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The Later Philosophy of Wittgenstein

Note: the essay topics are largely based on Past Papers available on the Oxford Sub-Faculty of Philosophy web site.

Wk 1

‘The meaning of a word is its use in language’. How, therefore, can we employ language to talk about the world? Is the notion of reference abolished in this definition?

Keywords: truth, reference, realism.

Readings

Philosophical Investigations. (Blackwell, 1958 or reprint) §§ 1- 89

The Blue & Brown Books (Blackwell, 1958 or reprint) pp. 1-19

McGinn, M. *Wittgenstein and the Philosophical Investigations*, ch. 2

Rundle, B. *Wittgenstein and the Contemporary Philosophy of Language*, ch. 1

Further Readings

Philosophical Investigations, §§ 133-43

The Blue & Brown Books, pp. 77-89

Travis, C. *The Uses of Sense*, ch. 1

Wk 2

‘For Wittgenstein, the only sense in which natural kinds are natural is that we find it *natural* to respond in the same kind of way to their instances.’ Discuss.

Readings

Wittgenstein, L. *Philosophical Investigations*, §§ 65-92

Kripke, S. *Naming and Necessity* (1980), pp. 116-29

Rundle, B. *Wittgenstein and the Contemporary Philosophy of Language*, ch. 3

Fogelin, R. *Wittgenstein* (2nd edition), pp. 133-8

Further Readings

Travis, C. *The Uses of Sense*, ch. 6

Dupre, J. ‘Natural kinds & biological taxa’, *Philosophical Review* 90 (1981) 66-90

Wk 3

What positive account does Wittgenstein give of the distinction between following a rule and merely happening to be acting in accord with it? Is what he says about this distinction satisfactory?

Keywords: rule-following, meaning, practice, scepticism.

Readings

Philosophical Investigations. (Blackwell, 1958 or reprint) §§ 138-242

Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics (Blackwell, 1978) 3rd edition. I. 1-3, 113-42; VI. 15-49

McGinn, M. *Wittgenstein and the Philosophical Investigations* (1997), pp. 82-113

McGinn, C. *Wittgenstein on Meaning* (Blackwell, 1984), ch. 1

Kripke, S.A. *Wittgenstein on Rules & Private Language* (Blackwell, 1982) [for a review of Kripke's theory cf. McGinn (1984), pp. 60-7]

Further Readings

McGinn, C. *Wittgenstein on Meaning* (Blackwell, 1984), ch. 3

Wright, C.J.G. *Wittgenstein on the Foundations of Mathematics* (1980), ch. II

McDowell, J. H. 'Wittgenstein on Following a Rule' in *Synthese* (1984), vol 58 pp 325-364, reprinted in Moore, A.W. (ed) *Meaning and Reference* (OUP, 1993), and in McDowell *Mind, Value, and Reality* (Harvard, 1998), 221-262

Wk 4

Is there an *argument* presented by the sensation-diary thought experiment at §§258ff. of *PI*? If so, what is it, and how compelling is it? If not, what is the point of this thought experiment?

Keywords: sensation, certainty, obeying a rule, naming.

Readings

Philosophical Investigations. (Blackwell, 1958 or reprint) §§243-315

McGinn, M. *Wittgenstein and the Philosophical Investigations* (1997), ch. 4.

McGinn, C. *Wittgenstein on Meaning* (Blackwell, 1984), pp. 47-53.

Fogelin, R. *Wittgenstein* (2nd edition), ch. XII.

Further Readings

Zettel, §§532-65.

Wright, C.J.G. 'Wittgenstein's later philosophy of mind: sensation, privacy and intention', in: *Journal of Philosophy* (1989), vol 86, pp. 622-634.

Wk 6

How would Wittgenstein respond to the following argument, and would he be right? 'I am sitting in the study; I am thinking about Prokofiev's Second Piano Concerto; so there is something which is both sitting in the study and thinking about Prokofiev's Second Piano Concerto.'

Keywords: self, experience, ownership, body.

Readings

Philosophical Remarks. (Blackwell, 1975) part III

The Blue & Brown Books. (Blackwell, 1958 or reprint) pp. 3, 11-12, 19-22, 31-44

Pears, D. *The False Prison* vol. II (Clarendon, 1988) ch. 10

Evans, G. *The Varieties of Reference* ch.7

Further Readings

Philosophical Investigations. (Blackwell, 1958 or reprint) §§398-412

Campbell, J. *Past, Space, and Self* (1994) ch. 3

Anscombe, G.E.M. 'The First Person' in Guttenplan, S. ed *Mind and Language* (Clarendon, 1975); reprinted in Cassam, Q. ed *Self-Knowledge* (OUP, 1994).

Wk 7

What is Wittgenstein's account of the relation between propositional attitudes and their objects?

Keywords: expectation, fulfilment, pictoriality, causality.

Readings

Philosophical Investigations. (Blackwell, 1958 or reprint) §§ 33-6, 429-465, 571-606.

The Blue & Brown Books. (Blackwell, 1958 or reprint) pp. 3, 11-12, 19-22, 31-44

Evans, G. *The Varieties of Reference* ch. 3 §§1, 3, 4.

Russell, B. *The Analysis of Mind* ch.3

Budd, M. *Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Psychology* (Routledge, 1989) ch. 6 (esp. pp. 131-43)

Further Readings

Dennett, D. 'Three kinds of intentional psychology' in his The Intentional Stance (MIT Press, 1967)