

thinks an analysis of a name will take – namely a description of the manner in which the object is constructed out of its parts – results from a confusion between metaphysical and conceptual necessity.) This criticism is important, and part of our task in the present chapter will be to see how Wittgenstein could have been tempted into adopting such a position. But I shall mostly set it to one side in the discussion which follows, concentrating on the programme of analysis as it applies to predicative expressions.

(B) Perspicuous representation

The idea that a correct analysis may provide us with different ways of expressing the things we say in ordinary discourse leads immediately to one of its main purposes, on the *TLP* conception. This is that since the modes of thought and speech embodied in ordinary language may be in some respects radically misleading, the provision of alternative ways of saying the same things, through analysis, will help us to see matters aright (3.323–3.325). For as Wittgenstein claims, ordinary language disguises the true form of our thoughts in ways which can easily lead to the most fundamental philosophical confusions (4.002–4.0031). One of our aims in providing an analysis of a given proposition should therefore be to find some way of expressing what is said by it which will be philosophically perspicuous (*'klar'* – see 4.115–4.116).

Wittgenstein thus shares with both Russell and Frege the aim of constructing a language whose syntax would reflect all important semantic and logical distinctions on its surface (a *Begriffsschrift* – 3.325).¹ Like them he sees the business of analysis as the production of a language which will be logically perfect. But note that, in contrast with Frege at least, this is not because he thinks there is actually anything wrong with ordinary language. On the contrary, it fulfils its function perfectly (5.5563). It is only when we come to do philosophy that its structure leads us astray (4.002).

Although Wittgenstein agrees with Russell and Frege about one of the main aims of analysis, he also goes beyond them in a number of respects. Some of these have already emerged in the course of our previous discussions. Thus we noted in Chapter 1 how an analysis of ordinary language in terms of a notation containing no predicates or relational expressions (the Picture Theory) would be supposed to reflect the fundamental distinction between referring and classifying. And in Chapter 2 we saw how Wittgenstein tries to provide a notation for dealing with the numbers in a non-referential way, showing that they are not genuine

7 The programme of analysis

Our task in this chapter is to elucidate the point of the *TLP* programme of analysis for ordinary language, especially the commitment to represent the truth-conditions of our propositions in as detailed a form as possible.

(A) The notion of analysis

There are two distinct strands to our (and Wittgenstein's) notion of analysis, which together lay down the constraints which any adequate analysis should meet. The first is that *analysans* and *analysandum* should say the very same thing – that they should share the same semantic content. The second is that the correctness of an analysis should be recognisable *a priori*, there being at least a conceptually necessary equivalence between the two expressions.

When taken together with the theory of semantic content outlined in Chapter 1, the first of these strands entails that a correct analysis of a sentence is one which succeeds in capturing its truth-condition. That is, it must say the very same things about the very same individuals, where the criterion for 'saying the same' is analytic equivalence. Any analysis meeting this constraint will thus say the same as the analysed proposition, but may do so in a different way (it may possess a different cognitive content).

However, the second of the above strands in our notion of analysis, when taken together with the account of the semantic content of ordinary proper names outlined briefly in Chapter 1, entails that such names cannot be subjected to analysis. For their contents are objects in the real world, whose individual natures cannot be known *a priori*. This then leads immediately to a criticism of the *TLP* programme of analysis. For as we also noted in Chapter 1, Wittgenstein's view is that ordinary names as well as ordinary predicates and relational expressions will disappear under analysis – see 3.24. (Moreover, we noted that the precise form which he

objects. Moreover, at 5.53–5.534 he provides a notation which is intended to enable him to do without a distinct sign of identity, taking this to show that identity is not really a relation.² Finally, I believe Wittgenstein thought that a successful analysis should reflect logical form on its surface in a much more specific way than either Frege or Russell ever contemplated; for example, believing that in a philosophically perspicuous notation a nonsensical sentence such as 'Seven is heavier than five' should be ill formed in precisely the sort of way that 'Exa' is.³

When coupled with the thesis of the priority of logic over metaphysics, the idea of a perspicuous representation thus comes to hold a central place in the methodology of *TLP*. More than anything else, it is the construction of such notations which is to enable the philosopher to show the essential features of thought and reality, while dispelling philosophical confusions. By presenting clearly whatever can be thought, analysis will show what is mere nonsense. And by providing alternative ways of expressing those thoughts, it will help us to be clear about the fundamental semantic distinctions at work in our language, and to discern, in consequence, the basic metaphysical structure of the world. This aspect of Wittgenstein's conception of the role of analysis is thus best seen as a development of the Frege/Russell idea of a conceptual notation, coupled with his own version of the thesis that logic and semantics are prior to metaphysics and ontology.

(C) Complete analysis

Nothing in the above discussion of perspicuous representation has yet done anything to explain why Wittgenstein should think that it must be possible to provide a *complete* analysis of the propositions of ordinary language (3.2–3.201, 3.25), unless this only means that the result of analysis should be complete perspicuity. But plainly he means more than this. Analysis, in *TLP*, is not just a matter of providing propositions logically equivalent to, but more perspicuous than, the originals; it also entails seeking ever more detailed representations of their truth-conditions. For as we noted at the outset of Chapter 5, analysis is to represent all propositions as truth-functions of a base-class of elementary propositions which cannot themselves be analysed further (3.26, 4.221, 5). Now, why should this be a goal worth pursuing? What would be the point of seeking a completely detailed representation of the truth-conditions of our ordinary-language propositions?

Part of the answer no doubt lies in the *TLP* commitment to Simples, if

Wittgenstein's reasons for believing in them should turn out to be independent of the programme of analysis itself. For if the very existence of language requires that there be a class of simple necessarily existing individuals to serve as possible objects of reference, then analysis must presumably be able to bring out how our ordinary discourse is, on some deeper level, related to such things. We shall return to the issue in Chapters 9, 10 and 12.

For the remainder of our answer we may once again consult *NB* 60–70. For discussion of the idea of complete analysis is there interwoven with discussion of the requirement of determinacy of *Sinn*. This suggests that, in one way or another, the search for ever more detailed representations of truth-conditions is to enable us to comply with this requirement. But as we discovered in our previous discussion of determinacy, there is not one requirement here but two. So the immediate question before us is whether analysis is to help us to meet the requirement of sharpness of *Sinn*, or rather the requirement of determinacy-in-advance.

We saw in Chapter 6 that it is impossible to introduce the fuzziness of ordinary statements by means of a truth-function of elementary propositions. So if we simply turn this around, it of course follows that analysis of ordinary language by means of such truth-functions would be precisely the way to show that it does – despite appearances to the contrary – conform to the requirement of sharpness of *Sinn*. Successful completion of such a programme of analysis would reveal fuzziness to be illusory. But we also saw that Wittgenstein lacks any independent reason for insisting on the requirement of sharpness. More precisely, we saw that some of the reasons which might have influenced him – namely confusion between two senses of 'vague', or a belief that fuzziness conflicts with the principles of logic – were poor ones. And we saw that the other reason which may have influenced him was none other than his commitment to his programme of analysis itself. As for the final possible reason – that Sorites paradoxes must remain insoluble for anyone with a commitment to logical objectivism – there is nothing to suggest that Wittgenstein was actually influenced by it. So in the interests of both Charity and historical plausibility, we would do well to seek evidence that his programme for the complete analysis of ordinary language was somehow motivated by the requirement of determinacy-in-advance.

Our first clue is to be found at *NB* 61, in the midst of a discussion of the idea of complete analysis. Wittgenstein remarks that every proposition must have a *complete Sinn* (italics in original), and that whatever is not yet said in a proposition cannot belong to its *Sinn*. This suggests very strongly

that it is the requirement of determinacy-in-advance which is at issue. But then in the next sentence he says that it must be explicable HOW THIS proposition has THIS *Sinn* (capitals in original). So it appears to be the business of analysis to provide an explanation of how a given proposition — a sentence with a particular Fregean sense — comes to have the truth-condition which it does. And it appears that the demand for such an explanation is somehow forced on us by the requirement of determinacy-in-advance (which is one aspect of logical objectivism). But what is it that needs explaining? And what is the connection with logical objectivism?

A second clue is to be found at NB 70, again in the midst of a discussion of analysis, where Wittgenstein remarks that he wants to justify the vagueness of ordinary propositions. Now, since (as we saw in Chapter 6) the notion of vagueness is ambiguous, this remark too is ambiguous. Does Wittgenstein mean that he wants (through analysis) to justify the unspecificity of ordinary propositions? Or does he mean that he wants to justify their fuzziness? In fact there is sufficient textual evidence for us to answer 'Both'. For just a little further down the page he is clearly discussing fuzziness, since he raises the possibility that there may be relative positions of watch and table such that it would be uncertain whether the one could be said to be lying on the other.⁴ But at the bottom of the previous page, separated only by some remarks about the extraordinary complexity of the conventions governing ordinary language, he had remarked that the proposition 'The watch is lying on the table' obviously contains a lot of indeterminacy ('*Unbestimmtheit*'), declaring it to be apparent to the uncaptive mind that the *Sinn* of that proposition is more complex than the proposition itself.

Now, he could hardly have thought it obvious that the proposition 'The watch is lying on the table' is really extremely fuzzy, since his strategy for dealing with fuzziness is to try to show it to be merely apparent, as we have seen. And indeed, in the paragraph immediately following the remark about justifying vagueness, he speaks of the demand that propositions should be given in more *detail* still (my italics). So when he speaks about the indeterminacy of the proposition here, he must surely have in mind its unspecificity or generality.⁵ This is confirmed by the previous page (NB 69), where he says that there will be an indeterminacy in any proposition containing a name of a complex object, and that this derives from the *generality* of such a proposition (my italics). So it would be the business of analysis, we may suppose, to justify this unspecificity by expressing the truth-condition in complete detail.⁶

Wittgenstein seems to take it to be a fact with which we have to reckon

that the states of affairs which render our propositions true or false are always, themselves, entirely particular and specific. There can be no indefiniteness in the world itself. (NB 62: 'The world has a fixed structure.') Yet we might naturally wonder where the truth of such a claim is supposed to come from. For who is to say that the world does not contain (perhaps at a sub-atomic level) states or events which are irreducibly indeterminate in some respect? Indeed, do not most physicists now believe that there is an indeterminacy in the position and/or velocity of sub-atomic particles, thus implying that their position is to some degree unspecific? It might be replied that such questions are anachronistic, since the various indeterminacy theses in physics had not been published at the time when Wittgenstein was writing. He may simply (and reasonably) have been taking for granted what was believed by the physicists of his day (Einstein included). But in any case it seems likely that his argument only really requires a weaker claim: that the states of affairs which make our ordinary propositions true are a great deal *more* specific than the propositions which describe them.

Wittgenstein's demand is thus to explain how an ordinary (unspecific) proposition can be made true by a quite specific (or at least more specific) state of affairs. And this is to be accomplished by analysing the unspecific proposition into one which is just as detailed as the states of affairs which might render it true. So the demand to explain how a proposition comes to have the truth-condition which it does, which we gleaned from NB 61, is the demand to show by analysis how an ordinary unspecific proposition can nevertheless be made true by a specific state of affairs. But still we need to ask why such an analysis is needed. Quite what is it here that calls out for explanation?

The answer lies in the requirement of determinacy-in-advance itself. For the relationship between the specific state of affairs and the unspecific proposition is an internal one. (If that state of affairs exists — if the watch is lying in *this* particular position on the table — then the proposition in question *must* be true.) So it must somehow be completely determinate, from the sense of the unspecific proposition alone, that it would be made true by this particular state of affairs. And if this is so, then in Wittgenstein's view it must be possible to *display* the content of the proposition in such a way that it will be *manifest* that it is so.

The idea behind the programme of analysis is then that the content of the unspecific ordinary-language proposition should be displayed as a truth-function of elementary propositions, each of which could be made true by one and only one specific state of affairs. It would then be manifest that the

relationship between proposition and state of affairs is an internal one, since the truth of the proposition would follow logically (truth-functionally) from the truth of elementary propositions stating the existence of states of affairs. To take a crude model, the idea is that if we were to analyse 'The watch is lying on the table' into a truth-function of propositions describing particular positions of the watch on the table, then it would be made clear how that unspecific proposition can be made true by (can 'reach right up to') a specific state of affairs.

In this exposition of Wittgenstein's ideas I have thus far focussed on the predicative element in sentences, reflecting on the variety of different positions of the watch which could correctly be described as 'on the table'. But a similar point would appear to hold equally in connection with ordinary names. For consider the variety of changes in the watch itself which would be consistent with the truth of 'That watch is on the table.' Its hands may be reading any number of different times; it may be broken or recently repaired; it may be scratched, dented or have lost its strap; and so on. In each one of this wide variety of circumstances the sentence in question would still have to be true (provided the watch were positioned somewhere on the table). So determinacy-in-advance will require that the sense of the sentence should somehow contain a representation of each of them. In which case it must be possible for analysis to display the content of the proposition in such a way that it will be manifest that the connection between it and the variety of states of affairs is dependent upon sense alone. In particular, it must be possible to analyse this use of the term 'That watch', in order to explain the variety of different ways in which the watch may enter into a state of affairs. And although this does not actually entail that the term may be replaced by a description of the various ways in which the watch may be made up of its parts, consistent with its existence, it is perhaps hard to see what other form the analysis might take.⁸

(D) The rejection of intuition

What has emerged from all this textual detective-work is that Wittgenstein's programme for the complete analysis of ordinary language is based upon his logical objectivism. Since the truth-conditions of our propositions must be determined in advance of anything empirical in all their particularity (the requirement of determinacy-in-advance), it must be possible to demonstrate that this is so – to show that language reaches right up to the world – by means of a completely detailed representation of the truth-conditions of the unspecific proposition.

But why should it be either necessary or possible to provide such a complete analysis? Why should we not simply say that anyone who understands the unspecific proposition will have the capacity to see – by intuition – that such-and-such a particular state of affairs must render it true? What would be wrong with saying that the connection with a particular state of affairs will be self-evident to one who has grasped the sense of the unspecific proposition?

Clearly Wittgenstein would reject any attempt to introduce intuition or self-evidence into the explanation of the internal connection between propositions and reality, in precisely the way that he rejects any attempt to find a place for intuition in logic. (See 5.4731, 6.1271, 6.233.) His reasons are not entirely easy to interpret, and we shall return to them in Chapter 13. But I believe we may see him as setting a dilemma. Either the appeal to intuition imports quite inappropriate psychological considerations into the account (the thinker's feelings of intuition being what *determines* that the unspecific proposition is made true by some given state of affairs), thus conflicting with the requirement of determinacy-in-advance; or it simply repeats the assertion that there really is an internal relation between the proposition and the state of affairs, without taking us one whit closer towards showing that this is so.

Considering the second horn of the dilemma first, we might wonder why it *has* to be possible to show that the relation between unspecific propositions and specific states of affairs is internal. Perhaps the relation is one which admits of no explanation, so that if we were asked what the proposition 'The watch is on the table' says, one could only reply: It says that the watch is on the table. But in response to this we need only reiterate that the proposition is, after all, made true by quite specific positions of the watch on the table. So if the requirement of determinacy-in-advance is complied with, the proposition must somehow determine – *a priori* – the truth-condition in all its particularity. And since the truth-condition is, so to speak, that much more specific than the proposition itself, it must at least be possible to set it out in all its particularity. This task is not only possible, but is required of us if we wish to show determinacy-in-advance to obtain. And it is hard to see how this could be done except by analysing the unspecific proposition into a truth-function of elementary ('particularised') ones. So it is not that there is anything really wrong with the answer 'It says that the watch is on the table' in itself. It is simply that this answer is compatible with either the truth or falsity of determinacy-in-advance (logical objectivism). If we are to show that the unspecificity of ordinary language raises no threat to logical objectivism, then we have no option but to embark on a programme of analysis.

To the first horn of the dilemma — the charge that any appeal to intuition which is doing genuine explanatory work will conflict with the requirement of determinacy-in-advance — we might object that even analysis itself will have to appeal to intuition at some point. For we should have to rely upon speakers' intuitive judgements in the use of the ordinary-language proposition in setting up the analysis in the first place. ('Would this be a case of the watch being on the table? And would this? And this?') And be our account of the truth-functional connectives as precise and explicit as you like, we shall still have to rely in the end upon our intuitive sense of what the rules and definitions require of us in particular cases. In short: if appeals to intuition are unavoidable in any case, then there can be no objection to the introduction of such an appeal into the defence of determinacy-in-advance; thus removing the need for a programme of analysis.

This reply overlooks a crucial distinction between a form of account which actually brings an appeal to intuition into the truth-condition of the proposition itself, and one which merely relies — externally — upon intuition to justify itself, or in seeing what is required of us in particular cases. The former really does threaten to undermine logical objectivism, whereas the latter merely reflects the fact that there must always be some latitude left to intuition, for the logical objectivist, by any rule or definition no matter how explicit. For while the sense of the rule may determine unlimitedly many applications, all that one can be given (or that one can give oneself) in explanation are some other symbols which themselves have to be understood, or various gestures and examples which themselves have to be interpreted. Understanding, for the logical objectivist, must always be to some extent a matter of 'cottoning on' to the intended sense. (Compare 3.263.)

The distinction I have in mind might also be expressed in terms of the difference between appealing to intuition in answer to a question of the form 'What does "p" mean, or say?', and in answer to one of the form 'How do you know that "p" means that?' In the first case, an appeal to intuition is either incoherent or conflicts with determinacy-in-advance. It will conflict with determinacy-in-advance, and with logical objectivism generally, if feelings of intuition are introduced as the link between propositions and reality. For this would be to suppose that it is speakers' feelings of intuition which determine that a sentence with a given sense has a given truth-condition, which is precisely to say that the relationship depends upon 'some third thing'. Incoherence will result, on the other hand, if intuition figures in the account of the sense of the proposition

itself. For suppose that in answer to the question 'What does "The watch is lying on the table" say?', one replied that it says things stand in such a way that anyone who understands it (and is suitably placed) will see by intuition that it must be true. This would be viciously circular, since we should have referred to the proposition itself within what was supposed to be an account of its content.

The second sort of case, on the other hand, is entirely innocent. If the question asked is 'How do you know that the proposition is true in these circumstances?', or if it is 'How do you know that it is equivalent to such-and-such a truth-function of elementary propositions?', then an appeal to intuition can be perfectly legitimate — indeed at some point unavoidable.

(D) Complexity in thought

Are we, on Wittgenstein's account, to think of the complexity of the fully analysed proposition as being somehow already implicitly there — perhaps 'added in thought' — in the ordinary-language proposition?⁹ If so, then the idea would be extremely counter-intuitive. Are we really prepared to believe that my understanding of an ordinary proposition somehow involves a huge — perhaps infinitary — truth-function of elementary ones, or that I somehow run over all these propositions in thought (extremely fast) when I think the ordinary proposition? For of course I may have not the faintest idea of what these propositions are, as Wittgenstein himself acknowledges (5.55).

At NB 70, when remarking on the complexity of the conventions governing our language, Wittgenstein does say that enormously much is added to each proposition in thinking it ('*dazugedacht*'). But this is dropped from the otherwise similar passage in TLP, 4.002. Moreover, when discussing the possibly infinite complexity of ordinary propositions earlier in NB (at 64), Wittgenstein had remarked that this complexity was not in the propositional sign by itself, but in it *together with its syntactical application* (italics in original). This suggests that the complexity results, not from what is added in thought, but rather from the conventions determining the use of the sign. But in any case the 'added in thought' interpretation would conflict with the thesis defended briefly in Chapter 1, that for Wittgenstein thinking and speaking are on a par, each consisting of structured arrangements of symbols. So when he speaks of the way in which the complexities of our language may be hidden from us, at 4.002, I take it he has in mind not just perceptible but also imperceptible languages.¹⁰

There is no reason to interpret Wittgenstein as believing that the com-

plexity of the fully analysed proposition is already there, in some mysterious way, in the ordinary one. His view is simply this: since the two propositions will (if the analysis is accurate) be logically equivalent, and since identity of semantic content is sameness of truth-conditions, both *analysans* and *analysandum* will say the very same thing, and will be (essentially) the very same proposition. There will then be no harm in saying that the ordinary proposition is (that is, has the same truth-condition as) a truth-function of elementary propositions (see 5). And we can use the fact that the one clearly complies with the requirement of determinacy-in-advance as an explanation of how the other does.

Summary

Analysis, in *TLP*, is to fulfil two distinct functions. On the one hand it is to provide notations which are philosophically and semantically perspicuous. And on the other hand it is to demonstrate how thought reaches right up to reality: showing how unspecific propositions can be made true by specific states of affairs, consistent with logical objectivism.

8 *Sense-data and solipsism*

In this chapter we shall consider, and reject, a phenomenalist interpretation of the *TLP* programme of analysis, the main evidence for which is provided by Wittgenstein's apparent endorsement of solipsism.

(A) Preliminaries

There is a long tradition, championed especially by the Logical Positivists in the thirties but revived again recently, of taking the 'simple objects' of *TLP* to be the data of immediate experience – sense-data.¹ Now it is certainly true that Wittgenstein began to play around with phenomenism and its associated verificationism soon after his return to philosophy in the late twenties (perhaps responding to the interests of the Vienna Circle), and that he often thereafter seems to have thought of his early work in broadly phenomenalist terms.² But in line with the general interpretative strategy adopted throughout this book, I propose to ignore this later evidence as being of doubtful reliability. (Given the forward-looking nature of Wittgenstein's intellect, it would be entirely natural that once stimulated to an interest in verificationism he should throw himself wholeheartedly into developing his old thoughts in this new direction, even to the extent of losing touch with their original significance.) We shall confine our attention to our primary sources: *TLP* and (cautiously) *NB*.

No doubt some have read *TLP* through the prism of Russell's 'Lectures on Logical Atomism', which he says reflects what he learned from his conversations with Wittgenstein in the period leading up to the Summer of 1914,³ allowing themselves to be guided by the fact that the programme of analysis envisaged in the 'Lectures' is clearly phenomenalist, as had been Russell's earlier publications. But in reality the evidence provided by the 'Lectures' is negligible. Notice firstly, that even if they were an accurate record of Wittgenstein's pre-1914 thinking, there are still