical role much like the connective 'and'. And that makes truth *transparent*, which is just to say that truth is metaphysically uninteresting.[5] When Beall considers objections to his view, he says (ibid, 374, italics added):

> I am not sure what is involved in the notion of a metaphysically interesting property, but whatever it is, it's likely not something that should apply to a *transparent-truth property*—or to a suitably 'deflated' truth property generally.

As we can see, Beall does not only say that *transparent* truth is likely not metaphysically interesting, but also that *no* deflationist view of truth should entail anything metaphysically interesting about truth.

Horwich (1998), on the other hand, thinks that despite the fact that the equivalence schema '<p> is true iff p' captures what there is to say about truth, truth is still metaphysically interesting[6], and thus tries to account for truth dependence (see, e.g., Horwich 1998, 2008, 2009). Indeed, the current literature on whether (and how) a deflationist theory of truth can account for truth dependence is focused on Minimalism

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[5] Truth is *metaphysically interesting* in the sense that truth has a non-obvious nature that is worthy of metaphysical investigation. Truth is not simply captured by, say, the truth schema. Thus, 'metaphysically uninteresting' means the opposite, namely, that the nature of truth is revealed by, say, the instances of the truth schema, or, according to Beall, through being a property correlate of the truth operator (more soon). Moreover, there is a clear connection between the notions of 'substantive property' and 'metaphysically interesting property' in the sense that a substantive property is metaphysically interesting. A substantive property is metaphysically interesting in the sense provided above, namely, that truth has a non-obvious nature to be investigated, one that is not simply captured by the truth schema. Whereas non-substantivism about truth says that something like the truth schema is all there is to understanding the property of truth, that is, truth doesn't consist in some other property, like corresponding to reality or what have you, that needs discovery.

[6] Horwich (1998, 104) emphasizes that Minimalism 'acknowledges that statements owe their truth to the nature of reality' and 'that it is indeed undeniable that whenever a proposition or an utterance is true, it is true *because* something in the world is a certain way — something typically external to the proposition or utterance'.

about truth[7], arguing against a Minimalist account of truth dependence (e.g., Wright 1992, Künne 2003, Rodriguez-Pereyra 2005, Vision 2005, Liggins 2016) or for it (e.g., Horwich 1998, 2008, 2009, Thomas 2011, Dodd 2018).

Unlike in the case of Minimalism, there is no existing transparency theorist account of truth dependence. Although transparent truth is recognized as a prominent deflationist solution in the literature on the liar paradox (see., e.g., Field 2008), it's completely neglected in the literature on truth dependence. In this paper, I first construct transparency theorist accounts of truth dependence. Second, I argue that even the best version ultimately fails to account for truth dependence. On the assumption that accounting for truth dependence is an adequacy condition on any theory of truth, the transparency theorist better revise their theory to account for truth dependence. Otherwise, we must reject their theory as an adequate theory of truth. In the next section, I'll begin by explaining what adequacy condition is at issue here.

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[7] A note on 'focused on Minimalism': As an anonymous reviewer pointed out, one might think that the claim is false. The literature on deflationism and dependence is also concerned with truthmaking. According to Asay and Baron (2019), even *deflationists about truthmaking* such as Williamson (2001), Dodd 2002, and Hornsby (2005) offer a kind of truthmaker theory to account for truth dependence without acknowledging it. So far so good. But note that while truthmaker theory is generally taken to be a successful way of accounting for truth dependence, it is an open question as to whether truthmaker theory is a *theory of truth*. Asay (2020) doubts this, and Lewis (2001) as well. So, if truthmaker theory isn't a theory of truth, then it's not central for the purposes of this paper. In that sense, 'focused on Minimalism' is still a true phrase, since the paper is interested in how truth dependence must be accounted for by a *deflationist theory of truth*. Minimalism is a recognized deflationist theory of truth. And it is a fair question as to how a deflationist theory can account for truth dependence without evoking (deflationary) truthmaking. It seems that a deflationist theory that can account on their own for truth dependence (say, because it is an adequacy condition on it) is a better theory than one that needs to take truthmaker theory on board (unless one believes that *only* truthmaker theory is qualified to account for truth dependence, which is simply to reject the adequacy condition on theories of truth). Or maybe one believes truthmaker theory, while not a theory of truth, and not the only one to be able to account for truth dependence, is still best equipped to do so. Now, that might well be the case, but the fact that there is this literature on Horwich and truth dependence shows that it is worthwhile asking how *accepted deflationist theories of truth* can account for truth dependence, and how they can do so on their own. This is the question that this paper is interested in. And it is in this context that the paper is concerned with the *transparency theory of truth*.

1. Truth Dependence as an Adequacy Condition

Before we can look at how transparency theory can/cannot account for truth dependence, it is required to address the following three questions:

(a) Is accounting for truth dependence really an *adequacy condition*?

If the answer to (a) is affirmative, then we can ask:

(b) *How exactly* is accounting for truth dependence an adequacy condition?

(c) Why exactly should the *transparency theorist* care about truth dependence?[8]

To begin with (a), let me begin by saying that this paper doesn't intend to give a *proof* that accounting for truth dependence is indeed an adequacy condition on any theory of truth, but the idea, as mentioned above, is that *if accounting for truth dependence is an adequacy condition on any theory of truth, then the transparency theorist better revise their theory to account for truth dependence. Otherwise, we must reject their theory as an adequate theory of truth.*

Nevertheless, there are independent reasons that suggest that any theory of truth should care about accounting for truth dependence. For one, in the literature, many bother to show that Minimalism cannot account for truth dependence (e.g., Wright 1992, Künne 2003, Rodriguez-Pereyra 2005, Vision 2005 Liggins 2016). If accounting for truth dependence were not an adequacy condition on any theory of truth, even a deflationary

[8] These questions were raised by two anonymous reviewers.

one, then why challenge Minimalism to account for it? The fact that Minimalism is challenged in the literature implies that accounting for truth dependence is generally taken to be an adequacy condition on any theory of truth. So, following the literature, I assume it is.

Moving on to (b), there are at least two answers. One answer relies on reading 'adequate' in the sense of an adequate theory being a *complete theory*. Such a theory provides a complete account of all the different facts about truth. So, if truth dependence is a fact about truth (and we assume that it is), then an adequate theory of truth needs to account for it.

The other answer is that an adequate theory of truth needs to account for how 'true' is used in ordinary language.[9] And indeed, no one, even a deflationist, can deny that a claim such as *the proposition that snow is white is true because snow is white* reflects ordinary usages of 'true'. At most, what some form of deflationism, such as transparency theory, can say is that they don't intend to account for uses of 'true' that involve 'because'-clauses. But why does that claim not simply amount to conceding their inadequacy as a theory of truth? For the sake of argument, let's agree for the moment that truth is an *insubstantive* property. Does that amount to saying that we must dismiss certain sorts of natural language uses of 'true'? Horwich (e.g., 1998, 37), for one, adopting terminology from Field (1992), states that truth is a 'logical property' but doesn't mean to suggest that truth *only* plays the role of aiding generalization, denominalization, and so on (see, e.g.,

[9] See more on such an adequacy condition on theories of truth in Soames (1984). Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for this.

Armour-Garb et al., 2023, *SEP*[10], section 3.1. for clarification). Neither does Horwich dismiss 'because'-clauses involving the truth-predicate (see, Horwich 1998, 104).

Moreover, the adequacy condition at issue in this paper should be sharply distinguished from Tarski's *Convention T*. Convention T was meant as an adequacy condition in the sense that a correct theory of truth must say what truth is, but note that accounting for truth dependence is a matter of what *truth is grounded in/depends on*, and not what truth is or how to define 'true'. According to Tarski's Convention T (e.g., 1944), a theory of truth is adequate if all the instances of (T) are derivable from it. And (T) is the following schema:

'X' is true iff S,

where 'X' has to be substituted by a name like 'snow is white', and *S* by a sentence of English, like *snow is white*. But, as we know, Tarski claimed that an object language could not contain its own truth-predicate without the rise of paradox (such as the liar paradox), and so we need to distinguish between the object language (the language which we're talking about using names such as 'snow is white' for statements in the language in question) and the metalanguage (the language we use to talk about the object language, e.g., 'copies' of sentences such as *snow is white*). According to Tarski, an adequate definition of the truth-predicate requires that 'true' be defined in the metalanguage, so that paradox can be avoided.

[10] 'SEP' stands for *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

So far so good. But since one can give an account of what truth is without also giving an account of what truth depends on, we need to distinguish between the two adequacy conditions. For example, the correspondence theory of truth suggests that truth is correspondence of sentence or proposition to reality, but it is a mistake to say that the correspondence relation is a grounding relation. The correspondence relation is not an explanatory relation (see, e.g., David 2009), whereas grounding is seen as an explanatory relation (see, e.g., Fine 2012). So, to (adequately) answer the question of what truth is does not necessarily amount to answering the question of what truth depends on/is grounded in.

As to (c), the burden of proof seems to be on the transparency theory to explain why truth dependence isn't a worthy *explanandum*. If deflationists and non-deflationists alike take truth dependence seriously, then why shouldn't the transparency theorist do so? Even assuming that truth dependence is not really an adequacy condition, there is still reason to account for truth dependence. The reason here is that, all else being equal, a theory of truth that can account for truth dependence is a better theory than one that can't. If transparency theory wants to compete with theories of truth that provide an account of truth dependence, then transparency theory better accommodate truth dependence. For example, Horwich (1998, 2008, 2009), while a deflationist, does accept truth dependence. Indeed, Horwich (1998, 104) emphasizes that Minimalism 'acknowledges that statements owe their truth to the nature of reality' and 'that it is indeed undeniable that whenever a proposition or an utterance is true, it is true *because* something in the world is a certain way — something typically external to the proposition

or utterance'.[11] So, given that Horwich admits that a proposition or utterance is true *because something external to the proposition or utterance is a certain way*, it's clear that Horwich accepts truth dependence, and, all things being equal, if transparency theory cannot account for truth dependence, then Minimalism is a better (deflationist) theory of truth than transparency theory just in case Minimalism can account for truth dependence. So, even if it turned out that accounting for truth dependence is not an adequacy condition, there still would be pressure for the transparency theory to account for truth dependence. I'll present Beall's version of the transparency theory in the next section.

2. Transparent Truth

The transparency theorist claims that the sentences 'A' and '<A> is true' are intersubstitutable in all non-intensional contexts (and contexts excluding quotation marks) (e.g., Beall 2009, 2021, Field 2008). For Beall (2021), the intersubstitutivity is not with respect to meaning, but with respect to consequence and entailment. 'A' and '<A> is true' entail the same sentences and are entailed by the same sentences. According to this view, 'true' is transparent. It doesn't express a metaphysically interesting property, or as Beall (374) puts it, whatever our notion of a 'metaphysically interesting property' is, it likely won't apply to a 'suitably 'deflated' truth property'.[12]

According to Beall, truth is only interesting *qua* what he calls, 'emergent logical property'. Emergent logical properties are property correlates of logical vocabulary. In

[11] We will have a quick look at his account further below.
[12] Just to be clear, being a deflationist about truth, Beall takes truth to be an *insubstantive* property. See footnote 2 for more on *substantivism*/vs. *insubstantivism*. And footnote 5 for 'metaphysically interesting'/'uninteresting'.

the given context, the term 'emergent' is used to suggest that transparent truth emerges directly from the truth-operator. It is the property correlate of logic's truth-operator. Beall argues here by an analogy, taking logical conjunction as an example.[13] The connective ∧ expresses an operator, not a property. According to Beall (371), we can provide 'a property correlate' for it, expressed by 'the binary predicate *C* (*x*, *y*)'. This predicate is intersubstitutable with the operator, that is, for <A> and <B>, C (<A>, <B>) is intersubstitutable in all (non-intensional) contexts with A∧B.

Similarly, given the transparency theory of truth and the fact that transparent truth is supposed to be the property correlate of the truth-operator, it follows that 'it is true that' and 'is true' are intersubstitutable in all non-intensional contexts. Beall (372) says:

> Transparent truth, defined by its transparency rule, is an emergent logical property in the sense above […]; it is motivated directly by logic's truth operator; it is the property correlate of logic's truth operator.

According to Beall (ibid.), the fact that transparent truth is motivated by logic's truth operator, suggests that, 'as with the example of logical conjunction (which is binary), we have a unary property extracted (or abstracted)' from the unary truth operator such that

T<A>

is intersubstitutable in all non-intensional context with

† A.[14]

[13] This point has also been made by Shapiro (2011).
[14] '†' stands for 'it is true that'.

And since '† A' and 'A' are intersubstitutable in all non-intensional contexts, 'T <A>' and 'A' are intersubstitutable in all non-intensional contexts, according to Beall.[15]

But there are also important differences between the truth-predicate and the truth-operator. An important difference that Beall mentions is that logic's truth operator is logically redundant, whereas the truth-predicate is not. Beall says (2021, 373):

> The property correlate of logic's truth operator—namely, transparent truth—is not redundant in the true theories in which it appears. As deflationists have long emphasized (e.g., with respect to the generalizing role that suitable deflationary truth predicates—certainly transparent predicates— play), there are some claims in true theories that are not expressible in the theories without transparent truth.

At this point, one might wonder what we gained with Beall's logicality account of truth if there is this important difference between the truth-predicate and the truth-operator. As Beall says, when deflationists talk about truth's logicality, viz. truth's logical role, they suggest that 'true' allows generalizations, etc. But the truth-operator doesn't play that role. So, the question is whether Beall's account of the logicality of truth via the intersubstitutivity of 'it is true that' and 'is true' captures the relevant sense in which 'true' is logical.

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[15] At this point, one might wonder whether Beall needs the detour via the truth-operator to be claiming that 'T <A>' and 'A' are intersubstitutable in all non-intensional contexts. As seen, he wants to explain in which sense truth is an emergent logical property, and that seems to be a worthwhile project. But that alone doesn't seem to justify the detour. The detour might actually seem artificial in order for his view of truth as a logical property to get off the ground, and in fact it might be uncongenial to deflationism just because there is a simpler view, the one that doesn't require the detour via the truth-operator. In the case of Minimalism, we don't have the detour; 'T<p>' and 'p' are simply equivalent given Horwich's equivalence schema '<p> is true iff p'. When asked about this via email, Beall responded that the 'transparency rule for the truth-predicate can be given using logic's truth connective or without. It's all equivalent.' And that in the context of his 2021-paper, 'the transparency rule is an abstraction of the logical equivalence governing truth — ditto falsity — connectives.' Note that this confirms that he *agrees* that there is no need to do the detour via the truth-operator even if it can be done.

Beall could respond that since his way of understanding 'logicality' is the more natural way, deflationists are wrong to think that it's truth's generalizing role that makes truth a logical property. But as we have just seen, he *does* acknowledge that there is a big creative difference between 'it is true that' and 'is true'. The truth-operator takes sentences to create new sentences, while the truth-predicate takes names of sentences to create new sentences. Beall agrees that there is a grammatical difference here, which explains why the truth-operator is redundant, while the truth-predicate, allowing generalizations, among other things, is not. And even if 'is true' is the property correlate of the truth-operator, the grammatical difference is not a problem for the transparency theorist, says Beall. He says (373):

> That logic's truth operator is redundant in all true (and complete-as-possible) theories, while the corresponding truth property (viz., transparent truth) is not redundant in all such theories, is not a problem for the running account of (transparent) truth's logicality; it's a feature of the work that properties (and the predicates used to express them) can do over operators.

First, as pointed out by an anonymous reviewer, it doesn't seem right that there is no issue here with the transparency account of truth's logicality and the distinction drawn between predicate and operator given that there is no such distinction between predicate and operator in the case of conjunction. As the reviewer put it:

> Beall is telling us that one thing is the operator and another is the function that the operator plays. [But] how is it that the distinction function-operator does not work in case of conjunction?

Beall does seem to owe us an answer here. Moreover, one might wonder whether the distinction Beall draws in the case of truth is helpful at all. Even if the corresponding truth-property is not redundant and even if there is a creative difference between the operator and the predicate, Beall's claim is *not* that truth is something other than a logical property, given that it is an emergent logical property. Given Beall's commitment to a logical truth property[16], our prediction is that the transparency theory of truth can't account for truth dependence. And this is what I am going to show now.

3. Why Transparent Truth Fails to Account for Truth Dependence

In the subsequent sections, I will first explain why the transparent theorist must reject the general slogan that truth depends on reality (see 3.1.), and then investigate whether she can still account for 'because'-claims involving 'true' (see 3.2.). Note that the transparency theorist's rejection of truth dependence as a slogan doesn't yet suggest that the transparency theorist has no ways or no duty to explain why '<p> is true because p' is acceptable, but 'p because <p> is true' is not. Given that these schemas involve truth, the transparency theorist will have to say something about them. Here is how I will proceed

[16] As pointed out by an anonymous reviewer, there is a sense in which Beall is a pluralist about truth and thus his views are *not* committed to a logical truth property. For Beall (e.g., 2013), truth as a *logical property* is transparent, but that doesn't mean that there aren't other conceptions of truth, according to which truth is not transparent. My response to this sort of pluralism is as follows: Beall has argued in various books and papers for truth as a logical property, and it is the logical view that is controversial from a dependence point of view, so it's interesting to see how the logical view can make sense of dependence. If we already have a notion of truth that is not purely logical, then it is to be expected that it will be able to deal with truth dependence. In other words, it is the logical notion that needs to be saved/justified, not the non-logical notion. So, it would be a less interesting paper if it were focused on the non-logical notion. Secondly, the problem with pluralism is that it is an easy way out. Whenever one's controversial notion of truth is insufficient to account for all the facts about truth, one can just point to a sort of pluralism. While this move is handy, it seems *ad-hoc* to say the least.

in this second part (so 3.2.): First, I will show that the transparency theorist's suggested attempts to account for 'because'-claims involving truth merely in terms of the *hyperintensionality, the irreflexivity and the asymmetry of 'because'* are futile. The transparency theorist has to accept that she can't account for 'because'-claims involving truth, since the focus on 'because' ignores truth and truth dependence. Second, for the sake of argument, I will also consider the view that the transparency theorist does accept truth dependence, but prefers to formulate truth dependence directly in terms of an acceptable 'because'-claim involving truth, in order to provide a deflationist account of truth dependence. However, I will argue that acceptable 'because'-claims involving truth pose a challenge to the transparency theorist *either way*. The transparency theorist doesn't have the resources *either* to defend acceptable 'because'-claims involving truth as a way of formulating truth dependence *or* to explain the data that acceptable 'because'-claims involving truth provide.

3.1. Regarding the Slogan 'Truth Depends on Reality'

What could the transparency theorist say about truth dependence given her truth theoretical commitments to a logical truth property explicated above? At first glance, she could say the following:

> Truth dependence would require a substantive property of truth that can depend on reality, but transparent truth is not such a property, it is a logical property, so as far as *transparent truth* is concerned, there is no truth dependence – the alleged dependence relation is missing a *relatum*.

The problem with this view is that it is very unsatisfying. As we have seen earlier, it should be in the interest of an adequate theory of truth to account for truth dependence. But if, according to the transparent theorist, transparent truth is not 'metaphysically interesting' (Beall, 374), and 'true' only expresses an emergent logical property, then it is difficult to believe that they would have anything interesting to say about truth dependence. As a result, the transparency theory fails to account for truth dependence.

One reason for failing is that the transparency theorist works with a false dichotomy. That is, she is ignoring a third approach – a *non-transparency-theorist* but *deflationist* approach to truth dependence. It's not an 'either-or' – *either* truth is a substantive property that can stand in the dependence relation, *or* truth is transparent and there is no such relation. As many have argued in the Minimalism and truth dependence literature (e.g., Horwich 2005, 2006, Thomas 2011, Dodd 2018), truth can be an insubstantive *and* stand in the dependence relation – in a suitably deflated way.[17]

In fact, Horwich tries to account for truth dependence via the Minimalist schema '<p> is true iff p'. On Horwich's account, we *deduce* an explanatory asymmetry. There are two steps: A *deductive-nomological* step and a *logico-deductive* step. The first step claims an explanatory direction from the laws of nature and the initial conditions of the universe to snow's being white. Then, once we have deduced 'snow is white' in a deductive-nomological step, the second step involves the Minimalist theory to deduce that <snow

[17] As we have seen earlier, Horwich (1998, 104) emphasizes that Minimalism 'acknowledges that statements owe their truth to the nature of reality' and 'that it is indeed undeniable that whenever a proposition or an utterance is true, it is true *because* something in the world is a certain way — something typically external to the proposition or utterance'.

is white> is true. And that's all there is to an account of truth dependence, according to Horwich. In particular, Horwich says (1998: 105, numbering omitted):

> In mapping out the relations of explanatory dependence between phenomena, we naturally and properly grant ultimate explanatory priority to such things as the basic laws of nature and the initial conditions of the universe. From these facts we attempt to deduce, and thereby explain, why, for example
>
> Snow is white.
>
> And only then, invoking the minimal theory, do we deduce, and thereby explain, why
>
> <Snow is white> is true.

So, Horwich thinks that once we have explained why snow is white, using his Minimalist schema, we can go on to deduce '<snow is white> is true' to obtain truth dependence.

There are obvious issues for this account such as not being able to eliminate the symmetry of the Minimalist schema via deduction (see, e.g., Wright 1992, Rodriguez-Pereyra, Liggins 2016), but the presentation of the account itself suffices to show that, according to Horwich, truth can be insubstantive and still depend on reality. So, for Horwich, truth dependence does not require a substantive truth property. It only requires truth to be metaphysically interesting in a suitably deflationist sense.

Now, if transparent truth is not a metaphysically interesting property in any sense as per Beall's transparency theory, then it's not clear how transparency theory can account for truth dependence. But maybe this is fine, since there may be alternative ways of accounting for acceptable 'because'-clauses involving truth without having to accept the metaphysical slogan that truth depends on reality. Accounting for the *data* is one thing, accounting for substantial metaphysical claims is another.

3.2. Regarding 'Because'-Claims

Rejecting truth dependence in broad terms involving the metaphysical slogan 'truth depends on reality' doesn't suggest that the transparency theory could not and should not engage with 'because'-claims involving 'true'. After all, if transparency theory is an adequate theory of truth, it should be able to account for *all* uses of 'true'. Therefore, consider the following example:

'Tasmania exists' is true because Tasmania exists.[18]

Can the transparency theorist adequately account for such 'because'-claims involving 'true'? One possible consideration is that, given that 'because' is usually seen as introducing (hyper)intensional contexts, the transparency theorist must say whether she agrees that 'A' and '<A> is true' cannot be intersubstituted *salva veritate* in 'because'-contexts. In particular, one might wonder how a transparency theorist would treat the following *even if she rejects truth dependence more generally*:

(A) Tasmania exists because Tasmania exists.

(B) 'Tasmania exists' is true because Tasmania exists.

It seems that even if rejecting the slogan that truth depends on reality, a transparency theorist still has to say something about the data, given that 'true' figures in the sentence (B). And in this respect, we might distinguish between *existing, less radical versions of transparency theory* which say that 'A' and '<A> is true' are intersubstitutable in all non-intensional contexts from *non-existing radical versions* which do not even contain an

[18] 'Tasmania exists' is an example discussed by Asay (e.g., 2023).

intensionality clause.[19] Such a transparency theorist ignoring the intensionality of 'because' would say that there is a mutual entailment between (A) and (B) because of the transparency of truth, and that the two sentences say the same.[20] So, there is no sense in which (B) is fine, but (A) isn't. (A) is bad because it's not a good explanation. It's a bad explanation. But if (A) is bad, then also is (B). In this way, the radical transparency theorist could save (or at least try to save) her transparency view of truth in virtue of denying that there is any significant difference between (A) and (B), which needs explaining.

She might even go a step further and claim that just because 'because' is irreflexive we can explain why we have to accept that (A) and (B) are equally bad.[21] Since (A) and (B) say the same thing, and since we accept the *irreflexivity* of 'because', we have to reject (B) when we reject (A). And while this step is open to the radical transparency theorist to defend her theory, it seems somehow unsatisfying to say that the irreflexivity of 'because' implies contradicting things. From a *non*-transparency-theorist standpoint, it seems that the irreflexivity of 'because' implies that if (A) is bad, then (B) *isn't*. But now presupposing

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[19] As far as I know, only *less radical versions* have actually been defended. Beall talks about intersubstitutivity in *non-intensional* contexts in various papers/books (see, e.g., Beall 2021, 367), and Field talks about cognitive equivalence (see, e.g., Field 1994, 250).

[20] For the radical transparency theory, it would obviously be the transparency rule ('T<A>' and 'A' are intersubstitutable in *all contexts*) that suggests that the two sides say the same, while for, e.g., Zalta (2014), it would be (the propositional version of) Tarski's T-schema that suggests that. That's because, according, to Zalta, the T-schema is a tautology. See more on this in his 2014-paper.

[21] Indeed, according to some philosophers, 'because' is irreflexive and asymmetric. According to Schnieder (2010), we can define 'because''s irreflexivity as follows:

$$\text{'}\rhd\text{' is irreflexive} \leftrightarrow \text{df. } \forall p \ \neg (p \rhd p).$$

In turn, the asymmetry of 'because' can be defined as follows:

$$\text{'}\rhd\text{' is asymmetric} \leftrightarrow \text{df. } \forall p \ \forall q \ (p \rhd q) \rightarrow \neg (q \rhd p).$$

transparency theory we get the contradicting result that the irreflexivity of 'because' implies that it is not true that (A) is bad, while (B) is not. Both are equally bad, since they say the same. And this seems counterintuitive. It seems that we do not want the irreflexivity of 'because' to imply that if (A) is bad, so is (B).

Now, the *less radical transparency theorist* could take a different approach. She could accept that (A)'s being bad does not suggest that (B) is bad, and say that the *hyperintensionality* of 'because' can make sense of this.[22] If 'because' gives rise to hyperintensional contexts, then when we replace '<Tasmania exists> is true' in (B) by 'Tasmania exists' as in (A), we don't preserve truth-value. And, actually, her view is consistent with this, given that her view is not the radical view of transparency, but the view that 'A' and '<A> is true' are only intersubstitutable in all *non-intensional* contexts. So, given that her view is not committed to the substitution of 'A' and '<A> is true' in 'because'-contexts (which are (hyper)intensional contexts)[23], there is no issue for her

[22] This has indeed been suggested by Beall in an email exchange in the context of arguing whether or not transparent truth has to account for truth dependence. At a certain point Beall said that

> DEP [truth dependence] may well be true (transparently so, so to speak!) but its truth has nothing to do with truth; it has only to do with the intensionality (or general demands) of the 'because' notion. This strikes me as the obvious thing that at least transparency theorists will say, and I don't see why this isn't also what any so-called deflationist about truth will say.

While we do not need to agree with Beall that *every deflationist* would say truth dependence has nothing to do with truth, as we have seen through our discussion of Horwich, we can note that moving to (hyper)intensionality is what Beall himself takes to be relevant in the context of truth dependence. Thus, on behalf of the transparency theorist, I will investigate (hyper)intensionality as a way of accounting for 'because'-claims involving truth *without her having to accept the metaphysical slogan that truth depends on reality.* Then, in the context of the asymmetry of 'because', I will briefly investigate acceptable 'because'-claims involving truth as an *indirect way of accounting for truth dependence* instead of assuming that truth dependence is not really about truth. I could have also considered this in the context of the hyperintensionality of 'because', but either way, the criticism will be the same: transparency theory fails.

[23] There is nothing in the less radical transparency theory that suggests that they would deny that 'because' gives rise to (hyper-)intensional contexts. So based on this, it seems fair to think that they would want to exploit the idea that, while 'true' is transparent, the reason why (B) is acceptable while (A) is not is *at least partially* owed to the fact that 'because' gives rises to (hyper-)intensional contexts.

view. She can explain the difference between (A) and (B) without compromising her theory of truth.

In response, one might object that (a) hyperintensionality does not explain *anything*, and (b) it's not even characteristic of truth.[24] So, whether or not we have sentences involving truth, the symptom will show up. For example, consider that there are 'because'-claims that do not involve truth at all (for example, 'He is your first cousin because he is a child of a sibling of one of your parents'), or consider sentences that only differ with respect to referring terms. Take, for example, the two sentences 'Lois Lane believes that Clark Kent can fly' and 'Lois Lane believes that Superman can fly'. Substituting 'Clark Kent' for 'Superman' in the latter sentence risks a change in truth value, given that Lois Lane doesn't know that Clark Kent is Superman. But the issue here has obviously *nothing* to do with explaining the phenomenon of truth dependence. So, it's not clear how hyperintensionality serves the transparency theorist to explain anything. After all, if hyperintensionality explains anything, it would just be one of many possible explanations. At least, in the case of belief contexts, one 'explanation' of the issue of risking a change in truth value when intersubstituting co-referring terms within belief contexts is the hyperintensionality of belief, whereas another is Frege's sense/reference distinction. So, likewise, in the case of 'because'-claims involving 'true', it won't be good enough to appeal to the hyperintensionality of 'because' to account for 'because'-claims involving 'true'. We will also need to say something about the role of 'true'.

[24] Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for suggesting to put the issue this way.

Also, even if we were granting that accounting for the features of 'because' is good enough to explain the data involving truth, notice that the hyperintensionality of 'because' certainly won't explain the *asymmetry* of 'because'. To see this, consider (B) together with (C):

(B) 'Tasmania exists' is true because Tasmania exists.

(C) Tasmania exists because 'Tasmania exists' is true.

Here, hyperintensionality doesn't even seem to come into the picture, since, usually, when philosophers talk about the (hyper)intensionality of 'because', what they have in mind is that '<Tasmania exists> is true' and 'Tasmania exists' cannot be intersubstituted *in front* of 'because', so that's the case with (A) vs. (B).[25] So we can't get to (B) from (A) (or from (B) to (A)) without risking a change in truth-value. The (hyper)intensionality of 'because' is not meant to also account for the difference between (B) and (C), since the difference between the two is not just a matter of a simple intersubstitution of 'Tasmania exists' and '<Tasmania exists> is true' in front of 'because'.

But one might disagree as follows: Assume one could get from (B) to (C) by a couple of substitutions: from (B) to (A) by making the substitution in front of 'because'

[25] According to Schnieder, 'because' creates hyperintensional contexts since there are sentences that do have the same truth-value in every possible world, so they're *intensionally equivalent* sentences, but they cannot be substituted *salva veritate* in 'because'-contexts. To illustrate the hyperintensionality of 'because' Schnieder gives the following two examples:

(3) *That snow is white* is true because snow is white.
(4) Snow is white because snow is white.

Schnieder emphasizes that the sentences 'snow is white' and '*that snow is white* is true' are intensionally equivalent, but while (3) is acceptable, (4) is not. So, we cannot substitute 'snow is white' for 'that snow is white is true' in front of 'because'.

and then from (A) to (C) by making the substitution after 'because'. But then using the hyperintensionality of 'because' the transparency theorist could try to explain (where 'explain' is understood in a loose way) why (B) is acceptable but (C) is not. Whether philosophers usually discuss or have in mind substitutions in front of 'because' when they discuss the hyperintensionality of 'because' is irrelevant.

Even if this were the case, and even if the move above would be a way for the transparent theorist to also 'explain' (in a loose sense) why (B) is acceptable but (C) is not, notice that doing so would not necessarily amount to explaining the *asymmetric character* of 'because'. This can be shown by an analogy: When we invoke the notion of hyperintensionality to 'explain' why we can't intersubstitute co-referring names in belief contexts without a change in truth-value, we're not thereby making any claims about any sort of asymmetry whatsoever. Similarly, if the less radical transparency theorist can 'explain' (in a loose sense) why (B) is acceptable but (C) is not via the notion of hyperintensionality, it doesn't follow that she thereby explained the *asymmetry* of 'because'.

Moving forward, suppose for the sake of argument that the less radical transparency theorist actually does accept that truth depends on reality instead of simply accepting a difference between (B) and (C). Also suppose that she still tries to leave truth out of the picture in order to provide a deflationist account of truth dependence. Then, she might say that there are ways of accommodating truth dependence that *do not fall out* of her less radical transparency theory, but are compatible with it. Independently of transparency theory and hyperintensionality, she could say that 'because' is indeed

asymmetric, and taking that into account is a straightforward way of explaining truth dependence. So, while this asymmetry move is not inherent to the less radical transparency theory, it is a way of avoiding the verdict of being an incorrect theory of truth, says the transparency theorist.

But this won't work. Notice that the asymmetry of 'because' does not suggest the relevant ordering with respect to truth dependence, namely, (truth, world) instead of (world, truth). So, the transparency theorist still has to explain why it's the former that is correct, and not the latter. And she doesn't seem to have the resources to do so.

Regardless of what our positive account of the asymmetry of 'because' looks like (see more on this, e.g., Schnieder 2010), truth dependence itself is asymmetric, and so a transparency theorist who *accepts* that (B) is good, while (C) is not has a serious problem. That is, she can't just say that the truth case just falls under a general dependence issue provided by 'because'-claims. That is, she can't simply deny any difference between a 'because'-claims like '<the rose is red> is true because the rose is red', and 'He is your first cousin because he is a child of a sibling of one of your parents'. Indeed, talk of a metaphysical dependence relation between truth and the world is one thing; talk of 'because' as having certain characteristic features that allow us to *express* truth dependence is another. As we know from the truthmaking literature, truth dependence can be accounted for by 'makes true' talk. For example, the idea that <*snow is white*> *is true because snow is white* can simply be put in terms of a truthmaking claim, i.e., <snow is white> is *made true* by snow's being white. Therefore, a transparency theorist can't just

rely on 'because' to explain, in their opinion, the 'mistaken view' that truth depends on reality. Put differently, they can't say the following:

> Since truth dependence must be stated in terms of 'because'[26], I can tell a story about why (B) is fine, but (C) isn't. My story is that the difference turns on 'because' and not on truth, which is transparent.

As we have seen, the transparency theorist can't plausibly retreat to special features of 'because', and so she has to take on the 'truth depends on reality' slogan, and then has to deny the claim outright. To truly explain truth dependence, while still being a deflationist, a transparency theorist would have to give up transparency theory, and adopt the view that truth is a metaphysically interesting property in the sense that truth can depend on reality while being insubstantive. This is the view that Horwich (e.g., 1998, 2008, 2009) holds. But as we have seen, the transparency theorist doesn't agree with the idea that truth is the kind of property that can depend on reality in any sense, and as we have also seen, even if she did, she doesn't have the means of accommodating the metaphysical claim, so what's left for her is to suggest that when we say that truth depends on reality, we have in mind a *substantive* truth property, and since she doesn't think that truth is substantive, truth dependence is an empty claim. At the end of the day, the only option for the transparency theorist is to say that there is no such thing as truth dependence. And this is exactly why transparent truth ultimately fails to be an adequate theory of truth *granting that accounting for truth dependence is an adequacy condition*.

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[26] See footnote 22 for justification of why the transparency theorist would say that truth dependence *must be* stated in terms of 'because'. As we have seen in that footnote, Beall claims that truth dependence has nothing to do with truth but only with 'because'.

Conclusion

This paper provided the first investigation into a transparency theorist account of truth dependence, and showed why the theory ultimately fails to account for truth dependence. On the assumption that accounting for truth dependence is an adequacy condition on any theory of truth, transparent theorists better revise their theory to accommodate it or otherwise we must reject the theory as an adequate theory of truth.

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