

# Truth, Pluralism, Monism, Correspondence

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## 1. Monism versus Pluralism: Where to Begin?

When talking about truth, we ordinarily take ourselves to be talking about one-and-the-same thing. Alethic monists suggest that theorizing about truth ought to begin with this default or pre-reflective stance, and, subsequently, parlay it into a set of theoretical principles that are aptly summarized by the thesis that truth is one. Foremost among them is the *invariance principle*.

(*inv*) The nature of truth is uniform or invariant across discipline or sector of discourse.

According to (*inv*), discursive differences in the standards of justification, semantic content, explanatory posits, and other such features make no difference to the underlying nature of truth; for it does not vary according to them. Statements about elephants and eggshells, if true, are true in the same way that statements about loose morals, the illegality of littering, or the laughability quotient of *your-mama* jokes.<sup>1</sup> The nature of truth is uniform across sectors of discourse.

Debates between monists and pluralists, who take truth to be many, have usually played out as a tussle over the invariance principle. Objections to it have been leveraged by several truth-theorists—including Wright, Putnam, Lynch, Sher, and Horgan—some of whom have advanced an opposing, *variance principle*.<sup>2</sup>

(*var*) The nature of truth varies across domain or sector of discourse.

Unsurprisingly, (*var*) gives rise to so-called *discourse pluralism* and *alethic functionalism*, which are most closely associated with the work of Wright (1992, 1998) and Lynch (2000, 2009), respectively.

Although these two theses have usually served as the point of departure for debates between monists and pluralists, there are alternative theses that have equally served to demarcate these two views. Perhaps this is unsurprising, since a natural way to understand the theses that truth is one (monism), or many (pluralism), is to take them to involve quantification over truth properties. Understanding monism and pluralism in this way yields an alternative pair of characterizations:

(*sin*) There is exactly one truth property that statements can have.

(*plu*) There is more than one truth property that statements can have.

Plainly, (*sin*) and (*plu*), are mutually exclusive. They cannot be true at the same time.

Since both the in/variance theses (*inv*) and (*var*) and the quantificational theses (*sin*) and (*plu*) have played a central role in setting the debate between monists and pluralists, it is reasonable to ask what relationship, if any, there is between these two pairs of theses. Are the combinations of (*inv*)-(*var*) and (*sin*)-(*plu*) simply two sides of the same proverbial coin? Or are there significant differences between them? As shall transpire, neither (*inv*)-(*var*) nor (*sin*)-(*plu*) can be simply assumed to provide the definitive point of departure for the debate.

<sup>1</sup> The locution *way of being true* is commonly used in this portion of the literature (see, e.g., Tappolet 1997; Lynch 2000, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2009; Wright 2005, 2010; Pedersen 2006, forthcoming; Edwards 2008; Cotnoir 2009). Monism and pluralism are sometimes framed as linguistic theses about truth predicates. Here, we restrict our attention to alethic theses about truth properties. See Pedersen (2006, forthcoming) for discussion about their relationship to each other.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Acton (1935); Wright (1992, 1998); Putnam (1994); Sher (1998, 2004, forthcoming); Lynch (2000, 2004, 2006, 2009); Barnard & Horgan (2006, forthcoming); Pedersen (2006, forthcoming); Wright (2010).

It would appear that (*inv*) differs markedly from (*sin*), and (*var*) from (*plu*), in terms of the concepts they involve; for those concepts that figure in (*inv*) are not the same as those figuring in (*sin*), and those figuring in (*var*) are distinct from those figuring in (*plu*). Specifically, (*inv*) and (*var*) connect to truth via talk of nature, in/variance, and sectors of discourse, while (*sin*) and (*plu*) do so via talk of (quantification over) truth properties that e.g., sentences or statements bear. Of course, despite their conceptual differences, it remains a possibility that (*inv*) and (*sin*) are equivalent; for they might still entail one another against certain background assumptions concerning the relationship between the relevant concepts (e.g., it might be that the nature of truth is tied to truth properties). Similarly for (*var*) and (*plu*), *mutatis mutandis*.

What would it take to rule out the possibility of this kind of equivalence? The compatibility of (*inv*) with (*plu*) would suffice for there being no entailment between (*inv*) and (*sin*)—and thus no equivalence—because (*plu*) entails the negation of (*sin*). Conversely, the compatibility of (*var*) and (*sin*) would suffice for there being no entailment between (*var*) and (*plu*)—and again, no equivalence—because (*sin*) entails the negation of (*plu*).

Let us consider two specific views from the literature, as doing so will illuminate how the compatibilities just mentioned might be realized. The first is a summary construal of alethic functionalism, the other a particular take on the correspondence theory:

The truth-role is pinned down by a list of platitudes—including the disquotational schema ('p' is true iff p) and the transparency platitude (to assert is to present as true). The Ramsey-sentence of these platitudes is obtained by taking their conjunction, replacing all alethic terms with variables, and prefixing with existential quantifiers. A statement has a property that plays the truth-role just in case it has a property that is the value of the variable that replaced *true* in the platitudes. Truth is the property of having a property that plays the truth-role. (See Lynch 2009: ch. 4)<sup>3</sup>

The property [truth] is the same in all cases. The word [*true*] is univocal, because the word [*true*] means the same thing in all contexts, in that it refers to the same property in all contexts. It is conceivable that correspondence should be a genus with a number of species, but with truth there is just one species [correspondence]. (Newman 2002: 42; see also Vision 2004; Marino 2008).

According to both Lynch's alethic functionalist and Newman's correspondence theorist, there is exactly one truth property. For the former, to be true is to have a property that plays the truth-role, where candidates for such properties include homomorphism, coherence, identity, and other properties that have traditionally received attention in the debate. For the latter, truth is always and everywhere a matter of correspondence. Both views thus carry a commitment to (*sin*). There is exactly one truth property.

Do they likewise carry a commitment to (*inv*), though? This is less clear. Indeed, one might think that they go hand-in-hand with (*var*) instead. For functionalists, truth is multiply realizable. And the very idea that truth is multiply realizable is precisely what might be thought to make alethic functionalism a view that is aptly characterized by (*var*). For while functionalist truth is always and everywhere the same property, it is nonetheless a property whose instantiation may have a variety of sources. Statements about ordinary human-scale manipulable objects might be true in virtue of corresponding with reality, while legal statements might be true in virtue of cohering with jurisprudential dictates and other bodies of law. Hence, while there is singularity at the level of the truth property itself, the underlying nature of this property—as given by its realizers—is one that varies across sectors of discourse. If this line of reasoning is correct, (*sin*) and (*var*) are compatible, as they both characterize alethic functionalism. Consequently, (*sin*) and (*inv*) cannot stand in a relationship of mutual entailment given that (*var*) entails the negation of (*inv*).

The same point might be thought to apply in the case of Newman's correspondence theorist. Truth is always and everywhere the same. It is a genus with just one species, correspondence. Such a view thus commits one to (*sin*). Nevertheless, correspondence might in turn be a genus that has several

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<sup>3</sup> See Lynch (2000, 2004, 2005, 2006) for additional exposition. See Wright (2005, 2010), Sher (2005), David (forthcoming) for criticism.

species (as Newman suggested).<sup>4</sup> In that case, the nature of truth—as given by correspondence—might be thought to vary to the extent that the different species of correspondence do. If it is further added that different species of correspondence are associated with different sectors of discourse, then this take on the correspondence theory would seem to go hand-in-hand with (*var*). The result would be another illustration that (*sin*) and (*var*) are compatible. As with alethic functionalism, this would mean that (*sin*) and (*inv*) cannot stand in a relationship of mutual entailment given that (*var*) entails the negation of (*inv*).

What is the significance of all this? Why does it matter whether (*sin*) and (*inv*) turn out to stand in a relationship of mutual entailment, and whether (*plu*) and (*var*) do so too? In this portion of the literature, (*sin*) and (*inv*) have both been taken to be characteristic of monism about truth, and (*plu*) and (*var*) of pluralism. However, if the foregoing is correct, these theses draw the dividing line between monism and pluralism differently. That is, (*sin*)-( *plu*) and (*inv*)-( *var*) will issue conflicting classifications. Both Lynch's alethic functionalism and Newman's correspondence theory appear to be cases in hand. Pace (*sin*)-( *plu*), both views may fall under the heading of monism, but may count as pluralist views pace (*inv*)-( *var*).

We observed earlier that (*inv*) and (*var*) as well as (*sin*) and (*plu*) have played a central role as reference points in the debate between monists and pluralists. If either of the lines of reasoning concerning alethic functionalism or the correspondence theory is correct, this might be thought to pose a small problem; for certain debates between monists and pluralists turn on an unresolved tension when there is indiscriminate reliance on (*inv*)-( *var*) and (*sin*)-( *plu*) on the basis of the faulty assumption that they issue the same classifications. This is a tempting—but also somewhat worrying—conclusion to draw. However, here is a reason why one might be hesitant to draw it: the line of reasoning for both Lynch's alethic functionalism and Newman's correspondence theorist relies on a substantial assumption, which, if removed, causes the attempt to drive a wedge between (*sin*) and (*inv*) to fail. The assumption is that the issue whether there is (exactly) one truth property is to be assessed by a standard that is, in some sense, more coarse-grained than the standard by which the in/variance of the nature of truth is to be measured. For example, consider the same line of reasoning for alethic functionalism again; therein, it was assumed that the alethic properties in virtue of which a statement has the functionalist's truth property are in no relevant sense themselves truth properties per se. This is the reason why alethic functionalism was thought to be aptly characterized by (*sin*). Yet, the base or realizer properties were thought to be relevant when it comes to the nature of truth, and this is why alethic functionalism was regarded as committing one to variance in truth's nature across sectors of discourse. But why not reject this way of thinking, and instead say the following: the nature of truth is invariant across subject matter—it is to have a property that plays the truth-role? This closes the conceptual gap between (*sin*) and (*inv*), at least as far as alethic functionalism is concerned. With appropriate adjustments, this kind of reasoning can be extended to Newman's correspondence theory. The upshot would be that both exemplars come out as being monist by the lights of both (*sin*)-( *plu*) and (*inv*)-( *var*). More generally, the upshot of tying the nature of truth to truth properties is that (*sin*) and (*inv*) will converge on the classifications they make, and likewise for (*plu*) and (*var*).

There is a further issue that we have not yet addressed, viz., whether there is something more-or-less propitious about the ways in which (*sin*)-( *plu*) and (*inv*)-( *var*) differentially cut the cake. It is not clear that there is. And it is not clear that it matters how and where respectively (*sin*)-( *plu*) and (*inv*)-( *var*) draw the line between monism and pluralism. They might both pin down an interesting sense of *monism* and *pluralism*. What is important is that disputants ensure that they do not conflate these different senses.

In the next section, we turn to the so-called *scope problem*—a problem that the pluralist thinks renders any monist theory inadequate—with particular emphasis on monistic versions of the correspondence theory. Pluralists have frequently framed the scope problem as a problem instigated by the endorsement of (*inv*); but, as we shall see, the force of the problem is independent of what answer is given to the question of whether or not (*sin*)-( *plu*) and (*inv*)-( *var*) provide the same metric for

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<sup>4</sup> Such a view is alluded to by Acton (1935), and is defended by Sher (1998, 2004, 2005, 2010) and Barnard & Horgan (2006, forthcoming).

commencing debates between monists and pluralists.

## 2. Do Correspondence Theorists Face the Scope Problem?

Although it might make for good philosophical theory, it is hardly obvious that it is a mistake to take oneself to always and everywhere be talking about one-and-the-same thing when one talks about truth. Consequently, the intuitiveness of monism and counterintuitiveness of pluralism is such that pluralists have needed to find strong motivation and warrant for their theory.

For that motivation and warrant, pluralists typically rely on the scope problem for leverage. In rough outline, the problem is that, for any given theory proposing that the nature of truth consists in being *F*, there is some class of statements *x* for which it is implausible to suppose that *x*-statements are true in virtue of having *F*. Traditionally, the theories that do propose that the nature of truth consists in being *F* are the traditional inflationary theories—correspondence, coherence, pragmatist, etc. By their commitment to (*inv*), any of these traditional inflationary theories may count as versions of alethic monism; and, by parity of reasoning—argues the pluralist—it is the very commitment to it that renders them insufficiently general.<sup>5</sup>

The correspondence theory is frequently mentioned as the foremost exemplar of a traditional monist theory facing the scope problem. As indicated, the source of trouble is meant to be the monist character of the correspondence theory. Suppose that we trace its monism to a commitment to (*inv*). (Later we will consider (*sin*).) The correspondence theorist, it is often said, claims that the truth of a statement is a matter of its correspondence to fact. The theory—as the story goes—is plausible so long as the statements are about everyday mind-independent observable objects—chairs, chisels, children, and whatnot; for the statements are true because what they express corresponds to the everyday empirical facts about chairs, chisels, and children. However, correspondence to fact is less plausible—as the story goes—in sectors of discourse like business advertising, mathematical logic, gastronomy, fashion, jurisprudence, etc. For example, laws are conventional constructions, and do not fit the bill for counting as everyday mind-independent observable objects; hence, the truth of statements about laws cannot be accounted for in terms of correspondence to jurisprudential facts, as the correspondence theorist is said to have it. As a result, the scope of the correspondence theory is said to be insufficiently general: the truth of some statements is implausibly accounted for by the theory. Moreover, while the scope of the correspondence theory does not generalize, the scope problem itself does; for similar considerations apply to other traditional theories—pragmatist, verificationist, and coherence theories, etc.

We have been supposing that the scope problem, as a problem for the correspondence and other inflationary theories, is instigated by an endorsement of (*inv*). Why might that be? Here is one way to think about it: the scope problem arises because, for any theory proposing that the nature of truth consists in being *F*, some sectors of discourse are such that it is implausible to suppose that the statements issuing from them are true in virtue of having *F*. Discourse pluralists solve that problem by either rejecting the principle and/or advancing (*var*) in its stead. However, we have also seen that the in/variance principles are not the only place to begin the debate between monists and pluralists. Does it then follow that the scope problem is not instigated if the debate between monists and pluralists is instead generated as a disagreement over quantifying over truth properties, i.e., by (*sin*) and (*plu*) rather than by (*inv*) and (*plu*)? If so, an obvious consequence would be that correspondence theorists might then be absolved of the problem. However, they are not. The scope problem can be equally instigated by (*sin*), in which case the problem arises regardless of how the debate is generated.

So, do correspondence theorists face the scope problem regardless? Not necessarily. It depends on the version. Frequently, one sees theorists plumping for their preferred epigrammatic statement or appellation, stated in terms that give one or another reductive analysis in biconditional T-schema form.

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<sup>5</sup> The scope problem has gone by various other names and is found in various different guises (see, e.g., Sher 1998; Lynch 2004, 2006, 2009; Wright 2005; Pedersen 2006, forthcoming).

But their doing so is hasty. Recall that the correspondence theory of truth is a theory in which truth is taken to be correspondence. Hence, the most general principle of the theory is the so-called *correspondence principle*.

(*csp*) Truth consists in correspondence.

All versions of the theory depart from, and thus are unified by, (*csp*); for plainly, any theory failing to endorse the principle that truth consists in correspondence would thereby fail to count as a correspondence theory of truth. Equally plain is that the principle—in addition to being general and unifying—is substantive. To say that the nature of truth consists in correspondence is to presume that truth has an underlying nature, and thus to presume that an aim of a theory of truth is, inter alia, some form of reductive analysis of it. Consequently, (*csp*) positions its advocates in opposition to those who deny the need for, or possibility of, any such reductive analysis. Likewise, it also positions its advocates in opposition to those who accept reductive analyses as the aim of a theory of truth but who suggest that the nature of truth consists in something other than correspondence. And if by *correspondence* we mean some kind of structural relation, then the principle also positions its advocates in opposition to certain functionalist and other non-structuralist claims.

Despite being substantial, unifying, and general, (*csp*) provides little-to-no constraint on the various forms that particular versions of the correspondence theory can take. Some, but not all, versions supplement it with corollaries that further specify what kind of relation correspondence itself is. Russell, for example, took it to be congruence (1912/1946); the early Wittgenstein seems to have focused on homomorphism, while others have focused on isomorphism; Austin took it to be correlation (1950; see also Wilson 2000); others like Devitt (1984, 2001), Vision (2004), and Marino (2006, 2008) have intimated that correspondence is just some kind of other generic mapping relation; and so forth. Other versions supplement (*csp*) with claims about how many relata the correspondence relation has (dyadic, polyadic, variable, etc.). And others still deploy additional principles and analysis about the relata themselves—e.g., truth-makers, facts, states of affairs, propositions, and the other usual suspects. The history of the correspondence theory is well-trundled, and there are indefinitely many principles that theorists have supplemented (*csp*) with.

Among the principles that correspondence theorists have traditionally supplemented their versions with, few if any have been explicitly pluralist. As pluralists sometimes tell the story, a principle like (*csp*) already settles the question of how many distinct ways of being true there are. To say that truth consists in correspondence is to say that the nature of truth is correspondence for any sector of discourse; and since all versions of the theory are unified under (*csp*), there is no need to make (*inv*) explicit. But this is a non-sequitur; for nothing in the idea of correspondence itself commits one to understanding the term *correspondence* in this manner.

The lack of constraints on theory-construction is such that (*csp*) turns out to be consistent with both (*inv*) and (*var*), as well as both (*sin*) and (*plu*). Evidence comes in the form of a wide variety of examples: Newman claimed, inter alia, that ‘the predicate [*is*] *true* should mean the same thing for all the different kinds of proposition that it applies to’ (2002: 33). On the other hand, Sher (forthcoming), developing on a suggestion by Acton (1935), advances a version whereby correspondence does take on different forms in different ‘fields’ (which, for Sher, are not coextensive with sectors of discourse).<sup>6</sup> Likewise, Barnard & Horgan (2006, forthcoming) advocate a version in which correspondence can vary according to its ‘in/directness’ relative to contextual semantic standards operative in different sectors of

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<sup>6</sup> Patterson argued that such views are falsely advertised: ‘[i]f a view of truth is not univocal, then in a straightforward sense it is not a correspondence theory, since as ‘pluralist’ it is a view on which truth tout court is not explained in terms of anything, and hence is not explained in terms of correspondence. (Of course it may be a view on which different kinds of truth are explained in terms of different kinds of correspondence.)’ (2004: 500). The spirit of the point is well-taken, despite that the inference is a non-sequitur—there is no absurdity in thinking that accounts of truth are accounts in which of truth tout court could be explained in terms of a class or collection of things, and not every account of truth must be an account in which of truth tout court is explained in terms of exactly one thing, unequivocally.

discourse.

The upshot is that the correspondence theory does not face the scope problem unless its versions are made to; for nothing inherent in (*csp*) forces a choice between (*inv*) and (*var*)—a point underscored by the further result that the divergence between (*inv*) and (*var*) is not the only point of departure for the debate between monists and pluralists. This is bad news for pluralists. After all, the counterintuitiveness of their view typically been overcome by motivating it using the intuitiveness of the scope problem; and the intuitiveness of the scope problem is thought to be best exemplified by the correspondence theory. Moreover, nothing inherent in (*csp*) forces a choice between (*sin*) and (*plu*); for correspondence theorists differ amongst themselves over whether truth is a highly singular property. The lesson, here, is not that the correspondence theory of truth is too often credited with unity that it does not have; for again, (*csp*) is not just a general and substantive principle, but also a unifying one (perhaps among others). Rather, the lesson is that the correspondence theory is mottled, and mottled in a particular way that allows for some of its versions to count as versions of pluralism that do not face the scope problem, and thus to be potentially orthogonal to the issues of one versus many.

### 3. Correspondence Monism: Back to the Drawing Board

With this lesson in mind, we can still ask of versions of the correspondence theory that commit to principles like (*inv*) or (*sin*) whether the scope problem is (i) a genuine problem for them, and whether it is (ii) unsolvable if so. To answer these questions, let's return to another. What drives the scope problem? One answer seemed to be the intuition that significant differences in kinds of truth-makers make for different ways of being true. Or rather, statements about entities are true in different ways because of the significant ontological differences among objects, formal structures, 2<sup>nd</sup>-order properties, etc. (as well as other kinds of differences, including conventionality, cognitive differences in event-segmentation, etc.).

Foremost among these differences are the simple metaphysical differences that break along mind-in/dependent and anti-/realist lines, such as those that render, e.g., ordinary physical objects qualitatively distinct from, e.g., legal objects such as laws, statutes, or precedents. Unlike the former, laws are passed by legislators, can be amended or repealed on later occasions, are normatively binding, etc. Accordingly, the scope problem seems to gain traction on the basis of the intuition that legal or jurisprudential statements are true in some 'lightweight' way because of the mind-dependent nature of legal objects, whereas empirical statements are true in some 'heavyweight' way—perhaps the sense of corresponding to reality—because of the mind-independent nature of those objects (Lynch 2004: 385).

Characterized thus, the scope problem seems driven by a presumption of an asymmetric dependency of alethic pluralism on metaphysical pluralism. The presumption is captured by a constitution principle about the effects of differences of entities in different sectors of discourse  $D_1, \dots, D_n$ .

(*con*) For any statements  $p$  and  $q$ , which are members of discourses  $D_1$  and  $D_2$  about entities  $x_1, \dots, x_n$  and  $y_1, \dots, y_n$ , respectively, the nature of the truth of  $p(x_i) \in D_1$  will differ from that of  $q(y_i) \in D_2$  if the metaphysical constitutions of  $x_i$  and  $y_i$  differ.

Although (*con*) is kin to familiar supervenience principles that ground truth in being, it is not itself a supervenience principle if by *supervenience* one means that changes in sets of supervenient properties are a (nomologically necessary) function of changes in set of base properties. Rather, (*con*) explains differences among truth-apt statements—not in terms of changes in and to their subvenient set of base properties—but in terms of the metaphysical constitution of the entities of which they are about. Hence, no changes in the metaphysical constitution of classes of objects need to occur in order for statements about those objects to be true in a different way from statements about a different class of objects; their constitution alone is sufficient.

Prima facie, versions of the correspondence theory committed to (*inv*) or (*sin*) seem able to overcome the constitution principle that drives the scope problem (though, as we shall see, only at the

cost of incurring the familiar and notoriously harder one). The way it does so is by invoking a self-consciously platitudinous or philosophically barren conception of facts.

(*plat*) *Fact*-talk can always be harmlessly glossed as talk of what is the case, how the world is, what in reality makes statements true, etc.

More than a few truth-theorists have used the unidimensional conception of facts in (*plat*) to enable talk of ontology, while simultaneously shuddering at the conception's artlessness. Nevertheless, it does have its use as a labor-saving device. For instance, by helping oneself to it, the correspondence monist—i.e., the theorist who accepts principles like (*csp*) but also (*inv*) or (*sin*)—can supplement (*csp*) with corollaries such as

(*ctf*) truth consists in correspondence to fact

and

(*cor*)  $\sigma$  is true if, and only if,  $\sigma$  corresponds to a fact,

where *fact*-talk is understood in the sense alluded to in (*plat*). And with such corollaries on the table, they can make sense of truth as correspondence to the facts for any sector of discourse *D*, independent of metaphysical constitution, provided that *D* deals in truth-apt statements. Armed with such a notion, correspondence monists will have no problem casting aspersion on (*con*), and subsequently arguing that the scope problem is either a pseudoproblem or else a trivially solvable one.

For example, contrast true empirical statements, such as *no minotaurs migrate to Minnesota* or *giraffes have long necks*, with true legal statements, such as *Enron executives violated trading regulations* or *Roe v. Wade is constitutional*. In both cases, reality is given by the facts—or what is the case—despite that zoological reality is mind-independent in a way that legal reality is not. Of course, legal reality is given by the legal facts, which are contrived by bodies of law; in turn, the law is made by legislators. The legal facts these statements represent are the facts that executives of the Enron corporation violated the trading regulations in force at the time and that the United States supreme court continues to uphold the decision that the constitution does not mandate that a woman's right to decide what happens in and to her body is outweighed by a fetus's right to life (if it has one). However, the difference in mind-in/dependence of zoological versus legal reality makes no difference to the sense in which correspondence is merely correct representation of what is the case, reality, etc.

These considerations suggest that the correspondence monist can account for the truth of legal statements in terms of correspondence, and thus that (*con*) has a falsifying instance; for here we have at least two sectors of discourse—e.g., the physical and the legal—whose statements *p* and *q* are about entities with very different metaphysical constitutions, but which are also true in the same way: corresponding to the facts. Importantly, the admissibility of the philosophically barren and artless conception of *fact*-talk means that the result generalizes to any sector of discourse that trades in truth-apt statements.

The failure of (*con*) suggests that the monist can generalize the scope of her theory, even if only in a philosophically barren way, within a correspondence framework. A statement *p*—whether physical, legal, etc.—is true if, and only if, *p* corresponds to some fact. Is this bad news for the pluralist? If pluralists require the scope problem to motivate their view, and the scope problem depends on a principle, (*con*), which has a falsifying instance, then yes. Is this good news for the correspondence monist? No.

The correspondence theorist's insight is one that can be maintained for any statement—regardless of the sector of discourse, and regardless of the metaphysical constitution of the entities of which truth-apt statements in those sectors of discourse are about—so long as the philosophically barren conception of fact in (*plat*) is acceptable. But what makes the platitude acceptable for rebutting the constitution principle that engenders the scope problem is precisely what makes the correspondence theory indistinct from, and compatible with, a great many other theories, including deflationism minimalism, disquotationalism, the modest identity theory, coherence theories, and so forth. And a correspondence theory of this sort is far

too weak to be of any interest (Patterson 2003). A fact-based correspondence theory that cannot make good on a substantive conception of facts is not a fact-based theory of truth worth having.

Generalizing the correspondence theory thus seems to come at a cost—viz., giving up on a non-trivial or robust conception of facts, which is a core commitment of many of its versions of the correspondence theory. Leaving aside the deflated notion of fact, one might think that generalizing the correspondence theory will also be problematical by involving or needing substantive or robust facts; for there are well-known, grave difficulties in trying to make good on such a conception. Facts qua states of affairs that obtain instigates the gamut of problems with negative facts, conjunctive facts, hypothetical and conditional facts, etc. Facts qua events or occurrences instigate problems with datability, duration, event-segmentation, occasion, etc. Fact as proposition incurs the burdens associated with postulating propositions and also creates the problem of false facts, while facts qua true propositions fails to distinguish the correspondence theory from its deflationary competitors, and, in particular, causes the theory to lose its credentials as a correspondence theory by transforming it into the identity theory. And then there are the litany of complaints about facts as simple and complex objects, in the wake of Russell, Austin, and others.<sup>7</sup>

Suffice it to say that correspondence monists, then, have a way to circumvent pluralism. It is a rather cheap form of circumvention, but it is by no means circumvention on the cheap; for what it costs correspondence monists is

- (i) a deflated notion of fact to account for correspondence truth within the domains that have traditionally posed trouble for the correspondence theory, plus
- (ii) the onus of having something about facts in general, whether deflated or robust.

Cost (i) will be regarded with suspicion by any correspondence theorist with a traditionalist bent, while cost (ii) raises the familiar spate of difficult issues and questions (for which there are few answers, and fewer which have proven satisfactory). So, here defenders of the generalized correspondence view are put back to the drawing board.

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<sup>7</sup> These problems were poignantly summarized by Strawson (1950), who argued that reification of facts is an onerous ontological mistake. Statements, for Strawson, state facts—they are not of or about facts, and so do not refer to them. Hence, the only fact that could answer to a statement like *the giraffe has mange* is the condition of the giraffe; yet, argued Strawson, there do not appear to be any such entities beyond the extant giraffe. Nothing else is referred to, insofar as the giraffe is the material correlate of the referring part of the statement. The mange of the giraffe, argued Strawson, is just the pseudo-material correlate of the describing part of the statement (in the framework of Austin's deictic and descriptive conventions), while the giraffe's having mange is the pseudo-material correlate of the statement as a whole (1950: 135). Subsequently, Austin's positing of facts appears to be a demand for there to be some relatum that makes statements true; but there is nothing else in the world for statements to be related to—either at the level of whole or part, either descriptively or demonstratively.