True but Also Not True

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Abstract

We present three ways of expressing a possible interpretative uncertainty of the truth predicate: ambiguity, context-sensitivity and semantic indeterminacy. Next, we examine Kölbel (2008)'s pluralist view that "true" is ambiguous between a substantialist concept and a deflationist concept, and that it is ambiguous as the word "dog" is between "male dog" and "canine". Our main goal is to show that Kölbel's thesis does not withstand empirical scrutiny in the sense that "true" fails most of the well-established tests for ambiguity (conjunction-reduction, contradiction, and ellipsis). In addition, we reformulate Kölbel's thesis by saying that "true" may be context-sensitive between a substantialist concept and a deflationist concept, and then we run Cappelen and Lepore (2004)'s inter-contextual disquotation test in order to show that "true" does not display that sort of context-sensitivity. In conclusion, we offer a diagnosis of Kölbel's thesis failure, and advance some possible developments.

Keywords: truth, pluralism, ambiguity, context-sensitivity

1. Introduction

Alethic pluralism is the view that truth requires different treatments for different domains of discourse. Accordingly, the subject matter we are talking about determines what notion of truth is in place. The intuition behind alethic pluralism is that we do not seem to appeal to the same notion of truth across different domains of discourses such as mathematics and morality. This may also account for the widespread disagreement among philosophers on what the nature of truth ultimately is (correspondence, coherence, deflationary, etc.). But given the distinction between concepts and properties, it makes sense to wonder whether there is a single concept of truth but different truth properties, or there are different truth concepts, each of them matching different properties. Wright (1992) argues that there is a single concept of truth that is specified by a list of platitudes about truth, and that different truth properties satisfy that concept in different regions of discourse. On the other hand, Kölbel (2008) argues that truth is split into different concepts which, in turn, are associated with different properties. Unlike Wright's pluralism, which is widely discussed in the literature, Kölbel's has not received

much attention yet. Our goal is to examine whether or not Kölbel's pluralism is tenable by looking at how ordinary speakers use the truth predicate.

Kölbel claims that the predicate "true" displays an interpretative uncertainty in natural language between two concepts: a deflationary concept and a substantialist concept. The former, TRUTH-D, is exhausted by the equivalence schema "<p> is true iff p"; the latter, TRUTH-C, involves a relation between truth-bearers and objective states of affairs. At first glance, it is unclear what sort of interpretative uncertainty Kölbel has in mind, as there are at least three ways of fleshing out his claim: the predicate "true" could be ambiguous, context-sensitive or indeterminate. Although these attributes are closely related to one another, as they all point to a lack of certainty, it is nonetheless possible to set them apart. Our inquiry mainly addresses the thesis that "true" is ambiguous and touches on the context-sensitivity alternative.[1]

Let us first introduce some basic terminology. Consider the pun "burying a treasure by the river, Barbarossa is putting his money in the bank". The pun is admittedly funny when one recognizes that "bank" is ambiguous between an organization that provides financial services and the side of a river. Ambiguity is generally defined as a matter of two or more lexical entries that correspond to the same word (e.g. financial-bank and river-bank). Sometimes it is also useful to draw a further distinction between two forms of ambiguity: homonymy and polysemy. A word is homonymous if it has one single phonological form and two separate dictionary entries. For example, the word "coach" has two unrelated meanings: one is trainer; the other is bus. On the other hand, a word is polysemic if it has one single phonological form and two distinct but related meanings. A polysemic word is "face", which can either refer to the part between the forehead and the chin or to the forward part of a clock. Yet the two meanings are conceptually related in that they refer to the front of an object.

It may be hard to tell whether a term is homonymous or polysemic. The word "bank" is clearly homonymous between river and financial institution; nonetheless, it may be considered polysemic between financial institution and relying on someone (as in the expression "you can bank on me") because of the underlying theme of security. For the sake of simplicity, we will lump homonymy and polysemy together and consistently use the term "ambiguity".

Context sensitivity is variability in content due to changes in the context of utterance without any changes in word usage. For example, the personal pronoun "I" is context-sensitive because it shifts reference depending on who is uttering it; but notice that "I" is not ambiguous. Looking up "bank" in the dictionary, we notice two distinct entries that correspond to it. And we conclude from that evidence that the word "bank" must be ambiguous. The personal pronoun "I", by contrast, has only one single lexical entry. To put it another way, "I" has one single lexical entry regardless of whoever is uttering it. Ambiguity, roughly speaking, is a property of the meaning of terms on their own, whereas context-sensitivity is determined by a mix of linguistic facts on the one hand, and non-linguistic facts about possible contexts of utterance on the other.

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[1] We mainly examine the ambiguity thesis because Kölbel himself (2008) considers the truth predicate as ambiguous. To be fair, Kölbel also suggests that "true" might display pragmatically ambiguity or context-sensitivity, although he seems to be in favor of syntactic ambiguity (2008: 369). We would also like to emphasize that Kölbel does not take into account "true" as indeterminate.

Keeping the distinction between ambiguity and context-sensitivity is a thorny issue when the dictionary cannot be a reliable tool. Philosophical disputes about whether a term is ambiguous or context-sensitive cannot be settled by merely appealing to dictionaries. Just think about the long-lasting disagreement over words such as "truth", "exist" or "real". Hence we need a method of telling whether a purported term is ambiguous, context sensitive or neither. As will be shown, sections § 3 and § 4 are aimed at presenting such a method and applying it to our ordinary usage of the predicate "true".

Both ambiguity and context-sensitivity should be distinguished from indeterminacy. We say that a term is (semantically) indeterminate if our inability to assess an instance of it would persist even if we had all the relevant information. Consider the sentence "Smith is bald" where Smith is a borderline case. "Bald" is indeterminate because our inability to assess whether or not Smith is bald would persist even if we knew the exact number of Smith's hair. To give another example, we know that *there is* a wealthiest poor person, but we do not know *who* the wealthiest poor is. Basically we know an existential sentence to be true without knowing any instance of it to be true.

If terms like "bald" or "wealthiest poor person" are semantically indeterminate, having complete knowledge of the history of the world (past, present and future) is not sufficient to address questions such as "is Smith bald?" or "who is the wealthiest poor person?" Compare the semantic indeterminacy of "bald" with the ambiguity of "bank". "Bald" does not have clear-cut extension, whereas "bank" *does* have it. This is because we can easily recognize whether something is either a river or a financial institution given all the relevant information. To disambiguate a word we need to add additional information to the context of utterance, whereas there is no fact of the matter to be known in the case of indeterminacy. Notice that context-sensitivity is also quite different from indeterminacy. "Bald" involves blurred conditions of applications, so that our thoughts and practice do not determine the truth-conditions of borderline cases where "bald" occurs. In the case of context-sensitivity, on the contrary, we can determine the truth-conditions of sentences such as "I'm eating an ice-cream right now" when the speaker is clear from the context of utterance.

It may seem that semantic indeterminacy and vagueness describe the same phenomenon, so that every occurrence of "semantic indeterminacy" simply stands for "vagueness". But this is not the case. In fact, three features are typically associated with vagueness: the presence of borderline cases, the lack of sharp boundaries and the sorites-susceptibility. Unlike vagueness, semantic indeterminacy is only characterized by the presence of borderline cases without boundary-lessness. Consider Fine's (1975: 266) example of a stipulated definition of "nice1": (a) n is nice1 if n> 15; (b) n is not nice1 if n< 13. Because it is impossible to determine whether or not 14 falls under that predicate, "nice1" is semantically indeterminate if n=14. However, "nice1" is not vague. Should it be vague, it would lack sharp boundaries. Nor is "nice1" affected by sorite paradoxes.

We have shown that ambiguity, context-sensitivity and indeterminacy are distinct notions. Saying that "true" displays an interpretative uncertainty thus requires further elucidation. We are now addressing the main question of the paper: in what sense might "true" be ambiguous?

2. Kölbel's Ambiguity Thesis

The sort of ambiguity we are going to examine is endorsed by Kölbel (2008). Kölbel argues that our ordinary usage of "true" expresses a deflationary concept (TRUTH-D) on some occasions, and expresses a substantialist concept (TRUTH-C) on other occasions. The deflationary concept is exhausted by some variant of the equivalence schema (e.g. the proposition that p is true iff p), whereas the substantialist concept is a "metaphysically interesting concept worthy of further analysis" (Kölbel 2008: 359). More specifically, TRUTH-C is defined by the principle that truth is objective, where objectivity is cashed out in terms of faultless disagreement. A truth-bearer is objective if and only if "disagreement about it cannot, as an a priori matter, be faultless" (Kölbel 2008: 376).

Let us explain Kölbel's view by way of example. Suppose that Sarah and Smith are having a disagreement about whether it is true or false that the voltage induced in a closed circuit is proportional to the rate of change of the magnetic flux it encloses. Since their disagreement is about one of Maxwell's equations, either Sarah or Smith must be wrong. The disagreement in question is not faultless. On the other hand, suppose that Sarah is now quarreling with Smith about whether oysters are tasty or insipid. Because taste judgments are not objective, it is not the case that one of them must be mistaken. Sarah and Smith are thus having a faultless disagreement.

According to Kölbel, competence with the predicate "true" requires knowing that the term expresses a deflationary concept on some occasions of use, and a substantialist concept on some other occasions. In turn, one must accept all the instances of the equivalence schema in order to be competent with the deflationary concept of truth; furthermore, being competent with the substantialist concept requires being acquainted with the notion of objectivity.

Kölbel argues that ordinary speakers are able to disambiguate TRUTH-D from TRUTH-C. As evidence for this claim, he asks us to consider the following two utterances:

(U1) It is true that Chaplin is funny.
(U2) Judgments (propositions, statements, beliefs, etc.) about what is funny cannot be true or false.

Kölbel observes that it is possible for the same speaker to utter both (U1) and (U2) without a change of mind or being confused. For there are two concepts of truth at stake: in (U1) "true" expresses the deflationary concept, which applies to all contents of thought/speech; in (U2) "true" (and "false") expresses a substantialist concept, which only applies to objective contents. In other terms, (U2) says that judgments about what is funny cannot be true-c (or false-c) because they are not objective, whereas "true" in (U1) does not discriminate between objective and subjective contents.

Kölbel's thesis is not just that "true" is ambiguous, but that it is ambiguous in a peculiar way. Unlike "coach" and "bank", which have mutually exclusive meanings, "true" functions as "dog", which has a general understanding ("dog" as canine) and a specific understanding ("dog" as male dog). As "dog" conveys both meanings, so does "true":

For all x, x is a dog-m iff x is dog-c and a male.
For all p, p is true-c iff p is true-d and p is objective.

To sum up, Kölbel's thesis is that "dog" and "true" are likewise ambiguous. What we want to do is to evaluate whether this thesis withstands empirical scrutiny. If that is the case, we should expect "true" to pass the same tests for ambiguity that "dog" also passes. Our general approach consists in putting the predicate "true" in utterances so as to highlight its purported ambiguous features. We shall then consider three well-established tests for detecting ambiguities: conjunction-reduction, contradiction and ellipsis.[2]

3. The Ambiguity Thesis Under Test

Let us start with the test of *conjunction-reduction*. It consists in conjoining two sentences that contain a purportedly ambiguous term, and in showing that the resulting conjunction is zeugmatic. A chain of words is zeugmatic if it must be understood in two different ways in order to make sense. Consider, for instance, the adjective "light" in unambiguous sentences such as (1) and (2):

(1) The colors are light.
(2) The feathers are light.

We build a new sentence by conjoining (1) and (2):

(3) The colors and the feathers are light.

(3) passes the test, for it is clearly zeugmatic. This is evidence that "light" is ambiguous between "not dark" and "not heavy". Consider now the word "exist".

(4) Alghero exists.
(5) Numbers exist.
(6) Alghero and numbers exist.

Regardless of our view on the existence of mathematical objects, (6) is not zeugmatic. This result squares with philosophers' intuition that "exist" is unambiguous. Consider now the following examples where "true" occurs.

(7) That Chaplin is funny is true.
(8) That Chaplin died in 1977 is true.

We have encouraged two readings of "true" as expressing TRUTH-D in (7) and TRUTH-C in (8). But their conjunction does not seem to display any zeugmatic effect:

(9) That Chaplin is funny and that Chaplin died in 1977 are true.

The test seems to drive us to conclude that "true" is not ambiguous in Kölbel's sense. Unfortunately, the matter is a little trickier. Let us put the word "dog" to the test:

(10) Bitches are dogs.
(11) Fido is a dog.
(12) Bitches and Fido are dogs.

Neither (12) strikes us as zeugmatic. So we ought to conclude that "dogs" is unambiguous, which is not the result we expected. What went wrong? The problem is that conjunction-reduction does not seem to work on privative opposites, i.e. when a more general understanding implies a more specific one. Consider the term "lion".

(13) Lionesses are lions.

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[2] The orthodox source for these tests is Zwicky and Sadock (1975).

(14) Simba is a lion.
(15) Lionesses and Simba are lions.

Conjunction-reduction fails to detect the ambiguity between feline and male lions. Also, think about the verb "drink", which has a general understanding (drink a liquid) and a specific one (drink alcohol). It is not clear how to emphasize that distinction within conjunction-reduction. Therefore, one may object, the test fails because it cannot display the sort of ambiguity that Kölbel has in mind.

Let us look at another test and see if we get different results. The test of *contradiction* is reliable as evidence to detect ambiguities in privative opposites. Accordingly, an expression is ambiguous if the same string of words can be used to say something that is simultaneously true and false of the same state of affairs. The seeming contradiction should go away as soon as we emphasize the two meanings of the ambiguous term. In this sense, (16), (17) and (18) are all ambiguous:

(16) She was funny [amusing] without being funny [strange].
(17) That bank [river-bank] isn't a bank [financial-bank].
(18) Bitches are dogs [canines] and aren't dogs [male canines].

As the test works on "dog", we can perform it on "true" as well. Consider the sentence

(19) "Chaplin is funny" is true, but it is also not true.

It does not seem that an ordinary English speaker can utter (19) without contradiction. But it is still possible that an ordinary English speaker may not recognize an ambiguity at first sight. After all, even the two understandings of "dog" sound rather unnatural. In other words, what if we specify that in the former instance of true we mean only that Chaplin is funny, whereas in the latter we mean that "Chaplin is funny" is objectively true?

(19') "Chaplin is funny" is true [true-d], but it is also not true [true-c].

Imagine a situation where I am having a conversation with a friend who says, "I watched Modern Times last night. Chaplin is so funny!" I nod in approval and say, "It's true!" Later on, another friend, a professional philosopher this time, comes to me and asks, "I've heard what you said earlier. But do you really believe that Chaplin is funny?" I pause for a second and then reply, "No, I do not believe that taste judgments can be true or false".

The bottom line is that natural language does not display two meanings of "true" unless we distinguish a serious, philosophical context from an ordinary one. That is why, we believe, the contradiction test fails when "true" occurs in *ordinary* speech; this is why we believe that "true" is not ambiguous in Kölbel's sense. But, one may object, what if a philosophical inquiry could reveal what the ordinary speaker is actually committed to? Perhaps the ordinary speaker could be driven to interpret the second occurrence of "true" in (19) as true-c. Assume that we ask an ordinary speaker, "do you think that Chaplin is funny in the same sense that it is true that Alghero is in Sardinia?" It is certainly possible that such an ordinary speaker, after being puzzled, would reply, "it doesn't sound right!" Notice that confusion may arise even after restating the same question on the word "exist". One could insist on the same ordinary speaker asking, "and so does Alghero exist in the same sense that numbers exist?" This question would give the ordinary speaker a hard time as well. At this point, we would need a philosophical

argument to prove that "exist" and "true" are both unambiguous. But this objection, although legit, goes far beyond the aim of the contradiction test. The test neither provides a knock-down philosophical argument nor engages an ordinary speaker in a philosophical debate. It ought to grasp the ambiguity of "true" in utterances without whatsoever philosophical bias. If those utterances sound naïve and not deeply philosophical, then the test is doing its job right. Note that the test does not rule out that there may be *contexts* where the distinction between true-c and true-d holds. But detecting such a distinction is more suitable for a context-sensitivity test (see § 4).

An important caveat: we do not want to suggest that philosophers cannot posit two meanings of the word "true"; but we adhere to the principle that, paraphrasing Grice, *ambiguities are not to be multiplied beyond necessity*. To quote Kripke (1979: 243), "do not posit an ambiguity unless you are really forced to, unless there are really compelling theoretical or intuitive grounds to suppose that an ambiguity really is present".

Let us consider a further test to detect ambiguities. The *ellipsis* test aims to identify impossible conflicting interpretations in sentences of the form *X does/did Y and so does/did Z*. Impossible conflicting interpretations are different readings of the same term that become mutually exclusive once we put them in an elliptical clause. Consider

(20) I went to the bank.

(20) has two conflicting readings. It can mean either that I went to the money institute, or that I went to the river. Now we add an "and so did" clause,

(20') I went to the bank, and so did Bill.

We get two impossible conflicting interpretations. In fact, (20') cannot mean that I went to the money institute (or the river) and that Bill went to the river (or the money institute). These two readings are mutually excluded by (20'). As a result, "bank" must be ambiguous. Notice that "dog" has also two impossible conflicting readings:

(21) I had my dog castrated, and so did Bill.

Suppose that I have a male dog, but Bill has a female dog by the name of Mia. Since castration can be performed only on male dogs—the correct term for females is spaying, or neutering for both males and females—Mia cannot be castrated. As a result, (21) admits impossible conflicting interpretations. "Dog" is therefore ambiguous between dog and male dog.

It is interesting to run the ellipsis test on the word "child". Consider

(22) I adopted a child, and so did Bill.

"Child" can have conflicting interpretations. For instance, it can pick out either a girl or a boy. But these interpretations are not mutually exclusive when we add an "and so did" clause. My child does not need to have the same gender as Bill's one in order for (22) to make sense. It follows that "child" is not ambiguous. At best, it is context-dependent with respect to whether "child" refers to either a boy or a girl.

Now, consider a perverse and horrifying society where children are customarily castrated.[3] The sentence "I castrated a child, and so did Bill" has still conflicting interpretations, boy or girl, but this time they are mutually exclusive. Note

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[3] An anonymous referee mentioned this grisly scenario.

that we have not changed the ordinary meaning of "child" but just imagined a scenario where "child" is ambiguous. There are however two important aspects to notice about this imaginary scenario: a) by running a thought experiment, as in the case of a perverse society, we force a change in the predominant context of utterance. Thought experiments have the power to induce ambiguities in a word via an alteration of the context of utterance, and they can be used to prove that a word is context-sensitive or ambiguous under possible scenarios. But we are employing the ellipsis test only to examine the behavior of "child" in ordinary contexts, and so we cannot help ourselves with any thought experiment; b) even if that thought experiment were valid, "child" would not be ambiguous in the same sense as "dog". In fact, "child" would display impossible conflicting interpretations that are polar opposites with respect to a gender feature (i.e. a child who can be castrated and another who cannot),[4] rather than displaying privative opposites (i.e. a general meaning and a specific meaning).

Let us now see how "true" behaves in an ellipsis test. Consider

(23) I think that "Chaplin is funny" is true, and so does Bill.

Suppose that "true" has two conflicting interpretations, namely true-c and true-d. When I say that "Chaplin is funny" is true I simply mean that Chaplin is funny, whereas Bill means that Chaplin is funny and that we cannot have faultless disagreement on Chaplin's funniness. It seems to us that (23) makes sense despite the fact that Bill and I disagree on the objectivity of Chaplin's funniness. Conflicting interpretations of "true" are thus possible, and therefore "true" is not ambiguous. On the assumption that "true" has conflicting interpretations, we can at best conclude that "true" is context-dependent with respect to whether it refers to something that is either objective or subjective. We are going to say more about that assumption in the next section. Of course, it is possible to adopt a generic meaning of "true" and a specific meaning that is entailed by the generic one. But, we stress, this move is a provision rather than the way ordinary speakers commonly use "true" in a statement such as "X is funny" is true.

Here is what we have so far established. We have performed three tests in order to demonstrate that "true" is not ambiguous in Kölbel's sense. Our first conclusion is that the truth predicate fails every test we have presented. This should provide evidence that the truth predicate is not ambiguous in natural language. A corollary of our analysis is that even if "true" were ambiguous in a way that these tests could not detect, it would not have the same type of ambiguity as "dog". In fact, "dog" passes both the contradiction test and the ellipsis test. Again, "true" would not still be ambiguous in Kölbel's sense.

A final caveat: the tests for ambiguities must be handled with care and, in any case, the ambiguity theorist is free to insist that "true" is ambiguous in a manner that is undetectable by the tests. However, in the absence of a better account, Kölbel's proposal stands on shaky grounds.

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[4] Two meanings are polar opposites with respect to a semantic feature *F* if they are identical except that the former can be represented as having *F* where the latter without having *F*, or the reverse (Zwicky and Sadock 1975: 6). To give another example, father and mother are polar opposites with respect to a gender feature.

4. A Look at the Context-Sensitivity Thesis

At the end of the last section we allegedly conceded that "true" might have two possible conflicting interpretations. In fact, one may be inclined to weaken Kölbel's thesis by saying that "true" is context-sensitive, in the sense that there are contexts where "true" means true-d and contexts where it means true-c. Before looking at our counter-argument, here is an important methodological proviso. We endorse the principle that if an expression is context-sensitive in English, that is a fact about the English *language*. So the context-sensitivity thesis cannot be disputed on the basis of philosophical arguments.

We want to argue against the context-sensitivity thesis by appealing to Cappelen and Lepore's inter-contextual disquotation test (ICD).[5] The test aims to detect whether or not an expression is context-dependent in ordinary language. An expression x is context-dependent iff one can assert that, for some sentence "S" containing x, there are false utterances of "S" even if S. For instance, consider the expression "I" in this sentence:

(24) I'm German.

We want to evaluate whether there are false utterances of "I'm German" even if I'm German. The answer is clearly "yes", as there are contexts in which there are false utterances of (24); that is to say, when (24) is uttered by someone who is not German. Consider now the expression "that" in the sentence

(25) That's cute.

Are there false utterances of "that's cute" even if that's cute (said pointing to a kitty cat)? The answer is "yes". Just think about someone who is uttering that expression referring to someone/something that is not cute.

Since "I" and "that" are indexical, it should come as no surprise that such expressions pass ICD. The truth predicate, on the other hand, is more difficult to evaluate. Adopting Cappelen and Lepore's methodology, we ought to build a story (called "context shifting argument" or simply CSA) in which the alleged context-sensitive expression has true utterances while denying an actual use of that sentence.

Consider the word "red". An ICD for red would be as follows: there are false utterances of "apples are red" even though apples are red. To deny that "red" is context-sensitive, there must not be such utterances. Let us look at this CSA (adapted from Cappelen & Lepore 2003: 33):

> Here are some red apples. An apple is red because it has red skin, so those apples have red skin. There are false utterances of "apples are red", not because red apples have changed color, but because the speaker cares about what is inside the apples rather than whether or not they are red.

This argument does not provide a convincing support for the context-sensitivity of red. So we cannot argue for the context-sensitivity of "red" on the basis of that

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[5] We are aware that Cappelen and Lepore's work is much controversial insofar as they use their test in order to argue that few purported contextually dependent expressions are such. We are also aware that there are other tests for context-sensitivity; for instance, the agreement-based tests used by Cappelen and Hawthorne (2009). Nonetheless, we would like to note that, unlike ambiguity, there is not a set of standard tests for context-sensitivity. In this respect, we view Cappelen and Lepore's ICD as a worthy attempt.

CSA. Of course, the burden of proof in every ICD depends on the CSA we devise, and on how much the CSA is persuasive. Let us now turn to the predicate "true". Consider

(26) It is true that Chaplin is funny.

We want to evaluate whether there can be false utterances of "it is true that Chaplin is funny" even if it is true that Chaplin is funny. What sort of CSA are we looking for? Kölbel's examples of "true-d" and "true-d" put some constraints on what an appropriate CSA should be. Consider the following CSA:

> Smith is saying that "Chaplin is funny" is true, and by that he simply means that Chaplin is funny. There is a false utterance of "the judgment that Chaplin is funny is true" not because Smith thinks that Chaplin is not funny, but because he also believes that taste judgments are neither true nor false.

Here we are actually telling a story that includes two "target contexts". In an ordinary context, Smith is saying that he believes that it is true that Chaplin is funny, whereas in a philosophical context (when he discusses taste judgments) Smith believes that it is not true that Chaplin is funny. That may be acceptable for Smith, insofar as he is a contextualist about truth, but our intuition on this CSA is that Smith ought to make up his mind. In fact, we are entitled to ask, "OK, but do you believe that Chaplin is funny or not?" What looks bizarre is that Smith is not able to answer a simple question like that without summoning two contexts: one where Chaplin is funny, and one where Chaplin is not funny because taste judgments are neither true nor false. Compare this situation with the case of "I'm German". Even though "I" is context-sensitive, Smith will have no problems in answering the question, "are you German?". Smith will not say, "well, that depends!", and then mention different contexts in which he would employ the word "I". In Cappelen and Lepore's lingo, the problem is that Smith's CSA is an ICSA (impoverished CSA), an argument where the alleged context-sensitive expression is neither asserted nor denied to describe a target context. In our example, Smith says that "Chaplin is funny" is neither true nor false while he is describing a philosophical context; that is to say, he neither asserts nor denies that "Chaplin is funny" is true in that target context.[6] To pass ICD, we must be able to build a real CSA (RCSA) where the alleged context-sensitive expression is either asserted or denied in *every* target context. But Smith's CSA does not pass ICD; therefore, we conclude that the truth predicate does not seem to be context-sensitive in Kölbel's sense.

Let us now consider a more fine-grained CSA.[7]

> Smith is saying that "Chaplin is funny" is true and by that he simply means that Chaplin is funny. There is a false utterance of "the judgment that Chaplin is funny is true", not because Smith thinks that Chaplin is not funny but because "Chaplin is funny" is not true in the same sense as "Alghero is in Sardinia" is true. Indeed, "Alghero is in Sardinia" is true because it is an objective fact of the matter; whereas "Chaplin is funny" is true merely because Smith believes it is true, but he is also aware that taste judgments are not objective.

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[6] We assume that if someone says that <p> is neither true nor false, then she neither asserts <p> nor denies <p>.

[7] We thank an anonymous referee for drawing our attention to this CSA.

Which CSA is the above? Is a RCSA or an ICSA? This story is trickier than the previous one, so it requires a bit more endeavor. *Prima facie*, we have two target contexts: one (a) where Smith says that "Chaplin is funny" is true, and one (b) where Smith says that "Chaplin is funny" is not true in the same way as "Alghero is in Sardinia" is true (we can equivalently say that Smith denies that "Chaplin is funny" is true in the same way as "Alghero is in Sardinia" is true).

The second context, (b), can be interpreted in two ways. Under the first interpretation, (b1), Smith asserts that it is true that being in Sardinia (an objective fact of the matter) is not the same as being funny (a taste matter); under the second interpretation, (b2), Smith says that "Chaplin is funny" (a taste judgment) is neither true nor false, and that "Alghero is in Sardinia" (an objective judgment) is true.

Notice that under the second interpretation, (b2), we get three target contexts in total after eliminating the conjunction: first, (a) Smith asserts that "Chaplin is funny" is true; secondly, (b2 E$\wedge$) Smith says that "Chaplin is funny" is neither true nor false; thirdly, (b2 E$\wedge$) Smith asserts that Alghero is in Sardinia. Because Smith neither asserts nor denies that "Chaplin is funny" is true in one conjoint, then the interpretation (b2) yields an ICSA.

Let us now look at the first interpretation (b1). Here we have two contexts: first, (a) Smith asserts that "Chaplin is funny" is true; secondly, (b1) Smith asserts that it is true that being funny is not the same as being in Sardinia. Given the equivalence schema, in (a) Smith simply asserts that Chaplin is funny, and in (b1) he simply asserts that being funny is not the same as being in Sardinia. However, it seems to us that Smith is actually making two assertions, (a) and (b1), about what is funny; not about what is true. At the end of the day, we agree that being funny is not the same as being located in Sardinia, because the former is a subjective property and the latter is an objective property; however, we do not need two meanings of "true" in order to make sense of the distinction between subjective judgments and objective ones. To put it another way, Smith is just saying that being funny is a subjective judgment, whereas being in Sardinia has an objective status.

If our considerations are correct, then the predicate "true" is not context-sensitive in Kölbel's sense. Of course, a possible reply is to blame the theoretical apparatus we have used. This is a fair objection, but our argument aims to prove that "true" is not context-sensitive in Kölbel's sense within Cappelen and Lepore's analysis of context-shifting arguments. Insofar as we adopt their technical apparatus, we can conclude that the ordinary usage of the truth predicate does not seem to be context-sensitive in Kölbel's sense.

5. Conclusions

We have argued that "true" in English is neither ambiguous nor context-sensitive. More precisely, we have claimed that the English truth predicate does not have these properties in the specific way envisaged by Kölbel.

For all we have said, "true" could be ambiguous or context-sensitive in other ways. We allege that the manner in which TRUTH-C is defined, i.e. by means of the notion of faultless disagreement, may be held accountable for the stumbling block to passing the tests. We acknowledge that people have faultless disagreements on taste judgments, but this does not seem to require that truth must be

split into two different concepts; rather it may imply that people tend to be relativistic on matters such as taste judgments. This hypothesis, however, requires further evidence and perhaps even a different methodology. We then encourage the collection of robust empirical data from ordinary speakers in order to shed light on our conjecture.

Moreover, "true" could display an interpretative uncertainty of a different kind than ambiguity or context-sensitivity. In fact, this is something that Kölbel himself concedes when he claims that the ambiguity in question may be a pragmatic phenomenon—one of the two senses of "true" would be conversationally implicated along Gricean lines (Kölbel 2008: 369). And there are other possibilities too. "True" could be vague or semantically indeterminate, as McGee and McLaughlin (1995) have indeed suggested. Our investigation, so far, has left these options open.

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