

lying in the direction in which they point (namely, towards opposite sides of it). Similarly with the remark that negation reverses the Sinn of a proposition (5.2341): for attaching the negation-sign to a proposition leaves the associated division within the set of worlds unaffected; what changes is which of the two sets the proposition points as towards.

### SUMMARY

The *TLP* use of the terms 'Sinn' and 'Bedeutung' may be said both to mark the primacy of the complete sentence within semantics, and to embody a substantial theory of semantic content. 'Bedeutung' may reasonably be translated as 'semantic content' throughout, leaving it open that the Bedeutungen of some expressions are not items in the real world. Sinn, which is the kind of semantic content possessed by sentences, is to be understood as a directed division within a set of truth and falsity conditions.

## 4

### In Search of Sense

The interpretation of the *TLP* terminology of 'Sinn' and 'Bedeutung' provided in chapter 3 leaves open that Wittgenstein might in addition have employed a notion which is more closely analogous to Fregean sense. In the present chapter I shall argue that this possibility is in fact realized.

#### 4.1 SYMBOL AND SENSE

At 3.31 Wittgenstein explicitly introduces the notion of a symbol, saying that by a symbol he means any part of a proposition which characterizes its Sinn. He also there treats 'symbol' as the equivalent of 'expression' ('Ausdruck'), an equivalence which I believe is maintained throughout *TLP*. I shall argue that a symbol, or expression, is a sign together with its Fregean sense (though without Frege's commitment to the mind-independent existence of senses).

There are at least two possible ways of reading 3.31, depending upon how the verb 'to characterize' is understood. On the one hand it may mean that a symbol is any part of a proposition which *determines* a contribution to the semantic content (Sinn) of the whole. A symbol would then be any part of a proposition which contributes to the latter's truth-condition by determining a semantic content (Bedeutung) for itself. This would certainly echo one aspect of Frege's notion of sense, since the sense of a sign is supposed to contribute towards determining the truth-conditions of sentences in which it occurs, via the determination of a Bedeutung (referent). Yet on the other hand 'characterize' may only mean 'contribute to' rather than 'determine a contribution to'. That is, 3.31 may merely tell us that a symbol is any part of a proposition which has associated with it something which contributes to the semantic content of the whole. This would leave us with something

closer to a Russellian, rather than a Fregean, conception, suggesting an interpretation of 'symbol' to mean 'sign which has reference (Russellian meaning)'.

Against the second of these interpretations we might point to 3.32, which tells us that a sign is what can be perceived of a symbol. Then if a symbol has both a perceptible and an imperceptible aspect, we might be tempted to argue that the latter would have to be something like a Fregean sense, an abstract mode of thinking of a *Bedeutung*.<sup>1</sup> But in fact it can be replied that the imperceptible aspect could just as well be the (bare) fact of the sign's having *Bedeutung*. What we really need is some evidence that Wittgenstein is prepared to think in terms of a symbol *determining* its semantic content, with perhaps a number of different symbols being able to determine one and the same such content.

At 3.317, in discussing the stipulation of values for a propositional variable (e.g. the stipulation that 'the chair' may occur as an argument in 'x is red', whereas '7' may not), Wittgenstein insists that the stipulation should only be concerned with symbols, not with their *Bedeutungen*. He then glosses this by emphasizing, in italics, that the stipulation should merely be a description of symbols, and should state nothing about what is signified. So a *Bedeutung* (semantic content) is *what is signified* by a symbol. Then at 3.321 he says that a sign will, if it signifies in two different ways, do so in virtue of being part of two different symbols. So a sign will come to signify in the way in which it does (and hence have the semantic content that it has) in virtue of being (part of) the symbol that it is. That is to say, part of what it is to be a symbol is to be a way of signifying (and hence of determining) a semantic content. And differences of symbol may result from differences in their way of signifying.

The notion of a symbol thus meshes with one aspect of the Fregean conception of sense, namely that senses are ways of determining *Bedeutungen*. (Though as we argued in the last chapter, for Wittgenstein not all *Bedeutungen* need be elements of the real world.) But equally important for Frege is the idea that the same *Bedeutung* may be determined by a number of different senses. In this respect, too, Wittgenstein seems thoroughly Fregean. For at 3.3411 he implies that one and the same object may be signified by a number of different symbols. So if differences in symbol mean differences in the way of signifying (3.321), then we are being told

that there can be a number of different names with the same *Bedeutung*, where those names signify that object in different ways. So names with the same *Bedeutung* can have different Fregean senses.

This is of course an extremely controversial reading of *TLP*, and there are many objections to it which need to be overcome before it can be regarded as properly established. To this task we shall return in chapter 12. But it is worth replying at this point to an objection against the argument just presented. This is that 3.321 does not actually say that differences in symbol are always due to differences in the mode of signifying. It says only that if one sign expresses two symbols, then this must be because it symbolizes in different ways. But since a symbol is a sign plus a way of signifying (3.32), Wittgenstein may also wish to say that two different signs with the same way of signifying would also be two different symbols. So when he implies at 3.3411 that one and the same object may be signified by a number of different symbols he may only mean that it can be signified by a number of different signs. And of course this is true, on any account of the matter.

There are two points to be made in reply. The first is that this suggested reading renders 3.3411 wholly trivial. For no one has ever supposed that any particular syntactic composition is essential to a name. What may *have* supposed (notably Frege) is that names have associated with them a mode of determining their bearers (a sense) which forms part of their semantic content. On my reading, 3.3411 would be denying just this combination of views, as we shall see in more detail in chapter 12. Wittgenstein would be conceding that names do have senses (modes of determining reference) but would be denying that these senses are part of their semantic content – he would be denying that in order to understand an utterance involving a proper name you have to know the speaker's mode of determining the referent of that name. My reading is therefore favoured by Charity, since it at least makes 3.3411 look interesting.

The second point is that just two remarks after 3.3411, at 3.3421, Wittgenstein seems to be making a cognate point; but he there talks about different modes of signifying, rather than differences of sign. While 3.3411 tells us that all kinds of composition are inessential to a name, 3.3421 says that although different modes of signifying are unimportant, it can still be philosophically illuminating to realize

that they are possible. We get the smoothest reading here if we assume that the earlier remark, too, is talking about different modes of signifying – thus implying that there can be names which signify the very same object in different ways.

We are beginning to build up a tentative case that Wittgenstein uses the term ‘symbol’ to mean something like ‘sign together with its sense’. But he also says – and this is the bit that Frege would not have endorsed – that these different ways of signifying (different symbols) belong to the realm of what is inessential in language. From the point of view of what is essential, he believes, all names signifying the same object are the very same name. (Just what this point of view may be we shall discuss in chapters 5 and 12.) Indeed this is how the idea of there being different symbols with the same *Bedeutung* gets introduced again and again throughout *TLP*: it comes in under the guise of the distinction between what is essential and what is inessential in language.

Thus at 3.344 he tells us that what signifies (i.e. what *really* signifies, what is essential) in a symbol is what is common to all the symbols that the rules of ‘logical syntax’ allow us to substitute for it. He then illustrates with the interdefinability of the logical connectives. So he is saying for instance that in ‘ $P \vee Q$ ’ and ‘ $\neg(\neg P \& \neg Q)$ ’ we have different symbols – those sentences determine their truth-conditions in different ways – but that, because they have the same truth-condition (*Sinn*), they may be regarded as the same from the point of view of what is essential. Similarly at 4.465, with reference to the relationship between ‘ $P$ ’ and ‘ $P \& (Q \vee \neg Q)$ ’ Wittgenstein remarks that it is impossible to alter what is essential to a symbol without altering its *Sinn*. So again he is implying that these two sentences signify their truth-condition in different ways (they are different symbols). But he is insisting that because their truth-condition is the same, the differences in ‘way’ belong to the realm of the inessential in language.

There is a possible objection to my interpretation of the above passages which parallels the earlier objection to my reading of 3.3411. It is that Wittgenstein may mean by distinct (but essentially the same, because having the same semantic content) symbols here, only differences in the *signs* involved and not their way of signifying. My view is that Wittgenstein is speaking of signs with different (if inessentially different) ways of signifying the very same *Sinn* or *Bedeutung*. But the objection is that he could equally well be taken as speaking only of differences of sign.

My only reply is to fall back on the principle of Charity. For on this reading the essential/inessential contrast becomes utterly trivial. Wittgenstein would merely be noting – what surely no one would ever have wished to deny – that the use of any particular sign to say something is always inessential to the thing said. And it would then be unintelligible that he should have given this idea such prominence. On my reading, on the other hand, he has a substantial point to make, involving an important criticism of Frege’s theory of communication, as we shall see in the next chapter. But for the present all that matters is that Wittgenstein appears to agree that a sign can be used with different ways of signifying.

#### 4.2 AN AMBIGUITY IN ‘SYMBOL’

Before continuing any further we need to notice an ambiguity in Wittgenstein’s use of ‘symbol’, which threatens the clarity of the account presented so far. For at 3.322 – immediately after we have been told at 3.321 that different symbols may involve different ways of signifying – we are told that the use of the same sign to signify two different objects can never indicate a common characteristic of the two, if we use that sign with different *modes of signification* (italics in original; I take it that Wittgenstein uses them to signal that he has shifted to quite a different sense of the phrase. See also the italics in 3.323). There is simply no way of making this intelligible if we interpret different modes of signification, and different symbols, to mean merely differences in Fregean sense. For the statement implies that the use of the same sign to signify two different objects *can* signify a common characteristic of the two, if used with *the same* mode of signification. And it is of course impossible, on the Fregean account, for one sign to signify two different objects without being used in two different senses.

What Wittgenstein has in mind is made clear in the next section (3.323), where we are told that in the sentence ‘Green is green’ (where the first word is a proper name and the last an adjective) the words do not merely have different *Bedeutungen*, but are *different symbols* (italics in original). I take him to mean that the name and the adjective do not merely contribute to the truth-condition of the sentence in different ways (by having different senses and different *Bedeutungen*), but that they contribute in different *kinds* of way, the

signifying relation being of quite a different sort. Similarly in the immediately preceding remark in the section, he is saying of the three different uses of the word 'is' – as copula, as identity-sign, and as an expression for existence – that they are three different *kinds* of use. It is not merely that the word has three different senses. Rather it has three different *kinds* of sense, which would be represented in a conceptual notation (Begriffsschrift) by signs as different from one another as a quantifier is from a proper name. (See 3.325.)

So although in general Wittgenstein understands different symbols to be signs with different ways of signifying (with different Fregean senses), in the passages immediately following 3.322 he understands them to be signs with different *kinds* of sense (belonging to different logical categories). This usage continues as far as 3.326, where we are told that in order to recognize a symbol by a sign we must observe how it is used in signifying. This would be barely intelligible if we took it to mean that in order to discover the sense of a sign you must observe how it contributes to the truth-conditions of sentences in which it occurs. For unless you already understand the sign (know its sense) you will be in no position to know those truth-conditions. By 'recognise a symbol' here, he must mean 'recognise the *kind* of sense'. And this is confirmed in the next remark (3.327), where he says that a sign only determines its logical form (i.e. the logical category to which it belongs) when taken together with its 'logico-syntactical employment'. What is at issue in these remarks is the methodology to be employed in constructing a conceptual notation.

The use of 'symbol' to mean 'kind of sense' does not last very long however. By 3.341 and 3.3411 we are back with its original meaning once again, and we remain there throughout the remainder of *TLP*. These are the passages where Wittgenstein talks of a single object being signified by a number of different symbols. Since it is surely unintelligible that a single entity might be signified by a number of signs belonging to different logical categories, he must here have in mind only signs with different Fregean senses.

### 4.3 PROPOSITIONS AND SENSE

I have been arguing that the *TLP* notion of a symbol (or an expression) embodies something very close, at least, to Frege's

notion of sense. Now 3.31 tells us that a proposition (Satz) is itself an expression. So if my interpretation were correct we would expect Wittgenstein to be using 'proposition' to mean 'sentence together with its sense'. And indeed, at 3.12 a proposition is defined as a propositional sign in its projective relation to the world. Similarly, 3.11 implies that a proposition is a sentence used as a projection of a possible situation. These remarks are strongly reminiscent of Frege, since the idea of a 'projection' for a sentence appears to be the exact mirror-image of Frege's famous metaphor of sense as the *mode of presentation* of Bedeutung.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, you could say that the metaphor of projection combines not only the Fregean idea of a mode of presentation – with different projections of the very same Bedeutung being possible – but also the Fregean thesis that sense *determines* Bedeutung.

However, it can be objected that this reading is by no means forced upon us. For notice firstly that the notion of a method of projection might be taken to be the analogue, in the case of sentences, of the notion of a pictorial relationship for pictures. As 2.1514 tells us, this consists in the correlations between the elements of the picture (the names in a sentence) with the objects in the state of affairs pictured (the bearers of the names). This interpretation combined with a Russellian view of Tractarian names would leave us with an entirely un-Fregean conception of a proposition. A proposition would be 'projected' onto reality by virtue of the correlations between the names in the sentence and the objects in the state of affairs represented, these correlations being mediated by the speaker's immediate acquaintance with those objects. There is nothing in this that is in any way similar to Fregean sense.

There are two replies to this objection, though neither of them can be properly substantiated here. The first is that nothing has yet shown that Tractarian names do not have senses. Certainly 3.3 does not show this, if 'Sinn' means something like 'truth-condition'. Nor does 3.203, if 'Bedeutung' means 'semantic content'. Moreover we have the contrary evidence of 3.3411, as we saw above. These issues will be pursued in more detail in chapter 12. For the moment we may merely note that there is nothing to show that the 'correlations' spoken of at 2.1514 must be immediate, rather than holding by virtue of the names expressing Fregean senses.

The second reply to the objection is this: although it is true that the pictorial relationship consists only of the correlations between

elements of the picture and things in the world, this is only one half of Wittgenstein's account of how a picture comes to depict what it does, the other half being the notion of *form*. (See 2.15–2.17.) The interpretation of this notion, too, is controversial. But I shall argue in chapters 11 and 15 that it is, roughly, the conventions enabling us to map any given arrangement of picture elements onto a determinate arrangement of their referents.<sup>3</sup> This certainly ought to belong within the notion of the 'method of projection' for a picture. And whatever we might say about the name/bearer relation, such conventions must surely involve something similar to the idea of Fregean sense.

Thus far the suggested Fregean reading of 'proposition' is only partly established, waiting on the arguments of later chapters. But we can here adduce some further evidence in its favour. For as we noted above, at 3.31 we are told that a proposition is a kind of expression; and we have already argued that an expression (symbol) is a sign together with its mode of determining a semantic content. Moreover, just as symbols in general have essential and inessential aspects – the particular mode of determining a *Bedeutung* belonging to the inessential – so too does a proposition (3.34). This idea is developed in more detail at 3.341, where we are told that what is essential in a proposition is what all propositions which can express the same *Sinn* have in common. This of course implies that there can be a number of different propositions with the very same truth-condition. And as I argued above in connection with symbols in general, what is meant by difference of proposition here should not be thought of as a difference only at the level of signs. On the contrary, it may result from differing modes with which the truth-condition is determined. This is confirmed a few remarks later at 3.3421, which speaks of the unimportance of different modes of signifying, rather than the unimportance of differences of sign.

One further argument for our interpretation is as follows. If, as we have been maintaining, 'proposition' in *TLP* means 'sentence with its sense',<sup>4</sup> then it will of course follow that there can be logically equivalent sentences which express distinct propositions. For there can be different modes of determining the very same truth-conditions. It will also follow that tautologies and contradictions are propositions, since they are sentences with a determinate mode of determining a truth-condition (though they turn out not to have a directed truth-condition, or *Sinn*) and since they can certainly have

cognitive content. And just as we might have expected, at 4.461 we find Wittgenstein saying that propositions show what they say, tautologies and contradictions showing that they say nothing; which implies that tautologies and contradictions are themselves propositions. Similarly, 6.1 says that the propositions (plural) of logic are tautologies. (See also 6.11–6.1222 and 6.126.) Nor can we take 'Satz' in these remarks to mean merely 'sentence', since it can only be a symbol (a sign in use) rather than the sign itself which shows what it represents, and since what makes something a logical Satz is that it can be recognized to be true from the *symbol* alone (6.113).

#### 4.4 PROBLEMS WITH 'PROPOSITION'

I believe that the above quasi-Fregean use of 'proposition' is maintained throughout most of *TLP*. However, just as in our earlier discussion of 'symbol', there are some exceptions and difficulties which need to be noted before our account can be allowed to stand. One clear case is 5.541, where Wittgenstein says (expounding Russell) that it might be felt that the sentence 'A believes that P' ascribes a relation between A and the proposition P. Here 'proposition' must be understood as Russell understands it, as an entity which itself contains the objects of thought. For otherwise the remark would embody the most fundamental misunderstanding of Russell, who certainly did not hold that belief is a relation between a thinker and a sentence, nor a relation between a thinker and a sentence with sense. But there is no problem for us here: it is entirely natural that Wittgenstein should have used 'proposition' in a Russellian way when discussing Russell.<sup>5</sup>

A second class of cases are some remarks among the 5s, where 'proposition' gets used to mean a sentence individuated by its *Sinn* (truth-condition), rather than a sentence individuated at least partly by its Fregean sense. Such a use implies that all sentences with the same truth-conditions are the same proposition, and that sentences which lack directed truth-conditions (*Sinn*) are not propositions at all. Thus 5.141 tells us that all logically equivalent sentences (all sentences with the same truth-conditions) are one and the same proposition; 5 and 5.3 say that all propositions *are* truth-functions of elementary propositions (rather than, as we

might have expected given a Fregean reading of 'proposition', that all propositions are *logically equivalent* to truth-functions of elementary ones); and 5.513 asserts that every proposition has only one negative.

If taken on their own, these passages need cause us no special difficulty. For it is easy to see how Wittgenstein could have slipped naturally into such a use, since he is dealing throughout the 5s with the question of the general propositional form; that is to say: with the essence of the proposition. For as we have already noted, he believes that what is essential to a proposition is its truth-condition, differences in symbol (sense) being relegated to the realm of the inessential in language. So what could be more natural, in this context, than that he should say that logically equivalent sentences are all ('essentially') the very same proposition?

However, these remarks in the 5s cannot be wholly isolated from the remainder of *TLP*. For as Goldstein argues in his (1986), Wittgenstein makes various claims about the essential properties of propositions which he then later denies with respect to the propositions of logic; in which case it seems to follow that tautologies and contradictions are not propositions at all.<sup>6</sup> For example, propositions are claimed to have Sinn (3.144, 4.064), to be pictures of reality (4.01, 4.021) and to say that things stand in a certain way (4.022, 4.5). In contrast, tautologies and contradictions are claimed to lack Sinn (4.461), to fail to be pictures of reality (4.462) and to say nothing (4.461).

These facts, too, could possibly be accommodated without materially altering our conception of what 'proposition' in *TLP* literally means. For all that is necessary to render the above passages consistent with our quasi-Fregean reading, is to say that in the remarks where propositions are claimed have Sinn etc., the discussion is implicitly restricted to contingent propositions alone. Indeed this is not wholly implausible, since it is clear that Wittgenstein's strategy is to concentrate first upon characterizing the nature of contingent propositions (from 2.1 through to about 4.4), and then only later (4.46s, 6.1s and 6.2s) to show how very different the propositions of logic and mathematics are from these.

What emerges out of the above discussion is that we face a three-way choice. Firstly, we might maintain that 'proposition' throughout *TLP* means a sentence individuated by its Sinn, writing off all textual contra-indications as slips and aberrations.<sup>7</sup> But this

would involve attributing implausibly many errors to Wittgenstein, especially as the passages in which the ideas of 'proposition' and 'symbol' are first introduced (3.1–3.4) are those which formed the basis for the quasi-Fregean reading outlined earlier. Secondly, we could claim that the *TLP* notion of a proposition is ambiguous, in some passages meaning a sentence individuated by its Sinn, and in others meaning a sentence together with its Fregean sense. This is a possible interpretation, but requires us to say that this crucial piece of *TLP* terminology shifts its significance backwards and forwards throughout the course of Wittgenstein's discussion without any signalling or acknowledgement. Finally, we could read 'proposition' in our quasi-Fregean manner throughout (with the exception of the Russellian use at 5.541); supposing that in some places the topic of discussion is restricted by the context to contingent propositions only, and that in other places Wittgenstein's mode of writing is elliptical (e.g. using 'same proposition' at 5.141 when he really means 'same in respect of what really matters about propositions'). Since this last suggestion gives us by far the smoothest, most natural, reading of the *TLP* terminology, I propose that we should adopt it.

## SUMMARY

Let me now summarize the interpretation of *TLP* terminology presented so far (remembering that it is partly provisional, waiting on later arguments):

- 1 'Sinn' means the truth-condition of a sentence, equivalent to a directed division within the set of all possible worlds.
- 2 'Bedeutung' means the semantic content of a sign, this being the contribution which the sign makes to the semantic content (Sinn) of sentences in which it occurs.
- 3 'Symbol' generally means a sign together with its way of signifying its Bedeutung (i.e. together with its Fregean sense).
- 4 'Proposition' generally means a kind of symbol. It is a sentence together with a way of signifying a truth-condition.

Although these interpretations present the semantics of *TLP* as Fregean in spirit, it is worth remarking three major differences from Frege, which will occupy us through many of the chapters which

follow. Firstly, differences between symbols with the same *Bedeutung* are said to be inessential. This doctrine, together with its consequences, will be discussed in chapters 5, 6, and 7, and again in chapters 12 and 13. Secondly, there is no place in the semantics of *TLP* for senses which are not the senses of some sign or other, as the very use of the terms 'symbol' and 'proposition' indicates; whereas for Frege on the other hand, senses have necessary existence, independent of the existence of any language. We shall return to this in chapters 8 and 9. Then finally: for Wittgenstein, unlike Frege, not all *Bedeutungen* are items in the real world. We shall consider this idea in connection with predicative expressions in chapters 15 and 16.

---

 5
 

---

## Essential Sense

As we argued at the outset, the proof of an interpretation lies in its fecundity, enabling us to make sense of the text under study. The task of the present chapter is to explain why Wittgenstein might have held both that language can contain a variety of signs with different senses but the same *Bedeutung*, and yet these differences are in some way inessential.

### 5.1 CONDITIONS FOR COMMUNICATION

One clue to the significance of this combination of views is provided by 4.024, which tells us that to understand a proposition means to know what is the case if it is true. We might initially be tempted to interpret this as a remark about idiolectic understanding, emphasizing once again that a speaker's understanding of a sentence is directed towards truth and away from falsehood. But the remarks which follow suggest, on the contrary, that what is at issue is understanding the statements of another. Thus 4.025 is about translating from one language to another, 4.026 speaks of using propositions to make ourselves understood (i.e. to another person), and 4.027 and 4.03 speak of the use of propositions to communicate. This suggests that 4.024 should be read as saying that to understand – to know the semantic content of – the statements of another, is to associate the very same truth-conditions with those statements as they do (i.e. not necessarily the same cognitive content). This reading is then confirmed by 4.03, which says that a proposition must use old expressions to communicate a new *Sinn*, suggesting that what is communicated is not, as Frege would have it, the thought expressed (the cognitive content), but rather the truth-condition.

In order to see what is going on here, we need to recall the main

presenting – one and the same truth-condition. (It is clear from the context of *BLA* 32 that we fix the truth-condition of a sentence by assigning referents to each of its component terms, implying that he takes truth-conditions to belong, not at the level of sense, but of reference.)

- 2 See *TLP* 5.54–5.5422 and Wittgenstein (1974), p. 23. See also the excellent reconstruction of the debate between Wittgenstein and Russell in Blackwell's (1981), especially pp. 18–24.
- 3 See for example Dummett (1973), pp. 590, 663 and 680.
- 4 Frege had of course maintained that predicates and concepts are essentially 'incomplete' whereas names are not – see his 'Function and Concept'. But it does not follow that there is nothing of significance left of this doctrine once we accept that all words are incomplete sentences – see my (1983b) where I extract a number of different strands from the incompleteness-metaphor. Nor does it follow that Wittgenstein is then free to reject Frege's distinction between concepts and objects as some have held (for example Allaire, 1963, p. 336).
- 5 See Frege (1984), p. 158.
- 6 As we saw in note 1 above, Anscombe falls into this trap.
- 7 This is urged by Anscombe (1959), p. 17.
- 8 '+' is Russell's addition-sign restricted to the case of cardinal numbers.
- 9 I here slip past the *TLP* distinction between senselessness and non-sense, which I will be expounded in ch. 6.
- 10 This suggestion should be distinguished sharply from the one made by McGuinness in his (1981), that 'Bedeutung' in *TLP* is best explicated in terms of Tugendhat's (1970) notion of semantic role or truth-value potential. On this account two expressions may be said to possess the same Bedeutung just in case they always produce sentences with the same truth-value when combined with the same expressions; and to say that an expression has Bedeutung is just to say that it does figure in true or false sentences. Here the Bedeutung of an expression is wholly a matter of its contribution to truth-value, whereas on my account it is its contribution to the content communicated by sentences containing it.

One thing wrong with McGuinness' suggestion is that it ignores the realism involved in saying that the Bedeutung of a name is an object (and is intended by him to do so). On this matter I am in agreement with Malcolm (1986) and Pears (1987), both of whom discuss this issue extensively – the objects of *TLP*, which make up the unchanging substance of the world and exist in all possible worlds, are wholly independent of the human mind and of language. But another thing wrong with the McGuinness suggestion is that it implies that the Bedeutungen of all types of expression are purely extensional. Whereas I shall argue in ch. 5 that the criterion of sameness of Bedeutung for all other types of expression besides proper names is logical equivalence.

- 11 The theses in question are (1) that the objects occurring in states of affairs have necessary existence, (2) that elementary propositions are logically independent of one another and (3) that a complete assignment of truth-values to the set of all elementary propositions gives a complete description of a possible world. Then when an elementary proposition directs us to the existence of a particular state of affairs we are in fact directed towards the set of all worlds in which that state of affairs exists and away from the remainder. And if we are directed towards the set of all worlds in which a given state of affairs exists, then we are directed towards the existence of that state of affairs itself and away from its non-existence.
- 12 See Russell (1910a), p. 158.
- 13 Anscombe, too, notices the directional connotations of 'Sinn'; see her (1959), p. 17.

#### CHAPTER 4 IN SEARCH OF SENSE

- 1 This temptation will eventually be vindicated by the discussion which follows in this and succeeding chapters. Quite a different temptation is to say that what gives life to the perceptible sign – what turns it into a symbol – is an imperceptible act of thinking on the part of the user of the sign. See for example McDonough (1986), pp. 62–5 and Malcolm (1986), ch. 4. In my view this interpretation is certainly incorrect, and it will be countered in ch. 8–10.
- 2 See Frege (1984), p. 158.
- 3 On this issue I am in broad agreement with Griffin. See his (1964), p. 95ff.
- 4 However, this should not be taken to imply that for Wittgenstein (as for Frege) senses are detachable from sentences; see ch. 8.
- 5 As Blackwell shows in his (1981), Wittgenstein's main criticism of Russell's theory of judgement was that the latter could not allow for the integrity – the wholeness or completeness – of the judged proposition (ibid. p. 23). For in order to account for the possibility of falsehood whilst holding onto the idea that judgement involves a direct relation to the things which the judgement concerns, Russell had been forced to construe it as a relation between the thinker and an ordered set of individuals and universals, thus losing hold of the essential wholeness of what is judged. I think Wittgenstein came to feel that the only solution was to give up the idea that judgement can be a direct relation to things in the world, moving rather towards the Fregean view that it always involves a mode of presentation of them. This then surfaces in non-Russellian use of 'proposition' throughout most of *TLP*, the integrity of the contents of judgements being preserved at the level of symbols (sign plus sense), in the wholeness of the propositions which thinkers employ to express their judgements.
- 6 Goldstein does have other arguments for this same conclusion. But



many of them are suspect, in that they make unreflective use of Wittgenstein's early Notebooks and later writings to establish claims about *TLP*. Moreover many of the passages in *TLP* which he cites, in fact do not obviously support his case. For example, he cites 3.3 in support of the claim that every Satz has Sinn (which he translates as 'sense'), when 3.3 merely says that *only* Sätze have Sinn (ibid. p. 46). And he cites 5.143 in support of the claim that tautologies and contradictions are not Sätze, omitting from his quotation that 5.143 says that 'in a manner of speaking' contradictions vanish outside all Sätze (ibid. p. 48).

7 In addition to the evidence mentioned above, it is worth also noting 3.13, where Wittgenstein writes: '(The content of a proposition' means the content of a proposition that has Sinn.)' The qualification here is redundant unless there can be propositions which lack Sinn (and so lack content). Note also 5.5351, where Wittgenstein uses 'non-proposition' in such a way as to imply that non-propositions are nonsensical sentences, as opposed to those which are merely senseless (such as contradictions and tautologies).

#### CHAPTER 5 ESSENTIAL SENSE

1 Since the *TLP* thesis is that the semantic contents of names are exhausted by their bearers, and since names are rigid designators (referring to the same individuals with respect to all possible worlds) it might be suggested that the *TLP* account of semantic content can be characterized in terms of logical equivalence for all categories of expression without restriction. For then if two names have the same bearer (and so the same semantic content), sentences which differ only in that the one has been substituted for the other will share the same truth-value with respect to every possible world. Note, however, that such an equivalence is metaphysical rather than conceptual or analytic – having to be established by empirical investigation. Whereas the argument which I shall give shortly would only warrant equating sameness of semantic content (for expressions other than proper names) with analytic equivalence. So it is better to characterize the *TLP* position by saying that understanding requires mutual knowledge of truth-conditions – where two names make the same contribution to truth-conditions just in case they have the same reference, whereas all other types of expression make the same contribution to truth-conditions just in case they are analytically equivalent.

2 This is loose because, in the normal terminology of *TLP*, propositions are sentences with their modes of projection (their Fregean senses), and propositions can be distinct from one another whilst being logically equivalent.

3 This my reply to the charge Dummett makes against the Wittgenstein of *TLP*, that by taking sameness of Sinn to be given by analytic

equivalence he is prevented from giving any account of linguistic understanding (see Dummett 1973, pp. 633–4). On the contrary, Wittgenstein's contribution lies in distinguishing sharply between speaker understanding (idiolectic sense) and the knowledge required for communication (semantic content). It is only the latter which may be characterized in terms of analytic equivalence.

4 I owe the ideas expressed in this paragraph to Dummett. See his (1978), pp. 3 and 435. For further discussion see my (1987b).

5 This example ought properly to be somewhat more complicated, since there is no simple correspondence between perceived colours and wavelengths of light. But this in no way affects the point being made.

6 Note that their understandings are certainly not more than materially equivalent. They are not even causally equivalent, since if the machine malfunctions their correct usage will diverge.

7 It is crucial to this example that neither of the parties should know the position the other is in. For it is designed to be a case in which speakers know nothing beyond the material equivalence of one another's statements. It is of course a truism that two people can, in general, attach different contents to a given expression and yet still understand one another in its use, in virtue of knowing the content which the other attaches to it.

8 Note that the argument given here suggests that the notion of logical equivalence involved in the account of semantic content should be explicated in terms of analytic, as opposed to metaphysical, necessity. For only so will speakers who attach the same semantic content to an expression possess a shared conception of what is to count as a reason for or against their statements involving it, in advance of exchanging further information. So someone who understands 'water' as a definitional equivalent of 'H<sub>2</sub>O' (perhaps a foreign laboratory technician), and someone who understands it in the usual way, ought not to be counted as communicating successfully by means of statements involving the term 'water', despite the fact (if Kripke and others are correct) that water is necessarily H<sub>2</sub>O.

9 The alert reader will have noticed that this list is culled from *PI* 23.

10 Wittgenstein can reply similarly to quite another sort of objection, that discourse (including factual discourse) is governed by conventions of conversational implicature which require, for their operation, mutual knowledge of cognitive content. He can, while acknowledging the existence of such conventions, claim with some plausibility that they do not belong to the essence of factual communication. But in any case it is by no means obvious that such conventions really do require mutual knowledge of cognitive content. For example, one convention seems to be that less information should not be provided on a given topic than can easily be done. Thus if my mother asks me about my love-life and I reply that I have a girl-friend when in reality I have several, then I may be said to have spoken misleadingly, despite the fact that what I said was literally true. But the notion of 'information'