

24.400: Proseminar in Philosophy I

Fall 2013

Philosophical Investigations

1. According to Horwich, “for Wittgenstein, the important revelations that are typically promised within our subject are impossible. In so far as *theses* are propounded in philosophy, they should be barely more than observations about the use of words—reminders offered to help loosen the grip of over-stretched analogies. The most we can hope for is the *elimination* of our traditional concerns” (*Wittgenstein’s Metaphilosophy*). Horwich endorses the view he attributes to Wittgenstein. Is the attribution correct? Is the view correct? See Horwich, “A critique of theoretical philosophy”.

The Concept of Mind

2. What is a “category-mistake” (ch. I)? Is it at all plausible that a category-mistake is the source of the mind-body problem?
3. What is the “intellectualist legend” (ch. II)? Assess Ryle’s account of its motivation, and his argument against it. For enthusiasts: Stanley and Williamson, “Knowing how”.
4. What is the difference between sensation and observation, according to Ryle? Is he right to claim that the Sense Datum Theory rests on a “logical howler” (ch. VII)?

Sense and Sensibilia and *The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge* (ch. 1.)

5. What does the Argument from Illusion show, according to Ayer? Is Ayer right?
6. Assess Austin’s criticisms of the view that “We do not directly perceive such objects as pens and cigarettes; rather, we perceive them indirectly”.
7. Is Austin correct in claiming that “the general doctrine about knowledge which I sketched at the beginning of this section [X]...is *radically* and *in principle* misconceived”?

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