

Unity of Content

Our task in this chapter is to find a way for Wittgenstein to dispense with the claim that all philosophy is nonsense whilst doing the minimum possible violence to the other doctrines of *TLP*. For that claim is manifestly false.

7.1 HOW IS PHILOSOPHY POSSIBLE?

A natural suggestion would be to take the resulting philosophy-as-nonsense doctrine as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the arguments of chapter 5, which by relegating cognitive content to the realm of the inessential led to the thesis that all tautologies and contradictions say the same thing: to whit, nothing. For if we were to reinstate the Fregean idea that sense is just as crucial to communication as truth-conditions, then we could hold on to the informativeness of tautologies. This in turn would lend support to the idea that philosophical statements can have semantic content, by undermining the argument that the terms used in such statements must themselves lack semantic content.

There are at least two reasons why this suggestion should not be immediately accepted. The first is that while the arguments of chapter 5 remain in place, we cannot simply decide to deny their conclusion. At the very least we should have to discover sufficient reason for rejecting one of the premises, or for discerning a fallacy in the argument itself. Yet it is not at all obvious how this can be done. The second is that even acceptance of the Fregean position would leave us almost equally poorly placed to account for the possibility of philosophy. For recall from chapter 2 the difficulties Frege experienced in allowing for the illumination which philosophical analysis can bring. If an analysis is informative, then on the Fregean view the two sentences must have different semantic

contents. But in that case the analysed proposition has not been elucidated but replaced by another. Thus Frege's problem is to find room for the possibility of even solipsistic analysis (hence the idea of philosophy as reconstruction) whereas Wittgenstein's is to explain how the results of analysis can be communicable.

It begins to look as if the only way forward, if we are to find an adequate place for philosophical analysis, would be to deny that semantic content is a unitary notion having the same identity-conditions in all different regions of discourse. Perhaps we should rather say that when engaged in doing science (or in the pursuit of factual truth generally) the concept of semantic content in operation is sameness of truth-conditions, but that when we are doing philosophy it is sameness of cognitive content.

This would enable us to steer a middle course between the *TLP* doctrine of philosophy-as-nonsense and the Fregean view of analysis as reconstruction. It would be because understanding of factual discourse is a matter of mutual knowledge of truth-conditions that one could present, as an analysis of a given statement, a sentence which is its logical equivalent. For both statements would (in scientific contexts) say the very same thing. But it would only be because we do also share knowledge of cognitive content that we could expect the realization of that equivalence to throw the same light on the understanding of others as it did on our own. And there would be communication between us, when doing philosophy, only when the sentences in our idiolects do possess the very same cognitive content. So in this context the concept of semantic content would be the Fregean one.

The same suggestion might also enable us to find room for the idea of there being terms whose use is distinctly philosophical. Such terms would be assigned a sense (cognitive content) which is intersubjective, thus fitting them for use in drawing our attention to certain essential features of language or the world. Yet they would be incapable of contributing to the semantic content of sentences employed in fact-stating discourse.

7.2 FRAGMENTARY CONTENT

The idea that the notions of communication and of semantic content might fragment into a number of different concepts has a

degree of independent plausibility. And it is not just philosophical discourse for which a Fregean concept of communication would be appropriate. Thus recall the example deployed in chapter 5, of the two people who attach different senses to the connective expressing disjunction. (You will remember that the one understands 'P v Q' in terms of its truth table, the other in terms of its equivalence with '¬(¬P & ¬Q)'.) We argued that there were no grounds for claiming that they would misunderstand one another in the use of the connective in factual discourse, and that conclusion can, on our present suggestion, be allowed to stand. But notice that there is one sphere in which they definitely will misunderstand one another, and that is when they come to do logic. In particular, there will be a failure of communication over the attempt to prove the equivalence of 'P v Q' with '¬(¬P & ¬Q)'. For the one who understands the former in terms of the latter will simply not be able to see what the other is about, remaining baffled as to why they should be going through such complicated manoeuvres in order to prove something which they themselves take to have the form 'A if and only if A'.

In general it would seem that communication in the fields of both logic and mathematics requires mutual knowledge of cognitive content.¹ For only so can the participants be confident that they will all be able to follow the course of a proof, and be able to see its point and significance. So within the area of assertoric discourse (as opposed for example to the imperative) there is apparently a distinction between that which purports to be empirically based, or fact-stating, and that which purports to be *a priori* – namely discourse in logic, mathematics and philosophy. In the former case the concept of semantic content (of what is asserted) would be the *TLP* one, given by sameness of truth-conditions. But in the latter case the concept of what is asserted would be Frege's, given by sameness of cognitive content.²

The conditions for communication in other areas of discourse (other 'language-games') might be different again.³ For example, suppose we ask what knowledge on the part of different speakers is essential for mutual understanding of the content of a command. (Here as before we need to bear in mind the function which communication is intended to subserve.) Clearly they at least need sufficient knowledge to be confident that, as the recipient of an order, they would know when they had reached a position which would satisfy the person who had issued it. This gives us at least a requirement of mutual knowledge of material equivalence. But

since the whole point of an order is not to describe the world but to change it, we shall plausibly need conditions for communication more stringent than this. For the very act of obeying an order involving one of two predicates which would otherwise be co-extensive, may bring about a situation in which those predicates fail to be coextensive after all. In which case speakers need to be confident that actions taken in obedience to a command, given their interpretation of it, would also bring about a situation which constitutes obedience as the others interpret it.

This now requires more than mutual knowledge of mere material equivalence. For from the fact that 'F' and 'G' are presently coextensive, it does not follow that success in, say, bringing home an F would also involve success in bringing home a G. For example, suppose that two Martians respectively interpret the predicate 'F' to mean 'human being' and 'featherless biped', and that each sets about complying with the order to bring home to Mars one of the smallest adult Fs. But suppose that their presence on Earth while they conduct their search causes the existence of a mutant species of featherless chicken. Then they will return home with very different creatures, and for one of them the mission will have been a failure.

Although mutual knowledge of material equivalence is clearly insufficient for communication with imperatives, it is hard to believe that anything as strong as shared knowledge of logical equivalence is required. All that is really needed is mutual knowledge of what might be called 'causal equivalence'. If two speakers are to understand one another in the use of a command, it is both necessary and (so far as the content of the command goes) sufficient, that they know of each other's interpretations that precisely the same events would be sufficient to bring about a state of affairs which would constitute obedience. Thus suppose that A and B respectively interpret the predicate 'F' to mean 'living creature (in its natural state) with a heart' and 'living creature (in its natural state) with a kidney'. Then they are always going to satisfy one another when doing what they take to be obedience to orders involving the term 'F', no matter what steps they take in the course of executing the order as they understand it. We are then left with no motive for insisting that A and B misunderstand one another, despite the fact that they do not possess mutual knowledge of logical equivalence (let alone of cognitive content).

Besides the kind of assertoric discourse – the factual – which

requires mutual knowledge of truth-conditions, we appear to have found one kind – the *a priori* – which requires something stronger, namely mutual knowledge of cognitive content. And we now seem to have found a kind of discourse – the imperative – which requires something weaker, namely mutual knowledge of causal equivalence. There would even appear to be areas in which the requirement is stronger than in the *a priori* cases. For the knowledge required to understand a joke is more than shared cognitive content. A shared background of beliefs will usually be required, either about the matter to which the joke relates, or about such things as the similarities in the sounds of the expressions of the language (puns). In the same way, a shared background of belief will generally be required if you are to follow a conversation (as opposed to understanding each utterance in the course of the conversation). For only so will you be able to see the bearing of what has just been said on what was said before. A similar point might be made in connection with the understanding of live metaphors (that is to say, metaphors whose significance has not been fixed by convention).

So our suggestion – that the way to avoid the philosophy-as-nonsense doctrine is by distinguishing between different notions of semantic content – can be further defended by being fitted into a much wider picture of fragmentation.

7.3 THE CASE FOR UNITY

Our question now must be whether Wittgenstein could have adopted our suggestion – thus saving himself from what is surely his strangest and most paradoxical doctrine – or whether, on the contrary, that doctrine is too deeply grounded in his other beliefs to be excised without altering their character entirely.

Recall the point made in chapter 5, that fact-stating discourse is of the very essence of language. This idea seems very definitely to be there in *TLP*, implicit in Wittgenstein's whole approach, with its almost exclusive concentration upon those uses of language which are directed at truth. It might be thought to follow from this claim about essence, that a theory of meaning would have to begin with an analysis of the content of statements, the results of that analysis then extending smoothly to account for the contents of all other

forms of linguistic act. Then from Wittgenstein's perspective there could be no question of adopting an account of the semantic content of linguistic acts belonging to the category of 'elucidation' – if that is the one to which utterances in philosophy belong – different from that provided for the contents of scientific statements.

But in reality it is one thing to claim that factual discourse is of the essence of language, and quite another to claim that the semantic content of such discourse must determine the contents of all other forms of linguistic act. We could concede that there can be no language without a truth-orientated component, and yet deny that the other (non-essential) uses of language need have their conditions for successful communication determined by the semantic content of assertions. Wittgenstein could therefore embrace the thesis that factual discourse is logically prior to all other forms, while also accepting the thesis of the fragmentation of semantic content.

There is perhaps a way of bolstering the above argument for unity. For we might introduce, in addition, a principle of compositionality of content, which is in any case required to explain the creativity of language understanding. (See 3.318, 4.027, 4.03.) This principle states that the semantic content of any sentence of the language must be a function of the semantic contents of its component parts.

Thus suppose that content were different in the various different regions of linguistic intercourse. Should we not then have to explain the contents of the component expressions of the language many times over? In explaining the meaning of a word like 'dog', for example, should we not have to fix its imperative content separately from its fact-stating content? And should we not have to do something different again to fix its content appropriate for use in *a priori* discourse? It would seem that the proposed fragmentation of semantic content stands refuted by the manifest fact that we do not need to do any such thing. Thus consider someone who is already familiar with the significance of the indicative and imperative moods: having explained the word 'dog' to them in orders such as 'Fetch the dog', we would take it for granted that they will immediately understand statements such as 'Mary has a black dog'.⁴

Although this argument appears powerful, we can in fact meet the compositionality requirement without compromising the thesis

of the fragmentation of content. We merely have to distinguish between what is required for the understanding of language as a whole, and what is required for understanding any given type of utterance within it. We can concede to the Fregean that in the former case, mutual knowledge of cognitive content is required. So explanations of the individual expressions of the language should be strict: they should require the trainee to associate the very same cognitive content with those expressions as the teacher does. (Understanding of jokes and metaphors we can leave to one side as a special case, since our understanding of them – that is to say, their point rather than their literal content – is not compositional.⁵ I also continue to leave the understanding of proper names for discussion in chapter 12.) But we can still maintain that when it comes to understanding individual utterances, somewhat less may be required of the trainee than is required for the understanding of language as a whole.

The idea will come out most clearly in the different ways in which the training can go wrong. Suppose that someone has taken their training with a word in such a way that their use of it is logically equivalent to that of the rest of us, but that it differs in cognitive content. Then they cannot be said to understand that word *simpliciter*, since they are not in a position to understand all forms of utterance which contain it – they will be in no position to understand philosophical claims about how the word should best be analysed, for example. But this need not prevent us from granting them a complete understanding of imperatives and factual statements which contain the word. For according to the fragmentation thesis, communication in these areas requires something less than mutual knowledge of cognitive content. Similarly, if the training results in them taking the word in a way which is only causally equivalent to ours, then we shall deny them an understanding of statements containing it. But we could still grant them an understanding of its use in imperatives.

The argument from the principle of compositionality of content is thus less than convincing. What allows us to reconcile the need to explain the creativity of linguistic understanding with the thesis of fragmentation of content is the observation that the different notions of semantic content form an hierarchy of increasing strength: from causal equivalence, through logical equivalence, to sameness of cognitive content. Then since identity of cognitive content im-

plies, but is not implied by, logical equivalence – which in turn implies but is not implied by causal equivalence – we can put someone in a position to understand all forms of linguistic utterance by means of a training which is, from the perspective represented by some of them, an over-kill. By introducing the component expressions of the language in such a way as to ensure that speakers have mutual knowledge of cognitive content we shall thereby have secured logical and causal equivalence – which is, from the point of view of factual and imperative discourse, more than is necessary.

Although two arguments against the fragmentation thesis have failed, there certainly seems to be at least one aspect of *TLP* which conflicts with it. For not only is Wittgenstein concerned with the essence of symbolic representation in general, he also takes for granted that any given concept in language will also have an essence. There is no suggestion, for example, that an account of a concept could take any other form than a statement of conditions necessary and sufficient for its correct application. And if all concepts have essences, then this will of course hold for the concept of understanding as well. Yet according to the fragmentation thesis the concepts of understanding and of semantic content admit of no unitary characterisation. Rather, the conditions under which someone may be said to understand a proposition will vary, depending upon whether it occurs in an imperative, or in a statement of fact, or in an elucidatory remark in philosophy.

It begins to seem that the philosophy-as-nonsense doctrine might be grounded in Wittgenstein's belief that all concepts have essences. For this, when combined with other plausible assumptions such as the central place of fact-stating discourse within language, would then yield the account of linguistic understanding outlined in chapter 5; and the nonsensicality of philosophy would follow, as night follows day. It might then appear that the only obvious way of rescuing Wittgenstein from his embarrassment would be by allowing for the sorts of concepts he himself was later to characterize as 'family resemblance concepts'.⁶ On this view there are at least some concepts (like that of a game) which do not possess a unitary essence, but which rather consist in a whole collection of variously overlapping characteristics. Then by placing the concept of understanding (and the associated concept of semantic content) into this category, we could say that the understanding of a philosophical

remark differs from, but is related to, the understanding of a scientific statement; which in turn differs from, but is related to, the understanding of an imperative. And something similar could also be said about semantic content.

7.4 PURPOSE-RELATIVE CONTENT

If the above suggestion were correct, then the philosophy-as-nonsense doctrine would indeed be deeply embedded within the structure of Wittgenstein's ideas. Certainly if family resemblance concepts were admitted to exist, then his whole programme for analysing the propositions of ordinary language into truth-functional compounds of a class of elementary propositions would have to be given up. For that programme surely commits him to the view that all concepts can be expressed in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions of application.

But in fact there is no difficulty about giving a univocal account of the concept of understanding, consistent with all the main elements of the fragmentation thesis. We need only include within the account a reference to the purposes which are operative in the context of the utterance, thus:

$\forall x \forall y \forall p$ (x understands an utterance of 'P' by y if and only if x knows sufficiently much about y's mode of employment of 'P' for the purposes in hand).

Then when the purposes in hand are those involved in the giving and receiving of commands, sufficient knowledge will be mutual knowledge of causal equivalence; when the purposes are those involved in the acquisition of rationally grounded belief, it will be mutual knowledge of truth-conditions; and when the purposes are elucidatory, or those appropriate to logic or mathematics, it will be mutual knowledge of cognitive-content.⁷ Indeed the proposal also has the merit of extending to cover the very demanding requirements for the understanding of jokes and metaphors as well.

It is arguable that many of our ordinary concepts have purpose-relative conditions of application.⁸ Thus 'flat' seems to mean something like 'is flatter than enough things of the sort in question for the purposes in hand'. For when a farmer is approached by the Territorial Army asking for a flat field in which to practise tank

manoeuvres he may point to one and truly say 'That one is flat'; but when he is approached by the local Bowls Club looking for a new green, he may point to the very same field and say – again truly – 'That one is not flat'. Similarly, 'knows' seems to mean something like 'has a true belief which is sufficiently reliably grounded for the purposes in hand'.⁹ For compare 'Mary knows that John will be at the party – he told her so' with 'Mary knows that John is the murderer – he told her so'. The first might in many contexts be acceptable whereas the second, in a court of law, would certainly not be. The standards required for a belief to count as knowledge are raised in proportion to the seriousness of the purposes which operate in the given context. Similar points can be made in connection with words such as 'empty', 'safe', 'dry' and many others. So the above suggestion regarding the proper analysis of understanding would render the concept by no means unique.

There is thus no real problem about combining the main elements from the fragmentation doctrine with a single univocal account of understanding and of semantic content.¹⁰ The real fault underlying the philosophy-as-nonsense doctrine is not the fact that *TLP* fails to make room for family resemblance concepts (through perhaps this is a fault), but rather the assumption that all concepts have senses which are purpose-independent. It is this which prevents Wittgenstein from seeing that the knowledge required for understanding can vary from context to context. Yet its denial would surely be consistent with all of the other doctrines of *TLP*.

I conclude that the philosophy-as-nonsense doctrine can indeed be exercised without doing violence to the body of *TLP*.¹¹ We can retain the commitment to concept-essences and to the programme of analysis for ordinary language. And we can hold onto the insight that the conditions for understanding within the linguistically central area of fact-stating requires mutual knowledge of logical equivalence, this being a powerful criticism of Frege's thesis that the semantic content of an assertion is the thought expressed by it. (I continue to leave the understanding of proper names to one side.) Yet we can allow that within other contexts – and particularly while doing philosophy – the requirements for mutual understanding may be more exacting.

SUMMARY

Intersubjective philosophical activity can only be possible if the semantic content of sentences (and hence the conditions for mutual understanding) can be allowed to vary from context to context. Recognition of this possibility saves *TLP* from absurdity, while leaving all its main doctrines intact.

8

Gedanken

Our task in this chapter is to elucidate Wittgenstein's use of the term 'thought' (Gedanke). At issue once again will be the extent to which the semantics of *TLP* is broadly Fregean in character.

8.1 PRELIMINARIES

As we had occasion to note in chapter 2, it is an important aspect of Frege's doctrine of sense that senses should be objective: they should have an existence which is at least intersubjective, and relations between them (such as entailment and inconsistency) should obtain wholly mind-independently. Indeed he also maintains that the senses of whole sentences, which he calls 'thoughts' (Gedanken), exist necessarily, at all times in all possible worlds.¹ He seems to have regarded this as a crucial part of his rejection of psychologism. Although conceding that there must be a mental component in any act of thinking (namely 'grasping' a Gedanke), he believes that the thought itself is not in any way dependent upon mental acts or states. And contra, for example, the imagist theory, thinking does not consist in any kind of inner mental process, but rather in a mental relation between the thinker and an objectively existing Gedanke.

It is almost certainly true that Wittgenstein rejects any belief in the necessary existence of sense. While endorsing Frege's objectivism about logic and logical relationships, he thinks (rightly, as I shall argue in chapter 9) that he can avoid Frege's heavy ontological commitments. The easiest way to see this is to reflect on the fact that the notion of sense in *TLP*, on the interpretation I have been defending, is essentially tied to the significant use of signs. (Recall that symbols are signs together with their mode of projection. There is no suggestion that the mode of projection might exist

- here is not especially cognitive, being characterizable rather in truth-conditional terms.
- 11 This may be taken as a criticism of the simple one-word imperative language-games of the early sections of *PI* if, as seems plausible, Wittgenstein's intention is that these are the only uses of signs in which the players engage.
 - 12 See the account of opacity which Frege provides in 'On Sense and Reference'. (See for example Frege, 1984.)
 - 13 In fact there are yet other perspectives on descriptions of propositional attitudes not relevant to the present issue, such as the one I characterize in my (1987b) as 'The Practical Reasoner's Perspective'.
 - 14 I intend to take no particular stance here on the semantics (or lack of semantics) for live metaphors, since this metaphor would appear to be dead.
 - 15 This is an idea which plays an important part in Wittgenstein's later philosophy of mathematics. See the discussion of surveyability in Wright (1980).

CHAPTER 6 SENSE AND NONSENSE

- 1 See his 'Function and Concept' in Frege (1984).
- 2 See for example Frege (1984), p. 193.
- 3 See Frege (1984), p. 147. Roger White first pointed this remark out to me.
- 4 Although I originally owe this suggestion to Tim Williamson, I have since found just such a purely-causal account in Favrholt (1964), p. 142, in the course of which he likens philosophical propositions to bird-song!
- 5 This suggestion is made by Hacker in his (1986), p. 26.
- 6 Just such a view is taken by McDonough, who argues that the tautology ' $P \vee \neg P$ ' does not really contain the symbols for negation or disjunction, nor the proposition P , at all. See his (1986), pp. 81–9. This goes too far, making it difficult to keep track of the distinction between nonsense and senselessness. McDonough is correct in attributing to Wittgenstein the view that the signs in a tautology are in one respect not performing their usual role. For that role is to contribute to the semantic content of sentences in which they occur; but since a tautology is lacking in such content, there is nothing for the component expressions to contribute to. This in itself is sufficient to explain Wittgenstein's remarks about the 'disintegration of signs'. Yet it does not follow that the signs in a tautology do not constitute their usual symbols (do not express their usual senses). Nor does it follow that they do not serve to introduce their usual semantic contents (that they are not about anything). Rather, the symbols in a tautology are 'combined' in such a way that their contents fail to be combined into the sort of semantic content that significant sentences have – a Sinn.

- 7 I here rely upon the general tenor and subject-matter of *TLP* rather than upon specific remarks. But see 3.3421 and 5.641.
- 8 That Wittgenstein speaks of 'logical form' of both pictures (propositions) and reality, might seem to count against the suggestion canvassed in ch. 4, that the form of a proposition is in effect the predicative element in a sentence (see also in ch.11). But in fact a form is a possibility. The form of reality is the set of possible truths about the world; the form of an object is the set of its possible combinations with other objects; and the form of a sentence is a possible mode of combining proper names, realized in the structure of the sentence (each such mode of combination providing a mode of comparison with reality – i.e. the semantic content of a predicate, as we shall see in chs. 15 and 16). In the exposition which follows I employ a restricted (Fregean) notion of logical form for the sake of simplicity.
- 9 See Anscombe (1959), p. 164 for further examples of this sort.
- 10 An argument for such a view is given by Pears (1987), p. 143, in the course of his exposition of the Picture Theory.

CHAPTER 7 UNITY OF CONTENT

- 1 Since both formal argument and mathematical calculation occur frequently in science, it might be argued that we do after all have sufficient reason for insisting on mutual knowledge of cognitive content as the condition for communication in scientific discourse. Yet it can be replied, with some plausibility, that the matter is merely one of convenience. What is important is that our respective interpretations of scientific theories and of the statements of the evidence which support them should be logically equivalent. How easy it proves to be to get one another to follow the course of our calculations is an inessential matter of psychology.
But what of simplicity-considerations in science? On any adequate account of the scientific enterprise these must surely play an essential role. Yet do not they too presuppose mutual knowledge of cognitive content? I think not. Since appeals to simplicity are introduced into accounts of scientific method in order to explain how we may rationally choose between empirically equivalent but logically non-equivalent theories, the notion at issue is not an especially cognitive one. It will rather involve, for example, such things as the postulation of fewer types of theoretical entity.
- 2 It is then no accident that Frege proposes to take mutual knowledge of cognitive content as the condition for communication, since his main interest is in logical and mathematical knowledge.
- 3 The allusion to the ideas of the later Wittgenstein here is intentional. For it is one of the themes of the early sections of *PI* that understanding is a family resemblance (and hence fragmentary) concept. See *PI* 65, 108 and 164.

- 4 Provided, of course, that they understand the other words in the statement.
- 5 I am inclined to agree with Davidson that the semantic content of a live metaphor is exhausted by its literal (non-metaphorical) meaning. See essay 17 of his (1984).
- 6 See *PI* 65–9. This was the only option I thought available in my (1984b).
- 7 Moreover, even within the area of factual discourse, conditions for understanding might be expected to vary with context. Thus someone who knows only that elms are a kind of tree may be said to understand statements involving the word 'elm' in contexts where the rational grounds for those statements are not in question. In these contexts they can defer to the understanding which other people possess of the term, knowing that they can at any time fill-out their understanding by consulting reference books or competent speakers. This enables them to build up a file of information about elms in advance of knowing what distinguishes elms from other sorts of tree, and enables them to serve as a channel through which information about elms can be passed on. But if the context is such that they themselves need to be in a position to challenge or to appreciate the justification for those statements, then they require an ability to tell elms apart from other sorts of tree. And if they lack such an ability, then they cannot be said to have understood those statements.
- 8 See Essay 13 of Lewis (1983), 'Scorekeeping in a Language-game'.
- 9 I intend this vague formulation to be ambiguous between internalist and externalist accounts of knowledge, since this is not an issue on which I need to commit myself for present purposes.
- 10 Indeed it seems to me on the basis of these considerations that the Wittgenstein of *PI* goes wrong in insisting that understanding is a family resemblance concept. We can provide for unity in diversity by construing the concept as purpose-relative.
- 11 Can it really be so easy to side-step the philosophy-as-nonsense doctrine? Especially since Wittgenstein himself places so much stress upon it, for example in the preface to *TLP*, and in the 1919 letter to Russell where he says that the main point of the work lies in the showing/saying doctrine (see his 1974, p. 71). One reply is that Wittgenstein's failure to allow for purpose-relative concepts is all-of-a-piece with his lack of attention to the context-dependent aspects of language generally, such as indexicals. But a different sort of reply is that he did not really *want* to avoid the philosophy-as-nonsense doctrine. On the contrary, he needs it in a place to give symmetry with his views on the inexpressibility of the Ethical; providing, as it were, innocence by association.

CHAPTER 8 GEDANKEN

- 1 This interpretation is a rational reconstruction of Frege's position, since Frege himself makes no use of the notion of a possible world.

- 2 See in particular Favrholt (1964), ch. 3, Kenny (1973), pp. 58–60 and (1981), Malcolm (1986), chs. 4–7 and McDonough (1986), ch. 6.
- 3 Only the text-based part of the argument will be completed in the present chapter. Arguments from Charity will be pursued in chs. 9 and 10.
- 4 Maslow (1961) rightly stresses that for Wittgenstein thought and language are inseparable (*ibid.* p. 49ff), though in many other respects he gets *TLP* wrong.
- 5 See Wittgenstein (1974), p. 72. Those influenced by the letter include Favrholt (1964), p. 81, Kenny (1973), pp. 58–9 and Malcolm (1986), pp. 65–6.
- 6 Malcolm makes heavy weather of this remark, and tries unconvincingly to work it around to support his own psychological interpretation. See his (1986), p. 65.
- 7 Ogden actually uses 'the thinking' instead of 'the thought', which seems unnecessarily barbaric.
- 8 For example, at 5 he is careful to say that *the* proposition is a truth-function of propositions. For on the use of 'proposition' common to the 5s, which we noted in ch. 4, there exist truth-functions (namely tautologies and contradictions) which do not express genuine propositions.
- 9 For a vigorous defence of this way of interpreting Frege's notion of sense, see Evans (1982), ch. 1.
- 10 I am not aware of any significant distinction between 'das Denken' and 'der Gedanke' in the terminology of *TLP*. Indeed, see the preface where they seem to be used interchangeably.
- 11 I am aware that some have claimed our knowledge of the meaning of a proposition to be a matter of perception, claiming that we literally hear the meaning in the person's utterance. See for example McDowell (1980). For an effective critique see Cooper (1987). But in any case the distinction between sign and symbol will remain.
- 12 See for example Shwayder (1963), and Griffin (1964), p. 124ff, both of whom apparently conflate the essential directedness of truth-conditions (which we acknowledged in ch. 3) with the idea that propositions are essentially assertoric.
- 13 This remark of Wittgenstein's then embodies a serious misunderstanding of Frege's mature view of his judgement-stroke, in which he makes a sharp distinction between sense (the content judged) and force (the linguistic act of assertion) – see *BLA* 5. It is not, however, wholly inaccurate as an account of Frege's view in *Begriffsschrift* where he says that the judgement-stroke (like the predicate 'is a fact' in a language where all assertions are made in the form 'Such-and-such is a fact') is the common predicate involved in all judgements – see his (1972), p. 113.

CHAPTER 9 THE EXISTENCE OF THOUGHTS

- 1 See *MT* ch. 4 for further discussion of this idea.
- 2 The talk of 'fixing conventions' in this paragraph should not be