

George Englebretsen

Bare Facts and Naked Truths: A New Correspondence Theory of Truth

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REVIEW

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Aristotle famously characterized truth-telling as saying of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not. From this stem grow many branches of the so-called the “correspondence theory of truth.” Aristotle also was the first to propose a logic of terms, though he never explicitly married his insight about correspondence with his logic to give what we would today recognize as a semantic account of truth for that logic.

That is what George Englebretsen provides in the book here under review. He defends a version of the correspondence theory of truth which brings the Aristotelian insight about truth into alignment with a powerful and elegant version of terminist logic, one that Englebretsen and the fellow-logician Fred Sommers have been developing over the last forty years.

The third chapter of this book presents briefly the formalities of the new terminist logic. Englebretsen provides sufficient detail about the functioning of the logic of terms to give readers a glimpse of how it models the inference patterns of ordinary language on the one hand, and is conformable to the theory of truth here developed on the other. Only just sufficient. But his minimalism is probably a virtue, since a longer presentation would have distracted him from the main project of presenting his spirited defence of the correspondence theory of truth. In any case detailed developments of the logic are readily available elsewhere.¹

The main thrust of this book is philosophical. Its goal is “to provide a sound version of the correspondence theory of truth” (p. 5). As the

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¹*E.g.*, George Englebretsen, *Something to Reckon With*, University of Ottawa Press: Ottawa, 1996; Fred Sommers and George Englebretsen, *An Invitation to Formal Reasoning: The Logic of Terms*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000.