

Lecture 5: Tarski on Truth

Philosophy of Logic and Language — HT 2017-18

Jonny McIntosh

jonathon.mcintosh@balliol.ox.ac.uk

Works by Tarski

The main texts this week are 'The Concept of Truth in Formalized Languages', 'The Semantic Conception of Truth', and 'Truth and Proof'. The first paper is his first proper treatment of the topic, but the second is the more accessible presentation. (There are also slight differences in approach.) The last was written later, for a general audience.

Alfred Tarski (1933) 'The Concept of Truth in Formalized Languages' in his (1983) *Logic, Semantics, and Metamathematics*, 2nd revised edition (Hackett).

— (1944) '[The Semantic Conception of Truth](#)' in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 4(3), pp. 341-376.

— (1969) '[Truth and Proof](#)' in *Scientific American* 220, pp. 63-77.

Secondary Reading

Starred items (*) are more introductory, and good places to start. Field (1972), Etchemendy (1988), Soames (1999), and Kühne (2003) will be particularly useful in writing essays.

Max Black (1948) '[The Semantic Definition of Truth](#)' in *Analysis* 8(4), pp. 49-63.

*Alexis P. Burgess and John P. Burgess (2010) *Truth* (Princeton UP), Ch. 2

Donald Davidson (1990) '[The Structure and Content of Truth](#)' in *Journal of Philosophy* 87(6), pp. 279-328.

Michael Dummett (1959) '[Truth](#)' in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 59, pp. 141-162.

John Etchemendy (1988) '[Tarski on Truth and Logical Consequence](#)' in *The Journal of Symbolic Logic*, 53(1), pp. 51-79, §1.

Hartry Field (1972) '[Tarski's Theory of Truth](#)' in *Journal of Philosophy*, 69(13), pp. 347-375.

*Mario Gómez-Torrente (2006) 'Alfred Tarski' in E. Zalta, ed. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/tarski/>

Richard Heck, Jr. (1997) '[Tarski, Truth, and Semantics](#)' in *The Philosophical Review* 106(4), 533-554.

- *Wilfrid Hodges (2001) 'Tarski's Truth Definitions' in E. Zalta, ed. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/tarski-truth/>
- *Richard Kirkham (1992) *Theories of Truth* (MIT Press), Ch. 5 and 6.
- Wolfgang Künne (2003) *Conceptions of Truth* (OUP), §4.2.
- John McDowell (1980) 'Physicalism and Primitive Denotation: Field on Tarski', reprinted in his (1998) *Meaning, Knowledge, & Reality* (Harvard UP).
- Douglas Patterson (2011) *Alfred Tarski: Philosophy of Language and Logic* (Palgrave Macmillan), Ch. 4.
- Hilary Putnam (1985) 'A Comparison of Something with Something Else' in *New Literary History* 17(1), pp. 61-79.
- Gila Sher (1999) 'What is Tarski's Theory of Truth?' in *Topoi* 18(2), pp. 149-166.
- Scott Soames (1999) *Understanding Truth* (OUP), Ch. 3 and 4.