The Bases of Truths

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Abstract. This paper concerns a distinction between circumstantial truths that hold because of the circumstances and acircumstantial truths that hold regardless of, or transcend, the circumstances. Previous discussions of the distinction tended to focus on its applications, such as to modality, logical truth, and essence. This paper focuses on developing the distinction largely, but not entirely, in abstraction from its potential applications. As such, the paper's main contribution is to further clarify the distinction itself. An indirect contribution is to help guide its future applications.

1 Overview

It is true that Elon tweets. This truth is based in the circumstances of Elon's tweeting. It is true that 2 is prime. This truth is not based in any circumstances, although it is true in them all. So there appears to be a *"basal"* distinction between truths based in the circumstances and truths that hold regardless of, or transcend, the circumstances.

Fine introduced the basal distinction (but not by that name) in a discussion of a puzzle of modality (Fine 2005). How can Elon be a human but not exist, given that he is necessarily a human and possibly nonexistent? Fine's solution relied on the basal distinction. Whereas Elon's existence depends on the circumstances, his being a human does not. This reveals a subtle equivocation in the modalities. The modality of Elon's possible nonexistence is based in the circumstances, whereas the modality of his necessarily being a human transcends them. Recognizing this equivocation, argued Fine, helps solve the modal puzzle.

The basal distinction has since been further developed. I introduced a distinction between *proximal* and *distal* basal status

(Raven 2020a,2022). The rough idea may be illustrated by distinguishing the *satisfaction* of a predicate from an *account* of its satisfaction. For example, 2 satisfies 'is prime'. This is a matter of pure math, not the circumstances. But an *account* of the predicate's satisfaction may involve the circumstances. To illustrate, consider a constructivist who says the activities of mathematicians determine mathematical truth. If so, then the truth that 2 is prime may be *distally* based in the circumstances even while it is not *proximally* based in them.

Some applications of the proximal/distal distinction have already been charted. One application is to logical truth. Is the truth of 'Elon tweets or not' based in the circumstances of his tweeting or not? Or does it transcend the circumstances for it not mattering which? Russell suggested transcendence when he wrote that the logician "must not condescend to derive arguments from the things he sees about him" (1919: 192). Wittgenstein suggested worldliness when, musing over how logic applies to the world, he asked, "if there would be a logic even if there were no world, how then could there be a logic given that there is a world?" (1921: 5.5521). But the proximal/distal distinction offers a rapprochement by allowing logical truths to be proximally but not distally based in the circumstances (Raven 2020a).

Another application is to essence. Do essences transcend the circumstances or are they immanent in them? Platonists answer that essentialist truths transcend the circumstances. Aristotelians deny this. Both views are alluring in the case of the essences of "constructed" items, such as those from social reality. But, again, the proximal/distal distinction offers a rapprochement by allowing essentialist truths to proximally transcend the circumstances while being distally based in them (Raven 2022).

These applications suggest a real distinction at work. The discussions by Fine and myself tend to postulate the basal distinction and focus on its application to a given topic. My focus here, however, will be on the basal distinction largely, but not entirely, in abstraction from its potential applications. Of course, just as exploring naïve set theory revealed its incoherence, our exploration may also uncover incoherence. If so, we may need to reconceive the basal distinction

just as the paradoxes forced us to reconceive set theory. The paper may thus be regarded either as categorically refining the basal distinction, or as conditionally refining it if it is coherent. Either way, my discussion substantially extends those by Fine and myself: some points they brought up in passing are pursued here, some loose ends are tied up, and some new points are made. The result is not a finished theory, but groundwork needed for it. As such, the paper's main contribution is to further clarify the basal distinction itself. An indirect contribution is to help guide its future applications.

The paper begins by elaborating the basal distinction (§2). I defend its legitimacy by arguing against attempts to assimilate it to other distinctions (§3). Then I clarify and develop the *proximal* (§4) and *distal* (§5) basal notions. I conclude with some reflections (§6).

2 Basal status

Just as modality concerns a truth's mode, *basality* concerns a truth's *basis*. Whereas the contrast in modal status is between necessity and contingency, the contrast in *basal status* is between a truth's being based in the circumstances, or not.

Start with the more familiar case of truths that are based in the circumstances. Some such truths may hold because of the physical circumstances, such as 'It's raining' or 'This rod is one meter' or:

ET Elon tweets.

Perhaps others may be nonphysical, as with Descartes's take on 'I am, I exist', or may be at least neutral on the issue, as in:

EE Elon exists.

What unites these examples is that they are *circumstantial* truths that hold *because* of the circumstances.

But not all truths appear to be based in the circumstances. To illustrate, some have thought that there are truths of *essence*, whether about natural kinds as in 'Water is H_2O' or substance sortals as in:

EH Elon is a human.

As Fine puts it (2005: 338-39):[1]

> …[Elon's] being a [hu]man is an unworldly matter. It is something that holds 'off-stage', regardless of how things turn out; and so, in particular, it is something that holds regardless of whether or not he exists. Thus it is not that he is possibly a [hu]man *despite* his not existing. His existence or non-existence is simply irrelevant to his possible status as a [hu]man; and all that the possibility of his being a [hu]man and not existing comes down to is the genuine possibility of his not existing and the unworldly, or circumstance-indifferent, fact that he is a [hu]man.

Further examples may include *mathematical* truths, such as '2 is prime', and *logical* truths, such as 'Elon tweets or not' and:

EI Elon is self-identical.

Acircumstantial truths, such as these, transcend the circumstances. They hold *regardless* of the circumstances, not because of them.

Falsity can also be either circumstantial or acircumstantial. If a statement's *truth* is based in the circumstances, then their absence (and perhaps also the presence of circumstances incompatible with its truth) would make it *false* (or *not true*). While Elon has children, his children do not (yet) have children. So we have the circumstantial falsehood:

EG Elon is a grandparent.

Similarly, if a statement's *truth* is not based in the circumstances, then no circumstances would make it *false* (or *not true*). And so there may also be acircumstantial falsehoods, such as:

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[1] My discussion owes much Fine (2005), but with some departures. For one, I emphasize Fine's intended substance sortal reading of 'is a man' and avoid its gendered connotations by using 'is a human' (which must not be read as the worldly predicate 'is an existent human', cf. Fine (2005: 337) and Wetzel (2000)). I also do not engage with Fine discussions of three grades of necessity.

EC Elon is Charles III.

Some issues may arise for circumstantial or acircumstantial falsehoods that do not arise for circumstantial or acircumstantial truths. But little generality is lost, and simplicity is gained, by focusing just on truths.

Some may resist taking EH and EI to hold regardless of the circumstances. They may assume that predicates like 'is a human' and 'is self-identical' are *existence-entailing*. It is, presumably, a circumstantial matter whether Elon exists. If he does not, then EH and EI won't be examples of acircumstantial truths because they won't even be true. But if Elon exists, then its being a circumstantial matter prevents EH and EI from being acircumstantial truths.

One reply is to challenge the assumption that the relevant predicates are existence-entailing. Another reply accepts that they are existence-entailing but claims that, in cases like EH and EI, the sense of existence is unworldly or transcendent (Fine 2005: §10). Each reply involves a thicket of issues beyond our present concerns. So it would be premature to abandon examples like EH and EI. But, in a conciliatory spirit, it is worth emphasizing that other examples evade these issues:

ZS 0 is a member of {0}.
ZI 0=0.

Let us assume that 0 and {0} are necessary existents. There is then no question of their nonexistence preventing them from satisfying the relevant predicates. Moreover, it is not a circumstantial matter whether 0 or {0} exist. So its being true that 0 and {0} exist will not prevent ZS or ZI from being acircumstantial truths. Those who find EH and EI uncongenial may focus just on ZS and ZI, although I will not restrict my focus.

It would have been ideal to have a single example to serve as the sustained focal point of the discussion. But, as the preceding considerations suggest, it is hard to find an uncontroversial example. That is why I have chosen a range. None is a hill on which the basal

distinction should die. Rather, they are meant to work together to point to what the basal distinction is.

The basal distinction would be trivial if every statement *must* be regarded as circumstantial. One route to this conclusion relies on truth's dependence on meaning. A statement's meaning helps fix its truth-conditional *content*. So a statement's truth indirectly depends on its meaning. Having the meaning it has, though, is a circumstantial matter. For example, it may depend on the circumstances of its use. But then the truth of any statement will depend on the linguistic circumstances of its meaning what it does.

This route may be blocked by taking a statement's basal status to concern *what* it expresses rather than *how* it is expressed. It may then be granted that it is a circumstantial matter how a statement comes to express the truth-conditional content that it expresses. But, in general, this will not be relevant to whether the truth-conditional content expressed is itself circumstantial.

This suggests that a statement's basal status derives from the basal status of its truth-conditional content. But refocusing on these contents would risk engaging with controversies over the nature of propositions and the like. These controversies, however, are not directly relevant to my immediate purposes. So I will postpone engaging with them and continue focusing on statements.

Another route to the conclusion that every statement must be regarded as circumstantial relies on expanding our conception of the circumstances. For example, suppose they include self-identities. Then even ZI would be circumstantial for turning on 0's self-identity. Further expansion may then lead to a "disquotational" view on which *every* statement S's truth turns on the circumstances of S.

This route may be blocked by circumscribing our conception of the circumstances. This does not require denying that there is an expansive conception of the circumstances. It is rather to recognize that there is *also* a conception that is not expansive. Following Fine, we may label the circumstances, so conceived, *worldly*. Because our focus will only be on worldly circumstances, we may use 'circumstances' and 'worldly circumstances' interchangeably.

We may clarify our circumscribed conception of the circumstances with an analogy between *temporal* and *atemporal* truths (Fine 2005). A *temporal* truth is true at *a time* (the limiting case is a *sempiternal* truth true at *all* times). By contrast, an *atemporal,* or *eternal*, truth is true *regardless* of the time. The contrast emerges in an asymmetry in temporal predication. Whether Elon is a parent or exists depends on the time. We say whether he was by temporalizing the predication:

WEP Elon was a parent.
WEE Elon existed.

The result is felicitous. But temporalizing can be infelicitous, as in:

WEH # Elon was a human.
WEI # Elon was self-identical.

We may grant that Elon was a human, and self-identical, last night. But the time is irrelevant. Temporalizing his being a human, or self-identity, is infelicitous *for* taking time to be relevant when it is not.

These considerations may seem to rely on a double-standard. We accept that Elon was, is, or will be a parent. Why not also accept that 0 was, is, or will be a member of {0}? But if we do, it seems we cannot consistently regard Elon's parental status as temporal while regarding the membership of {0} as atemporal.

The appearance of this double-standard, however, stems from a confusion. Accepting the atemporality of {0}'s membership does *not* require *refusing* to recognize *some* sense in which 0 was, is, or will be a member of {0}. Rather, it requires *allowing* for a sense in which time is irrelevant. Both senses may be recognized. By contrast, Elon's parental status can *only* correctly be regarded as a temporal matter. There is *no* sense in which time is irrelevant. The infelicity in WEH, WEI, and the like is *not* the temporalization itself but rather its false insinuation that time matters.

Some may leap for a *pragmatic* explanation of the infelicity. To illustrate, one may think that any speaker uttering WEI in a normal context would conversationally implicate that Elon might no longer be self-identical. Given that it is necessary that Elon is self-identical,

the implicature cannot be true. It might be thought, then, that WEI's infelicity has been pragmatically explained.

But the search for a pragmatic explanation is both artificial and unsatisfying. A hallmark of a conversational implicature is its *cancellability* (Grice 1989). The preceding implicature may be cancelled by continuing the utterance, "…not only was Elon self-identical, he is and will be". Let us replace WEI with EEI:

EEI # Elon was, is, and will be self-identical.

This too is infelicitous. But a speaker's utterance of EEI cannot generate the conversational implicature on which WEI's infelicity was blamed. Nor is it clear what other implicature might be blamed. I do not wish to deny that a resourceful philosopher may eventually conjure an implicature to blame. My point is rather that a plausible *non-pragmatic* explanation of EEI's infelicity is already closer to hand. It is that time is irrelevant to EEI's truth. Elon's self-identity holds regardless of the time, not because of it.

Generalizing the contrast between temporal and atemporal truths yields the intended contrast between *worldliness* and *unworldliness*. Instead of contrasting truths holding because or regardless of just the *temporal* circumstances, we contrast truths holding because or regardless of *any* circumstances of place, time, or how a world might turn out. Elon's being a parent turns on such worldly circumstances. We must, so to speak, consult the time or the world to determine this. But neither the time nor the world must be consulted to determine his self-identity. Granted, if we consult any time or any world, we find Elon to be self-identical. But neither the time nor the world strictly enters into it. Elon's self-identity transcends such circumstances. Circumstantial truths hold *because of* such worldly circumstances whereas acircumstantial truths hold *regardless* of them. Accordingly, circumstantial truths are *worldly* truths whereas acircumstantial truths are *unworldly* truths.

Some may still find it elusive how a statement's truth could hold regardless of the circumstances, given the appearance that any statement *may* be regarded as circumstantial. The appearance might be implicit in familiar approaches to semantics. Recall how truth is

evaluated. First, an interpretation assigns semantic values to predicates and names. It might, for example, assign the set of parents to 'is a parent' and Elon to 'Elon'. Atomic statements may then be evaluated relative to a time or a world. Thus, 'Elon is a parent' is true when evaluated relative to actuality today, but false when evaluated relative to actuality a week after Elon's birth. The truth-values of complex statements may also be evaluated relative to a time or a world. In general, every statement's truth-value will depend on the circumstances relative to which it is evaluated. But then it appears as if any truth *may* be regarded as circumstantial. If so, how could any be regarded as acircumstantial?

But even if we *may* evaluate a statement relative to the circumstances, what matters for the basal distinction is whether we *must*. To illustrate, we may evaluate '0=0' relative to place, time, or world. But these spatial, temporal, or worldly circumstances do not help determine whether '0=0' is true. This suggests that we must distinguish *evaluation* relative to the circumstances from *determination* by the circumstances. The basal distinction concerns the latter. We cannot always anticipate just which, if any, circumstances will be relevant to a statement. So it is handy that our semantics is flexible enough to allow for evaluation relative to whatever may sensibly be taken to be circumstantial. But this must not be confused with a statement's truth being determined by the circumstances relative to which it is evaluated.

3 Assimilation

Our glosses of basal notions recall ideas from the history of philosophy. Hume could have said that worldliness concerns *matters of fact*, not relations of ideas. Positivists could have said that worldliness concerns *possible courses of experience*, not the meanings of words. Modal metaphysicians could have said that worldliness concerns *contingent goings-on*, not necessities. I do not wish to suggest the anachronism of reading basality in these ideas. But its unfamiliarity may tempt one to define, reduce, or "assimilate" it to

analyticity, *apriority*, or *necessity* (or to a combination of these).[2] I will argue against these attempts. My aim is not to refute the possibility of assimilation but rather to undercut any presumed *demand* for it. This will help confirm basality's *bona fide* legitimacy.

The semantic assimilation equates unworldliness with *analyticity*. Analyticity (especially what Boghossian (1996) calls "metaphysical analyticity") is fraught. But to assess the assimilation, we may just assume its coherence. Following Quine (1980), the analytic/synthetic distinction relies on factoring a statement's truth into a linguistic component and a factual component. The linguistic component always contributes because a statement's truth depends partly on what it means. But earlier we screened off this contribution as irrelevant to basal status. So the question is whether the factual component contributes something or nothing. A statement is *synthetic* if the contribution is something but *analytic* if it is nothing. Given that the factual component involves the circumstances, it would seem to follow that analyticity and unworldliness coincide.

Now, I do not wish to deny that there may be *some* sense in which they do coincide. But even if there is, there is *another* sense in which they do not. This is because the question of whether a truth is worldly or unworldly may still arise even granting that it is analytic. To illustrate, consider a paradigmatic analytic truth like '0=0'. This truth is, arguably, unworldly: for it is true without regard to the circumstances. By contrast, consider another paradigmatic analytic truth like 'Elon tweets or not'. This truth is, arguably, worldly: for it is true depending either on the circumstance of Elon's tweeting or on the contrary circumstance that this is not so.[3] With hindsight, earlier discussions of analyticity may have conflated these cases. But our sensitivity to the basal distinction suggests that they differ. If so, analyticity and unworldliness needn't coincide.

Next, the epistemic assimilation equates unworldliness with *apriority.* Unworldly truths are *knowable apriori* whereas worldly

[2] I follow Kripke (1972) in distinguishing these notions.

[3] Arguably because there may *also* be a sense in which 'Elon tweets or not' is acircumstantial. The issue was raised above and is discussed in Raven (2020a).

truths are *knowable aposteriori*. If a truth is knowable independently of worldly circumstances, then it would not seem to be true because of them. Such a truth would seem unworldly.

But apriority crosscuts unworldliness. Some apriori knowable truths, such as '0=0' or '2 is prime', hold *regardless* of the circumstances. They are unworldly. But consider some other knowable apriori truths, such as my Cartesian thought 'I am, I exist', or that 'This rod is one meter' (Kripke 1972). These obtain *because* of the circumstances. They are worldly. So apriority needn't coincide with either worldliness or unworldliness.

Finally, the modal assimilation equates unworldliness with *necessity.* Unworldly truths are *necessary* and worldly truths are *contingent*. A necessary truth may seem not to turn on the circumstances because none can make a possible difference to its truth. That's why a necessary truth may seem unworldly.

But modality also crosscuts unworldliness. Necessities and contingencies alike can obtain *because of* the circumstances. This may be illustrated with the previous example of 'Elon tweets or not'. This is a necessary truth. It is contingent which disjunct is true. But both the disjunction and the disjunct alike are worldly because they turn on the circumstances of Elon's tweeting. So unworldliness needn't coincide with either necessity or contingency.[4]

Even if basality does not assimilate to other notions individually, maybe it assimilates to a combination of them. But this is also doubtful. For example, suppose 'Elon tweets or not' is analytic, apriori, and necessary. Even so, it may be worldly for its dependence on the circumstances of whether or not Elon tweets.

While these considerations do not show that assimilation is impossible, they undercut the *demand* for it. This still allows for

[4] Another approach assimilates the basal distinction to *inner/outer* truth (Adams 1981; Fine 1985; Einheuser 2012). A proposition is an *outer* truth if it represents a world as it is even if it does not exist in that world, whereas an *inner* truth both represents a world as it is and exists in it too. But not all unworldly truths are outer truths. For example, the proposition that 0=0 is an unworldly truth while also being an inner truth because it exists and represents the actual world as it is.

potential connections between the various notions. For one, perhaps unworldliness implies necessity. Others are more controversial. Whether unworldliness implies apriority may turn on the necessary aposteriori. If an essential truth may be discovered empirically (Kripke 1972) and also be unworldly (Fine 2005), then some unworldly truths are necessary aposteriori. And perhaps unworldliness does not imply analyticity. If mathematical truths are synthetic (Kant 1781/1997) and also unworldly, then some unworldly truths are synthetic. In general, we allow a truth's basality to have implications for its semantic, epistemic, or modal statuses. But whatever these may be, they do not get to the heart of the matter.

Even if basality resists assimilation to these notions, it may assimilate to yet others. The most promising are *essence* and *ground*.

It may be tempting to equate unworldliness with *essential truth*. The temptation may derive from our own examples. Elon is neither essentially a tweeter nor essentially existent. So worldly truths like ET and EE are not essentialist truths. By contrast, Elon is essentially a human and is essentially self-identical. So unworldly truths like EH and EI are essentialist truths. Generalizing, unworldly truths are *essential* and worldly truths are *inessential*.

But essentiality does not require unworldliness. To illustrate, consider *temporal objects*.[5] It is essential to any such object that it exists only if it exists at a time. Numbers are not temporal objects. Bridges are. In particular, it is essential to London Bridge that it exists only if it exists at a time. Existing at a time is a worldly matter. So it is a worldly truth that London Bridge exists only if it exists at a time.[6] This is a worldly essential truth.

Another tempting idea is that a truth's basality turns on its *grounds*. Ground is a determinative or explanatory notion.[7] A

[5] See Fine (2005: §§9-10) for related discussion. For some related complexities that arise in the case of social items, see Raven (2022).

[6] This follows from the principle that a complex statement is worldly if it has a worldly constituent (cf. Truth-functional Proximal in section 4.2).

[7] See Raven (2015) for an overview and Raven (2020b) for a comprehensive survey.

grounded statement holds *because* or *in virtue of* the *grounds* grounding it. Ground is *factive*: only truths ground other truths. Some take ground to be a relation between a grounded fact and the facts grounding it. But reifying facts is dispensable if we interpret 'ground' as a sentential connective (like 'because') connecting a sentence stating what is grounded to sentences stating its grounds.

Perhaps the most naïve ground-theoretic characterization of basality is as *ungroundedness*. An *ungrounded* truth has no grounds. It does not hold in virtue of anything, so not because of the circumstances. Perhaps unworldliness just is ungroundedness.

But this proposal has counterexamples. First, ungroundedness is unnecessary for unworldliness. For example, suppose that the self-identities '0=0' and '1=1' are unworldly truths. Their disjunction '0=0 $\vee$ 1=1' is then also unworldly. The disjunction is grounded in its true disjuncts. So the disjunction is grounded but unworldly. Second, ungroundedness is insufficient for unworldliness. For example, it is a worldly matter that a radioactive isotope decays when it does. Suppose that it just decayed when it did, and not in virtue of anything else. Its decaying then is thus ungrounded but worldly.

Another proposal appeals to the somewhat exotic notion of *zero-ground* (Fine 2012; Litland 2017). There are no truths that ground an ungrounded truth. By contrast, a grounded truth is grounded in some plurality of truths. We usually have in mind a non-empty plurality. But we may also allow for the limit case of an empty plurality. A *zero-grounded* truth is grounded in the empty plurality. Perhaps unworldliness just is zero-groundedness.

But this proposal may also have counterexamples. The cases I have in mind engage with issues beyond the scope of this paper. So, they should be regarded as tentative. Even so, they give a sense of the challenges the proposal faces. First, there may be unworldly truths that are not zero-grounded. For example, suppose once again that self-identities are unworldly truths. It is controversial what, if anything, grounds self-identities (Shumener 2020). But suppose they are ungrounded. If so, then '0=0' is an unworldly truth that is not zero-grounded. Second, there may be zero-grounded truths that are worldly. For example, consider a negative existential worldly truth,

such as 'There are no unicorns'. It is controversial what, if anything, grounds negative existential truths. But suppose that they are zero-grounded (Muñoz 2019). If so, then 'There are no unicorns' is a worldly truth that is also zero-grounded.

Yet another proposal appeals to *autonomy*. An *autonomous* statement is inapt for ground. Dasgupta says, "the question as to why those underlying autonomous statements obtain does not even arise, and so there is no further question as to why the world turned out like *this*" (2016: 383). And Sider suggests that "Being inapt for grounding can be thought of as the ground-theoretic version of...unworldliness" (2020: 39).

One problem for this suggestion is that autonomy's coherence is in doubt (Glazier 2017; Raven 2021). Even granting its coherence, it is still inadequate. The counterexample to the naïve proposal's necessity also shows that autonomy is unnecessary for unworldliness. We took '0=0 $\vee$ 1=1' to be unworldly for its unworldly disjuncts. These disjuncts may be autonomous if the question of what grounds a self-identity does not arise. But the question of what grounds their disjunction may still arise.[8] If so, the disjunction is unworldly but not autonomous.[9]

The counterexample does not arise for what we may call *ultimate autonomy*.[10] An *ultimately autonomous* statement is either autonomous or only sits atop chains of ground containing some autonomous statement. Then, even if the unworldly truth '0=0 $\vee$ 1=1' is not autonomous, it may still turn out to be ultimately autonomous.

Ultimate autonomy is defined in terms of, and so no more coherent than, autonomy. And we saw above that its coherence is in doubt. But that aside, we must still distinguish ultimate autonomy from unworldliness. Ultimate autonomy, at its core, is an *existence*

[8] So the case is also a counterexample to a closure principle requiring any complex statement composed of only autonomous statements to be autonomous.

[9] Autonomy and unworldliness also diverge over zero-grounded statements. These are not autonomous because grounded, but are also presumably unworldly.

[10] Thanks to an anonymous referee for suggesting this.

postulate. It requires that every chain of ground descending from a fact contain some fact inapt for ground.[11] Unworldliness, however, makes no such postulation. Even if unworldly truths turn out to be ultimately autonomous, it is a substantive question whether they are. Nothing about their unworldliness prejudges the answer.

The upshot is that ground and basality are not directly related. But they are not fully disconnected either. The issue is complicated by the proximal/distal distinction. Roughly, a statement's *"proximal"* basality does not concern the basality of other statements. So ground is irrelevant to proximal basal status. That is why the preceding proposals failed. But a statement's *"distal"* basality does concern the basality of other statements, namely its grounds. We first turn to clarifying proximal basality (§4) and then to distal basality (§5).

4 Proximal

A statement's *"proximal"* basal status is not determined by the basality of other statements but rather by the basality of its own constituents. So we first focus on the basality of these constituents and the atomic statements they form (§4.1) before turning to the basality of complex statements built from them (§4.2).

4.1 Atomic

An *atomic statement* has no other statements as (proper) constituents. We may also assume it has subject-predicate form. So its *subatomic constituents* are its singular terms and its predicate.[12] How do they compositionally determine an atomic statement's basality?

On the *"constituent approach"*, an atomic statement's basality is determined by its subatomic constituents, which are assumed to

[11] Non-ultimate autonomy is the vacuous case where that fact itself is inapt for ground.

[12] I assume the predicate must be *simple*. This avoids distracting complications that arise if the predicate can be *complex*. They may be postponed for another occasion.

have basal statuses of their own. A natural idea is that the basality of singular terms and predicates derives from the basality of the individuals or properties they refer to. This is suggested by paradigm cases from Fine (2005). Numerals seem unworldly for referring to numbers. Predicates for formal notions, such as 'is self-identical', seem unworldly (as in EI). And substance sortal terms, such as 'is a human', also seem unworldly (as in EH).

A tempting elaboration of this appeals to the *abstract/concrete* distinction: unworldly terms refer to abstracta whereas worldly terms refer to concreta. But the distinction, even setting aside its familiar problems (Rosen 2020), is inadequate for the elaboration. For one illustration, suppose that predicates refer to properties and that properties are abstracta. Then predicates are unworldly. This would imply that ET is unworldly, despite its manifest worldliness. The lesson is that general reference to abstracta does not determine basal status. For another illustration, statements containing singular reference to a concrete item may be worldly or unworldly. For example, given that 'Elon' refers to Elon the concrete man, ET is worldly while EH is unworldly. The lesson is that singular reference to concreta does not determine basal status. Combining the lessons shows that if there is a systematic connection between abstractness and unworldliness, it is not evident what it is.

These issues suggest a more general difficulty. An atomic statement is true just in case its predicate is satisfied by, or *applies* to, the items denoted by its subject terms. Some predicates may apply *uniformly*: their satisfaction is either always worldly or always unworldly. To illustrate, it was implicit above that *all* predicates are uniformly unworldly because they refer to abstracta. But some predicates may apply *differentially*: their satisfaction is sometimes worldly, sometimes unworldly.[13] To illustrate, suppose that a perfect sphere is round and that a cue ball is round. The cue ball is less round than the sphere. The comparability of their round shapes, however, makes it implausible to take 'is round' to equivocate over the properties *geometrically-round* and *materially-round*. Even granting that there are two such properties needn't prevent there also being a

[13] Differential applicability is also briefly discussed by Kuhn (2020: fn. 6).

single predicate 'is round' that applies to both the sphere and the cue ball.[14] Still, they may do so in different ways. For example, a geometric Platonist might take the application of 'is round' to the sphere to be unworldly while taking its application to the cue ball to be worldly. Then the *predicate* 'is round' itself is neither uniformly worldly nor uniformly unworldly because its *applications* are *differentially* worldly or unworldly. Approaches, like the constituent approach, that only consider the basality of the predicate struggle to account for this differential applicability.

Although these considerations are not comprehensive, we may still draw a lesson from them. It is that our approach to proximal status should allow the intelligibility of differential applicability even if the application of most or all predicates is either uniformly worldly or uniformly unworldly.

We allow for differential applicability by taking the basality of an atomic statement to be determined by the basality of the *application* of its predicate.[15] Let $Pt_1,...,t_n$ be an atomic statement composed of an n-place predicate P and n singular terms $t_1,...,t_n$ (for $n > 0$). Suppose P applies to $t_1,...,t_n$ ($t_1,...,t_n$ satisfy P). We now assume that its application is a worldly or an unworldly matter. Continuing the example, the application of 'is round' to the cue ball is worldly whereas the application of it to a perfect sphere is unworldly. In general, an atomic statement is proximally worldly if its predicate's application is worldly, and is otherwise proximally unworldly:[16]

[14] Kuhn (2020: fn. 6) suspects otherwise. But I conjecture that his suspicions derive from his choice of example. His examples are 'four is smaller than five' and 'David is smaller than Goliath'. It is implausible that 'is smaller than' is being used in the same sense in both sentences. But it is less so for 'is round' in my examples.

[15] Figdor (2008) and Bader (2013) draw similar distinctions between a property's being intrinsic/extrinsic vs. an item intrinsically/extrinsically having the property.

[16] These define *proximal* basal status in terms of circumstantial and acircumstantial truth. This is not circular because the latter notions are left undefined.

Atomic Proximal For any atomic statement $A = Pt_1,...,t_n$:

A is *proximally worldly* $=_{def}$ P's application to $t_1,...,t_n$ is worldly.

A is *proximally unworldly* $=_{def}$ A is not proximally worldly.

Proximal status is *proximally* determined because all that matters is the application of a statement's own predicate. We may, if we wish, still characterize the basality of a *predicate* itself in terms of its *applications*.[17] But applications come first in the order of explanation.

4.2 Complex

A *complex* statement is formed by the application of a sentential operator to its constituent statements. How do they compositionally determine a complex statement's basality? Just as we focused on the *application* of a predicate before, here we focus on the *application* of the operator. So our question becomes: How does the *operator's application* contribute to the basality of the complex statement?[18]

There are many kinds of sentential operators, including those forming propositional attitude reports ('x believes that'), modal operators ('$\Box$','$\Diamond$'), and more. It would be ideal to systematically consider a variety of them. But doing so would raise issues taking us too far afield. So I will instead focus on what is perhaps the simplest case: the classical truth-functional operators ($\neg$, $\vee$, $\wedge$, $\rightarrow$, $\leftrightarrow$).

How does a truth-functional operator's application contribute to the basality of the statement containing it? The contribution may or may not be *basal-functional.* This is like the familiar notion of truth-functionality. The truth-value of a complex statement formed by an application of a truth-functional operator is determined by the truth-values of its constituent statements. Analogously, the proximal status of a complex statement formed by the application of a *basal-*

[17] Perhaps the most obvious characterization is that a predicate P is proximally (un)worldly just in case P's applications are uniformly (un)worldly.

[18] This is even more natural if operators are what *third-order* quantifiers range over.

functional operator is determined by the proximal statuses of its constituent statements.

Truth-functional operators seem basal-functional. Were they not, then the application of a truth-functional operator would have to affect the basality of a complex statement even while the basality of its constituents remained the same. That would require the application of the operator itself to be differentially worldly or unworldly. And that is hard to fathom. Let us then assume, if only provisionally, that truth-functional operators are basal-functional.

A *basal-functional statement* is formed by the application of a basal-functional operator to its constituent statements. There is a question of just *how* the basality of such a statement is determined by the basality of its constituents. In particular, will its basal status be settled by the mere presence of a single constituent of that status?

The issue is which basal status is *"dominant"* and which is *"recessive"*.[19] One choice point is whether the dominance or recessiveness of a basal status is absolute or relative. On an absolutist approach, a basal status's dominance or recessiveness is invariant. By contrast, on a relativist approach, a basal status may be dominant relative to some contexts and recessive relative to others. For example, it may be that worldliness is dominant in conjunctions but recessive in disjunctions. Thus, $A \wedge B$ is worldly if A or B is worldly, whereas $A \vee B$ is worldly if A and B are worldly.

The relativist approach must allow truth-functionally equivalent statements containing the same constituents to differ in basal status, assuming a statement and its negation must have the same basal status.[20] For, given worldly W and unworldly U, $W \wedge U$

[19] Fine (2021) uses this "dominant vs. recessive" terminology in another context.

[20] Kuhn (2020) also makes this assumption. The assumption may seem to conflict with Muñoz's (2019) view that negative existentials are zero-grounded. Given that 'There are dogs' is a worldly truth, the assumption entails that its negation 'There are no dogs' is too. But if this negative existential is zero-grounded, then it may seem to be unworldly after all. The conflict may be avoided, however, with the proximal/distal distinction. For we may say that 'There are no dogs' is proximally worldly even if its being zero-grounded makes it distally unworldly.

is worldly while its equivalent $\neg(\neg W \vee \neg U)$ is unworldly. Thus, truth-functional form alone may affect basal status. This is somewhat odd. It also leads to a difficulty. For suppose that both W and U are true, but W is contingent. Then $W \wedge U$ must also be a contingent truth, as must its equivalent $\neg(\neg W \vee \neg U)$. But how can $\neg(\neg W \vee \neg U)$ be unworldly if its truth depends on the contingent circumstance of W's truth?

These considerations favor the absolutist approach.[21] On it, truth-functional form alone does not affect basal status. Either worldliness is dominant and unworldliness is recessive, or conversely. Perhaps we may vary which it is with as our interests shift. If so, then the issue may be regarded with some ambivalence.

But with all due ambivalence, there is still a strong case for worldly dominance.[22] Suppose that a worldly statement is among a basal-functional statement's constituents. Then the basal-functional statement, if it is true, will be true *partly because* of the circumstances, and so not *regardless* of them. That supports worldly dominance. So, once again, if only to fix ideas, I will assume worldly dominance.

We now characterize the proximal status of truth-functional statements. Let Ω be an n-place truth-functional operator. Then a truth-functional statement F is the result $\Omega(C_1,...,C_n)$ of applying Ω to n constituent statements $C_1,...,C_n$. Given worldly dominance, a truth-functional statement is proximally worldly if any constituent statement is worldly, and is otherwise proximally unworldly:

[21] Kuhn (2020) also assumes the absolutist approach.

[22] Kuhn (2020) also favors worldly dominance, although Fine (2005: 326) appears to stop short in classifying "hybrid" propositions (such as that Elon is a man and Elon does not exist) as partly unworldly and partly worldly.

Truth-functional Proximal For any truth-functional statement $T = \Omega(C_1,...,C_n)$:

T is *proximally worldly* $=_{def}$ some constituent C_i of T is proximally worldly.

T is *proximally unworldly* $=_{def}$ T is not proximally worldly.

Like before, proximal status is *proximally* determined because all that matters is the application of a statement's own operator.

There is an apparent counterexample to Truth-functional Proximal.[23] Consider the two-place truth-functional operator LEFT, where $\text{LEFT}(C_1,C_2)$ iff C_1.[24] Only the left statement makes a difference to the truth-value of the complex. Now, consider $\text{LEFT}(U,W)$ where U is unworldly and W is worldly. Given how LEFT is defined, W makes no difference to the truth-value of $\text{LEFT}(U,W)$. So, our verdict should be that $\text{LEFT}(U,W)$ is proximally unworldly. On the contrary, Truth-functional Proximal predicts that it is proximally worldly. And so the case appears to be a counterexample.

But what the case reveals is that there are two conceptions of how a complex statement's basal status is determined by its constituents. The inclusive conception considers them all. The exclusive conception excludes those "making no difference". The inclusive way is a better analogue for truth-functionality: just as the truth-value of a truth-functional complex is determined by the truth-values of all of its constituents, even the redundant ones, so too the basal status of a truth-functional complex is determined by the basal statuses of all of its constituents, not just those that "make a difference". We may have both conceptions, so long as we don't confuse them. The verdict that $\text{LEFT}(U,W)$ is proximally unworldly requires the exclusive conception. But I had in mind only the

[23] Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for suggesting the cases discussed in the rest of this section.

[24] I take LEFT to apply to *both* C_1 and C_2, giving "full weight" to C_1 alone. Another operator FIRST operates on just C_1, ignoring C_2 entirely. If FIRST genuinely differs from LEFT, then it is best regarded as a *one*-place operator applying (redundantly) to C_1. The basal status of $\text{FIRST}(C_1)$ is then that of C_1 itself.

inclusive conception. The case is not a counterexample to Truth-function Proximal, so conceived.

This also helps avoid other apparent counterexamples. Consider $W \vee U$ and $(W \wedge U) \vee \neg(W \wedge U)$. Suppose W is a worldly falsehood whereas U is an unworldly truth. Both $W \vee U$ and $(W \wedge U) \vee \neg(W \wedge U)$ are then true, but the former only because of U's truth and the latter only because of W's falsity. This may suggest differential verdicts: $W \vee U$ is proximally unworldly, whereas $(W \wedge U) \vee \neg(W \wedge U)$ is proximally worldly. But Truth-functional Proximal uniformly predicts that they are both proximally worldly alike.[25] The differential verdicts require the exclusive conception. But, again we are using only the inclusive conception. As before, the case is not a counterexample to Truth-function Proximal, so conceived.

4.3 Quantification

A *quantificational statement* has the form $\Pi x \phi(x)$, where Π is a (first-order) quantifier and ϕ is an open formula containing no bound occurrences of variable x.[26] How is their basality determined?

Our answer builds on how a quantificational statement's truth derives from the truth of its instances. The derivation varies with the quantifier (e.g. '$\exists$' requires *a* true instance, '$\forall$' requires *all* true instances). But our assumption of absolute worldly dominance removes this variation. Given worldly dominance, a quantificational statement is worldly for having a worldly instance regardless of the quantifier. Let any obtaining instance of a quantificational truth be a *witness* of it. So if the result $\phi(x/i)$ of replacing all free instances of x in $\phi(x)$ with i is true, then it is a witness of $\Pi x \phi(x)$. Then:

[25] As we will soon see, this is compatible with $W \vee U$ being *distally* unworldly.

[26] An alternative takes the quantifier to be a property of properties and relies on λ-abstraction to bind variables. I set aside this alternative for another occasion.

Quantificational Proximal For any quantificational statement $Q = \Pi x \phi(x)$:

Q is *proximally worldly* $=_{def}$ some witness of Q is proximally worldly.

Q is *proximally unworldly* $=_{def}$ Q is not proximally worldly.

Here too proximal status is *proximally* determined because all that matters are the witnesses of a statement's own quantifier.

Continuing in this vein would get us closer to a comprehensive compositional characterization of proximal status. But I will postpone that and rest content, for now, with the incremental progress we have made toward that goal.

5 Distal

Some views may be understood as requiring that the basality of a statement differs from the basality of its grounds. For example, consider a constructivist view on which mathematical truths are unworldly despite being grounded in worldly truths about mathematician's activities. Then, while '2 is prime' is unworldly, its unworldliness "disappears" in its worldly grounds. Or, for another example, consider an essentialist view on which logical truths are grounded in unworldly truths about the essences of logical operations. Still, the logical truth 'Elon tweets or not' may seem worldly because it turns on Elon's tweeting. Then, while 'Elon tweets or not' is worldly, its unworldliness "emerges" in its grounds.

Although these two examples focused on applications of basality to specific domains, a third example focuses on basality itself. Suppose that there are some unworldly truths. That raises the question of what, if anything, accounts for them. We may contrast various systematic answers. To illustrate, one answer is that only unworldly truths can help explain an unworldly truth. Unworldly truths cannot have worldly grounds. Another answer is a sophisticated variant of Fine's "worldly philosopher" (2005: 342). On their view, all truths, worldly and unworldly alike, can only be

explained by worldly truths. All truths ultimately must have worldly grounds. I will return to this view below (§5.2).

Examples like these illustrate a need to separate a statement's own basality from the basality of its grounds. This is not just to allow for a statement to have grounds with their own basal statuses. It is also to allow their basal statuses to qualify the basal status of the statement they ground. This calls for a *dual-leveled* approach. We have already explored the *proximal* level which concerns a statement's basality without regard to the basality of other statements. Our focus now turns to the *distal* level.

A statement's *"distal"* basal status is determined by the basality of the statements *in virtue of* which it is true. Thus, the statements determining another statement's distal status are not in general its *constituents* but rather its *grounds*.[27] We should therefore not expect the applications of a statement's predicates or operators to reveal its distal status. We must look instead to the chains of ground descending from it. We distinguish distal notions over whether they require proximal and distal statuses to coincide (§5.1) or allow for divergence (§5.2). A third class of notions trace the basality of a statement to certain constituents as their source (§5.3).

How a distal notion is applied may depend on which basal status is dominant or recessive, and whether absolutely or relatively. Now, we needn't suppose that the status dominant for proximal notions is also dominant for distal notions. But it is hard to imagine a sensible rationale for their divergence. I will therefore assume that the same basal status is dominant both proximally and distally. And as we earlier supposed (§4.2), that dominant status is worldliness.

5.1 Hereditary

We begin with the strictest distal notions. These *hereditary* notions require a statement and all its grounds to have the same basal status. These are best characterized in terms of *chains* of grounds. Let a *ground chain* be a nonempty sequence of statements $S_0,S_1,S_2,...$ where

[27] But it can be both: the constituents A,B of $A \wedge B$ may also be its grounds.

every later item is a partial ground of the previous (S_1 helps ground S_0, S_2 helps ground S_1, and so on). Then our hereditary notions are:

> Hereditary For any statement S:
> S is *hereditarily worldly* =$_{def}$ every ground chain S,... has only proximally worldly items.
> S is *hereditarily unworldly* =$_{def}$ every ground chain S,... has only proximally unworldly items.

The hereditary notions prohibit the contrary basal status from even appearing among a statement's partial grounds. This vacuously applies to statements without partial grounds. So the hereditary notions force proximal and distal statuses to coincide.

This feature of coincidence makes hereditary notions apt for *purely* worldly statements or *purely* unworldly statements. For example, it may be supposed that 'water is a solvent' is a worldly truth that is grounded but only in other worldly truths. If so, the statement is hereditarily worldly. For another example, it may be supposed that the polynomial remainder theorem is an unworldly truth that is grounded but only in other unworldly truths. If so, the statement is hereditarily unworldly.

But the feature of coincidence also makes hereditary notions inapt for capturing the possible divergences in proximal and distal status. Still, the hereditary notions play an auxiliary role in helping to define other distal notions that do allow for divergence.

5.2 Terminal

Divergent distal notions allow us to make sense of the "disappearance" or "emergence" of basality mentioned above. There are a variety of such notions that differ in subtle ways. Our focus will be on one such class of distal notions: *terminal* notions.

These terminal notions may be *weak* or *strict*, depending on whether *some* or *all* of a statement's grounds terminate in a given basal status. The weak notions take a statement of one basal status to have *some* ground that terminates in that hereditary status:

Weak Terminal For any statement S:
S is *weakly terminally worldly* =def for some full ground G_0,... of S, each of G_0,... is hereditarily worldly.
S is *weakly terminally unworldly* =def for some full ground G_0,... of S, each of G_0,... is hereditarily unworldly.

By contrast, the strict notions take a statement of one basal status to have *all* of its grounds terminate in that hereditary status:

Strict Terminal For any statement S:
S is *strictly terminally worldly* =def for some and every full ground G_0,... of S, each of G_0,... is hereditarily worldly or weakly terminally worldly.
S is *strictly terminally unworldly* =def for some and every full ground G_0,... of S, each of G_0,... is hereditarily unworldly or weakly terminally unworldly.

The strict notions entail the weak notions, but not conversely. The weak notions are exclusive, as are the strict notions. But the weak notions are not exhaustive, nor are the strict notions. There may be applications for various intermediate terminal notions, but I will not consider them here.[28] The weak notion of one basal status may be regarded as the "dual" of that status's strict notion. Thus, weak terminal worldliness and strict terminal unworldliness are duals, as are strict terminal worldliness and weak terminal unworldliness.

We should not expect the same terminal notions to be relevant for all tasks. Just which is relevant may vary with which basal status is dominant and with the topic at hand. Even so, we may still consider some potential applications of the terminal notions.

Applications of the weak terminal notions have already appeared in the literature. I explored an application to the essentialist view of logical truth, mentioned above, on which 'Elon tweets or not' may be proximally worldly while also weakly terminally unworldly (Raven 2020a), and also another application to

[28] For instance, one weaker variation is that each of G_0,... must *lack* the contrary hereditary or weakly terminal basal status.

whether essentialist truths about social items may be proximally unworldly while also weakly terminally worldly (Raven 2022).[29]

The strict terminal notions have not yet, as far as I know, been considered. But they do have some intriguing potential applications.

One application is to the constructivist view of mathematics mentioned above. The constructivist may say that while '2 is prime' is proximally unworldly, it is still strictly terminally worldly because it is grounded in worldly facts about mathematician's activities.

Another application is to the sophisticated "worldly philosopher" mentioned above. Fine's worldly philosopher grants the intelligibility of the basal distinction but insists that all truths are worldly. Our sophisticated variant, however, grants the distinction's intelligibility but allows for unworldly truths, provided that they are *ultimately* worldly. Such a philosopher is like a non-reductive physicalist who allows for mental facts provided that they are *ultimately* physical, or a non-reductive naturalist who allows for normative facts provided that they are *ultimately* natural. But in what sense are unworldly truths *ultimately* worldly? The strict terminal notions help answer: every unworldly truth is strictly terminally worldly. Thus, our sophisticated worldly philosopher can maintain a worldly basis for every unworldly truth by taking all their grounds to terminate in the worldly.

5.3 Source

Fine's influential discussion of essence emphasized its sensitivity to source: "different essentially induced truths may have their source in the identities of different objects" (1994: 9). There is an analogous question, not yet discussed in the literature, about basality's sensitivity to source. Just as an essential truth may have its source in the identity of some object as opposed to others, perhaps the basal status of a truth may have its source in some objects or truths as

[29] The "distal" notions in those papers correspond to the weakly terminal notions here.

opposed to others. Can a statement's basal status be traced to a distinctive source?

Not always. To illustrate, suppose Wt sits atop a single infinitely descending ground chain $Wt,W^1t_1,W^2t_2,...$, where the application of each predicate $W,W^1,W^2,...$ is worldly. Now, Wt, and each W^it_i, is hereditarily worldly because every ground chain it sits atop has only proximally worldly items. The worldliness of Wt is no more traceable to the worldliness of just some of $W,W^1,W^2,...$ as opposed to the others. Instead, all their worldliness contributes equally. So, Wt's worldliness lacks a *distinctive* source.

But there are other cases in which a statement's basal status may be traceable to a distinctive source. For instance, a predicate's application may be a source of a statement's basality when it "ineliminably" belongs to its grounds. We may characterize *ineliminability* as:[30]

Ineliminable For any statement S and predicate P:

P is *eliminably* in S $=_{def}$ S contains P and for some full ground $G_0,...$ of S, P is neither a constituent of any of $G_0,...$ nor any of their partial grounds.

P is *ineliminably* in S $=_{def}$ S contains P but P is not eliminably in S.

Thus, a predicate is eliminably in a statement when it has a "last occurrence" in one of the statement's full grounds. Conversely, a predicate is ineliminably in a statement when either the statement is ungrounded or has grounds in which the predicate forever recurs. Let us say that a predicate P is *uniformly worldly* just in case all its applications are worldly, and *uniformly unworldly* just in case they all are unworldly.[31] We then define a weak notion of ineliminability:

[30] These characterizations are adapted from Raven (2016,2017).

[31] This may have an essentialist explanation, e.g. it lies in the nature of the predicate to have uniformly (un)worldly applications. I do not assume any such explanation.

Weak Ineliminable For any statement S:

S is *weakly ineliminably worldly* =def for some uniformly worldly predicate P, P is ineliminably in S.

S is *weakly ineliminably unworldly* =def for some uniformly unworldly predicate P, P is ineliminably in S.

There is also a strict notion of ineliminability:

Strict Ineliminable For any statement S:

S is *strictly ineliminably worldly* =def for some and all predicates P in S, P is both uniformly worldly and ineliminably in S.

S is *strictly ineliminably unworldly* =def for some and all predicates P in S, P is both uniformly unworldly and ineliminably in S.

The weak and strict notions therefore differ over whether some or all constituents are ineliminable.

The contrast between dominant and recessive basal statuses affects how a statement's basality may be traced to an ineliminable source. For the dominant status, tracing just requires the *presence* of an ineliminable constituent of that status. To illustrate, consider a weakly ineliminably worldly statement. It will be proximally worldly because worldliness dominates. It will also sit atop a ground chain with an ineliminably worldly constituent at each link. So the statement will be weakly terminally worldly. And the source of this status is the ineliminably worldly constituent.

But for the recessive basal status, tracing requires both the *presence* of an ineliminable constituent of that status and the *absence* of the contrary status. To illustrate, consider a strictly ineliminably unworldly statement. It will be proximally unworldly because it has no worldly constituents. It will also sit atop ground chains, where each of its ineliminably unworldly constituents belongs to some chain at each link. But because unworldliness is recessive, this does *not* imply that the statement is even weakly terminally unworldly. For example, consider a statement U*a, where predicate U* is uniformly unworldly. Suppose that Ua and Wb together fully ground U*a, where predicates U and W are, respectively, uniformly

unworldly and uniformly worldly. Finally, suppose that Ua and Wb are both ungrounded. It follows that U*a is strictly ineliminably unworldly. But Wb's partially grounding U*a prevents U*a from being even weakly terminally unworldly. In general, strict ineliminable unworldliness does not imply weak terminal unworldliness.

The implication fails because the *presence* of an ineliminably unworldly constituent does not establish the *absence* of any worldly influence. This blocks the most natural ways of tracing recessive status to a source. If the presence of an ineliminable constituent is insufficient, then *it* cannot properly be regarded as the source.

But there is another sense in which the recessive status may be traced to a source. Let us say that a statement is *purely ineliminably unworldly* just in case it and all its partial grounds are strictly ineliminably unworldly. Any strictly ineliminably unworldly statement will be proximally unworldly. So a purely ineliminably unworldly statement will be hereditarily unworldly. In this way, the source of a statement's unworldly status can sometimes be traced to the collective *presence* of these ineliminably unworldly constituents, given the *absence* of constituents of any other sort.

6 Prospects

I conclude by summarizing our developments of the basal notions and sketching their prospects. The developments are depicted thus:

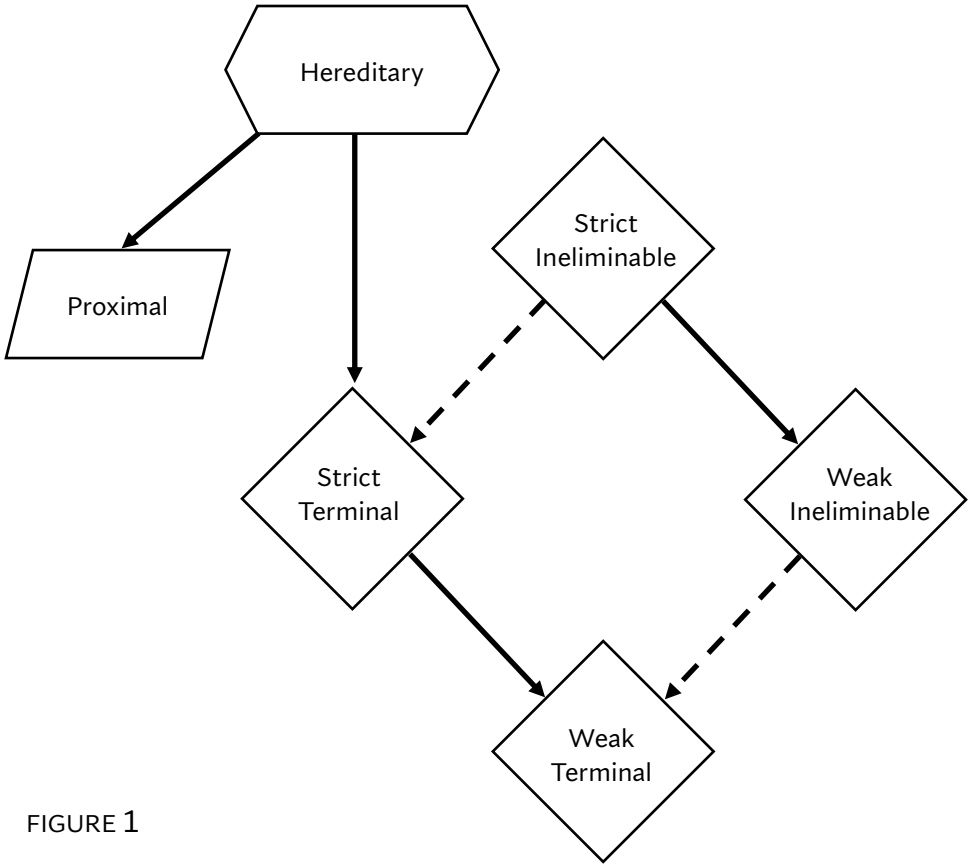

FIGURE 1

A node's shape indicates its basal category: parallelogram for *proximal*, hexagon for *hereditary* distal, and diamond for non-hereditary *distal*. These shapes also represent the possibility of diverging basal statuses. A statement's proximal and distal statuses differ if it has contrary statuses in a parallelogram and a diamond, but no status in a hexagon. Edges indicate logical implications. Solid edges indicate implications holding for both basal statuses. Dashed edges indicate implications holding only for the dominant status.

The goal of our exploration was to clarify basal notions. We did so by distinguishing them from other notions, by developing them, and by charting their connections. Our exploration presumed the intrinsic interest of the basal notions. The progress made clarifying them corroborates the presumption. Further corroboration comes from their fruitful applications, including those already explored

(Fine 2005; Raven 2020a,2022) and those yet to come. All this is a step toward the vindication of the basal notions.[32]

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[32] Thanks to Troy Cross, Kit Fine, Martin Glazier, Dana Goswick, Paul Hovda, David Mark Kovacs, Jon Litland, Kristie Miller, Alec Oakley, Erica Shumener, Jennifer Wang, and anonymous referees for their helpful feedback.

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