

Wittgenstein on Truth

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Abstract

The topic is Wittgenstein's eventual abandonment of his *Tractatus* idea that a sentence is true if and only if it depicts a possible fact that obtains, and his coming (in the *Investigations*) to replace this with a deflationary view of truth. Three objections to the initial idea that will be discussed here are: (i) that its theory of 'depiction' relies on an unexplicated concept of word-object reference; (ii) that its notion of a possible fact *obtaining* (or existing, or being actual, or agreeing with reality) is also left mysterious; and (iii) that Wittgenstein's conception of *possible atomic facts* makes it difficult to see how any of them could fail to be actual. These problems are resolved by deflationism. But that perspective could not have been incorporated into the *Tractatus*. For the view of 'meaning qua use', on which deflationism depends, was the key insight enabling Wittgenstein to appreciate the untenability of his other central Tractarian doctrines.

Keywords: correspondence, deflationism, fact, *Investigations*, logic, picture theory, possibility, propositions, reference, Russell, *Tractatus*, truth, Wittgenstein

1. Introduction

This paper will address four related questions: What is the account of truth that Wittgenstein gives in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*?¹ To which view of the concept does he turn in his *Philosophical Investigations*?² Is this a move in the right direction? And how does it relate to other important differences between his early and late philosophy: is it a cause of them, a mere effect of them, or fairly independent of them?

Before getting started on all this, let me be upfront about something that will anyway become evident very quickly. I am a philosopher, but not much of a scholar. I am primarily interested in philosophical ideas, in the relationships between them, and in their plausibility—and less interested in whether they can be pinned on this or that philosopher at this or that point in their life. So my main concern in relation to Wittgenstein is not to decide what *exactly* he *meant*

¹ Wittgenstein 1922.

² Wittgenstein 1953.

in his various writings. It is rather to examine and develop the material of substantial philosophical value that can be found in the *vicinity* of what he wrote.

In just this regard I greatly admire Saul Kripke's little book on Wittgenstein's 'private language argument'.³ Not for its scholarship (for I think the ideas presented there are fairly far from anything in Wittgenstein himself), and not for the correctness of the philosophy (for I believe that those ideas are in themselves quite questionable); but rather for what Kripke aims to do, and succeeds in doing—which is to devise a line of thought that is inspired by Wittgenstein's writings and that, whether Wittgenstein's or not, and whether correct or not, deserves our attention. This is just the spirit in which I would like my own work on Wittgenstein to be taken, including the present paper.

2. The *Tractatus* View of Truth

What seems to jump out of the first few pages of the *Tractatus* is something like a *correspondence* theory of truth. But I say "something like", because a couple of qualifications must be made. In order to explain them, a few preliminaries are needed.

First: keep in mind that although we can speak of *sentences* (such as "snow is white") as "true" or "false", we more often apply those terms to *the things expressed by sentences* (such as the *proposition* that snow is white)—the objects of belief and assertion. Philosophers dispute which of these two ways of speaking is the more fundamental one; but most of us would agree that they are not the same; so distinct accounts of what we mean by them are called for.

Second: it is not easy to bring this distinction to bear on Wittgenstein's remarks about truth in the *Tractatus*. For his terminology sometimes diverges considerably from what is typically employed nowadays. In particular:

- He uses the term, "propositional sign" for what we might call an "uninterpreted sentence" (that is, a "sentence conceived of as a sequence of mere noises or inscriptions").
- He uses "proposition" (translated from the German, "*Satz*") for what we might say is a "significant sentence" or, in other words, an "uninterpreted sentence together with an interpretation of it, conceived of as something along the lines of 'the *reference-potentials* assigned to its component noises or inscriptions'".
- And he uses "the *sense* of a proposition" for what we might call "the *possible fact* that is represented by a significant sentence", or perhaps "the *Russellian proposition* (composed of objects and properties) that is expressed by a significant sentence".⁴

³ Kripke 1992.

⁴ A puzzling matter, that I shall simply flag and not attempt to resolve, is what Wittgenstein thinks must be added to a mere propositional sign in order to arrive at one of his *propositions*. He insists (3.13) that a *proposition* (in his usage of the term) does not contain its *sense* (in his usage). So the material to be added to the sign is *not* the possible fact it represents. But what else is available for that material to be? I have just hazarded "the reference-potentials of the words, qua noises, etc.". But what on earth is a reference-potential? Wittgenstein himself speaks of "feelers" that emanate from the components of a propositional sign and reach out to the referents of those components (2.1515). So a proposition, for him, is the propositional sign plus its 'feelers'—but *not* including the enti-

Translating his terminology into ours, it is fairly clear from the text that his overt theory of truth concerns significant *sentences*, and not what they express, or represent as being the case. His view (as we would put it) is that

- A sentence is true iff
- (i) it represents a certain possible fact; and
 - (ii) that possible fact is *actual*

which is tantamount to

- S is a true sentence
 ≡ S represents a *fact* (= an *actualized possible fact*)

To see why this might aptly be termed a *correspondence* theory of truth we must look at Wittgenstein's distinctive account of *representation*.

His basic idea is that we should answer the relatively hard question of how a *sentence* (—a string of significant signs—) is able to represent something (—*that such-and-such is the case*—) by beginning with the relatively easy question of how a realistic picture, or a map, or an architect's model, represents what it does, and then proceeding to show that, initial appearances to the contrary, sentences represent in exactly the same way. Sentences are pictures!

More specifically, his view is that (i) a pictorial representation consists of elements arranged with respect to one another in a certain way; (ii) each such element has a referent; and (iii) the *actual* fact that the pictorial elements are arranged as they are represents the *possible* fact that the referents of those elements are also arranged just in that way.

For example: consider a map of Italy that has shaped dots, “★”, “◆”, and “■”, whose referents are (respectively) Pisa, Rome, and Naples. The fact that, on the map, “◆” is between “★” and “■”, *depicts* the possible fact that Rome is between Pisa and Naples. In this case, the common arrangement of pictorial elements and their referents is **that *x* is between *y* and *z***.

Moreover, according to Wittgenstein, we can and should regard a sentence (e.g. “John loves Mary”) as a kind of pictorial fact (—that “John” is just to the left of “loves” which is just to the left of “Mary”). In this example, we are to suppose that:

- This fact has three referring elements—namely, the words, “John” and “Mary”, and the relation, *x is just to the left of “loves” which is just to the left of y*.⁵
- The pictorial arrangement of these elements is not spatial, but is given by the abstract *logical* structure, **that #(*x*,*y*)**. This form is what the representing fact and the represented possible fact have in common.
- The referents of the three elements are, respectively, John, Mary, and the relation, *x loves y*.

ties they ‘touch’. As far as I can tell, no *literal* account of this phenomenon is ever supplied.

⁵ Note Wittgenstein's 3.1432: – We must not say, “The complex sign ‘*aRb*’ says ‘*a* stands in relation *R* to *b*’”; but we must say, “That ‘*a*’ stands in a certain relation to ‘*b*’ says that *aRb*”.

In our example, the “certain relation” is: *x is just to the left of “loves” which is just to the left of y*. The sentence's exemplification of this relation refers to an exemplification of the worldly relation, *x loves y*.

- Therefore, the depicted (represented) possible fact is just what we pre-theoretically know it to be—namely, the possibility *that John loves Mary*.

This is Wittgenstein’s famous ‘picture theory of meaning’. Clearly, *depiction of a possible fact* is treated as a form of *correspondence* to it. So it would seem that we *can* aptly say that Wittgenstein is proposing a “correspondence theory of truth”.

But now let me elaborate the pair of reservations, to which I alluded at the outset, about the applicability of that label.

One of them is that, arguably, the above-sketched picture theory of sentential representation is supposed by Wittgenstein to apply *only* to what he calls “elementary propositions”: that is, sentences that do not contain any logical vocabulary (either explicitly or implicitly).⁶ For, if this is right, then Wittgenstein’s correspondence theory of truth is also restricted to elementary sentences. Further principles will have to be added in order to extend that limited account into one that can cover logically complex sentences too. And such principles are indeed supplied in the *Tractatus*: they are the rules implicit in Wittgenstein’s *truth-tables*—rules which specify how the truth or falsity of negations, disjunctions, conjunctions, and so on are determined by the truth and falsity of the elementary sentences to which the logical terms have been applied. Thus, what Wittgenstein really proposes is a *two-stage* theory of sentential truth, only the first of which invokes *correspondence*.

A second misgiving one might well have about calling Wittgenstein’s view a “correspondence” theory of truth emerges from reflection on what he has to say about the other brand of truth I mentioned at the start: truth, not for *sentences*, but for what they express—that is, for what we nowadays call *propositions*.

One conclusion we might reach is that Wittgenstein does not have, and cannot have, *any* theory of truth of that sort. That is because the only kind of thing he countenances that resembles what are now called “propositions” are *possible facts*, and possible facts are not the sorts of things that it makes sense to speak of as “true or false”. Rather, such things can only be “actual or non-actual” (that is, “actual or *merely* possible”).

Alternatively, we might be inclined to think that, for us, “The proposition *that k is f* is true” and “The possible fact *that k is f* is actual” are just two ways of saying the same thing. In other words, we might suppose that Wittgensteinian

⁶ Why this restriction? According to Wittgenstein, “My fundamental thought is that the ‘logical constants’ do not represent” (4.0312). That is to say, the words, “and”, “not”, “or”, and so on, do not stand for bits of reality. And, in that case, how could his picture theory of representation conceivably work for sentences containing those words? Consider, for example, “It is raining or snowing”. If his theory were to explain how this logically complex sentence represents what it does, the word “or” would either have to be part of a representing component of the sentence, or else it would have to be part of the pictorial arrangement of those components. But Wittgenstein’s “fundamental thought” appears to preclude the first of these options. And his requirement that the represented entities exhibit exactly the *same* arrangement with respect to one another as the representing components appears to preclude the second. (Since surely the *noise* “or” does not feature in the possible fact that it is raining or snowing!)

Admittedly, Wittgenstein’s formulations often seem to allow that his picture theory applies across the board. But in some passages (e.g. 4.0311) the restriction to sentences is explicit. And we have just seen why that is called for.

possible facts should be identified with what we call “propositions”, so that they *can* perfectly well be spoken of either as “actual or non-actual” or as “true or false”. In which case we would conclude that Wittgenstein is, after all, *implicitly* committed to a view of the notion that we call “propositional truth”—the view of it that coincides with what he *explicitly* says about *possible-fact actuality*.

I myself am not sure which of these answers is best (although I am inclined towards the second). For, on the one hand, I really do not see how, for example, “Massimo thinks *that Mars is green*” could be *ambiguous*: in one sense relating Massimo to a Russellian *proposition* and in another sense to a *possible fact*. But, on the other hand it is indeed hard to accept that what is said to be “true” could with equal propriety be described as “actual”, and vice versa.

But whichever choice is made here, we can see that the *core* of Wittgenstein’s proposal about *sentential truth* is the idea that only when the things meant (or *expressed*, or *represented*) have a certain special quality (*—being actual, or being factual, or obtaining, or existing, or agreeing with reality, ...—*) can the sentences with those meanings be true. Thus one might well suppose that the character of this special quality will be crucial in judging whether his overall view can justly be called “a correspondence theory of truth”.

But there appears to be no role for *correspondence* at this fundamental stage. The only point at which that notion enters Wittgenstein’s picture is in his theory of *representation*—in the relationship between sentences and possible facts. We get to *sentential truth* only by relying on the concept of ‘*actuality*’ (or ‘*obtaining*’, or ...) which Wittgenstein does not explain. So we might reasonably conclude that what we are given is *not* really a correspondence theory of *truth* but rather a limited correspondence theory of *representation* plus a primitivist *non-theory* of when the represented entities are facts.⁷

3. The *Investigations* View of Truth

Wittgenstein’s remarks on truth in his much later work, *Philosophical Investigations*, suggest a position that is very different from the one to be found in the *Tractatus*.

Pretty clearly he is pivoting to a perspective that these days would be classified as “deflationary”—the term applied to accounts emphasizing that:

- Truth has *no* traditional explicit definition or reductive analysis (e.g. in terms of *correspondence*, or *coherence*, or *verifiability*, or *utility*, or *consensus*).

⁷ Hans-Johann Glock puts the point nicely as follows: “The *Tractatus* marries a correspondence theory of depiction to an obtainment theory of truth” (Glock 2004). He goes on to allow that it is still appropriate to call Wittgenstein’s view “a correspondence theory” since the similar view of truth that is proposed by both Moore and Russell around 1912 is standardly regarded as *paradigmatic* of such theories.

But it is worth noting a relevant *dis-similarity*. As we have seen, the foundation of Wittgenstein’s account is his distinction between those possible facts that are *actual* and those that are not; and *actuality* is not a *correspondence* notion. But there is no analogous distinction in the account offered by Russell and Moore. They hold, for reasons we will be examining in section 4, that there can be no such things as *false propositions*. And this reasoning would lead them to the same skeptical conclusion about *merely possible facts*.

- Instead, the nature of the concept is implicitly fixed by the way that each statement specifies its own condition for being true—e.g. the statement *that lying is wrong* is true if and only if lying is wrong.
- It is an extremely *superficial* concept. There are hardly any concepts that are defined in terms of TRUTH, or whose possession requires prior possession of the concept, TRUTH.
- It is merely a useful *expressive* device, enabling certain generalizations to be formulated—for example, “All propositions of the form, $\langle p \text{ or not-}p \rangle$, are true”, and “A belief is correct if and only if it is true”.⁸

There is a lot of evidence in favor of attributing some such perspective to the later Wittgenstein.

First: we have the *Investigations*, section 136: “ p is true = p ”. He is claiming here that ascribing truth to a proposition is equivalent to asserting the proposition itself.

Second: he was aware of, and influenced by, Frank Ramsey’s advocacy of precisely that view.⁹ They were together at Cambridge University in the early 1930s, and in the Preface of the *Investigations* he credits Ramsey with having been an enormous influence on his thinking.

Third: in accord with the deflationary definition and expressive *raison d’être* of TRUTH, this concept is given no important role in the *Investigations*.

And fourth: going hand-in-hand with deflationism about truth is the idea that our notions of predicative and nominal REFERENCE are fixed by the schemata:

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{f}(\) \text{ is true of } x &= \mathbf{f}(x) \\ \mathbf{n} \text{ refers to } x &= \mathbf{n} \text{ is } x \end{aligned}$$

which specify what a given concept applies to, *but only given prior possession of that concept* (which is deployed on the right-hand side of the relevant equations)—a possession that, on pain of circularity, cannot derive from knowing the concept’s reference but must instead consist in mastery of its *use*. Thus Wittgenstein’s move from the Tractarian *referential* conception of word-meanings to the *Investigations use* conception permits him to adopt a deflationary view of *reference*—and that is exactly what one would expect from a deflationist about *truth*.

Assuming it is right that the *Investigations* view of truth is deflationary, one might wonder which one of the various brands of deflationism on the market these days Wittgenstein favored, or would have favored. Would it be *disquotationalism*, according to which sentences (rather than propositions) are the bearers of truth, and the schema, “ p ” is true $\leftrightarrow p$, is the core of what implicitly defines the truth predicate? Or *pro-sententialism*, which denies that “true” is a genuine (logical) predicate, and which stresses instead the analogy between a pronoun and the sentence-type, “That is true” (insofar as both inherit their content from another expression (—one that is contextually salient)? Or the *redundancy theory*, whereby “The proposition *that p* is true” means exactly the same as just “ p ”? Or the *sentence-variable analysis*, which analyzes truth-talk in terms of quantification into sentence positions—“ x is true” is taken to mean “ $(\exists p)(x = \langle p \rangle \ \& \ p)$ ”? Or *Tarski’s theory*, which explains the truth condition of each sentence of a language

⁸ For elaboration of these points see “What is truth?”, Chapter 1 of Horwich 2010.

⁹ Ramsey 1927.

in terms of the referential properties of its component words (characterized disquotationally) and the logical structure in which the words are embedded? Or *minimalism*, which resembles disquotationism, except that it takes propositions (rather than sentences) to be the fundamental bearers of truth, and according to which our possession of the concept TRUTH is said to consist in our inclination to accept instances of the schema, “The proposition *that p* is true $\leftrightarrow p$ ”?

We do not have enough evidence to decide which of these (if any) he would prefer. But my guess is that Wittgenstein’s aversion to philosophical theorizing would push him away from those versions of deflationism that come with a substantial amount of theoretical baggage, making them not *fully* deflationary.

So the redundancy theory would be disliked for its artificial and implausible conception of propositional identity (whereby, *x* can be the same proposition as *y* even though *x* involves the concepts of TRUTH and of PROPOSITION, and *y* does not).

Disquotationism would be disliked for its misguided naturalistic presupposition that *propositions* are too weird to exist, and for its resulting revisionist disrespect for our *actual* use of “true”—our normal application of it to *the things we believe and disbelieve*, rather than to our *expressions* of such attitudes.

Tarski’s theory would be disliked even more. For not only does it involve the same mis-motivated abhorrence of propositions and resulting focus on the truth of linguistic expressions—but, in addition, it repeats the Tractarian assumption (which he came to regard as deeply mistaken) that any meaningful sentence is either an elementary sentence or else is equivalent to the result of logical operations on elementary sentences.

The sentence-variable analysis would be disliked for its different form of revisionism. It defines a concept of ‘truth’ using concepts of variable and quantifier that we do not currently deploy. So the concept of truth that they help define cannot possibly be ours.

And the pro-sentential theory would be disliked for its scientific overstretching of the analogy between our use of “That’s true” to avoid repeating someone’s recent assertion and, for instance, our use of “she” to avoid repeating some recent use of a name or description (e.g. “the discoverer of radium”). The most valuable of our deployments of “true” (as in “Some truths are unverifiable” and “Goldbach’s conjecture is true”) cannot be assimilated to that paradigm without absurd contortions.

Which leaves me thinking he would go for minimalism. (What a surprise!)

4. Which of Wittgenstein’s Two Views of Truth is Better?

Well my opinion is already obvious. But let me supply some justification for it.

As indicated above, Wittgenstein’s account in the *Tractatus* explains truth in terms of an unexplained (but equally puzzling) notion of *fact*. We are not told what it means to say “It’s a *fact* that *p*”, although this idea is obviously no less mysterious (and no less in need of explanation) than “It is *true* that *p*”, which is what it is supposed to explain. This is a considerable defect. And, of course it will not help to define a “fact” as a possibility that “is actualized” or “obtains” or “exists” or “agrees with reality” unless we have explanations of at least one of these—which we do not.

Another difficulty with Wittgenstein’s early position is that it is hard to see how there could be any difference between *actual* facts and merely *possible* facts.

After all, whether it is an actual fact *that Mars is green* or merely a possible fact that *Mars is green*, we are going to have the same constituents—namely, the object Mars and the property of being green—embedded in the same logical structure! Or to put the point in a slightly different way: the fact is a certain arrangement of certain entities; but the merely possible fact is exactly that arrangement of exactly those entities. So how could there exist any *merely possible facts*? Would not all *possible* facts have to be *actual*?

It is extremely surprising that Wittgenstein did not address this second problem, since his teacher and mentor, Bertrand Russell, made such a fuss about it. In his 1912 book-chapter, “Truth and Falsehood”, and in subsequent writings, Russell argued in just this way that there could be no such things as *false* propositions.¹⁰ He concluded that one cannot regard beliefs as relations between people and propositions (since many beliefs are mistaken). And so he devised a novel account of belief in which, for example, Massimo’s belief *that Mars is green* is not a two-place relation between Massimo and the proposition (or possible fact) *that Mars is green*, but is rather a three-place relation between Massimo, Mars, and greenness. Russell showed this work to Wittgenstein, who dismissed the new theory of belief (on the grounds that it “didn’t prohibit believing nonsense”). And Russell was demoralized, confiding to his then girlfriend that although he did not really understand the objection, his respect for Wittgenstein’s insight made him feel that it must be right.¹¹ Still—and this is my main point—it is surprising that, on the one hand, Wittgenstein did not complain about Russell’s argument for the non-existence of false propositions but, on the other hand, did not see that this argument would count equally against his own commitment to non-actual possible facts.

These two defects in the *Tractatus* account of truth are related to one another, as follows. In response to the first one it might be protested that Wittgenstein *does* address what it is for a possible atomic fact to be *actual* (or to *exist*, or to *obtain*,...). He says that this will be so when the constituents of the possible fact are *combined*. And this might seem to provide an illuminating analysis. But that is an illusion. The objection to it is not that *nothing* is said about what it is for objects to be *combined*. For Wittgenstein tells us that “In the atomic fact objects hang one in another, like the links of a chain” (2.03). Nor is the objection that this mere metaphor is woefully insufficient. For he makes it clear that the mode of combination is literally *logical*: it is for example, that Mars and being green (pretending for a second that these are basic entities) are embedded in the structure, ‘that #(x)’, or ‘that x exemplifies #-ness’. The real objection is the *second* of the defects just sketched, which is that this answer fails to do what it was mainly supposed to do—namely, to distinguish those possible facts that obtain from those that do not. For, in both cases the same objects are embedded in the same structure. Thus we are left with no clue as to what it is for a possible fact to obtain, hence what it is for the sentence representing that possible fact to be true.

And a third objectionable feature of Wittgenstein’s early theory is that the picture theory of representation, on which his view of sentential truth depends, deploys an unexplained relation of *reference* between words and things—a notion that is in no less need of definition than the notion of truth it is being used to define.

¹⁰ Chapter 13 of Russell 1912.

¹¹ This biographical material is taken from pp. 80-82 of Monk 1990.

All of these related defects in the *Tractatus* account of truth—its reliance on unexplicated concepts of *actuality* and *reference*, and its failure to explain how *merely* possible facts could exist—can be removed in one fell deflationary swoop.

To begin with the problem of ‘*merely* possible facts’—let us call it “Russell’s problem”—Wittgenstein can solve his own version of it by giving up the idea that there must be some *intrinsic* quality of a possible fact that makes it actual, and instead specifying conditions of *actuality* by means of the schema:

The possible fact *that p* is actual *iff* p.

And, of course, the parallel reply to Russell’s argument against false propositions is that we can identify *the facts* with *the propositions that are true*, and then supply the conditions for propositions to be true by means of the schema:

<p> is true *iff* p.¹²

Again, the mistake was to think that there must be something in the *intrinsic nature* of a fact that distinguishes it from a mere proposition.

This stone also kills the second bird. What I mean is that in resolving the Russellian objection to Wittgenstein’s early theory we are also addressing the objection that Wittgenstein’s attempts to demystify TRUTH by explaining it in terms of FACT, which is equally mysterious. For, as we have seen, the solution again is to say:

It is a fact *that p iff* p.

Thirdly, regarding his reliance on an unexplained relation of reference: Wittgenstein’s coming to appreciate that the meaning of a word is *not* constituted by its reference, but rather by how the word is used, allows him to explicate and demystify reference via a pair of schemata along the lines of

“n” refers to x ≡ n is identical to x (for names)

and

“f” is true of x ≡ f(x) (for predicates).

That is because our understanding of their right-hand sides will *not* already presuppose knowledge of the facts of reference that the left-hand sides are supposed to specify.

The overall moral is that the *Tractatus* theory of sentential truth needs an injection of deflationism if it is to be saved.

5. The Role Played by Wittgenstein’s Accounts of Truth Within his Earlier and Later Philosophies

Now we might well wonder whether it is really possible to coherently inject the deflationary component of Wittgenstein’s *Investigations* philosophy into his *Tractatus* philosophy.

¹² This is not the so-called *Identity Theory of Truth*, which is advocated by Jennifer Hornsby (cf. Hornsby 1997). Yes, she too maintains that true propositions are facts. But her idea is that this equation will define “true” in terms of “fact”—where the latter, roughly in the spirit of the *Tractatus*, is taken either to be a primitive or to be defined as a “combination of objects and properties”. But my deflationary suggestion goes in the opposite explanatory direction—that we rely on the trivial Equivalence Schema to fix the concept of TRUTH, and then proceed to define “fact” as “true proposition”.

I would suggest that the answer is no. That is basically because, as we have seen, deflationism about truth goes hand-in-hand with deflationism about reference; and deflationism about reference goes hand-in-hand with a use-theoretic view of meaning. But Wittgenstein's later commitment to 'meaning as use' is the principal basis for his recognizing his earlier "grave mistakes".¹³ These included his failure to see:

- The fundamentally *instrumental* purpose of language
- The limitless variability of the functions of the different words in a language, and of the kinds of rules that must govern the uses of different words in order for them to perform this variety of functions
- The pervasiveness of vagueness and other forms of indeterminacy
- The absence of a small set of primitive words in terms of which all others can be defined
- The philosophical irrelevance of logic: in particular, that it does not provide the structure of language and thought
- The impossibility of drawing a line in advance around everything a language can be used to say
- The *real* source of philosophical confusion and pseudo problems—which is *not* the enormous conceptual distance between ordinary language expressions and their fundamental analyses (but rather our scientific inclination to overstretch linguistic analogies)
- The contradiction between, on the one hand, the *theoretical* nature of his commitments (—to primitive terms, to the ideal of determinacy, to the fundamentality of logic, and to the exclusive role of *final conceptual analysis* in dissolving philosophical problems—) and, on the other hand, his bottom-line view that *philosophy cannot be theoretical*.

In short, once we let the genie out of the bottle—that is, the deflationary and use-theoretic cat out of its bag (the *Investigations*)—then the fundamental assumptions of his early philosophical system become evidently untenable.

So my conclusion is that Wittgenstein's magnum opus, *Philosophical Investigations*, is a great advance on the *Tractatus*, his brash, brilliant, *initial* attempt at a radically anti-theoretical philosophy. And this progress is almost entirely due to the way in which his new view of truth improves on the old one.¹⁴

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¹³ See the Preface to *Philosophical Investigations*.

¹⁴ My thanks to Hanjo Glock for the stimulus of his excellent above-cited article on this topic, to Charles Djordjevic for a most stimulating conversation about these matters, to Massimo Dell'Utri for his astute comments on the penultimate version of the present paper, and to all those who helped me by raising tough questions during my discussions of this material at the University of Zurich (June 2016), the University of Sassari, Sardinia (September 2016), and the University of Minnesota (November 2016).

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