

Teemu Tauriainen

University of Jyväskylä

Simultaneous Immanence and Transcendence of Truth

Debates on whether truth is dependent or independent of human concerns are present throughout the history of Western thought. According to one side, truth depends on mind-independent states of affairs, like facts or the relevant aspects of extensional reality. For others, truth depends on human-bound factors, like what is useful to believe or what science has at any given time proven to be the case. In more recent history, this debate has been labeled as the realist/anti-realist debate. For realists, the truth of chosen truthbearers is based on them adequately connecting with the world. For anti-realists, truth is determined by what one knows or is justified to believe. The conflict between these views has proven persistent because both sides have persuasive arguments in support of their position. I argue that both sides have lessons to be learned from a historically significant yet nowadays largely dismissed distinction between truths immanence and transcendence. Based on this distinction, I proceed to demonstrate how truth can involve both, human-dependent and independent aspects. My contention is that acknowledging such multifaceted nature for truth is necessary for achieving a philosophically plausible and scientifically legitimate account of its nature that can further be used as an explanatory instrument in defining various socially crucial phenomena, like knowledge, trust, and deception.

Keywords: truth, immanence, transcendence, anti-realism, realism.

1 Introduction

Truth's nature has been a subject of analysis throughout the history of western thought.¹ Despite the long tradition of theorizing, philosophers are far from reaching a consensus on what the details of a satisfactory, let alone an exhaustive definition of truth would be.² Interestingly enough, these definitional issues are in plain contrast with the truths intuitive nature and the significance it bears for our lives. We do not think that there is any confusion with the term when teaching our children to speak the truth, when obliging people to tell the truth and nothing but the truth in our courtrooms, and when relying on experts, scientists, and leaders to tell us the truth about a range of important topics. Our commonsense grasp of truth seems more than sufficient for sustaining the practices that rely on there being a satisfactory account of this notion. Past this, one might argue that supposedly we operated with a notion of truth even before our ability to speak about it, let alone try defining it. We all agree that in one way or another, truth describes things as they stand, and because of this, it bears instrumental value for achieving success in our practices in a systematic and reliable manner. Without this concept, one cannot distinguish between fact and fiction, between reality and illusion, delusion, or wishful thinking. In this sense, truth is not only a normative guideline that we can require from other people. True beliefs bear value, and this is why they are oftentimes worth the trouble of aspiring for.³ True sentences as the premises of valid inference enable prediction making, the subsequent control of our surroundings, and successful navigation in the world. What, then, is one to make of this Janus-faced notion that is intuitive, important, and valuable, yet which we seem to be incompetent to define in a satisfactory manner, to the extent that consensus is lacking on even the most basic features of an adequate account of its nature.⁴

It is the task of this paper to clarify matters by focusing on the question of whether truth is dependent or independent of human concerns. My contention is that work on this topic advances our collective understanding of truths nature. This, in turn, is necessary for reaching a satisfactory account of said notion. Achieving such an account bears great value for numerous reasons. Without a philosophically tenable and scientifically legitimate notion of truth, the gates are open for criticism towards it, which we all are painstakingly familiar with in light of recent history. Unfortunately, we are in middle of what some have labeled as the crisis or even death of truth that manifests in the form of speech about alternative facts and the post-truth era (Kakutani, 2018). No doubt, there is increase in people's thirst for alternative facts and explanations, and their inclination to feel

¹ Comprehensive historical discussion on the nature of truth can be found in Glanzberg (2018).

² My use of "true" is ambiguous between the concept of truth and the property of being true, but I will emphasize this distinction when it makes a difference. For the sake of simplicity, we can assume that the concept is what gives meaning to the property that is attributed by the predicate "is true".

³ More on the value and significance of truth for our concrete practices in Tauriainen (2022a).

⁴ Truth's intimate connection to other concepts is evident when realizing that we use it to define various other concepts, like meaning, knowledge, trust, and validity.

contempt for the truth, especially when it threatens their ways of life. But when we accept deception and lies from our leaders, and when their advisors say things like “truth isn’t truth”, perhaps more than ever, we should focus on developing and defending a robust notion of truth to sustain the practices that constitute our contemporary ways of life. Without such account, we are impaired to define various socially important phenomena, like honesty, trust, and deception, further rendering it difficult to hold those accountable who fail to stand up to the criterion of truth.⁵ My contention is that a robust notion of truth is not only a theoretical resource or valuable property of beliefs, but that it plays an indispensable role in sustaining healthy democratic practices, such as responsibility, voting, and trust in our leaders, experts, and educators.⁶ It is somewhat embarrassing that in light of the aforementioned significance that truth bears for various domains of life, we are far from reaching an account of it that is not vulnerable to obvious criticism. In this sense, the age-old skeptical question expressed by Pilate “what is truth?” still lives on.

In the following section, I briefly discuss the historical debate on whether truth is dependent or independent of human concerns. This section is a setup for the more thorough examination of the metaphysics of truth that will be executed in the latter half of this paper. After this, I turn to discuss the prominent debate between truth realists and anti-realists and argue that while anti-realists have solid arguments in support of their position, avoiding truths partial human-independence, and thus its partial transcendence, is difficult to avoid on both, theoretical and practical grounds. I conclude by arguing that for truth to play the role that it has in our practices, it best be treated as a realist and partially transcendent notion. Finally, some prospects for avoiding truths partial transcendence will be suggested, but whether or not they ultimately succeed is up to debate.

2 Truths Human-dependent or -Independent Nature

Views about truths nature show significant variety in the history of western thought. From the literature, one can find numerous mutually exclusive definitions with no prospect of agreement in sight.⁷ For some, truth is a fully objective matter, a representation of how things stand independent of minds, and for others, truth is that which is useful to believe, or which scientists at any given time prove to be the case. One historically significant distinction regarding truths nature that is

⁵ My contention is that without a robust notion of truth, healthy democratic practices become endangered, for we cannot hold politicians accountable for lying, or we cannot explain what science in general aims at past pragmatic utility, which is in itself problematic position to uphold. For example, if we hold that pragmatic utility is the sole purpose of science, then justifying the existence of those disciplines that do not provide pragmatic utility, like the more theoretical aspects of mathematics, physics and ethics becomes difficult if not impossible.

⁶ As Hannah Arendt has adequately noted in relation to the totalitarian regimes that: “The ideal subject of totalitarian rule is not the convinced Nazi or the convinced Communist, but people for whom the distinction between fact and fiction (i.e., the reality of experience) and the distinction between true and false (i.e., the standards of thought) no longer exist.” (Arendt, 1951: 474).

⁷ More on this in Glanzberg (2021).

relevant to this day concerns its mind-dependent or -independent nature. One side to this debate can be found from Aristotle, according to whom the existence of human's grounds the truth that humans exist, but not the other way around. Indeed, while it is intuitive to think that truth in one way or another depends on how things stand independent of minds, it is questionable whether there would be any truths without humans to uphold them. This point was adequately emphasized by Donald Davidson, perhaps the most prominent theorist of truth of the 20th century: "Nothing in the world, no object or event, would be true or false if there were not thinking creatures." (Davidson, 1990: 279). In *Metaphysics* (1908: IV 7, 1011b27), Aristotle proceeds to emphasize the basic realist intuition that truth is a description of how things stand independent of minds.⁸ There are truths about matters insofar as there are states of affairs to ground those truths, but someone still has to uphold or assert them. Whether and to what extent truth is dependent or independent of human concerns, such as our knowledge about it, is questionable even in the case of Aristotle. Nonetheless, it is intuitive that there are truths that we don't know, and truths that we don't know that we don't know, as determined by the reality that we partake in but don't have an exhaustive understanding of. Past this, there seems to be even *in principle* unknowable truths, like the exact rate in which the universe is expanding, or towards what it is expanding.⁹ In the most radical end of this dependence/independence spectrum lies Chrysippus, for whom there are contingent truths even about future events, despite anyone's ability to know about them.¹⁰ Aristotle disagreed on this matter on grounds of free-will. For there to be contingent truths about the future, humans would not have free will to affect the course of events, casting doubt on our ability to possess conscious agency. However, Chrysippus has contemporary allies. The now prominent deflationary approaches to truth argue that a sentence is true if and only if things are as the sentence says, and no reference to belief, knowledge or justification is required. The sentence "Trump will go golfing tomorrow" is true if and only if Trump will go golfing tomorrow, full stop. On this account, there are contingent truths about the future even in an indeterministic universe where humans have free will. Simply put, each sentence specifies its own conditions for being true, and it is left for reality to decide which of them adequately connect with its relevant aspects. Finally, for Plato, truth's nature derives from the form of the good, and is as such independent of one's ability to reach for it. Human accessible truth is always approximation of the whole truth, which is an ideal of reason. But as an ideal, it is also something worth pursuing, even though it might be in itself unreachable. From this follows that truth in the form of belief bears inherent normative force:

⁸ The dependence relation used here can be understood as either compatibility, isomorphism, identity, determination etc.

⁹ Reason being that one can still guess them and possess a true belief by accident even though there is no way to achieve knowledge about these matters.

¹⁰ The downside of this view is that it assumes determinism and thus compromises the notion of free will.

So that what gives truth to the things known [beliefs] and the power to know to the knower is the form of the good. And though it is the cause of knowledge and truth, it is also an object of knowledge. Both knowledge and truth are beautiful things, but the [form of the] good is other and more beautiful than they. In the visible realm, light and sight are rightly considered sunlike, but it is wrong to think that they are the sun [the form of the good], so here it is right to think of knowledge and truth as goodlike but wrong to think that either of them is the good—for the good is yet more prized. (Plato, 1997: 508e).¹¹

Interestingly enough, this view about the normativity of truth introduces partial transcendence to the notion. We aim and aspire for truth, and in this sense, truth is a goal of reasoning. But for truth to play such role, it needs to transcend our current knowledge or lack thereof about it. For truth to be something that we pursue, aim or aspire for, it must have a nature that transcends our current knowledge about it. This feature of truth as something that infinitely exceeds our grasp about it will be discussed further in the last sections of this paper.

Overall, both Plato's and Aristotle's ideas are intuitive. Surely, some truths are such at least partly because of how things stand independent of minds. Past this, it is both intuitive and practical to hold that there are truths we don't know, but which we *want* to know. We want to know whether human efforts can have a meaningful impact on climate change because the truth concerning this matter bears great instrumental value. We also want to know the truth about the origins of the universe simply to satisfy our inherent curiosity about the world. Interestingly enough, this seems to imply that we have *some* access to the truth, even if not in the eternal or ideal sense of the whole Truth. It is true that we are all conscious here and now, and it is true that the earth is an unevenly shaped ellipsoid. However, as history has proven to be the case, because of our limited perspectives to perceiving the truth, we have to accept the Kantian premise that what we at any given time understand to be true is never the whole story. Science, arguably the highest arbiter of truth, is in constant flux and eventually, most if not all the truths that we now uphold turn out to be false. This, again, is indication of truths at least partial transcendence. When a scientific discovery turns out false, we do not say that it *became* false. Rather, we admit our collective mistake in relation to the *truth*.

In what follows, I set to explore the metaphysics of truth by focusing on the prominent debate between truth realists and anti-realists. I focus specifically on the question of what is the nature of this thing that we aim in our inquiries, that we respect as a property of beliefs, and which we require from our leaders and educators, and which seems to be “out there” for us to discover. After this, I proceed to discuss a related, historically significant yet nowadays largely neglected question about

¹¹ In contrast, one might hold that truth is only *prima facie* or *pro tanto* correct to believe.

whether truth is immanent or transcendent to our potential understanding about it. My contention is that discussion on these topics helps illuminate the limits and requirements of an adequate and satisfactory account of truth.

3 Realism and Anti-realism

The debate between realists and anti-realists regarding truths nature is prominent in contemporary truth-theoretic literature (Shieh, 2018: 433–476). This distinction is closely related to the aforementioned distinction between truths human dependent or independent nature. One way to understand the former distinction is to see it as arising from a more general question about the relation that truth has to ontological concerns. If truth in the form of true sentences or beliefs depends on or is grounded in mind-independent states of affairs, such as the relevant aspects of extensional reality, then it is to some extent independent of what anyone thinks about it. There is either an even or uneven number of planets in the universe, as determined by the number of planets in existence. Similarly, there are approximately 10 nonillion (10 to the 31st power) viruses on earth alone, and we can identify only a fraction of them. Insofar as truth depends on facts, then it doesn't mind what anyone thinks about it. In contrast, if truth depends on human-bound factors, such as our ability to know or justify a claim, then no reference to mind- or theory-independent states of affairs is required. Prime example of this are necessary truths, like each entity being identical with themselves, or the number 2 being the smallest prime. There is nothing out there in the world, so to speak, to render these statements as either true or false. They are true based on convention, or in virtue of the language-system in which they are formed.¹² Thus, in short, the realism/anti-realism debate regarding truths nature can be understood from the perspective of truths grounding as the question of whether it is grounded on what exists independent of humans, or whether we have the power to dictate the truth.

As noted, for the realists, truth depends in one way or another on reality, i.e., how things stand independent of minds: “Truths are determined not by what we believe, but by the way the world is.” (Armstrong, 2004: i). The reason for the label “truth realism” follows from the baked in commitment of these theories into ontological realism. Insofar as our thoughts and expressions are about the world, it is this world that renders some of our expressions true and other ones false; truth depends on the adequate connection that our thoughts and language have to the relevant aspects of reality, as perceived from the given theoretical standpoint that is. For example, somewhat poetically, we simply have access to a language that includes a class of truth-apt beliefs and expressions, and it is left for reality to pick from this gallery those that adequately connect with its

¹² This is, of course, debatable.

relative aspects. It is up to reality, ultimately, to decide which of our expressions are true and other ones false. This explanation is conveniently in harmony with the way in which scientific inquiry is executed. In the words of W.V.O. Quine, perhaps the most prominent naturalist to date: “Such is scientific method: interrogation of nature in a cosmic true-false test. Man proposes, nature disposes.” (Quine, 1994: 500). Insofar as our theories aim to be about the world as given by a commitment to this or that form of metaphysical realism, then we require them to be true by consisting of true sentences, in the sense that it is precisely these *types* of sentences that provide the intermediary between language and the world.¹³ This approach is persuasive, not least because we indeed do require some standard of correctness to answering questions about the nature of reality or how things stand.

There is some variation in the way in which realists understand the relation between our expressions and the world. According to a restrictive approach, the world *determines* the truth of our expressions. Less ambitiously, one could claim that only *compatibility* with our expressions and the world is required. Further, one might be a naïve realist and presume that we have direct access to the world, or perhaps a scientific realist, for whom only indirect access is granted as mediated by the necessary theoretical standpoint that one has to deploy to conceptualize reality in the first place. Nonetheless, as described above, the basic thesis of truth depending in one way or another on existence stands. While realism is perhaps the most prominent approach to defining truth in contemporary literature, it is in no way devoid of problems, as noted by David:

We cannot step outside our own minds to compare our thoughts with mind-independent reality. Yet, on the realist correspondence view of truth, this is what we would have to do to gain knowledge of the world. We would have to access reality as it is in itself, to determine whether our thoughts correspond to it. Since all our access to the world is mediated by our cognition, this is impossible. Hence, on realism, knowledge of the world would be impossible. Since knowledge of the world is possible, realism must be wrong. (David, 2020: 9.2)

Indeed, correspondence theories of various sorts have traditionally been treated as a prime example of realist theories. These theories are rich with metaphysical implications, not least because many of them make explicit commitment to some form of realism. Similar strategy of tying considerations about truths nature to metaphysical commitments has been utilized by anti-realists.¹⁴ For anti-realists, truths nature is independent of the nature of the world. Dummett – perhaps the most prominent anti-realist to date – argues that truth can be defined through justification (1959). Truth

¹³ Indeed, if one wants to dispense with a scientifically legitimate account of truth, then they bear the burden of explaining what the contents of our theories are if not *true* sentences.

¹⁴ Note that the correspondence relation itself does not require a commitment to realism. For example, the sentence “I am hungry” can correspond with my *feeling* with being hungry, which does not map consistently to anything in the real world.

is *just* justifiability, warranted assertability or verifiability. From this, we get an account that rejects the law of the excluded middle and bivalence: we know some sentences to be true, and others to be false, but we also don't know and can't even in principle some things. According to one formulation of this thesis, what one is justified to believe in any instance *is* true. More robustly, one could argue that what our most potent scientific explanation of the world warrants us to believe counts as true. But whether or not we want truth to be so relativized is debatable.

On a more delicate level, the notion of anti-realist truth can be illustrated by presuming that as we don't have any direct access to reality in itself, all the objects we perceive, or the ontology of our science, is more or less theoretical. We speak about rocks and planets but not in any mind-independent or transcendent sense, for the referents of these terms are concepts, abstract representations, or classes of entities associated with them. Arguably, none of these things exist outside the domain of conscious beings. We are not speaking about anything *real* in the robust, realist sense where existence is grounded in mind-independent facets of the external reality. From this anti-realist claim follows that the truth of "rocks are solid" and "planets are round" has nothing to do with any particular rocks or planets in the world. Rather, one is free to argue that the terms "rock" and "planet" designate abstract entities, theoretical constructions, and the predicates "is solid" and "are round" simply have consistent rules of application and do not map anything significant in similarities between the entities *in themselves* that satisfy them. The truth of these sentences depends on the human-constructed language in which they are formed, and the internal balance of the truth values of those sentences that constitute the theory that gives rise and justifies them. No reference to extra-theoretic, actual, or mind-independent states of affairs is required.¹⁵

Relying on the aforementioned distinction between realist and anti-realist approaches, we can separate and contrast the core commitments of both types of theories in the following way:

T-realism: reality exists independent of minds, and our thoughts are about its aspects.

Commitment to ontological realism.

Law of the excluded middle and bivalence.

Warrant independence.

T-anti-realism: truth depends on human-practices, such as knowledge or justification.

No commitment to ontological realism.

Rejection of the law of the excluded middle and bivalence.

Warrant dependence.

¹⁵ Excluding observational sentences like "this rock is wet" that represent only a small portion of truth-apt speech, and it is questionable whether these sentences are any less language and theory-bound in the first place. Overall, the whole question of "reality" past what is conceivable from *some* framework of understanding is suspicious.

Interestingly enough, both realist and anti-realist views can be subjected to what is in contemporary literature known as the *scope problem*. This problem follows from the *either-or* way of thinking about truths grounding. Think about the following true sentences: “killing innocent people for pleasure is wrong” and “earth is an unevenly shaped ellipsoid”. As happens, realists have difficulty in accounting for the truth of the first sentence, for there is no fact in the world that the sentence can correspond with, and the anti-realists have difficulty in accounting for the truth of the second sentence, insofar as they don’t commit to realism. Because both theories limit their scope regarding truths grounding, they face issues with accounting for the truth of the full range of truth-apt discourse. Contrary to this, one can hold that depending on the truth-apt content, its truth can be grounded in either human-dependent or -independent factors. This approach has been labeled as the now prominent pluralist approach to truth: “Wright argues that a pluralistic perspective on truth can be put to work in developing a nuanced understanding of realism and anti-realism about various philosophical domains.” (Assay, 2016: 177) For example, the pluralist can argue that there is one general way for truthbearers to be true, yet depending on the *subject matter* of the truth-apt content, its truth can be grounded in different things, i.e., properties. Some sentences are true because they correspond and others because they cohere. While all truths are true in some unified sense, the grounds of truth are many. In this sense, truth becomes relativized on the realist/anti-realist spectrum between categories of speech, i.e., *domains of discourse*. This is only intuitive, for surely there are truths about mind-independent states of affairs, like stones and chairs, and truths about ethics and law, such as what one is permitted or prohibited in doing.¹⁶

Despite the intuitive appeal of the general pluralist thesis, this approach has failed to attract widespread popularity. One reason being the inability of the current pluralist models to resolve certain technical issues and thus convince scholars of the philosophical tenability of this position (Tauriainen, 2021). However, the skepticism that truth pluralism faces in current debates is only justified, for considering the long tradition of theorizing about truth, one has to be suspicious towards any “novel” approach to defining this notion. As the story goes about Strawson’s introduction of his performative analysis of truth to his colleagues as a new kind of truth theory, one of them allegedly replied: “Come on now, which of the old ones is it?” (Strawson, 1974: 23). Thus, it remains to be seen whether truth pluralism is able to attract widespread popularity by offering a philosophically tenable account of truth that satisfies both realist and anti-realist intuitions. In any event, pursuing such account is, to my contention, a worthy effort.

¹⁶ More on pluralist theories of truth in Wyatt & Lynch (2016), Edwards (2018), Pedersen (2020), Ferrari (2021).

Interestingly enough, one can find a closely related debate on the human-dependence or independence, and realism or anti-realism, from the historical literature on truths nature. Surprisingly, the historically significant distinction between truths immanence and transcendence has largely been neglected in contemporary debates. As proves to be the case, there are lessons to be learned by all, realists, anti-realists, and pluralists from this debate.

4 Truths Immanence and Transcendence

Two prominent commentators on truths immanence and transcendence are Kant and Quine.¹⁷ In Kant's usage, immanence is contrasted with transcendence through cognition and its target.¹⁸ The conditions for the possibility of cognition are transcendent, yet the cognition itself is a precondition for the domain of immanent thoughts, and experiences. In Quine's usage, all concepts, such as knowledge, reality and truth are immanent, or contained in the theory that gives rise to them: "Truth is immanent, and there is no higher. We must speak from within a theory, albeit any of the various" (Quine, 1981). In this latter explanation, all concepts are essentially human inventions, theoretical constructions, and as such bound to the framework in which they are *contained*.¹⁹ Thus, in both Kant's and Quine's usage, immanence is contrasted with the transcendent, which in one way or another describes that which exceeds our cognition or our theories, which are human-bound domains. Again, insofar as humans are creatures with inherently limited capabilities of understand the endlessly complex reality that we partake in, the question of immanence and transcendence is constantly present. We perceive entities, but not in themselves, and we understand their nature, but not completely. This can be illustrated with an example. We know there to be not only waves, but different types of waves. There are small and large waves that vary in their frequency and speed, and in scientific discourse, we acknowledge wind waves, wind surges, and tsunamis. In transcendental terms, however, there are no waves *per se*, let alone different types of them, for there are only masses of water molecules with no boundaries in between that act upon the forces imposed on them. But in some sense, there seems to be truth to both sides of the story. It is a necessary precondition of human understanding that one must deploy *some* immanent perspective to make sense of the world, even though the world itself transcends our ability to know about it in its totality.²⁰ Simply put, to think and speak at all is to do so from some perspective, better or worse. Indeed, while the notion of there being a transcendent, human-independent reality that at least sometimes dictates or guides the truth and falsity of our claims is sensible, the idea that truth in the

¹⁷ I will bypass the topic of whether and to what extent these terms have been used in distinct ways, as indicated by Sher: "The word 'immanence' has been used in the philosophical literature in a variety of ways." (Sher, 2016: 163).

¹⁸ Immanence doesn't necessarily mean "containment in the world" (medieval use) but "containment in our understanding about the world" (modern use).

¹⁹ Thorough analysis of the immanent/transcendent distinction in both Quine and Kant can be found in Sher (2016).

²⁰ Here I am assuming that there indeed are transcendent truths. Quine, for example, is critical towards this view: "what reality is really like /.../ is self-stultifying" (Quine, 1992: 405).

immanent, inherently limited sense would be something of secondary interest is problematic for various reasons. First, it is not clear to what extent we have access to the transcendent in the first place, and if we do, then it is reasonable to assume that reality in its near infinite complexity is indeed *too* complex for us to grasp past what is given in our limited human representations in the immanent domain.²¹ For example, think about the utility of maps, which oftentimes do not even aim at being fully objective representations of the thing they describe. More often than not, maps are crude simplifications of the geometrical structure of their target that lack dimension. Nonetheless, they are extremely useful instruments for achieving success in our practices. For example, an objective representation of the New York subway would contain too much information for it to be helpful in guiding navigation. For our benefit, we can simplify the transcendent as given by our perceptions about it in our models.²² To claim that these models wouldn't be true in any meaningful sense is peculiar, to say the least. Indeed, if reality is transcendent in the sense that we cannot grasp it past the mediated access granted by our representation about it, then there seems to be no way for us to know about the transcendent in the first place. Reason being that even the term "transcendent" is a theoretical term, human construction there to help us make sense of the world, and thus a member of the immanent domain. In other words, the term "transcendent reality" is a concept and as such a proxy for something in the world, or so we assume. There simply is no way for us to evaluate the Truth or full objectivity of our claims past the perspective that lays the foundation for this evaluation in the first place.

Of course, we would like to think that truth is as objective as it can be, but asking for it to be fully objective seems to be too much. It is extremely useful for us to hold that some things *are* true, even if not in the fully objective sense. Again, to quote Quine: "there is no extra-theoretic truth, no higher truth than the truth we are claiming or aspiring to as we continue to tinker with our system of the world from within. (Quine, 1975b: 327). We accept our fallible, theory bound notion of truth and deploy it in our theorizing, despite the fact that all the truths we now uphold might turn out false in the long run."²³ Truth, just like all other concepts, is there to aid our aspirations for knowledge and understanding, and if this means that it fails to be fully objective, then so much worse for the notion of full objectivity, were there such thing in the first place.

²¹ Remember the aforementioned example about waves. We cannot understand the complexity of masses of water molecules, so we organize reality into bits and pieces to make sense of it with our limited capabilities.

²² Of course, immanent models of the world can vary in their complexity.

²³ One can perceive two foundational commitments in this discussion: anti-transcendentalism and fallibilism. There is no transcendent, extra-immanent perspective to the world, and immanent perspectives are always limited and correctible to some extent.

However, there is a way to save our intuitions about truths partial transcendence without violating the above-mentioned claim of truths near throughout immanence.²⁴ In the following and final section, I proceed to argue that truth is after all a partially transcendent notion, and that this partial transcendence is an indispensable feature of a philosophically tenable and scientifically legitimate understanding truth. Thus, instead of being either mind-dependent or independent, or immanent or transcendent, truth indeed turns out to encompass both aspects.

5 Between the Immanent and Transcendent

I find the claim of truths simultaneous immanence and transcendence in the aforementioned sense appealing for various reasons. Let's start with a perverse example with computers, gods, and humans. Insofar as computers don't usually have any sensors for perceiving the world, truth for them is a wholly immanent matter. They are closed systems that operate with some internal logic with no regard for what rests beyond. Of course, there are potential inputs from humans, and the operating logic must come from somewhere. But when the foundation is there, the computer can run as long as it wants in solitude. On the other hand, for an omnipotent being such as God, truth would be arguably immanent in his understanding, but its target would be what we conceive as the domain of the transcendent.²⁵ In God's understanding, the immanent and transcendent would become one. But humans are neither computers nor gods. Rather, we are beings that in many ways lie in between. We operate with some internal logic, no matter its origins, yet we also have access to a fraction of the transcendent through our perceptions. My firm contention is that it is in this subtle interplay between limited cognitive agents and the infinitely complex reality that lays the foundation for the phenomena of truth to emerge. Simply put, both the immanent perspective and the transcendent domain of existence is required to explain truths nature. Regarding metaphysical commitments, for truth to be even partially transcendent, a commitment to realism in one way or another seeps in. It doesn't matter whether the reality assumed is the domain of extensional entities, or whether it is the domain of entities that some mad professor has fabricated. In both cases, we have an interplay between the immanent perspective or minds, and the transcendent reality in all its complexity. But are there any practical reasons for committing to truth partial transcendence in the aforementioned sense?

Let's assume that there are two mutually incompatible theories or understandings about some aspect of reality. If truth were fully immanent to the theory in which it is formed and to which it belongs,

²⁴ In this sense, the truth accessible to us humans is neither solely immanent nor transcendent, but an interplay between both. In this sense, the truth pluralist is right in trying to accommodate both realist and anti-realist intuition under one notion.

²⁵ I understand the limits of this analogy, but I think it is nonetheless illuminating.

then there would be no reason to seek resolving these sorts of conflicts. First, it is not clear what these theories would even argue about, for truth would be relative to these theories separately. But in our concrete practices, we seek to resolve theoretical conflicts, for this is what scientific development for a large part explicitly means. The question that emerges is that in relation to *what* are we disagreeing on, or in relation to what are we trying to resolve conflicts in epistemically serious contexts? Indeed, insofar as our theories are *about* something, this thing that they are about both guides our aspirations towards it, and when reached, helps solve disagreements about its nature. But for our theories to be about something, this something needs to rest *beyond* our theories, or they would simply be closed systems about themselves. If this were the case, then we could simply fabricate the truth in the context of any given theory, and it would not be clear in relation to what competing theories would disagree on. Rather, as seems to be the case with our actual scientific practices, we seek to resolve theoretical conflicts by figuring out the *truth*. Indeed, if and when science encompasses both theoretical branches like mathematics and logic, and branches that study empirically verifiable events, then for all theories there is a class of sentences that have their truths values effected by transcendent factors. In formal sciences, these sentences connect with the formal system and its properties, which we are aiming to discover in our theorizing about them. In natural sciences, these sentences are the ones that directly connect with empirically verifiable events. In both cases, our sentences connect with something that transcends our current theories about it.

Indeed, it is because of those sentences that directly connect with the transcendent, we are able to make predictions and evaluate the success of *all* theories. We want to possess true sentences to have them as premises of valid inferences that preserve their truth to the conclusion, and we want to discover true sentences to simply satisfy our curiosity about the world. If one theory is more accurate in predicting actual states of affairs as given by our perceptions about them, then we treat it as more successful than others. Same applies, to some extent, to the explanatory power of different theories. These claims are analogous to the way in which less formal common-sense reasoning is executed. Think about the phenomena of intersubjectivity. When we assert that the weather is nice today, people tend to either agree or disagree on the truth of this statement based on their own perceptions about *actual states of affairs*. It is hardly arguable that the source of these perceptions lies in the domain of the transcendent.

Thus, even though the claim of truth throughout immanence holds in the sense argued for in the last two sections, the shadow of transcendence is always present. The transcendent is what we assume to exist behind our proxies about it, and through these proxies we have evidence for its existence. This couldn't be more evident that in the phenomena of scientific progress. We might hold as firmly as possible that this or that claim about some aspect of reality is true, but when scientific

development shows it to be false, we never say that it *turned out* or *became* false. Rather, we simply admit that we were wrong all along, and correct our beliefs in relation to the *truth* as given by the transcendent. What is the exhaustive nature of this truth that we are near infinitely wrong in relation to? There is good reason to be skeptical towards any answer to this question that exceeds the immanent perspective.

Hkratna imanenca in transcendence resnice

Razprave o tem, ali je resnica odvisna ali neodvisna od človeških interesov, je vseprisotna v zgodovini Zahodne misli. Za nekatere je resnica odvisna od človeku neodvisnega dejanskega stanja, kot so dejstva ali relevantni vidiki razsežne realnosti. Za druge je resnica odvisna od človeških dejavnikov, kot so kaj je koristno verjeti ali kaj je v nekem obdobju znanost dokazala kot resnično. V bolj nedavni zgodovini to razpravo imenujemo razprava med realisti in antirealisti. Za realiste je resnica izbranih nosilcev resničnosti vrednosti osnovana na ustrezni relaciji teh s svetom. Za antirealiste je resnica določena glede na to kaj nekdo vé oziroma v kar je nekdo upravičen verjeti. Konflikt med realizmom in antirealizmom se je izkazal za trdovratnega, saj imata obe strani prepričljive argumente, ki podpirajo njune pozicije. Zagovarjal bom trditev, da bi obema stranema koristilo zgodovinsko pomembno, vendar danes bolj kot ne pozabljeno razlikovanje med imanenco in transcendenco resnic. V skladu s tem razlikovanjem pokažem, kako lahko resnica vključuje tako od človeka odvisne kot tudi od človeka neodvisne aspekte. Moja trditev je, da je upoštevanje takšne večplastne narave resnice nujno za doseganje filozofsko verjetnega in znanstveno legitimnega opisa narave resnice, ki je lahko uporabljeno tudi kot razlagalni inštrument pri definiranju različnih družbeno pomembnih pojavov, kot so védenje, zaupanje in prevara.

Ključne besede: resnica, imanenca, transcendenca, antirealizem, realizem.

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