*Language and Ontology*

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Handout 9

**Tropes and Attitudinal Objects**

**1. Tropes**

The wisdom of Socrates:

the manifestation of wisdom in Socrates – the bearer of the trope

Linguistic manifestation

Adjective nominalization

generally a mass noun:

wisdom -- \* wisdoms, happiness -- \* happinesses

sortal: *quality, behavior, property* (?)

Particular

noun with specifier: *Socrates’ wisdom*

Universal

bare mass noun: *wisdom*

(1) Wisdom si rare.

Characteristics of tropes

* Are particulars rather than universals
* Are ontologically dependent on a bearer

Bearer-dependence

* A trope with a bearer d exists (at t) only if d exists (at t)
* Two tropes are identical only if they have the same bearer

Properties of concreteness

* Enter causal relations
* Objects of perception
* Fully determinate, rather than determinable: grounded in specific properties
* In time
* Not really in space, but dependent on bearer that may be in space

Similarity relations

* Two tropes are exactly similar iff they manifest (belong to) the same natural property.
* Two tropes are similar iff they manifest the same property.

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**2. Attitudinal objects**

Examples

John’s claim that it is raining

John’s belief that it is raining.

John’s promise that he will come.

John’s hope that it will rain.

Some properties

Truth or satisfaction conditions:

(2) a. John’s claim / belief is true.

b. John’s promise / hope was fulfilled.

Linguistic manifestation

Deverbal nominalization, generally a count noun

*Belief – beliefs, claim – claims, thought – thoughts, promise -- promises*

Underived noun: *impression*, German *Absicht* ‘intention’

Sortal: ??

Particular

noun with specifier: *John’s belief*

Universal

Count noun with definite determiner: *the belief that* S

(3) a. The belief that god exists is widespread.

b. John and Mary share the belief that god exist.

Properties

Particulars

Dependent on an agent:

(4) ?? John’s remark was Mary’s remark.

Concreteness

Causal relations:

(5) a. John’s remark caused surprise.

Specificity:

(5) b. John’s belief is stronger than Mary’s.

In time:

(6) a. John’s claim yesterday that S

In space?:

b. John’s remark in the garden

c. John thought in the garden

d. ?? John’s thought in the garden

Similarity relations

(7) a. John’s belief is the same as Mary’s

b. John’s promise is the same as Mary’s.