

Verificationism, as a theory of truth, is wrong. It reduces truth to something else—being ideally verifiable. But if it were right, the property of being ideally verifiable would be necessary and sufficient for a belief to be true; and being ideally verifiable couldn't itself be something that we need truth to explain. It's clear, however, that verificationism can meet neither requirement.

As far as the first is concerned, there are some beliefs that could be true that are not verifiable or falsifiable even ideally. So such verifiability is not necessary for truth as such. But just as some propositions could be true but not ideally verifiable, so others might be ideally verifiable but not true. So such verifiability is also insufficient for truth generally.

As for the second requirement, the very idea of verification presupposes the idea of truth, anyway. To verify a belief is to justify it by providing evidence for it—evidence that it is likely to be true. But, then, verification has to be explained in terms of truth: what is justified by evidence is what is likely to be true.

Moreover, verificationism can't explain the value of truth. The statement that it is good, all things being equal, to believe what is true, or even what is ideally verifiable, is not itself thus verifiable, and is therefore cognitively meaningless. Nor can verificationism even explain the instrumental value of truth.

Finally, there is a severe disconnect between the verificationism people espouse and what they actually do. If we really believed that verificationism were the truth about truth, it would be utterly mysterious why we are so passionate in disagreeing about the topics about which we are most passionate in disagreeing. Far from inferring that all talk about poetry, philosophy, art, literature, and religion is cognitively meaningless, we should confidently conclude that there must be something deeply wrong with a verificationist theory of truth that requires such an inference.

As for the other reductivist theory of truth, i.e., causal realism, it likewise can't explain the truth or falsity of all sorts of beliefs that we have in daily life. In the end of the day, the two theories aren't all that far apart.

(Tracking the main argument of chapter six of Michael Lynch, *True to Life*)