Truth without Dependence

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'Truth asymmetrically depends on the world, in the following sense: true propositions are true *because* the world makes them true.' As philosophical remarks about truth go, that must be one of the least controversial (although the question of how to interpret it is another matter). Similar remarks have been made by correspondence theorists, truthmaker theorists, deflationists, primitivists, and even some identity theorists.[1] This is how Armstrong and Bennett put the intuition that all of these philosophers share:

> My hope is that philosophers of realist inclinations will be immediately attracted to the idea that a truth, any truth, should depend for its truth on something 'outside' it, in virtue of which it is true. (Armstrong 2004: 7)

> Truth—or better, truth-*value*—depends on [the world]. I find this intuition very plausible. After all, what's the alternative? That truth *floats free* of [the world]? (Bennett 2011: 187)[2]

However, despite its broad popularity, I think that this picture is fundamentally mistaken. I do not think that propositions are made true by a world 'outside' of them. But I also do not think that there is any risk of truth 'floating free' of the world. That is because I think the world just is the totality of true propositions.

I will begin the paper (§1) by presenting a problem for the *Dependency Theory*, i.e. the theory that true propositions are true because the world makes them true. Then (§§2 & 3), I will develop an alternative to the Dependency Theory which avoids that problem. This alternative will be an *immodest Identity Theory of Truth*, and I will end the paper (§4) by responding to Dodd's (1995, 1999, 2000) charge that immodest Identity Theories are incoherent.

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[1] Correspondence and/or truthmaker theorists: Armstrong 1997: 115–6, 2004; Rodriguez-Pereyra 2005; Cameron 2008; Schaffer 2010; Rasmussen 2014; Jago 2018; Simpson 2021. (That list would have been longer, but classical correspondence theorists were often unclear about their truth-bearers.) Deflationists: Lewis 2001; Schnieder 2006; Dodd 2007; Horwich 2008: §5; Simpson (again) 2021. Primitivists: Merricks 2007; Asay 2013: ch.4. Identity theorists: Hornsby 2005: §4; Dodd (again) 2007. Others: Künne 2003: ch.3; Melia 2005; Hawley 2011; Fine 2012: §1.3; Liggins 2016; Tallant and Ingram 2017. The idea that the world makes propositions true is often traced back to Aristotle (e.g. *Metaphysics* Θ 10:1051^{b}6–9); however, Aristotle can be interpreted as saying merely that the world makes *beliefs* true, and that is not something I want to deny (see fn.25 below, and Trueman 2021b: §14.7).

[2] Bennett originally had 'being' in place of 'the world'. I made this change to bring out what is uncontroversial in Bennett's thought. See §1.1 for related discussion.

1   Beyond a veil of thought

My aim in this section is to pose a problem for the Dependency Theory. But to control expectations, let me admit now that this problem will not amount to a decisive refutation. (How often does any problem for any theory really amount to that?) However, I do hope that this problem is enough to motivate the search for an alternative to the Dependency Theory.

1.1   The Dependency Theory

Before I can present my problem, I need to say a little about how I understand the Dependency Theory. Let's start with *propositions*. We can get an initial handle on propositions by conceiving of them as whatever we are related to by cognitive relations like belief, judgment, etc. So, for example, to believe that snow is white is to stand in the *believing* relation to the proposition that snow is white. But propositions turn up elsewhere too. Most obviously, sentences express propositions: 'Grass is green' expresses the proposition that grass is green. Generally speaking, then, I take the following to characterise propositions: if something has propositional content (i.e. if it represents *that things are thus-and-so*), then it has that content by virtue of standing in an appropriate relation to a proposition.

This preliminary account of propositions is, I think, more or less standard. By contrast, there is no standard account of how the world is supposed to make propositions true. Instead, there are two main options:[3]

(TB) $\langle P \rangle$ is true $\rightarrow \exists x (\langle P \rangle$ is true because x exists$)$
(TF) $\langle P \rangle$ is true $\rightarrow (\langle P \rangle$ is true because $P)$

These two options involve two different conceptions of what the world is. According to (TB) — better known as *Truthmaker Maximalism* — truth depends on what exists. So if a dependency theorist offers (TB) as their gloss on how truth depends on the world, they must be thinking of the world as *all that exists*, the totality of being. Now, (TB) certainly has its advocates,[4] but it is also widely acknowledged to have some problematic consequences. For example, (TB) implies that $\langle$Unicorns do not exist$\rangle$ is true because a certain object *exists*, but that sounds all wrong. It sounds much better to say that this proposition is true because unicorns do *not* exist.[5]

Those philosophers who reject (TB) tend to offer (TF) as the safe and sensible alternative.[6] Indeed, Merricks (2007: xiii) has gone so far as to describe (TF) as a 'trivial' type of dependence, which 'no one would deny'. According to (TF), truth does not depend on *what exists*, but on *what is the case*. So if a dependency theorist offers (TF) as their gloss on how truth depends on the world, they must be thinking of the world as *all that is the case*, to borrow Wittgenstein's (1922: 1) famous phrase.

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[3] I am here following the common convention of using '$\langle P \rangle$' as shorthand for 'the proposition that *P*'.

[4] See e.g.: Armstrong 2004; Cameron 2008; Jago 2018.

[5] See: Lewis 2001; Melia 2005: 69; Dodd 2007; Bigelow 2009: 394–5.

[6] See e.g.: Hornsby 2005; Melia 2005; Dodd 2007; Fine 2012: §1.3; Tallant and Ingram 2017.

We can get a sense of how these conceptions of the world differ by thinking about what it would take to uniquely identify our world. If the world is all that exists, then what is needed is a (presumably infinite) list of objects. But if the world is all that is the case, then what is needed is a (presumably infinite) conjunction that expresses all the ways things are.

For the record, I prefer (TF) to (TB), because I think it is better to conceive of the world as *all that is the case*, rather than as the totality of being (see §3). However, I think that both versions of the Dependency Theory should be rejected. Indeed, despite their differences, I think they both face exactly the same problem. So to avoid targeting just one of these Dependency Theories, I will present this problem abstractly, as a problem about how truth 'asymmetrically depends on the world'; the problem should be just as serious whichever way we precisify this dependence.

1.2   A veil of thought

In a nutshell, the problem with the Dependency Theory is that it leads to an indirect theory of judgment, which is at least as problematic as an indirect theory of perception.

Perception makes you aware of the objects in your environment. Naïvely, this might lead you to think of perception as a direct relation between you and those objects. However, that naïve thought is denied by indirect theories of perception. According to these theories, you perceive the objects in your external environment only indirectly: the direct objects of your perception are something else (e.g. sense-data) which somehow represent external objects.[7]

Indirect theories were once very popular, but they have long since fallen out of fashion.[8] They face a number of problems, but one of the most serious is that they draw a veil of perception between us and the objects in our environment. Drawing this veil makes certain sceptical worries urgent. First, there is an obvious *Cartesian* worry: how can we know that the objects in our environment are accurately represented by our sense-data? But second, there is a deeper *Kantian* worry: if we can never directly perceive the objects in our environment, how can we even come to conceive of our sense-data as representing them at all?[9]

Now let's turn to judgment. To make a judgment is to make yourself answerable to the world: the world is the arbiter of whether your judgment that P is true or false. Naïvely, this might lead you to think of judgment as a direct relation between you and the world. However, that naïve thought is denied by the Dependency Theory. According to that theory, your judgment that P is a direct relation to the proposition $\langle P \rangle$, which *asymmetrically depends* on the world for its truth-value.

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[7] For an especially vivid statement of the indirect theory of perception, see Russell 1912: ch.1.

[8] The modern debate is primarily between representationalists (e.g. Tye 1995; Siegel 2010) and relationalists (e.g. Martin 1997; Campbell 2002: ch.6; Logue 2012). However, this is a debate between direct realists, in the sense that both sides deny that there are always perceptual intermediaries between you and the objects in your environment. Foster (2000: ch.2) calls this *weak direct realism*.

[9] For more on the distinction between Cartesian and Kantian scepticisms, see: Conant 2004; Button 2013: ch.7.

But now it seems that, on the Dependency Theory, propositions form a veil of thought between us and the world, just as sense-data formed a veil of perception. And this new veil makes certain sceptical worries just as pressing. In particular, I will argue that the Dependency Theory makes the following Kantian worry unanswerable: if we do not think of judgment as ever making us *directly* answerable to the world, then how can we come to conceive of it as making us answerable to the world *at all*?

1.3 Frege's Treadmill

We can make this Kantian worry pressing with a modified version of *Frege's Treadmill* (Frege 1897: 228–9 & 234, 1918: 326–7).[10] We begin with a simple judgment:

(1) Sharon judges that snow is white.

By making judgment (1), Sharon makes herself answerable to the world. But more than that, this should be something that Sharon can become aware of on reflection: assuming that Sharon is a self-consciously rational agent, it must be possible for her to see that her judgments make her answerable to the world.[11] That would be entirely straightforward, if Sharon conceived of her judgment as a direct relation between herself and the world (see §3.2). But let's imagine that Sharon is a dependency theorist. Now she thinks of judgment (1) as a relation between her and something other than the world, the proposition ⟨snow is white⟩. So now she will need to explain to herself how standing in a relation to this proposition could make her answerable to the world. Of course, as a good dependency theorist, she has the explanation to hand: it is because the world is what makes ⟨snow is white⟩ true. So Sharon explains to herself how (1) makes her answerable to the world by forming another judgment:

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[10] Frege's Treadmill was originally designed to show that truth is indefinable. Here is how Frege summarised the argument in 'Thought':

> any [. . .] attempt to define truth [. . .] breaks down. For in definition, certain characteristics would have to be specified. And in application to any particular case the question would always arise whether it were *true* that the characteristics were present. So we should be going round in a circle. So it seems likely that the content of the world 'true' is *sui generis* and indefinable. (Frege 1918: 327)

In adapting this argument to my purposes, I have made two changes. First, I have shifted the target: my target is not the idea that truth can be defined, but the idea that truth asymmetrically depends on the world. Second, in his original argument, Frege notoriously slid from '*a* judges that *P*' to '*a* judges that it is true that *P*' without comment; by contrast, I try to make clear below how each step of my regress is generated by the Dependency Theory itself. The regress I present is not offered as an interpretation of Frege's original Treadmill; however, I do believe that it bears some important similarities to Ricketts's (1996) interpretation (see also Sullivan 2005b). For some alternative interpretations of Frege's Treadmill, see: Dummett 1981a: ch.13; Künne 2003: §3.3.2; Asay 2013: 138–47; Heck and May 2018: §7.5; Methven 2018: 1043–5; Johnston 2021; Kim 2021: §5.

[11] To clarify, I am not here assuming that every agent capable of making a judgment must also be capable of reflecting on that judgment. It may be, for example, that a dog can judge that the sofa is more comfortable than the floor, without being able to reflect that, in making this judgment, they have made themselves answerable to the world. But the point is that *self-consciously rational agents like us* must be able to reflect on their judgments in this way.

(2) Sharon judges that the world makes ⟨snow is white⟩ true.

But how, exactly, does making this extra judgment help? After all, Sharon's Dependency Theory tells her that (2) is just another relation between her and something other than the world, the proposition ⟨the world makes ⟨snow is white⟩ true⟩. So, on reflection, making judgment (2) cannot help Sharon understand how making judgment (1) makes her answerable to the world, unless she can explain how standing in a relation to this new proposition makes her answerable to the world. Again, as a dependency theorist, Sharon will attempt to explain this to herself by forming yet another judgment:

(3) Sharon judges that the world makes ⟨the world makes ⟨snow is white⟩ true⟩ true.

It is now clear that Sharon has taken the first steps in an infinite regress. This regress is vicious because each step is driven by the Dependency Theory. It is not that Sharon was moved from (1) to (2) to (3) by some sceptical outsider, who kept bothering her to explain how her judgments make her answerable to the world. If that were all that had been going on, Sharon would have been within her rights to stop answering the sceptic whenever she liked. But in reality, each step was just an application of Sharon's own Dependency Theory: by denying that (1) is a relation between herself and the world, Sharon imperilled her own ability to see (1) as a way of making herself answerable to the world; she can try to repair the damage she has already done by making more judgments, but her Dependency Theory will undermine these efforts in just the same way.

At this point, it becomes obvious that the *infinity* of this regress is not the real problem. The problem is its *futility*:[12] if it is not already transparent to you that your judgments make you answerable to the world, then no amount of extra judgments, not even infinitely many of them, will make it clear to you. To use Frege's image, Sharon is

> in the position of a man on a treadmill who makes a step forwards and upwards, but the step he treads on keeps giving way and he falls back to where he was before. (Frege 1897: 234)

That, then, is my problem for the Dependency Theory: it seems to make it impossible for us to form a reflective conception of judgment as answerable to the world.[13] As I warned at the start of this section, this problem is hardly a decisive refutation. The considerations involved in Frege's Treadmill are far too slippery for that. However, I hope that the sceptical worries induced by a veil of thought are enough to motivate the search for an alternative to the Dependency Theory, just as the sceptical worries induced by a veil of sense-data were enough to motivate the search for an alternative to indirect theories of perception.

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[12] Priest (2014: 11) makes an exactly analogous point about Bradley's Regress. See also Trueman 2021b: §10.2.1.

[13] Although its form is very different, this argument is driven by the same kinds of concern that drive McDowell's (1994) and Hornsby's (1997) arguments for the Identity Theory of Truth. For illuminating discussion of these concerns, see Sullivan 2005a. See also Button 2013: §6.2.

2   The Identity Theory of Truth

If we want to get off the Treadmill, we need to conceive of judgment (belief, etc.) as a *direct* relation between a thinker and the world. This might initially sound mysterious, but we can get to the conception we are after in two steps:[14]

Step 1: Identify true propositions with facts.
Step 2: Identify the world with the totality of facts.

In this section I will focus on Step 1, and in the next section, I will broach Step 2.

To identify true propositions with facts is to adopt an *Identity Theory of Truth*. There are a lot of different brands of Identity Theory,[15] but in this paper, I will be concerned with the Identity Theory that I developed in the final chapters of *Properties and Propositions* (Trueman 2021b: chs.11–14).[16] I will sketch that theory only briefly here, since Sullivan (2022: §2) has already provided a very helpful summary. I will also not attempt to reproduce any of my earlier arguments here. The only argument I offer for the Identity Theory in this paper is that it leads the way off the Treadmill.

2.1   *Facts and Fregean realism*

My Identity Theory starts with a *Fregean realist* account of facts. For the purposes of this paper, we can take Fregean realism to be the following conjunction:[17]

(a) Every semantically significant type of expression can be replaced with a corresponding type of variable, which can then be bound by a quantifier.
(b) Different types of variable have disjoint ranges of values.

A fully general understanding of Fregean realism would require a general account of what it means to say that a type of expression is 'semantically significant', and that two variables have 'different types'. However, for now, we can focus just on *names* and *sentences*.

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[14] You might think that there is another route to such a conception, which goes via Russell's (1910: 150–3, 1913: 109–10 & 116–7) multiple-relation theory of judgment. However, elsewhere (Trueman 2018, 2021b: ch.13) I have argued that, under the weight of Wittgenstein's (1922: 5.5422) objection, the multiple-relation theory collapses into the Prenective View I outline in §2.2. The same goes for modern descendants of the multiple-relation theory, e.g. Moltmann 2003; Soames 2010: ch.6; Hanks 2011, 2015.

[15] For early analytic Identity Theories, see: Frege 1918: 342; Moore 1899, 1902; Russell 1904; Wittgenstein 1922. For modern Identity Theories, see: McDowell 1994: 27–9, 2005; Hornsby 1997, 1999; Dodd 2000; Johnston 2013; Methven 2018.

[16] See also: Trueman 2018, 2021a.

[17] This way of formulating Fregean realism makes it vulnerable to a version of Frege's (1892a) concept *horse* paradox. In brief, the problem is that the conjunction of (a) and (b) is self-undermining, since it cannot be formulated unless it is possible to quantify simultaneously over the values of different types of variable. I discuss this problem elsewhere (Trueman 2021b: ch.9), but in this paper, I am just quietly setting it aside.

I take names and sentences to be paradigmatic examples of semantically significant expressions. So, given (a), we are permitted to replace both names and sentences with variables, e.g.:[18]

(1) $\forall x(x$ is a dog $\rightarrow x$ is a dog)
(2) $\forall P(P \lor \neg P)$

However, I also take it to be obvious that names and sentences are different types of expression. They play very different semantic roles: names *refer to* objects; sentences *say that* things are thus-and-so.[19] So, given (b), name-variables and sentence-variables have disjoint ranges of values. Whereas the values of name-variables are *objects*, we can think of the values of sentence-variables as *ways for things to be*. (So we can read (2) as saying: for every way for things to be, either things are that way, or things are not that way.) *Ways for things to be* must not be confused with a type of object: you cannot refer to these *ways* with names; you can only express them with whole sentences.[20]

Amongst the ways for things to be, we can distinguish between the ways things *are* (e.g. *snow is white*), and the ways things *aren't* (e.g. *snow is purple*). My proposal (Trueman 2021b: ch.11) is then that we think of the ways things are as *obtaining states of affairs* (or *facts*), and the ways things aren't as *unobtaining states of affairs*.

Now, this talk of 'unobtaining states of affairs' might initially sound a little alarming. But if so, that is only because we are forgetting that *ways for things to be* are not objects. Take the following two claims:

(3) The state *snow is white* obtains.
(4) The state *snow is purple* does not obtain.

In these claims, we appear to refer to two states with two names: 'the state *snow is white*' and 'the state *snow is purple*'. But according to Fregean realism, it is impossible to refer to states with names: states are *ways for things to be*, which can only be expressed with whole sentences. So, for a Fregean realist, (3) and (4) are only acceptable when their surface forms are not taken too seriously. That is, they can only be accepted as roundabout formulations of claims that do not involve any illegitimate attempt to name states. In particular, Fregean realists should take (3) and (4) to be nothing but fancy periphrases of these much simpler claims:

(3') Snow is white.
(4') Snow is not purple.

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[18] Throughout this paper, I will use lowercase letters as name-variables, and uppercase letters as sentence-variables.

[19] Frege (1892b: 158, 1893: §2) himself actually took sentences to be a species of name; in particular, they were supposed to be names which refer to truth-values. I think that this was a mistake (see e.g. Sullivan 1994), and my account of states of affairs is an attempt to eliminate that mistake.

[20] The point that we cannot name ways for things to be relies on a background assumption about the relation between naming and quantifying: if something can be named, then it is a possible value of a name-variable. For further discussion of ways for things to be, see: Trueman 2021a: §4, 2021b: chs 11 & 12. I previously used 'way for the world to be' instead of 'way for things to be'; I changed it for this paper to avoid the confusions that Sullivan (2022: §4.1) warns against.

Here is another way of making the same point. On the Fregean account of states, to say 'There exists an unobtaining state of affairs, such that . . .' is really just to say '$\exists P(\neg P \wedge \ldots)$'. Similarly, to say 'There exists a fact, such that . . .' is to say '$\exists P(P \wedge \ldots)$'.

2.2 Propositions and the Prenective View

We turn now to propositions. Propositions are (amongst other things) what we bear the *judgment* relation to. Take the following judgment-report:

(5) Sharon judges that snow is white.

According to the *Standard View*, sentence (5) should be parsed as follows:

(5a) [Sharon] judges [that snow is white].

On this parsing, 'Sharon' is a name that refers to a thinker; 'that snow is white' is a name that refers to a proposition; and 'x judges y' is a two-place predicate that expresses the *judgment* relation. By parsing judgment-reports in this way, the Standard View reifies propositions. Propositions become a special kind of representational object, which not only have propositional contents, but *essentially* have those contents. For example, the proposition that snow is white is a special object which essentially represents that snow is white.[21]

I reject this Standard View, and recommend something like Prior's (1971: ch.2) *Prenective View* in its place:

(5b) [Sharon] judges that [snow is white].

On this alternative parsing, we have a name, 'Sharon', a sentence, 'snow is white', and a *prenective* joining them together, 'x judges that P'. (Künne (2003: 68) coined the term 'prenective', because 'x judges that P' behaves like a predicate on one side, and a connective on the other.)

Unfortunately, this simple formulation of the Prenective View is almost certainly false (see Künne 2003: 68–9). However, I have attempted to refine and argue for the Prenective View elsewhere.[22] Right now, though, the refinements and arguments do not matter. What matters is the difference between the Standard View of propositions and the Prenective alternative. Unlike the Standard View, the Prenective View does not picture propositions as special representational objects. In fact, the Prenective View does not picture propositions as *objects* at all. Sharon's judgment is not a relation to a nameable object that represents a particular way for things to be; it is a relation to that way for things to be itself, the way that we express with the sentence 'snow is white'. In short, on the Prenective View, propositions are *ways for things to be*: propositions do not *have* propositional contents; they *are* propositional contents.

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[21] Frege (1918) was an advocate of the Standard View. The Standard View is ubiquitous in contemporary philosophy, but here are some of its modern advocates: King 2007; Soames 2010; King et al. 2014; Hanks 2015; Merricks 2015.

[22] For attempts to refine the Prenective View, see: Trueman 2021b: ch.12; Button and Trueman forthcoming: §6.4 (the latter is better than the former). For attempts to argue for the Prenective View, see: Trueman 2018, 2021b: ch.13.

2.3   Judgment and the Identity Theory

My Identity Theory of Truth combines the Fregean realist account of facts with the Prenective View of propositions. According to the Prenective View, a proposition is a *way for things to be*. A true proposition, then, is a *way things are*. But, according to the Fregean account of facts, a *way things are* is a fact. So true propositions are facts.

We have so far been focussing on the truth of propositions. However, propositions are not the only truth-bearers. There are also the objects, acts, states, etc. that express propositions, such as judgments, beliefs and sentences. In fact, there is a good sense in which these other truth-bearers bear truth in a more robust sense than propositions. Together, Fregean realism and the Prenective View imply that propositional truth is redundant. Take the following claim:

(6) ⟨Snow is white⟩ is true.

In this claim, we appear to be referring to a proposition with a name, '⟨Snow is white⟩', and predicating truth of it. But, according to my Identity Theory, that appearance must be misleading: propositions are ways for things to be, and ways for things to be can only be expressed by sentences, not referred to by names. An identity theorist should, then, take (6) to be nothing more than a periphrasis of something much plainer:

(6′) Snow is white.

So for an identity theorist, (6) is just a way of saying that snow is white, in a few extra words.

By contrast, truth is not redundant for judgments, beliefs, etc. Following Ramsey (1991: 9), we can define truth for judgments as follows:

(J) x makes a true judgment $\leftrightarrow \exists P\big((x \text{ judges that } P) \wedge P\big)$

Anyone who is happy to quantify into sentence-position should be happy with (J). It is just a formalisation of the intuitive idea that to make a true judgment is to judge that things are a way that they are. (And if you aren't happy to quantify into sentence-position, I challenge you to find another way of formalising that intuitive idea.) However, how you should *understand* (J) depends on whether you subscribe to the Standard View or the Prenective View. According to the Standard View, there is a distinction between what you judge, i.e. the proposition that P, and the way things are if your judgment is true, i.e. P. But according to the Prenective View, there is no such distinction: judgment is not a relation to an object which says that P, but a relation to P itself; so when you make a true judgment, what you judge *is* a way things are. That is the important upshot of the Identity Theory of Truth.

3   The world is the totality of facts

According to the Identity Theory I have just laid out, a true judgment is a direct relation to a fact (i.e. a way things are). But, as Sullivan (2022: §4) emphasises, this is not yet to say that a true judgment is a direct relation to *the world*. To get from

here to there, we need to close the gap between facts and the world. As I mentioned at the start of §2, I intend to close this gap by identifying the world with the totality of facts: the world is all the ways things are. However, Sullivan is right to criticise me for failing to explicitly acknowledge the role of this Tractarian conception of the world in my earlier work. By leaving the Tractarian conception implicit (both in my writing and in my thinking), I wrongly gave the impression that the Identity Theory by itself closes the gap between mind and world.

I have three aims for this section. In §3.1, I will explain what it means for a Fregean realist to identify the world with the totality of facts. Then, in §3.2, I will offer an argument for this identification. Finally, in §3.3, I will explain exactly what I think is wrong with the idea that truth asymmetrically depends on the world.

3.1 The significance of loose talk

Sullivan (2022: §4.1) anticipates that I might try identifying the world with the totality of facts. However, he argues that my Fregean realism prevents me from putting that identification to any real philosophical work.

On the face of it, 'the world' appears to be a name, referring to some especially grand object. But if the world were an object, Fregean realism would prohibit us from identifying it with the totality of facts: for a Fregean realist, the totality of facts is not an object, but the infinite conjunction of all the ways things are. So Fregean realists must either reject the claim that the world is the totality of facts, or tolerate it as mere 'loose talk'.

We can get clearer on what the second option involves by returning to an earlier example of loose talk. In §2.1, I committed myself to unobtaining states of affairs:

(1) The state *snow is purple* does not obtain.

Now, at first glance, unobtaining states of affairs might seem like an ontological extravagance. However, for a Fregean realist, they are no such thing. In (1), we appear to be referring to a state with a name, 'the state *snow is purple*'. But, according to Fregean realism, states are ways for things to be, not objects. The form of (1) is, then, misleading. We can still tolerate (1), but only on the understanding that it is a kind of loose talk, a roundabout way of saying something much more austere:

(2) Snow is not purple.

For a Fregean realist, then, loose talk in which we appear to refer to a way for things to be with a name is tolerable, but only so long as it can be eliminated. Applying that lesson to the case at hand, Sullivan concludes that 'The world is the totality of facts' is nothing but eliminable loose talk, and so not the sort of remark that can bear any philosophical weight.

However, although I do agree that 'The world is a totality of facts' is loose talk, I do not think that this robs it of all philosophical significance. Philosophical discussions always start with loose talk. (No one begins philosophy speaking like a strict Fregean realist.) For example, initial inchoate philosophical reflection on judgment leads us to say things like 'Judgments are answerable to the world'. When

we say things like that, we are setting out a role that the world is meant to play: the world is what our judgments answer to. When a loose-talking Fregean realist then says 'The world is the totality of facts', they are making a claim about what fills that world-role: do not think that a judgment is true or false in virtue of some object; think that it is true or false in virtue of how things are.

3.2 Avoiding the Treadmill

We now understand what a Fregean realist means when they identify the world with the totality of facts. The next question is: why should we make that identification? My argument is simple. If we combine this identification with the Identity Theory, judgment becomes a direct relation between a thinker and the world, and so the Treadmill from §1.3 cannot get going. (I should note that, since I did not present the Treadmill in *Properties and Propositions*, I was not there in a position to offer this argument; in other words, Sullivan (2022) is right that there was a serious gap in the argument of my book.)

I think it is fairly clear how this combination casts *true* judgment as a direct relation to the world: a true judgment is a relation to a fact (i.e. a way things are), and the world is the totality of facts. But what about *false* judgments? A false judgment is not a relation to a fact, but to an unobtaining state of affairs (i.e. a way things aren't). So in what sense, if any, is a false judgment a direct relation to the world?

For a Fregean realist, the totality of facts is an infinite conjunction. However, we obviously have no means of surveying this infinite conjunction all at once. We get a grip on this conjunction only by grasping the condition that a *way for things to be* must meet in order to be included in it: to be included in the conjunction, a way for things to be must be a way things *are*, i.e. an obtaining state of affairs. As I explained in §2.1, Fregean realists can only understand 'State P obtains' as a periphrasis of plain 'P'. So any judgment that P, whether true or false, is already a judgment that the world includes the state P, in the only sense that we can now make of the latter judgment. This provides us with a deflationary sense in which all judgments are direct relations to the world. It also explains how identifying the world with the totality of facts keeps identity theorists off the Treadmill: if to judge that P is already to judge that state P is included in the world, then the Treadmill does not amount to even a single step.

3.3 Truth without dependence

The Dependency Theory leads to an indirect theory of judgment (see §1). By contrast, when we combine the Identity Theory with a conception of the world as the totality of facts, we are led to a direct theory of judgment. It follows that this combination must be incompatible with the Dependency Theory. However, it is helpful to see exactly where this incompatibility lies.

According to the Dependency Theory, truth asymmetrically depends on the world. Back in §1.1, I distinguished between two ways of understanding this

asymmetric dependence:

(TB) $\langle P \rangle$ is true $\rightarrow \exists x(\langle P \rangle$ is true because x exists$)$
(TF) $\langle P \rangle$ is true $\rightarrow (\langle P \rangle$ is true because $P)$

Now that we have identified the world with the totality of facts, we obviously cannot accept (TB) as a gloss on the idea that truth depends on the world: (TB) presents truths as depending on *what exists*, not on *how things are*. However, that does not automatically imply that (TB) is false. Maybe truths depend on the totality of being, even if that totality is not to be identified with the world? That would, I think, be strictly consistent, but I do not think that it would be a very attractive line to take. If (TB) is not offered as a way of understanding truth's dependence on the world, then I can see no reason whatsoever to accept it. We can make this clearer by recalling that, according to the Identity Theory, propositional truth is redundant in the strong sense that '$\langle P \rangle$ is true' is just a periphrasis of 'P' (see §2.3), and so (TB) is equivalent to:

(TB′) $P \rightarrow \exists x(P$ because x exists$)$

This is not a principle about how truth depends on the world. It is a principle about how the world — conceived of as the totality of facts — depends on being. But as MacBride (2013: §4) observes, (TB′) is not independently plausible. Why should we think that there is a special object, such that snow is white because that object exists? Maybe we can stomach that commitment when we think of it as inevitably following from the way that truth depends on the world. But when (TB′) is offered bare, not as a consequence of (TB) but as its real content, it loses all credibility.[23]

We turn now to (TF). If a dependency theorist offers (TF) as their explanation of how truth depends on the world, then, like me, they are thinking of the world as *all that is the case*. Where we disagree is over the idea that truth could *asymmetrically depend* on such a world. Again, we can make the disagreement clearer by recalling that, according to the Identity Theory, propositional truth is redundant. So, for an identity theorist, (TF) is equivalent to:[24]

(TF′) $P \rightarrow (P$ because $P)$

This is not a principle about how truth depends on the world. It is the absurd principle that every fact explains itself. Once we conceive of the world as the totality of facts, the Identity Theory prohibits us from thinking of true propositions

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[23] The claim that (TB′) is the real content of (TB) has been made by a number of deflationists (Lewis 2001; Bigelow 2009: 396–7; Horwich 2008). However, it is unclear whether deflationists are really entitled to that claim. Deflationists typically take the Standard View of propositions as a type of nameable object. So according to these deflationists, there is a hyperintensional difference between 'P' and '$\langle P \rangle$ is true': even though these sentences are intensionally equivalent, '$\langle P \rangle$ is true' involves reference to an object, $\langle P \rangle$, that is not referred to in 'P'. By contrast, according to the Identity Theory, '$\langle P \rangle$ is true' is a mere periphrasis of 'P', and so involves no reference to any extra objects.

[24] For more detail, see: Trueman 2021b: §14.6; Sullivan 2022: §4.2.

as asymmetrically depending on the world. The world just is the totality of true propositions.[25]

4   Sense and reference

I started this paper by presenting a problem for the Dependency Theory: it leaves us with an indirect theory of judgment, which is vulnerable to Frege's Treadmill (§1). If we want to keep off that Treadmill, we need to adopt a direct theory of judgment. I recommended that we do that by combining the Identity Theory of Truth (§2), with a conception of the world as the totality of facts (§3).

Following Dodd (1995), we can call this combination an *immodest* Identity Theory. (By contrast, a *modest* Identity Theory agrees that true propositions are facts, but offers some other account of the world.)[26] According to Dodd (1995: 163–5, 1999: 229, 2000: 174–86), immodest Identity Theories are incoherent:

> For facts (as [an immodest identity theorist] thinks of them) and thinkables [i.e. propositions] (as [an immodest identity theorist] takes them to be) are of different ontological categories: occupiers of the realm of reference and the realm of sense respectively. If the world is to be everything that is the case, then the things that are the case—facts—must have objects and properties as constituents. Thinkables, meanwhile, if they are to be occupants of the realm of sense, must have modes of presentation as constituents. They must be thoughts. Consequently, [the immodest Identity Theory's] identification of (worldly) facts with true (Fregean) thinkables cannot be made good. A mode of presentation is *of* an object; it cannot be identified with it. (Dodd 1999: 229)[27]

My aim in this section is to answer Dodd's charge of incoherence. I will begin by presenting the *Individuation Problem*, which I take to be at the heart of Dodd's charge (§4.1). This problem is closely related to *Frege's Puzzle of Informative Identities*: the reason the Individuation Problem is so challenging for immodest identity theorists is that they cannot use the sense/reference distinction to solve Frege's Puzzle (§4.2). However, I will go on to argue that this solution to Frege's Puzzle is undermined by a version of Russell's (1905: 485–8) *Gray's Elegy Argument* (§4.3). I will end by briefly discussing how an immodest identity theorist should respond to the Individuation Problem (§4.4).

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[25] But to be clear, there is nothing wrong with saying that *judgments* (beliefs, etc.) depend on (or answer to) the world for their truth. Here is one thing we might mean by that: $\Box \forall P (\exists x (x$ makes a true judgment that $P) \to P)$, but $\neg \Box \forall P (P \to \exists x (x$ makes a true judgment that $P))$. For further discussion, see Trueman 2021b: §14.7.

[26] Dodd's (2000) own Identity Theory is modest: Dodd identifies facts with true propositions, but he subscribes to the Standard View of propositions as abstract representational objects; sensibly enough, Dodd refuses to identify the world with the totality of facts, so understood. Dodd (2007) is instead a Dependency Theorist, in the (TF) style.

[27] Dodd had originally targeted Hornsby (1997) in this passage. However, Hornsby (1999: §1) has since argued that her Identity Theory is modest in all important respects. For further discussion, see Dodd 2000: 181–3.

4.1 The Individuation Problem

Dodd presented his objection to immodest Identity Theories in terms of Frege's sense/reference distinction. As we will see in §4.2, this distinction does have an important role to play here, but I think it is better to begin by presenting a more theoretically neutral *Individuation Problem*.

My immodest Identity Theory presses *ways for things to be* into two roles: they are the worldly states of affairs that do or do not obtain; and they are also the propositions that we do or do not believe. However, these two roles appear to impose incompatible demands on the individuation of *ways*. Intuitively, the *fact* that Hesperus is a planet should be identical to the *fact* that Phosphorus is a planet. After all, both facts consist in the same object's instantiating the same property. But, by contrast, the *proposition* that Hesperus is a planet should be distinct from the *proposition* that Phosphorus is a planet. After all, it is possible to believe one of these propositions without believing the other.[28]

I have just informally presented the Individuation Problem as a problem about how to identify and distinguish between *ways for things to be*. However, there is a problem with this informal presentation. Ordinarily understood, identity is a relation between *objects*. But my Identity Theory incorporates a Fregean realist view of *ways for things to be*, which insists that these ways are not objects. So, according to Fregean realism, ways cannot be identified or distinguished in the ordinary sense.

It would be nice if we could leave the Individuation Problem here, as a hopeless non-starter. Unfortunately, however, we cannot really get by without being able to identify or distinguish between ways for things to be. That would make it impossible to understand even simple statements like, 'Sharon and Simon agree on three things'. Instead, Fregean realists are obliged to distinguish between two types of identity: the ordinary type of identity that holds between *objects*, $x =_o y$; and another type of identity that holds between *ways for things to be*, $P =_w Q$. For the purposes of this paper, we can take these two relations to be primitive. They both count as types of identity because they are both stipulated to obey structurally similar identity-laws. Now, as we will shortly see (§4.4), there is some question about what these identity-laws should actually be, but we can take these as our starting point:

(R$_o$) $x =_o x$
(LL$_o$) $x =_o y \rightarrow (\phi(x) \leftrightarrow \phi(y))$

(R$_w$) $P =_w P$
(LL$_w$) $P =_w Q \rightarrow (\phi(P) \leftrightarrow \phi(Q))$

(R$_o$) and (R$_w$) require that both types of identity be reflexive. (LL$_o$) and (LL$_w$) are two versions of Leibniz's Law: identical objects are indiscernible, and the same goes for identical ways.

Now that we have drawn this distinction between $x =_o y$ and $P =_w Q$, we can offer a more careful formulation of the Individuation Problem. It starts with a true, informative identity-claim:

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[28] Versions of this objection have been presented by Künne (2003: 11–12) and Sullivan (2005a: §5).

(1) Hesperus $=_o$ Phosphorus

Since (1) is informative, it should be possible for someone to believe that Hesperus is a planet without believing that Phosphorus is a planet:

(2) $\Diamond\exists x\big((x$ believes that Hesperus is a planet$)\wedge$
$\qquad\qquad\neg(x$ believes that Phosphorus is a planet$)\big)$

But now the identity theorist is pulled in two directions at once. If (1) is a true identity, then the following seems plausible when *ways for things to be* are thought of as states of affairs:

(3) (Hesperus is a planet) $=_w$ (Phosphorus is a planet)

In fact, not only is (3) plausible, it is implied by (1), (R_w) and (LL_o).[29] However, by (LL_w), (2) implies:

(4) (Hesperus is a planet) $\neq_w$ (Phosphorus is a planet)

Thus, by asking *ways for things to be* to act as propositions as well as states of affairs, we end up imposing inconsistent demands on their individuation.

4.2   Frege's Puzzle

At this point, you might be wondering if it isn't a bit unfair to present the Individuation Problem as a special challenge for immodest Identity Theories. *Everyone* needs to find a way of resolving the inconsistency between (1), (2) and the identity-laws. Indeed, the inconsistency is already present between (1), (2) and (LL_o), without any mention of the individuation of *ways for things to be*. That is just *Frege's Puzzle of Informative Identities*.[30]

However, there *is* a special problem for immodest identity theorists here: by identifying worldly states with propositions, they cut themselves off from Frege's own solution to his puzzle. According to Frege (1892b, 1918), propositions are not composed out of ordinary objects and properties, but out of senses. For example, the proposition that Hesperus is a planet is *not* composed out of the object Hesperus and the property of being a planet; it is composed out of senses which present that object and property. This led Frege to claim that the name 'Hesperus' is systematically ambiguous: in direct contexts, 'Hesperus' refers to Hesperus; but in indirect contexts, e.g. in belief-ascriptions, 'Hesperus' refers to its own direct sense.

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[29]   To see this, you just need to note that these are instances of (R_w) and (LL_o):

- (Hesperus is a planet) $=_w$ (Hesperus is a planet)
- Hesperus $=_o$ Phosphorus $\rightarrow$ $\big(($(Hesperus is a planet) $=_w$ (Hesperus is a planet)$)$ $\leftrightarrow$
  $($(Phosphorus is a planet) $=_w$ (Hesperus is a planet)$)\big)$

This point is rightly emphasised by Bacon and J. Russell (2019: 91).

[30]   This is a *slightly* non-standard way of thinking about Frege's Puzzle. The puzzle is often presented as follows, without explicitly appealing to (2): How can 'Hesperus is Hesperus' and 'Hesperus is Phosphorus' differ in cognitive content, if 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus' both refer to the same thing? However, as Makin (2000: 86–7 & 109–11) emphasises, possibilities such as (2) are the cash-value of the claim that 'Hesperus is Hesperus' and 'Hesperus is Phosphorus' differ in cognitive content.

(A name's *direct* sense is the sense it has in direct contexts.) The same goes for the name 'Phosphorus'. So if we were to eliminate that ambiguity from (1)–(4), we would end up with something like this:

(1') $h_0 =_o p_0$
(2') $\Diamond \exists x \big((x \text{ believes that } h_1 \text{ is a planet}) \wedge \neg (x \text{ believes that } p_1 \text{ is a planet}) \big)$
(3') $(h_0 \text{ is a planet}) =_w (p_0 \text{ is a planet})$
(4') $(h_0 \text{ is a planet}) \neq_w (p_0 \text{ is a planet})$

You should read 'h_0' and 'p_0' as unambiguous names, which refer to Hesperus/Phosphorus in all of their occurrences; 'h_1' and 'p_1', on the other hand, are unambiguous names which always refer to the direct senses of 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus', respectively.[31] Now that we have (partially) disambiguated (1)–(4),[32] Frege's Puzzle is easily solved. (1') and (2') can consistently be combined with all of the identity-laws; they jointly imply (3'), but not (4').[33]

The problem for immodest identity theorists is that they cannot solve Frege's Puzzle so easily. They cannot give different accounts of the composition of states and propositions, without violating (LL_w): if propositions are identical to states, then (LL_w) dictates that they must be composed in exactly the same way. Immodest identity theorists cannot, then, treat names as ambiguous in the same way as Frege. Instead, they are forced to take (1)–(4), and the inconsistency between them, at face-value.

4.3 The Gray's Elegy Argument

Losing access to Frege's solution is only bad news if the solution actually works. However, Frege's solution faces a number of well-known objections. Rather than recount them all here, I will focus on the one that I think is most important.[34] I will

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[31] In a letter to Russell dated 28/12/1902, Frege wrote: 'To avoid ambiguity, we ought really to have special signs in indirect speech, though their connections with the corresponding signs in direct speech should be easy to recognise.' (Reprinted in McGuinness 1980: 152–154.)

It should be noted that there is a weaker and a stronger sense in which we might *disambiguate* a name, e.g. 'Hesperus'. In the weaker sense, the subscripts on 'h_0' and 'h_1' are just there to remind us of the contexts in which those names appear. In the stronger sense, 'h_0' and 'h_1' become rigid names: 'h_0' is to refer in all contexts to what 'Hesperus' refers to in direct contexts; and 'h_1' is to refer in all contexts to what 'Hesperus' refers to in indirect contexts. For the purposes of my argument in §4.3, it is essential that we understand disambiguation in the stronger sense. (Thanks to Lukas Skiba for pushing me to be clear on this.)

[32] The disambiguation is only partial because 'is a planet' stands for a property in (3') and (4'), but for a sense that presents that property in (2'). However, (1')–(4') are sufficiently disambiguated for our purposes.

[33] Dodd (2000: ch.2) recommends a paratactic variant of Frege's solution, according to which 'x believes that Hesperus is a planet' should be parsed as 'x believes that: Hesperus is a planet', where the 'that' is a demonstrative referring to the Fregean proposition expressed by the sentence displayed after the colon. The objection I present to Frege's solution in §4.3 could easily be re-worked to apply to Dodd's paratactic variant. According to Dodd, 'x believes that Hesperus is a planet', for example, must have the same truth-value as 'x believes the proposition composed of h_1 and $planet_1$' (where h_1 is the sense of 'Hesperus', and $planet_1$ is the sense of 'is a planet'). So all we need to do to target Dodd with my objection is re-write all of the belief-ascriptions in §4.3 in this form.

[34] Here are two other objections. First, Frege's solution appears to make it impossible for a quantifier to simultaneously bind variables in direct and indirect contexts, as in (J). Second, Frege's solution

use a modified version of Russell's (1905: 485–8) *Gray's Elegy Argument* (GEA) to present a dilemma for Frege's solution: either it does not really solve Frege's Puzzle, or it is literally unbelievable by its own lights.

Early analytic fans will immediately spot a number of differences between my argument and Russell's GEA. (Here is an obvious but trivial one: I do not use the example that originally gave the GEA its name.)[35] However, like the GEA, my argument is driven by the following Fregean principles about sense and reference:

(i) Senses are *modes of presentation*: if s is the sense of a name, then that name refers to the object that s presents; s is the way that name presents that object.
(ii) There is *no backward road* from referent to sense: if an object is presented by a sense, then it is presented by more than one sense.
(iii) Senses are *aboutness-shifters*: propositions are not about their constituent senses; they are about what those senses present.

Principles (i) and (ii) will be familiar from any introductory lecture course on Frege. Principle (iii) is built into Frege's solution to his puzzle: when someone stands in the *believing*-relation to a proposition that has h_1 as a constituent, they thereby have a belief about Hesperus.

With these three principles in hand, we can start working toward my dilemma. Frege's solution requires that h_1 and p_1 be distinct senses. So, in order to believe Frege's solution, we need to believe that these senses are distinct. But what exactly is involved in believing that? Consider the following belief-ascription:

(5) Daniel believes that $h_1 \neq_o p_1$.

On the face of it, (5) appears to ascribe to Daniel the belief that h_1 is distinct from p_1. But recall that 'h_1' and 'p_1' are stipulated to be *unambiguous* names that refer to the senses of 'h_0' and 'p_0' in all contexts.[36] So, by principle (iii), (5) does not ascribe a belief about h_1 and p_1 to Daniel, but a belief about h_0 and p_0 (i.e. Hesperus and Phosphorus).

According to principle (iii), you cannot believe something about h_1 or p_1 by believing a proposition which has those senses as constituents. But that does not yet imply that it is altogether impossible to believe things about h_1 and p_1. You can, so long as you can find senses which present h_1 and p_1. Let 'h_2' and 'p_2' be unambiguous names for such senses; to keep things simple, we can suppose that

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violates Davidson's (1968) *semantic innocence* requirement: it appears to imply that, in order to learn a language, students must first learn how to use a name in direct contexts, *and then* learn how to use it in indirect contexts; but that is absurd. For discussion, see: Church 1951; Davidson 1965; Dummett 1981a: ch.9, 1981b: ch.6; Burge 1979, 2004; Parsons 2001; Kripke 2008; Skiba 2015. The chief virtue of Dodd's (2000: ch.2) paratactic theory is that it avoids this objection.

[35] Here is a deeper difference: Russell's original argument was meant to show that there is no satisfactory way of explaining the relation between a sense and the referent it presents; but, as will shortly become clear, that is not the focus of my argument. For especially helpful presentations of Russell's original GEA, see: Makin 2000: ch.2 & ch.5 §6; Potter 2002: 124–5.

[36] As noted in fn.32, there is still some ambiguity in (5): in direct contexts, '$=_o$' stands for objectual identity, but in (5) it stands for a sense. However, this residual ambiguity will not matter in what follows.

h_2 and p_2 are the senses of 'h_1' and 'p_1', respectively.[37] Now consider the following belief-ascription:

(6) Daniel believes that $h_2 \neq_o p_2$.

According to principle (iii), (6) does ascribe to Daniel a belief about h_1 and p_1. However, in order to ascribe this belief, we have been forced to think of the senses h_1 and p_1 as themselves the kind of object that can be presented by senses. And as soon as we do that, we re-open Frege's Puzzle.

Principle (ii) tells us that there is no backward road from referent to sense: if h_1 is presented by a sense, h_2, then it must also be presented by another sense, h_2^*. Senses are modes of presentation, and so, presumably, we could introduce a new unambiguous name, 'h_1^*', on the stipulation that it is to have h_2^* as its sense. Since h_2^* presents h_1, principle (i) implies that 'h_1^*' refers to h_1, and thus the following must be true:

(7) $h_1 =_o h_1^*$

This identity is not just true; since 'h_1' and 'h_1^*' have different senses, (7) is *informative* too. As a result, the following also seems to be true:

(8) $\Diamond \exists x \big((x$ believes that $h_1 =_o h_1) \wedge \neg(x$ believes that $h_1 =_o h_1^*) \big)$

To see why, imagine that Daniel accepts all of Frege's doctrines about sense, but is a little confused about which senses present which objects: he knows that h_1 presents Hesperus, but wrongly thinks that h_1^* presents Sirius. According to principle (iii), to believe that $h_1 =_o h_1$ or that $h_1 =_o h_1^*$ is not to believe something about the senses h_1 or h_1^*, but about the objects those senses present. So, as far as Daniel is concerned, to believe $h_1 =_o h_1$ is to believe about Hesperus that it is self-identical, and to believe $h_1 =_o h_1^*$ is to believe about Hesperus and Sirius that they are identical to each other. Assuming that Daniel knows his astronomy, he would therefore describe himself as believing that $h_1 =_o h_1$, but not believing that $h_1 =_o h_1^*$. If we defer to Daniel's self-description, then we have here exactly the kind of possibility that (8) concerns.

Together, (7) and (8) are enough to get Frege's Puzzle back up-and-running, since they are jointly inconsistent with (LL_o). And this time, Frege's solution is no help, because 'h_1' and 'h_1^*' are stipulated to be *unambiguous* names.

(We could try solving this re-run of Frege's Puzzle just by rejecting (8), and refusing to defer to Daniel's self-description. But then we would need to find some other way of describing his predicament. The obvious suggestion would be that Daniel has incorrect beliefs about his beliefs: he believes that he believes the proposition that $h_1 =_o h_1$, and he also believes that he does not believe the proposition that $h_1 =_o h_1^*$; but in reality, these propositions are identical, and so

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[37] It does not really matter whether h_2 and p_2 are the senses of 'h_1' and 'p_1'. In fact, it does not even matter whether 'h_1' and 'p_1' have senses at all; we could allow them to be special Millian names for senses. All that my argument requires is that h_2 and p_2 be senses that present h_1 and p_1; if h_2 is not the sense of 'h_1', just replace 'h_1' in (7) and (8) with a new name that is stipulated to have h_2 as its sense. (If no senses present h_1 and p_1, as Potter (2020: 104–5) seems to suggest, then we are stuck with the second horn of the dilemma below.)

to believe one *is* to believe the other. That may be an adequate way of solving the re-run of Frege's Puzzle, but if so, we could have solved Frege's original Puzzle in just the same way. That is, we could have just rejected (2), and then re-described apparent examples of (2) as cases where someone has incorrect beliefs about their beliefs: they believe that they believe the proposition that Hesperus is a planet, and they also believe that they do not believe the proposition that Phosphorus is a planet; but in reality, these propositions are identical, and so to believe one *is* to believe the other. Frege's solution would then become an idle epicycle.)

I can now state my dilemma for Frege's solution. Either senses can themselves be presented by senses, or they cannot. If they can, then Frege's solution is not effective: by principles (i) and (ii), senses become things that can be presented in different ways by different names, and that is enough to reignite Frege's Puzzle in a form that is resistant to Frege's solution. But if, on the other hand, senses *cannot* be presented by senses, then principle (iii) makes it impossible to have any beliefs *about* senses; in particular, then, (iii) makes it impossible to believe Frege's solution.

It is important to be clear that this dilemma is not meant to throw the whole idea of the sense/reference distinction into doubt. (Maybe Russell (1905: 485) thought that his GEA managed to do that, but if so, then this is one of the points where I disagree.) All it is meant to cast doubt on is the way that Frege used this distinction to solve Frege's Puzzle. Frege's solution is either ineffective or unbelievable by its own lights, and so immodest identity theorists should not be too upset to find out that it isn't available to them.

4.4 Immodest solutions to the Individuation Problem

I will now end this section by briefly discussing how an immodest identity theorist *should* respond to the Individuation Problem. The problem turns around the following four claims:

(1) Hesperus $=_o$ Phosphorus
(2) $\Diamond \exists x \big((x$ believes that Hesperus is a planet$) \wedge$
$\neg (x$ believes that Phosphorus is a planet$) \big)$
(3) (Hesperus is a planet) $=_w$ (Phosphorus is a planet)
(4) (Hesperus is a planet) $\neq_w$ (Phosphorus is a planet)

There are only two ways for a immodest identity theorist to respond to the Individuation Problem: (a) they can individuate *ways for the world to be* as finely as we intuitively individuate propositions; or (b) they can individuate *ways for the world to be* as coarsely as we intuitively individuate states. In *Properties and Propositions* (Trueman 2021b: §14.5), I chose option (a). I now think that this was a mistake.

Option (a): reject (3) and accept (4).
There are two versions of option (a), and neither of them are promising. First, we could reject (1). More generally, we could deny that any identity-claim could be both true *and* informative. That is obviously a radical move, but it does come with

some benefits: it allows us to retain (2) alongside all of the identity-laws listed in §4.1:

(R$_o$) $x =_o x$
(LL$_o$) $x =_o y \rightarrow (\phi(x) \leftrightarrow \phi(y))$

(R$_w$) $P =_w P$
(LL$_w$) $P =_w Q \rightarrow (\phi(P) \leftrightarrow \phi(Q))$

However, whatever the benefits, this version of option (a) is unacceptably *idealistic*.

The threat of idealism has always loomed over immodest Identity Theories. It can be hard to hear the declaration that the world is the totality of *true propositions* as anything other than a declaration of idealism. I tried to pre-empt this threat in §§2 & 3, by emphasising that, according to my Identity Theory, propositions are not representational: a proposition is not an object which expresses a way for things to be; it a way for things to be itself.[38] So when I say that the world is the totality of true propositions, I am not identifying the world with mere representations; I am identifying it with all the ways things are.

However, as Sullivan (2005a: §5) had already pointed out, this anti-idealist rhetoric rings hollow if we deny that there are any true informative identities:

> Part of what is involved in externality [i.e. mind-independence] is what common sense talks of as the cussedness of things, their having other sides responsible for often unexpected and sometimes unwanted consequences. External things do not reveal themselves completely to a single viewpoint, and our grasp of them will be in various ways incomplete. (Sullivan 2005a: 59)[39]

Immodest identity theorists cannot, then, solve the Individuation Problem by rejecting (1), on pain of idealism. The other version of option (a) is to accept (1), (2) and (4), but reject (LL$_o$). This is the version I previously had in mind (Trueman 2021b: §14.5). However, in retrospect, this version of (a) is unmotivated. The pressure to individuate *ways for things to be* finely is meant to come from the fact that (2) implies (4) by an application of (LL$_w$). But why should Leibniz's Law be sacrosanct for *ways*, if we have so lightly dismissed it for *objects*?

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[38] See also: Trueman 2021a: §7, 2021b: §14.3.

[39] Sullivan (2005a: 58–9) suggests that we could answer this threat of idealism if we were willing to commit to the Tractarian programme of analysis. That way, we could deny that there are any informative identities between *simples*, but then analyse apparently informative identity-claims — like (1) — as complex descriptive claims about simples. However, I am setting this suggestion aside, for two reasons. The first is the obvious one: as Sullivan (2005a: 59–61) notes, Tractarian analysis no longer strikes many philosophers as a viable programme. Second, it is not really clear to me how the Tractarian programme would manage to dodge the charge of idealism, even if it were viable: if we are idealists about simples — since there can be no true informative identities between them — and we analyse every claim we make into a claim about simples, then how can we avoid idealism across the board?

Option (b): accept (3) and reject (4).

I now think, then, that an immodest identity theorist should choose option (b), and individuate *ways for things to be* as coarsely as we intuitively individuate states. Again, there are two versions of this option. I will not attempt to choose between them here; for now, it will have to be enough just to know what they are.

First, we could reject (2). This would allow us to retain (1) and (3) alongside all of the identity-laws. This version of option (b) at least has the virtue of familiarity: plenty of philosophers have insisted that this is the right way to solve Frege's Puzzle, and have attempted to ease any intuitive reservations we might have about it.[40]

The second version of option (b) is much less familiar. We could accept all of (1)–(3), if we rejected both (LL_o) and (LL_w). This version of (b) might initially strike you as somewhat similar to Frege's solution, but that similarity is superficial: Frege did not reject, or in any way restrict, (LL_o) or (LL_w); he posited an ambiguity in (1)–(3), which made them consistent with the unrestricted identity-laws. By contrast, this second version of (b) solves the Individuation Problem by identifying objects(/ways) even when something true of one is false of the other. Now that it has been clarified, this solution might sound beyond the pale, but Bacon and J. Russell (2019) and Caie et al. (2020) have recently developed a number of consistent theories of this type.[41]

5   Conclusion

My aim in this paper has been to move beyond the Dependency Theory. If we think of the world as something that makes propositions true from outside, then propositions become a veil of thought between us and the world (§1). Instead of the Dependency Theory, we should adopt an immodest Identity Theory; if we do, then cognitive relations like judgment and belief will become direct relations to the world (§§2 & 3). Dodd (1995, 1999, 2000) has argued that immodest Identity Theories are incoherent attempts to identify facts from the realm of reference, with propositions from the realm of sense. However, things will only look that way if we accept Frege's solution to Frege's Puzzle, which is undermined by Russell's GEA. Immodest identity theorists should not solve Frege's Puzzle by distinguishing between a realm of reference and a realm of sense. Instead, they should resolutely

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[40] See e.g.: Salmon 1986; Soames 1987.

[41] Caie et al. (2020) consider four 'Theories of Opacity' — Classical Applicativism, Classical Purity, Free Applicativism, and Free Purity. Only one of these theories, Classical Purity, applies any pressure toward (4).

individuate propositions as coarsely as we intuitively individuate facts (§4).[42]

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