CLAIRE HORISK

WHAT SHOULD DEFLATIONISM BE WHEN IT GROWS UP?

ABSTRACT.   I argue that a popular brand of deflationism about truth, disquotationalism, does not adequately account for some central varieties of truth ascription. For example, given Boyle's Law is "The product of pressure and volume is exactly a constant for an ideal gas", disquotationalism does not explain why the blind ascription "Boyle's Law is true" implies that the product of pressure and volume is exactly a constant for an ideal gas, and given Washington said only "Birds sing", disquotationalism does not explain why the existentially quantified ascription "Something Washington said is true" implies that birds sing. Thus disquotationalism fails to account for all the facts about truth.

1.

Deflationism about truth maintains that we can account for the primary uses of "is true" without appeal to a robust property of truth. Varieties of deflationism (such as disquotationalism, minimalism, and prosententialism) can be distinguished by their proposals for dealing with three central kinds of truth ascription; a satisfactory deflationism must account for at least these three.[1] In this paper I will show that a venerable brand of contemporary deflationism, disquotationalism, does not meet this requirement.[2]

My discussion concerns explicit, quantified, and blind truth ascriptions. Explicit ascriptions pick out a particular sentence or proposition which appears alongside "is true", as in:

(1) It is true that Fred is extravagant.
(2) "Fred is extravagant" is true.

In non-explicit ascriptions, the proposition or sentence to which truth is being ascribed does not explicitly appear. Some are universally or existentially quantified ascriptions, such as:

(3) Everything Washington says is true.
(4) Something Washington said is true.

Others are blind ascriptions, in which a term refers to a particular, but unstated proposition or sentence, such as:

(5) Boyle's Law is true

or, where Caleb has said "Fred is extravagant":

(6) What Caleb said is true.

Disquotationalism is celebrated for its ability to handle non-explicit ascriptions.[3] But I will argue that, of the non-explicit ascriptions, disquotationalism adequately handles at most universally quantified ascriptions, failing to account for the logical properties of blind and existentially quantified ascriptions. For example, disquotationalism does not explain why given that Caleb said "Fred is extravagant" the blind ascription (6) implies that Fred is extravagant, and it does not explain why given that Washington said only "The cherry tree flowers in the spring" the existentially quantified ascription (4) implies that the cherry tree flowers in the spring.[4] I show the former in section 3 and the latter in section 6. The defense of my thesis begins in section 2, where I outline the disquotationalist analysis of explicit and non-explicit ascriptions. In sections 4 and 5, I consider and reject objections to the main premises of my argument.

2.

According to Quinean disquotationalism (1970), the truth predicate does not work like other predicates; rather, it is a device of semantic ascent in both explicit and non-explicit ascriptions.[5] For example, (2) is an indirect way of saying something about the world – that Fred is extravagant. In explicit ascriptions like (2) "is true" performs disquotation; in effect it cancels the quotation marks around "Fred is extravagant". For disquotationalism, the truth predicate's utility is best exhibited in non-explicit truth ascriptions, where it enables

us to express infinite conjunctions and disjunctions. Disquotationalism holds that a universally quantified ascription such as (3) is shorthand for an infinite conjunction such as:

(7) If Washington says "The cherry tree flowers every year", then the cherry tree flowers every year
and if Washington says "The cherry tree has been vandalized", then the cherry tree has been vandalized
and if Washington says "The cherry tree is in the garden", then the cherry tree is in the garden
and . . .

There will be one conjunct for every sentence Washington might say. Disquotationalism holds that an existentially quantified ascription such as (4) is equivalent to an infinite disjunction such as:

(8) Washington said "The cherry tree flowers every year" and the cherry tree flowers every year
or Washington said "The cherry tree has been vandalized" and the cherry tree has been vandalized
or Washington said "The cherry tree is in the garden" and the cherry tree is in the garden
or . . .

Finally, disquotationalism holds that blind ascriptions, like existentially quantified ascriptions, are equivalent to infinite disjunctions.[6] For example, (5) is equivalent to:

(9) Boyle's Law is "The product of pressure and volume is exactly a constant for an ideal gas" and the product of pressure and volume is exactly a constant for an ideal gas
or Boyle's Law is "grass is green" and grass is green
or . . .[7]

There is no doubt that (3) and (7), (4) and (8), and (5) and (9) are materially equivalent. However, the main argument of this paper will show that material equivalence is insufficient to disquotationalism's needs, at least where blind and existentially quantified ascriptions are concerned.

In the course of the discussion, it will be helpful to keep in mind disquotationalism's method for preserving material equivalence with cases involving indexicals. Suppose Fred says:

(10) I would not make a good clergyman

and Mary says:

(11) What Fred said is true.

A simple version of disquotationalism might individuate what Fred said as a phonetic or orthographic type, and treat Mary's utterance (11) as shorthand for the infinite disjunction:

(12) What Fred said is "I would not make a good clergyman" and I would not make a good clergyman
or what Fred said is "Fred would not make a good clergyman" and Fred would not make a good clergyman
or ...

But (10) and (12) will not share their truth value if, for example, Fred would not make a good clergyman but Mary would. Disquotationalism must deliver at a minimum material equivalence of (10) and (12) by providing a disjunct something like:

(13) What Fred said is "I would not make a good clergyman" and Fred would not make a good clergyman.

To handle cases like this, Quine (1970) proposes that truth is predicated of sentence tokens rather than of sentence types, adding that the typing of sentences must be done in a way that accommodates shifts in indexicals.[8] Field (1994) proposes that truth is predicated of a sentence on an occasion of utterance. For Field (1994) the procedure for understanding an attribution of truth is not simple disquotation, but disquotation indexed to speaker, place and time, and for Field (2001) sentences are to be typed computationally.[9] Let us assume that everything will come out rosy if we treat blind ascriptions as ascriptions of truth to sentence tokens, and employ disquotation that is sufficiently complex so that the infinite disjunction that is equivalent to Mary's blind ascription in effect contains disjunct (13).[10]

In the course of the discussion, I will distinguish *Whatever* ascriptions from *JustSo* ascriptions. For the disquotationalist, the utility of "is true" is illustrated by blind ascriptions because we can use them where we cannot supply the quote name of a sentence. I will call blind ascriptions like this Whatever ascriptions – for example, a speaker uses (5) to affirm Boyle's Law, whatever it is. But not all blind ascriptions are Whatever ascriptions – take, for example, Mary's (11), where Fred's (10) is available to her. Here the disquotationalist can appeal to some pragmatic or rhetorical reason to explain Mary's choice of (11) rather than the utterance "Fred would not make a good clergyman" – for example, Mary might want to let Fred know that she heard him. I will call ascriptions like this JustSo ascriptions.

<div align="center">3.</div>

Let us say that a blind ascription selects[11] a sentence or proposition. For disquotationalism, the ascription (5) selects the sentence:

(14) The product of pressure and volume is exactly a constant for an ideal gas.

For minimalism, which admits propositions, (5) selects the proposition:

(15) < The product of pressure and volume is exactly a constant for an ideal gas > .

On the face of it, blind ascriptions have certain implications. In our examples, given what Caleb said, (6) implies that Fred is extravagant, whereas given that Boyle's Law is what it is, (5) implies that the product of pressure and volume is exactly a constant for an ideal gas.[12] Any adequate account of blind ascriptions must have a smooth account of these kinds of implication, drawing on three elements – the blind ascription itself, the desired account of truth, and a premise specifying what the blind ascription selects. Intuition suggests both that blind ascriptions have such implications, and that no more than

these three elements should be required to account for them. Minimalism has an account of the appropriate implications along these lines. The minimalist can argue from a blind ascription to the requisite conclusion like this:

M1 Boyle's Law is true.

[Assumption – (5)]

M2 Boyle's Law is < The product of pressure and volume is exactly a constant for an ideal gas >

[Assumption – (5) selects (15)]

M3 < The product of pressure and volume is exactly a constant for an ideal gas > is true if and only if the product of pressure and volume is exactly a constant for an ideal gas.

[Axiom of the minimalist theory]

M4 < The product of pressure and volume is exactly a constant for an ideal gas > is true.

[from M1, M2]

C The product of pressure and volume is exactly a constant for an ideal gas.

[from M3, M4][13]

The minimalist's argument fills the bill – only three assumptions are required, premise M1 giving the blind ascription itself, premise M2 identifying Boyle's Law, and premise M3 embodying an axiom of the minimalist theory of truth. The parallel premises for disquotationalism should be D1, giving the blind ascription, D2 identifying Boyle's Law, and D3 embodying the disquotationalist analysis of blind ascriptions. But to derive the Law, the disquotationalist requires in addition to D3 something like D4:

D1 Boyle's Law is true.

[Assumption – (5)]

D2 Boyle's Law is "The product of pressure and volume is exactly a constant for an ideal gas".

[Assumption – (5) selects (14)]

D3 Boyle's Law is "The product of pressure and volume is exactly a constant for an ideal gas" and the product of pressure and volume is exactly a constant for an ideal gas

or Boyle's Law is "grass is green" and grass is green
or . . .

[Disq. analysis of D1 – (9)]

D4 Boyle's Law is not "grass is green" and Boyle's Law is not
"$e = mc^2$" and . . .

[Assumption]

D5 Boyle's Law is "The product of pressure and volume is
exactly a constant for an ideal gas" and the product of
pressure and volume is exactly a constant for an ideal gas.

[from D3, D4]

C   The product of pressure and volume is exactly a constant
for an ideal gas.

[from D5]

Surprisingly, D2 is idle in this argument. D2 tells us that *one* of
the conjuncts of the first disjunct of D3 is true, but that does
not imply the truth of the *other* conjunct of that disjunct. To
complete the derivation of C, we need D4. D4 guarantees the
falsity of each disjunct other than the first of D3, allowing the
derivation of D5. If the disquotationalist account of blind
ascriptions was adequate, no extra premises along the lines of
D4 should be necessary – C should follow from the blind
ascription, a premise identifying Boyle's Law, and the account
of blind ascriptions. Disquotationalists may think that D4 is
not really an additional premise, because they may think it
follows from D2. But I will show in section 4 that they are
mistaken.

   For the moment let us suppose my argument goes through.
The argument shows that some versions of disquotationalism
are false – those versions that claim a very strong equivalence,
intensional equivalence, between blind ascriptions and infinite
disjunctions.[14] Intensionally equivalent sentences (i.e., sen-
tences equivalent in meaning) should imply the same sentences,
but blind ascriptions and their equivalent infinite disjunctions
do not share their implications. Given the blind ascription (5),
and a premise identifying Boyle's Law, and a commonsense
understanding of the truth predicate, we can conclude that the
product of pressure and volume is a constant for an ideal gas.

But in the absence of an additional premise like D4, this con-
clusion cannot be drawn from the blind ascription (5), a pre-
mise identifying Boyle's Law, and a disquotationalist
understanding of the truth predicate. Therefore, blind ascrip-
tions are not intensionally equivalent to infinite disjunctions.[15]
The two are equivalent in some sense weaker than the inten-
sional.

My argument does not threaten the disquotationalist thesis
that blind ascriptions and the appropriate infinite disjunctions
are in some sense equivalent, since there is no doubt that they
are *materially* equivalent.[16] Nevertheless, it allows us to dis-
miss disquotationalism as an adequate theory of truth, be-
cause it shows that disquotationalism does not account for the
use of "is true" in blind ascriptions. I have assumed that the
blind ascription (5) implies that the product of pressure and
volume is exactly a constant for an ideal gas. If blind
ascriptions do have such implications, a complete explanation
of the facts about blind ascriptions should explain why they
imply what they do. But we cannot explain why the blind
ascription implies what it does by citing an equivalence (of
any kind) with an infinite disjunction, since infinite disjunc-
tions do not imply what blind ascriptions imply. Disquota-
tionalism cannot claim that there is nothing more to blind
ascriptions than their equivalence to infinite disjunctions, be-
cause there is something more, something which allows the
blind ascription to imply the law more immediately (i.e., with
fewer additional premises) than the infinite disjunction. In
short, if the disquotationalist accepts that a blind ascription
implies what it seems to, then she must deny that the equiv-
alence between the ascription and an infinite disjunction ex-
hausts its function. No equivalence between blind ascriptions
and infinite disjunctions, no matter how strong or how weak,
could account for those implications. The disquotationalist
account is incomplete – contrary to its bold claims, it does not
account for all the uses of "is true".

Perhaps this conclusion comes too fast. In each of sections 4
and 5, I will consider a tempting objection to this argument.
The first objection tries to show that D2 implies D4, so that D1,

D2 and D3 do after all imply C. The second holds that blind ascriptions do not imply what they seem to, so there is no need to demonstrate that D1, D2, and D3 imply C. Neither of these objections is successful.

<div align="center">4.</div>

Suppose that the disquotationalist objects that the conjuncts of D4 follow from D2 – so, given D2, D4 is a logical freebie, rather than an additional premise. Call statements of the form "Boyle's Law is 'grass is green'" I-statements.[17] Disquotationalists may think that the truth of one I-statement such as "Boyle's Law is 'grass is green'" guarantees the falsity of all the other I-statements (such as "Boyle's Law is '$e = mc^2$'") to be found in the infinite disjunction. Then each conjunct of D4 is guaranteed to be true, since each follows the pattern "Boyle's Law is not '$e = mc^2$'". The disquotationalist's derivation of C would mirror that of minimalism, containing only three elements – the blind ascription itself, the account of truth, and a premise identifying Boyle's Law. The implication of the blind ascription would be assured, with nothing beyond what ought to be necessary – so blind ascriptions and infinite disjunctions might be intensional equivalents, after all. I assume that disquotationalists have had something like this in mind.[18] But the conjuncts of D4 are not logical freebies following from D2 – *at best* they are contingent truths. To develop this objection and to see why we should reject it will take some work, because we will need to think about what is expressed by I-statements like "Boyle's Law is 'grass is green'".

Disquotationalists eschew talk of propositions, so assume that for the disquotationalist, "Boyle's Law" (both in the blind ascription and on the left-hand side of I-statements) has a sentence as its extension. Two options present themselves – "Boyle's Law" might have as its extension either a sentence token or a sentence type. If we take "Boyle's Law" to have a sentence token as its extension, we might treat I-statements as token–token identities, or as statements telling us that the

sentence token falls under a sentence type. If we take "Boyle's Law" to have a sentence type as its extension, we might treat I-statements as type–type identities. Two methods of sentence typing are relevant, orthographic and computational. I will treat each of these possibilities in turn, showing that none is satisfactory for disquotationalism. There is a reading of the I-statements which is viable, but as we shall see, it involves semantic sentence-typing, a method of typing that is not available to disquotationalism.

Given the proffered disquotationalist solutions to the indexical problem, suppose first that "Boyle's Law" picks out a sentence token. We can swiftly dismiss the view that I-statements are token–token identities. If "Boyle's Law" on the left-hand side of an I-statement picks out a sentence on an occasion of utterance it does not pick out the physically distinct token to be found on the right-hand side of the I-statement in an infinite disjunction. So I-statements cannot express token–token identity, because if they did, none of the I-statements would be true (cf. David, 1994, p. 153). So assume that the I-statement "Boyle's Law is 'grass is green'" holds that the sentence token selected by "Boyle's Law" belongs to the sentence type "grass is green".

As I noted above, there are a number of ways to type sentences. Let us begin with orthographic typing. The disquotationalist may think that the truth of "Boyle's Law is 'grass is green'" (if it is true) logically precludes the truth of other I-statements, such as "Boyle's Law is '$e = mc^2$'". Formal languages normally forbid referring terms with more than one referent, and if we follow this dictum here, "Boyle's Law" cannot refer to more than one sentence token. Quote names name uniquely, so that each sentence is named by a single quote name: Treating quote names as picking out orthographic sentence types, different quote names pick out different sentence types.[19] If "Boyle's Law" picks out a sentence token, that token cannot belong to more than one orthographic type. It follows that as a logical matter at most one of the I-statements in the infinite disjunction could be true. Then the disquotationalist might hold that the conjuncts of D4 are logical freebies: The truth of the I-statement in D2 guarantees the falsity of the other

I-statements, and thereby the truth of each conjunct of D4. If this disquotationalist objection were sound, my argument to the conclusion that blind ascriptions and infinite disjunctions differ in their implications would not go through. However, the objection is not sound.

The objection correctly points out that logical languages normally forbid referring terms with more than one referent, but the normal prohibition simplifies natural language, where ambiguous names are common. Since the disquotationalist's task is to account for the use of "is true" in everyday speech, she cannot assume that in natural language the referring terms in blind ascriptions pick out a single sentence token. It is highly unlikely that "Boyle's Law" univocally refers in English to a sentence token. We have assumed that "Boyle's Law" selects (14). But there were any number of other tokens of Boyle's Law prior to my writing of (14). Furthermore, some of these fall under different orthographic types, e.g., "The pressure of an ideal gas varies inversely with its volume at constant temperature". Tokens of these orthographic types have a very strong claim to being Boyle's Law.[20] We cannot reasonably suppose that the English term "Boyle's Law" picks out a single sentence token; thus, this reading of the I-statement of D2 offers a logical simplification, along the lines of standard treatments of ambiguous referring terms. But "Boyle's Law" is a poor fit with the pattern of ambiguous referring terms. The multiplicity of reference exhibited by "Boyle's Law" in English is not like that of the name "Smith" – "Smith" is certainly multivocal, picking out multiple Smiths. But the alternative candidate sentences for "Boyle's Law" are not as unrelated as the many Smiths. In the case of "Boyle's Law", we want to count all the candidate sentences I am thinking of as the very same law, Boyle's. If the disquotationalist wants to appeal to the standard logical prohibition on ambiguous referring terms, she must take the implausible step of assimilating the English "Boyle's Law" to cases of ambiguous referring terms.

Once the implausible step is taken, and with the standard prohibition on ambiguous referring terms in place, and assuming that D2 is true, it turns out that the I-statement

"Boyle's Law is 'grass is green'" is false. That is good for the disquotationalist – D2 implies a conjunct of D4. But further difficulties arise. With orthographic sentence-typing, it also turns out that "Boyle's Law is 'The pressure of an ideal gas varies inversely with its volume at constant temperature'", is false. Then D4, while derivable from D2, contains apparently false conjuncts – e.g., "Boyle's Law is not 'The pressure of an ideal gas varies inversely with its volume at constant temperature'". Moreover, in the case where Boyle's Law is identified as (14), so that D2 is true, while we can derive C we cannot derive "The pressure of an ideal gas varies inversely with its volume at constant temperature". This reading of D2, then, is infelicitous. Adopting the prohibition on ambiguous names may buy the disquotationalist falsehood of the requisite I-statements, but with the awkward presupposition that in English "Boyle's Law" is an ambiguous referring term and the uncomfortable consequences that apparently true I-statements quoting alternative forms of Boyle's Law are false and that we can derive only one form of Boyle's Law from the blind ascription. It is likely that the disquotationalist objection is unsound.

So far, we have assumed that in blind ascriptions terms like "Boyle's Law" select sentence tokens. Assume, instead, that they select sentence types – would this strengthen the disquotationalist case for derivability of D4 from D2? Again, we will consider orthographic typing. The disquotationalist proposal, on this reading, is that an I-statement of the form "Boyle's Law is 'p'" says that the Boyle's Law sentence type is identical to the type picked out by the quotation name "p". The disquotationalist might then argue that if "Boyle's Law is 'p'" is true, "Boyle's Law is 'q'" is false. Each sentence is named by only one quotation name. For this reason, David says that premises like "p"$\neq$"q" are "special. Because of the special properties of quotation names, these premises are as safe as any instance of a logical truth can be" (1994, p. 104). Then if it is true that the Boyle's Law sentence type is "p", given that "p" $\neq$ "q", it cannot be true that the Boyle's Law sentence type is "q", and the disquotationalist could derive D4 from D2. But this version of the disquotationalist objection is unsound, because on this

reading D2 is false. The sentence types picked out by terms like "Boyle's Law" and "Fermat's Last Theorem" are not demarcated by quotation names. Recall that there is more than one way to state Boyle's Law in English – e.g., "The pressure of an ideal gas varies inversely with its volume at constant temperature". Since sentence types for terms like "Boyle's Law" are not individuated by quotation names, D2, read as a type–type identity statement, is false. So interpreting I-statements as type–type identity statements does not help disquotationalism.

Where sentences are typed orthographically, we have seen that the disquotationalist objection has implausible consequences both when "Boyle's Law" is taken to pick out a sentence token and when it is taken to pick out a sentence type. But disquotationalists might hold that the difficulties described above stem not from the proposed account of blind ascriptions, but from the unwarranted assumption that sentences are typed orthographically. Field proposes that the entities that fall in the extension of the truth predicate are not orthographic types but computational types: "equivalence classes of (potential) tokens under the relation of computational equivalence" (2001, p. 151). The class of tokens or potential tokens consists of those that are treated computationally as equivalent in the speaker's actual idiolect (2001, p. 158). The quote names in infinite disjunctions and conjunctions would, presumably, pick out computational sentence types, and as before, the quote names would name uniquely, so that if "p" and "q" are distinct quote names, they pick out distinct computational types. If we imagine that terms like "Boyle's Law" pick out computational types too, then we can explain how sentences of orthographically distinct types can nevertheless belong to the same computational type, so that there can be multiple (orthographic) forms of Boyle's Law. So far so good, but this approach does not solve the disquotationalist's problems with blind ascriptions. Boyle's Law may not fall into any computational type for a scientifically inept speaker. In such a case the blind ascription cannot fulfill its purported function, to allow him to assert the Law without access to it. Even if the Law does fall into a computational type for him, since computational types are

settled within a speaker's idiolect, there is no guarantee that a blind ascription will allow him to assert what the scientifically competent would take to be Boyle's Law. In such a case, we may guarantee that the blind ascription implies something, but there is no reason to suppose that what it implies is the Law. Again, the blind ascription does not fulfill its purported role.[21]

One solution is not available to disquotationalism. What is needed is semantic sentence typing, rather than orthographic or computational sentence typing. The I-statements might tell us what semantic type Boyle's Law belongs to – in effect, what proposition is expressed by sentences that count as Boyle's Law. This permits us to count more than one orthographic or phonetic sentence type as a single law. But on this view, the truth or falsity of I-statements is determined by semantic facts, and this rules out pure deflationism for blind ascriptions. While semantic sentence typing is not available to disquotationalism, it could be accommodated by other, proposition-friendly, varieties of deflationism, such as Horwich's (1998a) minimalism or McGrath's (1997) weak deflationism. We would need an appropriately gerrymandered infinite disjunction so that each disjunct dealt with a distinct proposition. Semantic typing might allow us to construe the I-statements in such a way that truth of one would ensure the falsity of all the others, so guaranteeing that D2 had the right implications. Such a deflationism would not have to treat seemingly true I-statements as false. But with semantic typing, the truth of an I-statement would be a substantive matter. So this would be deflationism for proposition truth only, not for sentence truth – the sentence/truth-condition relationship would be rich and not thin. Since our primary interest is in disquotationalism I set this alternative deflationary proposal aside. In the discussion to come, let us see what can be done with disquotationalist-approved infinite disjunctions.

5.

I have argued that disquotationalism is inadequate because it does not account for the implications of blind ascriptions. But

the disquotationalist might bite the bullet, claiming that blind ascriptions do not have the implications they appear to have – e.g., that C does not follow from D1 and D2. If it was successful, this objection would permit the disquotationalist to reassert an explanatory equivalence between blind ascriptions and infinite disjunctions, because the unexplained implication of the blind ascription is dismissed as merely apparent.

The objection now under consideration makes a controversial claim, i.e., that knowing that Boyle's Law is "The product of pressure and volume is exactly a constant for an ideal gas", that Boyle's Law is true, and what it means to say that something is true, is not enough to allow derivation of C. This objection will not do. Such a disquotationalist fails to account for all the facts about truth, in particular, for the standard practice of using blind ascriptions as premises in certain inferences.

Suppose that Guy says:

(16) Hendrix excused himself to kiss this guy.

Skye says, in sequence:

(17) What Guy said is true.
(18) People excuse themselves to do what they want to do.

and concludes:

(19) Hendrix wanted to kiss the sky.

The example makes use of a mondegreen, that is, a series of words that result from the mishearing or misinterpretation of a statement or song lyric. [22] In my book, what follows from (17) and (18), given that Guy said (16), is not (19) but:

(20) Hendrix wanted to kiss this guy.

One of the steps in my chain of inference uses (17) and the premise "Guy said 'Hendrix excused himself to kiss this guy'" to derive "Hendrix excused himself to kiss this guy".

The bullet-biting disquotationalist denies that blind ascriptions have the implications I think they have. So she cannot allow an inferential step from (17) and the premise "Guy said

'Hendrix excused himself to kiss this guy'" to "Hendrix excused himself to kiss this guy". For the bullet-biting disquotationalist, there are no rules of inference allowing me to conclude (20) from (17), (18), and the premise "Guy said 'Hendrix excused himself to kiss this guy'"; similarly, there are no rules of inference allowing Skye to conclude (19) from (17), (18), and her mistaken premise "Guy said 'Hendrix excused himself to kiss the sky'". Thus the bullet-biting disquotationalist fails to explain unexceptionable inferences from blind ascriptions. Furthermore, while the implications of (17) conjoined with "What Guy said is ____" should be the same whether Skye hears Guy correctly or not, they should *differ* depending on whether Guy said "Hendrix excused himself to kiss the sky" or "Hendrix excused himself to kiss this guy". But for the bullet-biting disquotationalist, the implications of (17) and "What Guy said is ____" do not differ depending on what Guy said – regardless of what he said, the infinite disjunction that is supposedly equivalent to Skye's (17) is just the same.

Bullet-biting disquotationalism does not carry out the deflationist program. The purported aim of deflationism is to explain all the facts about truth. But the bullet-biting disquotationalist does not do this; rather, she is revisionist about the truth predicate, holding that it does not function as we expect in blind ascriptions.

The revisionism is marked with JustSo ascriptions. As we noted above, disquotationalism explains the use of blind ascriptions in JustSo cases by appeal to pragmatic motivations on the part of the speaker – the story is that the speaker might just as well use the selected sentence, but employs the blind ascription instead with the aim, for example, of acknowledging someone else's contribution to the conversation. But given bullet-biting disquotationalism, the choice to use a blind ascription rather than to repeat someone else's words has a sizable cost, since the blind ascription and the repetition do not share their implications. The deflationist story about JustSo ascriptions is undermined, because given bullet-biting disquotationalism, the commitments of Skye's blind ascription are much weaker than a repetition of Guy's words. Bullet-biting

disquotationalism does not properly account for JustSo ascriptions.

<div align="center">6.</div>

Existentially quantified ascriptions pose parallel problems for disquotationalism. Just as with blind ascriptions, disquotationalism fails to explain why existentially quantified ascriptions have the implications that they seem to have.

Suppose Linda says

(21) Something Jimi said is true.

Given that any reasonably loquacious person is likely to have said something true once in a while, it is difficult for (21) to come out to be false unless we make use of the standard supposition that the context implicitly restricts the universe of discourse – perhaps to sentences at a particular time or place or on a certain topic. The restriction on the universe of discourse restricts the number of disjuncts of the disquotationalist's infinite disjunction that contain true I-statements of the form "Jimi said 'p'". The less Jimi said in the designated period, the fewer disjuncts are candidates for truth on the grounds of the truth of their I-statements.

Now imagine that Jimi said only two things in the relevant period – "Lately things just don't seem the same" and "Jimi kissed the sky". If we know he said only those things, from (21) we ought to be able to infer

(22) Lately things just don't seem the same or Jimi kissed the sky.

An adequate account of existential ascriptions should have a smooth account of this kind of inference, drawing on three elements – the existential ascription itself, the desired account of truth, and a premise specifying what Jimi said. Minimalism provides the derivation as follows:

M6 Something Jimi said is true.

<div align="right">[Assumption]</div>

M7 Jimi said only < Lately things just don't seem the same >
and < Jimi kissed the sky > .

[Assumption]

M8 < Lately things just don't seem the same > is true if and
only if lately things just don't seem the same and < Jimi
kissed the sky > is true if and only if Jimi kissed the sky.

[Axioms of the minimalist theory]

M9 < Lately things just don't seem the same > is true or
< Jimi kissed the sky > is true.

[from M6, M7]

C2 Lately things just don't seem the same or Jimi kissed the
sky.

[from M8, M9]

But it is now old news that on the disquotationalist account,
the required implication does not hold. The disquotationalist
will need a premise in addition to those paralleling the mini-
malist's M6, M7, and M8 – that is, he needs more than the
existential ascription itself, his account of truth, and a premise
specifying what Jimi said. The derivation proceeds as follows:

D6   Something Jimi said is true.

[Assumption]

D7   Jimi said only "Lately things just don't seem the same"
and "Jimi kissed the sky".

[Assumption]

D8   Jimi said "Lately things just don't seem the same" and
lately things just don't seem the same
or Jimi said "grass is green" and grass is green
or . . .

[Disq. analysis of D6]

D9   Jimi did not say "grass is green" and Jimi did not say
"Jimi kissed this guy" and . . .

[Assumption]

D10 Jimi said "Lately things just don't seem the same" and
lately things just don't seem the same or Jimi said "Jimi
kissed the sky" and Jimi kissed the sky.

[from D8, D9]

C   Lately things just don't seem the same or Jimi kissed the sky.
[from D10]

Bolstered by the "only" in D7, the disquotationalist may think that D9 follows from D7. But this is a mistake. D7 is idle in the derivation. D9 really is an additional premise, not a logical freebie following from D7. D9's conjuncts include some contingent truths and a few falsities. It is familiar to us that the method of sentence typing is crucial in considering whether D9 follows from D7 – it would, if we had semantic sentence typing, but without semantic sentence typing it does not. In our discussion of Boyle's Law, the issues turned on whether the disquotationalist could manage with orthographic or computational typing. Matters are a little different in this case: The sentences selected by the existentially quantified ascription are spoken, not written, and Jimi produced only two tokens. Since those tokens are of the phonetic types "Lately things just don't seem the same" and "Jimi kissed the sky", it might seem reasonable to suppose that they are not of distinct types, such as "Grass is green", "I am the eggman" or "I am the walrus". Then, at first blush, it might seem that the truth of the right two I-statements will guarantee the falsity of the rest, allowing D9 to follow from D7. But phonetic sentence typing will fail because of the possibility of sound-alike mondegreens. If D7 is to imply D9, the truth of the I-statement "Jimi said 'Jimi kissed the sky'" will have to guarantee that "Jimi said 'Jimi kissed this guy'" is false, but if we understand the I-statements as identifications of tokens with phonetic types, "Jimi said 'Jimi kissed this guy'" is true. To think otherwise is to confuse phonetic typing with orthographic typing. Orthographic sentence typing cannot save the day, because proper orthographic sentence typing in a case like this is dependent on proper semantic sentence typing. Computational sentence typing is of no help, because with computational typing, the truth of the infinite disjunction will not correspond with the truth of what Jimi actually said, but rather with what Linda thinks he said. What we need is semantic typing – then the truth of the two I-statements of D7 will happily guarantee the falsity of the other I-statements, and D7 would imply D9. Proposition-friendly forms of deflationism could accommodate semantic sentence typing, to deliver deflationism for proposition truth. But with

semantic typing, the truth of an I-statement would be a sub-stantive matter. So this would be deflationism for proposition truth only, not for sentence truth.

The rest of my argument parallels that given for blind ascriptions. Let me summarize. The argument shows that some very strong versions of disquotationalism are false – those that claim an intensional equivalence between existential ascriptions and infinite disjunctions. Existential ascriptions and infinite disjunctions do not have the same implications, so they are not intensionally equivalent. My argument does not threaten the disquotationalist thesis that existential ascriptions and infinite disjunctions are in some sense equivalent – they certainly are materially equivalent. But nevertheless we can dismiss disquo-tationalism as an adequate theory of truth, because it does not explain why existentially quantified ascriptions have the implications that they do. There is more to existential ascrip-tions than equivalence to infinite disjunctions, something which allows the existential ascription to imply the truth of one of the things Jimi said more immediately (i.e., with fewer additional premises) than the infinite disjunction. Since equivalence to an infinite disjunction does not exhaust the properties of existen-tially quantified ascriptions, disquotationalism fails to account for all the uses of "is true".

<div align="center">7.</div>

The conclusions of this paper show that disquotationalism is not successful in accounting for existentially quantified and blind ascriptions, because it cannot explain why these ascriptions have the implications that they have. So what should deflationism be when it grows up? If it wants a paying job it should not be disquotationalism, because disquota-tionalism cannot fulfil the job description of accounting for the central varieties of truth ascription.[23] Other career paths, that admit propositions, are open to deflationism. These in-clude, but are not limited to, Horwich's (1998a) minimalism and McGrath's (1997) weak deflationism. But these kinds of deflationism may not satisfy a truly deflationist soul, because

they may have to allow for substantivism about sentence truth.[24]

NOTES

[1] For more on understanding the distinction between varieties of deflationism in this way, see Bar-On et al. (forthcoming). It is well-recognized that deflationism must account for all the uses of "true" – see, for example, David (1994, p. 73). Regarding the centrality of these three kinds of truth ascription, see a useful discussion in Kirkham (1995, pp. 317–325). The terminology I adopt here, of explicit and blind ascriptions, is reasonably widely used, even though one of the issues is whether truth is ever ascribed to anything at all. Explicit ascriptions are sometimes known as revealing ascriptions (e.g., Künne, 2002), and blind ascriptions are sometimes known as indirect endorsements (e.g., Shapiro, 1998). Of course "true" and "truth" pop up in other constructions as well, such as "He is a true patriot", and "It is a true likeness". These additional uses may be either metaphorical or parasitic on the primary cases of blind and explicit ascriptions. For discussion, see White (1970).

[2] The target of this paper is deflationism that takes sentences as truth-bearers, and the truth predicate to be a device that either forms infinite disjunctions and conjunctions, or obviates the need for the formation of infinite disjunctions and conjunctions. My argument has no impact on other kinds of deflationism, the most influential contemporary examples being the minimalism of Horwich (1998a) and the prosentential approaches of Grover et al. (1975) and Brandom (1994).

[3] Disquotationalism's ability to handle non-explicit ascriptions is often noted as a virtue, particularly in contrast with early versions of deflationism like Ramsey's (1964) redundancy theory. Horwich (an advocate of minimalism rather than disquotationalism), says the redundancy theory must be rejected for its failure to account for "genuinely useful attributions of truth" such as "Oscar's claim is true" (1998a, pp. 39-40) and that "the Quinean account is clearly superior" to the redundancy theory (1999, footnote 4, p. 241) since the latter

had nothing much to say about the *function* of our concept of truth. But if it really is redundant, why on earth do we have such a notion? A virtue of minimalism is that it contains a satisfying response to this question – one that was first proposed by Quine – namely that the truth predicate plays a vital role in enabling us to capture certain generalizations (1999, p. 241).

Williams tells us:

The *great advance* of Quine's view over the redundancy theory then – an advance which its current rivals preserve – is that it shows how truth talk contributes significantly to the expressive resources of our language... ["True" enables us] to express agreement and disagreement with sentences that we cannot specify: for example, because we do not know exactly what they are ("What the President said is true") or because there are too many of them ("Every sentence of the form 'P or not P'" is true) (1999, p. 547, emphasis mine).

In a similar vein, Schantz tells us that Quinean disquotationalism "is a great advance beyond the redundancy theory because it offers an illuminating answer to the pressing question as to why we have the word 'true' in our language, which Ramsey remained silent about" (2002, p. 6). Soames also makes a thorough case against the redundancy theory on these grounds (1999, pp. 40–49). But see Gupta (1993) who argues that the deflationist treatment of universally quantified ascriptions is inadequate. Gupta's conclusion, coupled with mine, suggests that disquotationalism is adequate only for explicit ascriptions.

[4] Disquotationalism is often criticized for its failure to account for attributions of truth couched in language L to a sentence of a distinct language M. Disquotationalists like Resnik (1990) and Field (1994, 2001) argue that the truth predicate is properly applicable to sentences of one's own natural language (Resnik) or one's own idiolect (Field), and therefore disquotationalists who adopt their position might be considered immune to this criticism. (For further discussion, see Shapiro, 2003.) Such disquotationalists are not immune to the argument of this paper, because it shows that disquotationalism has trouble accounting for attributions of truth in language L to sentences of language L, even where the sentences in question are part of one's own idiolect.

[5] Proponents of disquotationalism in addition to Quine include Leeds (1978), Resnik (1990) and Field (1994).

[6] See for example Leeds (1978, pp. 121–122) and Field (1994). Field says

it will help to ask what a deflationist should say about why we need a truth predicate. If truth conditions aren't central to meaning, why not drop talk of truth altogether? As is well known, the deflationist's answer is that the word "true" has an important logical role: it allows us to formulate certain infinite conjunctions and disjunctions that can't be formulated otherwise. There are some very mundane examples of this, for instance, where we remember that someone said something false yesterday but can't remember what it was. What we are remembering is equivalent to the infinite disjunction of all sentences of form "She said 'p', but not-p" (pp. 263–264).

Blackburn and Simmons (1999) and David (1994) offer useful reconstructions of this position.

[7] Whereas each conjunct in an infinite conjunction such as (7) is itself a conditional on the model "If Smith's Theorem is 'Grass is green', then grass is green", to deliver material equivalence with (5) the disjuncts in an infinite disjunction such as (9) must be conjunctions, not similar conditionals. If any of the antecedents of the conditionals are false (as most of them will be), as a whole an infinite disjunction of conditionals is true, even if Smith's Theorem is false. This consideration does not rule out treating a blind ascription as an infinite conjunction of conditionals, but that treatment is ruled out by other considerations of material equivalence. Suppose Smith, the washed-up mathematician, encourages us to believe (falsely) that he has a new theorem, to be known as Smith's Theorem. Intuitively in these circumstances the blind ascription "Smith's Theorem is true" is not true, but an infinite conjunction of conditionals as described above would be true, so for material equivalence blind ascriptions cannot be infinite conjunctions of conditionals. But see Resnik (1990, p. 412).

[8] Quine (1970) allows attribution of truth to sentence types for so-called eternal sentences. Quine (1990) proposes that we consider all "truth vehicles" to be eternal sentences, with appropriate modifications to sentence tokens to generate eternal sentences.

[9] Field avers that we can apply disquotational truth to tokens.

[O]nce we remember that "disquotationally true" means "true-as-I-interpret-it", the obvious thing to say is that an utterance of "$p(i_1,\ldots,i_n)$" is disquotationally true (for me, that is, as I understand it) iff the sentence is true relative to the values of $a_1,\ldots,a_n$ I regard as appropriate to associate with the indexicals (1994, pp. 279–280).

He concludes that disquotationalism faces no special difficulty in dealing with indexical tokens (1994, p. 280).

[10] Minimalism about truth addresses indexical cases by admitting propositions to the ontology, and holding that blind ascriptions such as (11) ascribe truth to a proposition, rather than to a sentence. On this view, Mary's blind ascription picks out the proposition accompanying Fred's utterance, that Fred would not make a good clergyman. That blithe solution is not available to the disquotationalist: A supposed advantage of disquotationalism, championed by Quine (1970) and Field (1994), is that (unlike other versions of deflationism) it does not posit propositions. See, for example, Field (1994, pp. 266–267).

[11] I will say that blind ascriptions select a sentence rather than saying that they pick out or refer to a sentence. The latter terminology might seem to beg the question against deflationism, by suggesting that truth ascriptions refer to and attribute a property to a sentence.

[12] Throughout the discussion I hold fixed the sentence (or, for minimalism, proposition) selected by the blind ascription, since we cannot expect the implications to remain the same if we allow the selected truth-bearer to vary.

The blind ascription (5) has the implications specified only given the assumption that Boyle's Law is what it is.

[13] I have followed Horwich's (1998a, p. 21) example of the derivation of "Snow is white" from "What Smith said was true" and "What Smith said was that snow is white". Horwich emphasizes that this is "precisely the sort of reasoning on which the utility of our concept of truth depends" on p. 39.

[14] Gupta (1993) argues that infinite conjunctions and disjunctions are not synonymous with the purported truth ascriptions because the former, but not the latter, require for understanding a massive ideology – an understanding of a vast number of words. The argument here is distinct, because it rests on the claim that infinite disjunctions and blind ascriptions do not share their implications. Gupta makes a similar claim for infinite conjunctions and universally quantified truth ascriptions, pointing out that a universally quantified truth ascription does not have the same implications as a conjunction of its instances.

[15] We have shown that they do not share their implications without entertaining any counterfactual claims and without considering attributions of truth to sentences of a foreign language, so this conclusion affects immanent versions of disquotationalism, cf. footnote 4.

[16] If disquotationalism can generate a peculiarly deflationist position from the equivalence of blind ascriptions and infinite disjunctions, more must be said about the equivalence of infinite disjunctions and blind ascriptions. Claiming material equivalence between the two does not constitute a distinctive deflationist view, since material equivalence of non-explicit ascriptions and infinite conjunctions or disjunctions is assured on any half-decent theory of truth, deflationist or otherwise. All that is needed for material equivalence of (5) and (9) is a theory that preserves the truth predicate's normal truth-functional pattern.

[17] In the literature, I-statements are often expressed using " = ", e.g., "What Claire said = 'aardvarks amble'," (Blackburn and Simmons, 1999, p. 13). This encourages the view that the "is" in the disjuncts of (9) is meant to be the "is" of identity. In calling these statements I-statements, I remain neutral (for now) about whether these are indeed identity statements.

[18] This is Blackburn and Simmons's assumption too (1999, p. 13 and footnote 22). See also David (1994, pp. 102–103).

[19] In this way, quote names are distinct from other kinds of names – things can have more than one name, but sentences cannot have more than one quote name (David, 1994, pp. 103–104).

[20] Given the contingent facts about Boyle's Law, it will turn out that the only disjuncts with true I-statements are those that mention the theorem in one of its forms. So the infinite disjunction plus the facts about what the theorem is plus a set of non-I-statements (e.g., Boyle's Law is not "$e = mc^2$") will in fact imply the theorem, because each disjunct that is not ruled out by the non-I-statements will have the theorem in one form or

another as its second conjunct. This does not defeat the argument given to the conclusion that blind ascriptions are not intensionally equivalent to infinite disjunctions.

[21] This may not worry Field, who says

"True" in the purely disquotational sense means "true as I understand it": it doesn't mean "true on the correct understanding of it", because the idea of a "correct understanding" of a sentence or utterance is a semantic notion that has no place when we are discussing purely disquotational truth. If on my understanding of "Der Schnee ist weiss" it is equivalent to "$E = mc^2$", then for me this sentence is disquotationally true iff $E = mc^2$. Anyone in the grip of the Frege-Russell tradition will think that this shows that we need a notion of truth conditions very different from the disquotational one; but I don't think it at all obvious that they are right (1994, p. 278).

For a rich discussion of Field's position, see Shapiro (2003).

[22] The term is commonly attributed to Wright (1954), who reports mishearing the song "The Bonny Earl of Murray." She heard the phrase "hae laid him on the green" as "Lady Mondegreen".

[23] The elimination of disquotationalism as an adequate theory of truth may have bearing on a number of central questions about deflationism, e.g., whether deflationism can be coupled with an adequate theory of meaning (canvassed by, for example, Dummett, 1959; Horwich, 1998b; Williams, 1999; Bar-On et al., 2000), and whether deflationism explains the normative value of truth (canvassed by, for example, Dummett, 1959; Horwich, 2002; Williams, 2002). Discussion of the impact of the conclusions of this paper on these further questions must be reserved for another occasion.

REFERENCES

Bar-On, D., Horisk, C. and Lycan, W.G. (2000): 'Deflationism, Meaning and Truth-Conditions', *Philosophical Studies* 101, 1–28.

Bar-On, D., Horisk, C. and Lycan, W.G. (forthcoming): 'Postscript to "Deflationism, Meaning and Truth-Conditions"', in J.C. Beall and B. Armour-Garb (eds.), *Deflationary Truth*, Chicago: Open Court Press.

Blackburn, S. and Simmons, K. (1999): *Truth*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Brandom, R.B. (1994): *Making it Explicit*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

David, M. (1994): *Correspondence and Disquotation: An Essay on the Nature of Truth*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Dummett, M. (1959): 'Truth', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 59, 141–162.

Field, H. (1994): 'Deflationist Views of Meaning and Content', *Mind* 103, 249–285.

Field, H. (2001): *Truth and the Absence of Fact*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Grover, D., Camp, J. and Belnap, N. (1975): 'A Prosentential Theory of Truth', *Philosophical Studies* 27, 73–125.

Gupta, A. (1993): 'A Critique of Deflationism', *Philosophical Topics* 21, 57–81.

Horwich, P. (1998a): *Truth* 2nd ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Horwich, P. (1998b): *Meaning*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Horwich, P. (1999): 'The Minimalist Conception of Truth', in S. Blackburn and K. Simmons (eds.) *Truth*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 239–263.

Horwich, P. (2002): 'Norms of Truth and Meaning', in R. Schantz (ed.), *What is Truth?*, Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, pp. 133–145.

Kirkham, R. (1995): *Theories of Truth: A Critical Introduction*, Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Künne, W. (2002): 'Disquotationalist Conceptions of Truth', in R. Schantz (ed.), *What is Truth?*, Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, pp. 176–193.

Leeds, S. (1978): 'Theories of Reference and Truth', *Erkenntnis* 13, 111–129.

McGrath, M. (1997): 'Weak Deflationism', *Mind* 106, 69–98.

Quine, W.V.O. (1970): *Philosophy of Logic*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Quine, W.V.O. (1990): *Pursuit of Truth*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Ramsey, F.P. (1964): 'Facts and Propositions', in G. Pitcher (ed.) *Truth*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, pp. 16–17.

Resnik, M. (1990): 'Immanent Truth', *Mind* 99, 405–424.

Schantz, R. (2002): *What is Truth?* Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter.

Shapiro, S. (1998): 'Proof and Truth: Through Thick and Thin', *The Journal of Philosophy* 95, 493–521.

Shapiro, S. (2003): 'The Guru, the Logician, and the Deflationist: Truth and Logical Consequence', *Noûs* 37, 113–132.

Soames, S. (1999): *Understanding Truth*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

White, A.R. (1970): *Truth*, Garden City, NY: Double Day & Company.

Williams, B. (2002): *Truth and Truthfulness: An Essay in Genealogy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Williams, M. (1999): 'Meaning and Deflationary Truth', *The Journal of Philosophy* 96, 545–564.

Wright, S. (1954): 'The Death of Lady Mondegreen', *Harper's Magazine* 209, 48–51.

Department of Philosophy
438 General Classroom Building
University of Missouri
Columbia, MO 65211-4160
United States
E-mail: horiskc@missouri.edu