

FIL 4160/4170/4180 – Metafysikk II/Metafysikk II med lite essay/Metafysikk II med stort essay

Våren 2007

Fredag 25. mai kl. 9.00-13.00 (4 timer)

Oppgavesettet består av 2 sider

Ingen hjelpemidler tillatt

You can write in Norwegian or English, as you prefer. Answer all questions in (A), one question in (B) and one question in (C):

(A) THE CONTENT AND STRUCTURE OF THE MINIMALIST THEORY OF TRUTH.

According to Horwich, 'a theory of any phenomenon, X, is a collection of principles (i.e., axioms and/or rules)'.

A.1. *What are the fundamental principles of the minimal theory of truth?*

According to Horwich, the minimalist theory of truth "is highly reminiscent of the old 'redundancy theory' of Frege, Ramsey, Ayer and Strawson": the idea that 'The proposition *that p* is true' means no more and no less than simply '*p*'."

At the same time, Horwich mentions *three fundamental respects* in which minimalism represents an improvement over the redundancy theory: they concern (i) the function of our concept of truth, (ii) the relation between '*p*' and 'the proposition that *p* is true', and (iii) the question whether truth is a property.

A. 2. *Explain what those three improvements consist in, according to Horwich, and why he thinks they are needed. Do you agree with Horwich that all the changes are improvements?*

According to Horwich, one of the 'striking features' of minimalism is that 'although we have been able to characterize the axioms of [the minimalist theory of truth] we cannot explicitly formulate the theory – for two independent reasons'.

A. 3. *What are the reasons Horwich gives for why the minimalist theory cannot be explicitly formulated?*

(B) OBJECTIONS TO MINIMALISM (ANSWER ONE QUESTION)

B.1. *Crispin Wright's key objection to deflationism is that it is 'internally unstable'. What does he mean? Explain and assess his objection.*

B. 2. *Anil Gupta argues against the strong reading of 'The disquotation thesis'. What does 'the disquotation thesis' say on the strong interpretation? Present, and assess, Anil Gupta's key argument against it.*

(C) FURTHER ISSUES ABOUT MINIMALISM (ANSWER ONE QUESTION)

The possibility of a finitely axiomatizable theory of truth:

As Horwich notes, there is a strong temptation to suppose that we can improve on the minimal theory of truth 'and capture the infinity of instances of the equivalence schema in a compact formulation'. He considers, and rejects, the following two attempts at formulating 'an explanatorily adequate theory of truth' as a single principle or proposition:

(i) $(x)(x \text{ is true iff } \{\exists q\} (x = \langle q \rangle \ \& \ q))$

(ii) Every instance of $\langle \langle p \rangle \text{ is true iff } p \rangle$ is true

C.1. *What are Horwich's reasons for rejecting these proposals? Explain and assess.*

Worries about taking propositions to be the bearers of truth.

Horwich's 'minimal theory of truth' takes truth to be a property of propositions. However, philosophers have a number of worries about propositions: there are disputes about their nature and whether they even exist. In addition, worries have been voiced about whether deflationism (minimalism) can consistently be combined with a commitment to the existence of propositions.

C.2. *How does Horwich address these worries? Do his answers strike you as adequate? Explain.*

