



# Presentation of chapter 3 of *Truth*

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# Content

- General overview of the chapter. What is Horwich trying to show?
- Step-by-step discussion of the chapter.
  - The 'objection of explanation' against the minimalist.
  - Horwich's rebuttal of the objection.
    - We don't need a substantial theory of truth to account for truth's explanatory role:
    - Example 1: truth and successful action.
    - Example 2: truth and favorable circumstances.
    - Example 3: truth and successful empirical predictions.
    - Example 4: truth and the equivalence scheme.
- Points of discussion.



## General overview of the chapter.

- The notion of 'truth' is brought down to a bare minimum.
- Other things might nevertheless be true of 'truth'.
- Anti-minimalists: too minimal.
- Horwich counters by giving four examples.



## General overview of the chapter.

- Horwich counters by giving four examples.
  - ⚡ But might there not be *other* examples?

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# The 'objection of explanation' against the minimalist.

Consider the following example.



“All episodes of *Dora the Explorer* are made for children.”





# The 'objection of explanation' against the minimalist.

There exist certain lawlike relations between things.

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# The 'objection of explanation' against the minimalist.

Consider the following example.



There must be something about episodes of *Dora the Explorer* and children that makes both related in this particular way.




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# The 'objection of explanation' against the minimalist.

Consider the following example.



"All emeralds are green."

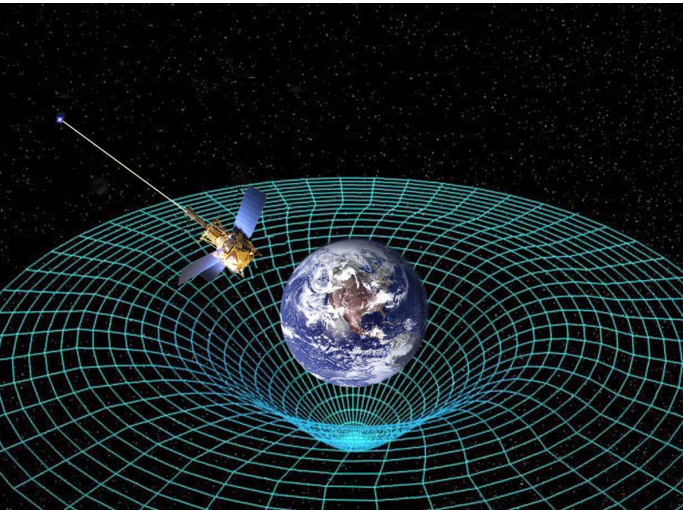
A solid, bright green rectangular block, positioned to the right of the text "All emeralds are green." It is a uniform color and has a smooth, flat surface.



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# The 'objection of explanation' against the minimalist.

The same holds for relations involving truth.



“The theory of general relativity makes good predictions, because it’s true.”



# The 'objection of explanation' against the minimalist.

The same holds for relations involving truth.

- So we seem to need a substantial theory of truth.
- Can we add it?
- No, since minimalists claim that's *all* there is to it.
- Therefore, minimalism is wrong.



# Horwich' rebuttal of the objection

- Truth is involved in lawlike-relations.
- Though these relations can be explained.
- Shows this by giving some examples.

# Example 1: truth and successful action

- True beliefs lead to successful action.
- What is successful action? Horwich: one example is reaching your goals.
- For example: investing money in certain shares. Roughly: if true: success, if false: no success.
  - Nevertheless, you might be wrong, while still being successful.



# Example 1: truth and successful action

- True beliefs lead to successful action. How to *explain* this relation?
- One way to be successful is to reach goals.
- Suppose someone has the following belief: “If I do action A, state of affairs S will be the case.”
- Suppose goal is S.
- **Practical syllogism** implies: do A. If true, S will happen, goal is reached, thus success.



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# Example 1: truth and successful action

- True beliefs lead to successful action. How to *explain* this relation?
- ⚡ This explanation focuses on very few propositions. What about the others?



# Example 1: truth and successful action

Sidenotes to this argument.

1. True beliefs don't always lead to successful action: consider accidents.
2. It explains why we must aim for true beliefs.
  - ⚡ But what about weakness of will?
3. People acting in more complex ways doesn't affect reasoning.



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# Example 1: truth and successful action

Rebuts three anti-minimalist positions.

1. Why do we strive for truth?
2. Does it need a deeper structure?
3. Relation to practical success a matter of definition?





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## Example 2: truth and favorable circumstances

Some circumstances and ways of doing research make for reliable conclusions.



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## Example 2: truth and favorable circumstances

In some circumstances, people conclude a certain proposition iff that proposition is the case.\*

\*Perhaps noting a difference between concluding and affirming.



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## Example 2: truth and favorable circumstances

Why? Social training.



## Example 2: truth and favorable circumstances

Another example of circumstances that usually make for reliable conclusions: propositions inferred from reliable observational propositions also reliable.

1. Deduction. "His speed is 105 km/h or 110 km/h."
2. Generalisation.
3. Scientific instruments.

$O_1, O_2, \dots, O_k; S_1, S_2, \dots, S_k.$



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## Example 2: truth and favorable circumstances

(7a) The use of instrument I will give rise, for some k, to the belief that  $O_k$  obtains;

(7b) If we believe that  $O_k$  obtains then  $O_k$  probably does obtain;

(7c) There is a high nomological correlation between  $O_k$  and  $S_k$ ;

(7d) If we believe that  $O_k$  obtains, then we infer that  $S_k$  obtains.



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## Example 3: truth and empirical success

1. True theories make for better empirical predictions.
2. Horwich: elimination of truth-predicate retains the hypothesis.
3. Doesn't occur in hypothesis, so no need for theory.
4. Nevertheless, truth predicate is valuable: "All theories by Einstein are true."





## Example 4: truth and equivalence scheme

1. Bit of an odd-one-out (no real *connection*). But nevertheless related: minimalism accused of lack of explanatory power.
2. Horwich: cannot (OR IS IT: 'not expected to') explain why, no deeper theory.
  - a. Implausible options. Correspondence, coherence etc..
    - ⚡ Doesn't conclude that there's no option *in principle*.
  - b. Scheme is fundamental.
    - ⚡ Why is it fundamental/how do we *know* this? Because there is no possible explanation? Circularity.
  - c. Scheme is a priori.

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## Points of discussion (1)

- Horwich counters the objection by giving examples of connections between truth and other things that can be explained by minimalism.
- No deeper/fundamental argument? What do you think? Is this strong to do?

Perhaps we can think of such an argument.





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## Points of discussion (1)

- Consider a part of the original objection again:

There are certain more-or-less lawlike relations between things, such as that all episodes of Dora the Explorer are intended for children.

IMPLICIT. How can these lawlike relations come about? Apparently these come about/are caused by substantial properties of the relatas in question. There must be something about episodes of Dora the Explorer and children that makes both of them relate to each other in that specific way. And similarly for emeralds and greenness.

But if these relations come about only because of certain substantial properties, then we can only explain these relations in terms of substantial theories of these properties.



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## Points of discussion (1)

- Consider a part of the original objection again.

Relations may be caused by logical properties of relata, not always due to empirical properties.

Consider: “All bachelors are unmarried.” Lawlike, though not due to empirical facts.



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## Points of discussion (2)

- Recall: eliminating truth predicate from statements about the empirical success of theories.
- ⚡ Might need truth predicate in explanation anyway?



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## Points of discussion (3)

- Recall: no deeper theory, because scheme is a **priori**.
- ⚡ Is it not an easy way out?
- ⚡ Seems problematic.

