

Good term paper on wittgensteins tractatus

[Sociology](#), [Ethics](#)



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PART A

1 a)

Wittgenstein employs the picture theory of meaning effectively to explain many important things in philosophy. In essence, the picture theory of meaning by Wittgenstein is a theory in which he argued that the state of things or the atomic facts could be pictured by a meaningful proposition. Using this theory, Wittgenstein managed to compare spatial pictures with the concept of pictures. In essence, the picture theory is seen as a correspondence to the truth theory. Wittgenstein's arguments were to the effect that statements can only be meaningful in the event that they can be easily pictured or be defined in the real world. Statements, or rather language represents the major system of representation.

Through the language, people have the capacity to make their own facts depending on the pictures they may create. This is the main reason he classified the picture as being a reality model and as an effect; the pictures in themselves portrayed facts. Due to this interrelationship, objects are linked to form facts. In order to form necessary propositions, the language is linked to the words. All these play a role in ensuring that the sentence makes

meaning. In achieving this, the sentence ought to be a fact that corresponds to some fact; failure to do so, and then the meaning of the sentence is distorted.

As Wittgenstein once argued, ' the difficulty of my theory of a logical portrayal was that of finding a connection between the signs on paper and a situation outside in the world. I always said that truth is a relation between a proposition and the situation, but could never pick out such a relation' (Wittgenstein et al. 43). To a large extent, he was concerned on the relationship that should exist between a picture and the fact that it represents.

Language, according to him, plays a role in making the pictures.

Wittgenstein's use of the term picture is, therefore, deeply construed within his picture theory of meaning. The theory is to the effect that propositions play a role in determining a person's visual analogy. The reason he gives for this is the fact that propositions are facts by themselves. They are not as a result of mental representation. He further admits that a picture is in itself a fact. For instance, he argued to the effect that a picture, in order to be a picture, must have some resemblance of what it intends to picture. The picture's form of representation should conform to reality in determining whether it is right or wrong.

1 b)

Various researchers and philosophers have opined and gave evidence to the effect that Wittgenstein's picture philosophy comprises of some contrasting positions. For instance, Wittgenstein's Tractatus argues for the picture theory of meaning. At this stage, all this can be summed up by Wittgenstein

that propositions represent pictures of reality. In the later times, the same Wittgenstein suggests a use theory. According to this later theory, pictures do not have meaning by themselves. The pictures only acquire meaning in the event that they are applied in specified contexts and after being assigned to specific uses. As such, there is a major confusion between the early and the later arguments on pictures.

Philosophers have also made conclusions that the deflationary philosophical conception that Wittgenstein subscribes to do not advance or promote any theses. Due to this reason, the tractatus has been deemed as containing no doctrines. To a large extent, the Tractatus has been argued to be containing plain nonsense, apart from some framing remarks that give the relevant instructions towards reading a book. The tractatus is not deep, and it seeks to explain a thing that it is almost impossible to put in words. In order to try and understand the tractatus, working through it is not an option for someone. They have to go through it and try to dissolve them from the inside to have a better chance to dissolve the mystery.

1 c)

Wittgenstein's argument that simple propositions are pictures in some sense may lead to a thorough investigations and evidences to show that the logically complex propositions are pictures too. When looking at a sentence, for instance, we need not look at it as a complex object. Instead, we should always look at it from the perspective that the sentence's signs are in a certain way, related. Taking this complex objectivity and applying the simple interpretation or seeing the relatedness of the objects in a sentence may end up transforming a sentence that was complex to becoming a simple one.

As much as this process of simplifying the propositions has been seen as the better way of handling complex situations, sometimes it becomes difficult to conclude that the complex propositions are pictures in the real sense.

Wittgenstein's second principle of propositions comes in because using the first principle; it is difficult to see the proposition picturing the situation that makes it true. A sentence, for instance, 'for every four years, world cup is played,' makes it difficult to agree that the proposition plays a role in picturing the true situation. According to Wittgenstein's second principle, 'the logical constants do not stand in for anything' (Wittgenstein et al. 54). In essence, this means that words such as 'all', and, 'some' and 'not' in some circumstances bring out the meaning that is very different from what they normally tend to imply. This is what he refers to the language's logical apparatus. In some cases, there can be a need to contrast a simple proposition and a complex proposition logically. If such is the cases, it becomes important to think of the propositions as being true, depending on whether that state of affairs exist or not.

Wittgenstein further proposes that we should always try to think that logical apparatus has a role that is different from the language's other elements. The major function for this is to build complex propositions logically out of the propositions that are logically simple or in other words, elementary. Due to this interrelatedness of the logically simple propositions and the logically complex propositions, Wittgenstein argues to the effect that propositions that are logically complex, in essence, pictures a situation that is logically complex. This can be further explained by the fact that the logical apparatus apparently gives a proposition a logical multiplicity which is the same as the

situation that it intends to represent. In most cases, these situations tend to be logically complex. In essence, if the logically simple propositions can be used to picture a relatively easy situation, then equivalently, then logically complex propositions also serve the purpose of picturing a complex situation.

In a clearer way, Wittgenstein further argues that, in reality, elementary propositions play a role in building the complex propositions. This is what he calls the truth-functional state. As such, by saying the falsity and truth of the elementary propositions, a complex proposition is specified. This is what makes the complex proposition become either true or false. Due to the above argument, Wittgenstein makes a valid conclusion to the effect that propositions are always truth-functions. In essence, this truth-function relates to the elementary propositions. Complex propositions, to some extent, therefore, are pictures of the complex situations that may arise in sentences. However, they can be simplified by looking at the falsity or truth of the elementary propositions that make it.

1 d)

Wittgenstein's argument on the complex propositions being pictures brings a lot of difficulties in trying to understand them. For instance, the generality take that he adopts when classifying the propositions will, in a way, pose some serious challenges to breaking down the complex propositions into elementary propositions. Generalizing all propositions as to be taking a similar form, for instance, fx , may bring a number of difficulties in interpreting the complex propositions. This makes it difficult to think of them as being elementary. What Wittgenstein does not explain, however, is the

fact that the possible x values' totality that can be argued to be directly involved in the propositions that take the fx form's totality cannot be spoken about. Due to this, there is an attempt to conceive the world generally. As such, the x values' totality largely becomes mystical. Wittgenstein's arguments on how the complex propositions and the elementary propositions are pictures of the real situation, therefore, have a long way to explain if philosophers of the modern times are to consider them as laying the perfect platform to explain the interrelatedness between picture and propositions. He, however, to some extent, explains this in his tractatus, 'every statement about complexes can be resolved into a statement about their constituents and into the propositions that describe the complexes completely', (Wittgenstein, 15).

PART B

OPTION 1

2 a)

In his works, Wittgenstein employed more than one notion of form. Whereas the first form is simple and straight-forward, the second form is rather long and without proper interpretive skills, one may fail to get the intended meaning. In essence, Wittgenstein intends to use the second form in order to explain the first one. Wittgenstein, in the tractatus, effectively argued that both complex propositions and the simple propositions are all pictures. However, what differentiates them is the fact that the logically complex propositions are constituents of the elementary propositions. In order to understand a logically complex proposition; therefore, one must subdivide it into the logically simple proposition and then try to look at the pictures they

create. These are the different notions of form that Wittgenstein employs in the tractatus in order to solve the problems that are related to creating pictures from the propositions.

In the great sense, all these notions and forms perform the same function, in that they are intended to give proper meaning to the propositions that have been employed. Whereas one form is categorized by the simplicity it takes, the other form is characterized by the complexities it takes and the difficulties that it presents to people in understanding it. For instance, 'if a fact is to be a picture, it must have something in common with what it depicts'. This is a simple form that a sentence may take, because it is comprised of an elementary proposition. 'What a picture must have in common with reality, in order to be able to depict it- correctly or incorrectly- in the way that it does, is the pictorial form' represents the logically complex propositional form. As such, breaking it into simple propositions can play a role in ensuring it is easily understood.

2 b)

According to Wittgenstein, propositions have the same form as reality. Propositions, in essence, are seen as pictures. It would be illuminating to conclude that Wittgenstein's arguments are to the effect that propositions are pictures. Because of the factor that a picture can depict the reality of the form that it already has, it is similar to propositions in a sentence since they perform the same role in explaining something. In a sentence or any situations, propositions play the role of giving the correct picture about a given notion or form. Due to these factors, as Wittgenstein argues out, propositions are pictures to a certain extent because through the

propositions in logically complex situations and simple situations, the humans can create pictures from the propositions. Calling the propositions pictures would, therefore, make some sense that is consistent to Wittgenstein's arguments.

4 True to how many commentators have interpreted the tractatus, the manner in which Wittgenstein employs the term indeterminacy best refers to vagueness rather than lack of specificity. Although the uncertainty and lack of specificity are also terms that can be employed to similar effect, it would be essential to refer the term to vagueness. A propositional element in most cases, when it refers to a complex, leads to vagueness of the propositions in that the sentences fail to make a concrete meaning, hence becoming vague effectively. Arguing that the same thing may lead to lack of specificity in a sentence would distort the meaning of the sentence and create a very different meaning of the sentence. This would be very inconsistent with the information that Wittgenstein intended to put across in the tractatus. Therefore, as the commentators argue, the right meaning of the term indeterminacy is vagueness rather than lack of specificity. It is very valid to make arguments related to propositions in terms of vagueness. For instance, the vagueness that a proposition may take may play a big role in defining and signifying a complex in a sentence. Although the lack of specificity can also be effectively used to mean the indeterminists that are argued in the tractatus, the most appropriate term is vagueness.

Works Cited

Wittgenstein, Ludwig, David Pears, and Brian McGuinness. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. London: Routledge, 2001. Print.

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