

Objections and Replies

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Dear Editor:

I thank Prof. Smith for his carefully considered comments and would like to take this opportunity to respond to his reservations about my discussion of section 4.002 of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Prof. Smith suggests that my analysis is incomplete without an explanation of Wittgenstein's intriguing use of the clothing metaphor. While I agree that the matter is somewhat intriguing, and while perhaps I should have given it a bit more prominence, I think, really, that Wittgenstein's choice of metaphor is of relatively minor importance.

Dear Editor:

It is kind of you to offer a forum in which I can clarify my concerns about Prof. Jones' discussion of Wittgenstein, for I fear he has misunderstood my point. It was not so much that an explanation is warranted as that an explanation would have yielded the conclusion that Wittgenstein's choice of metaphor is perhaps not as apt as one might think.

Dear Editor:

I assure you that I do understand Prof. Smith's point, but I'm afraid that it is simply irrelevant. Wittgenstein's point, and it surely stands with or without the metaphor, is that language disguises thought.

Dear Editor:

Yes, of course, that much is obvious. But one must articulate the nature of the disguise if one is to say one is providing any sort of analysis of Wittgenstein.

Dear Editor:

I couldn't agree more and spend pages 513-679 doing just that. Perhaps my learned friend didn't get that far.

Dear Prof. Jones:

I have just re-read – quickly, since it is rather light going – pages 513-679 of your book and humbly suggest that you mistake 'language' for 'Language.'

Dear Prof. Smith:

I don't believe that I do.

Dear Prof. Jones:

Well, I really don't want to belabour the point, but if one examines the matter closely, as I have done in my admittedly shorter book (*Language and language: a not insignificant difference*, Oxford University Press, ISBN 0-929015-01-0 789p), one is, in fact, compelled to conclude that you do.

Dear Editor:

The difference between 'language' and 'Language' is a matter that neither Prof. Jones nor I will settle in a mere book or two. Suffice to say the ephemeral nature of temporality to which the human organism is bound implies that the nature of the difference now is not necessarily the same as the nature of the difference not-now.

Dear Editor:

Oh my, such a statement may pass for academic rigor on the west coast but, well, of course there is a great deal more to be said, isn't there? But I suppose my esteemed colleague is satisfied with the more superficial analysis. It is, perhaps, one of the unfortunate hazards of attempting scholarship at one of our smaller colleges.

Dear Editor:

Excuse me?

Prof. Jones:

Are you denying that the examples in my book constitute a challenge to the interpretation you present?

Prof. Smith:

What the hell are you talking about?

Dear Editor:

Oh dear, I fear I have upset Prof. Jones. I assumed he had read all of the relevant previous scholarship on the matter before undertaking his own work. I kindly direct his attention to pages 742-5 of my *Language and language: a not insignificant difference* (Oxford University Press, ISBN 0-929015-01-0).

Dear Editor:

A full critique of Prof. Smith's thesis is beyond the scope of this reply. Suffice to say, he's full of shit.

Prof. Jones:

With all due respect, then you've misunderstood me completely.

Prof. Smith:

With all due respect, you're a blathering idiot.

Jones:

Are you familiar, at least, with the 'ad hominem' error?

Smith:

A pretentious blathering idiot. At every conference you attend - and you attend them all - you make such a show of having proofs to read. Tsk tsking through everyone's presentation, implying the copyeditor has yet again misunderstood your genius. Oh so important, oh so busy, one book after another, every year a new book, my my. Well I'm calling your bluff, you old fart, you haven't published since 1980. You're 'reading' the same set of proofs over and over!

Liar liar, pants on fire!

I'm calling Oxford right now.

Piss off, you wormlet! May you rot in hell!

Technically, given the presumed temperature in hell, one wouldn't rot, so much as roast, or, more likely, burst into flames. But then perhaps I'm mistaking 'hell' for 'Hell.' You fucking moron.