

**Frege, Russell, Wittgenstein  
Somerville College  
Dr Hilary Greaves**

**Set Texts**

This is an author-based paper. This means that the examination will require in-depth familiarity with particular “set texts”, in addition to an appreciation of and ability to think critically about the related philosophical issues. The following are the set texts for this paper.

Frege

*Conceptual Notation*, ch.1 (1879)  
*The Foundations of Arithmetic* (1884)  
Function and Concept  
Sense and Reference  
Concept and Object  
Frege on Russell’s Paradox

Russell

-On Denoting (1905)  
-Mathematical Logic Based on the Theory of Types (1908)  
-Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description (1910)  
-On the Nature of Acquaintance (1914)  
-The Relation of Sense-Data to Physics (1914)  
-The Ultimate Constituents of Matter (1915)  
-*Our Knowledge of the External World*, chs I-IV. (1914)  
-*Either: Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*: chs 1-3 and 12-18. (1919)  
Or: *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism* (1918)

Wittgenstein

*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1922)

The examination requires candidates to “show adequate knowledge of at least two authors”. We will cover all three in tutorials; you can then choose whether to continue with all three or to focus on your favourite two in your further reading and revision.

**Useful books and collections**

Kenny, A (1995). *Frege*. Penguin books.  
Beaney, M (1996). *Frege: Making Sense*. Duckworth.  
Frege, G. (1979) *Posthumous writings*. Blackwell.  
Geach, P. and M. Black (eds) (1960). *Translations from the philosophical writings of Gottlob Frege*. Blackwell.  
Frege, G. (1980). *Philosophical and mathematical correspondence*. Blackwell.  
Russell, B. (1963). *Mysticism and Logic*. George Allen & Unwin Ltd.  
Russell, B. (1956). *Logic and Knowledge*. George Allen & Unwin Ltd.

## Tutorials

Tutorials will take place in my office (Maitland 2, Somerville).

Each week, one of you will present the other's essay in the tutorial. When it's your turn to present your partner's essay, prepare your presentation so that it would be *no longer than 15 minutes if uninterrupted*, to leave plenty of time for discussion. Your presentation should include

- A succinct statement of your partner's conclusions;
- A concise summary of his/her argument(s) for those conclusions (be charitable here!);
- Brief discussion of any points at which you think your partner's essay goes wrong.

You can prepare a handout, if you think it would be useful, or use the whiteboard. (If you don't have a tutorial partner, present your own essay in each tutorial.)

Conversely, when it's your turn to have your essay presented, make your partner's job easy! State your conclusions clearly at the beginning and end of the essay, and include plenty of 'signposts' throughout the essay so that the intended structure of your argument is easy to discern.

You should take the time to read your partner's essay, and meet with him/her to discuss the topic, in advance of the tutorial. You will get much more out of tutorials if you bring to the tutorial a list of any points that you don't understand, and/or of which you think you would particularly benefit from discussion of in the tutorial, following discussion with your partner.

## Handing in work

Hand your essays **in hard copy, to my pigeonhole** in by midday the day before the tutorial. **Please state clearly at the top of your essay whether or not that essay is to be presented during the tutorial** (I will make written comments on the essay that isn't being presented, and verbal comments during the tutorial on the essay that is being presented).

You can hand essays in by any of the following means:

- (1) Deliver it to my pigeonhole yourself;
- (2) Hand it in at Somerville Lodge;
- (3) Non-Somerville students only: Email your essay to [tutorial.admin@some.ox.ac.uk](mailto:tutorial.admin@some.ox.ac.uk), asking them (politely!) to print out the essay and deliver it to my pigeonhole for you.

It is your responsibility to make sure your work reaches my pigeonhole by the agreed time (please note that if you use method (2) or (3), there will be some time delay between the essay leaving your hands and its reaching mine).

## Marking and late work

If you hand in your essay on time, I will read it and supply written comments, and return it to you in the tutorial.

If your essay is late, I will try to mark it if and when I have time, but I can't make any promises. (It is still important that you hand your essay in even if I don't have time to comment on it, as I am required to report to your college how many pieces of work you have completed to a satisfactory standard.)

### **How to keep your tutor happy and healthy**

Please

- (a) Notify me by email as soon as possible if you have been or can foresee that you will be unable to complete an essay on time, explaining the reason and when you expect to be able to hand in the essay.
- (b) Arrive at tutorials on time.
- (c) Notify me by email as soon as possible, and at any rate before the start of the tutorial, if you will be unable attend one of the tutorials or will be unable to arrive on time.

If you are experiencing difficulties (academic or otherwise) that are affecting your ability to work at your normal standard, or you are concerned about your level of understanding of this topic, don't suffer in silence – please do let me know as soon as possible.

### **Readings**

The readings for each week are divided into “core” and “further” readings. You should read all the core readings before writing your essay. You probably won't have time to read many of the “further” readings during term, but you may wish to explore them later for the topics you are particularly interested in.

### **Vacation essay**

You are not *required* to write a vacation essay, but I strongly *encourage* you to do so (of e.g. 3000-5000 words) if you find this topic interesting. The idea of such a project is to give you an opportunity to think in more depth about an aspect of this topic that particularly interests you, enhancing both your understanding of this particular topic and your general philosophical maturity. (It is difficult to overstate how much more you can get from extended focus on a single topic, giving yourself time properly to develop, reflect on and refine your ideas and arguments, than from the whirlwind tour you get in weekly tutorials; it is also difficult to overstate how much more you are likely to enhance your understanding if you try *writing out* your thoughts and arguments rather than simply reading and thinking.)

We'll discuss possible projects later in the term, but keep an eye out as the term progresses for issues that you'd like to explore or ideas of your own that you'd like to develop in greater depth. You may also like to browse the Faculty reading list (available via the Philosophy website), and/or textbooks providing surveys of this field, for further ideas.

Please let me know *by Friday of 7<sup>th</sup> week* if you intend to do a vacation project, so that I can pass along any suitable reading advice I may happen to have on your chosen topic.

### **“Study questions” and Finals preparation**

*Finals questions are quite specific. They do not simply say “write an essay on sense and reference”, and you can’t count on the Finals paper containing questions that happen to match your tutorial essay questions.* Every single examiners’ report complains that many students simply recycle their tutorial essays in response to Finals questions that were asking something quite different. To be well-prepared for Finals, you will need to know (at least) two or three topics with enough depth and breadth that you can understand and intelligently discuss almost anything the examiners choose to ask on that topic. Study strategies vary, and only you can discover what works for you, but *one* sensible strategy would be

- (i) As you read for tutorials: Take notes summarising the basic points covered by the core readings.
- (ii) During the vacations, when you have more time: Choose the two or three topics that interest you most, and do the “further readings” for that topic. Think through *your own views* in detail. Be original – is there anything that you think the authors whose work you’ve read have been missing? Look at some past Finals questions for this paper; work out what you think each of the exam questions is getting at, what you think about the issue it is raising, and how you could structure an essay, *answering precisely that question*, that you could write in fifty minutes.
- (iii) Read widely around the subject (beyond these reading lists), and keep an eye out for non-core lectures and seminars related to these topics that interest you.

## 1. Frege's logicism

### Essay question

Could Frege have achieved his goal in *The Foundations of Arithmetic* by adopting “Hume's principle” as an axiom instead of “Basic Law V”?

### Core reading

Zalta, Edward N., "Frege's Logic, Theorem, and Foundations for Arithmetic", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2010 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2010/entries/frege-logic/>.

*Introductory survey article. Discusses Frege's Begriffsschrift and Grundgesetze, as well as Foundations.*

Frege, G. (1884) *Die Grundlagen der Arithmetik*, Beslau: Koebner. Translated as *The Foundations of Arithmetic* by Austin, J. L. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1980. *The second of Frege's three major works. (This is a set text.)*

Russell, B. Russell to Frege 16.6.1902. In Gabriel et al (eds.), *Frege: Philosophical and mathematical correspondence*, Blackwell. *The letter in which Russell points out to Frege that the latter's system is inconsistent (“Russell's Paradox”). (Very short.)*

Frege, G. Frege to Russell 22.6.1902. In Gabriel et al (eds.), *Frege: Philosophical and mathematical correspondence*, Blackwell. *Frege's first reaction to Russell's Paradox. (Very short.)*

Paul Benacerraf, “Frege: The Last Logician”, in Peter French et al. (eds), *The Foundations of Analytic Philosophy*, University of Minnesota Press (1981). Reprinted in William Demopoulos (ed.), *Frege's Philosophy of Mathematics*, Harvard University Press (1995). *Discusses Frege's motivations in Foundations.*

Hale, B. and Wright, C. (2005) “Logicism in the Twenty-First Century” in Shapiro, S. (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Mathematics and Logic*. *On “neo-logicism”: the attempt to salvage a broadly logicist claim from the ruins of Frege's own attempt precisely by e.g adopting “Hume's principle” in place of Frege's “Axiom V”.*

### Further reading

Burgess, J. (2005) *Fixing Frege*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Pp. 1-34. *A clear, concise summary of Frege's system.*

Boolos, G. (1987) "The Consistency of Frege's Foundations of Arithmetic". In Thomson, J. J. (1987), *On Being and Saying*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Reprinted in Boolos, G. (1997), *Logic, Logic and Logic*.

*Argues that Frege's key claims in Foundations can be embedded in a consistent system.*

Boolos, G. (1997) *Logic, Logic and Logic*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Pt. II.

Demopoulos, W. (ed.) (1995). *Frege's Philosophy of Mathematics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Dummett, M. (1991) *Frege's Philosophy of Mathematics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Wright, C. (1983) *Frege's Conception of Numbers as Objects*. Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press.

Paul Benacerraf, 'What Numbers Could Not Be', *Philosophical Review* 74 (1965): 47-73.  
*On numbers as objects.*

Paul Benacerraf, 'Mathematical Truth', *Journal of Philosophy* 70 (1973): 661-679.

Bob Hale, 'Frege's Platonism', *Philosophical Quarterly* 34 (1984): 225-241.  
*On numbers as objects.*

Richard Heck, 'The Julius Caesar Objection' in R. Heck (ed.), *Language, Thought, and Logic: Essays in Honour of Michael Dummett* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 273-308.  
*On the Julius Caesar Problem.*

### **Questions for further study**

Was Frege right to insist that every individual number is a self-subsistent object? [cf. *Foundations*, §§55-61]

Was Frege right to criticise Mill's empiricist view of arithmetic in the way he does? [cf. *Foundations*, §§7-10, 16-17, 23-25]

Does Frege draw a sound distinction between the logical and the psychological? [c.f. *Foundations*, 'Introduction', p. X, §27]

What is the claim that arithmetical truths are analytic? Did Frege succeed in showing that they are?

What are definitions? And what are the criteria of their correctness?

Is there only a single way to elaborate the thesis that the truths of arithmetic are analytic?

What counts as general *logical* laws?

## 2. Functions and concepts/The paradox of the concept *horse*

### Essay question

Why did Frege say that the concept *horse* is not a concept? Is this contradictory? If so, how should Frege's system be amended?

### Core reading

*Review: The Foundations of Arithmetic*, §§45-54, 70.

Frege, G. (1891) "Function and Concept." Reprinted in Beaney, M. (ed). *Exposition of Frege's notion of a function, and how his notion of a concept can be viewed as a special case. (This is a set text.)*

Frege, G. (1892) "On Concept and Object." Reprinted in Beaney, M. (ed). *Response to Kerry, including discussion of the paradox of the concept 'horse'. (This is a set text.)*

Kenny, pp.121-125.

*Introductory remarks on the paradox of the concept horse, followed by Kenny's defence of Frege on this point.*

Baker, G. P. and Hacker, P. M. S. (1984) *Frege: Logical Excavations*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell. Chapter 9 ("Function and concept"). *Trenchant criticism of Frege, including remarks on the paradox of the concept horse. For the latter, see esp. pp.247-*

Michael Dummett, *Frege: Philosophy of Language* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1981), London: Duckworth. Pp. 212-8.

*Argues that Frege is correct to say that "the concept horse" designates an object rather than a predicate, and that the so-called "paradox" unproblematic, since we can directly refer to concepts by avoiding use of the word 'concept', and writing instead "what 'x is a horse' stands for".*

Parsons, T. (1986) "Why Frege Should Not Have Said "The Concept *Horse* Is Not a Concept".  
*History of Philosophy Quarterly*. 3: 449-465.

*Argues that given the remainder of Frege's theory, Frege should have said that "the concept horse" denotes a concept. Further argues that even if we do insist (for Frege's reason or otherwise) on holding that it denotes an object, still "The concept horse is not a concept" is either false or meaningless, not true, by the lights of Frege's theory.*

Crispin Wright, 'Why Frege did not Deserve his *Granum Salis*. A Note on the Paradox of "The Concept Horse" and the Ascription of Bedeutungen to Predicates', *Grazer Philosophische Studien*, 55 (1998), pp. 239-263.

### **Further reading**

Frege, G. 'What is a function?', all in *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege*.

*Argues against views that functions are linguistic entities or 'variable numbers', and proposes Frege's own view.*

Frege, G. 'Comments on Sense and Reference'. In *Posthumous Writings*.

Burge, T. (1984) "Frege on Extensions of Concepts, from 1884 to 1903". *Philosophical Review* 93: 3-34.

*Discusses the development of Frege's discomfort with the notion of an extension of a concept, including the issue of whether it could be dispensed with in favour of talk of "the concept", and whether it could be dispensed with by offering a radically different definition of number. Suggests (among other things) that the object that Frege thinks "the concept horse" denotes is the extension of the concept horse.*

Resnik, M. (1980) *Frege and the Philosophy of Mathematics*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Dummett, M. (1991) *Frege: Philosophy of Mathematics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 87-95.

Dummett, *Frege: Philosophy of Language* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1981), London: Duckworth, ch. 2&3.

David Wiggins, 'The Sense and Reference of Predicates: A Running Repair to Frege's Doctrine and a Plea for the Copula', in *Frege: Tradition and influence*, Wright, C. (ed.) (1983), Oxford: Blackwell: pp. 126-143.

### **Questions for further study**

Why did Frege think that he ought to replace subject and predicate by function and argument?  
Are his arguments convincing?

Was Frege right to treat a concept as a kind of function?

### 3. Sense and reference

#### Essay question

What is Frege's distinction between sense and reference? What, given this distinction, should Frege say about Kripke's puzzle about belief?

#### Core readings

Frege, 'On Sense and Reference', in *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege*. Reprinted in Beaney ed.  
*This is a set text.*

Kenny, Frege, Chapter 7 ("Sense and reference").  
*Introductory exposition.*

Baker, G. P. and Hacker, P. M. S. (1984) *Frege: Logical Excavations*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell. Chapters 10-11.

Evans, G. (1982) *The Varieties of Reference*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapter 1.  
*On empty reference.*

Saul Kripke, 'A Puzzle about Belief', in *Propositions and Attitudes*, Nathan Salmon and Scott Soames (eds) (1988), Oxford: Oxford University Press.  
*Challenges Frege's idea that the notion of sense is the key to explaining how a subject can believe (say) that Hesperus is Venus but not that Phosphorus is Venus, by exhibiting a similar puzzle involving names with the same sense as one another.*

#### Further reading

Michael Dummett, *Frege: Philosophy of Language* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1981), London: Duckworth, ch. 1 (for singular terms), ch. 5 (sense and reference), ch. 12 (for sentences).

Bell, D. (1990) "How 'Russellian' Was Frege?" *Mind* 99: 267-277.

John McDowell, J. 'On the Sense and Reference of a Proper Name', *Mind* (1977). Reprinted in *Meaning and Reference*, Adrian Moore (ed.) (1993), Oxford: Oxford University Press.  
*On empty reference.*

Frege, G. (1892) *Comments on Sinn and Bedeutung*. Reprinted in Beaney, M. (ed).

Frege, G. (1879) *Begriffsschrift*, #8. Reprinted in Beaney, M. (ed).

Frege, G. (1918) *Thought*. Reprinted in Beaney, M. (ed).

Frege, G. (1903) *The Basic Laws of Arithmetic*. Preface, Introduction, ##1-4, 32. Reprinted in Beaney, M. (ed).

Frege, G. *Letter to Husserl 24.5.1891*. Reprinted in Beaney, M. (ed).

Frege, G. *Letter to Jourdain Jan.1914*. Reprinted in Beaney, M. (ed).

Frege, G. 'Letter to Russell' (13.11.1904), in *Frege, Philosophical and Mathematical Correspondence*.

Frege, G. 'Letter from Russell' (12.12.1904), in *Frege, Philosophical and Mathematical Correspondence*.

### **Questions for further study**

Was Frege right to hold that two proper names could share a reference while differing in sense?

Was Frege right to apply the sense/reference distinction to expressions other than singular terms?

Can Frege coherently admit expressions that possess a sense while lacking a reference?

Is Frege's notion of sense extended from proper names to sentences?

How can the notion of sense be applied to concept-words?

What is Frege's rationale for introducing the Sinn-Bedeutung distinction into his logical system?

How has Frege endowed every formula in his concept-script with a sense [Frege, Gottlob The Basic Laws of Arithmetic, Exposition of the System §32]?

Is it possible to say what the sense of an expression is?

What is the criterion for identity of sense?

## 4. Definite descriptions

### Essay question

“This is the principle of the theory of denoting I wish to advocate: that denoting phrases never have any meaning in themselves, but that every proposition in whose verbal expression they occur has a meaning.”

What exactly did Russell mean by this claim? Are his arguments persuasive?

### Core readings

Ludlow, P. (2007) Descriptions. In Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy. Sections 1-4 (“What are descriptions?”, “Russell’s theory of descriptions”, “Motivations for the theory of descriptions” and “Objections to the theory of descriptions”), and section 8 (“Descriptive theories of proper names”).

*Introductory survey, outlining the issues discussed in the Russell/Strawson/Donnellan literature (and related issues), and the current state of play in the modern discussion of these issues.*

Russell, B. (1905) “On Denoting.” *Mind* 14: 479-493. Reprinted in Russell, B. (1973), *Essays in Analysis*, London: Allen and Unwin, 103-119.

*This is a set text. Sets out Russell’s theory of definite descriptions.*

Strawson, P. (1950) “On Referring.” In *Mind*. Reprinted in *Meaning and Reference*, Adrian Moore (ed.) (1993), Oxford: Oxford University Press.

*Argues that Russell’s theory of descriptions gives the wrong answer to the Meinongian puzzle that formed part of the motivation for that theory, and that there that there is a “referential use” of definite descriptions in addition to the “attributive use” that Russell captures. Diagnoses Russell’s mistake as failure to recognise the distinctions between (i) a sentence/expression and a use of a sentence/expression, and (ii) entailment and a weaker sense of implication.*

Donnellan, K. (1966) ‘Reference and Definite Descriptions’, *The Philosophical Review* 75, pp.281-304.

*Further investigates the distinction between attributive and referential uses of definite descriptions, focussing in particular on cases in which descriptions are (successfully) used to refer to things that do not in fact fit the description. Argues that neither Russell nor Strawson treats both attributive and referential uses correctly.*

### Further reading

Kaplan, D. (2006) “Reading ‘On Denoting’ on its Centenary.” *Mind* 114: 933-1003. Pages 933-978.

Whitehead, A. and Russell, B. (1910) *Principia Mathematica*. Chapter III of the introduction (“Incomplete symbols”).

Russell, B. (1919) *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*, London: George Allen and Unwin; New York: The Macmillan Company. Chapters 15 and 16.  
*This is a set text.*

Neale, S. (1990) *Descriptions*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Chapters 1 and 2.

Makin, G. (2000) *The Metaphysics of Meaning*. London: Routledge. Chapter 3.

Mark Sainsbury, *Russell*, (1985), London: Routledge, ch.4.

The special issue of *Mind*: '100 Years on 'On Denoting'', vol. 114, (2005), in particular the introduction by Stephen Neale.

### **Questions for further study**

What is Russell's Theory of Descriptions? Is it an adequate theory?

Compare Russell's and Frege's account of descriptions.

What is Russell's motivation for regarding 'the present king of France', not as a referring expression, but as an incomplete symbol?

Did Russell succeed in his ambition to give a single uniform logical analysis of all occurrences of definite descriptions?

Does the theory of definite descriptions rest on identifying the meaning of a name with the object named?

Does Russell's theory of descriptions make possible a full account of linguistic meaning which avoids the complications of Frege's distinction between sense and reference?

## 5. Knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description

### Essay question

Explain how Russell's doctrine of acquaintance leads him to search for constructions of ordinary physical objects in terms of sense-data. Is it plausible that this search can be completed? If not, how should Russell's account be amended?

### Core readings

Russell, B. (1910) "Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 11: 108-128. Reprinted in Russell, B. (1963), *Mysticism and Logic*, London: Allen and Unwin, 152-167.

*This is a set text.*

Russell, B. *Our Knowledge of the External World*. Chicago/London: Open Court. Chapters I-IV.

*This is a set text.*

Kaplan, D. (2006) "Reading 'On Denoting' on its Centenary." *Mind* 114: 933-1003. Pages 978-999.

Jaakko Hintikka, "Knowledge by acquaintance—individuation by acquaintance", D.F. Pears (ed), *Bertrand Russell: a Collection of Critical Essays*, Anchor Books, 1972, pp. 52-79.

### Further reading

Russell, B. (1919) "On the Nature of Acquaintance" in Marsh, R. C. (1953), *Logic and Knowledge: Essays, 1901-1950*, London: Allen & Unwin, 125-74.

*This is a set text.*

Evans, G. (1982). *The Varieties of Reference*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapter 4.

Pears, D. F. (1967) *Bertrand Russell and the British Tradition in Philosophy*, London: Collins. Chapter 6.

Thomas Baldwin, "From knowledge by acquaintance to knowledge by causation", Nicholas Griffin (ed), *The Cambridge Companion to Bertrand Russell*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 420-448.

Roderick M Chisholm, "Russell on the foundations of empirical knowledge", and reply by Bertrand Russell, Paul Arthur Schilpp (ed.), *The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell*, Library of Living Philosophers, 1944, pp. 421-444, 710-716.

Elizabeth Ramsden Eames, "Russell's empiricism", Chapter IV of *Bertrand Russell's Theory of Knowledge*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1969, pp. 90-137.

Grover Maxwell, "Russell on perception: a study in philosophical method", D.F Pears (ed), *Bertrand Russell: a Collection of Critical Essays*, Anchor Books, 1972, pp. 110-146.

David Pears, "Russell's views about sense-data", Chapter III of *Bertrand Russell and the British Tradition in Philosophy*, Fontana Library, 1967, pp. 32-42.

Mark Sainsbury, "Knowledge", Chapter VI of *Russell*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979, pp. 161-217.

C. Wade Savage, "Sense-data in Russell's theory of knowledge", C. Wade Savage and C. Anthony Anderson (eds), *Rereading Russell: Essays on Bertrand Russell's Metaphysics and Epistemology*, Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science Volume XII, University of Minnesota Press, 1989, pp. 138-168.

### **Questions for further study**

What is the justification for incorporating knowledge by description into a theory of knowledge?

Can descriptions play the epistemological role that Russell wanted them to play?

How is the notion of knowledge by description related to the theory of definite descriptions?

By what criteria is one to decide what can be known by acquaintance?

Does the foundational role assigned to knowledge by acquaintance make Russell into a classical empiricist?

## **6. Logical atomism**

*The mathematically inclined may wish study "Russell's theory of types": see the end of this reading list. If so, you could replace this tutorial with a type-theory tutorial.*

### **Essay question**

'Every proposition has a unique final analysis.' Is that so?

### **Core readings**

Klement, Kevin, "Russell's Logical Atomism", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2010 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2010/entries/logical-atomism/>.  
*Introductory.*

Russell, B. 'The Philosophy of Logical Atomism' in *Logic and Knowledge*.

*This is a set text.*

David Pears, 'Introduction' to the *Philosophy of Logical Atomism*, (1985), London: Open Court Publishing Company.

Urmson, J. O. (1956). *Philosophical analysis: Its development between the two world wars*. Chapters 9 ("Some detailed defects in logical atomism") and 10 ("The impossibility of reductive analysis").

*Presents objections to logical atomism.*

Mark Sainsbury, *Russell*, (1985), London: Routledge, ch. 2.

### **Further reading**

Russell, B. "The ultimate constituents of matter", in *Mysticism and Logic*.

*This is a set text.*

Russell, "Logical Atomism", in Marsh (ed), *Logic and Knowledge*.

Russell, B. 'Letter to Frege' (12.12.1904), in *Frege, Philosophical and Mathematical Correspondence*.

### **Questions for further study**

What is Russell's theory of propositions?

What is the role played by acquaintance in Russell's philosophy of logical atomism?

What, according to Russell, is the form of "A believes that p"? Is his account plausible?

## 7: Wittgenstein's picture theory

**Essay question:** What problems did Wittgenstein intend the Picture Theory to solve, and how was it supposed to solve them?

### Core readings

L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, 1-4.05, 4.2-4.3  
*This is a set text.*

Bill Child, *Wittgenstein*, ch. 2. Routledge, 2011.  
*Introductory.*

Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, ch. 12.  
*Sets out Russell's "multiple relation" theory of judgment, to which (among other things) Wittgenstein's picture theory was a response.*

David Pears, "The relation between Wittgenstein's picture theory and Russell's theories of judgement" in C. G. Luckhardt (ed), *Wittgenstein: Sources and Perspectives*.

P. M. S. Hacker, "The rise and fall of the picture theory" in I. Block (ed), *Perspectives on the Philosophy of Wittgenstein*.

### Further readings

*Other introductions:*

Anthony Kenny, *Wittgenstein*, chs. 2-4.

G. E. M. Anscombe, *An introduction to Wittgenstein's Tractatus*, chs. 1, 2, 4, 5.

Morris, M. (2008) *Wittgenstein and the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, London: Routledge

White, R. (2006) *Wittgenstein's Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus: A Reader's Guide*, London: Continuum.

*Other more advanced readings:*

Russell, *Theory of Knowledge*, Part I ch. 9, Part II ch 3.

James Griffin, *Wittgenstein's Logical Atomism*, chs. 8-10.

David Pears, *The False Prison*, vol I, ch. 6.

P. M. S. Hacker, *Insight and Illusion* (revised edition), chs. II, III.i.

R. J. Fogelin, *Wittgenstein* (2nd edition) chs. 2, 3.

Peter Carruthers, *Tractarian Semantics*, chs. 3-6, 11, 14, 15.

Peter Sullivan, 'A version of the picture theory' in W. Vossenkuhl (ed) *Ludwig Wittgenstein; Tractatus Klassiker Auslegen*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2001 (also available from Sullivan's website: see <http://www.philosophy.stir.ac.uk/staff/p-sullivan/peters-pubs.php>)

Peter Sullivan, 'Identity theories of truth and the *Tractatus*', *Philosophical Investigations* 28, 2005, 43-62.

Marie McGinn, *Elucidating Wittgenstein's Tractatus*.

Thomas Ricketts, 'Pictures, logic, and the limits of sense in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*', in H. Sluga & D. Stern (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

### Questions for further study

What, if anything, does the idea that a proposition is a picture add to the views that Wittgenstein had already developed in the "Notes on Logic" and "Notes dictated to G. E. Moore"?

". . . the cardinal question of what can be expressed by a proposition, and what can't be expressed, but only shown" (Letter to Russell, 1919 (NB 131)). "My fundamental idea is that the 'logical constants' are not representatives; that there can be no representatives of the logic of facts" (*Tractatus* 4.0312). What is the connection between the "cardinal question" and the "fundamental idea"?

What do you think of the suggestion (for which, see Carruthers) that names in the *Tractatus* have something like Fregean sense, as well as reference?

"We have said that some things are arbitrary in the symbols we use and that some things are not" (*Tractatus* 6.124). Which things are arbitrary and which are not? How does Wittgenstein explain the difference? What is the importance of this principle in the Tractarian picture of language?

"Tautologies and contradictions lack sense" (*Tractatus* 4.461). "Tautologies and contradictions are not, however, nonsensical" (4.4611). What is the difference between senselessness and nonsense, and why does it matter to Wittgenstein?

What is Wittgenstein's account of the semantics of propositional attitude ascriptions? How plausible do you think it is?

## 8: The "resolute reading" of the *Tractatus*

**Essay question:** What is the point of the *Tractatus* distinction between showing and saying? Are

we supposed to take this distinction seriously? If so, what is involved in taking it seriously?

### **Core reading**

Bill Child, *Wittgenstein*, ch. 3. Routledge, 2011.  
*Introductory.*

Cora Diamond, "Throwing away the ladder: How to read the *Tractatus*", in her *The Realistic Spirit* (MIT Press, 1991; originally published, 1988).

James Conant, "Must we show what we cannot say" in R. Fleming & M. Payne (eds) *The Senses of Stanley Cavell* (Bucknell University Press, 1989).

Warren Goldfarb, "Metaphysics and Nonsense: On Cora's Diamond's *The Realistic Spirit*",  
*Journal of Philosophical Research*, 1997, 57-73.

Marie McGinn, "Between Metaphysics and Nonsense: The Role of Elucidation in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*", *Philosophical Quarterly*, October 1999, pp.491-513.

### **Further readings**

A. Crary & R. Read (eds), *The New Wittgenstein* (Routledge, 2000).

P. M. S. Hacker, "Was he trying to whistle it?" in Crary & Read 2000, reprinted in Hacker's *Wittgenstein: Connections and Controversies*.

P. M. S. Hacker, "When the whistling had to stop", in Charles & Child (eds) *Wittgensteinian Themes: Essays in Honour of David Pears*, reprinted in Hacker's *Wittgenstein: Connections and Controversies*.

Ian Proops, "The New Wittgenstein: A Critique", *European Journal of Philosophy* 2001.

Michael Kremer, "The Purpose of Tractarian Nonsense", *Nous*, 2001, 39-73

Peter Sullivan, "On Trying to be Resolute: A Response to Kremer on the *Tractatus*", *European Journal of Philosophy*, 2002, 43-78.

A. W. Moore, "Ineffability and Nonsense", *PASS*, 2003, 169-193.

Peter Sullivan, "Ineffability and Nonsense", *PASS*, 2003, 195-223.

Meredith Williams, "Nonsense and cosmic exile: the austere reading of the *Tractatus*" in *Wittgenstein's Lasting Significance* ed. Max Kolbel and Bernhard Weiss.

Peter Sullivan, "What is the *Tractatus* about?" in *Wittgenstein's Lasting Significance* ed. Max Kolbel and Bernhard Weiss.

J. Conant & C. Diamond, “On reading the *Tractatus* resolutely: reply to Meredith Williams and Peter Sullivan” in *Wittgenstein’s Lasting Significance* ed. Max Kolbel and Bernhard Weiss.

Marie McGinn, *Elucidating the Tractatus* ch. 1, ‘The Single Great Problem’.

### **Questions for further study**

Does the Tractatus contain substantive philosophical doctrines?

Are there, according to the *Tractatus*, truths that are ineffable?

If the propositions of the Tractatus are nonsense, how can we understand them? What, if anything, can they communicate to us? And how do they succeed in doing so?

“If this work has any value, it consists in two things: the first is that thoughts are expressed in it, and on this score the better the thoughts are expressed – the more the nail has been hit on the head – the greater will be its value. Here I am conscious of having fallen a long way short of what is possible. . . On the other hand the *truth* of the thoughts that are here communicated seems to me unassailable and definitive” (TLP, Introduction). How should we understand these claims?

## Optional extra/replacement: Russell's theory of types

### Essay question

Assess the differences between the simple and the ramified theory of types.

### Core reading

Russell, B. (1908) "Mathematical Logic as Based on the Theory of Types". *American Journal of Mathematics*, 30, 222-262. Reprinted in Russell, B. (1956) *Logic and Knowledge*, London: Allen and Unwin, 59-102, and in van Heijenoort, J. (1967) *From Frege to Godel*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 152-182.

*A non-technical presentation of the motivations for and basic ideas of the theory of types. (This is a set text.)*

Copi, I. (1971) *The Theory of Logical Types*, London: Routledge.

*An exceptionally clear exposition of the Simple and Ramified theories of types, together with brief discussion of criticisms of each theory.*

William and Martha Kneale (1962), *The Development of Logic*, OUP. Chapter XI, section 2 ("Russell's Theory of Logical Types").

*Puts the development of type theories into its historical context.*

Godel, Kurt (1944) "Russell's Mathematical Logic" in Schilpp, Paul Arthur (ed.) (1951) *The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell*, 3rd edition, New York: Tudor, 123-153. Reprinted in Benacerraf, P. and H. Putnam (eds.) (1983) *Philosophy of Mathematics*, 2nd edition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 447-469.

Warren Goldfarb, "Russell's reasons for ramification", C.W. Savage and C. A. Anderson (eds), *Rereading Russell, Essays in Bertrand Russell's Metaphysics and Epistemology*, University of Minnesota Press, 1989, pp. 24-40.

*Challenges the view that ramification is ill-motivated.*

### Further reading

Potter, M. (2000) *Reason's Nearest Kin: Philosophies of Arithmetic from Kant to Carnap*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapter 5.

Ramsey, F.P. (1926) "Mathematical Logic". *Mathematical Gazette* 13, 185-194. Reprinted in Ramsey, Frank P. (1960) *The Foundations of Mathematics*, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1931, 62-81 and in Ramsey, Frank P. (1990) *Philosophical Papers*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 225-244.

Alasdair Urquhart, "The theory of types", Nicholas Griffin (ed), *The Cambridge Companion to Bertrand Russell*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 286-309.

Alfred North Whitehead and Bertrand Russell, "The theory of logical types", *Principia Mathematica*, Vol. I, Cambridge University Press, 1910, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn 1927, pp. 37-65.

Russell, B. 'Letter from Russell' (16.6.1902), in *Frege, Philosophical and Mathematical Correspondence*.

Frege, *The Basic Laws of Arithmetic*, appendix to Vol. II (reprinted as 'Frege on Russell's Paradox' in *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege*).

Frege, G. 'Letter to Russell (22.6.190)', in *Frege, Philosophical and Mathematical Correspondence*.

Russell, *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*, ch. 1-3 and 12-18, esp. 1-2 and 18. *This is a set text.*

Boolos, G. 'The Advantages of Honest Toil over Theft', in his *Logic, Logic, and Logic*, pp.255-274.

Rudolf Carnap, "The logicist foundations of mathematics" (1930), Paul Benacerraf and Hilary Putnam (eds) *Philosophy of Mathematics: Selected Readings*, 2nd edn, Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 41-52.

Peter Hylton, "Logic in Russell's Logicism", David Bell and Neil Cooper (eds), *The Analytic Tradition: Philosophical Quarterly Monographs*, Vol. 1, Blackwell's, Oxford, pp. 137-172.

Georg Kreisel, biographical memoir of Bertrand Russell, Chapters II, "Mathematical logic and logical foundations of mathematics", *Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of The Royal Society* 19 (1973), pp. 591-606.

### **Questions for further study**

Does Russell's Theory of Types provide a satisfactory solution to Russell's Paradox?

Does Russell's Axiom of Reducibility have any merit?

'Whether the axiom [of infinity] is true or false, there seems no known method of discovering' (RUSSELL). Discuss.

'It is more prudent to content ourselves with the class of couples, which we are sure of, than to hunt for a problematical number 2 which must always remain elusive' (RUSSELL). Can Russell's definition of the number 2 be defended?

What, according to Russell, are numbers? Is his view of this matter to be preferred to Frege's?

What grounds did Russell have for calling the Axiom of Reducibility a principle of *logic*?

Did Russell succeed in motivating the whole of the ramified theory of types by reference to the Vicious Circle Principle?

Did Russell make clear that the theory of types is 'really about symbols, not things'?