INVITED PAPER

Cora Diamond
coradiamond@gmail.com

Wittgenstein and What Can Only Be True

Abstract

In her Introduction to Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, Elizabeth Anscombe took it to be a fault of the *Tractatus* that it excluded the statement "'Someone' is not the name of someone", which she took to be obviously true. It is not a bipolar proposition, and its negation, she said, peters out into nothingness. I examine the question whether she is right that the *Tractatus* excludes such propositions, and I consider her example in relation to other propositions which, arguably at least, have no intelligible negation. In considering the particular case of Frege's response to Benno Kerry about the concept 'horse', I try to develop an account of the place in Wittgenstein's philosophy for certain sorts of proposition which do not have an intelligible negation.

Introduction

I want to explore here an issue that comes up in thinking about Wittgenstein. My approach is shaped by a question that Warren Goldfarb asked. To explain the problem, I first set out how things seemed to me *before* the Goldfarb question, and then I show how his question leads to a rethinking of the issue.

I start from something that Anscombe took to be a major flaw in the *Tractatus*, that it excludes propositions that can only be true, apart from tautologies and mathematical propositions (1963: 77, 85). One might ask how much of what Anscombe wanted Wittgenstein could allow for; and that leads to two questions: what Wittgenstein could allow for, and what Anscombe wanted. Let me add something about what the interest is of the overall question. When Anscombe wrote her book about the *Tractatus*, she argued against interpretations that took Wittgenstein to be putting forward two separable theories: a picture theory of elementary propositions and a truth-functional account of composite propositions (1963: 25). That idea is incompatible, she thought, with the fundamental insights about truth and meaning that there were in the book. So what I am asking is how far one can hold on to a more or less Wittgensteinian account of propositions that can only be true, that allows for (at least some of) the propositions Anscombe took to have been wrongly excluded, while not dropping the features of Wittgenstein's thought that are tied to his fundamental insights as she saw them. Anscombe herself at one point did ask a related question: what important thoughts from Wittgenstein's first great work remain, if we explore what was not and what was rejected by Wittgenstein later on? (2011b: 179-80)

Here is another way of putting the issues. What Anscombe took to be right in the *Tractatus* was inseparable from its not being a mere combination of a theory of the picture-character of elementary propositions and a truth-functional account of composite propositions. Rather, the essential thing is its account of propositions which have the possibility of truth and of falsity, and of how one and the same reality corresponds to both such a proposition and its negation (see for example, 2011a: 74). What is built into this understanding is the connection between the possibility of truth and falsity for such propositions and there being one proposition which is true if the proposition is false and false if it is true; what is also built into it is a profound distinction between such propositions and those which do not have the possibility of truth and of falsity. That distinction, as Anscombe understands what becomes of it in the *Tractatus*, is the basis of her complaint

about what the book excludes. I believe that the distinction as it works itself out in the *Tractatus* is not exactly what Anscombe thought, and also that (as she herself insists) things become a lot more complicated later (2011b: 179). The distinction itself belongs to the things that are insightful on her view; but the question is how to understand it, and this involves seeing what it was to start with, as well as how it all gets more complicated. The first two parts of this essay are about the distinction as it can be seen in the *Tractatus*; the third part is about a class of propositions that Anscombe thought were wrongly excluded by the *Tractatus*. In the fourth part I turn to Goldfarb's question, and there and in part 5 I show how it reshapes the question about what Wittgenstein might allow for. In a larger project of which this is part, I consider both how the issue gets more complicated in Wittgenstein's later work, and also how far apart, in the end, Wittgenstein and Anscombe were.

Part 1

I begin with what I call the everything-else-is-nonsense assumption, which structures many readings of the *Tractatus*. According to that assumption, Wittgenstein held in the *Tractatus* that anything that appears proposition-like but is not a contingent description of how things are, and is not a tautology or contradiction, is nonsense. The assumption also appears in the form of the idea that, according to the *Tractatus*, everything that looks proposition-like, but is not a truth-function of elementary propositions, is nonsense. Sometimes the assumption is expressed in a way that explicitly allows for mathematical propositions not to count as nonsensical. But in whatever way the assumption is expressed, the basic idea is that, according to the *Tractatus*, there are sayings how things are, and also logical propositions and possibly also mathematical propositions; and then beyond that, there are propositions which, in virtue of not being of those types, are nonsensical. Anscombe accepted a version of the assumption, and it is important in what she takes the

Tractatus to *exclude*.[1] So I need to consider what might be wrong with the assumption. My argument will depend upon Wittgenstein's treatment of mathematical and scientific propositions, which Anscombe does not discuss. Her overall presentation of the picture theory and what it supposedly excludes depends upon there being available a story about Wittgenstein on mathematics and science that does not undercut the everything-else-is-nonsense assumption (1963: 78, 79-80), and it is at least questionable whether there is any such story.

Here I need to mention that there is a question about the use of "proposition" in discussing Wittgenstein's thought, since the word "*Satz*" can be translated either as "proposition" or as "sentence", depending on context. Moore, in his notes to Wittgenstein's lectures, said that Wittgenstein often used the English words interchangeably (1959: 268). I shall look in more detail at the use of "*Satz*" in discussing his thought in Part 2. My view is that the reader needs to see what is involved in Wittgenstein's use of any of these words at any particular point, and that questions of this or that translation are not usually significant. I stick to "proposition" for "*Satz*".

There are two philosophers who have brought out, in different but related ways, what is the matter with the everything-else-is-nonsense assumption. One is James Griffin, in his explanation of the *Tractatus* treatment of scientific propositions (1964: 102-108). Griffin points out that "many general statements in science need not be treated as truth-functions of elementary propositions" (102-3). They are not empirical propositions, and are not tautologies or contradictions; they are not propositions in the logical sense specified through the general form of proposition. But these propositions do have an important function: they supply "representational techniques". These techniques may be very useful for a time but then may be superseded when more useful ones are

---

[1] For Anscombe's commitment to the assumption, see (for example) the line of argument which leads her to hold that Wittgenstein took "'p' says that p" to be a bipolar proposition (1963: 88). The quoted sentence is not a tautology; so the idea is then that, if it is not nonsense, it must be bipolar.

found. There is no suggestion that scientific propositions that are not truth-functions of elementary propositions would count as nonsensical on the *Tractatus* view. Rather, they have a function which is quite different from that of propositions in the logical sense, and which can be spelled out. What is significant in Griffin's treatment of Wittgenstein on scientific laws is how his thought moves. He takes the fact that many general statements in science are not truth-functions of elementary propositions to set the question what exactly their use is. His discussion makes clear an important possible response to the fact that some kind of proposition is neither a contingent proposition nor a tautology nor a contradiction. Griffin's approach relies implicitly on a way of taking the *Tractatus* on *meaningfulness*. Something that looks proposition-like may not be a senseful proposition, in the sense specified in the *Tractatus*.[2] But it is not nonsensical, it is not meaning*less*, if it has a function tied in with our use of senseful language. That idea, which is implicit in Griffin's treatment of scientific laws, is made explicit and defended in detail by Michael Kremer. He argues that the most general notion of meaningfulness in the *Tractatus* is *having a linguistic function*, and he shows the bearing of that general point on the specific case of mathematical equations—which have a distinct function, but are not empirical propositions and not tautologies. To see the status of both mathematical propositions and tautologies in the *Tractatus*, we need to attend to their role in facilitating inferences with senseful propositions. It's because they have such a role that mathematical propositions, like tautologies, are not nonsensical, not meaning*less* (2002: especially p. 300). And, like tautologies, mathematical propositions can be described as *senseless*, where this indicates their lack of sense but does not imply nonsensicality. (As I read the *Tractatus*, nonsensical propositions count as senseless, but the inverse doesn't hold.)

There is a label available in the *Tractatus* for things that look like propositions and that have a role in what we do with senseful

---

[2] My further uses of the expression "senseful proposition" in discussing the *Tractatus* should be taken to be abbreviations for "senseful propositions in the sense specified in the *Tractatus*".

propositions but are not themselves senseful propositions. An expression constructed by putting an equal sign between two signs means that either of the flanking signs can be substituted for the other; and Wittgenstein speaks of such expressions as *Behelfe der Darstellung*: aids to representation (*TLP*: 4.242). There are two other labels we can use, which come from Wittgenstein's later philosophy. In 1939, Wittgenstein spoke of the contrast between propositions that belong to the apparatus of language and those that belong to its application; and this suggests one label we might use for things which look like propositions saying that something or other is the case, but which function as part of the apparatus of language. We could speak of "apparatus propositions" (1976: 250). We could also speak of propositions as "preparatory" if what they do is, in a sense, to prepare language for what we go on to do with it, as definitions, for example, do.[3] My claim right now is that the *Tractatus* allows for various apparatus propositions, sentences that have a function tied in with making inferences, or tied in in other ways with the use of senseful propositions. These, I am arguing, are not nonsensical. This means that there is no general inference from some sentence's not being a contingent description of things, nor a tautology nor a contradiction, to its counting as nonsense on the *Tractatus* view. It's part of my claim that you'd have to look at the use of a type of proposition to see whether propositions of that sort were apparatus propositions. So, for example, linguistic rules of various sorts in propositional form, including translation rules, would count as apparatus propositions, and hence would not be meaningless according to the *Tractatus*. I don't think that Wittgenstein, at the time of writing the *Tractatus*, had any interest in the variety of kinds of case there might be of such propositions apart from the cases actually mentioned, but his absence of interest

---

[3] The idea of mathematical propositions or grammatical propositions as belonging to the "preparation" of language comes up in various ways in Wittgenstein's lectures during the 1930s. See for example the statement in 1931 that "mathematics can be learned beforehand" (1980: 62) . Here we have the idea of a kind of logical "before", where what belongs to grammar comes "before" the application of language. Cf. also Moore's notes from Wittgenstein's lectures in 1932-3 (1959: 279). I return to the topic of Wittgenstein on "preparatory" uses of language in Part 4.

should not be read as an implicit denial of their existence. The basic idea is: if some type of apparent propositions (*Scheinsätze*) have a use in aiding what we do with senseful propositions, those propositions are not nonsense. Uses are not specified in advance. One way of putting what is common to Griffin's reading and Kremer's is that they reject a reading of the *Tractatus* which models it on the sort of everything-else-is-nonsense structure that genuinely can be found in *Language, Truth and Logic*. The everything-else-is-nonsense assumption may be a remnant of a logical positivist reading of the *Tractatus*.

In Part 2, I will consider some objections to the account so far, but first there are two important general points about apparatus propositions. First, they fit in with an important remark in the *Tractatus*, that everyday language depends upon all sorts of conventions and other arrangements that we don't usually think about, and that help to conceal the underlying logical structures. Secondly, everyday language, because it has all these arrangements, is responsive to the particular realities of our lives, again in ways we don't usually have any reason to think about. Thus, for example, definitions are or aren't useful because of what sorts of things we happen to need to speak about in particular ways. So there is room in the *Tractatus* for the idea that language-structures can be responsive to particular realities, but the kind of way it actually works is not taken to have any significance for the philosophical project of the *Tractatus*. But the fact that there is room for such responsiveness suggests another label we might use for propositions that function to make language responsive in various ways to particular realities, as definitions do, or the representational techniques provided by scientific laws. We can call these "accommodatory" propositions.

Part 2

It may be argued that there is an obvious tension between suggesting that Wittgenstein allowed for the existence of apparatus propositions in the *Tractatus*, and his recurrent emphasis on propositions' being representations of how things stand. It looks (that is) as if there is a pretty strong presumption in favour of the

everything-else-is-nonsense reading of the *Tractatus*. (I am very grateful to Lars Hertzberg for putting this point forcefully to me.)

To reply to the objection, I need to consider the complicated use of the word "*Satz*" in the *Tractatus*. I want to put it into perspective by considering it along with a passage from Frege and one from Russell.

In "Concept and Object" (1984), Frege pointed out that the word "concept" was used in various ways. At no point did he claim that the use he set out in his great essay was *correct*. He said that he did not dispute Benno Kerry's right to use the word in his own way, and asked of Kerry only that his own equal right be respected, and that Kerry admit that Frege had got hold of a distinction of the highest importance. *That*, indeed, is the aim of the essay: to make that distinction and its importance clear. To understand Frege, to get the point of the essay, is to see what it is he calls a concept, *what counts as that*. It would be misleading to say that he is explaining *what concepts are*, as if Kerry had got that wrong. The word "concept" is not what is at stake, but is essentially secondary. I don't want to suggest that Frege should have used the word "pumpkin" (say) instead of "concept", but it would not have affected the philosophical point. When Frege said that there were various uses of "concept", he added that its sense was sometimes psychological, sometimes logical, and sometimes "a confused mixture of both" (1984: 182). The logical use needed to be put clearly before us, in the face of the various and to some degree confused existing uses of "concept"; and if Frege can achieve the "meeting of minds" at which he aims, the understanding of the logical use, the appropriation of this or that particular word rather than some other for what is thus understood, is not important.

The idea of a philosophical task of getting something indefinable and of logical importance clearly into view is understood in a somewhat different way by Russell, who appeals in this connection to the notion of *acquaintance with an entity*: the idea is that philosophy should present the entity in question to the mind in such a way that it may have the same sort of acquaintance with it as it has with the taste of a pineapple (1996: xv). Prior to the success of such an endeavor, there would not be a way of *fixing on* what it is

you are trying to put before the mind. The clear putting-before-the-mind itself is the only kind of focused specification there can be of *what* is being put before the mind.

Wittgenstein's idea of philosophy as an activity of clarification is similarly tied to the idea that what it is that is being clarified comes out in the clarification. What he wants to clarify in the *Tractatus* is *propositionhood*, but what actually is being clarified you can see only in the clarification, the setting out of a use of words, which you can call the proposition-use. But he does this in two different ways, and so there are two central uses of the word "proposition": (1) the word is used for representations of situations (and what that means is spelled out through the discussion of pictures and of construction from elementary propositions), and (2) the word is used for whatever can be constructed by truth-functions from all elementary propositions (thus including, in addition to everything counted as a proposition according to the first use, tautologies and contradictions, taken as a kind of limiting case of propositions). Philosophy as an activity of clarification can get both of these uses clear; and indeed if you prefer "pumpkin" for one use in order to distinguish it from the other, that would not interfere with the achieving of the kind of clarity Wittgenstein was after. So long as you are clear what is going on, there is also nothing wrong with using the word "proposition" in connection with both of the logical uses. The question is *what is getting counted as that*; and in each case, if you are clear about *that*, then call it what you like.

In discussing Wittgenstein's use of "*Satz*", Kremer has argued that, so far as we take the paradigm case of *Satz* to be *sinnvolle Satz*, "tautologies and contradictions are *Sätze* in some more parasitic and secondary sense" (2002: 275); but one could also argue that the recursive specification of *propositions* as constructed by truth-functions from elementary propositions gives *propositionhood* a logical generality tied to the generality of propositional construction by operations, and that it was in that sense logically deeper. I do not think that the *Tractatus* suggests that readers should fix on one aspect-seeing of *propositionhood* rather than the other; the point would rather be to demand of readers that they are aware of the different ways of using "proposition". It should be noted that the

Prototractatus contains a fairly clear expression of preference for the first way of looking at the use of "proposition" (the second sentence of 4.4303), which is not in the *Tractatus*; and the *Tractatus* reverses the order of the discussion (under proposition 4) of tautologies and contradictions on the one hand and the generality of propositionhood on the other. There is also a very significant shift from *Prototractatus* to *Tractatus* in the treatment of propositions at the beginning of the 6's. The *Prototractatus* does not identify the general form of truth-function with the general form of proposition (as the *Tractatus* does); and it has no propositions corresponding to the *Tractatus* on the general form of transition between propositions.

While Frege did say that Kerry had a right to use the word "concept" in his own way, he might well have thought that it wasn't a great idea to use the word "concept" to mean a capacity to think about such-and-such kinds of things (so that one could say that the concept 'horse' was easily acquired, and mean that a capacity to pick out and think about horses was easily acquired). Such a use, which Frege was clearly committed to allowing, might nevertheless have seemed all too likely to be run together confusedly with the logical use. The situation is somewhat different, though, if we consider the *Tractatus*, and uses of "proposition" other than the two central logical uses.

We can note first the use (*TLP* 6.34) of "proposition" for various *a priori* insights; these are neither tautologies nor senseful propositions. In discussing probability, Wittgenstein again uses the word "proposition" (*TLP* 5.154-5.155) for the result of a kind of calculation. Such propositions are not senseful propositions and they are not tautologies. They could as well, I think, have been described by him as *Scheinsätze*, which would draw to attention that they *resemble* senseful propositions. And Wittgenstein does speak of the propositions of mathematics as equations and "therefore" as *Scheinsätze*. The "therefore" harks back to *TLP* 4.241-4.242, where Wittgenstein says that expressions in which an equal sign is flanked by two expressions are merely *Behelfe der Darstellung*, and that they don't say anything about the things meant by the expressions that

flank the equal sign. That is, they don't represent a situation involving those things. They aren't, that is, senseful propositions.

The point at *TLP* 4.241-4.242 has an important implication for the argument here. It implies that you cannot, in general, tell from what a proposition looks like what it is about, if indeed it is about anything. (This is in fact also implied, though in more general terms, by Wittgenstein's remark about Russell's having made clear that you can't discern a proposition's logical form from its apparent logical form, *TLP* 4.0031.[4]) If one does not attend to the point, it may seem that there is an easy line of argument that will show that the sorts of proposition at issue here are nonsensical. Here is an example of the argument, as applied to probability propositions.

> According to Wittgenstein, a probability proposition is a proposition of the form "Proposition B gives to proposition A the probability m/n ($0 \leq m/n \leq 1$)". These are overtly propositions about other propositions. Such propositions are excluded by the *Tractatus*. What probability propositions are supposed to affirm thus lies outside the domain of what can be expressed by meaningful propositions. The propositions are therefore nonsensical.[5]

If, in speaking of what a proposition is about, you are going by its sheer look, then you cannot infer anything at all from what a proposition is about (in this sense), concerning whether the proposition attempts to assert something that lies "outside the domain of the sayable". In contrast, if you restrict yourself to a logical use of "about" (as in *TLP* 4.242), then telling what a proposition is about in this sense will depend on considering its use, not its look. But the *Tractatus* view would then be that, if you consider the use of probability propositions (they give the results of a kind of calculation, and are useful in judging the assumptions that we may be making about a situation), you will see that probability propositions are no more *about propositions* (in the restricted sense of "about") than equations or identity-propositions are *about* the

---

[4] But see also Kremer 2012. *TLP* 4.242 has an important connection with Kremer's argument, in that a misreading of the form of identity propositions is tied to the misunderstanding of "identical" that Kremer discusses.

[5] The argument here is based on Pasquale Frascolla's discussion (2007: 182, 200).

things meant by the signs that flank the equal-sign. Putting the point another way: the argument that I imagined depends on assuming that, for Wittgenstein, "Proposition B gives to proposition A the probability m/n" is *either* a senseful contingent proposition about propositions (and that possibility can be ruled out) *or* a nonsensical pseudo-proposition that attempts to say something a priori about the two propositions. – What is the matter with that assumption can be spelled out in various ways; here I briefly note two. (1) The two possibilities, the "either"-"or", will appear to exhaust the possibilities only if one does not take into account that the superficial form of probability propositions may be misleading. (2) The "either"-"or" assumption has built into it the idea that one can set aside the question how a proposition is used in considering what the form is of a proposition and what it is about. And this further has built into it the idea that one could first establish that the proposition is nonsensical and then go on to investigate what uses it might have.

What is important about the flawed argument above is that it illustrates how a useful kind of proposition, which indeed *lacks sense*, can be misunderstood as making, or trying to make, an assertion of something that supposedly cannot be said, according to the *Tractatus*. The stage at which the misunderstanding occurs is the stage at which, without considering at all the use of the proposition, one imagines that one can discern in its superficial form, the form of a kind of would-be assertion.[6]

Although I am here focusing on the *Tractatus*, we should note that in Wittgenstein's lectures in the early 1930s he speaks explicitly of the possibility of using the word "proposition" in a strict sense and also in a sense in which it includes mathematical propositions and so-called "hypotheses", used as providing forms of description.

---

[6] Frascolla does discuss the use of probability propositions, but puts consideration of use after the setting out of the logical character of these propositions. His argument reflects very clearly the idea that the use is not relevant to the form of the propositions in question. That the propositions are supposedly nonsensical can be established prior to and independently of considering their use. For an account of the *Tractatus* understanding of probability propositions and their use which does not read their form from what they look like, see Juliet Floyd 2010.

He notes that the wider use of "proposition" goes with significant logical analogies between propositions in the strict sense and propositions in this wider sense.

In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein speaks of nonsensical *Scheinsätze* at various points, but he also uses the plain word "*Satz*" in talking about other cases of nonsense, including (for example) "Socrates is identical" and "1 is a number", as well as the propositions of the *Tractatus* itself. When they are called *Sätze*, though, nothing is meant by this beyond their mere appearance: they more or less resemble senseful propositions.

One important point should be added to this account of how the *Tractatus* uses the word "proposition". Wittgenstein introduces a way of speaking of "same proposition" at 4.465 and 5.141. These ways of speaking of the identity of propositions are not applicable to senseless propositions other than tautologies and contradictions, although there is no reason why one could not (for example) treat mathematical propositions written in different notations as "the same mathematical proposition". Again, one could also introduce a way of treating the identity of propositions, which allowed *TLP* 5 (for example) to count as the same proposition whatever language it was written in, and which at the same time recognized the proposition as nonsensical.

I have three conclusions about the way the *Tractatus* speaks of *Sätze*:

1. The reader of the *Tractatus* is expected to distinguish the various cases here. The important thing is not the word "*Satz*" itself. There are four groupings of cases that might be labelled with the word "*Satz*": (a) senseful propositions; (b) senseful propositions and logical propositions; (c) senseful propositions, logical propositions and other propositions which lack sense but which are useful in connection with the uses of senseful propositions and which have some logical analogies with senseful propositions; (d) anything looking like a proposition. With these different cases in view, the reader will also be able to consider whether some particular use of the word "*Satz*" (or "proposition") might involve equivocating (in the sense of taking for granted a wider and

narrower use of the word at the same time), or might involve simply failing to make any definite determination.

2. The *theme* (as one might put it) of *propositions being representations of situations* is central in the *Tractatus*, but the presence and significance of that theme leaves unsettled the question what the status is of anything which appears to be a proposition but which does not represent a situation. There is no inference from something's not being a senseful proposition to its being a bit of nonsense; nor is there an inference from its not being a senseful proposition and not being a tautology or contradiction to its being a bit of nonsense.

3. The superficial form of a propositional construction tells us nothing about what its use is, if indeed it has any use. It does not enable us to see in the propositional sign a tie to a would-be assertion of some sort. There is no route from the superficial form of a propositional construction to a diagnosis of nonsensicality. If we imagine that we see "what the proposition is trying to say", we are taking its superficial form as a guide to the form of something that (as we think) would have to be outside the limits of sense; but the confusion here lies in a misunderstanding of what it is for something that looks like a proposition to have this or that "form". When Wittgenstein says of a bit of language: "That can't be said", that implies that it has nothing but its superficial form, i.e., that there is nothing to it; it dissolves.

I am not in this essay arguing that the *Tractatus* excludes no sort of proposition, although I take that to be so. I will comment here only that the idea that the book excludes "synthetic necessary truths" depends upon the idea that we can recognize some propositional constructions as would-be synthetic necessary truths, and as therefore lying outside the limits of language. But what is the matter in the case of such propositions is something that is the matter with *us*, with our taking the superficial form of a propositional construction as an indication of a kind of would-be assertion.

I have been arguing against the "everything-else-is-nonsense" reading of the *Tractatus*. But it might be objected that my account clearly goes too far. If I am suggesting that something that looks

like a proposition, but has a use, does not count as nonsensical on the *Tractatus* view, am I not (the objection goes) committing myself to the idea that the propositions of the *Tractatus* itself don't count as nonsense, since plainly they are intended to have a use? And wouldn't that run against Wittgenstein's calling them nonsensical? But the objection rests on misunderstanding: I am not suggesting that everything that looks like a proposition but has a use is therefore meaningful. We need to distinguish cases like that of equations, which are *Scheinsätze*, which may look as if they are about things named in them, and which have a usefulness which is not dependent on taking them to be about those things, from cases of *Scheinsätze* which look as if they are about things named in them (and are such that, taken in that way, they are nonsensical because they contain some sign or signs with no meaning), and which have a usefulness dependent upon both their capacity to mislead us (through their apparent aboutness) and our ultimate capacity to see through the deception. Propositions of mathematics and logic, definitions, scientific laws, probability propositions, and so on have a usefulness tied in in various ways with the functioning of senseful propositions, a usefulness which is in no way dependent upon taking them to be a kind of failed senseful proposition, whereas there are other propositions which are useful in particular contexts precisely through the recognition of such failure.

Summary of Parts 1 and 2: According to the *Tractatus*, the apparatus of language includes a variety of proposition-like structures which in various ways aid in the application of language. These are not senseful propositions, but there is no indication in the *Tractatus* that Wittgenstein took such propositions to be nonsensical. Such propositions may, however, be mis-seen as would-be assertions of something supposedly outside the limits of language. This kind of mis-seeing can be avoided if you take seriously that you cannot tell from the superficial appearance of a proposition-like structure what its form is, or what, if anything, it is about, and if you take seriously that you cannot judge a proposition-like structure to be nonsensical without considering what kind of use in the language such propositions may have.

Part 3

Part 3 starts from Anscombe's claim that one thing wrong with the picture theory was that it excludes too much. My aim in this section is to get into view a class of propositions in which she was particularly interested, and which she took to be excluded by the *Tractatus*.

A lecture of Anscombe's on truth, from 1983, is relevant here.[7] In the lecture, she explains Wittgenstein's idea that one and the same reality corresponds to a proposition and its negation, and she adds that this is indeed essential to the meaning, the sense or *significatio*, of the sort of proposition that can be true *or* false. And later in that lecture, she speaks of the sort of propositions that are such that *truth* cannot be the sole possibility for them. So her idea there is that the sort of propositions that the *Tractatus* theory fits constitute one sort of proposition, the ones such that truth cannot be the sole possibility for them. Her words imply that there is at least one other sort of proposition. One such "other sort" would then be propositions that do not have two possibilities, the sole possibility for propositions of this sort being truth. In 1959, in her *Introduction to Wittgenstein's Tractatus*, she had discussed a proposition about which she says both that it is true, and that it is prohibited by the *Tractatus* because there is nothing that it says is not the case (as opposed to the equally possible situation of its being the case), and it is not a logical truth in the strict sense. This is the proposition "'Someone' is not the name of someone". She argues that this can be illuminatingly said, though what it denies is nothing but confusion; its contradictory, she adds, "peters out into nothingness". For the proposition itself, there is only the possibility of truth, which means, she says, that it is not allowed by the *Tractatus* (1963: 85-6). And she also says that this is a reason why Wittgenstein's theory is inadequate, because it excludes such propositions – where these would be among the ones that she pointed out also as possibilities in the 1983 lecture. I shall speak of propositions that have only the possibility of truth as can-only-be-

---

[7] Anscombe 2011a. Anscombe's title for the lecture was "Truth".

true propositions. Her point, that the *Tractatus* treatment of these propositions was inadequate, needs to be put carefully. The *Tractatus*, as she reads it, does not exclude tautologies and mathematical equations; and these are indeed propositions that do not have the possibility of truth and that of falsity. So Anscombe's objection to the *Tractatus* is that it excludes all can-only-be-true propositions except for tautologies and equations.

I think that there are problems in Anscombe's discussion of "'Someone' is not the name of someone". (See Diamond 2004.) But I am interested here in a general claim that is not dependent on the particular example. The claim is that, in excluding all can-only-be-true propositions apart from tautologies and equations, the *Tractatus* is excluding a significant group of propositions, the contradictories of which peter out into nothingness. It is part of this claim that such propositions may have a use; they may be illuminating. It may be that, in her objection to the *Tractatus*, Anscombe was concerned also with other types of can-only-be-true propositions, in addition to those whose contradictories peter out. But I shall be concerned only with those propositions that do not have anything intelligible opposed to them.

I want to consider some other possible cases, but how exactly should these cases be described? At this point, in as non-committal a way as possible. They will be cases where there is a kind of asymmetry between a proposition and its negation: the proposition itself might be said to have a use, or to be intelligible, or to be thinkable, or to be illuminating, or indeed (as in Anscombe's example) to be true, while its negation falls apart, is not something thinkable, has nothing to it but confusion – or something of the kind. This asymmetry then can be contrasted with the symmetry of two different kinds of case. There is first the symmetry of senseful propositions in the *Tractatus* sense, each of which is a member of a pair, both members of which have the possibility of truth and the possibility of falsehood. My cases will also involve a contrast with necessary truths the negations of which do not peter out into nothing but supposedly express *something that cannot be the case*, "substantial impossibilities", as they might be called. The negations of the propositions with which I am concerned are not expressive

of anything but confusion. Tautologies and contradictions constitute a special case. Examining the reasons for putting them either with symmetric pairs or with asymmetric propositions would take me too far out of the way.

The first set of cases comes from the *Tractatus* and the *Prototractatus*, and is discussed by Michael Kremer (2002). Kremer argues that we should read the *Tractatus* on mathematical equations as involving an asymmetry of the general sort specified above. Correct equations have a use, and count on the *Tractatus* view as meaningful though not senseful; incorrect equations (and presumably this would apply also to incorrect inequations) have no use in the language and are meaningless nonsense. Kremer also discusses the related case of the *Prototractatus* description of correct mathematical propositions as self-evident, and of incorrect ones as nonsense; and again there is an asymmetry of the sort with which I'm concerned. (Kremer argues that the changes we see later, in the 1922 version of the *Tractatus*, reflect the idea that incorrect equations do not even count as "mathematical propositions", which is a view that maintains the asymmetry but expresses it differently.) Although I want to focus here on the *Tractatus*, we should note that in the lectures reported by Moore, Wittgenstein said that there were a large number of different sorts of propositions that have no intelligible negation, including mathematical propositions, logical propositions, and some propositions about colour (Moore, 1959: 267). Kremer's account of Wittgenstein on equations has an important consequence. We can see that behind the usefulness of the equation there lies the calculation of which it is the record. The corresponding point is somewhat obscured in Anscombe's treatment of "'Someone' is not the name of someone", of which she says that it may be illuminating. But it is not so much the statement itself which is illuminating, but rather the clarification (which she gives) which underpins the statement by explaining how different the use of "someone" is from that of a name. Her proposition has the clarificatory activity behind it in something like the way the equation has behind it the carrying out of the calculation.

Cases of the sort which interest me can come up in the context of philosophical controversy, as is illustrated by two examples. The first is from Timothy Chappell's account of Bernard Williams on internal and external reasons. He formulates the "wider" version of Williams's claim this way: "Nothing can be a reason for me to do such-and-such, unless doing so furthers some motivation I have or would come to if I deliberated fully rationally". The structure of Williams's view (as Chappell describes it) is the same as the structure of Anscombe's account of her example. In both cases, the true proposition is negative, and what it denies is, as Chappell puts it, "only a piece of confusion".[8] A second case comes from Peter Geach's description of the statement, "A proposition can occur now asserted, now unasserted, without losing its identity or truth-value". He describes the point there ("the Frege point") as "not a thesis, or a conclusion derivable from premises, but an attainable insight", and says that what is opposed to it is "not a contrary arguable thesis" but mere muddle (1979: 223). Geach also wrote about this sort of case in his autobiographical memoir, where he said that he learned from Wittgenstein "that philosophical mistakes are often not refutable falsehoods but confusions", and that the contrary insights "cannot be conveyed in proper propositions with a truth-value" (1991: 13).

Part 4

In this part and the next, I consider the relevance of Frege's ideas to the questions I have been discussing, beginning with what he says about "The concept 'horse' is not a concept", which I shall refer to as "the concept-horse proposition". (I am grateful to Warren Goldfarb for asking how this case would fit into my discussion of Wittgenstein, Anscombe and what can only be true.)

We should note that the concept-horse proposition, as Frege uses it, resembles several of the cases we have seen so far in being

---

[8] Chappell 2010. The version I quote has been replaced. The later version is not so neatly quotable but makes the same point: what is opposed to Williams's view is not something intelligible.

negative in surface form, and intended to correct a confusion. Frege's specific target was Benno Kerry's use of the proposition: "The concept 'horse' is a concept easily acquired", but the target would include any similarly constructed proposition purporting to ascribe a property to the concept 'horse', where that is purportedly a concept in Frege's sense; and the target also includes "The concept 'horse' is a concept".

It is not entirely clear how to see the relation between the concept-horse proposition and Anscombe's problems about the *Tractatus*. A different region of Frege's thought provides us with a tool that we might try to use here. In discussing *definition*, Frege repeatedly treated the propositions that are used to give definitions as having two different roles, one role when they are used to stipulate a meaning for a sign which does not as yet have a meaning, and a different role afterwards. Speaking of the context in which the stipulation is given, one can say that the definition "is concerned only with signs"; but it then "goes over into a sentence asserting an identity" (1979: 208). Frege, that is, allows for there being a phase in the working out of a systematic science prior to the system's actual use, a phase in which the expressions that will be used in the system are prepared for use. This phase may include the giving of definitions (establishing the sense of some of the signs that will be used), the clarification of complex notions that have been expressed by simple signs with an established use, and the clarification of the logically primitive elements of the system (which will not be a matter of definition or analysis). Definition-propositions, then, are striking in having, in the preparatory stage, a role concerned only with signs, and in being capable of functioning as assertions afterwards. Thus, for example, if the definition-proposition defines what logically has the role of a proper name, the proposition can afterwards be used to say of the thing named that it stands in the relation of identity to itself; and the two names that flank the identity sign will have the same sense. In this use, the proposition asserts something about the thing named, but did not do so before. If the proposition "The concept 'horse' is not a concept" can be taken also to belong to the preparatory stage (i.e., to the stage of sharpening of linguistic tools, prior to the use of

these tools), might this affect its characterization? My idea here is that Frege's treatment of the logical difference in the role of definition-propositions, depending on whether they occur in the preparation for a system or in its use, suggests that in general there may be a question whether a proposition occurring within the "preparatory" stage might have a use that is different from what one might assume if one took it to be straightforwardly an assertion about the things meant by the words in it. I am not here suggesting that the general issue is one on which Frege had a view, but only that the view that he did indeed have, that definition-propositions have two distinct roles, one when they are used in the propaedeutic stage of a systematic science to stipulate a sense for a sign, and one afterwards, can be used to frame a question: how far do any other types of proposition work in different ways, depending on whether or not they belong to "preparation" of language for its uses?

I want to explore this idea, and also to connect it with themes in Wittgenstein's thought. In fact I want to make a wild speculative claim: we should think of there being parallels between Frege on preparation of language for use in a systematic science, and Wittgenstein on the kinds of propositions I discussed in Parts 1 and 2, which I said could be labelled as *Behelfe der Darstellung*, or as apparatus propositions, or as preparatory propositions. I think that Wittgenstein's treatment of this class of propositions has some resemblances to Frege on propositions used in the preparation of expressions for use in a systematic science; but Wittgenstein's treatment of this category of uses makes it much more extensive than the corresponding category as we see it in Frege (as comes out especially in Wittgenstein's willingness in the 1930s to think of mathematical propositions as belonging to the preparation of language for its use). What I take to be important for both Wittgenstein and Frege is the idea that a particular proposition may occur with a "preparatory" role and, in a different context, with a non-preparatory role, in which the signs may now function differently. A further point (that comes up in different ways for the two philosophers) is that in many cases it may be easy to misunderstand a proposition which has a preparatory-type use, if you try to read it as if it were straightforwardly an assertion about

the things meant by the words in it.[9] An important difference between Frege and Wittgenstein on "preparatory" propositions is that, for Wittgenstein, many propositions that have this character *keep it.* Their use may *continue to be* that of enabling other types of uses of propositions. I think that this idea, which marks a significant difference from Frege, can be seen in the *Tractatus*; but it is explicit later on, for example when Wittgenstein in 1939 invited his students to think of mathematical and logical propositions as *"preparations* for a use of language", and he added "almost as definitions are" (1976: 249). In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein said that a definition was a rule dealing with signs, and had the form "a = b", but he then went on to make the point quoted in Part 2, that expressions of that form state nothing about whatever it is that is meant by the signs that flank the identity sign: they are not used referentially. This is not far from what Frege says about definition-propositions *when they are in use to introduce a new sign*, but it is very far from what Frege held about the use of definition-propositions afterwards. They go on afterwards to have an assertoric use, in which the signs flanking the identity sign and the identity sign itself are used referentially; and this is then very different from the *Tractatus*. My plan now is to use Frege's treatment of "preparatory" propositions to deepen the questions about Wittgenstein's approach, and to use Wittgenstein's treatment of the asymmetric propositions that I have been concerned with to help us understand Frege on the concept 'horse'. Part 5 starts from Frege and then moves back to Wittgenstein.

Part 5

What Frege says in making clear what he means by "concept", "function" and "object" was held by him to belong to the phase in the development of a systematic science in which the signs that are going to be used in the science (in this case, signs belonging to Frege's notation) are prepared for their use. Frege's attempts to clear up misunderstandings of what he had said as part of this

---

[9] But see Joan Weiner 2008, on the variety of kinds of uses of language that can occur within the propaedeutic of a systematic science, as Frege understands it.

propaedeutic also belong to the propaedeutic. That is, "Concept and Object", should be taken to belong to this kind of use of language. (We should note here the connection also with Anscombe's example "'Someone' is not the name of someone", which is meant to correct a misunderstanding about the use in ordinary language of "someone" as existential quantifier.) I mentioned that the concept-horse proposition is directed specifically against Benno Kerry's "The concept 'horse' is a concept easily acquired"; and Frege believed that the underlying confusion in Kerry's writings, including in particular his use of that example, was the running together of the logical sense of "concept" (as Frege had attempted to present it) and uses of "concept" to mean something psychological. This muddling together leads Kerry to take for granted that the words "The concept 'horse'" in "The concept 'horse' is a concept easily acquired" refer to something that is both a concept as Frege understands it and a psychological capacity which, it might be thought, is easily acquired. Frege wanted to make plain how this muddle operates; he wanted to block the route to the muddle: a route that it is all too easy to take, through exactly the blur between the logical and the psychological exemplified by Kerry's treatment of the concept 'horse'. The point of the concept-horse proposition is, in large part, what it is *against*, and what Frege shows about how not to get *there*. The concept-horse proposition is a kind of road-block, blocking a road to confusion. Frege himself, reflecting on the problematic character of the proposition, said that "by a necessity of language, my expressions, taken literally, sometimes miss my thought" (1984: 193). But we cannot infer straightforwardly from that remark that Frege took there to be a thought, in his sense of that word, that his proposition was unable properly to express. The problem in ascribing to him such an understanding is that, for him, a thought is something that can be grasped as the sense of an interrogative question, before one answers the question. If there is nothing but muddle in "The concept 'horse' is a concept easily acquired" or in "The concept 'horse' is a concept" – if there is no intelligible thought that the utterer of such things is struggling to express – it is not clear that what Frege finds himself unable properly to express, when he uses a proposition formed by negating the

confused utterance, counts on his own terms as a thought. (A thought has an opposite thought; a muddle isn't a false thought.)

Here I think we can be helped to move forward by going back to Wittgenstein.

First, there are a couple of points to note about the idea that a proposition used in the "preparatory" phase of language can also have a different sort of use. This idea comes out in Wittgenstein's discussion in 1939 of "putting a proposition in the archives" (1976: 107, 112-14), where the image of "the archives" indicates something that will have a future application, just as the depositing of a platinum rod in the archives might be preparation for its future use as a standard of measurement. Wittgenstein says that a particular proposition like "20 apples plus 30 apples is 50 apples" might be an experiential proposition about what happens with apples, or it might be used as a mathematical proposition, might (that is) be put into the archives, might have a "preparatory" use (1976: 113-14). But we should also note that a proposition that has a "preparatory" use may be misread, if we take it, or try to take it, as asserting something about the things that appear to be referred to by the signs in it. On this point, we can consider Moore's report of Wittgenstein's "astounding" claim that Russell was wrong in distinguishing as he did between the meaning of "= Df" and "=" (Moore 1959: 290). Russell took definitional propositions to be concerned solely with the signs, not the things meant, while identity propositions are, he thought, about the things meant by the signs flanking the equal sign: identity is (according to Russell) a reflexive property and a symmetric relation (1962: 22). A criticism of Russell's reading of identity propositions (as leading into confusion) is suggested by *TLP* 5.473, and the confusion in question is blocked by *TLP* 4.241-2: *Don't* read identity propositions as about the things named by the signs flanking the "=". The important idea there is that trying to read a proposition the use of which is "preparatory" as if it were straightforwardly about the things meant by the signs in it can lead into confusion.[10]

---

[10] To say that the proposition is not about the things meant does not imply that it must be about the signs. Contrast Moore's discussion of Wittgenstein on Russell and identity (1959: 289-90); and cf. also Wittgenstein, 1975: 143.

That idea was at the heart also of the discussion in Part 2 of probability propositions. If one tries to read probability propositions as expressive of a relation between two propositions, they appear to affirm something that lies outside the domain of the sayable.

We need to consider more fully Kremer's account of the use of mathematical propositions, as understood in the *Tractatus*. The important background fact for his account is that we may use calculations in carrying out an inference from one experiential proposition to another. But once we have done a particular calculation, we may keep a record of it for future use: and that is what equations should be taken to be: records of calculations, useful in making inferences from one proposition to another, in cases in which we could not make the inference without a calculation. Similarly, if a proposition is shown by a logical calculation to be a truth-functional tautology, the tautology may be kept, as being the record of the calculation, and can then also come in handy in making inferences.[11] Equations and tautologies show us roads that are open for us, roads by which we can go from one proposition to another. But in some cases it might be useful to have "Road closed: dangerous" signs. Suppose, for example, we found ourselves frequently multiplying 2 times 24 and getting 46 (perhaps because we tended to slip from multiplying 2 times 4 to adding instead). So in these cases an inequation might come in handy: "$2 \times 24 \neq 46$". As I mentioned in Part 3, it would be a consequence of Kremer's reading of Wittgenstein on equations that such an inequation has the same asymmetry (of not being opposed to anything meaningful) that correct equations have. There is no reason we might not write down inequations and put them in the archives as indications of common inferential dangers. Wittgenstein himself, shortly after his return to philosophy in 1929, did indeed suggest that, just as equations can be construed as rules for signs rather than as propositions (using the term "proposition", there, in a narrow sense), inequations could be treated in the same way (1975: 249); he added that there may also be cases when it would

---

[11] Kremer, 2002: 299-300.

be useful to recognize that such-and-such a proposition does not follow from some other. Alongside the suggestion that inequations might be put into the archives as warnings, we should put a suggestion of Wittgenstein's. He wrote (2005: 312):

> Language has the same traps ready for everyone; the immense network of easily trodden false paths. And thus we see one person after another walking down the same paths and we already know where he will make a turn, where he will keep going straight ahead without noticing the turn, etc., etc. Therefore, wherever false paths branch off I ought to put up signs to help in getting past the dangerous spots.

My suggestion here is that the role of false-path markers is not very different from that of equations, as Kremer discusses them: equations indicate useful paths. Path-indicators – indicators of useful paths on the one hand and of paths leading into confusion on the other – belong in the general and varied group of "preparatory" propositions. But this point should then be seen with the preceding one: that propositions with a preparatory use may be misunderstood if one tries to read them as straightforwardly assertoric, straightforwardly about the things named by the signs in them, or straightforwardly about the signs themselves. The path-blockers, the indicators of confusion, most frequently take the form of negative propositions, of denials of something that peters out into nothing. But the negation in them can be taken to be like the negation we see in "Don't": "Don't go that way"; that is, they can be thought of as like rules about where not to go in using signs, just as identity propositions were taken by Wittgenstein to indicate something we could do with signs: we can substitute the sign on this side of "=" for the one on the other side. The "Don't" of a path-blocking proposition properly follows a process of making plain what the danger is, what the confusion is, that lies on the blocked path; and this is of course what Frege does in "Concept and Object". My suggestion then is that, just as we may carry out a calculation, and make a memorandum of it for future use, so we may make plain a kind of confusion, and make a memorandum in the form of a negative proposition, a path-blocker. If we recognize a path-blocking proposition as having a kind of preparatory use not altogether far from that of such path-

opening propositions as equations and identities, and not far from simple path-blocking propositions like inequations, this has two consequences. First, following Kremer on mathematical propositions: propositions that are not themselves senseful propositions, but that are useful to us in operating with senseful propositions, are not nonsensical. Secondly, if we try to read them as straightforward assertions, we may be flummoxed: that is clear already in the case of Wittgenstein on taking identity as a property.

I have suggested that "The concept 'horse' is not a concept" can be thought of as a path-blocker, and as having a use like that of a warning about how not to use words in order to avoid confusion. I've suggested too that path-blockers have the asymmetric character of mathematical equations, as described by Kremer. I am not suggesting that that is how Frege himself thought of the concept-horse proposition. It's rather that I want to do something analogous to what Wittgenstein does: he invites us to consider mathematical propositions as having a role like that of setting up a unit of measurement before we actually start measuring things. The philosophical suggestion is: Try thinking of it like this. So I'm suggesting that we try thinking of the concept-horse proposition as an asymmetric proposition used as a path-blocker. I also would want to emphasize the importance of not treating the concept-horse proposition as if the alternatives we confront in thinking about it are that it is either nonsensical or a significant bit of referential language, in which case the question how it is about what it is meant to be about is obviously problematic.

In Part 2, I discussed the difference between the nonsensical propositions of the *Tractatus*, which are indeed meant to be useful, and senseless but not nonsensical propositions like mathematical equations and probability propositions. I made the distinction this way: that although probability propositions and other apparatus propositions may resemble senseful propositions, the fact that we may be taken in by that appearance has nothing to do with their usefulness, whereas the usefulness of the *Tractatus* propositions depends on our first being taken in by them, and our then recognizing that they are not what we took them for. But there is a further distinction that we can make now. While responses to

confusion, and other sorts of asymmetric propositions, may have a merely nonce-use, it is significant that many of them—mathematical equations, definitions, probability propositions (and so on)—may be kept. Indeed the image Wittgenstein uses for propositions used in these kinds of ways is that of their being put into the archives. In contrast, the nonsensical propositions of the *Tractatus* are meant to be thrown away. A proposition like "The configuration of objects produces states of affairs" is meant to lead us on, in an activity the outcome of which is meant to be a reconception of what doing philosophy is, and of what we can achieve by it. The justification that there will be for doing philosophy that way is that it will be helpful; problems will disappear (supposedly). There is (that is) no need to keep hold of the *Tractatus* propositions as if they were needed to provide a justification for anything that the book teaches us to do. Unlike "7 + 5 = 12", the propositions of the *Tractatus* have no ongoing role; nothing depends on keeping them around. But there is a "but". Propositions may have different uses. There is no reason why a proposition in the *Tractatus*, the role of which there is to lead us on, and which indeed (in order to play that role) needs to appear misleadingly to be an a priori assertion of some sort, should not also come to have a use as a path-blocker (for example).

Philosophers try to read propositions referentially; and this tendency is one of the things at the heart of Wittgenstein's treatment of mathematical propositions. There is a sense of "about" which is at work in the *Tractatus*, and in that sense, propositions with some or other asymmetric sort of use are not about what the signs in them might stand for in other contexts; nor are they about the signs themselves. One can speak of what an asymmetric proposition is about, but "about", there, is not used in the same way it is used when we speak of propositions that come in intelligible pairs.[12] We don't have to first read an asymmetric proposition referentially and then take it to be nonsense, in order to be clear about its use; and this point applies to all sorts of asymmetric propositions, including path-blockers. You don't have

---

[12] See Wittgenstein, 1979: 155; Wittgenstein, 1976: 33, 112-14, 250-251, 254, 279.

to take "The concept 'horse' is not a concept" to be "about the concept 'horse'" first, in order to move to a clearer view of its use: it is not like *Tractatus* nonsense. Its use does not depend on its taking you in. The model of *Tractatus* nonsense is not a great model for path-blockers like "The concept 'horse' is not a horse"; and it seems to me that one reason it has been taken to be a good model is that we may tend to consider just two models: the would-be-expression-of-a-thought model, in which the concept-horse proposition is taken as aiming to express a thought about the concept 'horse' but not quite managing to do so properly, and the Tractarian-nonsense model. Try instead the "2 times 24 is not 46"-model, where that is understood as an asymmetric path-blocker.[13]

Part 6

"'Someone' is not the name of someone", understood as a response to confusion, was Anscombe's example of a proposition which is excluded from the *Tractatus*, and which should not be excluded from an adequate account of the ways in which a proposition may be true. In this essay, I've tried to show that the *Tractatus* is not as unwelcoming to *responses to confusion* as she thought. The heart of my argument is that their status can be conceived on the model of inequations, and that we can see the use of inequations by seeing how it resembles and how it differs from that of equations: correct inequations and correct equations have a function in language, though they do not have, opposed to them, propositions which also have a function in the language. I have made a start, but only a start, on the questions from which I began. I have not discussed what might be involved in calling *true* a proposition that responds to confusion, as Anscombe does. I have not discussed how Wittgenstein's treatment of apparatus propositions changed and developed in his later philosophy; nor have I spelled out the views of Wittgenstein on modality that are

---

[13] For a quite different sort of approach, see Anscombe, 1981, and the discussion of Anscombe's remarks about the concept-horse proposition in Jolley, 2004.

implicit in my procedure.[14] But the main thing I haven't discussed is *the range* of Anscombe's objection. It may be that propositions that function as responses to confusion can (as I've argued) be accommodated within Wittgenstein's approach. But that sort of case figured only as an example for Anscombe. Her general point was that, apart from tautologies and equations, propositions that can only be true were excluded by the *Tractatus*. The question then remains how far her objection would still be that there are kinds of proposition that can only be true, that are excluded by the *Tractatus* and that would not be excluded by an adequate philosophical understanding of language. So there is much that remains to be done.[15]

References

Anscombe, G.E.M., 1963. *An Introduction to Wittgenstein's* Tractatus. 2nd edition. London: Hutchinson University Library.

Anscombe, G.E.M., 1981. "The Intentionality of Sensation: A Grammatical Feature". In G.E.M. Anscombe, *Collected Philosophical Papers*, vol. 2, *Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Mind*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 3-20.

Anscombe, G.E.M., 2011a. "Truth: Anselm and Wittgenstein". In: G.E.M. Anscombe, *From Plato to Wittgenstein: Essays by G.E.M. Anscombe*. Ed. M. Geach and L. Gormally. Exeter: Imprint Academic, pp. 71-6.

---

[14] In the essay, I use a contrast between asymmetric propositions (some or all of which one might want to think of as *propositions that can only be true*) and two types of symmetric propositions: contingent propositions, on the one hand, and, on the other, necessary truths taken to have, opposed to them, propositions which do not dissolve into nothing but which express something that cannot be the case. What underlies this mode of treatment is the idea that it is useful to think of the *Tractatus*, not so much as having a stance on "modality", as *disrupting* the idea of modality as a topic. The *Tractatus* is concerned (on the one hand) with tautologies, contradictions and such asymmetric propositions as equations and (on the other hand) with various kinds of confusion that are involved in taking some or other proposition to express, or to be trying to express, or intended to express, something that is necessarily the case. For some discussion of the contrast here, see Sanford Shieh (forthcoming).

[15] An earlier version of parts of this paper were part of a paper presented at the Kirchberg Wittgenstein Symposium and at the Wittgenstein Workshop at the University of Chicago. I am very grateful to the members of the audience on both occasions, and to Adrian Moore, Silver Bronzo, Jean-Philippe Narboux, Lars Hertzberg and Anselm Mueller for helpful comments and suggestions.

Anscombe, G.E.M., 2011b. "The Simplicity of the *Tractatus*". In: G.E.M. Anscombe, *From Plato to Wittgenstein: Essays by G.E.M. Anscombe*. Ed. M. Geach and L. Gormally. Exeter: Imprint Academic, pp. 171-80.

Chappell, T., 2010. "Bernard Williams". In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/williams-bernard/. Replaced in 2013.

Diamond, C., 2004. "Saying and Showing: An Example from Anscombe". In: B. Stocker, ed., *Post-Analytic* Tractatus. Aldershot: Ashgate, pp. 151-66.

Floyd, J., 2010. "On Being Surprised: Wittgenstein on Aspect-Perception, Logic, and Mathematics". In: W. Day and V.J. Krebs, eds., *Seeing Wittgenstein Anew*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 314-337.

Frascolla, P., 2007. *Understanding Wittgenstein's* Tractatus. Abingdon: Routledge.

Frege, G., 1979. "Logic in Mathematics". In: G. Frege, *Posthumous Writings*. Ed. H. Hermes et al. Tr. P. Long and R White. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 203-250.

Frege, G., 1984. "On Concept and Object". In: G. Frege, *Collected Papers on Mathematics, Logic, and Philosophy*. Ed. B McGuinness. Tr. M. Black et al. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 182-94.

Geach, P.T., 1979. "Kinds of Statement". In: C. Diamond and J. Teichman, eds., *Intention and Intentionality: Essays in Honour of G.E.M. Anscombe*. Brighton: Harvester Press, pp. 221-35.

Geach, P.T., 1991. "Philosophical Autobiography". In: H.A. Lewis, ed., *Peter Geach: Philosophical Encounters*. Dordrecht: Kluwer, pp. 1-25.

Griffin, J., 1964. *Wittgenstein's Logical Atomism*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Jolley, K.D., 2007. *The Concept 'Horse' Paradox and Wittgensteinian Conceptual Investigations*. Ashgate: Farnham.

Kremer, M., 2002. "Mathematics and Meaning in the *Tractatus*". *Philosophical Investigations* 25, pp. 272-303.

Kremer, M., 2012. "Russell's Merit". In: J. Zalabardo, ed., 2012. *Wittgenstein's Early Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 195-240.

Russell, B., 1962. *Principia Mathematica to *56*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Russell, B., 1996. *The Principles of Mathematics*. 2nd edition. New York: W.W. Norton.

Shieh, S., forthcoming. "In What Way Does Logic Involve Necessity?" *Philosophical Topics*.

Weiner, J., 2008. "Preface to the Paperback Edition". In: J. Weiner, *Frege in Perspective*. Paperback edition. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, pp. ix-xiii.

Wittgenstein, L., 1963. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Tr. D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Wittgenstein, L., 1975. *Philosophical Remarks*. Ed. R Rhees. Tr. R Hargreaves and R.White. Oxford: Blackwell.

Wittgenstein, L., 1976. *Wittgenstein's Lectures on the Foundations of Mathematics: Cambridge, 1939*. Ed. C. Diamond. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Wittgenstein, L., 1979. *Wittgenstein's Lectures, Cambridge, 1932-1935*. Ed. A. Ambrose. Oxford: Blackwell.

Wittgenstein, L., 1980. *Wittgenstein's Lectures, Cambridge, 1930-1932*. Ed. D. Lee. Oxford: Blackwell.

Wittgenstein, L., 2005. *The Big Typescript: TS 213*. Eds. and Trs. C.G. Luckhardt and M.A.E. Aue. Oxford: Blackwell.

Biographical note

Cora Diamond is University Professor and Kenan Professor of Philosophy emerita at the University of Virginia. She is the author of *The Realistic Spirit: Wittgenstein, Philosophy, and the Mind* and the editor of *Wittgenstein's Lectures on the Foundations of Mathematics, Cambridge, 1939*.