

24.400

Proseminar in philosophy I

Fall 2003

The literature on the *Tractatus* is beginning to resemble the literature on the real meaning of the White Whale.

Judith Jarvis Thomson, "Professor Stenius on the 'Tractatus'", 1961

Names and objects

Do Tractarian names include predicates? Yes, according to Allaire, "The 'Tractatus': Nominalistic or Realistic", in Copi and Beard, *Essays on Wittgenstein's Tractatus*; Steinus, *Wittgenstein's Tractatus* (this is what Wittgenstein "obviously means", p. 126). No, according to Anscombe, *An Introduction to Wittgenstein's Tractatus*; Thomson, "Professor Stenius on the 'Tractatus'", in Copi and Beard; Fogelin, *Wittgenstein*; Carruthers, *Tractarian Semantics*, and a number of others.

The Picture Theory

Helpful discussions, although coming to different conclusions, are in Anscombe, ch. 4; Fogelin, ch. 2; Carruthers, chs. 14, 15; Pears, *The False Prison*, vol. I, ch. 6.

The N-operator

See Fogelin, *Wittgenstein*, ch. 6; Geach, "Wittgenstein's Operator N", *Analysis* 1981; Soames, "Generality, Truth Functions, and Expressive Capacity in the Tractatus, *Phil Rev* 1983.

Color exclusion

6.3751 says, in effect, that 'this patch is red and green (all over)' is a contradiction. Thus this sentence must somehow be analysed into the negation of a truth of logic, and this is

evidently problematic. “Some Remarks on Logical Form”, the 1929 Aristotelian Society paper we discussed, is reprinted in Copi and Beard. See also *Philosophical Remarks* (1930), pp. 105-9, *The Blue and Brown Books*, p. 56, and *Remarks on Colour* (written around 1950).

See also Allaire, “‘Tractatus’ 6.3751”, in Copi and Beard, and Kenny’s *Wittgenstein*, pp. 103-19.

Mathematics

We didn’t discuss TLP’s account of numbers (6.02). An in-depth but somewhat confusing study is in Frascolla, *Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Mathematics*.

Models of TLP

See:

Goddard and Judge (1982), *The Metaphysics of Wittgenstein’s Tractatus*, Australasian Journal of Philosophy Monograph.

David Keyt, “Wittgenstein’s Picture Theory of Language”, in Copi and Beard.

Carruthers, *The Metaphysics of the Tractatus*, ch. 14.

Solipsism

Helpful discussions are in Anscombe, ch. 13; Pears, ch, 7; and Fogelin. ch. 8.

Metaphysics or therapy?

The traditional interpretation is that the *Tractatus* propounds a metaphysical and semantic theory that implies its own ineffability. A rival interpretation, due to Diamond, Goldfarb and others, is that the point of the work is to stop us asking philosophical

questions, because they lead to genuine nonsense, not somehow-illuminating nonsense. An attempt to chart a middle way between these two different interpretations is in Marie McGinn, "Between Metaphysics and Nonsense: Elucidation in Wittgenstein's Tractatus", *Philosophical Quarterly* 1999.