

Second Philosophy:
Word-World Connections

Fall-Winter 2004-5

The relation a true sentence bears to the world is often considered the central word-world connection, based perhaps on a relation of reference between the parts of the sentence and parts of the world. We'll start by reading a series of articles focused on a lively contemporary debate between those who accept this common-place, who regard the analysis of this robust correspondence between a true sentence and the world as an important philosophical problem, and those who reject it (at least as the correspondence theorists intend it), holding instead that 'truth' is a simple syntactic device with no underlying nature in need of investigation. Much of our focus will be on understanding the 'disquotational' or 'deflationary' theory stemming from the writings of W. V. Quine, Hartry Field and Stephen Leeds, but we'll also take a look at the 'minimalism' of Crispin Wright, Patricia Marino's 'modest correspondence theory', and some related issues in the philosophy of mathematics.

We'll then turn to Mark Wilson's forthcoming *Wandering Significance*, a book addressed to the question how our linguistic predicates hook up with the world's properties. This way of putting it suggests that Wilson should be classified as a correspondence theorist, and perhaps he should, but I hope that a more finely nuanced understanding of the options will emerge from the our earlier discussions, and that Wilson's challenging and original approach will help illuminate the subtleties involved.

(To those wondering, 'second philosophy' is less a particular position than an approach to philosophical inquiry. The Second Philosopher is born native to the contemporary scientific world view and uses its results and methods in her investigations. This is a form of 'naturalism', one discussed at great length in my 03-04 seminar, the readings for which can be found on my web page. For a rough and ready introduction, see the talk 'Second philosophy', also available there.)

Books it might be useful to own:

Simon Blackburn and Keith Simmons, eds., *Truth*.

Hartry Field, *Truth and the Absence of Fact*.

Michael Lynch, ed., *The Nature of Truth*.

Copies of these collections will be kept on the 7th floor (in Sam Hillier's office) for those who don't own them. Copies of the remaining readings will be available (for photocopying) in the box outside my office door.

The default requirement for those taking the course for a grade is three short papers (750-1250 words) due at the beginning of class in the 4th week, 7th week, and 10th week. (Each paper should isolate one localized point in the readings and offer some analysis.) Other options are open to negotiation.

As we will be losing two Thursdays during fall quarter (Veteran's Day and Thanksgiving), please come to the first session prepared to discuss the (non-parenthetical) items under Topic 1.

Topics

1. Tarski on truth

Alfred Tarski, 'The Semantic conception of truth and the foundations of semantics' (1944), in Blackburn and Simmons, pp. 115-143, in Lynch, pp. 331-363.

Alfred Tarski, 'The establishment of scientific semantics' (1935), in his *Logic, Semantics, Metamathematics*, pp. 401-408.

(Alfred Tarski, 'The concept of truth in formalized languages', in his *Logic, Semantics, Metamathematics*, pp. 152-278.)

Hartry Field, 'Tarski's theory of truth' (1972), in Field, pp. 3-29, and in Lynch, pp. 365-396.

(John Etchemendy, 'Tarski on truth and logical consequence' (1988), *JSL* 53, pp. 51-79.)

(Scott Soames, 'What is a theory of truth?' (1984), in Lynch, pp. 397-418.)

(We're less concerned here with Tarski himself than with the debate initiated by Field's paper, but those interested in other takes on what Tarski was up to and what he accomplished might look at these papers of Etchemendy and Soames. Both give

readings of Tarski that might be described as 'deflationary'. Field argues, in 'Correspondence truth, disquotational truth, and deflationism' (1986), in Lynch, pp. 483-503, that Soames is actually describing a correspondence notion.)

2. Disquotational theories

W. V. O. Quine, excerpts from *Philosophy of Logic*, Blackburn and Simmons, pp. 144-146, and from *Pursuit of Truth*, Lynch, pp. 473-481.

Stephen Leeds, 'Theories of truth and reference' (1978), *Erkenntnis* 13, pp. 111-129.

3. The 'Success' argument against disquotational theories

Hilary Putnam, 'Meaning and knowledge' (1976), lecture 1 (pp. 9-17 of *Meaning and the Moral Sciences*), and 'Reference and understanding' (1978), (pp. 97-119 of *Meaning and the Moral Sciences*).

Hartry Field, 'The Deflationary conception of truth' (1986), in MacDonald and Wright, eds., *Fact, Science and Morality*, pp. 55-117, especially section V, pp. 89-105.

Stephen Leeds, 'Truth, correspondence, and success' (1995), *Philosophical Studies* 79, pp. 1-36.

Hartry Field, Postscript to 'Deflationary views of meaning and content', section 7, in Field, pp. 153-156.

4. More pro and con

Anil Gupta, 'A critique of deflationism' (1993), in Blackburn and Simmons, pp. 282-307, and in Lynch, pp. 527-557.

Hartry Field, 'Deflationist views of meaning and content' (1994), with postscript, in Field, pp. 104-152, (in Blackburn and Simmons, pp. 351-391, without postscript).

5. The problem of 'factually defective discourse'

Hartry Field, 'Disquotational truth and factually defective discourse' (1994), in Field, pp. 222-258, especially pp. 222-225, 235-238.

Hartry Field, 'Some thoughts on radical indeterminacy' (1998), in Field, pp. 259-277, especially pp. 269-277.

Stephen Leeds, 'Incommensurability and vagueness', *Nous* 31 (1997), pp. 385-407, especially pp. 398-403.

Hartry Field, 'Indeterminacy, degree of belief, and excluded middle' (2000), pp. 278-311.

(There's a lot in here about vagueness, not all of which can be skipped, but let's concentrate on referential indeterminacy.)

6. Wright's minimalism

Crispin Wright, 'Truth: a traditional debate reviewed' (1999), in Blackburn and Simmons, pp. 203-238.

Crispin Wright, 'Minimalism, deflationism, pragmatism, pluralism' (2001), in Lynch, pp. 751-787.

Fall Quarter

Winter Quarter

7. Meanwhile, back at the correspondence theory ...

Patricia Marino, 'Two deflationisms and the perils of conflation', under review.

Patricia Marino, 'What should a correspondence theory be and do?', forthcoming in *Philosophical Studies*.

8. Mathematical truth

Crispin Wright, *Truth and Objectivity*, pp. 1-12, 27-29, 31-37, 42-44, 61-64, 86-87, 174-201.

Crispin Wright, 'Neo-Fregean Platonism', in *Reason's Proper Study*, pp. 7-11, and 'Précis of *Truth and Objectivity*', in *Saving the Differences*, pp. 3-10.

Maddy, II.2, 'Disquotationalism'.

Maddy, 'Mathematical existence' and 'Addendum'.

9. And now for something completely different ...

Mark Wilson, *Wandering Significance*.

The book's project is to develop an understanding of concepts and how we use them in our interactions with the world and each other. Its method is to examine a range of widely-varied concrete examples.

Wandering Significance, Preface
Chapter 1
Chapter 2, §6

Wandering Significance, Chapter 3, §§1-9, §11

Wandering Significance, Chapter 4, §§1-5, §10
Chapter 5, §§1-8

Wandering Significance, Chapter 5, §§9-12
Chapter 6, §§1-4, §§7-11

Wandering Significance, Chapter 7, §1-3, §§6-10

Wandering Significance, Chapter 8, §§1-12

Wandering Significance, Chapter 10, §§1-9

Bibliography

- Hartry Field, *Truth and the Absence of Fact*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
- Simon Blackburn and Keith Simmons, eds., *Truth*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
- Bob Hale and Crispin Wright, *The Reason's Proper Study: Essays Towards a Neo-Fregean Philosophy of Mathematics*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
- Michael Lynch, ed., *The Nature of Truth*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001).
- Hilary Putnam, *Meaning and the Moral Sciences*, (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978).
- W.V.O. Quine, *From a Logical Point of View*, second edition, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980).
- Bertrand Russell, *Problems of Philosophy*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1959).
- Alfred Tarski, *Logic, Semantics, and Metamathematics*, second edition, (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishers, 1983).
- Mark Wilson, *Wandering Significance*, to appear from (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Crispin Wright, *Truth and Objectivity*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).
- Crispin Wright, *Saving the Differences*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).