Ways of approaching truth: tracing the source of inflationary theories of truth's predicament

Formas de aproximación a la verdad: en busca del origen del problema de las teorías inflacionarias de la verdad

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Resumen

Las teorías inflacionarias de la verdad son propensas al problema del alcance. Éste consiste en identificar una única explicación que podría cubrir los diversos enunciados que la mayoría de nosotros estamos dispuestos a aceptar como verdaderos. Este problema también se puede expresar de otra manera: a las teorías inflacionarias de la verdad les resulta difícil identificar una única propiedad que todos los enunciados verdaderos deben compartir para pertenecer a la clase de los enunciados verdaderos. En este orden de ideas, el texto trata de rastrear el origen de esta situación. Se mostrará que la raíz del problema se remonta a los inicios de la filosofía occidental. En el proceso, ofreceré una distinción que puede ayudar a explicar por qué las teorías inflacionarias de la verdad son propensas al problema del alcance. Dicho en términos más generales, se argumenta que el mismo enfoque (o metodología) que estas teorías emplean las hace propensas a dicho problema.

Abstract

Inflationary theories of truth are prone to the scope problem. This is the problem of identifying a single explanation that could cover the various statements that most of us are willing to accept as true. This problem can also be expressed in another way: Inflationary theories of truth find it difficult to identify a single property that all true statements share for them to belong to the class of true statements. In line with this, the paper seeks to trace the source of this predicament. It will be shown that the root of the problem extends back to the early beginnings of Western philosophy itself. In the process, I will offer a distinction that can help explain why inflationary theories of truth are prone to the scope problem. Put in quite general terms, it is argued that the very approach (or methodology) that these theories employ makes them prone to the scope problem.

Palabras clave

esencialismo como enfoque (o metodología), teorías inflacionarias de la verdad, problema de la verdad, problema del alcance, filosofía occidental.

Key words

essentialism as an approach (or methodology), inflationary theories of truth, problem of truth, scope problem, Western philosophy.

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Introduction

Theories of truth are usually classified into two: either a theory of truth is *inflationary* or *deflationary*. Philosophers who subscribe to an inflationary theory of truth (henceforth ITT) are committed to the view that truth has an underlying nature that needs to be discovered. A theory of truth's task therefore is to unravel truth's nature. In addition, philosophers who subscribe to ITT consider truth as a robust or substantive property of statements (or propositions). On the other hand, philosophers who subscribe to a deflationary theory of truth (henceforth DTT) argue against the idea that truth is a substantive property and that truth has an underlying nature that needs to be discovered. Deflationists contend that truth is implicitly defined in the instances of the T-schema. They dismiss the supposed metaphysical and epistemological characterizations of truth upon the recognition that "the content of the claim that a putative truth bearer is true is equivalent to that of the truth bearer itself." (Soames 229)

The paper is divided into five parts. Section I identifies and articulates a difficult problem which poses a serious threat to any theory of truth that is classified as a variant of ITT. This is the *scope problem* (*Cf.* Lynch 385), or the *problem of common denominator* (*Cf.* Wright 1).[1] Section II identifies the tasks of a theory of truth and offers an important distinction that can help explain ITT's predicament. Section III articulates the view that the root of ITT's predicament extends back to the early beginnings of Western philosophy itself. This is done by discussing Plato's Theory of Forms and the project of the first philosophers of the Western world (e.g. the Milesians). Section IV tries to apply the essentialist approach (or methodology) to the problem of theorizing about the concept of truth. It also identifies some problems and challenges entailed by such an approach. Section V, the conclusion, provides a synthesis of the important points that have been articulated in the previous sections. In general, it demonstrates that essentialism, as an approach or methodological stance, employed and deeply embedded in the Socratic-Platonic dialogues, can help explain why many philosophers have been accustomed to think (or at least have a strong tendency to think) that truth has an underlying nature that needs to be discovered. At the outset, it must be mentioned

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[1] It is important to note that the difference between Lynch's scope problem (SP) and Wright's problem of common denominator is merely terminological. In essence, they are both referring to the same problem. For the sake of convenience, I will simply adopt Lynch's (i.e. scope problem) terminology in the discussions that follow.

that the paper does not aim to provide a solution to the scope problem (henceforth SP). It only humbly seeks to provide a *diagnosis* for ITT's predicament. While this is the case, it is hoped that the distinction and the diagnosis to be provided are significant in at least two ways: (1) they can at least shed light on the difficult issues involved by providing a plausible link from the ancient to the contemporary, and (2) that they can at least invite others to think about the difficult issues once more.

The Scope Problem: A serious threat for inflationary theories of truth

It is uncontroversial to state that the problem of truth is one of the most difficult problems that contemporary philosophers deal with regardless of their philosophical affiliation/orientation. For better or for worse, how we view the concept of truth has serious implications to various aspects of human existence (e.g. how we think and assess what we know and how we act given what we think we know). Despite the complexity of the problem of truth, it is possible for us to explain it in a clear and simple way. Consider the following statements:

(1) 4^2 is 16.
(2) Snow is white.
(3) The government (or state) should respect human rights.
(4) Every even number is divisible by two.
(5) Murder is wrong.

As to how statements (1)-(5) may be used to setup SP, several points are in order. First, statements (1)-(5) are just some of the numerous statements that any person may *reasonably believe* or *accept to be true*. They are in fact true. Second, it is the *content* of statements like (1)-(5) that make them capable of being true (or false). Third, while statements (1)-(5) are all true, it can be said that the content of these statements are *varied* (i.e. these statements belong to different domains of discourse, e.g. mathematics, ethics). Fourth, given the variety of the content of statements (1)-(5), it is difficult to identify a *single* theory of truth which can handle all of them without remainder. Let me elaborate on the fourth point. From the list of statements above, we can easily say that statement (2) can best be explained by the *correspondence* theory of truth. The rudiments of the correspondence theory of truth, put in quite general terms, are *language*, on the one hand, and the *world* (or reality), on the other. These elements constitute the *correspondence intuition*. Those who adhere

to the correspondence theory of truth therefore contend that truth is to be conceived of as a correspondence relation between a statement (proposition) and the world. In such a view, a statement is true if it corresponds to how things are in the world. The same theory of truth however cannot explain the truth of statements like (1) and (4) unless we are willing to admit the literal existence of mathematical objects. Ordinarily, statements (1) and (4) can best be explained by the *coherence* theory of truth. In general, the coherence theory of truth states that a statement is true if and only if it forms a coherent whole together with the other statements that we embrace (or accept) to be true, for instance, the different statements in the domain of mathematics. Notice that the aforementioned formulation does not talk about facts or state of affairs but merely about statements and their coherence with other statements. Finally, it can be said that neither the correspondence nor the coherence theory of truth can handle statements like (3) and (5) since they belong to different domains (e.g. value theory, ethics).

The *problematique* can thus be expressed in its full complexity in the following way: If statements (1)-(5) are all true, then they must have a property that they all share for them to belong to the class of true statements. This intuition however is prone to an important objection. It can be said that statements (1)-(5)'s ways of being true are significantly different (i.e. in fact, they have different methods of verification/criteria of proof). This line of reasoning suggests that truth has no uniform structure. In other words, truth, if construed as a property of statements (or propositions) is *ambiguous*. As the foregoing discussion shows, without a satisfactory solution to SP, philosophers who subscribe to ITT are required, at the very least, to rethink their positions and underlying assumptions on the problem of truth.

The Tasks of a Theory of Truth and an important distinction

In a very general way, a theory of truth has a two-fold task. It seeks to explicate: (1) what truth is, and (2) what the predicate 'is true' means. On this juncture, I would like to point out an important distinction. The two-fold task of a theory of truth corresponds to two approaches in theorizing about the concept of truth. Sometimes, philosophers combine these approaches without fully realizing the delicate distinctions and commitments that they involve. The first task, that is, the task of answering what truth is, the question itself is *metaphysical*. Consequently, it leads a philosopher to take a route (or an approach) which is also

metaphysical. For the sake of brevity, let us call this the *essentialist approach* (henceforth EA). The second task, that is, the task of answering what the predicate 'is true' means, the question itself merely seeks to understand the truth predicate within the confines of a language (e.g. English). Let us call this the *use approach* (henceforth UA). Moreover, as UA only seeks to understand the truth predicate within the confines of a language, it can be argued that it is metaphysically neutral on the fundamental disagreements between those who accept ITT or DTT (e.g. on the issue of whether or not truth has a nature and that a theory of truth's task is to discover it). It is important to note that the distinction rests on the approach or methodology those philosophers implicitly or explicitly pursue in their attempts to understand the concept of truth.[2]

For the sake of clarity, we can summarize the abovementioned distinction this way: Asking about the nature of truth is different from asking about the truth predicate, for to ask about the nature of truth is to deal with its ontology, whereas, to ask about the truth predicate is to deal with its use (or function) in the context of a given language. If philosophy is a "critique of language" (Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* 23) then the principal task of a philosophical work is one of *clarification*. This idea is part of Wittgenstein's view on the nature of philosophy in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. In his view, the philosopher's work involves the clarification of thought via the analysis of the logic of our language. Such clarification is important because "Language disguises thought." (Ibid. 22) While it is true that Wittgenstein's arguments in the *Tractatus* has lost much of its force in the passage of time, I think his overall idea on the nature of philosophy (as an activity which embarks on the task of clarifying our thoughts via the analysis of language) is still significant to philosophers of our time. On this juncture, the distinction put forth earlier between EA and UA is to be construed as an attempt to *clarify* how we approach the concept of truth and is crucial in the discussions that follow.

Western philosophy and the essentialist approach

It is a truism in the study of history that in order to better appreciate and understand the present and the future, it is important to understand the past. For the current purposes of this paper, it is imperative to trace

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[2] At this point, an important limitation of the paper needs to be emphasized. While the paper offers a distinction between EA and UA, the paper will solely focus on EA since it is this particular approach (or methodology) that is prone to SP.

the origin of EA in order to better understand why many philosophers who accept ITT have been accustomed to think (or at least have a strong tendency to think) that truth has an underlying nature that needs to be discovered. I shall argue that essentialism as a methodological stance employed and deeply embedded in the Socratic-Platonic dialogues can account for such a tendency.

Essentialism, as a methodological stance and as a systematized theory is traceable to the writings of Plato, most especially in his doctrine of the Forms. It is important to note that Plato ascribes an ontological status to the Forms. This is to say that in Plato's view, the Forms are *real* in the strongest sense of the term. In Plato's theory, sensible objects in the world such as tables and chairs may be said to *participate* or *partake* in what he refers to as the Forms. Such being the case, sensible objects are, in Plato's view, mere *copies* of the Form, thereby less in terms of reality. The relation between objects and the Forms, as Plato conceives of it, is a certain kind of copying or imitation (*mimesis*). Although Plato scholars usually understand Platonic mimesis negatively, Monroe Beardsley provides us with an idea of its importance via the concept of representation when he writes:

> "*Mimesis*" perhaps carries with it a stronger notion of copying, of being modeled upon […] I adopt the usual term "imitation," for Plato's "*mimesis*," but try to safeguard it against a misunderstanding by saying that it is to be used in a way close to "representation," in its multiple sense. And in the broadest sense, all productive craft, or making, involves representation. (Beardsley 34)

Let me briefly articulate why the sense of copying involved in Platonic mimesis is also significant to epistemology. Images and copies for instance might be considered as inferior to the things that they bear semblance to but given the conditions of human existence, what one immediately encounters are images and copies. Images and copies are therefore important because it is through them that one is able to bring to mind the recognition of the Forms. From a methodological standpoint then, Platonic mimesis may be understood as a necessary condition for the recognition of reality. How about the Forms? Plato has these things to say about the Forms (e.g. the Form Beauty) and the sensible objects which participate of them (through Socrates who serves as his mouthpiece in the *Phaedo*):

> [I]f there be anything beautiful other than absolute beauty it is beautiful only in so far as it partakes of absolute beauty – and I should say the same of everything… nothing makes a thing beautiful but the presence and participation of beauty in whatever way or manner obtained; for as to the manner I am uncertain, but I stoutly contend that by beauty all beautiful things become beautiful. (Plato, *Phaedo* 140)

The foregoing passage suggests that for Plato, the Forms constitute the underlying reality behind the sensible objects that we encounter. This is to say that for Plato, the Forms, by virtue of being primary substances and as answers to "What is F?" questions are the "essences of things." (Fine 399) For the aforementioned reasons, it is plausible to maintain that the Platonic Forms have a crucial role to play in what may be called *Platonic explanations*. In the previously quoted passage from the *Phaedo*, when one asks, "What makes a thing beautiful?" one can say that a thing is beautiful because it partakes of the Form of Beauty. It is the Form of Beauty, which ultimately *explains* why a thing is beautiful. We can summarize the underlying idea as follows: Although there are many beautiful things, there is something that all of these things share (or have in common) as to why we call them beautiful, and this is the Form of Beauty. Aside from having a crucial role to perform in explanations, Plato ascribes something more to the Forms in the *Parmenides*:

> [I]f someone, having an eye on all the difficulties we have just brought up and others of the same sort, won't allow that there are forms for things and won't mark off a form for each one, he won't have anywhere to turn his thought, since he doesn't allow that for each thing there is a character that is always the same. In this way he will destroy the power of dialectic entirely. (Plato, "Parmenides" 369)

The abovementioned passage points out that for Plato, the Forms are not merely important because of their role in explanations. More importantly, it is through the admission of the existence of the Forms that one can explain the very possibility of *discourse*: "By not admitting the existence of "Forms" one would destroy the possibility of all thought and argument." (De Vogel 9)

There is much disagreement between and among Plato scholars particularly in terms of the internal consistency of the Theory of Forms but this section will not deal with them. The modest claim raised at this

point is that there are occasions when Plato employs the term *essence* (the Greek word for which is *ousia*) to refer to the *nature* of a thing: That which makes a thing the kind of thing that it is.[3] For the most part, it can be said that it is the quest for the nature of things which constitute the primary task of the *Dialogues.* As the foregoing discussion suggests, the quest for the nature of things turns out to be a quest for the essence of things. This is because for Plato, Forms and not particulars are "the bearer of essences." (Silverman 10) It is important to note that Plato also extends this ontological privilege to mathematical objects (or concepts): "Plato seemed to insist that mathematical objects, like the Platonic forms or essences, must be perfectly abstract and have a separate, non-material kind of existence." (Simpson 599) Plato's project then, in its entirety, and through the employment of the dialectic (*dialegesthai*) is primarily an attempt to unravel the essences of things (e.g. Beauty, Justice, Knowledge).

It is however important to note that Western philosophy, since its inception, has a natural affinity with EA. This observation is true not only of Plato but also of his predecessors (e.g. the Milesian (or natural) philosophers) and this is understandable. The natural philosophers' project as a whole is an early attempt to determine the structure of reality through the capacities of human reason.[4] For these thinkers, knowing the structure of reality means "giving an account of all things." (Long 10) By "giving an account of all things" the Milesian philosophers seek for a single, underlying stuff, which constitutes "the real and basic nature of all that makes up the cosmos." (Cohen, Curd and Reeve 8) Scholars refer to this view as *Material Monism.*[5] One of the significant results of the Milesian philosophers' project is a fine distinction between "how things appear to us" and "what they really are," a distinction that eventually found its niche not only in philosophy but also in the sciences. The underlying intuition is that it only appears to us that there are different things in the world. In reality, everything is one. This is because what seem to be different things are ultimately composed of a single stuff, "the source and the essence of the world and everything in it." (Graham 20) As the foregoing discussion shows, it is not only Plato but also his

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[3] See for instance, Socrates' admonition to Euthyphro's answer to the question, "What is holiness?" (Plato, *Five* 12).
[4] As is well-known, the importance of the emergence of philosophy in the ancient world made possible the eventual replacement of *mythos* with *logos* in our attempt to understand physical phenomena. Myths do explain but the explanations provided by myths do not satisfy the explanatory demands of reason.
[5] This is so far the orthodox interpretation: That the early philosophers were material monists.

predecessors (e.g. the Milesian philosophers) who accept a certain form of essentialism in their attempt to understand the structure of reality.

Applying the Essentialist Approach to the concept of truth: Problems and challenges

As shown in the previous section, Western philosophy, since its inception, has a natural affinity with EA. In this section, it will be shown that: (1) Socrates' questions, just like Plato's theory of Forms, have an ontological import and thus counts as an approach similar to EA and (2) if one employs an approach similar to EA in theorizing about the concept of truth, then one cannot escape SP. This section will also identify some of the problems that beset approaches similar to EA like the Socratic Method.

In studying the *Dialogues*, Plato scholars observe that Socrates' questions have a recognizable pattern: "What is X?" In this formulation, X can be any concept that we need to give a definitive account of. It is, however, important to note that what Socrates means by the aforementioned formulation is not a simple matter for the question itself has an ontological import. By the aforementioned formulation, what he actually means is the "Being of X" or in other words, its essence. Thus, "What is X?" means "What X really is." At this point, we have been able to characterize, albeit very roughly, what Socrates means by the formulation of his questions. If we are to *apply* the aforementioned formulation in our philosophizing about the concept of truth, the question, "What is truth?" means "What truth really is," and our task is to unravel its nature (it's *Being* or its *essence*). It is not difficult to point out what such an approach to truth presupposes. It presupposes that truth has an underlying nature, and this is the core of ITT's fundamental intuition. In the following discussion, it will be pointed out that such an approach leads to difficult problems as articulated by Ludwig Wittgenstein. In order to do this, it is important to consider why and how ontological questions, in general, generate problems that are difficult to resolve.

In the latter part of the previous section, we mentioned that the Socratic-Platonic dialogues employ the method of dialectic in their act of philosophizing. While it can be maintained that there are significant differences between Socrates' and Plato's treatment and employment of the dialectic in their act of philosophizing, their ideas converge at a certain point: The conviction that there are essences and that these

essences are absolute and real and thus should be considered as the proper objects of (philosophical) thought.

It is a well-known fact that Socrates' questions require a satisfactory definition of X. The underlying intuition is that to know something means to be able to provide a satisfactory definition for that which one claims to know. Socrates' question therefore, to the extent that they are understood as questions which aim at understanding the essence of a concept, is in a rather difficult position for several reasons. These difficulties are in a way related to the very methodology adopted by Socrates along with its underlying commitments.

First, it can be argued that the Socratic Method appears to be a *negative* approach in the sense that it can only get rid of errors in people's beliefs (or thoughts). It is however unable to arrive at what it seeks to arrive at: The essence of a concept. This problem can be put succinctly in the following way: "It is true that "in point of logic" the *elenchos* can only establish inconsistency, but Socrates nowhere claims to have established anything else." (Benson 106)

Second, one may ask his/herself, "Is there a correct answer to the kind of question which Socrates asks?" As pointed out earlier, Socrates' questions are *ontological*; they are not mere attempts to arrive at satisfactory (or at the very least, precise) definitions. Such being the case, it is an open question as to whether or not it is humanly possible to arrive at the knowledge of "what things really are" in the Socratic sense. If this is correct, this explains why there is an apparent difficulty in answering questions of this kind since we are delving into the murky waters of metaphysics and ontology.

The third point attacks the very core of EA. Recall the kind of approach to explanations that are employed in the *Phaedo*. When one asks, "What makes a thing beautiful?" one can say that a thing is beautiful because it partakes of the Form of Beauty. It is the Form of Beauty, which ultimately explains why a thing is beautiful. The underlying intuition is as follows: Although there are many beautiful things, there is something that all of these things share (or have in common) as to why we call them beautiful, and this is the Form of Beauty. Take note that this is the very same intuition which makes ITT prone to SP. Once we apply EA in our theorizing about the concept of truth, we are bound to accept the following: If statements (1)-(5) (in Section II) are all true, then there

must be a single property which they all possess or have in common for them to belong to the class of true statements. But this kind of approach is suspect to philosophers like Wittgenstein. Consider, for instance, the notion of *family resemblances* in the following:

> Consider, for example, the activities that we call "games".
> I mean board-games, card-games, ball-games, athletic
> games, and so on. What is common to them all? — Don't
> say: "They *must* have something in common, or they would
> not be called 'games'" — but look and see whether there
> is anything common to all — For if you look at them, you
> won't see something that is common to *all*, but similarities,
> affinities, and a whole series of them at that […] I can think
> of no better expression to characterize these similarities
> than "family resemblances"; for the various resemblances
> between members of a family — build, features, colour of
> eyes, gait, temperament, and so on and so forth — overlap
> and criss-cross in the same way. (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical*
> 36ᵉ)

From the foregoing passage, it can be inferred that Wittgenstein would surely object to the kind of approach employed by EA in theorizing about the concept of truth. To further strengthen this point, consider what he says about essentialism in the *Blue and Brown Books*:

> The idea that in order to get clear about the meaning of a
> general term one had to find the common element in all its
> applications has shackled philosophical investigation; for it
> has not only led to no result, but also made the philosopher
> dismiss as irrelevant the concrete cases, which alone could
> have helped him to understand the usage of the general
> term. (19-20)

From the foregoing passage, it can be said that contrary to Socrates' contention that the dialectic and its result, that is, the awareness of one's ignorance, should be considered as progress, that is, a step closer to arriving at the truth, Wittgenstein counters that such an approach did not merely constrain but also and more importantly, stunted philosophical investigation. In the passage cited earlier, Wittgenstein expresses that EA has led to no result. It should be noted that in the context of Socrates, knowing the essences of concepts is not a mere appeal to *Conventionalism* (i.e. the view that what a term means is a matter of linguistic convention). To be more specific, according to conventionalism, the meaning of a

term: "depends entirely on agreement, usually tacit agreement, among the users of the relevant language, concerning the proper application of the term." (Audi 110) This is to say that (1) even though Socrates seeks definitions, these definitions are not mere definitions that concern word-meanings as used by a particular linguistic community in question, (2) Socrates' method and what it seeks to achieve is extra-linguistic in the sense that what he wants to arrive at is not merely the meaning of X in a natural language but the Being of X, that is, its very nature, and (3) the first two points are consistent with what we think to be Plato's view about the Forms themselves. To expound on (3), consider Plato's ontological commitment in the following:

> For Plato the *eidos* or *idea* was not a concept of our mind in this sense that, by thinking it, we would never come into contact with any other kind of reality than that of our own thinking mind. On the contrary, Plato emphasizes the *reality of the object of our thought*. It is not a "thought", he says, that things participate of, in order to become that which they are. They participate of a "Being", that is, of something existing in an exemplary way in an objective order. (De Vogel 7)

The foregoing discussion showed that even if one maintains that Socrates' and Plato's treatment and employment of the dialectic in the *Dialogues* are different in significant ways, it is difficult to deny that their approaches could both be classified as EA in the sense that they are both aimed at unraveling the essences of concepts and of things. As one may have noticed at this point, since both philosophers take an essentialist methodology in their act of philosophizing, most of the criticisms directed at Socrates are also applicable to Plato. In addition, it is important to note that both philosophers' approaches have an underlying ontological commitment and that they share the basic assumption that things have essences and these essences are necessary conditions for very possibility of thought and knowledge.

Conclusion

Our main problem concerns the concept of truth. The exposition of the doctrine of essentialism as deeply entrenched in the Socratic-Platonic Dialogues is a mere example of how most of us go about our ways in trying to account for phenomena or solve problems in philosophy. This is to say that all this time, our focus had been on essentialism as an approach (or methodology). Confronted with the question, "What is

truth?" the question itself leads us to think that there is something (e.g. a structural property) that all truths share but all non-truths lack. This approach, of course, commits us to seek for something that is essential, a property that must be possessed by a statement for it to belong and be categorized as a member of the class of true statements. As discussed earlier, EA as an approach (or methodology) leads to several difficult problems. More importantly, it is precisely because of the employment of such an approach that ITT find it difficult to provide a satisfactory solution to SP.

It is important to note that both Socrates and Plato did not ask the question about truth directly. It was their main assumption. Using EA as some sort of groundwork and since both Socrates and Plato did not ask the question about truth directly, the underlying idea behind such an exposition is a *hypothetical situation* were we apply such an approach in trying to account for the concept of truth. The resulting picture is a *negative* one. Indeed, many philosophers became skeptical to the prospect of identifying a single structural property which all truths share but all non-truths lack. Mindful of the fact that a great number of the Socratic-Platonic dialogues ended in perplexity (*aporia*), it is understandable as to why philosophers can have misgivings about it, especially in terms of its capacity to achieve what it seeks to achieve: The essences of concepts and of things. For the most part, we can say that the skeptical attitude taken by philosophers (e.g. Wittgenstein) stems from the questionability of the fundamental assumptions of EA itself.

Is this the proper way in and through which we should proceed in theorizing about the concept of truth? Do we have good reasons to believe that there is something (e.g. a property) that all truths share but all non-truths lack? In other words, is EA correct (or at the very least, plausible)? To these questions, philosophers who subscribe to DTT reply with a resounding 'No!' For the most part, the development of DTT itself shows that there are objectionable aspects with the underlying intuition behind EA as an approach (or a methodology). As this paper concludes, it is important to note that there is however a positive result, a plausible *link* from the ancient to the contemporary: ITT inherited the fundamental assumption and methodology of essentialism in the Socratic-Platonic dialogues and employed it in theorizing about the concept of truth. As have been shown, this is the main reason why ITT are prone to SP in the first place.

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