

FICTIONALISM
IN
METAPHYSICS

Edited by

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Truth as a Pretense

JAMES A. WOODBRIDGE

Truth is a pretense. This bald statement might inspire “incredulous stares”, but my aim here is to deflect this initial incredulity. To begin, then, my claim that truth is a pretense is really part of an analysis of truth-talk—the fragment of our talk (and thought) that employs the notion of truth.¹ Just this clarification probably deflects little skepticism, since it merely marks my view as some sort of fictionalism with respect to truth-talk. On a common understanding of fictionalist analyses, certain statements from a “way of talking”² understood fictionally may be “true in the fiction”, but really all statements from this fragment of discourse are *false*.³ Some of the abiding skepticism toward my initial claim likely comes from the recognition that this error-theoretic conception of fictionalism undermines itself when applied to truth-talk. The problem here is by now familiar: an account of truth-talk based on the thesis that all truth-talk is *false* (or, more broadly, *never true*) seems to presuppose a non-error-theoretic notion of truth-conditions, and so of truth.⁴ And even if it did not, the claim that all instances of truth-talk are false is itself an instance of truth-talk, and so it would turn out to be false on this view. In fact, matters are even worse; this position would be *paradoxical* since it would say of *itself* that it was false.⁵ Understood this way, a fictionalist interpretation of truth-talk is a non-starter.

Nevertheless, a fictionalist account of truth-talk is what I offer here. Of course, in doing so I will have to avoid the problematic, error-theoretic understanding of fictionalism, but that is precisely what the approach I take lets me do. My account explains truth-talk in terms of *semantic pretense*. The pretense approach applies coherently to truth-talk because on this variety of fictionalism some utterances understood this way still make genuinely true

claims about the real world. The resulting pretense-based account of truth-talk amounts to a version of *deflationism* about truth. This provides some partial support for my view (along with others), as certain unusual features truth-talk exhibits—the duality of triviality and non-triviality truth-locutions display, and the talk's *prima facie* propensity for paradox—motivate pursuing some form of deflationism. Support for a pretense-based formulation in particular comes from this approach's agreement with the general deflationary strategies for dealing with truth-talk's unusual features. Even stronger motivation then comes from certain advantages a pretense-based view offers over other formulations of deflationism.

While my account explains truth-talk in terms of pretense, it still maintains that speakers typically use truth-talk to make serious assertions about the world. However, the serious assertions they make are not the ones that they seem to make. In the instances of truth-talk, uses of expressions like 'is true' and 'is false' appear to attribute properties—truth and falsity—to objects that the term expressions supposedly denote. These appearances are just part of a pretense on my view. There are no such properties as truth and falsity, and the expressions 'is true' and 'is false' do not even really play the linguistic roles they appear to play. We talk *as if* there are properties of truth and falsity in order to make certain serious assertions (not about truth) indirectly. The real value of the talk is that it lets speakers express a form of assertion that they otherwise could not express, in particular, it lets them formulate certain otherwise inexpressible generalizations. The account of truth-talk I develop here explains how the talk's invocation of pretense gives it this linguistic function. We should not, however, confuse the thesis that truth-talk involves pretense with the claim that saying something is true amounts to *pretending* it is true. Pretending something is true involves applying an additional level of pretense to something one would express indirectly via the pretense truth-talk already invokes. Truth-talk functions in virtue of pretense, but speakers use it to say (indirectly) how things are, not just how they pretend things are.

My goals for the rest of this paper are to motivate a pretense-based account of truth-talk and to show that in addition to being a coherent view, it also has certain theoretical advantages over other accounts of truth-talk. I start by explaining how truth-talk's unusual features provide initial motivation for deflationism in general. Then I lay out the basic details of the pretense approach (including how its application avoids generating an error theory). To show both that a pretense-based account is the best way to make good on deflationary aspirations and that it avoids a modified error-theoretic inter-

pretation, I expand the standard account of semantic pretense by specifying a new distinction. I then explain the core pretense behind truth-talk, focusing on its satisfaction of the basic adequacy criteria that any account of truth-talk must satisfy, as well as its satisfaction of the central commitment of deflationism. Next, I discuss how to extend this account to cover the most interesting cases of truth-talk, the quantificational instances. Here (and in the discussion of the view's adequacy) I also highlight some of the advantages the pretense-based account offers in explaining certain aspects of truth-talk. Finally, I respond to some objections, including the most serious challenge to my view: the claim that we cannot explain truth in terms of pretense because we must appeal to truth to explain pretending.

Truth-talk, Deflationism, and Pretense

Truth-talk exhibits some unusual features that render it philosophically suspect. One such feature is a remarkable duality truth-locutions display.⁶ In some cases the notion of truth seems vacuous or redundant. Claims like:

- (1) It is true that crabapples are edible

appear to be trivial expansions of the sentences they embed; (1) is at least necessarily and *a priori* equivalent to (if not synonymous with):

- (2) Crabapples are edible.

However, in other instances, the notion of truth does not seem trivial. For example, the claim:

- (3) What Dex said is true

is not a trivial expansion of anything; it is not necessarily an *a priori* equivalent to any claim free of truth-locutions. The expression 'is true' is not redundant in an utterance like (3); removing it would turn a sentence into a singular term, resulting in a loss of content and a failure to express any thought.

Another suspicion-arousing feature truth-talk exhibits is a *prima facie* propensity for paradox. The central principles governing the notion of truth are the instances of the equivalence schema:

- (ES) It is true that p iff p (= That p is true iff p).⁷

The problem is that some instances of truth-talk seem to generate contradictions in certain circumstances when we apply (ES) to them. This is especially

clear for utterances that amount to formulations of the famous Liar paradox, for example, the sentence:

(4) The sentence labeled '(4)' does not express anything true⁸

The problem with sentences like (4) is well known. What (4) most plausibly expresses is that the sentence labeled '(4)' does not express anything true. So, what (4) expresses is true iff that the sentence labeled '(4)' does not express anything true is true. It follows from this and the relevant instance of (ES):

(ES₄) That the sentence labeled '(4)' does not express anything true is true iff the sentence labeled '(4)' does not express anything true

(and a little rephrasing) that (4) expresses something true iff (4) does not express anything true.⁹

Truth-talk's duality and propensity for paradox suggest that this way of talking is not completely straightforward. The general conclusion I draw is that we should approach the subject of truth from a *deflationary* perspective, rather than an inflationary one. The best way to understand deflationism "about truth" (henceforth, simply 'deflationism') is as a *metatheory* about truth-talk, rather than as a theory of *truth*. Viewing deflationism the latter way entangles the approach with independent philosophical issues concerning the nature and existence of properties. For example, if we took the central claim of deflationism to be that there is no property of truth (or even that there is no *substantive* property of truth), then any nominalist who rejects properties altogether would automatically be a deflationist.¹⁰ But it is implausible to apply this classification to a nominalist who sees no difference between the functioning of truth-talk and that of, say, talk of what is and is not metal, or any other sort of "everyday" talk. As a view specifically about the topic of truth, the point of deflationism is to draw some sort of distinction here. Deflationism has consequences for the issue of whether there is a property of truth (and if so, what sort of property it could be), but the best way to understand the approach is as a view about truth-talk.¹¹

We must be careful, however, about what sort of view about truth-talk we take deflationism to be. For reasons similar to those just rehearsed, we should also not take deflationism's primary concern to be which sorts of functions truth-talk performs, for instance, whether it plays an explanatory or normative role. This view of deflationism would also entangle the approach with independent philosophical issues, for example, those concerning the natures of explanation and normativity. The most plausible candidate for the central

concern of deflationism is truth-talk's logico-linguistic functioning. The thesis that best captures deflationism's central commitment is the claim that truth-talk functions (logico-linguistically) in such a way that the instances of (ES) are *fundamental*.¹² What this means is that these equivalences neither require nor admit of any "deeper" analysis; their holding is not a matter of any underlying aspects of some property (truth) that truth-predicates attribute, or of any definitional connections holding between the concept of truth and more basic concepts. On deflationary views, the instances of (ES) are conceptually and explanatorily basic.¹³

Truth-talk's unusual features provide initial incentive for pursuing a deflationary account because views of this sort have an easier time dealing with them (in virtue of having less of an explanatory burden) than inflationary views do. There is no difficulty in accounting for the modal and epistemic status of the instances of (ES) if we take them to be fundamental in the sense just described. The necessity and *a prioricity* of these equivalences in turn accounts for the triviality of the truth-locutions in certain instances of truth-talk. Those that figure in the instances of (ES) are necessarily and *a priori* equivalent to certain sentences free of truth-locutions; those that do not figure in the instances of (ES) are not. There is thus a sense in which the truth-locutions make no significant contribution in cases of the first sort, but do in those of the second.

With regard to truth-talk's putative propensity for paradox, taking the instances of (ES) as fundamental allows deflationary views to accept the *prima facie* paradoxical sentences as genuinely paradoxical and to pursue a strategy of diagnosing and containing truth-talk's inconsistency, rather than one attempting to eliminate it.¹⁴ This is not an option if we take the instances of (ES) to hold in virtue of the nature of a property the truth-predicate attributes on the left-hand side.¹⁵ Given that many, if not most, actual instances of truth-talk "risk being paradoxical if the empirical circumstances are extremely (and unexpectedly) unfavorable",¹⁶ solving the "diagnostic [and containment] problem" is probably an easier task than solving the "preventative problem".¹⁷ Support for this thought comes from the seemingly relentless recurrence of paradox in the form of some strengthened version of the Liar in response to any proposed elimination.¹⁸ Deflationary views might very well have a more difficult time in tackling the preventative problem, since various strategies (e.g., an appeal to truth-value gaps) might not be available to them, but one of the advantages deflationism offers over inflationism is that it makes solving this problem supererogatory and replaces it with what is arguably a less difficult task.¹⁹

A useful way to understand the position I advance here is as the claim that deflationism is the most promising approach to the topic of truth, and the best way to formulate a deflationary account of truth-talk is in terms of semantic pretense. I will specify the points on which I think a pretense-based formulation of deflationism scores better than current formulations presently, but an antecedent explanation of the approach I take will help make this clearer. The pretense approach is a recent fictionalist strategy that has produced illuminating analyses of some other philosophically suspect ways of talking. A central source of the approach is the account of the representational arts Kendall Walton presents in his book *Mimesis as Make-Believe*.²⁰ The best-known extension of Walton's views is the application of the pretense approach to our talk ostensibly of what does and does not exist (henceforth, 'existence-talk'). A central motivation for a pretense-based analysis of existence-talk stems from the problem of non-being, that is, the puzzle of negative existential claims like:

(5) Santa Claus does not exist.

According to the pretense approach, although claims like (5) can be genuinely true, they do not saddle speakers with paradoxical ontological commitments to nonexistent entities. This is because we should understand existence-talk in terms of a pretense. However, even though (5) functions in virtue of a pretense, a speaker could still use it to make a serious assertion about the world because of the special kind of pretense it involves.

The kind of pretense (5) involves is most familiar from children's games of make-believe. The interesting aspect of make-believe is that it is a kind of pretense in which some of what is *to be pretended* by participants in the game—some of what is *fictionally true* or *fictional*—depends on the state of the world outside of the game. Games of make-believe involve principles of generation, rules that determine the way actual circumstances (in particular, those pertaining to the features of the *props* the game employs) combine with the game's stipulated pretenses to determine what else is to be pretended (or, as I will say, what further pretenses are *prescribed*).²¹ Within the context of a game of make-believe, then, we must distinguish between two kinds of prescribed pretenses: those that are the stipulative ground of the game—what is *expressly made-believe*—and those that are *generated from reality*.²²

Because make-believe involves pretenses whose fictional truth depends systematically on real-world conditions, its use in the pretense approach results in a non-error-theoretic version of fictionalism. In using a pretense-

employing utterance to make an assertion, one puts forward the pretenses the utterance displays as appropriate or prescribed. The principles of generation governing the game of make-believe the utterance is from determine that those pretenses are appropriate only under certain real-world conditions. Putting the utterance forward assertorically thus expresses a serious commitment to the obtaining of the required real-world conditions. A pretense-employing way of talking is therefore a way of making serious assertions *indirectly*, that is, of engaging in “indirectly serious discourse”.²³ So, far from undermining any serious purposes that a way of talking serves, an appeal to make-believe can allow for and actually explain them if taking the talk at face value is problematic.

Consider existence-talk again. We can resolve puzzles about negative existentials by explaining existence-talk in terms of a game of make-believe that stipulates pretending that every putative referring expression has a bearer, and that uses of ‘exists’ attribute a discriminating property. We explain the serious purposes of existence-talk in terms of principles of generation making it fictionally true that a (pretend) referent has the (pretend) property of existence iff the referring expression as employed really refers to something, and fictionally true that a (pretend) referent does not have this (pretend) property iff the referring expression as employed does not refer to anything. Because of the dependency this establishes, an utterance like (5) makes a serious and genuinely true claim about how the world actually is, even though its doing so involves pretense. What (5) seriously asserts is that attempts to refer of the kind it displays will all be unsuccessful, something we know is correct.²⁴ Since pretense-employing utterances are not automatically false but in fact can be true, pretense-theoretic accounts are not automatically error theories. This placates the initial worry that a pretense-based account of truth-talk is incoherent.²⁵

One of the reasons the pretense approach offers the best means of formulating a deflationary account of truth-talk is that it makes the most sense of deflationism’s central commitment to the fundamentality of the instances of (ES). The pretense approach also fits particularly well with the general deflationary strategy for dealing with truth-talk’s propensity for paradox. I elaborate on these points in the discussion below. Another point favoring a pretense-based formulation of deflationism is the fact that it accounts for some important aspects of truth-talk in a more satisfactory way than the current formulations offered by Paul Horwich, Hartry Field, and Robert Brandom. Of particular importance on this front is what some philosophers call “the generalization problem”. This problem concerns the

task of accounting for the role that truth-talk plays in generalizing on embedded sentence positions, as in the move from:

(6) If the Pope asserts that crabapples are edible, then crabapples are edible

to:

(7) Everything the Pope asserts is true.

I will explain the advantages a pretense-based account of truth-talk offers over the current formulations of deflationism with respect to the generalization problem (and a few other aspects of truth-talk) after presenting the make-believe behind truth-talk.

Extrinsic and Intrinsic Pretense

Before turning to the details of the game of make-believe behind truth-talk, it is important to explain the particular way that pretense figures in these utterances. The reason for this is twofold. First, it reveals an interesting affinity between deflationism and the pretense approach, supporting the idea that the latter offers the best way of formulating the former. Second, it makes clear why a modified charge of error-theoretic incoherence does not apply. The latter is an issue because even though the basic details of the pretense approach explain how uses of pretense-employing utterances can put forward genuinely true statements, there is still the worry that this approach has to assume that all such utterances are *literally* false. This would be problematic for a pretense-based account of truth-talk since it would require an antecedent notion of truth-conditions to apply to the instances of truth-talk taken literally (i.e., before the operation of any pretense). There is even the possibility that this would make the view paradoxical for reasons similar to those mentioned above.

We can accomplish these two tasks by drawing a distinction between two different ways that an utterance can invoke pretense. The basic difference has to do with whether pretense attaches to the utterance “from the outside”, or whether pretense is integral to the utterance saying anything at all. In the first case, pretense is *extrinsic* to the utterance; in the second case, it is *intrinsic* to the utterance. Perhaps the most concise way of marking the difference is to say that a basic case of extrinsic pretense involves pretending of the proposition an utterance expresses, when we take it at face value, that it is true, while a case of intrinsic pretense also involves pretending of an utterance *that it expresses a*

proposition at all when we take it at face value, in addition to pretending that this (pretended) proposition is true. However, I want to avoid explaining this distinction in terms of truth-talk (and proposition-talk) in order to skirt circularity worries. So I need a different account. A possible worry here is that any such account is just another statement of the proposition-based account, but my contention is that this is not the only way to interpret it. One could just as well reverse this order of explanation.

In the basic cases of extrinsic pretense (*first-order* extrinsic pretense),²⁶ we could take the utterance made literally. What I mean by this is that what a face-value or “straight” reading of the utterance gives is something that we could also, in some circumstances, take seriously—in the case of an assertoric utterance, as a genuine, direct statement about the actual world. Most metaphors of the form ‘A is B’ involve extrinsic pretense. Consider:

(8) Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is the headliner of a bad lounge act.

One could take this sentence to make a serious statement about the world directly, that is, one could take it at face value. Taking or offering (8) metaphorically involves placing the face-value reading of the utterance in the context of a pretense. Specifically, (8) invokes a pretense consisting of a game of make-believe that prescribes pretending someone is the headliner of a bad lounge act whenever that person actually possesses certain features, features that really have nothing to do with headlining a lounge act.²⁷ The utterance’s non-literal content, the serious claim it makes indirectly (namely, that Schwarzenegger has the pretense-prescribing features), depends on an antecedent literal content that (1) attaches to the whole utterance, and (2) depends compositionally on the literal contents of its parts in the usual way.

Intrinsic pretense is really what is important for my purposes here because that is what truth-talk involves. In cases of intrinsic pretense, the pretend statement an utterance makes is *not* something someone could offer as a serious statement in any actual circumstances. What a face-value reading of the utterance gives is something that could only be a pretend statement. We pretend that the utterance is meaningful when we take it at face value (i.e., without the operation of some pretense), but the only content there is to associate with it is the content the utterance puts forward indirectly in virtue of its role in the pretense. Typically the reason an utterance invokes pretense intrinsically is because there is no way to take some part of it seriously at face value. In other words, an utterance’s lack of literal content as a whole usually

results from the failure of at least one of its components to have any literal content.

Examples of intrinsically pretense-invoking utterances of this sort include cases employing fictional names or kind terms, as in:

- (9) Quidditch is more about the Golden Snitch than the Quaffle or the Bludgers.²⁸

The only content the terms ‘Quidditch’, ‘Golden Snitch’, ‘Quaffle’, and ‘Bludgers’ possess is that which the make-believe generated by J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* books gives to them.²⁹ Independent of that make-believe, these terms have no content to contribute to the content of (9) as a whole. Thus, pretense is integral to the utterance making any statement at all. Similar points hold for cases involving (restricted) quantification over domains of fictional objects, as one might interpret:

- (10) All of Harry Potter’s relatives are mean.³⁰

We can find less literature-dependent cases in certain idiomatic expressions involving layers of pretense. For example, an utterance like:

- (11) The puppy’s gaze tugged at my heart strings

appears to invoke pretense intrinsically because not only does it require pretending that gazes can tug on things (arguably an extrinsic pretense), but it is only in the context of a further pretense that there is anything for the puppy’s gaze to tug. In fact, it is only in virtue of this pretense that the expression ‘heart strings’ has any sense. So there is no content we can assign to (11) without some appeal to pretense because at least one of its component expressions has no literal content to contribute to the whole.

We can find a type of component literal-content failure more relevant for present purposes in instances of *anthimeria*.³¹ This figure of speech involves using a term that standardly functions as one part of speech as a different part of speech. For example, we might use a name as a verb, as in:

- (12) Clinton nearly nixed his presidency,

or we might use an adjective as a noun, as in:

- (13) Gödel had a lot of smarts.³²

The result is a neologism of sorts, but one that arises out of a kind of “word-play” derivative of the actual function and meaning of an existing term, rather than from explicit stipulation of a completely new word.

In cases of anthimeria, pretense enters at the level of functioning. ‘Nixon’ is a proper name and does not serve to specify an activity in any actual circumstances. Similarly, there are no actual circumstances in which ‘smart’ functions as a referential term.³³ In using these terms as in (12) and (13) we pretend that they function in these new ways. The pretense is most visible in the “coining” of a case of anthimeria, when one simply uses a term *as if* it already functions in the relevant novel way. Because prior to an invocation of this sort of pretense the expressions ‘nixon’ and ‘smarts’ do not really function as they appear to in (12) and (13), in these utterances these terms make no contribution to a literal content for the whole. Thus, we cannot take (12) and (13) seriously at face value, i.e., literally. However, this does not impede our ability to understand them. Interpreting (12) and (13) (and cases of anthimeria generally) does rely on the contents their components have in their standard uses, and these contents happen to be literal contents. But what is important here is the availability of contents provided by standard uses, not that they be literal contents.

According to a pretense-based account, truth-talk is like anthimeria in that it is just a pretense that the central expression it employs, ‘is true’, functions as it appears to function. Truth-talk is unlike anthimeria in that it is the *standard* use of ‘is true’ that involves pretense; pretense does not enter the picture only when an utterance forces this expression into some non-standard use. Truth-talk is thus a way of talking that invokes pretense intrinsically without depending on any literal content attaching to certain components of its instances. To understand this way of involving pretense better, it helps to consider a way of talking that exemplifies it more clearly: existence-talk.

The predicate-term ‘exists’ never has any pretense-independent content as any part of speech; the only content there is to associate with this expression is the content it gets from its role in a game of make-believe. Support for this thesis stems from the fact that the best understanding of ‘exists’ takes its standard use to invoke pretense in its very logico-linguistic functioning. Although claims like:

(5) Santa Claus does not exist

(14) Christopher Robin exists

appear on the surface to perform the (internal) speech act of predication—to pick out objects with singular terms and to characterize or describe those objects (as lacking a property of existence in the first case and as having it in the second)—existence-talk does not really function in this way. We can see

the not-fully-predicative nature of ‘exists’ from the absence of any informative analysis of its applicability conditions³⁴ of the form:

(E) $(\forall x) (x \text{ satisfies ‘exists’ iff } x \text{ is } F)$.

Given that for any object to be in the domain of a quantifier it must *be* (i.e., for those of us who reject Meinongian grades of being, it must exist), all one can and all one needs to give to account for the applicability of ‘exists’ is the formula:

(E’) $(\forall x) (x \text{ satisfies ‘exists’})$.³⁵

This “analysis” reveals that the applicability conditions of ‘exists’ do not place conditions on the referents of the terms the instances of existence-talk employ. Although ‘exists’ functions *logically* as a predicate in existence-talk, the nature of its applicability conditions indicates that we should not take it to function as a genuine predicate in the full speech-act or logico-linguistic sense of serving to characterize or describe objects.³⁶ In order to characterize or describe objects, an expression must require something of objects that satisfy it.³⁷ Depending on the nature of the conditions it requires, the expression is either an analyzable predicate or a primitive predicate. There being no informative analysis of form (E) shows that ‘exists’ is not an analyzable predicate. So, if it is a predicate it is a primitive one. Primitive predicates still place conditions on the objects that satisfy them, so the basic form of their applicability conditions is:

(P) $(\forall x)(x \text{ satisfies ‘} F \text{’ iff } x \text{ is } F)$.

The availability of an “analysis” of form (E’) where there is no analysis thus shows that ‘exists’ is not a primitive predicate. Of course, the substitution of ‘exists’ for both instances of ‘F’ in (P) yields a truth, but unlike any primitive predicate, for ‘exists’ this is not the final account of its applicability conditions since (E’) is available. Because ‘exists’ is neither an analyzable predicate nor a primitive predicate, it is not really a predicate (in the full, logico-linguistic sense of predication).

According to this line of thought, although we can use existence-talk to make true assertions about the real world, ‘exists’ does not function directly to offer genuine descriptions of any objects. But this is exactly what utterances employing this expression appear to do. So, existence-talk makes serious assertions indirectly by appearing to perform a logico-linguistic function it does not actually perform. Since there is no other role we could consider the standard function of ‘exists,’ we should see this way of talking as invoking

pretense intrinsically, in a way that does not require associating any literal content with its central expression.

We can apply a similar line of reasoning to truth-talk. In the previous section, I claimed that certain aspects of truth-talk motivate a deflationary account. From there it is then a short step to a pretense-based account. The reasons just given for thinking that existence-talk involves intrinsic pretense parallel what deflationism says about truth-talk. Deflationary views consider the instances of the equivalence schema:

(ES) It is true that p iff p (= That p is true iff p)

to be fundamental, that is, they claim that there is no deeper explanation for why these equivalences hold. This allows these views to deal with truth-talk's unusual features more effectively. But this attitude toward these equivalences also entails believing that, at least in the basic instances of truth-talk (those that figure in the instances of (ES)), the applicability conditions of the expression 'is true' place no conditions on any objects picked out by the terms these utterances employ, that is, by the 'that'-clauses. This suggests that 'is true' also does not really function predicatively in the full logico-linguistic sense.

The case of 'is true' differs from that of 'exists' in that (E') involves no analysans while the instances of (ES) do.³⁸ However, the analyses are all the same in that none of them makes any reference on the right-hand side to any putative object the left-hand side offers as a satisfier of the supposed predicate. So in none of them do the applicability conditions involve placing conditions on the putative satisfiers. Deflationism thus involves viewing truth-talk as not fully predicative. Prosentential theorists like Brandom explicitly endorse a thesis even stronger than this, claiming that truth-talk is not even logically predicative.³⁹ But this seems too strong; 'is true' functions like a predicate in inference.⁴⁰ Moreover, the instances of truth-talk look exactly like cases of full-blown predication, and prosententialists offer no substantive account of why they take this form. We can resolve the apparent conflict between truth-talk's appearances and the denial that it is really predicative by recognizing the instances of truth-talk to invoke pretense at the level of logico-linguistic functioning. So an account of truth-talk in terms of intrinsic pretense fits especially well with the central commitment that gives deflationism its advantage in dealing with truth-talk's unusual features.

Identifying the pretense the instances of truth-talk involve specifically as intrinsic pretense also shows how a pretense-based account of truth-talk avoids the modified error-theoretic interpretation. There is a sense in which

the instances of truth-talk are misleading on my account. Since the basic functioning of the expression 'is true' is not really predicative, it is not possible to make serious claims of the sort that:

(r') That crabapples are edible is true

appears to make on the surface. So it is never correct to say that (r') is true when we take it literally. But my account is not an error theory in any problematic sense because it is also never correct to say that (r') is false when we take it literally, or even that (r') is not true when we take it literally. The point is that we cannot really take (r') literally, that is, we cannot assign it an interpretation on a face-value (which is not to say standard) reading. Truth-talk never puts forward genuine claims about the world *directly*, without the operation of any pretense. (r') has *no* literal (i.e., pretense-independent) content at all because the standard use of 'is true' invokes pretense intrinsically. The only content regarding the real world we can associate with (r') is the serious content it puts forward indirectly, in virtue of its role in a game of make-believe.

The Make-Believe behind Truth-Talk

The grounding, stipulated pretenses the game of make-believe behind truth-talk involves are as one might expect. The central component is a pretense that in a truth-attribution the expression 'is true' serves to describe referents of the term expressions it gets combined with by attributing to them a special property called "truth". So in the pretense, truth-talk is predicative in the full logico-linguistic sense. There is a definitional connection (in the pretense) between *being true* and *having the property of truth*.⁴¹

The game also stipulates pretending that the fundamental bearers of the property of truth (and that of falsity) are objects of a special sort called "propositions". This provides the best account of our linguistic and inferential practices. For example, we conclude that Dex believes something true when told that he believes what Corey said, that what she said is that crabapples are edible, and that it is true that crabapples are edible. The best way to understand talk of what people believe, assert, etc. is as talk ostensibly about propositions.⁴² We use 'that'-clauses to specify what people believe, assert, etc., so we should take them to pick out propositions. 'That'-clauses are also the term expressions used in the basic instances of truth-talk, i.e., claims like:

(1) It is true that crabapples are edible.

Thus, we should understand the basic instances of truth-talk as ostensibly describing propositions. This means it should be part of the make-believe that propositions are the fundamental bearers of truth.

The basic instances of truth-talk appear to employ the expression ‘is true’ to attribute a property to propositions denoted in a special way by ‘that’-clauses. We can consider this denoting special because ‘that’-clauses *display* the propositions they pick out; they denote propositions *transparently*. Call the segment of truth-talk comprising (1) and its ilk “transparent propositional truth-talk”. The particular form of claims like (1) involves an added complication in that strictly speaking they combine ‘is true’ with the pronoun ‘it’. This is unproblematic in these cases, however, since the pretense has it that the pronoun inherits its referent anaphorically from the relevant ‘that’-clause.⁴³ We can eliminate this distracting complication by replacing (1) with its trivial syntactic variant:

(1′) That crabapples are edible is true.

On the surface, (1′) appears to involve the attribution of a property (truth) to a proposition denoted by a ‘that’-clause. According to the present view, these appearances are part of a game of make-believe that involves parameters like those just described.

We can capture the key parameters of the make-believe behind truth-talk more precisely with the following schematic principles:

(PG1) (Πp) (The pretenses displayed in an utterance of ‘The proposition that p has the property of truth’ are prescribed (i.e., are part of what is to be pretended) iff p).

(PG2) (Πp) (The pretenses displayed in an utterance of ‘The proposition that p has the property of falsity’ are prescribed (i.e., are part of what is to be pretended) iff $\sim p$).

Because they use the universal substitutional quantifier ‘ Π ’ (understood as a device for encoding potentially infinite conjunctions), (PG1) and (PG2) encode collections of individual rules that result from filling in the schematic variable ‘ p ’ with declarative sentences from the substitution class associated with the quantifier. These individual rules are the game’s principles of generation; they anchor the make-believe to reality by making some of what is to be pretended in the context of this game depend on how the world is. These principles extend the pretenses belonging to the game beyond

the stipulated ones offered so far by making the appropriateness of certain additional pretenses follow from game-independent, real-world conditions.

For simplicity of expression, I will refer to (PG1) and (PG2) themselves as the principles of generation for the make-believe behind truth-talk. This will not affect any of the points I make here. The pretenses that these principles govern are those displayed in the instances of :

- (15) The proposition that *p* has the property of truth.
- (16) The proposition that *p* has the property of falsity.

(in which an English sentence goes in for '*p*').⁴⁴ These utterances invoke pretense intrinsically by employing linguistic components (e.g., 'the property of truth') that are entirely creatures of the pretense. The basic principles of the make-believe give these linguistic components uses in the game and make utterances of the instances of (15) and (16) count as assertions in that context (i.e., make them at least *pretend* assertions). But these utterances have no life outside of the make-believe except that given to them *by* the make-believe. Principles (PG1) and (PG2) are what do this; they turn pretend assertion involving these utterances, which otherwise would have no serious application, into a way of making (indirectly) serious assertions that are not just about which pretenses the game prescribes.⁴⁵

(PG1) and (PG2) thus determine precisely what serious assertions speakers make with the instances of (15) and (16). In making a pretend assertion with an utterance of either sort, e.g.:

- (17) The proposition that crabapples are edible has the property of truth.
- (18) The proposition that crabapples are edible has the property of falsity.

a speaker puts forward the intrinsic pretenses the utterance displays as appropriate or prescribed. Principles (PG1) and (PG2) stipulate that these pretenses actually have this status only under particular conditions. Part of what making a pretend assertion with (17) or (18) does, then, is express a serious commitment to the obtaining of the particular real-world conditions specified as necessary and sufficient by the relevant instance of (PG1) or (PG2). Given how these principles assign prescriptive conditions to the pretenses these utterances display, the serious assertion an utterance of (17) makes is that crabapples are edible, and the serious assertion an utterance of (18) makes is that crabapples are not edible.

A game of make-believe including (PG1) and (PG2) serves to institute a particular (indirect) semantic path for certain utterances. An instance of, say, (PG1) relates an assertion of the truth-attribution it mentions (and thus

governs) to an assertion of the claim that appears on the right-hand side of the equivalence, by instituting something like the content-inheritance relation that prosententialists emphasize. With respect to serious content, the two claims are content equivalent. But the truth-attribution is not thereby content equivalent to the claim that the pretenses the truth-attribution displays are prescribed or appropriate, that is, to an assertion of what appears on the left-hand side of that instance of (PG1). The instances of (PG1) and (PG2) are material equivalences, not definitions. (PG1) makes appropriateness claims of the form schematized on its left-hand side materially equivalent in each case to an assertion of what goes in for '*p*'. A truth-attribution is thus also materially equivalent to the relevant appropriateness claim, since the former is content-equivalent (with respect to serious content) to what goes in for '*p*' in forming the relevant instance of (PG1). An appropriateness claim of the form that appears in an instance of (PG1) states very general correctness conditions for a (pretend-)assertion of the mentioned truth-attribution. Because the equivalence links the conditions said to obtain (that certain pretenses are appropriate or prescribed) to certain real-world conditions, these correctness conditions play a role in determining the (serious) content of the truth-attribution. However, that is the extent of the semantic relation between the truth-claim and the appropriateness claim.

One aspect of principles (PG1) and (PG2) that calls for some additional comment is a consequence of their use of the "non-standard" logical devices of substitutional quantification and sentence variables. Being basically conjunctions of schema instances, (PG1) and (PG2) do not offer general, unified conditions for the appropriateness of the pretenses the instances of (15) and (16) display. Instead, the individual instances of (PG1) and (PG2) each stipulate distinct conditions for the prescription of the pretenses in the relevant individual instances of (15) and (16). On the pretense-based account, the issue of what there is to say about the putative referents of the instances of '(the proposition) that *p*' being true becomes the issue of when the pretenses displayed in the instances of (15) are prescribed. According to (PG1), in each case there is nothing more to say about this than what an assertion of the sentence that goes in for '*p*' says by itself.

Because a game of make-believe including (PG1) institutes an indirect semantic path for truth-attributions of form (15), giving each of them the same serious content as an assertion of the sentence that goes in for '*p*' by itself, it thereby gives us all the instances of the schema:

(ES*) The proposition that *p* has the property of truth iff *p*.

Some of the other parameters of the make-believe discussed at the beginning of this section identify the pretenses that the corresponding instances of (I5) display with those displayed by the instances of:

(I9) The proposition that p is true.

So we can substitute (I9) for (I5) on the left-hand side of (ES*). Dropping the expression ‘the proposition’ as superfluous, this yields all the instances of:

(ES) That p is true iff p .

A pretense-based account of truth-talk including principle (PG1) as a principles of generation therefore satisfies the basic criterion of adequacy any account of truth-talk must satisfy, namely, that it generate all the instances of (ES). The account also satisfies the central commitment of deflationism because the instances of (ES) are fundamental on the pretense-based account of truth-talk, in the sense that they follow directly from the talk’s logico-linguistic functioning. The explanation of this functioning essentially involves reference to a game of make-believe that includes a pretense that the instances of truth-talk attribute a property, but because this is just a pretense explaining how the talk works, it does not amount to a deeper explanation of these equivalences.

Another aspect of principles (PG1) and (PG2) that needs some discussion concerns the significance of the last appearance of the sentence variable ‘ p ’ in them. This variable functions on the right-hand side of each schema as a placeholder for sentences. These sentences specify real-world conditions prescribing the pretenses displayed in the sentences mentioned on the left-hand sides of the schema instances. It might seem, therefore, that only pretense-free sentences can go in for this variable, or that we must take any sentence going in for it seriously at face value. This is not the case. Equally viable substituends include sentences that themselves employ either extrinsic or intrinsic pretense, for instance, metaphors or (more importantly here) truth-attributions. One reason this is important is that an account of truth-talk must accommodate the indefinite iterability of truth-attribution. If it is true that snow is white, then it is true that it is true that snow is white. This consequent is itself true as well, and so on. Thus, the substitution class for the quantifier in (PG1) has to include truth-attributions, so the variable must admit pretense-employing utterances as well.

A second reason for allowing instances of truth-talk to fill in the variable on the right-hand side of (PG1) is that this is necessary if the pretense-based

account is to provide a diagnosis of the Liar paradox. I explained above how substituting a Liar sentence like :

(L) The proposition expressed by the sentence labeled '(L)' is not true.

in for ' p ' in (ES) reveals an inconsistency in truth-talk. But on a pretense-based account this inconsistency is not worrisome; the account contains it appropriately. To begin with, truth-talk's inconsistency occurs entirely within the bounds of the pretense aspect of the talk. Because (L), like all truth-talk, invokes pretense intrinsically, the only way it might say something about the real world outside of the pretense is indirectly, by inheriting serious content from somewhere else (in part via the principles of generation of the make-believe). However, the utterance that (L) looks to for serious content happens to be one that invokes pretense intrinsically, namely (L) itself. Since this situation iterates indefinitely, there is never any serious content that attaches to (L). This lack of serious foundation can be thought of as a translation into the pretense framework of the informal notion of ungroundedness.⁴⁶ Call utterances without a serious foundation 'purely pretend' claims.⁴⁷ (L) and Liar sentences generally are all purely pretend claims. Because it is only in purely pretend claims that truth-talk exhibits its inconsistency, the bounds of the pretense completely contain it. No attribution of truth in itself generates an inconsistent claim about reality. While Liar sentences contain an ineliminable inconsistency, they do not say anything inconsistent about reality because the principles of generation governing truth-talk do not connect these claims with any content regarding states of affairs outside of the game. (L) makes no inconsistent claim about the real world; no serious inconsistency results.

We can illuminate the second stage of containment for truth-talk's inconsistency by comparing the situation with the Liar paradox to inconsistencies holding in works of fiction. There are two directions we can take this comparison. The first allows that in the context of the make-believe, Liar sentences generate contradictions. The situation is like that in a work of fiction that invites its audience to acknowledge a contradiction explicitly. A possible example of this sort of case is the lithograph, *Waterfall*, by M. C. Escher. We acknowledge in the make-believe the drawing invokes that the water is running up hill and not running up hill, and then we enjoy the sensation of paradox that ensues.⁴⁸ On this approach to the Liar, given (L) and (ES) we can derive a conjunction of the form ' $p \ \& \ \sim p$ ', namely:

(20) The proposition expressed by the sentence labeled '(L)' is true and the proposition expressed by the sentence labeled '(L)' is not true.

The conjuncts in (20) are both purely pretend claims, so it is only within the bounds of a game of make-believe that there is a contradiction. As in the case of the Escher drawing, we take the contradiction to be part of what the make-believe prescribes pretending, but we do not take it to entail that everything is to be pretended in the make-believe. The logic of the fiction is *paraconsistent*, that is, in it not all contradictions entail everything.⁴⁹ Similarly, we might take the logic of truth-talk to be paraconsistent, in which case (20) would not entail everything, not even just within the make-believe behind truth-talk. In fact, it might entail nothing further.

An alternative direction to take the comparison with inconsistencies in works of fiction is to disallow the explicit formation of the contradiction (20) in the first place. The inconsistency in truth-talk would remain in the form of a biconditional, but nothing further would follow from it. This is similar to how we treat accidental inconsistencies in works of fiction. For example, the Holmes stories as a whole are inconsistent about the location of Watson's sole war wound. The stories do not, however, invite readers to conclude that this wound is in his leg and not in his leg. If we treat the Liar paradox like an accidental inconsistency, (20) would not be a permissible consequence. Liar-like inconsistency would be something to note and avoid, but like the inconsistency about Watson's wound, it would be nothing to worry about since it would not undermine or trivialize the rest of the fiction by entailing everything in that context. Whether this amounts to another type specifically of paraconsistent logic, it is at least some sort of (non-adjunctive) non-classical logic. In any case, this approach results in the same sort of further containment of truth-talk's inconsistency as the previous one.

In both of these approaches to the Liar paradox, fully containing the inconsistency involves giving up classical logic. However, one of the advantages of formulating deflationism in terms of pretense is that this motivates an appealing localization of the deviation from classical logic. As far as "everyday" talk is concerned, it is as if logic is classical. Paraconsistency manifests itself only in truth-talk (and perhaps certain other related ways of talking) because the ineliminable inconsistencies arise only within this fragment of discourse and furthermore only within the bounds of the make-believe behind the talk. Dealing with the Liar paradox by claiming that logic is paraconsistent is just an instance of a general approach we already take to inconsistencies in fiction, so the same sort of localization occurs. Thus, the strategy of diagnosing and containing truth-talk's inconsistency in terms of paraconsistent logic fits particularly well with a pretense-based formulation of deflationism. Other formulations of deflationism can make this move in

trying to deal with the Liar, but they offer less motivation for this strategy and any localization.

Still, since other formulations of deflationism can adopt a paraconsistent logic, this strategy does not clearly favor a pretense-based formulation. However, something that does is the way that a pretense-based account of truth-talk deals with the generalization problem. Explaining this involves extending the make-believe introduced above so that it also covers quantificational instances of truth-talk, for example, claims like:

- (7) Everything the Pope asserts is true
 (21) Something Dex asserted is true.

It is in claims of these sorts, especially those like (7), that truth-talk plays its most important role. Universal claims like (7) allow us to express generalizations not about truth that we could not otherwise express—they allow us to generalize on the embedded sentences in a claim like:

- (6) If the Pope asserts that crabapples are edible, then crabapples are edible.

From the deflationary perspective, fulfilling this function is truth-talk's central purpose.

In order for the pretense-based account to cover claims of these forms, we must add additional principles of generation to the game of make-believe considered so far. The generalization (7) is (a contraction of) an instance of the general form:

- (22) $(\forall x)(Fx \rightarrow x \text{ is true})$

in which ' F ' symbolizes 'is asserted by the Pope'. Claims of form (22) involve pretenses governed by the principle for universally quantified truth-talk:

- (UQ) The pretenses displayed in an utterance of the form ' $(\forall x)(Fx \rightarrow x \text{ is true})$ ' are prescribed iff (Πp) (the pretenses displayed in an utterance of the form ' $(\exists x)(Fx \ \& \ x = \text{the proposition that } p)$ ' are prescribed $\rightarrow p$).⁵⁰

Existentially quantified truth-attributions like (21) have the general form:

- (23) $(\exists x)(Fx \ \& \ x \text{ is true})$.

(21) is an instance of (23) in which ' F ' symbolizes 'is asserted by Dex'. Claims of form (23) involve pretenses governed by the principle for existentially quantified truth-talk:

- (EQ) The pretenses displayed in an utterance of the form ‘ $(\exists x)(Fx \ \& \ x \text{ is true})$ ’ are prescribed iff (Σp) (the pretenses displayed in an utterance of the form ‘ $(\exists x)(Fx \ \& \ x = \text{the proposition that } p)$ ’ are prescribed & p).⁵¹

Extending the make-believe behind truth-talk with these principles requires also taking utterances of the general form:

- (24) $(\exists x)(Fx \ \& \ x = \text{the proposition that } p)$

as pretense-involving. The full story about quantificational truth-talk thus also includes a pretense-based account of *proposition-talk*. The need for such an account in the present context is hardly surprising, given of the tight connection between the notions of truth and proposition. However, a pretense-based account of proposition-talk is not an *ad hoc* demand that the present account of truth-talk requires just for consistency. There are independent reasons for thinking that the best explanation of our talk putatively about propositions (e.g., in attitude ascriptions) is in terms of semantic pretense.⁵² My preference is for a fairly radical version of this sort of account, one that specifies the possession of certain use-theoretic features like inferential or conceptual role as the real-world conditions prescribing a pretense that something (e.g., an utterance) is related (in some way) to some proposition (pretend-)denoted by a ‘that’-clause.⁵³ Essentially what this amounts to is giving a non-truth-theoretic account of content (or better, of *attributions* of content, i.e., “meaning-talk”) in which an appeal to pretense explains both how we manage to talk about the use-features in question with utterances that seem unsuited to the task and the utility of doing so. Given that any deflationary account of truth-talk must rely on and eventually produce a non-truth-theoretic account of meaning, this is not a burden peculiar to my formulation of deflationism.

The main advantage the pretense-based account of truth-talk offers over other formulations of deflationism is its ability to account for truth-talk’s special generalizing role without attributing to it any non-standard logical functioning involving devices like substitutional quantification and sentence variables. Of course, in stating the principles of generation that govern truth-talk, including those governing quantificational instances, even I have had to *use* substitutional quantification and sentence variables to express the real-world conditions prescribing the pretenses truth-attributions invoke. But on my view this is simply due to the fact that the only way to express these conditions in a natural language is *indirectly*, with pretense-employing utter-

ances of the very sort that these principles explain. Truth-talk functions as a surrogate for these non-standard logical devices, by deploying standard logical devices, such as predication and objectual quantification, in the context of a particular pretense. The non-standard devices in question are not actually at work in the talk's logical functioning. The pretense-based account thus avoids a serious problem that confronts some of the current formulations of deflationism.

The problem threatening these other views stems from the fact that they take the complicated sorts of logical devices mentioned above to be part of truth-talk's actual logical functioning. This does give these formulations of deflationism at least something approximating an account of how the talk performs its definitive generalizing function, but in the end it undermines their attempts to explain truth-talk's role here. A fairly extreme version of this approach involves interpreting the main quantifiers in utterances like (7) substitutionally. This is the strategy Brandom's presentential account of truth-talk employs. Understanding (7) as a contraction of:

- (25) Everything (one can assert) is such that if the Pope asserts it, then it is true.

Brandom's view takes 'it is true' as it functions in (25) to be something like an "open" presentence, each instance of which depends anaphorically on what the quantifier supplies to fill in the variable 'it' in forming that instance.⁵⁴ Since anaphora is a relation between linguistic items, the quantifier does not supply things that any part of (25) *talks about*; both occurrences of 'it' serve as substitution variables rather than object variables. An account of the quantifier as functioning to pick out a class of things (linguistic items serving as the anaphoric antecedents of a variable presentence) to which the tokens of the variable connect "referentially" (by the relation of *anaphoric reference*)⁵⁵ gives utterances like (7) a structure that is at least superficially similar to that of ordinary generalizations. *Prima facie*, then, Brandom's view provides truth-talk with a role that seems to account for the way the talk enables us to generalize on the embedded sentences in statements like:

- (6) If the Pope asserts that crabapples are edible, then crabapples are edible.

This sort of appeal to substitutional quantification is also available to a "Fieldian" disquotational account of truth-talk as a strategy for explaining the talk's special generalizing function. The thought here is that in generalizing on (6), an instance of truth-talk like (7) provides all the instances of the schema:

(26) If the Pope asserts that p , then p .

We can formulate a kind of “generalized” version of this schema by prefixing (26) with a universal substitutional quantifier as in:

(27) $(\Pi p)(\text{the Pope asserts that } p \rightarrow p)$.

The problem is that even if (27) counts as a generalization of (6), there is no way to express a claim of this form informally in a natural language (at least directly) because there are no (atomic) expressions playing the role of schematic sentence variables. This is where truth-talk comes in, as a means of expressing something equivalent to (27) in natural language.

According to Field’s account, we can axiomatize the functioning of truth-talk with a generalized version of the equivalence schema like:

(GES) $(\Pi p)(\text{that } p \text{ is true iff } p)$.⁵⁶

The availability of this formula allows us to derive from (27) an equivalent claim that one might hold is expressible in a natural language, namely:

(28) $(\Pi p)(\text{the Pope asserts that } p \rightarrow \text{that } p \text{ is true})$.

The reason we might claim that (28) is expressible informally is that here the variable ‘ p ’ occurs only in the nominalizing context of a that-clause. This means that (28) uses the variable only as part of a variable *term-expression*, ‘that p .’ Because ‘that p ’ is a variable nominal term, we can translate it (and so cover every use of ‘ p ’ in (28)) into natural language as a pronoun, as in the “open” sentence:

(29) If the Pope asserts it, then it is true.⁵⁷

Because in the context of Field’s view the things the instances of ‘that p ’ pick out in the instances of (28) are exactly what make up the substitution class of its substitutional quantifier (computationally typed tokens of the sentences of the speaker’s idiolect), there is a sense in which the quantifier “supplies” all the different things that “fill in” the occurrences of ‘it’ in (29) when we “bind” the open sentence with the quantifier.⁵⁸ This is the motivation for claiming that we can express (28) informally with a universally quantified claim like:

(7) Everything the Pope asserts is true.

Truth-talk’s generalizing role lets us use claims like (7) to express fertile generalizations that impact on matters not involving truth but that we cannot formulate except by employing truth-talk.⁵⁹ By interpreting the initial

quantifiers in claims like (7) substitutionally, Brandom's prosentential view and a "Fieldian" disquotationalism would provide truth-talk with a role that seems *prima facie* to account for the desired generalizing from claims like (6).⁶⁰ However, beyond just the implausibility of attributing this more complicated logical functioning to the quantificational expressions of ordinary language, the problem with this appeal to substitutional quantification, as Anil Gupta has pointed out, is that there is a logical gap between what a substitutionally quantified schema provides (a conjunction of the instances of the schema) and a genuine generalization.⁶¹ This casts serious doubt on the adequacy of taking the substitutional quantifier approach to explain truth-talk's generalizing role. Because the pretense-based account explains truth-talk's generalizing role without interpreting the quantifiers in general truth-attributions substitutionally, it avoids Gupta's objection. This gives the account a clear advantage over Brandom's view since he has to give quantifiers truth-talk employs a substitutional interpretation.⁶² The advantage the pretense-based account has over Field's view requires further consideration, however, since there is an alternative way the latter can read universally quantified claims like (7), one that provides Field with a different, less overtly problematic approach to the generalization problem.⁶³

This alternative understanding of Field's view also avoids treating the quantifiers in instances of quantificational truth-talk substitutionally. However, even on this different approach, Field's view does not take the logical form of a claim like (7) to be (22). Instead, Field understands it as something like:

$$(30) (\forall x)[Fx \rightarrow (x = \text{that } p \rightarrow \text{that } p \text{ is true})].^{64}$$

We can factor in the operation of 'is true' more completely by taking into account Field's understanding of (the instances of) the equivalence schema:

$$(ES) \text{ That } p \text{ is true iff } p.$$

Field takes (ES) to axiomatize a cognitive equivalence amounting to the substitutability in most contexts (except inside quotation marks and intentional attitude constructions) of what appears on either side of an instance of (ES) for what appears on the other.⁶⁵ Thus, on his view, a claim of form (30) is cognitively equivalent to one of the form:

$$(31) (\forall x)[Fx \rightarrow (x = \text{that } p \rightarrow p)].$$

So, an instance of truth-talk like (7) is a way of making a claim of form (31)—the sort of fertile generalization on a claim like (6) that we are after.

This approach to quantificational truth-talk differs from the previous “Fieldian” approach in two ways. First, the main quantifier in (31) is objectual, so this approach avoids the problematic logical gap Gupta has identified. Second, this approach drops substitutional quantification altogether (both here and in treating (ES) itself as “general” instead of appealing to (GES)) in favor of the weaker approach that employs just schemata involving sentence variables like ‘ p ’ (that can appear inside and outside quotation mark devices, including ‘that’-clauses), subject to certain rules of inference.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, in spite of these improvements, I maintain that the pretense-based account still offers certain advantages over Field’s view. On his view, truth-talk itself still involves non-standard logical devices (schematic sentence variables) in its actual logical functioning. One merit of the pretense-based account is that it avoids postulating logical devices of this sort at work in natural language, even to this lesser degree.

There is a sense in which the pretense-based view and Field’s view agree on the logical form of what a general truth-attribution says. After all, given how (UG) identifies the real-world conditions prescribing the pretenses that claims like (7) display, the logical form of the serious assertions made indirectly by such claims is fairly similar to what Field attributes directly to truth-talk itself. So the two approaches coincide at the level of what (7) seriously asserts.⁶⁷ The main difference between the two views emerges in their accounts of how speakers make an assertion with this logical form. On Field’s view they do it directly because (31) is the logical form of (7) itself; on the pretense-based view speakers make an assertion with the schematic logical form indirectly, through the operation of make-believe in their utterances. One advantage of the pretense-based view, then, is that it offers more explanation of *how* truth-talk makes the claims we take it to make. Field’s view can certainly explain *why* we should think that speakers assert something with the postulated logical form. Recall that deflationists hold truth-talk’s most important role to be that of allowing speakers to generalize on the sentences a claim like (6) embeds, by uttering something like (7). Asserting (7) commits a speaker to everything the Pope asserts, but without requiring that she affirm each of those things explicitly and individually. If fulfilling this task really is the whole purpose of a general truth-attribution like (7), its making an assertion with logical form (31) would accomplish this directly. So, for a deflationist, the thesis that this particular job is truth-talk’s central function explains why we should think general truth-attributions put forward claims with this form. What Field’s view leaves without substantive explanation, however, is *how* truth-talk accomplishes this by using an expression that looks unsuited to the

task, one whose grammatical role makes it look like it is in fact doing something else.

Of course, substantive how-explanations of this sort are not always necessary. Ordinary language quantificational expressions function grammatically as nominal terms, but they do not function logically like ordinary referential expressions, and the explanation of how they pull off the very different logical task they perform is quite simple: *they just do*; *that is their job*. But this non-substantive sort of answer is not always appropriate. One might be able to offer arguments explaining why, say, we should read existence-talk as making metalinguistic claims about referential success and failure, or explaining why we should take intentional-attitude ascriptions to involve some hidden indexicality to modes of presentation, but in cases like these there would still be a need for accounts of *how* these ways of talking manage to put forward claims with these unobvious logical forms. The reply ‘they just do’ is unsatisfying in these cases because the putative divergences of logical from grammatical form lack the transparency the quantificational-expression case exhibits. The divergence shows up in the inferential behavior of quantificational expressions; understanding how the logical form differs is part of knowing how to use them properly. This is not the case for more opaque divergences, including, I claim, that occurring in truth-talk.

We cannot plausibly maintain that the logical/grammatical divergence Field postulates for truth-talk has the sort of transparency the quantificational-expressions case exhibits. Thinking it does would involve attributing an implausible level of logical sophistication—including an understanding of schematic sentence variables—to anyone who knows how to use truth-talk. Moreover, there is no apparent explanation for transparency here, since the divergence does not show up in the inferential behavior of ‘is true’; on the contrary, this expression’s behavior mirrors that of an ordinary, property-attributing predicate. These points might not concern Field much, however, since he is perfectly willing to characterize his view as offering a more precise, technical notion meant to replace the ordinary notion of truth.⁶⁸ If we consider his notion of truth a replacement concept designed for a particular job, then we can say that it has a transparent (because stipulated) divergence of logical form. But since we cannot make this claim about ordinary truth-talk, a non-revisionary deflationist who attributes a divergent logical form to the (serious) assertion made with a general truth-attribution needs a substantive explanation of *how* such an utterance manages to make such an assertion. The pretense-based view thus has an explanatory advantage over Field’s view, at least as an account of ordinary truth-talk, since in addition to endorsing the

same why-explanation as the latter, the pretense-based view also offers a how-explanation of the desired sort.⁶⁹

According to a pretense-based account of truth-talk including rule (UQ), the serious assertion an utterance of (7) makes *indirectly* has a logical form that generalizes schematically on the sentences (6) embeds. Although the quantifier (7) employs operates in the ordinary, objectual way, and the expression ‘is true’ functions like an ordinary property-attributing predicate, here these familiar logical devices operate in the context of a make-believe that assigns to the pretenses (7) displays prescriptive real-world conditions we cannot specify directly without introducing complex, non-standard logical devices like substitutional quantification and schematic sentence variables. Thus, because of the way the pretense approach determines the serious assertions pretense-employing utterances make indirectly, the appeal to pretense here explains *how* an utterance that looks unsuited to the task manages to make an assertion with such a different logical form. At the same time, since the pretense-based view does not interpret the main quantifier in claims like (7) substitutionally, it does not open the logical gap that undermines certain other formulations of deflationism. It also avoids postulating any non-standard logical devices at work in truth-talk’s actual functioning. To reiterate a point made earlier, on my view truth-attributions themselves do not involve such devices in any way (not even in their ‘underlying logic’). Rather, it implements these new logical roles indirectly by employing simpler logical devices already available in a natural language, the important factor being that here it does so in the context of a particular pretense. Because the pretense-based account deals with the generalization problem in this logico-syntactically conservative way, it fits especially well with one of the motivating thoughts behind the deflationary impulse: Truth-talk allows us to effect schematic generalizations *without* having to incorporate new, complicated logical devices into our language.⁷⁰ Brandom and Field have to abandon this thought in one way or another as they attempt to deal with the generalization problem; the pretense-based account does not.

Objections and Replies

I have already replied to the challenge that my view is incoherent because, as a version of fictionalism, it amounts to an error theory of truth-talk. The particular way pretense figures in truth-talk prevents the account from being an error theory (in any problematic sense anyway). However, even

though my view avoids this worry, my application of the pretense approach to truth-talk extends the reach of semantic pretense beyond any previous application, and to a domain of discourse that might appear off limits—even to those who employ the approach elsewhere. One might think the application to truth-talk is illegitimate because of the apparently explanatory role that truth-talk typically plays in applications of the pretense approach.⁷¹ However, the use of truth-talk in explanations of other applications of the pretense approach does not preclude applying the approach to truth-talk itself. There is nothing inconsistent about using one semantic pretense to explain another. In fact, although it might be a surprising result, there would be no inconsistency if applying the pretense approach to truth-talk entailed that the only way to explain some semantic pretenses was indirectly, through the use of some (other) semantic pretense.

A slightly stronger objection someone might raise is that this kind of account ignores the obvious fact that speakers making truth-attributions do not think of themselves as pretending anything, and pretending is not something one can do unintentionally.⁷² In response to this objection, let me first reiterate that my view does not claim that employing truth-talk amounts to *pretending* that things are true. Pretending that something is true involves intentionally applying a higher-order extrinsic pretense to something truth-talk already expresses indirectly via its intrinsic invocation of pretense. Speakers cannot unintentionally pretend something is true, but they can invoke the pretenses that utterances involve without thinking of themselves as pretending anything because semantic pretense requires only *shallow* pretenses.

The point of calling the pretense an utterance employs “shallow” is to indicate that a speaker’s use of it does not require that she *actively* engage in any pretending. Speakers do not actually have to play the game of make-believe that explains a way of talking in order to employ the talk. The pretense approach is a way of explaining how fragments of language function; it is not an account of what speakers do. A speaker may be aware that an utterance involves pretense somehow, but she might only allude to the pretense that explains the utterance rather than engage in it.⁷³ In fact, a speaker can make a pretense-employing utterance without even being aware that it involves any pretense.⁷⁴ She might just know that an utterance of this form is a way of making some point without having much of an idea of how it accomplishes this feat, or even without being completely clear on precisely what point the utterance makes.⁷⁵ This last possibility is simply another facet of the social dimension of content externalism—just as, by relying on his

linguistic community (in particular, certain experts), one can refer, e.g., to elm trees without knowing any of their essential features, so too can one assert something he does not (and possibly even cannot) understand by using truth-talk to *co*-assert with someone who does.⁷⁶ In any case, what ordinary speakers take themselves to be doing is not particularly relevant here. Viewed from the outside we can say that it is *as if* someone employing truth-talk actively plays the game of make-believe sketched above. But a shallow pretense is more like a figure of speech one employs than a game one is playing; it is a figure of speech we can best explain in terms of an implicated game of make-believe.

The final objection I will address here is the one that poses the most serious challenge to a pretense-based account of truth-talk. The charge is that we cannot explain truth-talk in terms of pretense because the explanations of pretense and the activity of pretending rely on the notion of truth. If this notion played an ineliminable role in explaining pretense, a role the pretense-based account of truth-talk could not cover, then the attempt to provide a complete account of this talk in terms of semantic pretense would be self-undermining.⁷⁷ This is a genuine worry because the best way to understand pretending is as a special kind of imagining, and the most concise account of imagining, e.g., that *a* is *F*, is in terms of regarding the proposition that *a* is *F* as being true, regardless of whether it is true.⁷⁸ However, objecting to a pretense-based account of truth-talk on the basis of this observation pushes the point beyond its legitimate purchase. While we *can* explain pretense in a way that employs truth-talk, it is also possible to account for pretending without appeal to the notion of truth.

The account of pretending I have in mind stems from the deflationary thesis that truth-talk is just a device for canceling semantic ascent, or, more generally, for denominalizing sentence nominalizations (e.g., expressions of the form ‘that *a* is *F*’). The thought is that we can attain a truth-talk-free account of pretending by “semantically descending” from the proposition- and truth-involving account mentioned above. As a first pass at this, explain pretending that *a* is *F* in terms of regarding the subject of the embedded sentence as being how the sentence says it is on a face-value reading, whether it is that way or not. So we explain pretending that *a* is *F* in terms of adopting the attitude prescribed in:

- (32) Regard *a* as being *F*, regardless of whether it is *F*

Obviously this does not cover all scenarios. One will attempt to regard *a* in some way only if he believes that *a* really exists. Similarly, one will take

something to be *F* only if he thinks being *F* is really a way something can be. So the attitude (32) prescribes underlies pretending that *a* is *F* only when this involves the application of extrinsic pretense to a literal (face-value) reading of '*a* is *F*'. For example, we explain pretending what (8) taken literally says, that is, pretending that Arnold Schwarzenegger is (literally) the headliner of a bad lounge act, in terms of the attitude prescribed in:

- (33) Regard Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger as being the headliner of a bad lounge act, regardless of whether he is the headliner of a bad lounge act.

However, complications arise once we move beyond this straightforward sort of case. If one does not believe both that *a* exists and that things can (literally) be *F*, then one will not take a literal reading of the sentence '*a* is *F*' to provide anything one might pretend. All the sentence might provide for someone to pretend would be something an utterance of it would say indirectly through the operation of some prior pretense. In other words, *pretending* that *a* is *F* under these conditions involves the application of extrinsic pretense to something that an utterance of '*a* is *F*' would assert indirectly, via the intrinsic pretense it invoked. For example, consider the scenario in which one pretends that Santa Claus gets skinny every summer, in full awareness that there is no Santa Claus.⁷⁹ The embedded sentence in this case invokes pretense intrinsically because the name 'Santa Claus' is a fictional name drawn from what we can call the 'Santa Claus'-story.⁸⁰ Following Walton's analysis of what he calls "ordinary statements" concerning works of fiction, the use of a fictional name like 'Santa Claus' in, for example:

- (34) Santa Claus gets skinny every summer

makes a serious assertion about the story that supplies the name.⁸¹ So *pretending* that Santa Claus gets skinny every summer (when one knows there is no Santa Claus) involves an additional layer of pretense beyond that already at work in (34). We explain this additional pretense in terms of adopting the attitude prescribed in:

- (35) Regard the 'Santa Claus'-story as portraying a jolly, fat man called "Santa Claus" who lives at the North Pole, brings presents to good children on Christmas Eve, who rides a sleigh pulled by flying reindeer, . . . , *and who gets skinny every summer*, whether the story portrays this or not.⁸²

In both of the scenarios considered so far there is a match between how the person pretending takes the name and how the name functions: the pretender takes it to refer when it does and takes it not to refer when it does not. There are also, however, two possible scenarios involving mismatches of these two aspects: (i) the potential pretender takes the name not to refer when it actually does; (ii) the potential pretender takes the name to refer when it actually does not. We can analyze the first mismatch scenario in the same way as the matching scenario just discussed. Whether the name actually refers is insignificant; what matters for the pretenses that the use of the name specifies is that the potential pretender takes the name not to refer.⁸³ In such a situation the pretending involves adopting an attitude like the one (35) prescribes.

The second mismatch scenario is not so simple and requires more comment. Consider a case in which a child who believes that Santa Claus exists attempts to *pretend* that Santa Claus gets skinny every summer. She will not adopt an attitude toward the 'Santa Claus'-story; rather, she will attempt to regard Santa Claus in some way. But since there is no Santa Claus, this attempt will fail, and she will not succeed in pretending anything. This is not as counterintuitive as it might sound. The child is not, after all, *pretending* that Santa Claus exists and then adding the further pretense that he gets skinny—nor is she *believing* that Santa Claus both exists and gets skinny every summer. It is quite possible for her to do either of these things (although the explanations of what she does might be somewhat complicated). Part of the point of distinguishing the various scenarios is to contrast *de dicto* and *de re* cases. The current scenario is akin to a *de re* attitude ascription. Resistance to the idea that the child's attempt to pretend will fail most likely arises from thinking of this case in *de dicto* (or at least ambiguous) terms, that is, as a case of pretending that Santa Claus gets skinny every summer. There is no problem with the child doing this when we read it *de dicto*, but then it is closer to the second matching scenario. Because the distinguishing factor in the current scenario is that the child *believes* that Santa Claus exists, we should read this case *de re*, that is, as one in which she attempts to pretend of that (supposedly existing) object that it gets skinny every summer. Her attempt fails because there is no such object. It is only when a potential pretender takes the name as a fictional (or merely empty) name that we can use a sentences like (34) to specify the content of a pretense.

The possibility of these different scenarios indicates a need for a more inclusive account of the attitude pretending that *a* is *F* involves than the one (32) illustrates. Because there are possible cases of pretending that *a* is *F* in

which the claim '*a is F*' itself involves pretense, we need to modify the idea that we regard the subject of the embedded claim as being the way a face-value reading of the sentence describes it. What pretending that *a is F* involves is regarding the *serious* subject of '*a is F*' as being how the utterance *seriously* describes it, whether it is that way or not. This account of pretending applies generally, both to situations that involve applying extrinsic pretense to a claim that we take literally (as in pretending that Arnold Schwarzenegger headlines a bad lounge act), and to situations in which pretending that *a is F* involves applying extrinsic pretense to something that a claim that itself invokes pretense intrinsically expresses indirectly (as in pretending that Santa Claus gets skinny every summer). In fact, the first pass account (32) offers still works as an account of the first sort of scenario because (32) is a special case of the general account for instances of first-order extrinsic pretense. I maintain that a truth-talk-free account of pretending constructed along these lines will address the circularity challenge and allow for the application of the pretense approach to truth-talk without threat of incoherence. And even if an account based on the points just made cannot completely avoid circularity, this does not automatically mean that a pretense-based account of truth-talk is incoherent. It would simply mean that we can explain pretending itself only indirectly, through the use of some semantic pretense.⁸⁴

Concluding Comments

I have presented a pretense-based deflationary account of the fragment of truth-talk that putatively describes propositions transparently denoted with 'that'-clauses. This is an important start, but further work must extend the account offered here in at least two ways. First, it must be extended to truth-talk ostensibly describing propositions denoted opaquely (e.g., by expressions like 'what Corey believes'), and to truth-talk purporting to describe things other than propositions (e.g., sentences). These extensions will require a pretense-based account of proposition-talk, in particular, talk of expressing a proposition. This is no small task, but as mentioned above, it is just a version of the demand for a non-truth-theoretic account of meaning(-talk) that all deflationists face.

Second, further work must extend the account to cover the other traditional semantic notions: reference and predicate-satisfaction.⁸⁵ The pretense-based accounts of these ways of talking will parallel my account of truth-talk in that they too will explain how certain apparently predicative ways of

talking allow us to make indirectly serious assertions we could not otherwise make, by means of appearing to say something else. And as the principles of generation from the make-believe behind truth-talk underwrite (ES), the pretense-based accounts of the other semantic notions will underwrite the similar schemata governing them:

- (R) $(\forall x)$ (' n ' refers to x iff $n = x$)
- (S) $(\forall x)$ (x satisfies ' F ' iff Fx).

These extensions are the issues that the larger project this chapter introduces should address next. Further work then includes the task of determining how a pretense-based account of truth-talk impacts related subjects (e.g., proposition-talk, propositional-attitude-talk, property-talk, existence-talk, and identity-talk). The account offered here addresses some of the basic concerns truth-talk raises and provides the foundation for a suggestive line of inquiry into the important family of issues related to the functioning of truth-talk.

NOTES

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1. By 'truth-talk' I primarily mean that fragment of our talk (and thought) that involves the terms (or concepts) 'true', 'false', 'truth', 'falsity', and such cognates as 'being right', 'being so', etc. Taken broadly, truth-talk also includes talk involving such technical notions as reference and satisfaction. The scope of my concern at this stage is truth-talk in the former, narrower sense.
2. A way of talking is a loosely bounded fragment of discourse (and thought) centered around some expression (concept) or family of expressions (concepts)—e.g., modality, numbers, truth—or around some mode or figure of speech—e.g., metaphor, irony, hyperbole.
3. Field (1989: 2) describes this error-theoretic sense of fictionalism but also points out that this is not the only way to understand the general approach. See also Price (2003: 188) for a statement of this worry about fictionalism regarding semantic notions.

4. See Boghossian (1990: 167, 174–5) for a fuller account of this kind of objection to such a view.
5. I say more about the paradoxical aspect of truth-talk below.
6. See Frege (1918: 6) and Soames (1999: 21–2).
7. Claiming as I do here that utterances of the forms ‘It is true that p ’ and ‘That p is true’ are trivial syntactic variants involves a commitment to treating ‘that’-clauses as referential expressions. Schiffer (1996) presents arguments for doing so. Here I take them as referential expressions, but only in the context of a pretense. I will say a bit more about this below.
8. This is a *strengthened* version of the Liar formulated to foil attempted solutions in terms of truth-value gaps or the claim that Liar sentences do not express anything. Even the latter strategy is self-defeating if we apply it to (4).
9. Note also that in the case of (4), its paradoxical nature is due to the contingent fact that I have labeled it ‘(4)’ rather than anything intrinsic to the sentence itself. The sentence would not be paradoxical if I had labeled it ‘(A)’—unless, of course, I also applied the label ‘(4)’ to ‘The sentence labeled “(A)” expresses something true,’ in which case (4) and (A) would form a paradoxical loop. See Kripke (1975: 691–2).
10. Kirkham (1992: 311).
11. It turns out to be a necessary condition for a view of truth-talk to count as deflationary that it takes the talk not to attribute any substantive property, but this is not a sufficient condition for counting as deflationary, and thus is not deflationism’s definitive commitment.
12. See Horwich (1998: 121, 126–8, 138). This general understanding of deflationism covers a variety of more specific “realizing” formulations of the approach. The three most developed formulations in the current literature (the “current formulations”) are: Paul Horwich’s Minimal Theory (MT), presented in Horwich (1998); Robert Brandom’s operator version of Prosententialism (OP), presented in Chapter 5 of Brandom (1994); and Hartry Field’s Pure Disquotationalism (PD), presented in Field (1994). Field (2001c) presents an account of ‘that’-clauses that would allow him to explain his *disquotational* view in terms of (ES).
13. On Horwich’s MT these equivalences are brute axioms, in the sense of being logico-linguistically basic. Field’s PD and Brandom’s OP take the instances of (ES) as explanatorily and conceptually basic, but not as brute. Rather, on the latter two views these equivalences are immediate consequences of truth-talk’s basic logico-linguistic functioning.
14. Although not explicitly deflationary, Graham Priest’s dialethism is the best-developed example of this approach to the paradoxes. See Priest (1979) and (1998).
15. I am assuming, of course, that there cannot be “inconsistent” properties—properties that certain things have if, and only if, those things do not have those properties. If one finds this assumption questionable (perhaps by taking

reality to be inconsistent?), then he should take my point here to be just that deflationary views are more flexible in pursuing the “diagnose and contain” strategy with respect to the Liar paradox, since one does not have to assume that reality is “inconsistent” (whatever that might mean) to do so.

16. Kripke (1975: 692).
17. See Chihara (1979) on the diagnostic problem/preventative problem distinction.
18. See Priest (1998: 421). As evidence for this point, consider the following cases. Sentence (L_1): ‘The sentence labeled “(L_1)” is not stably true’ challenges rule-of-revision solutions. Sentence (L_2): ‘The sentence labeled “(L_2)” is not definitely true’ confronts indeterminacy solutions. Sentence (L_3): ‘The sentence labeled “(L_3)” is not true in any context (or at any level of the hierarchy)’ confronts contextual/indexical solutions.
19. I should note that this does not hold for all deflationary views. As it currently stands, Horwich’s MT needs to solve the preventative problem as much as any inflationary view does. So the Liar may pose even more of a problem for MT than it does for inflationary views. This would change if Horwich gave up the claim that MT is a theory of *truth itself* and offered it just as a theory of the *concept* of truth. He seems to be leaning slightly in this direction in the postscript to Horwich (1998: 141–2), although his explicit position is still that MT is a theory of truth itself and that we must eliminate the paradoxicality from the Liar paradox (ibid.: 36–7, 136).
20. Walton (1990).
21. Walton (1990: 37–8). To avoid circularity, I replace Walton’s use of ‘fictional’ and Crimmins’s related and more perspicuous use of ‘fictionally true’ (1998: 4–6) with explanations in terms of what is *to be pretended* or what pretenses are *prescribed*. I use ‘prescribed’ here simply as a means of saying that something is both permissible (or appropriate) and obligatory (in so far as the question of its normative status arises). A pretense being prescribed thus means that given certain assumptions (e.g., that one is playing a particular game of make-believe), circumstances will antecedently settle that one should include this pretense in what he pretends, should the issue of what to pretend on that front arise.
22. Crimmins (1998: 5).
23. Ibid.: 32.
24. See Walton (1990: ch. 11) for the details of this way of applying the pretense approach to existence-talk. Evans (1982: ch. 10) and Kroon (1996) develop slightly different pretense-theoretic accounts.
25. The pretense approach thus offers a direct response to the worries about self-application failure that Huw Price considers regarding fictionalism about truth and other semantic notions. See Price (2003: 188).
26. Higher-order levels of extrinsic pretense are possible, for example, second-order extrinsic pretense involves merely pretending that it is to be pretended that *a* is *F*, etc. Second-order extrinsic pretense involves a change in how we regard the

- subject in the pretense (from being *F* to having the features required to be fictionally *F* in a first-order pretense). Third- and higher-orders of pretense involve a change in subject (from *a* to games of make-believe themselves) as well.
27. See Walton (1993) for the details of the role of make-believe in (much) metaphor. What I add here is a specification of the type of pretense many cases involve as extrinsic, in particular, *first-order* extrinsic.
 28. See Rowling (1998: 166–70). For the uninitiated, Quidditch is a sport played by wizards on flying brooms. It involves three types of balls: a Quaffle, two Bludgers, and a Golden Snitch.
 29. See Walton (1990: ch. 10) for the relevant account of “ordinary statements” concerning works of fiction.
 30. The pretense approach and the notion of intrinsic pretense might explain not only uses of fictional names and “fictional quantification”, but also uses of merely *empty* names and “empty quantification”. See note 82.
 31. Preminger and Brogan (1993: 74). Thanks to David Hills for the suggestion.
 32. See Yablo (2000: 214, 223).
 33. In the case of ‘smarts’ this might be too strong, but if so this is only because this expression is now a case of *dead* anthimeria (on analogy with dead metaphors, as in ‘The bottle has a long neck’). Even if this term is now a referential English expression, it still has no referent, and it seems highly plausible that it entered the language via the kind of pretense about its functioning that I describe. After all, its meaning is parasitic on the meaning of the adjective that an utterance like (13) uses as a noun. (*Mutatis mutandis* for the pretend verb ‘to nixon’.)
 34. I do not mean anything too heavy-duty by ‘analysis’ here—just an account specifying when the mentioned expression is applicable to some object. The most precise form of this involves the specification of (when available) discriminating conditions that are necessary and sufficient for the expression’s correct application.
 35. Evans (1982: 348) makes a similar point, although without drawing the conclusion I draw from it.
 36. Functioning *logically* as a predicate is a matter of how a term behaves in inference. We can see that ‘exists’ functions as a predicate logically from its behavior in inferences like that from ‘Santa Claus and the tooth fairy do not exist’ to ‘There are things that do not exist.’ Functioning as a predicate *logico-linguistically* includes this inferential behavior, but it includes more as well (in particular, characterizing or describing the referent of the term expression to which the putative predicate attaches).
 37. This claim pertains to the most general applicability conditions for the expression. The truth of a claim like ‘Dex is happy iff Corey is nearby’ is not a counter-example even though it implies ‘Dex satisfies “is happy” iff Corey is nearby.’ A statement of the *general* applicability conditions for ‘is happy’ has the form ‘ $(\forall x)(x$ satisfies “is happy” iff x is F .’ The same point applies to other putative counter-examples like

- 'Space is Euclidean iff for any straight line L and any point not on that line, exactly one line co-planer with L passes through that point without intersecting L .' The form of the general applicability conditions for 'is Euclidean' is something like $(\forall x)(x \text{ satisfies "is Euclidean" iff } x \text{ is a spatial structure such that } \dots)$.' Thus, the right-hand side of any instance of these applicability conditions does place conditions on the subject from its left-hand side.
38. There is also the difference that (ES) is an analysis *schema* rather than an actual general analysis, so each instance of (ES) is itself an analysis of a particular application of 'is true'. This does not affect the present point. An additional difference is that in the instances of (ES), the putative predicate is used rather than mentioned, but this is also unimportant here, since each is trivially equivalent to an instance of: '(ES') That p satisfies "is true" iff p .'
 39. The classic presentation of prosententialism is Grover, Camp, and Belnap (1975). Brandom's version of the approach appears in Brandom (1994: ch. 5). On this view, the expression 'is true' is an operator that attaches to terms denoting sentences (or "sentence-tokenings" as Brandom would say) to form *prosentences*, the sentential analog of pronouns. Like pronouns, prosentences inherit their content anaphorically, in this case from another sentence.
 40. See Horwich (1998: 125).
 41. *Mutatis mutandis* for 'is false' and the pretend property of falsity.
 42. See Alston (1996: 14). I say "*ostensibly* about propositions" because proposition-talk also gets a pretense-theoretic account on my overall view. I will not discuss this in detail here (I do in Woodbridge (MS)), but briefly, I accept the arguments in Schiffer (1996) for propositions being "language-created" entities, but not those for their being "language-independent" entities. We *talk* as if they are, but this is just a semantic pretense serving other expressive purposes, e.g., that of talking about computationally typed mentalese sentences in my head for the purpose of describing (via analogy or comparison) mentalese sentences in other heads. (See Field (2001c), on 'that'-clauses and content attributions.)
 43. Although we can break claims like (t) down syntactically into the expression 'it is true that ...' and a sentence, this decomposition does not represent the underlying logical form of these claims. Even in (t), the truth-locution functions ostensibly as a predicate, combining with a referring term; it does not function as an operator modifying a sentence.
 44. I do not mean to imply that making utterances in English is an essential part of the pretenses identified in this way. One might engage in the relevant pretenses by making utterances in some other language or by having certain thoughts.
 45. We can make serious assertions with utterances expressing stipulated pretenses belonging to the game, e.g., 'Propositions are the basic truth-bearers' or 'Truth is a property of propositions', but the serious assertions made will be that the pretenses displayed in the utterances are part of the content of the make-believe.
 46. See Kripke (1975) and Grover (1977).

47. The contrast is with *partially* pretend claims, e.g., non-pathological instances of truth-talk, such as ‘It is true that crabapples are edible.’ Partially pretend claims generally are claims that employ pretense to make serious claims about the world indirectly.
48. Thanks to Ken Walton for the example.
49. See Priest (1998: 410–12).
50. There will also be an analogous principle for the segment of truth-talk involving quantificational attributions of falsity. We can obtain this rule by replacing ‘is true’ in the mentioned formula on the left-hand side with ‘is false’ and ‘ p ’ in the consequent on the right-hand side with ‘ $\sim p$ ’.
51. As in the case of (UQ), there is a principle analogous to (EQ) for existentially quantified attributions of falsity. ‘ Σ ’ is the existential substitutional quantifier, which is a device for encoding a (potentially infinite) disjunction.
52. See Crimmins (1998).
53. I develop an account of this sort in Woodbridge (MS).
54. See Brandom (1994: 302).
55. Brandom (1994: 304).
56. Field (1994: 259, 267, 268). Field also discusses an approach that drops substitutional quantifiers and just takes schemata employing sentence variables as themselves generalized. I consider this alternative below. In discussing both approaches I am paraphrasing what Field says about the *disquotational* schema: ‘(DS) “ p ” is true iff p ’, in light of the account of ‘that’-clauses Field now finds attractive (what he calls “LV” in Field (2001c)). According to LV, ‘that’-clauses are just a means of picking out computationally (rather than orthographically) typed sentences of the speaker’s own idiolect. Thus, on Field’s view, the equivalence schema: ‘(ES) It is true that p (= That p is true)’ is really the basis of a disquotational (rather than propositional) account of truth-talk.
57. This step involves the assumption that ‘that’-clauses pick out the things speakers assert. Combining Field’s PD with LV somewhat complicates this thesis. According to LV, ‘that’-clauses pick out sentences belonging to the idiolect of the person using them (interpreted as that person interprets them). But while I can assert (29) indiscriminately, much of what comes out of the Pope’s mouth are not sentences belonging to my idiolect. So really we need to loosen (28) to something along the lines of: ‘(28’) (Πp) (Pope assertorically utters something *that means* that $p \rightarrow$ that p is true)’ where we understand meaning-talk as LV explains it.
58. Although, unlike an objectual quantifier, it does not supply them referentially as things the claim talks about.
59. Field (1999: 533).
60. Because it is a propositional view, Horwich’s MT cannot make use of substitutional quantification in this way. As a result, however, MT has even less to say about truth-talk’s generalizing role, and because of its structure it is basically sunk by the generalization problem.

61. See Gupta (1993).
62. As part of his normative-inferentialist approach to meaning, Brandom actually endorses a substitutional interpretation of quantification generally. (See Brandom (1994: 434–5).)
63. This is the reason for my use of scare-quotes above around ‘Fieldian’, to distance the application of the above strategy to a disquotational account from Field’s actual view. In fact, Field has urged something like the following alternative reading on me as his intended one (recognizing the above strategy for the sort of Trojan Horse it is).
64. It is important to keep in mind the explanation of Field’s take on ‘that’-clauses from above and note 56. Since on his view, ‘that’-clauses amount to a kind of quotation with which a speaker can refer to computationally typed sentences of her own idiolect, (30) involves identifying objects the quantifier supplies with sentences, not with propositions, and applying the truth-predicate to sentences, not to propositions. Thus, like (ES), (30) is still part of a *disquotational* account of truth-talk.
65. Field (1994: 251, 251 n.2, 268). See also Field (2001a: 142 n. 1). Cognitive equivalence is thus a non-intensional notion for Field. Again, I am translating what Field says about (DS).
66. Field (1994: 259) and (2001b: 141–2). The details of these rules are not important for present purposes, but I should note that I find the particular rules Field offers problematic. In fact, my worries apply to any rules that would be strong enough for Field’s purposes. I pursue this objection in Woodbridge (2003).
67. However, as indicated in the comments about proposition-talk above, I think that Field needs to modify his understanding of ‘that’-clauses to include an element of pretense. We can take the analysis LV offers to capture the serious content proposition-talk puts forward indirectly via the semantic pretense it involves. This fits better with our linguistic and inferential practices involving ‘that’-clauses and avoids the problems that follow from taking terms like ‘what Corey asserted/ believes’ as literally denoting sentences (or sentence-tokenings). For instance, one does not have to think (implausibly) that our ordinary notions of belief, assertion, etc. are relations to sentences; instead one can retain the intuitive thought that each is (or at least purports to be) a relation to a proposition—that is, something that we assert, believe, etc. *by means of* uttering sentences or having mental states (that perhaps involve mental sentence-analogs).
68. Field (1994: 277–8). This revisionary attitude is also apparent in Field’s talk of “incorporat[ing] schematic letters for sentences into the language” (ibid.: 259) and Field (2001b: 141) and of “reasoning with” and “accepting” schemata (Field (2001b: 147–8)).
69. With respect to treating Field’s view as a replacement proposal, understanding ordinary truth-talk in terms of semantic pretense offers both a theoretical and

practical advantage over accepting this revision because on the pretense approach truth-talk involves fewer and simpler syntactic resources.

70. Horwich (1998: 4 n.1, 37).
71. Consider, for example, the use of ‘fictionally true’ in the brief sketch of the pretense-based account of existence-talk given above. Truth-talk plays a similar role in Mark Crimmins’ discussion of the pretense approach and his applications of it to attitude ascriptions and identity-talk in Crimmins (1998). See also Stephen Yablo’s application of the pretense approach to possible-worlds-talk in Yablo (1996).
72. At least the first conjunct seems to be one of the fundamental objections Richard (2000) raises against semantic pretense.
73. See Walton (1990: 406–11) on statements belonging to “unofficial” games of make-believe.
74. Crimmins (1998: 10, 14–15). One must be aware of the shallow pretense, however, if one is to have a full understanding of both what is said and how it gets said (ibid.: 3).
75. In the case of truth-talk, the explanation of this might be the fact that ‘is true’ has no literal content. Yablo (2000: 223–4) points out that we often mistake standard usage for literal usage. Thus, we might fail to notice that standard usage involves pretense, especially if there is no literal content with which to contrast the non-literal (standard) content.
76. See Putnam (1975) on the role of the linguistic community (and in particular, of experts), in referring.
77. This would be akin to the sort of general objection to deflationism developed in Boghossian (1990).
78. Velleman (2000: 251). On Velleman’s view, both imagining and believing involve accepting a proposition, that is, both are ways of regarding a proposition to be true. He claims that the difference is that, unlike imagining, believing a proposition involves regarding it as true with the aim of doing so only if it is true.
79. For simplicity, I will contrast cases that differ only with respect to one’s position on the existence of *a*. The same points apply *mutatis mutandis* for cases that involve giving up the possibility that things can literally be *F*, and for cases in which one rejects both.
80. The ‘Santa Claus’-story is the familiar, standard, culturally salient story in which the term ‘Santa Claus’ centrally figures. This rules out deviant stories employing the name, and stories portraying someone with the same features as those the ‘Santa Claus’-story portrays someone named ‘Santa Claus’ as having, but which are “about someone else” (i.e., which use a different fictional name with the intention of portraying a different (fictional) person). This does not rule out stories in other languages or from other cultures (e.g., the French ‘Papa Noël’-story) from being the “same story” or from portraying the “same” (fictional) person.

81. I take this to follow from the explanation given in Walton (1990: 403).
82. We can give an analogous account of pretenses involving names one takes as merely empty names not drawn from established works of fiction (as opposed to specifically fictional names that are). Just as the serious assertion one makes with an utterance employing the name 'Santa Claus' as a fictional name is about the 'Santa Claus'-story, the serious assertion one makes with an utterance employing what he takes as a merely empty name (e.g., 'Vulcan') is about the (mini-)theory or "lore" surrounding the use of that name (e.g., the 'Vulcan'-lore). Therefore, pretenses described using merely empty names involve regarding the associated "lore" as including various claims, regardless of whether it does.
83. In my use of 'the name' here I am simplifying things by proceeding as if we individuate names orthographically rather than (at least partially) semantically. In fact, the latter seems more plausible to me, but then the name we take not to refer would be a different (though homophonic) name from the one that does refer. If so, and if one's linguistic community employed the latter name, that would not automatically falsify one's belief that this particular orthographic item does not refer, even if one intended to use it as his linguistic community does. Rather, it would be indeterminate which name one was using, and we could resolve this indeterminacy in either direction depending on whether the speaker gave up the intention or the belief upon discovering this conflict. Thus, we must qualify the claim that what matters is how one takes the name, factoring in the social aspects of content externalism referenced in the paragraph connected with note 76. But this qualification does not undermine the claim, as the flexibility in resolving the indeterminacy just mentioned indicates.
84. See Yablo (1998: 249 n.50). This would not be a problem, since it would just be a fact about the extent of our linguistic and explanatory capacities and would *not* constitute a vicious regress in which one must already be pretending in order to *begin* pretending.
85. We might think that pretense-based accounts of these notions receive initial motivation from the Berry Paradox involving expressions like 'the least number not describable in less than eighteen syllables' and the Heterological Paradox involving predicates like '... is not true of itself.'

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