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THE PSEUDO-EXAMINATION OF A PSEUDO-PROBLEM:
THE ONTOLOGY OF THE *TRACTATUS*

Abstract

In the *Tractatus* there is not a real ontological doctrine, with a proper theoretical dignity. The indefiniteness and the ambiguity Wittgenstein deals the whole issue with, shows clearly that his aim is not building up a specific ontological theory, but only defining the rigorous bounds of the semantic sphere.

On the other hand, an ontological doctrine could not exist in the *Tractatus*, since it would be quite contradictory to present a typical metaphysical doctrine in a work that assumes just the nonsense of metaphysics as its own target. A lot of authors have interpreted as an example of kantian transcendentalism the presence of ontological propositions, traditionally metaphysical, in the work. But this would be contradictory as well, since it would be difficult to explain the reason why Wittgenstein needs to found on metaphysics a semantic theory that relegates any metaphysical proposition to the dimension of the nonsense.

My thesis, instead, is that this metaphysical foundation exists in the *Tractatus*, but it has a rhetorical aim. It is in fact thought for the potential reader of the work, with his demands of theoretical foundation. Wittgenstein's greatness would therefore appear not only in his theses, but also in the "didactically" clever way of presenting them to the intellectuals of his time.