

## On an Argument Against the Trope Theory

*Summary.* This paper is about an argument put forward by David Armstrong<sup>1</sup> against trope theory. The argument goes like this:

- (1) Every truth is made true by a truthmaker. (Truthmaker Principle);
- (2) If two propositions are not interderivable, they must have different truthmakers. (Instance of the Containment Thesis);
- (3) Difference-truths and Resemblance-truths about two exactly resembling tropes are grounded on the mere existence of the tropes themselves. (Trope-Theory Assumption);
- (4) Difference-Truths and Resemblance-Truths have the same ground. (From 3);
- (5) Difference-Truths and Resemblance-Truths are interderivable. (From 2 and 3);
- (6) 5 is utterly false (e.g., *that Socrates resembles to Socrates* doesn't imply *that Socrates is different from Socrates*, and *that Socrates is different from Lassie* doesn't imply *that Socratse resembles to Lassie*);

thus

- (7) Difference-truths and Resemblance-truths about two exactly resembling tropes can't be grounded on the mere existence of the tropes themselves.

Even if Armstrong concedes that the argument isn't a knock-out one, he claims that it is worthwhile to consider it in that it points out a counter-intuitive aspect of the trope theory, namely the fact that the alleged simple nature of a trope can't ground for two different not-interderivable truths. I'll analyse the argument testing its premisses. I'll argue that (2) is false since there are truths that have the same truthmaker and nonetheless are not-interderivable (e.g., 'This rose is red' and 'This rose is colored'). Thus even if (4) is true it doesn't follow that the Trope Theory is committed to (5)'s truth. It turns out the mere statement that within a trope-theoretic context Difference-Truths and Resemblance-Truths might share the same ontological ground isn't an objection: that's the theory itself.

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<sup>1</sup> See Armstrong [2004: 43-44]. See also Hochberg [1988].

## Bibliography

Armstrong, D. M. (2004). *Truth and Truthmakers*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.

Hochberg, Herbert (1988). 'A Refutation of Moderate Nominalism', *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 66, 188-207.