

24.400: Proseminar in Philosophy I

Fall 2013

The Problems of Philosophy

0. What is Russell's criticism in PLA of his treatment of belief in ch. 12?

1. "We must therefore, if possible, find, in our own purely private experiences, characteristics which show, or tend to show, that there are things in the world other than ourselves and our private experiences" (ch. 2). Why does Russell think so? Is he right?

2. "All our knowledge, both knowledge of things and knowledge of truths, rests upon acquaintance as its foundation" (ch. 5). What does this mean? Is it true? Are we in fact acquainted with anything?

3. Has Russell solved "the problem of priori knowledge"?

Tractatus

0. Explain Wittgenstein's use of 'fact', 'state of affairs', 'name', 'object' (assume 'thing' is a synonym), 'sign', 'symbol', 'propositional sign', 'proposition', 'elementary proposition', 'pictorial form', 'logical form'.

1. On one interpretation, Tractarian "names" are proper names *and* predicates (and so properties are kinds of Tractarian object). On another interpretation, Tractarian names are proper names, and Tractarian objects are particulars. On yet another interpretation, Tractarian names are proper names, and Tractarian objects are particulars and properties. Decide between them.

2. Explain what Wittgenstein means by saying that "a proposition is a picture of reality". Is it?

The Construction of Logical Space (ch. 1)

0. What is "metaphysicalism"? Is the Tractarian Wittgenstein a metaphysicalist? Is metaphysicalism "bad philosophy of language"?

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