

Why the Truth Pluralist should Pluralise her Pluralism

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Domain-relative truth pluralists say that the nature of truth varies between domains of discourse. They famously encounter problems the moment propositions from different domains are considered simultaneously. For example, let's say that propositions about macroscopic objects, like 'David Cameron lives in 10 Downing Street' are true when they correspond to facts in the world, but propositions about fiction, like 'Sherlock Holmes lived at 221B Baker Street' are true when they are consistent with a story: what property, then, does the conjunction 'David Cameron lives at 10 Downing Street and Sherlock Holmes lived at 221B Baker Street' have? It need not correspond to a fact (in fact, no one lives at 221B Baker Street), nor be consistent with a story (David Cameron did not appear in the Sherlock Holmes stories). So, what property makes it true?

Pluralists have tried to solve this - and other 'mixing' problems - in one fell swoop by admitting a further, univocal truth property, possessed by all true propositions: the further truth properties, like correspondence and consistency, are then versions of this one univocal property, in some sense or other. This 'weak' pluralism has become orthodoxy. In this talk, I will show that no such formulation can solve the problem of mixed compounds. I start piecemeal, by showing that no extant version of weak pluralism succeeds: genus/species; determinable/determinate; role/realiser; role/manifesters. I then argue wholesale: that no such formulation could work.

The upshot, I suggest, is that the pluralist should not think that logical compounds are true in the same sense as atomic propositions. Rather, the pluralist should think that logical compounds are true in a different sense: that the relevant truth property for a proposition depends not only on its domain, but also its logical form. This is new kind of truth pluralism pluralises the pluralisms the pluralist should adopt.