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## Truth as an internal standard of judgment

### Abstract

Donald Davidson was sceptical about the possibility of having a definition of truth and useful criteria of truthfulness at the same time. Davidson's conclusions seem right in relation to truth expressed with a single-argument predicate indicating a certain property of a sentence. In the article, I defend the view inspired by Edmund Husserl's deliberations that 'truth' is best expressed with a two-argument predicate, as it belongs to the internal structure of a judgment. I understand a 'judgment', in Husserl's spirit, as a relation between thought and the object it is captured by. I argue that this way of understanding truthfulness is the best one to reveal its prescriptive aspect. I present truthfulness as an internal standard of judgments. I assert that truth in this meaning can be reconciled with the disproportion of criteria for establishing truthfulness in various areas of knowledge. Truth as a standard is applicable to ordered pairs of cognitive states – the ordering expresses the fact that the occurrence of the first state produces a peculiar cognitive obligation to accept the other one. It does not seem that the notion of truth as a standard might be constructed in this way for sentences. The problem is that our practices of turning from untrue sentences to true sentences are incommensurable – they are not subject to any one principle which would allow the construction of a set that might be recognized as an extension of the notion of truth. However, it seems that such a principle may be sought for judgments. A certain line of critique by Alfred Tarski of the semantic definition of a true sentence, presented for instance by Ernst Tugendhat, indicates the assumption regarding the truthfulness of judgments embedded in the definition. I am looking for such a description of judgments that would allow me to verify the intuition that the essence of a judgment consists in its being subject to the standard of truthfulness and that the material content of the standard is shared by all types of judgment. Based on Edmund Husserl's views presented in his *Logische Untersuchungen, Formale und transcendente Logik* and *Erfahrung und Urteil*, I formulate a hypothesis that the pair <intention, fulfilment> and the phenomenological notion of truth in the context of a full presentation of an object is applicable to all types of judgment and carries the standard of truthfulness regulating cognitive activities. In *Erfahrung und Urteil*, Husserl compares such activity

to the satisfaction of desire, namely, the desire to possess an object in its self-presentation more and more fully. I think that the comparison may be given a less metaphorical sense by a retentive-and-protentive analysis of the structure of acts of judgment.

### 1. Four challenges as regards truth

The 20th century enriched and complicated our reflection on truth. The notion of truth was subject to fourfold critique:

1. *Relativization to language.* Alfred Tarski proved that it is impossible to formulate a definition of a true sentence for a natural language due to the impossibility of providing an unambiguous translation of sentences in such a language into appropriate sentences in the metalanguage containing names of expressions of the source language and other expressions needed to describe the source language. A definition of truth is only possible for an ordered language, in which a formal principle of creating the metalanguage is given.

2. *Irreducible multiplicity of truth criteria.* Criteria for justifying scientific sentences differ depending on the discipline. We have to respect various standards of justification, in accordance with the nature of the very objects subjected to study as well as with the current state of the theoretical development of a given science. Thus, the notion of truth has no uniform meaning. An attempt at providing a definition of truth in a situation in which various ways of justification fail to share a common denominator leads to the formulation of a notion that is empty and redundant in science.

3. *Truth as part of a power system.* Truth and other cognitive values are ways of standardizing human mental activities, but we do not have cognitive states directed at the very property of truth – the very truth is not subject to real perception. This is why when talking about truth, we do not talk about the properties of all true sentences. We rather refer to entire systems of knowledge. However, we recognize or reject these on a principle that is entirely different than that in the case of true sentences. Michel Foucault indicated for instance the role of social power – according to him, truth is one of the elements of legitimizing and exercising power.

4. *Pragmaticist reduction of truth.* In the tradition of pragmatism, truth is the basis of activity. Here, the equivalent of truthfulness is the resolution of controversies or selection from among alternative solutions. Cognition is used to find practical solutions, to reach a consensus, to plan the future, to assess the degree of responsibility, to make decisions, etc. Truth is not something separate or superior to such goals, but simply a fulfilment of such goals. In the pragmaticist perspective, truth retains its prescriptive power, but only as a set of other cognitive norms.

The above-mentioned sceptical arguments with regard to truth concern either definitions of truth, the criteria for truth, or the prescriptive power of truth. It is also emphasized that these three aspects of truthfulness support each other insufficiently. For instance, Tarski's formally correct definition of truth has no peculiar consequences either for the problem of the criteria for truth or the problem of the

prescriptivism of truth. In turn, a focus on perfecting the criteria for determining truthfulness in science requires that one rejects any definition of truth, although undoubtedly it brings something into the understanding of the normativity of truth. The thinkers who start from the prescriptive power of truth apply it to practice rather than cognition. To them, truth is a set of criteria for justification or consensus adopted by a given community.

In the deliberations that follow, I try to substantiate the view that the notion of truth in all of the three aspects (definition, criteria and norm) has a uniform sense, which becomes visible when we refer the notion of truth to judgments and the act of judgment, and not only to sentences. However, the reference of the predicate 'truth' to judgments requires that the efforts undertaken by Edmund Husserl in *Formale und Transcendentale Logik* and in *Erfahrung und Urteil* be continued – the efforts that have been pushed away unfairly to the margin of the contemporary analytic philosophy.

## 2. Deflationary consequences of the critique of truth

The following opinion is characteristic of contemporary scepticism with regard to truth:<sup>1</sup> The multiplication of problems resulting from the desire to define truth (to capture its essence or its aprioristic relations to other values) is unnecessary. The dictate related to truth simply requires that true sentences be formulated in the best possible way – in order to describe reality as best as possible in a given situation.<sup>2</sup> This position can be split into the following mental steps: (1) the truth norm applies to situations in which it is possible to determine truth, but – taking account of possessed information – it is also possible to formulate an untrue sentence; (2) all information about the content of the notion of truth and truth norm lies in conditions that differentiate true sentences from false ones; (3) the conditions can ultimately be brought down to the best possessed justifications of the articulated sentences; (4) the justifications should be understood non-atomistically (with regard to a specific sentence under consideration), but as elements of broader descriptions of reality.

This position is very suggestive and, as a certain generalization of scientific practice, legitimate. I do not think, however, that it satisfies the philosophical aspirations that lie at the base of deliberations on truth. First of all, we should notice that conditions allowing true sentences to be distinguished from false ones may be based on something entirely different than truth – namely, on an accidental correspondence of a set of sentences uttered by a given person with the set of

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<sup>1</sup> The opinion summarized below reflects the spirit of the entire family of deflationary solutions that differ from one another in material detail. However, such details are of no importance to our present deliberations.

<sup>2</sup> I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. Andrzej Grzegorzczak for a clear formulation of this position in an informal conversation about the essence of Tarski's results. According to Prof. Grzegorzczak, talking about a *definition* of truth is not very accurate in this case – it is rather about a formally correct generalization of the intuitive understanding of truth to sentences created on the basis of a given language. A somewhat similar direction is followed by an analysis by Adam Nowaczyk, which I will refer to further on in this paper, when I attempt to better understand that intuitive understanding of truth by referring to Husserl's analyses.

true sentences. Such correspondence may be founded on certain properties of the world that really limit the possibility of error, but do not enable insight into the justification of the sentences uttered. In other words, we are always under threat from the aporia formulated by Davidson: The reasons for which we recognize something as true are something different from that which makes such sentences true.

One of the ways of dealing with this aporia is to weaken the requirement that the reasons for recognizing sentences as true and the reasons for which such sentences are true should match each other exactly. If we combine such a weakened requirement with a certain optimism as regards the legitimacy of scientific methods, we will arrive at a conclusion that every sentence is true in only one way that is unique to it: by correspondence to a certain state of things described in an appropriate methodology. Such a formulation of the practical clarity of the notion of truth does away with the need to look for its definition. Anyway, we do not need any more precise definition than that contained in Aristotle's classic formulation. Attempts at making it more specific for certain languages in the way described by Tarski would not have any special impact on cognitive practice and would not be helpful in formulating cognitive ideals or norms.

However, the solution referred to above is unsatisfactory. Even if a sentence can only be true in one way, it can still be false in many ways. The norm of truthfulness calling for the determination of truth refers to pairs of sentences, in which one is not true and the other is true. Although this situation can be presented as a situation of choice, because a sentence can be false in many ways, the choice becomes multifaceted and not very clear. It rather consists in a complicated process of rejecting inferior hypotheses, which calls for standard scientific procedures: designing experiments, improving measuring instruments, better conceptualization and visualization, etc. Ultimately, we replace pronouncement of truth and falsehood with pronouncement of better or worse justifications.

Thus, we come to a conclusion that is slightly too strong in relation to the intent of some sceptics. Davidson claims for instance that it is possible to use the notion of truth without defining it, i.e. without establishing relations of semantic nature. However, by reasoning as above, we not only do away with the definition of truth, but also the very notion of truth, replacing it with the notion of a warranted assertability. At best, we leave truth as a certain metaphor that describes all our cognitive efforts. This is not what Davidson intended.

An interesting line of critique of the reduction of truth to the validity and warranted assertability was adopted by Schnädelbach. He claims that all holistic, pragmatic or verificationist interpretations of truth limit truthfulness to validity (*Gültigkeit*). That last notion is of importance to science and probably sufficient for it. This means that a given judgment can be proved for all the relevant cases. However, it does not work in a general philosophical sense. Truth as a general norm of cognition has neither attributed subject nor a set of relevant cases. This is why it has always been so important to differentiate the expression 'true' from 'true

as' or 'true with relation to'.<sup>3</sup> And so an intellectual challenge is posed by Kant's concept, who tried to combine these two senses of truthfulness. The philosopher's reasoning included the following three steps: (1) he defined truthfulness as importance, as truth consists in a certain reference to reason; (2) he gave conditions of universal validity (for all rational beings); (3) thanks to the previous step, he did away with the relativizing condition and was able to talk directly about truth as a certain specific idea – equivalent to universal validity.

The assessment of the Kantian solution by Schnädelbach is critical, because the replacement of the predicate 'valid', resp. 'binding', for the predicate 'true' has some undesirable consequences, as it leads to a change in the logical form of the predicate 'true'. It becomes a three-argument predicate  $P(x,y,z)$ , which can be interpreted as: Sentence (judgment)  $x$  is binding on person  $y$  in conditions  $z$ . According to the philosopher, this logical revision loses an important intuition that lies at the base of the notion of truth. Schnädelbach defends the intuition that 'truth' is a single-argument predicate, drawing on the universal language expression 'Sentence "p" is true', which does not introduce any additional arguments. However, Schnädelbach pays an exorbitant price for his solution. Emphasizing the single-argument nature of the predicate 'true', he loses sight of the prescriptive nature of truth – it is simply a property. From no property, even the most valued one, there follows a norm ordering that such a value should be realized, at most an inclination to do that. The expression of prescriptivism calls for the use, which Schnädelbach rejects, of a two- or three-argument predicate, depending on interpretation. I believe that Schnädelbach's critique should be recognized – indeed, the transfer to truthfulness of prescriptivism appropriate for morality, i.e. prescriptivism understood as significance and validity, is inappropriate, but the proposed solution (the single-argumentness of the predicate 'truth') does away with the entire prescriptivism in one go – both ethical and epistemological.

It should also be remembered, which has already been pointed out, that single-argument interpretation of the predicate 'true' automatically falls victim to Tarski's critique. Donald Davidson has suggested an interesting way to circumvent Tarski's objections without abandoning the single-argument interpretation of the predicate 'true'. He recognizes truth as a primeval and undefinable notion. Thus, no complication of the logical structure with a view to connection with other variables is then necessary. This solution, however, necessitates the proposal of another principle of constructing a universal set of true sentences – a principle that would not have to depend on a (an impossible) definition of truth. To Davidson, the word 'truth' is extended by a collection of fuzzy sets of true sentences in various idiolects. In turn, such sets are only defined by a certain indication; namely, as a majority of sentences accepted by a given person (provided such person is rational). However, the Davidsonian principle of construction of a set of true sentences is not a sufficient interpretation of the notion of truth. Undoubtedly, the principle is understandable; it provides a certain feeling that we know what we are talking about when using the word 'truth'. However, it is not an effective

<sup>3</sup> H. Schnädelbach, *Rationalität und normativität*, [in:] H. Schnädelbach, *Zur Rehabilitierung des "animal rationale"*, Berlin 1992.

concept, either in the epistemological sense (it does not implicate the criteria of truthfulness) or in the semantic sense (no criteria for the correct use of the word ‘truth’ arise from it).

Therefore, we seem to face the following possibilities:

1. The property ‘true’ expresses the single-argument predicate:  $P(x)$ . In this view, truth is a property of a sentence. This interpretation is susceptible to Tarski’s argumentation. It cannot be defined for colloquial language and so it is of no special importance to epistemology, although it obtains a precise meaning as a semantic notion.

2. The property ‘true’ expresses the two-argument predicate:  $P(x,y)$ . In this view, truth is a norm ordering cognitive states. This is the interpretation I intend to defend in these deliberations.

3. The property ‘true’ expresses the three-argument predicate:  $P(x,y,z)$ . In this view, truth is a cognitive value to a certain subject in a certain context. This perspective reflects the prescriptive power of truth, but makes the remaining components of this notion incomprehensible or redundant. (It is for this reason that Schnädelbach rejects this interpretation.)

Below I defend the model of truthfulness as a two-argument predicate whose arguments are certain moments of judgment. I define a judgment after Husserl as a certain relation between thought and its object. Truth characterizes the relation between some constituents of this relation, and so it is an internal property of a judgment. Before undertaking the argumentation regarding the phenomenological interpretation of the truthfulness of judgments, I would like to justify the transition from considering the truth of sentences to considering the truth of judgments, which I do in the following paragraph.

### **3. Transition from truthfulness as a property of a sentence to truthfulness of a judgment**

Today’s popular deflationary concepts of truth, partly inspired by Tarski’s achievement, hold that the predicate ‘true’ does not possess any content or that its content is created as a result of an ordinary replacement of the name of the sentence ‘ $p$ ’ for sentence  $p$ . Seemingly, this removal of quotation marks is an operation identical to the so-called Convention T: ‘ $p$ ’ is true if and only if  $p$ .

However, the issue seems more complicated. When we establish that there occurs the relationship: ‘ $p$ ’ is true if and only if  $p$ , and we establish that  $p$ , then we obtain the right to regard sentence ‘ $p$ ’ as true. Therefore we may determine that  $p$  does not refer to ‘ $p$ ’, but to  $p$ , which is what the sentence ‘ $p$ ’ is about. Acknowledging that the predicate truth can be applied to a certain sentence depends on the satisfaction and recognition of a judgment whose expression is the sentence ‘ $p$ ’. In other words, ‘ $p$ ’ without quotation marks is not the same sentence, but a judgment. This is why it is possible to replace ‘Snow is white’ for ‘Śnieg jest biały’ on the left-hand side of the sentence ‘“Śnieg jest biały” if and only if snow is white’. There exists a certain formula: ‘[ ] is true if and only if snow is white’, into which expressions in various languages can be inserted. The criterion for the

possibility of this replacement is the content of a certain judgment – namely, that snow is white.

The objection made above is connected with remarks by Adam Nowaczyk who pondered the question: Did Tarski really formulate a semantic definition of truth? Commenting on the critique formulated by Putnam and Echemedy, Nowaczyk observes that Tarski's concept assumes certain semantic intuitions, but it does not express them directly. Tarski aimed at providing a purely morphological definition of truth, without assuming any other semantic notions. Two notions of language need to be distinguished here: 1) only morphology and meanings, with no pragmatic elements; 2) morphology and semantics plus pragmatics (Ajdukiewicz-style). When talking about the language of class theory, he meant the first one (language with no pragmatics connected with the normal practice of mathematics). The other view of language is related to having language models. In his work on truth, Tarski did not use the notion, but implicitly it is present in the semantic definition of truth, because Tarski makes use of a certain intuitive model, when he translates expressions from the object language of the class theory into the metalanguage understandable by the reader<sup>4</sup> (he refers to objects of the syntactic class [z] as sentences 'z', creating a metalanguage class ['z'], etc.). In fact, it is not necessary at all to translate expression z into expression 'z', understood as expression 'sentence' (expressing the notion SENTENCE, or meaning sentence) in the metalanguage. The metalanguage could be entirely arbitrary in the sense that it would determine unintuitive ranges of names in the metalanguage; the names would only have to meet the condition of coherence with the syntactic rules of the source language. Actually, however, we use translations, which will be useful in a way – language models and pragmatics lie at the basis of such decisions.

'In the model theory semantics, all notional constructions are based on the notion of a (formalized) language model, i.e. (in the simplest case) the organized pair  $M = \langle U, D \rangle$ , where D is any relation between language expressions and objects that is in line with the principle of categorial conformity (i.e. correspondence between the syntactic category of the expression and the ontological category of the object defined relatively to the scope of U). Each such relation is designated as *denotation* and maintained that it is a semantic relationship.'<sup>5</sup>

The conclusions from Nowaczyk's analysis are as follows: (1) With Tarski, there is no reduction to morphology – object notions are still used; (2) 'The defining of the notion of a true sentence in a given language requires a reference to the denotation of all syntactically simple terms of such a language.'<sup>6</sup> Tarski refers to the intuitive interpretation of the denotation.

When formulating the definition for the language of calculus of classes, Tarski simultaneously negates the ability to capture the universal definitional property of

<sup>4</sup> A. Nowaczyk, *Semantyczna czy asemantyczna*, [in:] J. Hartman (ed.), *Filozofia i logika. W stronę Jana Woleńskiego*, Kraków 2000, p. 301.

<sup>5</sup> According to Adam Nowaczyk, there is an analogy here with the situation in which we compare the formal notion of marriage (a certain set of ordered pairs) with the ordinary sense of marriage. The relation between them consists in a generalization resp. idealization. Cf. *ibidem*, p. 302.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 303.

truth, which property would be responsible for the ability to implement Convention T in various languages. However, Nowaczyk's analysis brings in a certain solution to the problem – even if there is no such property, there is a certain theory binding various semantics – namely the general principles of the model theory semantics.

In the same spirit, Tarski's position is analysed by Ernst Tugendhat. This philosopher is, however, more radical in relativizing Tarski's result. Above all, he questions the privileged function of the definition of truth in seeking an explanation of the essence of truth. He thinks that there is no single definition of a 'true statement.'<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the definition of a true statement, resp. sentence, refers – according to Tugendhat – to 'the truthfulness of a judgment.'<sup>8</sup> Tugendhat advances an argument similar to that which I formulated against deflationism at the beginning of this section. He claims that the statement '“x” is a true sentence if and only if “p” is true' is based on an equivocation – first, it talks about a sentence, then about a judgment. According to Tugendhat, the difficulty is clearly seen when we turn around Tarski's convention and say: 'p = “p” is true'. In this way, the truthfulness of judgment p is made dependent on the truthfulness of 'p'. However, it has to be pointed out that: '...if we reflect on the actual status at the base [of this equation], the meaning of the word 'true' that is present in it acquires a sense which cannot be seen in the equation itself.'<sup>9</sup> The relation referred to above is as self-evident, as it is elusive. A judgment can be expressed by means of many sentences and it is impossible to limit such a set, and so a full understanding of the content of a judgment by only designating a certain set of sentences, without indicating the sense determining the set, is impossible.

However, the formula: 'p = “p” is true' reflects still another property of key importance to our present deliberations about the prescriptivism of truth. Namely, there exists a close connection between the truth of a judgment and the truth of sentences – in each judgment there is a potential reference to language, or perhaps even stronger: only thanks to a connection with language can a judgment reveal a property of truth. It does not mean, however, that the truth of a judgment boils down to the truthfulness of sentences, and this is because of the connection between a judgment and an unspecified multiplicity of sentences in a given language.

Ultimately, according to Tugendhat, the purely formal definition of truth given by Tarski is, from the philosophical point of view, trivial, but the scheme it is based on ('x is a true sentence if and only if p'), is not trivial and 'leads to a legitimate definition of the truthfulness of a sentence – a definition that subordinates a judgment, resp. the captured state of things, expressed by a sentence to that sentence. The correspondence established here should, however, be distinguished from the adequacy that regards the relation of the captured state of things, a judgment, to the very thing.'<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> E. Tugendhat, *Tarskiego definicja prawdy I jej miejsce w historii problemu prawdy w pozytywizmie logicznym*, [in:] E. Tugendhat, *Bycie, prawda. Rozprawy filozoficzne*, tłum. J. Sidorek, Warszawa 1999, p. 169.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 172.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 174.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 177.



Thus, truth concerns a judgment and a judgment is a relation between a thought and a certain thing, which is formed thanks to a cognitive interpretation of a certain fragment of reality. A reference to the very reality is a different matter – the real occurrence or nonoccurrence of states of things that a judgment refers to is only of significance to a certain (although a very important) class of sentences, which in particular includes the sentences of science. Within science it is enough to talk about the truthfulness of sentences, which practically becomes indistinguishable from the type and degree of justification of such sentences. However, within the entire scope subject to human judgment, it is important that judgments remain in the relation of truth to that which they concern, regardless of whether they are about existing or nonexisting objects, whether they are empirically cognizable or not, whether they are independent of or entirely dependent on the perceiving subjects or even forming part of the very cognitive processes. For this broad sphere encompassing all thoughts and their pretensions to truthfulness we should explain the property of truthfulness and the standard of truthfulness that regulates the very process of forming such judgments. In my earlier remarks, I outlined the negative basis for further reasoning, stating that attempts at defining truth as a property of sentences assume certain intuitions as to the nature of judgments. Now, I would like to focus on the positive determination of the truth of judgments, in particular the normative nature of truth in relation to judgments.

#### 4. Phenomenological interpretation of the truthfulness of judgments

Truth is a cognitive norm. When uttering true sentences on any grounds, we simultaneously undertake to form our judgments (ways of referring thoughts to their objects) in the way that is implicitly contained in true sentences. This does not mean that we know or that we can say that implicitly present norm. As we will see further on, the formulation of such a norm is not a trivial task, regardless of how often we comply with the norm every day. I will try to show – principally, by referring to Husserl's analyses in *Logische Untersuchungen*, *Formale und transzendente Logik* and *Erfahrung und Urteil* – that truth can function as a norm for judgments in a more literal and stricter sense.

The task is to prove, by a certain analogy with Tarski's efforts in respect of the truthfulness of sentences, a certain general property of judgments, which can be a carrier of the properties of truth and an implementator of the norm of truthfulness. This property is, to a certain extent, visible in the very unity of a judgment understood not as an act of judgment, but as the meaning of a sentence. Judgments contain notions which Frege proposed to interpret as functions, i.e. objects containing an unsaturated element. This element makes a judgment preserve its fundamental identity in many acts of its shaping and formulation. Recently, John Searle returned to the idea in order to explain the unity of judgments.<sup>11</sup> The unity of a judgment arises from the unsaturation of a conceptual function. This function is satisfied by a certain objects posited by certain set of acts of judgment. The

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<sup>11</sup> J. Searle, *The Unity of Sentence*, [in:] J. Searle, *Philosophy in a New Century*, Cambridge 2008, p. 181–196.

set of satisfying objects can be interpreted statically (without any assumptions regarding the temporal aspects of acts of judgment or time in general) or dynamically. The very notion of unsaturation does not implicate this dynamics, but only its static fabric. We do not know yet why or how the state of unsaturation of a conceptual function (and hence judgment) gets restored after each satisfaction, i.e. after each statement of a given predicate about some thing. It seems that our efforts embodied in judgments have a certain teleological aspect – pursuance of truth has always been a way of intuitively expressing this teleology. However, if we want to understand truth not only as an ideal we strive for (the general teleology of cognition), but as an internal norm driving cognitive acts (the internal teleology of each judgment), then we cannot refer back to the notion of truth. The question is now: At what form does a judgment aim that such dynamics can be regulated normatively, i.e. that a given judgment can be perfected because of truth? It is not enough to indicate a certain property of judgments: truthfulness, rationality, clarity, etc., and to say that the property should be realized. Obligations do not arise automatically from valued properties – just like cognitive obligations do not arise automatically from valued cognitive properties.

Edmund Husserl proposed an interpretation of judgments in a language accepted by him generally for all acts of consciousness. Of fundamental importance to this interpretation is the notion of the pair: <intention, fulfilment>. Using this, in *Logische Untersuchungen*, Husserl distinguished four meanings of the word ‘truth’. These were extensively discussed in Polish literature by Andrzej Póltawski<sup>12</sup> (who took account, among other things, of the analyses of Ernst Tugendhat in *Der Wahrheitsbegriff bei Husserl und Heidegger*), and so I will only focus on the elements of alethiology presented in *Logische Untersuchungen* which lead to the explanation of the teleological dynamics of judgments, and so they contribute to the explanation of the prescriptivism of truth.

According to Husserl’s most general definition of truth, truth is a total coincidence of intentions and fulfilment (*die volle Übereinstimmung von Gemeintem und Gegebenem*). This coincidence has to be given in experience in the form of a certain intuition (*Evidenz, Intuition*). The most important thing is that such intuition – the intuition of truth – is at the same time corrected in the light of the very experience – i.e. in the light of other truth intuitions. Phenomenological analysis is tasked with bringing about the clarity of certain types of coincidence of act intentions and appropriate fulfilments.

At the level of sensory experience, the process takes place in accordance with the perception norms. The dynamics of operation of such norms is shown by Husserl on the example of kinesthesia. As Andrzej Póltawski writes: ‘The general dynamics of intention and fulfilment corresponds there to the dynamics of indeterminacy and determinacy, and the prerequisite for a closer determination of the content of experience is “the process of inclusion in the remaining knowledge, which becomes habitual” [...] Thus, this is about the process of constituting sense, which encompasses “that which is new”, when a closer determination brings

<sup>12</sup> A. Póltawski, *Aletejologia Edmunda Husserla*, [in:] A. Póltawski, *Realizm fenomenologii. Husserl-Ingarden-Stein-Wojtyła*, Toruń 2001.

a new element of sense.<sup>13</sup> In this way, the sense builds in perception. However, a kinesthetic experience includes, on the one hand, unfulfilled elements, and on the other – a presentation of an object goes beyond what is included in the intention. ‘This which here, in the course of kinesthetic perception, goes beyond the very conjecture (*Vorzeichnung*), beyond that which is expected, does not characterize simply as falsehood, but as a closer determination.’<sup>14</sup> That last one as such has a nature of fulfilment. The dynamics of kinesthetic experiences refers one both to the very object and to the movement of the subject (kinesthesia as an experienced form, resp. a time-and-space scenario organizing the surroundings of an object). On the one hand, an object is given only to the extent to which it accompanies a certain bodily movement, and on the other hand – it is not simply a correlate of such movement. The movement of a body is the most important factor – it is this movement that triggers a constant spreading of intentions and fulfilments, and, at the same time, constitutes the cognitive movement of a sensory judgment from one state to another.

In order to explain truth as the prescriptivism of judgment we now need a transition from rudimentary judgments for which we have perception norms (based on body movement and explainable at the naturalistic level) to a whole class of judgments whose truth and other cognitive values can be stated. What is the relation of the regularities operating at the sensory level with the general theory of judgment?

Husserl’s thinking runs in two directions here: firstly, he examines the genesis of the form of judgment. This topic is his focus of attention in *Formale und transzendentale Logik*. Secondly, he studies the content-related genesis of judgment (principally in *Erfahrung und Urteil*). Both of these trains of inquiry are to establish the bases for logic and the theory of perception by outlining the possibility of reconstructing the source experience – the original obviousness that lies at the basis of all types of judgments. The most important instrument of analysis in both cases is intentional analysis. It assumes that in each perception there takes place intentional modification, which – by transforming interpretations characterized by original obviousness – generates areas of senses expressed in possible act variants.<sup>15</sup> Husserl’s key assumption is that such modifications can be traced in an appropriate insight. The subject of consciousness, and so the phenomenologist as well, who ‘imitatively understands such a form of consciousness’, can strive towards the

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 152–153.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>15</sup> ‘But intentional modifications have, quite universally, the *intrinsic* property of *pointing back* to something unmodified. The modified manner of givenness, when, so to speak, we interrogate it, tells us itself that it is a modification *of* original manner of givenness, to which it points. For the subject of the consciousness (and consequently for everyone who places himself in that subject’s place and understands that mode of consciousness in following him), that makes it possible, starting from the particular non-original manner of givenness to strive toward the original one and perhaps make it explicitly present to himself in fantasy at the same time making the object-sens “*clear*” to himself. The fulfilling clarification takes place with the transition to a synthesis in which the object of non-original mode of consciousness becomes given either as the same as the object of consciousness in the mode of “experience” (the mode of “it itself”) or else as the same object “clarified” – that is to say as it “would” be itself-given in a “possible experience”. E. Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, transl. D. Cairns, The Hague 1969, p. 314.

source form of experience. This source form has, in line with the general idea of intentionality, a certain objective sense. The explanation consists in revealing the source objective sense. This happens in a synthetic transition from something that is given in a non-sourceful manner (as represented, mediated) to a form in which it presents itself ‘as it itself’ – namely, in a way in which ‘it would be given itself in a possible experience’. The possible experience is the most important notion here. Intentional analysis does not seek a new justifying experience, but hopes to reveal the source form in the experience we have.

The same strategy, as I have already outlined, applies to thinking, and in particular to the logical form of thinking. However, here the explanation requires the assumption of the unity of thought and language. It is not a trivial unity and it is not given in a natural way. It is rather the object of one of the most interesting questions asked by Husserl in *Formale und transzendente Logik*, namely: ‘What universal essential character must a process of consciousness have in order to be capable of taking on a significant function?’<sup>16</sup> What is needed here is a typology of thoughts, relationships of consciousness to various types of objects, and, above all, an analysis of constructing pure forms in mental operations. It is on the basis of pure forms that there arises the capability to outline relationships of judgment of all types (belonging to direct experience and to organized scientific experience). These pure forms emerge as ‘pure possibilities of a cognitive life.’<sup>17</sup> If they are captured in their essential features, they will become a source of clarity – other than that proposed by Descartes, as he drew on a certain property of the mind, and not on the ideal domain of pure forms. It is only from the perspective of clarity understood in this way that it is possible to undertake deliberations on truthfulness. “Truth and falsity are predicates that can *belong only to judgement that is distinct* or can be made distinct, *one that can be performed actually and properly*. Logic has never made clear to itself that this concept of the judgement is at the basis of the old thesis that truth and falsity are [...] the predicates of judgements.”<sup>18</sup> Thus, a theory of judgment in general, whose elaboration would be a theory of scientific judgments, is called for.

Obviously, formal sciences have worked out their own ways of substantiating their sentences – by proving them; a philosophical project may not contribute any bigger degree of substantiation or certainty. However, it may supplement formal methods with a parallel train of reasoning, which will not show that something is true, but rather that which is true. One can reduce every judgment down to the very object it talks about, and use the grasp of the object to assess a positive or negative adequacy of judgment in question.<sup>19</sup> In the first case, a judgment

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 25–26.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 28.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 66.

<sup>19</sup> This fragment will best show the strategy of Husserl’s explanation. When considering the law of noncontradiction in the second part of the work, he writes as follows: ‘The law of contradiction expresses the general impossibility of contradictory judgements being true (or false) together. If we ask for the evidence in which it is grounded, we see that this impossibility involves the following: If a judgement can be brought to an adequation in a positive material evidence, then, a priori, its contradictory opposition not only is excluded as a judgement but also cannot

is self-evidently true – thanks to a satisfying-and-confirming agreement with the categorial objectivity which it regards as an opinion and which now offers itself as self-given; in the other case, it is self-evidently false – namely, because simultaneously with a partial fulfilment of an opinion (a surmised categorial objectivity as such) categorial objectivity revealed itself as a self-given, and it negates the entire opinion and, by necessity, it ‘does away’ with it. In other words, for each thought it is possible to find a certain basic form, which presents itself with self-obviousness and combines with such thought via a constitutional sequence of mental forms.

The focusing and intentional function of an object makes theory of truth refer to ontology. In the perspective of truth there lie final objects whose status needs to be described in an appropriate ontology. This obligation of ontology to describe objects that lie within the horizon of experience as target objects – ultimate fulfilments of intentions – means that all ontology also becomes a theory of truth.<sup>20</sup> According to Tugendhat, the basic notions of object domains are regarded by Husserl as counterparts of the basic forms of experience; they cannot be separated from types of self-presentation of objects. This is why Husserl’s ontology, which is not based on differences between the objects themselves, but on the types of experience, is in fact a theory of truth.<sup>21</sup>

Deliberations on the logical form can be expected to negatively determine the limits of truth in logic – to show forms that in no conditions find an appropriately fulfilling intuition (*Evidenz*). However, a step further should be taken and a correspondence between the justification lying in the object and the justification lying in the form of judgment should be shown. According to Husserl, it is necessary to transfer interest to the very objective importance, resp. fulfilling intuition [*Evidenz*]. It is important to distinguish the more primeval forms of judgments that in themselves carry results of previous judgments from the very objective obviousness [*Evidenz*].

The studies in *Erfahrung und Urteil* are, to a certain extent, parallel to those in *Formale und transcendente Logik*. In the latter work, Husserl was looking for a general theory of the logical form of judgment, while in *Erfahrung und Urteil*, he focused on the objective obviousness that lies at the basis of judgments. Husserl begins his deliberations by distancing himself both from Hume’s and Brentano’s concept of judgment. To the first, judgment is a certain given of consciousness,

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be brought to such an adequation, and vice versa. That is not yet to say that, without exception, every judgement can be brought to adequation. But just this is involved in the law of excluded middle, on the subjective side, its evidential correlate” Cf. *ibidem*, p. 193.

<sup>20</sup> In the very history of mathematics, Husserl saw a certain movement leading towards an increasingly richer expansion of the objective sphere to which mathematical theorems refer. The best example of this is the extension of the notion of geometry with non-Euclidean spaces (Riemann, Lobaczewski).

<sup>21</sup> A. Póltawski, *Aletejologia Edmunda Husserla*, p. 159. This motif also appears in *Formale und transcendente Logik*. Husserl looks for basic forms of experience to consolidate logical operations in them. The task brings basic object intuitions closer to formal sciences. Ultimately, mathematics is to Husserl a formal ontology. According to Husserl, from the notion of an object in general derive such notions as: multiplicity, number, relation, series, combination, entity and part, etc. In turn, Husserl calls logic apophantics (a science about forms of judgment) and an apriori-and-formal theory of object.

to the other – a pure activity of I. Both concepts are regarded by Husserl as false. To him, a judgment is always a certain reference of thought to an object, and it always contains some doxastic element, i.e. an embedded belief about an object. From the perspective of an object, Husserl's thesis says that even a passive constitution of a datum standing out of the background of the unity in immanent passivity has a passive *doxa*.<sup>22</sup> This relation possesses an appropriate dynamics – doxastic states are never stable – ‘... this domain of doxa is the domain of the fluid. A passively given unity of identity is not yet one which is grasped as such and retained as an objective identity. On the contrary, this apprehension, e.g., the perceptive contemplation of the pre-given sensuous substrate, is already an activity, a cognitive performance at the lowest level.’<sup>23</sup>

In the field of philosophy, an analytically natural tendency would be to interpret such dynamics of judgment by means of linguistic categories – as a semantic-and-pragmatic order of sentences and statements. Husserl does not deny that a reference to language is key to the building of a certain field of possibilities that constitutes a basis for the dynamics of judgments. Yet the issue of linking judgments with language is deliberately treated as marginal by Husserl.<sup>24</sup> The founder of phenomenology is more interested in cognition (formulation of judgments) as a certain activity. In paragraph 48 of *Erfahrung und Urteil*, Husserl even suggests that cognitive activity belongs to the same broad category as practical activity. The following feature is pointed out by Husserl as a difference: “The predicative achievement of cognition has been characterized as an action, and this is justified in that the general structures of all action are also capable of being exhibited in this cognition, though in other respects cognition is still to be distinguished from action in the ordinary sense of that term. We prefer to think of action as an external doing a bringing-out of certain objects (things) as self-giving from other self-giving objects. In cognitive activity, new objectives are indeed so pre-constituted, but this production has an entirely different sense from that of the production of things from things; and what is here important above all – this production of categorial objectives in cognitive action is not the final goal of this action. All cognitive activity is ultimately referred to the substrates of the judgement.”<sup>25</sup> The striving for cognition is analogous to the striving for something out of desire. In both cases it is about a certain possession. As Husserl says: ‘in the progress of the action the striving fulfils itself more and more from the initial mere intention to realization.’<sup>26</sup>

However, if truth were only to be a total fulfilment by the objective sense, and thus a full possession of an object, then truth would still be only a certain ideal – a fanciful possibility of skipping – as Husserl wrote in the fragment already quoted – a certain number of cognitive steps and the imagining of a total fulfilment. In

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 61.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 59.

<sup>24</sup> ‘The predicative operations will be examined purely as they phenomenally present themselves in lived experience, apart from all these connections, nely as subjective entities’. E. Husserl, *Experience and Judgement Investigation in a Genealogy of Logic*, transl. J.S. Churchill, Evanston 193, p. 199.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 200.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 201.

order to extract a realistic basis of truth, we need to show this process of cognitive appropriation of an object in a dynamic relation with its previous, imperfectly fulfilled forms. A judgment has indeed to be presented as an activity characterized by an internal connection of its individual phases.

Thus, time is constitutive in relation to the act of judgment. According to Husserl's thought that is of key importance to these deliberations, in an act of judgment there occurs a peculiar symmetry between retention and protention. As known from Husserl's analyses of time, the very protention-retention structure is not a full development of the time experienced – however, it reflects the dynamics of the present moment, going from a certain field of possibilities in protention to the indeterminacy of content given in the passing. The tracing 'back' of a modification of a judgment is also an exploration of a protentive possibility. An increasingly fuller presentation of an object is simultaneously a protention-based disclosure of constantly new content relating to a given object and the constitution of a constantly fuller presentation of the object in a series of retentive views. Conversely, the tracing of intentional modifications is at the same time a disclosure of a certain way of a possible, and so a prospective, experience.<sup>27</sup> The goal set by Husserl – to disclose the source objectivity – is also the pursuance of truth as a full presentation of an object. Truth is a standard of judgment that demands its development towards a full presentation of appropriate objects. At the same time, reflection leads to a gradually disclosed source of each judgment – the object (also its parts and moments) constituting the ultimate establishment of a given judgment.

The retentive-and-protentive symmetry of an act of judgment is closely related to the dialectic of intention and fulfilment. A field of possibilities given in protention corresponds to an intention, while the retentive depth of a given act corresponds to fulfilment. In the case of a judgment, both the first and the latter are connected with language. The protentive field of possibilities is given as a field of meanings, and the retentive field of fulfilments is given as a certain structure of notions – co-stated in a certain order about a given object.<sup>28</sup> Developments of a statement can theoretically extend into infinity, as each use of a notion refers to successive notions. In practice, the content of an experience is limited by a certain convention, which requires that the optimum subject of presentation (a set of expressions that come together in a full presentation of a given object) be placed at a certain level of notional presentation.

We have reached the key moment of our reasoning: Not only does the field of possibilities of determination actualize (fulfil) in a retentive series of notionally organized determinations, but also the opposite relationship occurs – a given state of judgment in the form of a retentive series of determinations is another expression of that which is protentively present as a field of possibilities of determination. I believe that Husserl's description enables us to understand that we go beyond

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<sup>27</sup> Because both retentive and protentive developments still belong to a present experience, here we do not deal with the past or the future in their strict sense, although in a way the retentive-protentive symmetry indicates an open horizon of temporality.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. L. Eley, *Nachwort*, [in:] E. Husserl, *Erfahrung und Urteil. Untersuchung zur Genealogie der Logik*, p. 515–516.

a simple symmetry, namely towards a true dynamics of an act of judgment directed as a cognitive act towards a full presentation of an object. My argument is as follows: the very mechanism of determination that makes it to occur at a level of world categorization appropriate for a given cognitive situation is also a source of opening of a field of possibilities – that which is left in the indeterminacy of retention is also the openness of protention. Conversely, a field of protentive possibilities indicates the lack of a sufficient determination of an object in the retentive depth of an experience. This lack is the source of a cognitive need, which Husserl puts in one group with other desires. Here, we have to do with a peculiar experience of a partial possession of an object and a partial satisfaction of a need. Striving for a full presentation of an object is not based on an enigmatic sense of a lack, but on a specific development of a linguistic (categorical) indeterminacy into a field of protentive possibilities.

### 7. In conclusion

Considering the modern criticism of the notion of truth, can it be regarded as an immanent and, at the same time, effective standard that drives our cognitive acts? Is truth not simply a justification? In *Oneself as another*, Ricoeur observes that prescriptivism is embedded in the very nature of acting<sup>29</sup> – each act can be improved, the acting party can be advised, etc. However, such an analogy between the prescriptivism of cognitive acts and the general prescriptivism of acting is not sufficient – truth and all cognitive standards would then boil down to perfectionist standards (how to best perform a given act), but one would lose sight of the attitude to the world – it would, at most, be taken account of implicitly, without ever mentioning what it is. The vertical axis of the connection with reality and the horizontal axis of perfection has to cross in the explanation of the notion of truth. We need a realistic consolidation of the notion of truth. The very naturalistic relativization to a cognitive system is not enough, as it is not sufficient that a system operates in accordance with the truth – it has to operate in accordance with the truth, because of the truth. I think that in spite of the fact that over 100 years have passed since the publication of *Logische Untersuchungen*, Husserl's phenomenology is still a source of inspiration to those who try to find a solution to this problem. I also think that the phenomenologically interpreted dynamics of intention and fulfilment is helpful in understanding the prescriptive and, at the same time, realistically based function of truth. It is, however, important to apply the notion of 'truth' above all to judgments and acts of judgment, and only secondarily to statements and sentences. Each phase in the constitution of a judgment implicates the imperative that an increasingly fuller presentation of an object should be strived for. This striving is reflected in a constant self-turning (in a field that can only exist thanks

<sup>29</sup> P. Ricoeur, *Oneself as another*, transl. K. Blamey, Chicago 1992, p. 169. Later, by referring to the notion of immanent goods of Alister McIntyre, Ricoeur stresses even more the importance of the internal teleology of action, which, combined with the idea of an immanent good, generates the notion of a standard of action; cf. *ibidem*, p. 176–177.



to language) of a retentive indeterminacy into a protentive field of possibilities. The very truth operates opposite to such striving, turning a field of possibilities into a gradually consolidating knowledge.