

BOOK REVIEW

Scott Soames. *Understanding Truth*. Oxford University Press, New York, 1998.
ix+268 pages.

1. Introduction

Scott Soames's book, *Understanding Truth*, offers a skillfully written introduction to a wide range of problems of contemporary interest involving the notion of *truth*. This range includes the question of the bearers of truth values, Tarski's definition of truth, the Liar Paradox and solutions to it, vagueness and the sorites paradox, and deflationism. Throughout, the book is well written and closely argued, and Soames's judgments are judicious and generally sound. This would be an ideal introduction to the subject for advanced undergraduate and graduate students were it not for a single flaw: the book fails to refer to much important work on the subject done in the late '80s and early '90s. I will make note of some of the more important lacunae below, and I hope that future additions of the book will fill these bibliographical holes. Otherwise, I am worried that philosophers relying on Soames's text for a survey of the state of the art in 1999 will overlook some very significant books and articles, works which are in many cases directly relevant to the issues Soames discusses.

The book comprises three parts: Foundational Issues, Two Theories of Truth, and Extensions. In the first part, Soames addresses two questions: What are the bearers of truth? and Does truth have a significant role to play in philosophical theories? In the second part, Soames deals with the formal theories of truth developed by Tarski and Kripke, and he develops a positive case for his own interpretation of Kripke's theory in which 'truth' is treated as a partially defined predicate. Finally, in the third part, Soames turns to the problems of vagueness and the sorites paradox and to the issues raised by deflationary theories of truth.

2. Truth Bearers

In Chapter 1 Soames offers a series of convincing arguments in favor of the thesis that the fundamental bearers of the property of truth are propositions. An eternal sentence (one free of indexicals, demonstratives, and significant uses of tense) is true just in

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