

Published Papers: Notes, Typos, and Errata

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This document will be updated whenever new publications are added or new issues with earlier papers come to light.

(1) The Possibility of Truth by Convention

- Section 7.II of *Shadows of Syntax* updates the argument here, discussing a number of other options for the conventionalist.
- Here I was still writing “metasemantic” as “meta-semantic”, as the word was unfamiliar at the time and I believe I had hit on the term independently.
- I think this paper’s main stylistic fault is the overuse of abbreviations for latin terms, especially “e.g.”.

(2) Quantifier Variance and the Collapse Argument

- This paper oddly uses “meta-ontology” instead of “metaontology”; I really have no excuse for this.
- Page 242: typo — the superscripted “*N*” is not in italics here. This also happens again toward the top of page 243, and once on page 247.

- Page 243: typo — “*non sequiter*”.
- Page 246: typo — needless indentation after point (1) is listed (not repeated with point (2), immediately following).
- Page 247: typo — “meta semantic”. This happens again on page 248.
- Page 251: typo — “N” instead of “ \mathcal{N} ”. This happens again in footnote 15 on page 252.
- Page 251: The translation is presented informally with both the plural variable “ xx ” and the singular variable “ x ” in the language of \mathcal{N} mapping to “ x ” in the language of U . Obviously, in actual practice clashes must be avoided or else the translation won’t give accurate results. I noted that we needed to avoid clashes on page 250, in the proof of the previous lemma, but some readers have thought that I didn’t mean for clashes to be avoided below and more generally. Obviously, that is not the case.
- This paper was finished in 2013 before I read a pre-publication draft of Cian Dorr’s “Quantifier Variance and the Collapse Theorems”. Accordingly, it does not address Dorr’s semantic arguments; they are addressed in 9.IV of *Shadows of Syntax*, and also and at greater length in an unpublished draft paper that currently gathers dust. They are addressed more briefly in footnote 33 of my “Quantifier Variance and Indefinite Extensibility” and in “Quantifier Variance”, co-written with Eli Hirsch.
- The number of typos in this paper is entirely my fault. This paper was accepted in July of 2014 when I was due to be on the job market for the first time in the Fall. At the time I (falsely) believed that it was important for my job chances to have this paper appear online as quickly as possible, so I skipped on a careful correction of the proofs.

(3) Conventionalism, Consistency, and Consistency Sentences

- Page 1355: typo — clause (ii) in footnote 8 uses “a” and “b” instead of “x” and “y”.
- Page 1357: Footnote 13 cites *Shadows of Syntax* under its originally intended title, *Syntactic Shadows*.
- Page 1370: Footnote 41 cites a paper as “under review” that is yet to appear. Most of the content of that paper was incorporated into chapter 10 of *Shadows of Syntax*, some of the other content was incorporated into the early parts of my first joint paper with Dan Waxman. The paper itself is currently gathering dust, along with some of its close relatives.
- Related but distinct discussions of conceptual pluralism occur in section 5 of “Change of Logic, Change of Meaning”, on pages 12-13 of “Talking with Tonkers”, on page 1651 of my “Epistemology versus Non-Causal Realism”, and most fully in 5.III of *Shadows of Syntax*.
- Despite what some readers have thought (perhaps misled by discussion on page 1364), the point of this paper is not to address the issues of arithmetical or syntactic determinacy. The discussion on pages 1369-1370 was meant to clear this up. My approach to determinacy is given at length in chapter 10 of *Shadows of Syntax*, and also in some unpublished papers.
- Another misunderstanding of the paper involves trying to understand *applied syntax* in terms of a *formal theory of syntax*. Obviously, that doesn’t advance the point at all. You cannot get *any* conclusions about applied syntax from pure mathematical theories alone, whatever they may be called, since empirical bridge laws are also required. So conventionalists and other pluralists can assume that actual syntactic facts are determinate, if they are so inclined. And if this assumption is used in the background when arguing that we have a determinate grasp of arithmetic or syntax, this kind of “outsourcing” to actual facts is indirect and subtle, nothing like using determinate quantification over

relevant items in the explanation— Lewis’s “just more theory” point from “Putnam’s Paradox” is indirectly relevant, see also 7.IV, 11.VII, and 12.III of *Shadows of Syntax* for directly relevant discussion.

(4) Talking with Tonkers

- The first complete draft of this paper was finished in the summer of 2011. For details on its origins, see the preface to *Shadows of Syntax*.
- Page 17: I attempt to carry out the strategy for approaching the liar paradox mentioned here in some unpublished work.
- Page 18: For the sake of clarity, I now think I should have been a bit more careful at the top of this page about the different norms that are in play when it comes to rules. This is made painstakingly clear in the discussion in *Shadows of Syntax*.
- Page 20: typo — clause (ii) in footnote 56 uses “a” and “b” instead of “x” and “y”.
- Although some of the structuring choices here are not ideal (I’m generally not a fan of objection-reply prose), the last paragraph of section 7 and the 2 paragraphs of section 9 remain among my favorite things I’ve written.
- This is something of a position paper, and has always been my personal favorite out of my early papers. Now chapters 3 through 5 of *Shadows of Syntax* contain my preferred statement of my unrestricted inferentialist theory of logic, but I still think “Talking with Tonkers” is worth reading.

(5) Trapping the Metasemantic Metaphilosophical Deflationist?

- This paper is based on a presentation I gave on September 20, 2012 at the first meeting of the NYU Metaphilosophy & Metasemantics reading group, led by

Yuo Guo and myself.

- In the summer of 2014, anticipating being on the job market, I wrote up this short paper and submitted it to *Metaphilosophy* on June 6, 2014. I was hoping for an acceptance before the Fall job market season, but unfortunately I didn't hear anything from them until December 2, 2015, when the paper was accepted.
- From the start I have worked on style and clarity in writing, but this is the first publication of mine that, upon rereading, I am stylistically happy with all the way through. If I were writing it now, I would just use "good" and "bad" instead of "G" and "B", but overall I think the paper is fun and clear, and I retain a fondness for the coda riffing on the *Tractatus*.

(6) Sider on the Epistemology of Structure

- Page 2422: I think the example, of a theory T along with a theory T is false but all empirical consequences of T are true, is generally important in the philosophy of science. Handling this case is important for a correct evaluation of the "No Miracles" argument as well as inference to the best explanation, more generally.
- Page 2426: The pointed formulation here of the incoherence of combining epistemological pragmatism and metaphysical realism came from Crispin Wright in a 2013 conversation, he was summing up and (I think) agreeing with my view on this.
- Page 2429: At around this point the paper originally included a discussion of using "inference to the best explanation" to answer the reliability challenge. I still think this is the most promising response for realists, but the discussion was cut for length.

- As I mentioned in footnote 44, Ted Sider visited NYC, and attended a meeting of the NYU metaphilosophy reading group that I ran with Yu Guo, on February 13, 2013 (Ted had previously been at NYU but had left for Cornell). At that meeting I pushed Ted with early versions of all of the arguments in this paper, and afterwards he encouraged me to develop them into a paper. The paper was finished in something close to its final form a few months later.

(7) Epistemology versus Non-causal Realism

- This paper was written in the Spring of 2010, during my second year of graduate school, for a class on evolution and ethics jointly taught by Laura Franklin-Hall and Sharon Street.
- Page 1647: typo — “...throwing darts at board with...”.
- As the title suggests, the central goal of this paper was to clearly lay out the *structure* and *target* of a fully general Benacerraf-Field style epistemological argument, so most of the paper is devoted to those tasks. Much other relevant material — alternative replies to Lewis’s objection, the analogy to skepticism, alternative replies to the evolutionary objection, more detail on the sensitivity and safety conditions (types of modality, the needed similarity metric, counterpossibles, generality and the role of methods, systematic interference, and so on) — had to be left out. Yet all of this and more might soon see the light of day, because...
- In 2012, during *his* second year of graduate school, Dan Waxman independently wrote a paper similar to mine. After comparing notes, Dan and I then collaborated on a paper, titled “Reliability, Explanation, and the Failure of Mathematical Realism”. In that paper we pushed the epistemological argument hard at the specific target of mathematical realism. This joint paper was widely circulated at NYU in 2013 and 2014, but was never published. Dan

and I remain unsatisfied with current discussions of these issues, so are finally writing a long-planned short book laying out all of the ugly details and strengthening the case. Stay tuned.

(8) Revisiting Quine on Truth by Convention

- The first complete draft of this paper was finished in early 2014.
- Page 122: typo — there is a missing “to” in “...argument is amend...”.
- Page 124: typo — unnecessary indentation after conditional proof and *modus ponens* are set out.
- Page 128: The later-Wittgenstein-related variations on Quinean themes that I mention here but set aside are discussed in detail in 7.IV of *Shadows of Syntax* (Quine’s argument, covered in this paper, is discussed in 7.III).
- Page 135: The quote from Quine’s “Methodological Reflections on Current Linguistic Theory” has a misprint — “behavior” swapped for “behave”, the quote should read: “...behavior is not guided by the rule unless the behavior knows the rule and can state it.”

(9) Internal and External Questions Revisited

- This paper was written during my second year in graduate school — see the opening footnote for a fuller history.
- Page 180: typo — unnecessary indentation after the characterization of Euclid’s theorem.
- Page 181: typo — unnecessary indentation after statement of the answers and methods principles.
- Page 204: typo — unnecessary indentation after the Carnap quote.

- I am obviously not impartial, but I still think that the third section of this paper contains one of the most powerful general criticisms of philosophical ontology.

(10) Change of Logic, Change of Meaning

- This paper was originally written in 2011, it was (after “Talking with Tonkers”) the second paper touching on aspects of my unrestricted inferentialist theory of logic, but from an entirely different direction (and not assuming inferentialism). Those interested in my theory of logic should read the first two parts of *Shadows of Syntax*. For those wanting a much shorter introduction, this paper, along with “Talking with Tonkers” and “Revisiting Quine on Truth by Convention” provide the groundwork for the final step to logical conventionalism.
- Page 430: typo — unnecessary indentation after the displayed argument.
- The paper’s arguments are freestanding, but some of the same ground is covered from an inferentialist/conventionalist perspective in chapter 5 of *Shadows of Syntax*. Including the important taxonomy given in section 5 of this paper.

(11) Quantifier Variance and the Indefinite Extensibility

- The first draft of this paper was written in 2013, sometime in 2014 it was in something reasonably close to the final published form. In addition to applying variance to indefinite extensibility, a central goal of the paper was to provide more details on the metasemantics of quantifier variance, and to distinguish different forms of variance.

- Page 93: I'm speaking a bit loosely here in saying that quantifier deflationism "entails" quantifier pluralism. A top down metasemantics does not automatically lead to pluralism. See the discussion in chapter 9 of *Shadows of Syntax*.
- Some of my terminological choices here have since been superseded, see chapter 9 of *Shadows of Syntax* and my joint papers with Eli Hirsch. I now prefer "modest" and "strong quantifier variance" for the two main types of quantifier pluralism discussed here.

(12) (with Waxman) A Metasemantic Challenge for Mathematical Determinacy

- Our policies about capitalizing the statement of our named principles were applied inconsistently.
- Page 484: typo — in footnote 20, "...for some discussion of...see...for discussion".
- Page 487: typo — unnecessary indentation after the displayed argument.
- Page 488: A nuanced version of the omega rule approach is defended in "Infinite Reasoning" and in 10.VII of *Shadows of Syntax*.
- Page 489: After this paper appeared, Sharon Berry offered an argument combining McGee and Field with realism about modality. For critical discussion of this argument, see 10.IV of *Shadows of Syntax*. For my own argument using open-endedness to argue for arithmetical determinacy, see 10.V of *Shadows of Syntax*.
- Page 489: In unpublished work, Waxman has pursued the "cognitive imagination" approach to (something like) determinacy, and I (also in unpublished work) have critically responded.
- Page 492: typo — "...as an approach to...this approach is...".

- Some readers have assumed that Dan and I both think that arithmetic is indeterminate. This is false. We both think (for slightly different reasons — see above) that arithmetic is determinate but that set theory is not.
- This paper was blindly reviewed, but was submitted to a special issue of *Synthese*.

(13) (with Hirsch) Quantifier Variance and the Demand for a Semantics

- The original idea to write this paper came out of an e-mail discussion of my “Quantifier Variance and the Collapse Argument”, in early 2015.
- Page 593: typo — unnecessary indentation after the displayed argument.
- The mathematical reason that the semantics we develop here is possible has to do with some unique features of set theory with urelements. In unpublished work, I prove the key general results needed and relate them to the dialectical situation of this paper.

(14) Killing Kripkenstein’s Monster

- The basis for this paper was a presentation I gave on October 18, 2012, to the NYU Metaphilosophy & Metasemantics reading group, led by Yu Guo and myself. In 2013 I attended two meetings of a class on Wittgenstein that Kripke was giving at CUNY. My goal was to discuss and argue about my proposals with Kripke himself. But after a couple of meetings it became clear that Kripke’s class was going to be focused more on history and other aspects of Wittgenstein, rather than on the Kripkenstein book’s anti-dispositionalist arguments. My paper was written in the summer of 2016, for possible use as a writing sample on the job market (I ultimately decided against using it as a writing sample because of concerns that people no longer cared about the Kripkenstein puzzles).

- Page 270: typo — extra space in “A -GENERAL”.
- Page 271: Though I think it was mostly fine for my purposes in this paper to set it aside, Boghossian’s holism challenge that I mention here deserves a separate response. I attempt this in some work under review (after many versions and many false starts over the last few years).
- Page 272: The “even” in “But even intuitively...” is best deleted.
- Page 277: typo — missing “a” in ...the sum in given particular case...”.
- Page 286: typo — the Boghossian quote is actually from page 513 of “The Rule-Following Considerations”, not page 170.
- This paper was 20,000 words long when accepted, so the editor asked me to cut 2,500 words, saying he didn’t care how or from where. Because of this, many issues mentioned in the paper were originally given much fuller discussion, and some topics were deleted entirely (for instance, obviously my treatment needs to be tweaked slightly to deal with direct indexing or self-reference of certain kinds). I could easily write a fairly long book covering the material in this paper in more detail. As it stands, this is one of my favorite papers of mine and I hope that more people read it.

(15) (with Hirsch) Quantifier Variance

- This is the only paper of mine that was invited. Eli was invited to contribute an article on quantifier variance for the handbook and he asked me to write it with him. The paper had to be under 5,000 words, so we excluded footnotes and aimed for a clear and streamlined presentation. I had been reading a lot of Bertrand Russell at the time, so was convinced that the goal could be met.

(16) (with Waxman) Supertasks and Arithmetical Truth

- Page 1278: Note that we are careful to talk of the truth of *each* of the individual instances, but we are *not* saying that the evidence given by the supertask computation is a single truth generalization. If it were, standard compositional truth axioms could be used to finitely prove Goldbach’s conjecture from this evidence.
- Page 1282: typo — our earlier paper (#12 above) is listed twice in the bibliography.
- Chapter 10 of *Shadows of Syntax* contains my own take on the role of open-endedness and the omega rule in securing arithmetical determinacy (see also “Infinite Reasoning”).

(17) Ontological Commitment and Ontological Commitments

- I first drafted this paper in the Fall of 2018, while I was teaching a metaontology class during my first quarter at Stanford.
- I find that numbering formulas on the right, rather than the left, is unnatural and harder to read, but my left-numbering was changed throughout the paper to right-numbering during typesetting, so as to conform to house style.

(18) Infinite Reasoning

- This paper was created in the Fall of 2019, as a major overhaul of an earlier unpublished paper, “Following the Omega Rule”, which was written in the summer of 2015 after an epiphany in a bookstore cafe.
- The page numbers here aren’t the final published page numbers, as the paper has only appeared in an online preprint. When the print journal issue appears, the page numbers here will be updated.

- Page 3: typo — there should be a comma after “remarks” in footnote 4.
- Page 6: typo — “a infinite” for “an infinite” in footnote 20.
- Page 7: typo — “the” in “the supertask argument” should also be underlined here, for stylistic consistency.
- Page 10: *Parts of Classes* is, indeed, an under-recognized masterpiece of philosophical style. In it, Lewis manages to briefly and clearly present extremely technical material without using any logical symbols aside from schematic letters. This policy continues in the book’s technical appendix, co-authored with John Burgess and Allen Hazen, but here I think the lack of symbols makes the argument a bit more difficult to follow than it would have been otherwise.
- Page 11: typo — should be “conclusion attitude”, not “conclusion attitudes”.
- Page 18: typo — there shouldn’t be an indentation after the displayed uniform reflection formula.
- Pages 18-19: The objection to my position here, using uniform reflection, is stated too strongly. The assumption at line 1 isn’t *generally* justified (though it is true for the Gödel sentence, for instance) and thus the claim that omega inconsistent theories are always inconsistent with their uniform reflection principles is too strong. What is true instead is that omega inconsistent theories are inconsistent with their uniform reflection principles *plus* the true theory of Π_2 -sentences in the language of arithmetic ($Th_{\Pi_2}(\mathbb{N})$). This actually makes the objection *against* my position somewhat weaker than the paper suggests.
- Page 19: If you haven’t read any Greg Egan, do so.

(19) Ontology, Set Theory, and the Paraphrase Challenge

- This paper grew out of reflections on the joint paper, “Quantifier Variance and the Demand for a Semantics”. I wanted to understand the *mathematical*

reason why the semantics we gave in that paper was possible, and to establish the generality we conjectured in the earlier paper. Perhaps to logicians, this was already obvious, but it wasn't obvious to me. The first draft was finished in early 2017, but the paper was overhauled and rewritten for clarity several times on the way to the final version.

- Page 14: typo — missing parentheses in “ $USet\rho(\beta)$ ”
- Page 14: There is unclarity in the informal statements here, related to my vacillation about translating terms, but hopefully the general idea still comes through.

(20) Functionalism About Inference

- The original version of this paper was written in the summer of 2014. I had a fair amount of difficulty getting the paper published, and had to keep updating references to keep the paper up to date. Shortened and simplified versions of the basic theory of inference given at length in the paper can be found in 2.VI of *Shadows of Syntax* and section 3 of “Infinite Reasoning”.

(21) This Quintessence of Dust — *Consciousness Explained*, at Thirty

- When doing research on grue in early 2020, I discovered *Philosophical Papers's* rereading option, which allowed discussion of older papers and books for renewed consideration, and decided to try to write a re-reading of Dennett's *Consciousness Explained* (CE). I first read CE in full toward the end of 2010, in graduate school, so a decade later, I reread the book and wrote this paper.

(22) Defending Understanding-Assent Links

coming soon