MATTHEW McGRATH Between Deflationism & Correspondence Theory. New York:

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<u>Between Deflationism & Correspondence Theory</u> is part of the Garland 'Studies In Philosophy' series, edited by Robert Nozick, which publishes outstanding dissertations in philosophy. McGrath's primary goal is to present and defend a view about truth which he calls 'weak deflationism.' Weak deflationism is an alternative version of Paul Horwich's minimal theory of truth, which Horwich also calls 'deflationism'.

Deflationism is the view that there is no more to the truth predicate than what is expressed by uncontroversial instances of the equivalence schema

(E) the proposition that p is true iff p

Horwich excludes instances of (E) which lead to paradox; the uncontroversial instances are the axioms of deflationism. Deflationism is close kin to Quine's disquotational theory, except that for Horwich it is propositions which bear truth. Because Horwich excludes paradoxical instances of (E), deflationism does not endorse the universal quantification of (E) over propositions. Consequently, deflationism cannot be given a finite statement; it has an infinite number of axioms. This is a source of objections, on the grounds that deflationism cannot account for the explanatory role of truth, and cannot provide a characterization of the nature of truth. (Horwich embraces the latter result.) Objections have also been raised against deflationism stemming from the use of the substitutional variable 'p' in (E); specifically, problems arise where 'p' is ambiguous, contains context-sensitive terms, or is a non-English sentence.

Ernest Sosa (who advised McGrath's dissertation) has proffered a refinement of deflationism based on a schema using an objectual variable ranging over propositions, and which is finitely stateable:

(FMT)
$$(x) [x \Leftrightarrow \langle x \text{ is true} \rangle]$$

Sosa's finite minimal theory claims that every proposition entails and is entailed by the *de re* proposition that it is true. Sosa's theory is finitely stateable, and is compatible with various characterizations of the nature of truth; thus, the finite minimal theory can account for the role truth plays in explanation.

Weak deflationism is a development of Horwich's deflationism, and is an alternative to Sosa's finite minimal theory. Following Horwich and Sosa, McGrath takes propositions to be the primary bearers of truth. Likewise, the truth predicate expresses a property, but a deflated property; that is, a property explained by reference to a schema such as (E) or (FMT). Strictly speaking, weak deflationism is a determinable theory whose determinates are determined by the interpretation given to the symbol ' \Leftrightarrow ' in (FMT). This symbol may be interpreted as mutual entailment to yield the finite minimal theory; it may be interpreted as material equivalence, to yield Horwich's deflationism, so long as the universal quantification is eliminated. From discussions later in the book, McGrath's preferred interpretation of ' \Leftrightarrow ' seems to be the asymmetric relation of explanation, in a special sense: e.g., the proposition that whales are fish explains the proposition that 'whales are fish' is true. This sense of

explanation does not entail that the explanans is true, only that the two propositions are related such that the explanandum would explain the explanans, should the explanans be true.

What makes weak deflationism a weak version of deflationism is that while truth for propositions is deflationary, truth for sentences, utterances, beliefs, and other non-propositional truthbearers is inflationary. 'If one is willing to inflate meaning, one can give an account of truth for non-propositional entities that recognizes explicitly a dependence on meaning, but which remains deflationist about truth for propositions. Truth for non-propositional entities will be analyzed in terms of expression of true propositions' (39). Although the weak deflationist's ontology is 'inflated' by recognizing propositions as meanings, the correspondence relation in which sentences participate is simply the relation of expression. This is not a relation of correspondence which will satisfy a correspondence truth theorist. Hence, weak deflationism is thoroughly deflationary; it does not lie between deflationism and correspondence theory.

Weak deflationism is presented and defended in chapters 2 and 3. In chapter 1 McGrath discusses and argues for realism about propositions and properties. Chapter 4 defends Platonism about properties and propositions against modal realist challenges. Chapter 5 discusses the relation of the truthmaker project to correspondence theories and to weak deflationism. Throughout, McGrath's discussions are detailed and interesting.

A more serious problem addressing weak deflationism is addressed in chapter 6: the Liar Paradox. To his credit, McGrath does not endorse restricting the central truth equivalence, i.e., (E) or (FMT), to non-paradoxical instances, on the grounds that such a move is *ad hoc*. His solution is based on 'an (almost) general account of truth' according to which both ordinary and strengthened Liar sentences (L) are ungrounded, and consequently neither true nor false. However, his (almost) general account does not permit $\langle L$ is neither true nor false) is true to be asserted, since it is ungrounded; hence, the account is unduly restrictive, albeit not *ad hoc*. Another problem facing this account is the ordinary Liar sentence, which poses a more tenacious paradox than the strengthened Liar sentence.

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