

Nikolaj J. L. L. Pedersen and Cory D. Wright, eds., *Truth and Pluralism: Current Debates*. Oxford University Press 2013. 364 pp. \$78.00 USD (Hardcover ISBN 9780195387469).

Truth and Pluralism: Current Debates is an anthology of essays edited by Nikolaj J.L.L. Pedersen and Cory D. Wright (hereafter C.D. Wright). The edited volume contains an introduction and sixteen essays dealing with alethic pluralism. The book has three thematically organized parts. I will discuss some issues raised in part one of the volume in more detail below. However, first I provide a very brief statement of the topics covered in each of the sixteen essays in the anthology.

Part one contains essays by Michael Lynch, Pedersen and C.D. Wright, Douglas Edwards and Crispin Wright (hereafter Wright). Most of the discussions in part one deal with a tradition of work on alethic pluralism that originates with Wright's pioneering *Truth and Objectivity* and Michael Lynch's influential functionalist variant of alethic pluralism discussed primarily in his *Truth as One and Many*. In an earlier helpful review of this anthology Matti Eklund calls this tradition *Wright-Lynch pluralism*. Part one also contains two papers by Marian David and Pascal Engel that raise critical challenges for Wright-Lynch pluralism.

Part two contains papers by Gila Sher, Robert Barnard and Terence Horgan, Richard Fumerton, Wolfram Hinzen and Dorothy Grover. The first two papers deal with what is sometimes called correspondence truth-pluralism. Pluralists in the *Wright-Lynch* tradition have generally claimed that there are truth-properties that do not involve correspondence. However, Sher and Barnard and Horgan argue that truth always involves correspondence but there are different forms that correspondence truth can take. In his contribution Richard Fumerton argues that the correspondence theory of truth is compatible with realism and with anti-realism. The latter view is commonly thought to be difficult to square with a correspondence conception of truth. In his essay Hinzen advocates the adoption of a naturalistic methodology to investigate the nature of truth. Hinzen understands his naturalist approach as undercutting certain motivations for alethic pluralism. However, Hinzen proposes a naturalistic interpretation of truth-pluralism as emerging from variation in the 'conceptual structure of domains of human knowledge'. Dorothy Grover is critical of truth-pluralism. However, in her contribution she discusses truth-pluralism from the perspective of a descriptive pluralism: the view that there are multiple correct ways of describing the world.

Part three contains essays on the topics of deflationism and paradox and their relationship to truth-pluralism. Contributions in part three are by Simon Blackburn, Max Kölbel, Julian Dodd, J.C. Beall and Aaron J. Cotnoir. According to Blackburn the alethic pluralist contends that in distinct domains there are distinct contents and distinct kinds of truth. However, while Blackburn thinks there are distinct contents in distinct domains he also thinks there is no need to invoke pluralism about truth in order to explain the divergence of content in divergent domains. Kölbel argues for the view that truth is ambiguous and that there are at least two distinct truth concepts. One of these concepts is the deflationary truth concept. The other truth concept is a substantive truth concept. Julian Dodd argues that alethic pluralism has not been sufficiently motivated over a deflationary theory of truth. He contends that deflationism is the default position and alethic pluralists have not provided sufficient reason, as of yet, to abandon deflationism in favor of alethic pluralism. Beall also adopts a deflationary approach to truth. However, Beall contends that there is more than one non-substantive deflationary truth-predicate. Aaron Cotnoir advances a novel approach to the liar paradox that is available for a variant of truth-pluralism. For further discussion of Cotnoir's interesting paper see Eklund's review.

Each of these papers deserves significantly more consideration than can be given in a short review. In what follows I focus my discussion on some contributions in part one of the anthology that offer competing accounts of the best way to develop Wright-Lynch pluralism.

- (i) The classical correspondence, coherence and pragmatic theories of truth are *substantive* and *monistic* theories of the nature of truth. These classical theories hold that: Propositions are true if, and only if, they possess a particular substantive property F and that,
- (ii) The only property that can render propositions true is F .

A problem facing classical theories of the nature of truth is that they appear to have a limited scope of application. For some propositions it makes sense to regard them as true when they correspond to an obtaining state of affairs. For other propositions we are reluctant to think of their truth as consisting in their corresponding to a state of affairs. Common examples of claims that we are inclined to think are true when they correspond are descriptive claims such as the claim that there are three cedars within ten meters of the south doors of Manchester Hall. Common examples of propositions with which a correspondence theory of truth is difficult to square are normative propositions such as the proposition that one ought not push people into Mirror Lake.

Alethic pluralism supports (i) and denies (ii). The exact characterization of alethic pluralism varies from author to author. However, broadly speaking, alethic pluralism is the view that there are different ways of being true. Alethic pluralists often contend that the different ways of being true are realized relative to a domain of discourse or subject matter. It is commonly claimed that in descriptive domains in which we are talking about ordinary-sized dry goods propositions are true when they possess the property of corresponding to an obtaining state of affairs:

(COR). A proposition p is true if, and only if, it corresponds to a state of affairs s that obtains. (*Correspondence*)

However, in normative or mathematical domains alethic pluralists commonly contend that propositions are true when they possess a property like superwarrant:

(SUP). A proposition p is true if and only if it is warranted at a state of information I_j and remains warranted without defeat at any state of information I_k such that $I_j \leq I_k$. (*Superwarrant*)

The view that truth properties are realized relative to a domain of discourse is the view that Michael Lynch adopted in *Truth as One and Many*. However, in his contribution to this anthology Lynch revises his view somewhat claiming that, ‘talk of “domains” does suggest, if it does not imply, that subject matters come in natural kinds, and that as a result, we can sort them into these kinds with little difficulty. That is implausible. We can admit, as is obvious that beliefs have different kinds of content, but we needn’t say that the propositions that are those contents divide into natural or rigid kinds’. Inquiring minds will wonder: if it is not the domain to which a proposition belongs that determines what property a proposition must possess in order to be true, then what does? The answer that Lynch provides is that facts about the proposition itself determine what property renders the proposition true. In particular, Lynch contends that facts about what the proposition is about and facts about the proposition’s logical form determine the property the proposition must possess to be true. One is likely to discover that propositions naturally sort themselves into rough and ready groups. For

instance, propositions about ordinary sized objects may sort themselves into a group for which, typically, the property that propositions in that group must possess in order to be true is correspondence. However, in Lynch's revised view the truth-property of a proposition is not determined by the domain to which the proposition belongs; the truth-property is determined by features of the proposition itself.

In Pedersen and C.D. Wright's contribution several variants of Lynch-Wright alethic pluralism are discussed. They begin their paper by stating the distinction between *strong* and *moderate* pluralism about truth. Moderate pluralism about truth holds that there is a 'truth-as-such' property that is possessed by all true propositions. In addition to the truth-as-such-property there are several interestingly distinct truth-properties that can exhibit or realize, in some fashion or other, the truth-as-such property.¹ It is an important theoretical objective of moderate alethic pluralism to maintain a unity to the concept of truth while simultaneously postulating the existence of a plurality of realizer truth-properties. Thus, the truth-as-such property is thought to possess some core features that any realizer truth property must also exhibit or possess in some way or other. Examples of candidate core features that moderate truth pluralists have thought any truth-as-such-property must exhibit are:

(OBJ). For every proposition p , p is true if, and only if, were p to be believed things would be believed to be as they are. (*Objectivity*)

(NOB). For every proposition p , it is prima facie correct to believe p if, and only if, p is true. (*Norm of Belief*)

(GOI). For every proposition p , other things being equal, believing p is a worthy goal of inquiry if p is true (*Goal of Inquiry*).

In contrast strong pluralism is the view that there is no truth-as-such-property but merely several different truth-properties. The precise relationship between truth-as-such and the realizer truth-properties is the subject of much of the discussion in Pedersen and C.D. Wright's paper. In particular Pedersen and C.D. Wright make the case that two influential moderate-pluralist approaches to characterizing the relationship between the truth-as-such property and the realizer truth-properties are committed to the existence of a *disjunctive truth-property*. The disjunctive truth-property can be characterized as follows,

(DIS). $\forall(p)[T_{Dis}p \Leftrightarrow ((T_1p \wedge p \in D_1) \vee (T_2p \wedge p \in D_2) \dots \vee (T_np \wedge p \in D_n))]$

In essence what DIS says is that a proposition that possesses the disjunctive truth-property is either a member of domain₁ and possesses the truth-property of domain₁ or is a member of domain₂ and possesses the truth-property of domain₂ and so on for every domain. The two influential moderate pluralist accounts that Pedersen and C.D. Wright contend are committed to DIS are second-order pluralism and manifestation pluralism.

In his contribution Wright also zeros in on the issue of the relationship between truth-as-such and the realizer truth-properties. Wright's preferred proposal for how to characterize this relationship is in terms of Douglas Edwards's *simple-determination pluralism*). This account of the relationship

¹ For ease of expression I will call these later truth-properties realizer truth-properties. However, it is important to understand that the truth-as-such property can realize itself. The realizer truth-properties are all distinct from one another. However, they all share in common some relationship with the truth as such property (i.e., manifesting truth-as-such, or being a first level property that itself possess the second-level property of being true-as-such).

between truth-as-such and the realizer truth-properties is not only discussed in Wright's contribution to this volume but also in Edwards's contribution. The basic thought underlying simple-determination pluralism turns on a helpful analogy between winning and truth. In different games winning is characterized in different ways. If we are playing football, winning involves scoring more points than the other team over a given period of time. If we are playing chess, winning involves putting the opponent in checkmate. Just as the goal of playing a game is, and should be, to win, the goal of making an assertion is to hit the truth. Achieving this goal, the simple-determination pluralist contends, involves doing different things in different domains. As with other accounts of moderate pluralism various core features characterize truth-as-such for simple determination pluralism such as OBJ, NOB and BOI. The particular realizer truth-property that a proposition must possess in order to be true is determined based on what an assertion within the domain that the proposition is a member of would have to achieve in order to reach the goal of assertoric practice for the domain. By conceptual reflection on the nature of content and assertoric practice within the domain we can arrive at a conception of what property is required for a proposition within that domain to achieve truth. Thus, for different domains we have different, what Wright calls, *Edwards Conditionals*. These conditionals have the form:

(EC-Gen). In domain of discourse x : if $\langle p \rangle$ has property F , then $\langle p \rangle$ is true (has the property of truth). (*Generalized Edwards Conditional*)

Specific examples might include:

(EC-Mat). In material world of discourse: if $\langle p \rangle$ corresponds to the facts, then $\langle p \rangle$ is true. (*Edwards Conditional-Material World*)

(EC-Mor). In moral discourse: if $\langle p \rangle$ is superassertible, then $\langle p \rangle$ is true. (*Edwards Conditional-Moral Discourse*)

There is an interesting contrast between Lynch's and Edwards's accounts of how the realizer truth-property for a given proposition is determined. On the one hand, as discussed, on Lynch's account what determines the truth-property that a given proposition would have to possess in order to be true is the logical form of the proposition as well as what the proposition is about. Propositions end up being sorted into rough kinds based on their content. However, propositions, on Lynch's view, are not cleanly prepackaged into distinct domains. On the other hand, in simple determination pluralism what truth-property would realize truth for a given proposition depends on features of the particular domain of which the proposition is a member. In his contribution Edwards explains that a careful study of the content in the domain in question as well as the assertoric practices within the domain is required to determine whether truth in the domain in question is 'properly described in terms of a relation between linguistic and nonlinguistic entities (such as correspondence, for example) or a construction between linguistic entities (such as a coherence property), or a construction out of justification or warrant (such as superassertibility)'.

So on Lynch's view there is no requirement to work out a comprehensive account of a domain of discourse. What is required is an account of how the topic of a proposition and its logical form determine the realizer truth-property that the proposition would possess in order to manifest truth-as-such (or 'plain truth' as Lynch calls it). However, for simple determination pluralism an independent account is required that explains what exactly a domain of discourse is and how specific domains determine a realizer truth-property for propositions in the domain in question. Indeed in

Wright's contribution an outline of what such an argument might look like is developed. In years to come a useful gauge of the success of these different approaches to moderate alethic pluralism will be the adequacy of the accounts they offer in response to these theoretical challenges.

One drawback of the anthology is that it is lacking in contributions that examine connections between alethic pluralism and pluralist theories of other concepts that are conceptually related to the concept of truth. In his earlier review Eklund points out that the anthology contains no discussion of connections between truth-pluralism and ontological pluralism. Recently several contributors to this volume have explored this issue. For instance, see Pedersen's 2014 paper 'Pluralism x 3: Truth, Logic, Metaphysics' in *Erkenntnis* or Contnoir and Edwards' 'From Truth Pluralism to Ontological Pluralism . . . and Back', forthcoming in *Journal of Philosophy*.

In addition to ontological pluralism several contributors to the present volume have examined the relationship between logical pluralism and moderate alethic pluralism. For example, see Chapter 5 of Lynch's *Truth as One and Many* or Pedersen's *Erkenntnis* paper just mentioned. J.C. Beall's contribution to this volume does discuss how various non-classical logical theories require different deflationary truth-predicates. So that essay does offer a unique perspective on the relationship between logical pluralism and a novel variant of truth-pluralism. However, much of the discussion in the literature outside of this anthology has been focused on the connection between a substantive variant of truth-pluralism and logical pluralism. Including some discussions on that topic in this volume could have enhanced its breadth. I look forward to future work on truth-pluralism that explores how the view interacts with other pluralist views and with other philosophical theories and areas of inquiry more broadly.

However, this anthology represents the state of the art of work on alethic pluralism. In the present author's opinion the book contains a variety of thought provoking essays. It is essential reading for any philosopher working on the nature of truth. The book in its entirety, or selections from the book, could be effectively integrated into advanced undergraduate or graduate courses.

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