

THE DISTINCTION IN THE TRACTATUS  
BETWEEN SAYING AND SHOWING

by

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## ABSTRACT

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The distinction between saying and showing is fundamental to Wittgenstein's attempt in the Tractatus to explain the communication of significant propositions, the function of non-significant assertions, and the general relationships between thought, language and reality. In fact, the saying and showing distinctions provide the key to an interpretation of the philosophies of logic and language in the Tractatus.

The distinction has not been thoroughly investigated in the Wittgensteinian literature. When it has been discussed, it has not been analyzed rigorously; nor, I think, has it been analyzed correctly. It is quite remarkable that a distinction so important to the Tractatus has been given such brief treatment.

I critically construct the positions of the six leading commentators on the Tractatus doctrines of saying and showing early in the dissertation. The commentators are: Pitcher, Black, Stenius, Favrholt, Schwyzer and Shwayder. Arguments are presented to demonstrate the inadequacies of each of their interpretations.

By paying attention to just how Wittgenstein uses various "show" and "say" terms or expressions in the Tractatus, and by exploring what follows from those uses, an appropriate interpretation is found. In Chapters Three and Four, I structure this interpretation and I indicate how it avoids the criticisms and errors attributed to the other commentaries.

The last chapter buttresses my interpretation of what Wittgenstein is doing in, and with, the doctrines of showing and saying in the Tractatus by presenting supporting evidence from the pre-Tractatus manuscripts.

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## INTRODUCTION

As we shall discover, the distinction between saying and showing is fundamental to Wittgenstein's attempt in the Tractatus to distinguish claims which "say something about the world" (significant propositions) from those which fail to do so (tautologies). The distinction between saying and showing is indispensable to Wittgenstein's account of the communication of significant propositions. With it Wittgenstein can explain both how we come to understand the syntax of language, and the very character of logical inference. The manner in which a significant proposition relates to the world is given in terms of the distinctions. The explanation Wittgenstein offers of what it means to talk of the truth of any proposition is also tied to the distinction between saying and showing.

Clarification of the distinction between saying and showing makes intelligible Wittgenstein's view of the relationships between thought, language and reality. The distinction provides the key to any interpretation of the philosophies of logic and language in the Tractatus.



The dissertation contains five chapters. The first is an analysis and criticism of the standard interpretation of the distinction between saying and showing given by several well-known commentators. The second chapter discusses an unorthodox but provocative reading of Sätze which has important implications for the interpretation of the showing-saying distinction. In the third chapter I present my own interpretation of the passages from the Tractatus in which saying and showing is discussed. The fourth chapter collects the specific differences between my analysis and the interpretations discussed in Chapters I and II. The last chapter buttresses my interpretation of what Wittgenstein is doing in, and with, the showing and saying distinction in the Tractatus by presenting supporting evidence from the pre-Tractatian material.

All Tractatus references are to the Pears and McGuinness translation (1961). A complete bibliography of material related to the Tractatus has recently been compiled by K. T. Fann.<sup>1</sup> The bibliographical information given here contains only items used in the preparation of this dissertation and is not intended to be exhaustive.

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<sup>1</sup>K. T. Fann, "Wittgenstein Bibliography," International Philosophical Quarterly, Vol. VII, (June, 1967), pp. 311-339.

## CHAPTER I

### The Showing-Saying Distinction in the Commentaries of Pitcher, Black, Stenius and Favrholt

The following is an exposition and critical discussion of the several efforts to render understandable Wittgenstein's distinction between saying and showing. Included as the central commentaries on these distinctions are the positions of Pitcher,<sup>1</sup> Black,<sup>2</sup> Stenius,<sup>3</sup> and Favrholt.<sup>4</sup> I argue that none of the renderings of the distinctions presented here is fully satisfactory. The burden of the present section will be to establish the reasons for rejecting these commentaries and to make the necessary distinctions for a more satisfactory account which will appear in chapter three. In the second chapter the interpretations of Shwayder<sup>5</sup> and Schwyzer<sup>6</sup> will be discussed. Their approach is exciting and merits much attention; even so, I will argue that their exposition of the distinctions we are concerned with is neither complete nor wholly correct.

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<sup>1</sup>George Pitcher, The Philosophy of Wittgenstein, N. J., 1964.

<sup>2</sup>Max Black, A Companion to Wittgenstein's Tractatus, Ithaca, 1964.

<sup>3</sup>Erik Stenius, Wittgenstein's Tractatus: A Critical Exposition of Its Main Lines of Thought, Oxford, 1960.

<sup>4</sup>David Favrholt, An Interpretation and Critique of Wittgenstein's Tractatus, Copenhagen, 1964.

<sup>5</sup>David Shwayder, Wittgenstein's Tractatus, (a thesis) Bodleian Library, Oxford, 1954.

<sup>6</sup>H. R. G. Schwyzer, "Wittgenstein's Picture Theory of Language," Inquiry, 1962.



In its preface, Wittgenstein claims that the whole sense of the Tractatus can be summarized as: "What can be said at all can be said clearly, and what we can not talk about we must consign to silence." A similar but more elaborate "summary" is made in Wittgenstein's letters to Russell where he notes that the "cardinal problem of philosophy" [clarifying the possible content of language] is solved only by distinguishing "what can be expressed (gesagt) by propositions, i.e., by language (and what comes to the same, what can be thought) from what cannot be expressed by propositions but only shown (gezeigt)...."<sup>1</sup> Ironically, little effort has been made by recent commentators to elucidate these "summaries." Their restraint is interestingly ascribed to either the distinctions being so clear and simple that merely noting them is sufficient (see, for example, Maslow<sup>2</sup>); or to their being so opaque and difficult that one hardly knows whether or how to say anything at all about them.<sup>3</sup>

If one is to understand what Wittgenstein is doing with the doctrines of saying and showing then I suggest that there is a need to reconcile:

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<sup>1</sup>From a letter to Russell dated August 19, 1919. Excerpts from the letter are reprinted in L. Wittgenstein, Notebooks 1914-1916, Oxford, 1961, p. 130.

<sup>2</sup>Alexander Maslow, A Study in Wittgenstein's "Tractatus", Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1961, pp. 154-160.

<sup>3</sup>Pitcher, Wittgenstein, p. 110n.

a) the assertions that a proposition shows its sense (4.022) and that what shows cannot be said (4.1212) with the assertion that its (the proposition's) sense is just what is affirmed (4.064);

A proposition shows its sense. A proposition shows how things stand if it is true. And it says that they do so stand (4.022).

What can be shown, cannot be said (4.1212).

Every proposition must already have a sense: it cannot be given a sense by affirmation. Indeed its sense is just what is affirmed. And the same applies to negation, etc. (4.064).

b) the assertion that what can be shown cannot be said (4.1212) with the assertion that propositions show what they say (4.461);

Propositions show what they say: tautologies and contradictions show that they say nothing.

A tautology has no truth conditions, since it is unconditionally true; and a contradiction is true on no condition.

Tautologies and contradictions lack sense. (Like a point from which two arrows go out in opposite directions to one another.)

(For example, I know nothing about the weather when I know that it is either raining or not raining.) (4.461).

c) the assertion that a proposition shows how things stand if it is true and says that they do so stand (4.022) with the assertion that every proposition must already have a sense: it cannot be given a sense by affirmation; and

d) the assertion that propositions show logical form (4.121) and the claim that only some (the sensible) propositions show their sense (4.022 and 4.461), which leads us to assume that two different kinds of things are being shown.

Propositions cannot represent logical form: it is mirrored in them.

What finds its reflection in language, language cannot represent.

What expresses itself in language, we cannot express by means of language.

Propositions show the logical form of reality. They display it (4.121).



It is helpful to formulate these issues in a manner which makes clear the conflicts in Wittgenstein's position. A proposition cannot abbildt (picture, represent) logical form (4.014 and 4.041); a proposition cannot darstellt (here used as "represent" sometimes as "present"<sup>1</sup>) logical form (4.12, 4.121). It (the proposition -- either sensible or tautological) zeigt logical form (4.121); it aufweist (shows forth, displays) logical form (4.121). Since logical form shows itself, it cannot be gesagt (4.1212) nor can it be pictured (if abbildt is, as Wittgenstein usually claims, equivalent in this context to sagt; 4.03). To attempt to say (zusprechen) what the logical form is results in nonsense (4.124). Regarding sensible propositions, we are given evidence that what a proposition or picture darstellt (in this case, represents, pictures, or even says), it also

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<sup>1</sup>Darstellt has two different categories of uses here:

(a) as "represent" when it appears to be used by Wittgenstein as he uses abbildt, for example, 2.19, 2.201, as compared with 2.202 and 2.22;

(b) as "present" which has as synonyms for Wittgenstein vorstellt and on some occasions zeigt or aufweisen. See especially 4.031 and its more complete statement 4.0311; also 4.115, 4.12, 4.124, 4.125, and 4.462.

With a great number of important cases it is unclear which rendering (a or b) is preferable. Especially bothersome are those remarks which suggest that propositions are "pictures" of reality (4.011, 4.021, 4.031, 4.04 and 4.1) -- for here it appears that darstellt can be used by those who argue for propositions representing reality (as some pictures "represent" their object) and by those who argue that propositions present situations and thereby feel obliged to deny that propositions are pictures (in that exclusively representing fashion) of reality.

vorstellt (presents, exhibits or shows 4.031, 4.0311). We read from 4.022 that a picture or proposition sagt what it zeigt. However, at 2.172 we have a case of its being impossible to have a picture aufweist what is abbildet (from above, sagt). Finally, the most worrisome conflicts to be reconciled are those between the remark that what can be zeigt cannot be sagt (4.1212), on the one hand, and, on the other the assertions that propositions zeigt what they sagt (4.461), and that a proposition zeigt how things stand if it is true and it sagt that they do so stand (4.022).

Admittedly, several doctrines and sets of distinctions are in need of analysis in this material. But it will be helpful to make some rather obvious classifications before noticing how commentators have attempted to unravel this nest of distinctions.

Regarding what is sayable, we should distinguish that which is:

- a) sayable by me (us);
- b) sayable by sensible propositions or pictures;
- c) sayable by tautological propositions.

Regarding what is unsayable, we distinguish what is:

- a) unsayable by me (us);
- b) unsayable by sensible propositions or pictures;
- c) unsayable by tautological propositions.

And regarding what is showable, we distinguish what is:

- a) showable by me (us);
- b) showable by sensible propositions or pictures;



c) showable by tautological propositions.

To indicate what is at stake in the showing and saying distinctions, and to suggest what I think needs to be taken into account in undertaking an analysis of them, we need to roughly mark the relations holding between the classifications noted above. We begin by indicating those relations which at least seem to have a firm basis either in evident definitions or textual material.

1. What is sayable by me (us) is by definition not unsayable by me (us).
2. What is sayable by a sensible proposition is by definition not unsayable by that sensible proposition.
3. From 4.121 and 4.124 we also infer that what is showable by a tautological proposition is unsayable by that proposition.
4. 4.022 permits us to infer that at least something which is sayable by a sensible proposition is showable by that proposition.
5. However, at 4.1212 we are to understand that whatever is showable (i.e. by either a tautological or a sensible proposition) is thereby not sayable (by the proposition).
6. 6.1264 permits what is sayable by a sensible proposition to be showable as a result of something done by me (us).
7. Part of what is shown by a sensible proposition (viz., its form -- that it is sensible) is not sayable by the sensible proposition (4.121).
8. "To say the unsayable must be to say nonsense." It means we cannot say what we cannot say. However, Wittgenstein

does not make the claim that "we cannot say what the proposition shows."

Within these eight claims (which are in the text or inferred from the text) are the difficulties in clarifying just what Wittgenstein would have us understand about saying and showing. For instance, the remarks listed above as 4) and 5) do not appear compatible, and some resolution of their incompatibility must be found. Moreover, it is not clear whether or not Wittgenstein thought it necessary to distinguish what is sayable by a sensible proposition from what is showable by me (us). Thirdly, Wittgenstein did not seem to notice the relationships which obtain between what shows and what we as language users find impossible to say in (or with) the language. An adequate reading of the saying and showing doctrines must resolve these difficulties and others like them; and in doing so it must rigorously appraise the distinctions Wittgenstein did employ.

## II

### Recent Commentaries

Pitcher's treatment of the saying and showing thesis is quite brief and on occasion without refinement. For instance his analysis of "say" or "saying" is by his

own admission not complete. Moreover, he fails to consider any number of the issues we have found to be connected with Wittgenstein's remarks at 4.022 and 4.1212.

What is helpful about Pitcher's discussion is, I think, that he gives to his readers many correct hunches as to plausible lines an explication of the Tractatus showing doctrine might follow. Unfortunately he fails to develop the suggestions he does make. His own explanation of the incompleteness of his suggestions is that he finds the elements of the showing doctrine(s) exceedingly obscure.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, Pitcher does make the following important and helpful observations.

a) There is little difference between our saying and a proposition's saying:

And on Wittgenstein's thesis that a proposition is a kind of picture, this convention reads that the very act of making the sounds of producing the written marks "aRb" means that the person is asserting that this, namely the way things are pictured by the proposition, is the way things are (are not). Given this convention, it makes little difference whether we say that it is the fact that the proposition is uttered (or written) which does the asserting or whether we say that the proposition itself does it. Wittgenstein usually speaks in the latter way.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Pitcher, Wittgenstein, p. 110 f.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 97.



b) It is important to understand that a Satz both says and shows something. Pitcher argues that Wittgenstein's sensible propositions say only because they show. What they show is some state of affairs; what they say is that the state of affairs they picture does obtain.

And so there is no real incompatibility between, on the one hand, the fact that according to our present conventions concerning ordinary pictures they are not in themselves deemed to say anything and, on the other hand, Wittgenstein's thesis that propositions, which do say something, are pictures.

Hence the following two doctrines of Wittgenstein are perfectly consistent:

- (a) a proposition is a picture of a situation, and
  - (b) a proposition states, or says, something.
- Wittgenstein, however, as we have seen, goes much further than merely defending the consistency of (a) and (b). He claims that (b) is true only because (a) is true.

4.03(4) A proposition states something only in so far as it is a picture.<sup>1</sup>

We will develop the point later, but it is worth noting here that Pitcher misses an opportunity to indicate that there are several items shown by a Satz. What the proposition says is what the proposition shows; but that the proposition says (i.e. that it is sensible) also shows, and this showing appears dependent upon the Satz saying (the fact of its saying, not what it says).

c) Pitcher, among others,<sup>2</sup> distinguishes between

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 98.

<sup>2</sup>Arne Naess, Four Modern Philosophers, Chicago, 1968. Naess has argued that there is a distinction to be



illuminating and non-illuminating nonsense in order to discuss an important implication of the showing and saying doctrines.

Wittgenstein considered his philosophical assertions (the Tractatus assertions) to be illuminating nonsense -- what he had intended to say is quite true -- only, as it turns out, it can't be said. So we must grasp what it is that he intended to say, learn the lesson -- climb up the ladder. But precisely in virtue of having done so we will no longer continue trying to say such things, for we realize that they cannot be said.<sup>1</sup>

On this account, Wittgenstein's own "lessons" can be claimed as illuminating nonsense. Even though Wittgenstein is saying (in writing the Tractatus) what cannot be said but only shown, that he is attempting to say is illuminating -- in virtue of what it shows, we can learn some lesson. Some nonsense is evidently not of this illuminating sort; from it no lessons are learned.

d) A major element in the showing thesis in the Tractatus is untenable. This contention of Pitcher's, which I think is generally correct, is not, however,

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made between higher and lower nonsense. Higher nonsense results in the attempt to say the unsayable (in this case the showable which is not sayable). It is the attempt to use signs that cannot be used significantly in language. It is Naess' position that the remarks constituting the Tractatus are of this higher sort of nonsense. The lower nonsense is the unsayable that is neither sayable nor showable. It is not part of the content or the logical form of this or any language.

<sup>1</sup> Pitcher, Wittgenstein  
p. 155.

adequately supported by analysis and argument.

So we must grasp what it is that he intended to say, learn the lesson - climb up the ladder. But precisely in virtue of having done so, we will no longer continue trying to say such things, for we will realize that they cannot be said. We will throw away the ladder by means of which we came to have this insight. We will see that certain important things are the case - things which are shown, but cannot be said. But from then on we will say only what can be said, namely, the propositions of the natural sciences.

One immediately feels a sense of uneasiness with Wittgenstein's position here, and I think it is in fact untenable....We understand these doctrines (relation of propositions to states of affairs, etc.), we weigh their merits and demerits and no doubt take a stand on them, either accepting or rejecting them. But then at the end (of the Tractatus) we are told that they are all nonsense, and that such doctrines cannot be said. This evaluation cannot be accepted. Wittgenstein has said these things and therefore they can be said....What has to be abandoned, it would seem, is not only the idea that those cannot be said but also - and more basically - the theory (of what can be said) that implies that they cannot be said.<sup>1</sup>

Wittgenstein's contention that some of what shows cannot be said may well be mistaken; but that he is mistaken cannot be seen without careful elucidation of the subtleties of his thought and argument.

M. Black offered in 1964 (A Companion to Wittgenstein's Tractatus) a solution to some of the problems we have defined.

It is a distinctive feature of his (Wittgenstein's) conception of language to insist upon two radically different modes of significance, "showing" and "saying": to signify, to have meaning is either to show something or to say something, but what can be shown cannot be said (4.1212). Only a proposition can say anything; what is liable to puzzle a reader

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.



(as it has already perplexed previous commentators) is that a proposition also shows something, its sense (4.022). The point has already been made, in other words, at 2.221, where Wittgenstein has said that a picture (including a logical picture, a proposition, we are entitled to add) presents (darstellt) its sense. We might reasonably infer from 4.022 that darstellt (presents) is a synonym for zeigt (shows). But the sense agrees or disagrees with reality (2.222); what function is left over for saying? One might be inclined to equate "saying" with "affirming" or "asserting" - but for remarks such as 4.064 and the like which tell conclusively against this view. The answer is to be found at 4.461 (a proposition shows what it says) which I take to imply that the "saying" is part of - or rather, an aspect of - the sense, not something superadded to it.<sup>1</sup>

I think Black's reasoning can be more carefully spelled out in the following way:

- a) A picture (proposition) darstellt its sense (2.221).
- b) A proposition zeigt its sense (4.022).
- c) From a) and b) we can assume darstellt and zeigt are synonyms. Black really doesn't need the remark at (a) to generate the claim we have at (b); all that (a) indicates is that the remark at (b) is not isolated, or somehow peculiar.
- d) The sense (of the picture or proposition) agrees or disagrees with reality, which means it has a truth-value (2.222).
- e) We are to infer from the statements at a) and d), a picture or proposition darstellt its sense, which has a truth-value.
- f) A proposition says that matters stand in just the way that it shows them *as standing*.
- g) The conjunction of e) and f) appears to have the consequence that either the saying or the showing of sense is superfluous. For instance,

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<sup>1</sup>Black, Companion, pp. 165-166.

what is to be said if it is not the saying of what is either true or false?

h) Black assumes that the author of the Tractatus does not wish to describe the functions of saying and showing in the manner of (g).

i) If the conclusion drawn at (g) is not to be accepted, Black suggests that we construe saying as part of, or an aspect of, the sense which is being shown. Indirect support for this interpretation is given at 4.461: "Propositions show what they say: tautologies and contradictions show that they say nothing."

j) 4.022 would then allow of this reading, according to Black's solution: A proposition darstellt (shows) its sense, (how things stand if it is true), and in showing its sense, that things so stand is said. But the fact that the sense is said is due to the saying being a part of the sense and not to the saying being a part of the showing (presenting).

Black's solution is not satisfying. First, if the sense of a proposition is its agreement with possibilities of existence and non-existence of states of affairs (4.2) then much needs to be said to explain what "aspects" or "parts" of that sense come to, and to explain the strange thought that one of these parts is equivalent to the activity of saying. This is not to say that Black is mistaken, only that without further explanation it is impossible to assess his thought. Secondly, if the saying spoken of in 4.022 is, on Black's interpretation, a part of the sense which is shown, then not only is the saying



shown, but what is said is also shown. What is said must be shown because the sense of a proposition is what it says, not that it says (the fact of its saying). But saying what is shown is ruled out by 4.1212, and Black provides no resolution of this conflict. Thirdly, from the claim at (c) Black would have us infer the synonymy between zeigt and darstell. We noted, however, that Wittgenstein uses darstellt in no univocal way; and unfortunately in the most crucial places he is ambivalent (see above, p. 6 f). Thus it is questionable whether or not we can justify the inference Black wants to make.<sup>1</sup>

Black's earlier interest in the problems of showing and saying had been centered on the question of whether or not the Tractatus itself was somehow internally inconsistent. In his review of the Tractatus in Aristotelian Society Proceedings, 1938-39, Black says that "...the primary negative thesis of the Tractatus is that the logic of facts (the relation between the structure of propositions and the structure of states of affairs) cannot be represented (said) -- but only shown." It follows,

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<sup>1</sup>No one, I would think, would infer that darstellt and zeigt are synonymous because they both take "sense" as an object. That I can open and close my door does not allow me to infer that "open" and "close" are synonymous.

Black argues, that the Tractatus on its own principles must consist of showing.<sup>1</sup>

Yet if the Tractatus itself is or contains the sort of thing that can only be shown, then the obvious difficulty is with 4.1212 - "what can be shown cannot be said." Wittgenstein has clearly said what he claims can only show. For instance, Wittgenstein states (says) that the relation between the structure of an elementary proposition and the structure of a state of affairs cannot be said. (4.121) But by his own doctrine this cannot be said; his statement is not a Satz, for it pictures no elementary state of affairs. It must be a meta-statement. Such meta-level claims are common in the Tractatus, and all of them must be nonsense.

My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical....He must transcend these propositions, and then he will see the world aright. (6.54)

Is the Tractatus then, self-contradictory? Black feels that this is the central issue or problem in trying to understand the distinctions Wittgenstein is making between showing and saying in the Tractatus. Black, in his answer to whether or not the Tractatus is consistent, argues that both the distinction and the Tractatus are

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<sup>1</sup>Max Black, "Some Problems Connected With Language," Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 39 (1939), p. 49.

quite correct but very badly understood by most commentators. What follows is an analysis of Black's argument.

(1) A senseless proposition is not a proposition at all. But this does not mean that tautologies and contradictions are nonsensical concatenations of symbols: "Tautologies and contradictions are not, however, nonsensical. They are part of the symbolism, just as "0" is part of the symbolism of arithmetic." (4.4611).

(2) It is logically impossible that whatever we understand should finally, or at any time, be revealed to be senseless.

(3) Either there is nothing to understand and a remark is a nonsensical collocation of sounds, etc., or something is understood, and the remark is not a collocation of sounds.

(4) From the Tractatus statements at 6.54 and 7, either Wittgenstein cannot mean that each of the propositions of the Tractatus is senseless in the manner in which an unorganized grouping of symbols is senseless or he does so intend 6.54 and 7. But if the latter alternative is accepted then nothing is communicated by the Tractatus. That's false. Therefore Wittgenstein must intend the "senseless" in 6.54, etc., in some special way.

(5) It is "characteristic of Wittgenstein,"<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 160.



argues Black, that "p can be said" is restricted to cases where "p" is an empirical proposition. To strengthen his reading of the Tractatus on this issue Black offers as support:

a. (5.2) Propositions of mathematics are equations and therefore are pseudo-propositions.

b. (6.22) The logic of the world which shows in tautologies, mathematics show in equations.

c. (6.11) The propositions of logic say nothing. They are analytic propositions.

(6) From the claim at (5) we are to conclude that: to say "p says something" is to say "p is empirical"; to say "p shows but does not say" is to hold at least that "p is not empirical."

(7) There are both empirical and non-empirical propositions but the terms "sensible propositions" seem to be reserved for just those propositions which do say i.e. those which are empirical.

(8) "My propositions are nonsensical" becomes on Black's interpretation a quite misleading way of saying "my propositions are not empirical." Thus Black can argue that Wittgenstein could avoid the charges of inconsistency by making this empirical and non-empirical division among propositions. [Black also discusses it as a distinction between the use of contingent propositions and the use of necessary propositions.] On Black's interpretation the



propositions composing the Tractatus, are non-empirical, they are not used to make some extra-linguistic reference; rather they are used "...to reveal and emphasize the kind of ways in which it is permissible in language to use them."<sup>1</sup> Understood in this way, the inconsistency dissipates and "the" problem of the Tractatus (in Black's view) is dissolved.<sup>2</sup>

It seems to me that both Black and Wittgenstein want to hold that the terms "senseless" and "sensible" do not between them characterize all propositions (from claims (1) and (7)). Propositions are either sensible or non-sensible (i.e., tautologies, etc.) All else may masquerade as a proposition but will be a senseless group of sounds or signs. This, I think, is righthanded and while not directly ascribable to Black, his 1939 position would allow him to embrace the position. But I disagree

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 151.

<sup>2</sup>It must be admitted, however, that the exposition given here of the 1939 article is generous - especially regarding the statements at (1) and (7) above. Someone may object that Black wants us to call all of those propositions which show but do not say, senseless and thereby not propositions at all. The point depends on whether Black intends the remarks at (1) and (7) in the manner we have suggested. If it was Black's intention to so render all propositional signs which show but do not say "senseless," then I think the textual evidence for its truth is clearly missing. On the other hand, the move taken here to render such propositional signs as "non-sensible" is I think a more tenable and generally consistent thesis that is in fact similar to the position taken by Pitcher on the same issue.

with his judgment as to what constitutes "the" problem of saying and showing.

Black thinks that the problem is to take the lessons of the Tractatus, as from an external point of view, and to apply those lessons to the Tractatus itself. In doing so, some difficulty is found in maintaining the consistency of the lessons learned from the Tractatus regarding what shows and cannot be said with the application of those lessons to the very writing of the Tractatus. From this position "the" question is whether we can dissolve this inconsistency. I cannot deny that this problem is an important one, and no doubt Black's argument goes some way to settle the puzzle. Nevertheless, the problem I wish to emphasize is an "internal" problem concerning Wittgenstein's saying and showing theses. "The" problem, in my view, is that of discovering consistency within the elements of the saying and showing distinctions Wittgenstein chose to make.

Concerning my version of "the problem," Black's most interesting suggestion is that we should make clear, on Wittgenstein's behalf (since Wittgenstein neglected to do so), the difference between the formal and the material features of a proposition. This suggestion deserves careful treatment.



...[W]e may summarize Wittgenstein's usage by saying that what shows itself is either (i) something material about the reference or the sense of a given expression (e.g. that it stands for a certain object, for no object, or the same object as some other given expression) or (ii) something about the logical form of the reference or sense (e.g. that it is a number, or a significant proposition, or the contradiction of a given proposition, or a consequence of another proposition). (If we used "meaning" to cover both sense and reference, we could say more briefly that what is shown is some feature of either the content or the form of the meaning of a given expression.) The second type of case is the more prominent in Wittgenstein's exposition.<sup>1</sup>

If what shows itself is a "material" feature of the meaning, this presumably appears in some feature of the use of the symbol (though Wittgenstein does not explicitly say so).<sup>2</sup>

In the second type of case, where what shows itself is something about the form of the meaning, this manifests itself in a corresponding "formal" or "logical" feature of the corresponding symbol. For example, that " $p \vee q$ " follows from " $p$ " manifests itself in " $p \rightarrow p \vee q$ " being a tautology. Wittgenstein says that some formal features of propositions are "shown" by their structure (4.1211b). Such formal features may be expressed by means of what Wittgenstein calls "rules of syntax," but these do not "say" anything, are not assertions having truth-values.<sup>3</sup>

Unclear in Black's remarks is whether or not the formal features are predicable of propositions or of propositional signs. One use of "formal" would be appropriately used to characterize the sign and not the proposition itself. For instance, a formal feature of " $aRb$ " is that  $R$  is a two place predicate. Black speaks of this as a

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<sup>1</sup>Black, Companion, p. 191.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 191-2.

formal feature of a "symbol." However, when we say "p is contingent," we are, following Black, also calling attention to a formal feature. But in this later case it is clearly the proposition (Satz) which is contingent (i.e. possibly true or possibly false) and not the sign (or symbol).

Black's statement that "the formal features may be expressed..." should not permit him, or us, to assume that at least in some cases both the material and the formal features of the proposition can be said (by us). If such an interpretation were given, (and it is not clear that Black would do so), where both sorts of features could be said, then in the case of the formal features we would be saying what Wittgenstein argues can only be shown and not said.

When something falls under a formal concept as one of its objects, this cannot be expressed by means of a proposition. Instead it is shown in the very sign for this object... (4.126).

Finally, if we are to accept Black's way of characterizing the distinction between formal and material features in the Tractatus, then what we would be accepting is a distinction made in terms of the difference between form and content. Black, for example, discusses the material feature of a sensible proposition as what the

proposition says -- "its content" -- "its meaning." It seems to me that there is nothing self-evidently mistaken in such an interpretation, but there is something at least unfortunate about it. Since Wittgenstein claims in the Tractatus (3., 3.01) that we should consider sensible propositions as thoughts, Black is obliged to supply a form-content appraisal for Wittgensteinian "thoughts." Unfortunately for Black, there is no discussion by Wittgenstein of the "form" of a thought as opposed to its "content." Moreover, it is not necessarily the case that we must assume a form and content dichotomy for an adequate analysis of pictures and picturing in the Tractatus. The character of Satz is linked rigidly to that of both thoughts and pictures, and I think all that we are suggesting to Black is that some further argument is needed on his part. Black needs an argument the outcome of which should convince us that the analysis of Sätze can adequately be done in terms of material and formal features.

My feeling is that Black's intent with the formal-material feature issue is to find some clear way of re-asserting a distinction to which Wittgenstein is certainly committed -- viz., that between Sätze and tautologies. It is undeniably true that the Tractatus makes such a distinction, and this distinction is marked in a number of ways.



The most interesting and illuminating way, however, in which the difference between Satze and tautologies is made is by means of the distinction between saying and showing. The saying and showing distinctions are not the same as those between what we are given to understand in Black as the difference between formal and material features. In fact, Black appeals to the complexity of saying and showing to assist him in marking the difference between "form" and "content" regarding propositions (or signs). The outcome of his efforts seems to be only one way of pointing out that the Tractatus demands that we separate sensible propositions from senseless tautologies. We are agreed to that. What we suggest is that we are prevented from understanding the character of saying and showing in the Tractatus by Black's use of the terminology of content and form. Black's purpose was to illuminate. But if we are right on the several charges of obscurity noted earlier, then Black has not taken us far in appreciating what Wittgenstein intends for us to understand in this part of the Tractatus.

We said that the major interest in this discussion is to set "the" problem of showing and saying as one of determining the internal consistency of several elements in Wittgenstein's own formulation of the say and show distinctions. A commentator who has made a most interesting effort to examine these internal issues is Erik Stenius. Stenius' primary interest is with the subtleties

of Wittgenstein's picturing theories. Because of that interest he has given us a rather detailed account of the showing and saying distinctions in their connections with the picture theories. Also, Stenius attempts to find a solution to some of the problems we outlined on pages four and five of this chapter. Stenius' course is to argue for two senses of zeigen.

We will start our analysis from 4.1212. What can be shown in language cannot be said, Wittgenstein states here. But this statement seems to be contradicted in 4.022, according to which a sentence shows how things stand, if it is true, and says that they do so stand. Obviously Wittgenstein uses the word "show" (zeigen) in two different senses: in one sense of "show" sentences say what they show, in another they cannot say what they "show." At least in the latter sense the word "show" is, according to 4.121, synonymous with "exhibit" (aufweisen). And what a sentence exhibits but cannot say is the "logical form of reality." According to 4.12 this is something that a sentence must have in common with reality to be capable of representing it.<sup>1</sup>

To justify his interpretation, Stenius argues that the distinction between the two senses of show must be understood in light of what he takes to be corresponding claims regarding pictures.

On Stenius' reading we are to recognize a difference between a picture theory of some proposition (he uses "sentence") and a complete picture theory of language. The "picture theory of sentence" is used to characterize the relation between the specific sentence (or proposition)

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<sup>1</sup>Stenius, Wittgenstein's Tractatus, p. 179.

and the reality described by that sentence. The "picture theory of language" is used, on the other hand, to characterize the relation between language as a complete system and reality as a whole. In Stenius' terms "...language, considered as the system used in sentence formation, is thought of as reflecting the "logical" structure of reality. We might call this the "ontological picture theory" in order to distinguish it from the "descriptive picture theory" of sentence meaning."<sup>1</sup>

This difference in types of picturing theories is related by Stenius to a distinction between what he terms internal and external structure. The internal structure of a fact is its logical character-- its form. Since the fact is a construct of elements each with its own form, the internal structure can be defined as the totality and arrangement of the logical forms of the different constituent elements. The internal structure indicates what the form of the fact would be in any possible world. The external structure of substance (of a fact) involves only what is actually the case in a given world.<sup>2</sup> With the external structure of a particular substance (a fact), which is comprised of atomic states of affairs, we can indicate which of the constituent states of affairs is

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 177.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 70-71, 79.



existent and which is non-existent (but still possible). Using both this distinction and the one between the sorts of picturing, Stenius argues:

...whereas the descriptive picture theory states that there is a similarity in external structure between a sentence and what it describes, the "ontological" picture theory states that there is a similarity in internal structure between language and reality.<sup>1</sup>

Before we are ready to understand why Stenius thinks that the difference between the descriptive and ontological picture theory corresponds to the distinction in the Tractatus between what can be shown and what said we need to briefly explain some further terminology in Stenius' analysis.

a) Pictures do not need to represent or depict something to be pictures. For instance there are representational pictures, having no existing "representata" but all pictures are of something, i.e. they have what Stenius terms a "prototype." Prototypes are the objects of depiction and they may be real or not real. Non-real prototypes (mythological figures, characters of fiction, etc.) do not come up for careful analysis by either Wittgenstein or Stenius.

b) A "picture field" is an uninterpreted picture. It is an "articulate field capable of different interpretations - i.e. one to which a key of interpretation

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 177.

is not fixed."<sup>1</sup> To appreciate this remark of Stenius' we are to understand an "articulate field" as an arrangement of facts capable of being analysed in different ways such that certain objects and predicates would appear as elements (as part of the external structure) of that field.

An "articulate" field differs from an analysed "world as a fact" only in (1) that it need not comprise more than a certain portion of the world as a fact and (2) that the elements need not be "atomic"...In respect of its elements an articulate field has a fixed "external structure."<sup>2</sup>

c) Finally, a "key of interpretation" is the means by which the facts of one articulate field are seen to stand for the facts of another articulate field -- "thus the criterion for F being a picture of G is the existence of the key only."<sup>3</sup> That they (the facts) stand as pictured -- i.e., that the relation between facts of a picture field and existent facts "of the world" is isomorphic -- is the criterion for the truth of a picture, not that there is a picture. The key of interpretation indicates that there is a picture of some prototype, the truth of that picture is determined by our checking the world and not the key.

Now I think we can understand Stenius' attempt to relate these various theses to the saying and showing doctrine.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 98.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 90.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 97.



...[I]n order to be capable of representing a prototype either truly or falsely a picture must already have something in common with the prototype, and this is the "logical form of representation," which consists in the identity in internal structure between the system of elements in the picture and the prototype.

We can thus distinguish between two different kinds of "showing" in regard to pictures. On the one hand a picture "shows" by the external structure of the picture field and by means of the key of interpretation a state of affairs that it presents or depicts; on the other hand it "shows" -- according to Wittgenstein -- by the internal structure of its elements the internal structure of the elements of the prototype. And what it "shows" in the latter sense it cannot "show" in the former sense, because the possibility of "showing" in the former sense presupposes that the elements of the prototype have the internal structure "shown" in the latter sense. If we take the word "show" in the latter sense we may therefore state (cf. 2.172):

X1. A picture can only "show" or "exhibit" the internal structure of reality but not depict it....

X4. The elements of a picture always exhibit the logical form of the elements they stand for.<sup>1</sup>

To complete the correspondence, Stenius returns to explicate two sorts of showing by characterizing them in the grammar of "internal" and "external."

Showing of what can be "shown" and said is an "external" showing whereas showing of what can only be "shown," but not said is an "internal" showing.

A sentence shows by its external structure how things stand if it is true, and says that they do so stand. It describes reality as having the same external structure as the sentence itself.

But what a sentence shows by its external structure must be distinguished from what it shows by the internal structure of its elements. The elements of a sentence show the logical form of the "things" they name, and since all description presupposes, according to Wittgenstein's view, that the elements of reality have the internal structure "shown" in this way by the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 179-180.



elements of language, we must infer, on the one hand, that the internal structure of reality can only be shown or exhibited by language but not described by sentences, and on the other hand, that it is essential to the possibility of a linguistic description that the internal structure of language really exhibits the internal structure of the reality described in it. We thus arrive at the following theses:

- X5. The internal structure of reality can only be shown or exhibited by language, not described in sentences.
- X6. The internal structure of language exhibits the internal structure of reality. (Completing the comparison, we note that X5 corresponds to X1, and X6 to X4.)<sup>1</sup>

Summarizing Stenius' position we find that sentences (or Sätze) show in two different senses. The internal showing of the Satz involves the showing of the logical form of reality. That is, the "internal structure" of the Satz shows the internal structure of the world. The internal showing cannot be said; and Stenius suggests that the use of "exhibit" is adequate to characterize a showing that is not sayable. The second sort of showing is called "external." What a Satz shows externally can be said, and to mark this difference, Stenius suggests the term "depict" to characterize what is both a showing and a saying. The external structure of a picture "depicts" a state of affairs. A Satz shows by external structure how things stand if true -- it "depicts" a state of affairs -- it shows and says how things stand. Stenius' conclusions then are easily appreciated:

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 181.

- a) A picture can show (exhibit) internal structure but not depict it.
- b) The elements of a picture show (exhibit) their own logical form as well as the corresponding logical form of what they depict.
- c) The internal structure of reality and language can be exhibited but not depicted -- it can not be described by language.
- d) The external structure of reality and language can be depicted -- can be both shown in language and described or said by language.

We must return to these topics in the third chapter where we will attempt an analysis which is quite different from Stenius' analysis and interpretation. For instance, there are several uses or senses of "show" in the Tractatus -- but Stenius has overlooked different uses or senses of "say" which are also to be found there.

There is a question as to whether or not Wittgenstein did or would have marked a distinction between uses of "show" in the manner Stenius describes; there is no good textual evidence for Wittgenstein's maintaining a difference between "depict" and "exhibit." Nevertheless, it is clear that Wittgenstein does think

there is some difference between a showing compatible with saying and a showing that is not compatible with saying -- (and, as we noted, this difference will be laid out in our chapter three).

Stenius' interpretation may be open to a charge of ambiguity. Stenius uses several different sorts of expression in discussing the "internal-external distinction." He claims within a matter of two pages of text that in addition to the fact that sentences show categorically different things (a sentence shows its logical form while it shows and says its sense), they can be said to show by their internal or external structure ("a sentence 'shows' by its external structure how things stand....").<sup>1</sup> In addition, Stenius suggests that the terms "internal" and "external" apply to the showing itself, for Wittgenstein. That is, not only are we to speak of showing by internal or external structure, but the showing itself is to be termed internal or external depending on what is shown. The following quote suggests this interpretation:

Showing of what can be "shown" and said is an "external" showing whereas showing of what can only be "shown," but not said is an "internal showing."<sup>2</sup>

I see nothing clearly inconsistent in Stenius' remarks. But we do need some explanation of how he, or Wittgenstein, can use the "internal-external" terminology to adequately

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



characterize both the means by which a sentence shows and the very showing itself, as determined by what is shown.

Stenius appears to ignore any difference between our saying and the sentence's saying. Pitcher has argued (and we agree) that little rests on such a distinction, though it can intelligently be made; but quite a lot does depend on noticing a difference between our (as language users) showing and the sentence showing - yet this too Stenius ignores.<sup>1</sup> A final point is related to this issue. Stenius has generally allowed the term "describe" to be treated as a synonym for "say." This, by itself, causes no real difficulties until we appreciate several uses of "say" and "describe" in the Tractatus --- not all of which are synonymous. Take for example the remarks at Tractatus 4.022 and 4.023.

A proposition shows its sense.

A proposition shows how things stand if it is true.

And it says that they do so stand.

A proposition is a description of a state of affairs.

Just as a description of an object describes it by giving its external properties, so a proposition describes reality by its internal properties.

Here "beschreibt" cannot be rendered as "say" for we have agreed with Stenius that a Satz does not "say" with or by its internal properties.

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<sup>1</sup>In Chapter 3, the use of our showing is found not to be the same as the showing of sense done by a Satz. For instance, we show that the Satz is true - but it does not show its own truth.

We are ready now to turn to a second level of criticism. To do so we must introduce an interpretation of the Tractatus which is critical of Stenius' fundamental assumptions regarding Wittgenstein's theory of picturing -- and thereby critical of Stenius' interpretation of the distinctions in the Tractatus between showing and saying.

In An Interpretation and Critique of Wittgenstein's Tractatus, Favrholt's procedure is to strike at the center of Stenius' reading by offering a competing theory of picturing that, claims Favrholt, renders the saying and showing dichotomy understandable.

Favrholt contends that "thought" can be substituted for "elementary proposition" wherever the latter occurs in the Tractatus (his support coming from 2.1, 3, 3.1, 3.11, 3.12, 3.2, 3.5, 4). A thought, Favrholt argues, is a configuration of psychical elements belonging to consciousness; and a thought-sign is the appearance of a thought when the thought is considered introspectively. "Thought" and "thought sign" then, are to be considered synonymous for "proposition" and "propositional sign," although a "thought" should be considered equivalent to the expressed proposition.<sup>1</sup> This manner of viewing the use of "thought" and "proposition" leads, in Favrholt's view, to holding what he has termed the "W" propositional

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<sup>1</sup>Stenius, Wittgenstein's Tractatus, pp. 77-78.

theory of picturing. A "W" proposition is a "configuration of physical elements that are used as substitutes for psychical elements of a thought," so that the thought as it is expressed becomes a public phenomenon. Put briefly the view held by Favrholdt -- he calls it the "W view," meaning by this, I assume, "the authentic Wittgenstein view" -- involves the following ideas:

- Wi) We picture facts to ourselves.
- Wii) The logical picture of a fact is a thought.
- Wiii) The thought "p" and the corresponding proposition "p" only differ from each other in respect of the elements which constitute them (e.g. psychical/as opposed to physical elements).
- Wiv) The thought "p" and proposition "p" exemplify the same structure.
- Wv) Any proposition is a "W" proposition.
- Wvi) It is nonsense to say that a proposition is a picture whether or not it is thought.
- Wvii) A proposition is a configuration of objects; the relations these (objects) have to one another show what the proposition pictures.<sup>1</sup>

Favrholdt's intent is to have us compare the above series of "W" -- labeled remarks to the views of Stenius. On Stenius' reading, argues Favrholdt, an elementary Satz is a picture "that represents something, whether it is

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 89.



thought of, perceived or in some other way experienced, by a conscious person or not."<sup>1</sup> Using Favrholt's labels, Stenius subscribes to the "O propositional" position -- ("O," I take it, emphasizes there being an "object" of the Satz rather than the expressing of the Satz emphasized by the "W" view). The "O interpretation" involves the following ideas:

- Oi) We picture facts to ourselves.
- Oii) The logical picture of a fact is a proposition, whether or not it is thought.
- Oiii) A "thought p" and corresponding "proposition p" differ from each other in respect to constitutive elements.
- Oiv) The thought "p" and proposition "p" exemplify the same structure.
- Ov) Any proposition is an "O" proposition  
Any proposition is a picture, or has sense, no matter whether or not it is thought.
- Ovi) A proposition ("O" proposition) is a configuration of objects to which a key of interpretation, which enables indication of what the elements of the proposition represent, is attached.<sup>2</sup>

We can, I think, appreciate Favrholt's subsequent arguments without having to explicate any special terminology. Wittgenstein began with an "O" view of Sätze.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 89.

<sup>3</sup>While he does not call it to our attention, 19e and 22e of Wittgenstein's Notebooks appear to support an "O" view.

But, Favrholtz contends, by the time of the Tractatus, Wittgenstein's position was clearly that of the "W" view. Any commentator who fails to notice this transition -- Stenius' is a paradigm of such a commentary, argues Favrholtz -- presents to his readers a mistaken interpretation of what Wittgenstein was holding in the Tractatus.<sup>1</sup>

Favrholtz is right to this extent: a proposition is an expressed propositional sign (3.5); a necessary condition for a thought is that a sign be "applied and thought out"; and a picture is a Satz only insofar as it is an expressed picture. There can be no Sätze which are not expressed (articulated), and there can be no unthought thoughts.

Stenius (or any holder of the "O" view) is mistaken. He is mistaken because he has committed Wittgenstein to a "key" of interpretation (see Ovi above) which is necessary, on Stenius' view, in order to enable one to see that an unthought picture represents some possible fact. But in point of fact, there is no textual evidence in the Tractatus indicating that Wittgenstein wished to introduce there the notion of a "key of interpretation." On the contrary, at 2.14 Wittgenstein claims that "what constitutes a picture is that its elements are related to one another in a determinate way." As Favrholtz puts it,

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<sup>1</sup>Favrholtz, An Interpretation, p. 89.

using the terminology of Stenius, which has been explained:

2.15 reinforces 2.14: "The fact that the elements of a picture are related to one another in a determinate way represents that things are related to one another in the same way...." Here it is clearly stated that a picture consists of elements only and that it is a picture by virtue of the fixed relations of these elements only. If we conceive of "picture" as the same as "O-proposition" we are led into the line of thought which Stenius has developed. We are led to distinguish between an "internal" and an "external" structure, since an articulated field can be correlated with another possessing the same "internal" structure in more than one way. Consequently, it is necessary to speak of a key of interpretation in connection with the field, and, instead of 2.14, we should rather say that "the fact that the elements of a picture are related to one another in a determinate way does not represent anything." It is only in connection with a key of interpretation, (which establishes a relation between names and objects), that the element of a picture represent that "things are related to one another in a determinate way." The reason that Wittgenstein did not formulate 2.15 in this way is not that he forgot to do so.<sup>1</sup>

According to Favrhøldt's interpretation of the Tractatus, a Satz is an expressed picture. In agreement with Wittgenstein's remarks at 4.022, a Satz both shows and says how things are. It says insofar as it is expressed (its sense is articulated); it shows how things are insofar as it is a picture. There is no need, then, on Favrhøldt's reading, to speak of Sätze as pictures which must be interpreted. It is a mistake to consider that certain items which are uninterpreted until some "key of interpretation" is employed are what Wittgenstein means by an expressed picture in the Tractatus. This is a

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 83.



mistake (in Favrholt's opinion) because this position fails to present an accurate interpretation of Wittgenstein's theory of pictures and propositions. Favrholt's argument rests on there being no evidence for either a "key of interpretation" or uninterpreted thoughts and pictures in the Tractatus. Moreover, he has presented a reading of Wittgenstein's theory of Sätze which does have textual support and is consistent with Wittgenstein's remarks in the Tractatus regarding the nature of thought.

Favrholt has suggested a challenge to the Stenius interpretation of the nature of a Satz and of a picture in the Tractatus. Perhaps there is no need to adjust differences between internal and external showings etc., as Stenius did, if Favrholt and others are correct in claiming that the Stenius interpretation has misread what Wittgenstein meant by a Satz and by a picture.

Before it is possible to evaluate the adequacy of this criticism of Stenius -- in which the activity of asserting a Satz is emphasized -- we must analyze the contributions of two commentators: H. R. G. Schwyzer and D. S. Shwayder. Both of these commentators will be used to articulate our fundamental disagreement with the Stenius reading of the Tractatus.

## CHAPTER II

The Analyses of Schwyzer and Shwayder

The Favrhholdt commentary, briefly formulated in the previous chapter, is, as I indicated, characteristic of a recent series of discussions challenging the plausibility of what many commentators have suggested as a proper analysis of Wittgenstein's theories of picturing and of the difference between showing and saying. The most promising of these discussions first occurred in a 1954 manuscript of D. S. Shwayder.<sup>1</sup> Since then, Shwayder has formulated an abbreviated version of his position in Mind, 1963.<sup>2</sup> In 1962, H. R. G. Schwyzer argued for a very similar position,<sup>3</sup> and elicited a response from Stenius.<sup>4</sup>

We shall here examine the Shwayder-Schwyzzer way of meeting the problems outlined in the previous chapter. We will be particularly interested in the question whether or

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<sup>1</sup>D. S. Shwayder, Wittgenstein's Tractatus, A Historical and Critical Commentary, deposited in Bodleian Library, Oxford, 1954.

<sup>2</sup>D. S. Shwayder, "Review of Stenius," Mind 72, 1963, pp. 275-288. Reprinted in Copi and Beard (editors), Essays on Wittgenstein's Tractatus, New York, 1966, pp. 305-312.

<sup>3</sup>H. R. G. Schwyzer, "Wittgenstein's Picture Theory of Language," Inquiry 5, 1962, pp. 46-64. Reprinted in Copi and Beard (editors) pp. 271-288.

<sup>4</sup>Erik Stenius, "Wittgenstein's Picture Theory: A Reply to Schwyzer," Inquiry 6, 1963, pp. 184-195. Reprinted in Copi and Beard (editors) pp. 313-324.



not the Shwayder-Schwyzer position offers a tenable reading of Wittgenstein's showing and saying doctrines, and in their application of their interpretation to his analysis of sensible propositions.

Both Schwyzer and Shwayder find that the saying and showing distinctions for meaningful propositions are unintelligible unless they are understood in light of a close appreciation of Wittgenstein's picture theory. What follows from such an analysis, they claim, is that for Wittgenstein all pictures and Sätze are to be understood as activities performed by conscious agents. Sätze are not objects. For example, they are not objects in relation with some prototype -- they are not objects in some isomorphic relation with reality. On the contrary, they are conscious presentations (Darstellung), conscious activities. These presentations are to be considered as overt acts of asserting; and asserting is an activity which has both saying and showing aspects. In addition, the following are held to be true, on this interpretation of the Tractatus: a) when I present that some state of affairs is the case, I am, in part, at least thinking that this state of affairs is the case; and b) the thought, itself, is a picture, and as a picture it is an overt conscious act of asserting or presenting.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Shwayder, "Review," p. 306.

## Part I

A major aspect of Schwyzer's essay is his contention that most commentators on the Tractatus (at least Warnock, English Philosophy Since 1900, page 65; Anscombe, An Introduction to Wittgenstein's Tractatus, page 67; and Stenius, Wittgenstein's "Tractatus," pages 95 f) have mistakenly attributed to Wittgenstein the view that an assertion has meaning in virtue of an isomorphic relation it has to the way things are. Schwyzer, however, is convinced that Wittgenstein did not hold such a view. Rather, Schwyzer argues, there has been a general confusion regarding how the terms "Satz," "Bild," "Sachverhalt," and "Tatsache" are to be understood in the Tractatus. Wittgenstein's theory is not about sentences [i.e., it is not about how sentences relate to the world or to a prototype]. Rather, it is about talking sense.<sup>1</sup> In the first move to explain his view Schwyzer reminds us that Stenius argues, as do many others, that for Wittgenstein a picture is representational, and has a prototype which it represents. Pictures, then, are replicas of, or reproductions of, prototypes (originals) -- and these originals are held to be facts (Tatsachen).<sup>2</sup> Against Stenius, Schwyzer argues that this view is false. "There are no prototypes

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<sup>1</sup>Schwyzer, "Picture Theory," p. 271.

<sup>2</sup>Stenius, Wittgenstein's, Tractatus, p. 95.

(prototype facts) in the Tractatus; rather, the elements of the picture correspond to objectives, not to elements of a fact...the picture is a model of reality (2.1), [and it is] not of any fact."<sup>1</sup> With this asserted denial of prototypes and the representational (isomorphism) view, Schwyzer goes ahead to reconstruct what appears to him the proper interpretation of picturing in the Tractatus:

...To say that a Satz is a picture is not, I shall argue, to explain what sentences or propositions must be like if they are to be the kinds of things that can be used to make statements; rather it is to explain what it is to make statements, to mean something, to "express a sense." The "relation," if you wish to call it a relation, between language and the world is asymmetrical -- and this in virtue of the "internal" features of the Satz -- if you wish to call them features. For a Satz is an assertion; it is not the kind of thing that can be used, held up in speaking; for it is itself an act of speaking.<sup>2</sup>

There is thus no difference on Schwyzer's reading, among what we do when we make pictures (have thoughts), what the picture does when it presents that something is the case, and what the picture is (T. 2.15-2.1515).

"For the picture is the presenting that something is the case, and we do the presenting -- i.e. the picture is the act of presenting that something is the case."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Schwyzzer, "Picture Theory," p. 276.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 273.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 278. At this point, Schwyzer appears not to distinguish between the picture doing the presenting and our doing the presenting -- he certainly wishes to make that distinction later.



What might seem speculative in this account, Schwyzer says, is how facts can be acts, i.e., "How can the fact that the picture elements are combined in a certain way be itself the act of presenting that the objects are so combined?"<sup>1</sup> The answer he gives is that the fact of relating reality to the picture is in the picture; indeed, the relating feature is what makes a picture into a picture. The elements of the picture stand for things; and this "standing for" is not something beyond what a picture is: "their being picture elements is their standing for things":<sup>2</sup>

So a picture is this sort of fact. It is the fact that elements standing-for-things are connected in a certain way, and this fact is the presenting-that the things which the elements stand for are combined in the same way.<sup>3</sup>

Schwyzer remarks that on the traditional (e.g. Stenius) reading there are two features which must be ascribed to a picture: (a) a certain relation between the pictorial elements and (b) the correlating of the pictorial elements with things (prototypes) outside the pictures. Regarding the second relating feature, (b), on the traditional reading, it is we who do the correlating. That is, for the traditional reading, feature (b) does not

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

belong to the picture itself, but to us as language users.

Schwyzzer argues vigorously against this interpretation of the Tractatus. According to Schwyzzer, the feature, (b), belongs to the very nature of a picture, and must be ascribed to the picture itself. Against the view that a picture need not be either true or false but that we as language users use the picture in making true or false assertions,<sup>1</sup> Schwyzzer argues that a picture must be true or false in itself since the picture, according to Schwyzzer, is a "presenting that" something is the case.

It is plain that a Wittgenstein picture must be either true or false.<sup>2</sup>

This does not mean that we have already determined that it is true or that it is false, only that the presenting picture must have a truth value, since it is presenting what is or is not the case.

A third aspect of Schwyzzer's thesis is his effort to relate the picture theory to an account of significant sentences -- and it is here, particularly, that we discover the relevance of his interpretation of Wittgenstein's picture theory to our interest in the showing and saying dichotomy. Wittgenstein does not, according to Schwyzzer, make a distinction between the sentence and what it

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<sup>1</sup>G. E. M. Anscombe, Introduction to Wittgenstein's Tractatus, London, 1963, p. 62.

<sup>2</sup>Schwyzzer, "Picture Theory," p. 280.

expresses (normally referred to as its sense). Rather, if we are to make claims of identity, then a thought is the sense of a Satz; or the sensible thought is the Satz. A thought is the expression of sense -- for to think is to mean something.<sup>1</sup> It (the Satz) is a thinking that, and as a Satz it is also a saying that things are in a certain fashion. A Satz should not be interpreted as a proposition (or a sentence) but as a language activity we perform. However, a "sentence" as we normally use that term, is for Wittgenstein in the Tractatus a synonym for "sentence sign" (Satzzeichen) -- a sign that can be interpreted; that is, it can be used in the activity of saying and showing how things are.

The "Satz" is the use of the "Satzzeichen"; it is the "Satzzeichen" being used as a projection of the sense, the "Satzzeichen" with the sense thought into it. From this point on, when Wittgenstein speaks of the "Satzzeichen" he often means just the sign, not just the written or spoken sentence, but the sign in use. Like the picture, the sentence-in-use is a fact -- it is that the words are combined in a certain way (3.14). These words are "names" (3.202); names "mean" ("bedeuten") objects; they refer to them, name them (3.203). Like the picture element, the name deputizes, stands for (vertritt) the object (3.22).<sup>2</sup>

We are warned however, not to be misled by this position:

Wittgenstein is not saying that naming is a purpose (even the purpose) for which names can be used, any more than he is saying that thinking (presenting) is something that thoughts (pictures) are used to do.... To say "the thought thinks the Sachlage" is to explain not what thoughts do or can be used to do, but what

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 281.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 282.



they are. The case of names is exactly analogous....A Satz is not a name (3.143), a complex word in use, it is a sentence in use...the act of thinking out loud, of speaking. A Satz is an...assertion and assertions are "embodied" in sentences, [sentence signs].<sup>1</sup>

If it is the case that to make a statement, to use a sentence (i.e. "to Satz") is to think aloud or assert a sense, then the next issue, as Schwyzer presents it, is how this thinking aloud or asserting conveys or carries any sense to a listener.

The answer is, of course, that a Satz is a picture (e.g. 4.021); asserting is presenting. Now "presenting" ("vorstellen," "darstellen") has important overtones which mere "asserting" ("behaupten") might not seem to have. When we present a state-of-affairs, we are at the same time showing what state of affairs it is that we are presenting. And it is only because saying in this way involves showing, that other people can immediately understand what we are saying -- provided they know what objects we are referring to in our assertion (e.g. 4.024).<sup>2</sup>

In a somewhat deliberate style Schwyzer's position can, I think, be organized in the following manner.

i) Showing is not identical with presenting but presenting does include showing. The presenting of a state of affairs is both our showing what state of affairs it is that we are asserting to hold, and our saying that it does so hold.

ii) A picture and a Satz are used to present what is taken to be the case not what necessarily is the case.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 282-283.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 284.

iii) When we present a state of affairs, we show, by the presenting, what state of affairs it is we are presenting. In this manner we communicate the sense of an expression; someone can immediately understand what we are presenting.

iv) Showing cannot be identical ~~with~~ presenting. In fact, presenting is saying.

v) The connecting of showing to presenting does not violate the Tractatus at 4.1212: "What can be shown, cannot be said."

Schwyzzer's arguments for these points should be put in his own words:

What I have said must not be taken to mean that "presenting" is to be identified with "showing." For as we have seen, a picture presents what it presents independently of its truth or falsehood; and what it presents is that things are combined in such-and-such-a-way. This...is the explanation of what a picture is; it is what makes the picture into a picture. Now it is clear that the only circumstances under which we can say of a picture that it shows that such-and-such is the case are those in which we have prior knowledge of the picture's truth. We could not say this of pictures in general. Only if pictures were a priori true, could they be said, in general, to show that such-and-such is the case. But pictures must be true-or-false; "presenting" is "saying," not "showing."<sup>1</sup>

Showing is linked to presenting (asserting) in the following way. When we present that something is the case, we thereby show not what is the case, but what it is that we are presenting as the case. In this way

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 284.

Wittgenstein can say, somewhat misleadingly, both that we assert, present, the sense (2.221, 4.064) -- and that we show the sense (4.022). And in saying this he is not undermining his principle that "what can be shown cannot be said" (4.1212). For when we say something we show what it is that we are saying, and this we cannot say; that is, we cannot say what it is that we are saying. We cannot even say that we are saying anything, for this too is shown.<sup>1</sup>

Showing, not saying, is the clue to understanding. To say that something is the case is to show what is the case when what we say is true (4.022) and to understand an assertion is to know what is the case when it is true (4.024). We, as it were, grasp what is shown, and thereby understand what is said.<sup>2</sup>

On Schwyzer's interpretation, to assert that something is the case is, among other things, to show what is the case if the proposition is true and to understand a Satz is to know what would be the case if this Satz were true. Therefore, to understand a Satz we must grasp what is shown. Showing is the "clue," according to Schwyzer, because Wittgenstein felt that an account of only the saying in making an assertion could not explain how it is

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 284-285.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 285.



that people can communicate. An assertion must show, it must exhibit what its sense is, if we are to understand it: a) the sense of a Satz must be publicly available; b) the asserting of a Satz shows the sense (what is affirmed); and c) what is communicated publicly is the sense of the Satz, and not just the fact that the Satz does have sense.

Throughout his essay Schwyzer argues that the notion of showing is derived from that of picturing and from that of presenting-that.<sup>1</sup> This, I think, cannot be construed as an explanation of the genesis of Wittgenstein's theory of showing, but must be viewed as a re-assertion of Schwyzer's primary thesis: that Satz is an activity! If Schwyzer's claim were to be taken as an explanation of the origin of showing then he would be misleading us. As we will attempt to establish in Chapter Five, Wittgenstein's theory of showing and saying appears earlier than did his picturing theories.

On Schwyzer's interpretation, among the items shown through the act of asserting is the existence and

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 285. "But Wittgenstein appears to have felt that an account of assertion alone would not explain how it is that people can communicate. An assertion must show, must exhibit what its sense is, if we are to understand it. And the notion of "showing" is derived from that of "picturing," of "presenting-that."

identity of the asserter or the shower. I do not say "I say p," for that I do say p will be shown by my asserting p. On Wittgenstein's theory of language, according to Schwyzer, any mention of the speaker is redundant. If a Satz is an act of making a statement, and if language consists of such acts, then there is no need to search for something "behind" what shows. There is no agent doing the referring who must be sought out independently of grasping the sense of a Satz. The analysis of Satz as an activity makes saying and showing intelligible by conceiving both the sense and the speaker (the actor) of the Satz as visibly figuring in the activity itself.

This is why Bild, Gedanke, Satz appear to have lives of their own..."The name means the object"... "the thought thinks the state of affairs,"... "the picture presents a sense" are...disguised explanations.<sup>1</sup> There is no such thing as a "relation" between language and the world; language is, if you wish, one of the ways in which we are related to the world. We speak, we assert that things are connected in particular ways, and that is all there is to it.<sup>2</sup>

For example, on Schwyzer's interpretation, Wittgenstein's remark at 4.022.

A proposition shows its sense. A proposition shows how things stand if it is true. And it says that they do so stand.

is a "disguised explanation" in the respect that it should be properly understood as: "we show the sense, we show how things stand...."

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 286.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 288.

Schwyzer appears to confuse, in his argument for the separation of showing and presenting, the showing of the sense (a possible state of affairs) by a picture or a Satz and the showing that the possible state of affairs presented does, in fact, obtain. Schwyzer's remark; "presenting is not the same as showing," is misleading. Schwyzer is correct in holding that only in special cases (e.g. those known to be true a priori) can we say of a picture or Satz that it shows that what it presents actually obtains. It is also true that pictures or Sätze must be true-or-false, even though we may not be in a position to determine their truth. What does not follow from these two statements is Schwyzer's claim that presenting is not the same as showing. What does follow is that presenting is not the same as "showing that the sense presented does obtain"; i.e., presenting p is not the same as demonstrating that p is true. It seems to me that we have not been given, by Schwyzer, any reason for distinguishing presenting from the showing of sense.

I am also distressed with the argument Schwyzer uses to reconcile his interpretation of 4.022 ("A proposition shows its sense") with Wittgenstein's remark at 4.1212: "What can be shown cannot be said." Schwyzer's argument rests on the following theses: presenting is really a sort of saying and not a sort of showing;<sup>1</sup> "A

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<sup>1</sup>We criticized Schwyzer's argument for this thesis immediately above.



proposition shows its sense" is a disguised remark, and should be understood as "we show the sense of the proposition"; what we present, we show in presenting; that we present, we show in presenting; 4.1212 is to be taken as undisguised, as literally true; therefore, neither what we present (say) nor that we present (say) can be said. In Schwyzer's terms: "We cannot say what it is that we are saying. We cannot even say that we are saying anything...."<sup>1</sup>

I do not think I am alone in finding Schwyzer's remark difficult to understand. "We cannot say what we are saying" appears to be a contradiction. Unless some distinction is made between the various uses of "saying" is the Tractatus, then Schwyzer's analysis has not adequately reconciled the remarks at 4.022 and at 4.1212.

In 1963, Stenius, defending the "traditional view," responded to Schwyzer's interpretation by pointing out the historical inaccuracies and the inadequate textual evidence for Schwyzer's analysis of picturing and Satz.<sup>2</sup> Stenius briefly formulated what he took to be Schwyzer's argument as follows:

Mr. Schwyzer seems to arrive at the interpretation in the following way: (1) According to the Tractatus a picture "presents" a (possible) state of affairs.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 285.

<sup>2</sup>Stenius, "Wittgenstein's Picture Theory," p. 318.

(2) According to the Tractatus it is an essential feature in thinking or speaking that we form pictures. (3) A picture cannot do anything. (4) The state of affairs "presented" by the picture or sentence is thus presented by us, by our making a picture. (5) Therefore a picture or a sentence is the act of presenting a state of affairs.<sup>1</sup>

Stenius pointed out a special difficulty in Schwyzer's position, viz., the apparent vacillation between at least two uses of "presents":

One could believe one was reading Heidegger. First "present" is taken in the meaning of "depict" or something like this- as the words "vorstellen" and "darstellen" are used in the Tractatus. Then "present" is taken as an activity, i.e. the picture is identified with the activity of making this picture. (By the way, Mr. Schwyzer seems to find a support for this identification in the fact that some words, and in particular the word "thought" can be used as referring both to an activity (the activity of thinking) and to the product of this activity). Therefore pictures are acts. Q.E.D.<sup>2</sup>

But in explication of what Schwyzer has done, this criticism of Stenius' is particularly unhappy; for Schwyzer has claimed that there is only an apparent or disguised distinction between the two uses of "present" suggested by Stenius. What Stenius is obliged to do is not to claim that Schwyzer misses the distinction (for that is Schwyzer's intent) but to demonstrate that that distinction is a "real," "non-disguised" one which is important to Wittgenstein, and thereby defeat Schwyzer's position.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 323.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

What follows is an effort to do just that. For what appears to me to be the root difficulty in Schwyzer's programme is his failure to find some defensible way of rendering 4.022 ["A proposition shows its sense. A proposition shows how things are if it is true. And it says that they do so stand."] that would be consistent with his appraisal of Satze as acts. In order to defend the theory of Sätze as acts, Schwyzer construes 4.022 as a "disguised" remark. What Wittgenstein really means at 4.022, argues Schwyzer, is that we show (by engaging in the activity of "Satzing") the sense of a Satze. I do not think that this interpretation can be supported.

First, nowhere is there clear textual support for the Schwyzer interpretation (what he would take to be the undisguised reading) of 4.022, that it is we who show the sense of a Satz when we say the Satz. On the contrary, 4.461 reasserts that it is the proposition which does the showing.

Propositions show what they say: tautologies and contradictions show that they say nothing.

To justify his interpretation, Schwyzer must find evidence for "the proposition showing" being equivalent to "my engaging in the activity of showing [and saying] a sensible proposition." The assertions at 4.461 must be viewed as damaging to the Schwyzer position unless he can suggest some independent warrant for applying to them his



reading of Sätze as acts. He needs to give us some reasons for holding his interpretation other than an appeal to that interpretation.

Now it may be supposed that Wittgenstein does develop some explanation of what it means for a proposition to show its sense when at 4.0311 he writes that a Satz presents, "like a living picture," a state of affairs:

One name stands for one thing, another for another thing, and they are combined with one another. In this way the whole group -- like a tableau vivant -- presents a state of affairs.

This remark may be construed as the evidence Schwyzer needs. For Wittgenstein may mean here by a "living picture" that it is we who are living pictures, engaging in the activity of "Satzing." Nevertheless, several points count against 4.0311 being so construed. The German phrase "wie ein lebendes Bild" means explicitly "as though a living picture," or "as if a living picture" or "like a living picture." Making an analogy is not the same as asserting an identity. Sätze are not said to be identical with living pictures; if Wittgenstein had wished to clearly note identity he would have done so -- as he does in 4.03:

A proposition states something only in so far as it is a picture [my emphasis].

What Wittgenstein appears to me to be saying at 4.0311 is that the Satz is a group, a set, of name in some form;

and what the Satz does is to present (both say and show) a state of affairs. To understand Wittgenstein here we should remember that a Satz is to be distinguished from a Satz-sign. The latter is an unorganized or non-formed series of name signs. The former, the Satz, is a series of name signs which are in a form, and because they are in some specifiable form or arrangement, they have a sense, they mirror some possible arrangement of things; and they show that sense. Therefore, the whole group [of arranged signs] presents a state of affairs. To the question "In what manner does this formed group of name signs present or show?" the answer is that they show as though or as if they were animated. The signs are arranged in such a way that it is as though they were comparable to the little cars moving in the modeled accident scene that Wittgenstein is reported to have seen depicted in a magazine article.<sup>1</sup> Wittgenstein is suggesting in the separated (and it is interesting to notice that it is set off as an explanatory phrase and not an essential part of the remark) phrase at 4.0311 a way of understanding the entire remark. We are to think of the Sätze as though they were a series of signs "come alive."

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<sup>1</sup>G. H. von Wright, "Biographical Sketch," reprinted in Malcolm, *Memoir*, pp. 7-8. The following entry occurs in the Notebooks 1914-1916: "In the proposition a world is as it were put together experimentally. (As when in the lawcourt in Paris a motor-car accident is represented by means of dolls, etc.)" (29.9.14).

One name stands for one thing, another for another thing, and they are combined with one another. In this way the whole group -- like a tableau vivant [wie ein lebendes Bild] -- presents a state of affairs (40311).

I do not think that Wittgenstein intended for us to accept such a metaphor as literally true. The Satz is a "living picture" in the sense that as an item independent of me, it performs a feat -- it shows how things are. Like a scale model, the Satz "comes alive" and shows how things are or were or will be.

The defender of Schwyzer's interpretation, however, may insist that the Satz is a "living picture" because Sätze really are acts -- acts of living human beings. But I would think that this is not a likely interpretation of what Wittgenstein means. If I am correct, then what we need to understand is why Wittgenstein would speak of Sätze or pictures as "living" items at all. The explanation rests, I think, in Wittgenstein's analysis of the form of the Satz. It is form which distinguishes Satzezeichen from Sätze; that is, it is form which permits the signs to "come alive" and show some sense.

The issue is what kind of form makes the signs "as if animated," and why would Wittgenstein think that such an explanation is satisfactory? Regarding the nature of pictures (and of Sätze, later in the Tractatus),



Wittgenstein distinguishes three sorts of form: the "pictorial form" (Form der abbildung, 2.15) which the picture or Satz has in common with what it represents; "representational form" (Form der Darstellung, 2.173) which characterizes only the picture by "giving it a point of view" and does not attribute anything to the object of the picture; and "the form of reality" (Form der Wirklichkeit, 2.18) which is the necessary condition for any set of signs becoming a significant picture. In order for a picture or Satz to present some state of affairs it must "touch reality," it must have something in common with reality. The form of reality is what permits a series of signs to "come alive." It "animates" a Satz in the respect that the form of reality (also called "logical form" by Wittgenstein) permits the series of signs to "reach out and touch reality." Wittgenstein does not say that the signs are used (by us) to touch reality; rather the Satz is essentially connected to the way things are, independent of language users.

Pictorial form is the possibility that things are related to one another in the same way as the elements of the picture (2.151).

That is how a picture is attached to reality; it reaches right out to it (2.1511).

These correlations are, as it were, the feelers of the picture's elements, with which the picture touches reality (2.1515).

This capacity of the group of signs to touch reality and

in so doing to show sense is what Wittgenstein calls the logical form of the Satz -- it is in fact the defining property of a Satz: "a series of signs come alive." As we speak of certain representational paintings in a gallery or of scale models on exhibit, we can speak of Satze as though they were alive -- for they show us a possible world.

The correct reading of 4.0311 has, I think, been structured in the comments above. Because names (name-signs which do refer) are in some form or arrangement, they are, as a proposition, capable of presenting their sense -- a presenting which includes their both showing and saying:

A proposition communicates a situation to us, and so it must be essentially connected with the situation. And the connection is precisely that it is its logical picture (4.03).

The last quotation suggests a further difficulty with Schwyzer's position; namely, there are a number of claims which appear to constitute firm evidence for the position that Wittgenstein does hold some form of isomorphism -- i.e. that he does wish to consider propositions as items whose structure or form, etc., is to be compared to that of the way things are. For instance the remarks between 4.001 and 4.016 are particularly difficult for Schwyzer's thesis.

4.011: At first sight a proposition -- one set out on the printed page, for example -- does not seem to be a picture of the reality with which it is concerned. But no more does musical notation at first sight seem to be a picture of music, nor our phonetic notation (the alphabet) to be a picture of our speech.

And yet these sign-languages prove to be pictures, even in the ordinary sense, of what they represent.

4.012: It is obvious that a proposition of the form "aRb" strikes us as a picture. In this case the sign (zeichen) is obviously a likeness of what is signified.

4.0141: ...That is what constitutes the inner similarity between these things which seem to be constructed in such entirely different ways. And that rule is the law of projection which projects the symphony [reality] into the language of musical notation [pictures]...

and finally:

4.016: In order to understand the essential [my italics] nature of a proposition, we should consider hieroglyphic script, which abbildet the facts that it describes.

In each of the above, it does not seem to me misleading to say that Wittgenstein was asserting some isomorphism between language and the world.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Stenius, "Wittgenstein's Picture-Theory," p. 320. Stenius makes my point clearly enough:

Now Mr. Schwyzer must of course admit that there are numerous statements in the Tractatus where "similarity in structure" is indicated as an essential concept in Wittgenstein's theory of language. But he dismisses them as "atypical" [p. 287]. I am afraid that in order to be consistent in his terminology Mr. Schwyzer would have to dismiss almost all of what is said on the subject in the Tractatus as "atypical."



The last difficulty I want to notice in Schwyzer's thesis is that while he is apparently obliged to claim that all similar occurrences of "show" are disguised or unclear references to our showing, I do not find any arguments in the Tractatus that support such a reading. Schwyzer makes the following attempt to find support in the text:

We now [Schwyzer is referring to a discussion of T.3.02] have a further confirmation of our thesis that the picture is the presenting-that. There can be no picture without a presenting that, any more than we can have thoughts without thinking. Wittgenstein's theory does not comprise pictures and thoughts and presenting and thinking. There is only thinking. Sometimes we think on canvas.<sup>1</sup>

Regrettably the argument fails. Its weaknesses can be seen if it is unpacked in the following way:

- a) we can't have thoughts without thinking;
- b) "thought" can be used either for the activity of intellection or what we might call the product of the intellection;<sup>2</sup>
- ∴ c) thoughts are the same as thinking;
- d) we can't have a picture without a "presenting that"...
- e) we can't understand "pictures" without understanding "presenting that"
- ∴ f) pictures are the same as presenting that.

That lines (c) and (f) do not follow from the lines given and demand further support for their justification is apparent. Schwyzer fails to provide that support.

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<sup>1</sup>Schwyzzer, "Picture Theory," p. 281.

<sup>2</sup>I have added, for clarification, lines (b) and (e) to Schwyzer's argument.

## Part II

D. S. Shwayder traces what he considers the means by which Wittgenstein is led to the showing and saying distinction.<sup>1</sup> Regrettably, Shwayder is not as rigorous in his account of the distinction itself as he is in the material we might consider as a prelude to the theory of showing and saying -- for instance, Wittgenstein's theories of judgment and picturing. Nevertheless, in what follows we will attempt to reconstruct Wittgenstein's distinction between saying and showing in terms of Shwayder's careful and thorough footwork. The result will, I think, be one of the most plausible and textually defensible explications of the showing and related doctrines heretofore developed. If the full-blown Shwayder account does falter, it will be at just the point at which we found Schwyzer's account weak -- namely, an inadequate handling of 4.022 and its implied corollaries.

The main tenets of Shwayder's interpretation of the development of the showing doctrine in the Tractatus are these:

- a. Wittgenstein restricts the uses of language to those involved in asserting;
- b. for Wittgenstein, sentences (Sätze) are acts of asserting;

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<sup>1</sup>Shwayder, "Critical Commentary," p. 145 f.

- c. we cannot talk about significant signs;
- d. no sentence (Satz) can say anything about itself;
- e. when we make a statement (when we assert, or "when we Satz"), the statement is complete, determinate;
- f. a language composed of such complete and determinate statements is itself complete and determinate;
- g. a closed, determinate and complete, language excludes the possibility of a meta-language;
- h. the rules of (the only) language cannot be formulated in the language;
- i. within the closed and complete language we must be able to say all that is sensible.

Shwayder is also aware that, regarding the logic of our language, an adequate interpretation of the Tractatus must permit:

- a. the relation of logical entailment to show itself;
- b. the determinacy and completeness of language to show itself;
- c. the statement maker to show himself;
- d. the pictorial character of language to show;
- e. the truth-functional character of language to show; and
- f. the psychological and physical conditions of language to show themselves.

The determinate sense of a Satz must show both: that the Satz is sensible; and what the sense of the Satz



is. Shwayder must be able to explain how it is that a Satz has a determinate sense which can be said, but without violating Wittgenstein's restrictions against saying what is shown.

Shwayder stresses Wittgenstein's remark that the intent of the showing doctrines is not to preclude empirical claims about sentence signs (philology or linguistics etc.), but to prohibit the effort of philosophers and logicians to "get behind" language and say what they discover as its logic -- for what they would say about language cannot be said, only shown.

To investigate the logic of language [of my one complete language] (5.55) requires that we be able meaningfully to formulate the results of our investigation. But to be able to do this already presumes language and so presumes the logic of language. We cannot put ourselves outside of language in order to investigate its logic. The logic must already be given -- it must precede the language. (5.552, 5.555) -- Recall we cannot speak or think illogically (3.03, 3.0321)...[W]e cannot ascribe to language properties it cannot have, nor does it make sense to ascribe properties it must have (4.123, 4.124). Rather we see the logic of language in the use of language (4.125).<sup>1</sup>

Now let us take up sequentially Shwayder's contributions, labeled (a)-(i) on pp. 66 and 67.

- a. Wittgenstein restricts the uses of language here, to only those involved in asserting sentences (Sätze).

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 149 B - 150.

All meaningful (i.e., assertional) discourse must be true or false. The most elementary parts of that discourse -- as products of analysis -- are terms which refer to objects (3.2). Sentences are compositions of these elementary parts in certain forms, and the union of names in form allows us to state a fact. More complex elements of meaningful discourse are reduced to the more simple fact-stating ones by means of a truth-functional analysis (5.52) -- an analysis which is only possible because all of what Wittgenstein recognized as meaningful language is either true or false. Apparently convinced that the imperativial, emotive, petitional, etc., uses of language could not be discussed in terms of clear truth values, Wittgenstein ignored them.

Two other conditions may be relevant to Wittgenstein's restriction to only assertional uses of language. 1) The picture theory assimilates pictures (as models or "linguistic topography") to fact making statements and does not appear to be of much assistance in determining how, for instance, a command or exhortation might be understood.<sup>1</sup> And 2) Wittgenstein's effort to get our symbolism right, avoiding ambiguous and imprecise

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<sup>1</sup>There is, admittedly, much evidence that Wittgenstein was committed to a thesis which considered only assertional uses of language prior to his account of a picturing theory. (See our Chapter V.)

signs of expression, obliged him to find a correct notation. This correct notation (what some, following Russell, have called Wittgenstein's effort to develop a "logically perfect language") is not intended for an ideal language but evidently reveals Wittgenstein's conception of our actual language. For example, we are told that a meaningful assertion does have one and only one complete analysis; moreover, the sense of that assertion is determinate -- exact and not obscured by the notation. What one could rightly think is "ideal" is not Wittgenstein's characterization of the assertional use of language, but that this characterization is applicable to all of those other uses of language he ignores in the Tractatus.<sup>1</sup>

There is, it seems, nothing arbitrary about Wittgenstein's view here. If it is true that the only way to make clear the meaning of words is to use them in fact stating discourse; and if it is true that names, as the resultant of analysis, make sense only in the context of fact stating discourse; and if the only way to get at the way things are, as the referents of names and sentences, is by making assertions; then Wittgenstein is obliged to have a world consisting in facts as the metaphysical object of sentences. He is committed to a logic which, as a study of assertions

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<sup>1</sup>That even the assertional uses of language do not function as characterized in the Tractatus is of course a central theme of Wittgenstein's later writings.



alone, characterizes both language (as he restricts it) and reality. Moreover, this logic must show in our use of fact stating expressions.

- b. Sentences (Sätze) are "overt acts of asserting."<sup>1</sup>

This is one of the most debatable tenets of Shwayder's analysis, and one we have already discussed in connection with Schwyzer. Shwayder's interpretation of Sätze as acts of asserting was initially constructed in his 1954 Oxford dissertation and has been restated in Mind, 1963 (a criticism of Stenius), and again in Inquiry, 1964 (a criticism of Griffin: Wittgenstein's Logical Atomism, Oxford, 1964). The following quotations reveal Shwayder's position most clearly:

- 1) Every picture is a presentation (Darstellung) that such and such is the case; and every presentation that such and such is the case is a picture; a presentation that such and such is the case is an act of thinking that such and such is the case; it is an act, whether or not overt, of asserting.... [A] Satz is an overt picture, an overt act of asserting.... A Wittgensteinian Satz is not a sentence but a thought made manifest (3, 3.1).... Thoughts are pictures and every Satz is a thought (3, 3.5, 4, 4.01, 4.06).... Every picture is a presentation that such and such; in presenting such and such it has a sense. Consequently, every picture must have a sense and every picture must be "adequate" for we do not know what picture it is until we know its sense (4.032).... We may analyze a presentation as a presenting that such and such truth conditions are fulfilled (4.022, 4.063). We fix the identity of the picture by specifying the

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<sup>1</sup>Shwayder, "Review," p. 306.

truth conditions to be fulfilled. A presenting that such and such truth-conditions are fulfilled is a presentation as fact, as a state of affairs, as reality (4.01, 4.022, 4.031). If what a picture presents as fact is fact, the picture is true (2.222, 4.05). To be a picture, i.e. to present as fact is to represent the world as being so (2.201, 4.022)....The picture theory therefore is a theory of presenting as the case i.e. it is a theory of assertion and not a theory of "propositional content" (3.13, 4.062, 4.063, 4.064).<sup>1</sup>

- 2) A sign that is applied as a Satz-sign is a Satz and a Satz is a picture; but any picture (every picture) is a thought. A thought is a complex of mental, "intentional" elements, e.g. references to objects. The thought may be embodied or expressed in signs, and then the thought is a Satz, and the signs taken together constitute a Satz-sign. According to this, thoughts and pictures and also Satze are mental complexes. But this does not imply the psychologistic theory that logic is part of psychology any more than the other view that Satze are inscriptions of carbon implies the mineralogistic theory that logic is part of the study of mineralogy.<sup>2</sup>
- 3) In the Tractatus, the idea of a picture is introduced before the idea of a Satz. This encourages [one] to think that the notion of a Satz is a specialization of the notion of a picture. [One could] also appear[s] to think that the part of the Satz which pictures is the sign and not the Gedanke embodied in the sign. But Wittgenstein says that the logical picture is the Gedanke, and the Gedanke is the Satz, and every picture is "auch ein logisches" (T 3., 4., 2.182). In short, I think that the Tractatus notions of Bild, Satz and Gedanke are almost co-extensive. (The only difference is that a Satz is a thought or picture embodied in signs.) Griffin takes the Anscombe view that first we form a picture and then we cause it to represent something by assigning uses to the occurring pictorial elements. This somehow leads him to the idea that a picture can have a sense without being either true or false, even though, as Wittgenstein

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Shwayder, "Gegenstände and Other Matters," Inquiry, 7, 1964, pp. 395-396.



explains it, the sense is the truth-conditions of the picture. Allowing that there are intimations of such a view in the Notebooks, it seems to me perfectly evident that in the Tractatus Wittgenstein was holding that a picture is (as I would summarize it) an assertional presentation of putative fact.<sup>1</sup>

- 4) The sense of a statement is not something apart from the statement, rather it shows forth when we make a statement. It is even misleading to say that we assert the sense of the sentence, for the assertion or the saying is the sentence (Satz). Therefore that which is judged is not apart from the judgment; nor is the judger apart from the act. There is no such entity as the "judging I" (5.5421, 5.6). At best the judge is just another feature (shared with other judgments) of the single indivisible act. We see that something is asserted to be the case and that someone is asserting in any judgment (assertion) when we understand any assertion.<sup>2</sup>
  
- 5) So too, the picture as Wittgenstein sometimes but not always puts it, in being a presentation of sense, is an act of presenting sense, and not the sense itself; but it must show that it is a presentation of sense and what sense it is a presentation of (4.022). It presents what it shows, if it does, not because the showing and the presenting are the same, but because it shows that it presents such and such; one does not in presentation, p, present that this is presentation, p, i.e., in asserting p one does not assert that he is asserting p (4.1212)....A picture is a thought (Gedanke) and a thought is a thinking that such and such (3.02). It is not, as with Frege, the Sinn thought. Nor is it what Moore calls a "proposition," and even less is it a sentence. Wittgenstein, in a letter to Russell, made it entirely explicit that a thought was something psychological. A picture is a mental act, whether or not overt, of thinking that such and such is the case. A picture is a presentation of such and such by being a presenting of such and such. This is why I equate pictures with assertions, for these are acts of saying (outward thinking) that such and such is the case.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 393.

<sup>2</sup>Shwayder, "Critical Commentary," p. 118.



Sätze, in the full sense, seem to be such overt presentations (3.1, 4).<sup>1</sup>

The textual basis for Shwayder's position here is impressive. That in the Tractatus every Satz is an assertion gains support from at least the following:

- i) a Satz is an expression of sense (4.4);
- ii) a Satz is a thought out and applied sign (3.5, 3.262);
- iii) in making a statement ["Satzing"] we arrange the signs (3.1432, 4.031);
- iv) we use Satz to say things stand in a certain way (4.062);

and v) a Satz "states," it "communicates" (4.03).

If we recall that a Satz is a thought (4) and it is a "picture of reality" (4.01) then we are close to understanding why we cannot consider a Satz apart from its sense -- as we could not consider a picture apart from picturing something, nor a thought apart from thinking something. To be a picture is to depict something; nor would it make sense to talk of a thought without thinking; hence the Satz as the act of asserting sense, cannot be separated from that asserting. However, to infer that the Satz is identical with the assertion that some state of affairs holds is to do what we criticized Schwyzer for doing. Shwayder has not supplied an argument capable of demonstrating the identity of Sätze with "asserting of sense."

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<sup>1</sup>Shwayder, "Review," p. 307.

The transition (2.1 - 3 - 3.1 - 4 - 4.01), Shwayder suggests, from picture to thought (as mental picture) to Satz is evidence of Wittgenstein's denial of some type of "content" theory of judgment.<sup>1</sup> As the quoted excerpts (3) and (4) indicate, the Satz is not just a Satzzeichen which stands in some peculiar relation to the expressing of a thought, nor is the Satz some "thing" which is a content of some act of denial, or judgment, or assertion, etc.; rather, as we have seen, the Satz is the thought -- it is the assertion. Since there is no separation of judgment or assertion (as act) from sense (as content), the logic of language must show in Satzing. For instance, without the act-content separation, we cannot speak of the sense apart from the assertion, there is no thing like a Moorean proposition waiting to be asserted or denied or entertained.<sup>2</sup>

c. We cannot talk about a significant sign by using other signs.

d. No Satz can say anything about itself.

To support his interpretation Shwayder cites:

3.142: Only facts can express a sense, a set of names cannot.

3.144: Situations can be described but not given names. Names are like points; propositions like arrows -- they have sense.

<sup>1</sup>Shwayder, "Critical Commentary," p. 123.

<sup>2</sup>G. E. Moore, "Propositions," Some Main Problems of Philosophy, New York, 1953, p. 66 f.

3.221: Objects can only be named. Signs are their representatives. I can only speak about them: I cannot put them into words. Propositions can only say how things are, not what they are.

In the context of the Tractatus, if we are to consider what sort of thing a Satz is, then Wittgenstein provides us with two categories of classification: "facts" or "objects." We are entitled, Shwayder claims, to infer from 3.142, 3.144, 3.221, together with these (a) and (b), above that Sätze themselves are facts, and as facts they are asserted but not named (an object would be named but not asserted). Therefore, if "talk about" is understood in (c) to mean "refers to" (in the manner in which a name is said to refer to an object), then, Shwayder argues, Wittgenstein prohibits "talking about Sätze" by using other signs (e.g., names).<sup>1</sup>

The remark (d) is not an inference on Shwayder's part but is wholly textually based. Wittgenstein held the truth of 3.332 as the only reason for taking seriously a theory of types.

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<sup>1</sup>Shwayder, "Critical Commentary," p. 144. In 1954 Shwayder argued that Wittgenstein also prohibited us from "talking about" sentence signs (Satzzeichen). One would have assumed that Satzzeichen were "objects," in the Wittgensteinian sense, and could be named ("talked about"). Shwayder argued, however, that what is meant by Satzzeichen in the Tractatus are signs used in a language. As used in a language, Tractatean Satzzeichen were significant signs and therefore could not be "talked about." Shwayder does not repeat this argument in his more recent essays.



- 3.332: No proposition (Satz) can make a statement about itself, because a propositional sign (Satzzeichen) cannot be contained in itself.

The discussion of the inadequacies of a theory of types was developed early in the pre-Tractatean materials; however, that type differences do hold is consistently supported in the early Wittgenstein writings.<sup>1</sup> When we assume that the sense of a Satz is part of, or an aspect of the Satz itself then (c) and (d), if true, have the effect of guaranteeing that the sense of any Satz, if it is to be communicated at all, must be communicated by some other means than by being said, whether by itself or by any other Satz. The alternatives which seem possible for Wittgenstein in order to account for the communication of a sensible proposition are the use of a meta-language to say the Satz, or a doctrine of showing in which the sense of a Satz shows (publicly). Before removing as an alternative the meta-language route, the determinate character and completeness of any Satz must be mentioned.

- e. A Satz has a complete and determinate sense.

The arguments needed here break down into those supporting the truth of (e) for elementary propositions and those for complex propositions. Regarding elementary

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<sup>1</sup>See Chapter V.

propositions the argument can be presented as follows:<sup>1</sup>

- i) Satzzeichen have as composing elements names, which are related in a definite way.

3.14: What constitutes a propositional sign is that in it its elements (the words) stand in a determinate relation to one another.

- ii) Sätze (even elementary ones) are expressed thoughts.

- iii) The objects of the expressed thought have a determinate relationship to the organized Satzzeichen.

3.2: In a proposition a thought can be expressed in such a way that elements of the propositional sign correspond to the objects of the thought.

- iv) Each Satz is a picture, and as a picture is definite; it is of something and it is a complete picture. Moreover, the elements of a picture represent objects.

2.131: In a picture the elements of the picture are the representatives of objects.

2.14: What constitutes a picture is that its elements are related to one another in a determinate way.

- v) Names, as the elements of a Satzzeichen stand for things, one name for one thing

4.0311: One name stands for one thing, another for another thing, and they are combined with one another.

- vi) From i), iv), and v) we are to understand that names are connected together in a particular manner in order to present -- like a "living picture" -- some state of

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<sup>1</sup>Shwayder's general account of this material occurs in "Critical Commentary," pp. 183-200.

affairs. In the case of elementary propositions, an atomic fact is presented.

4.0311: In this way the whole group -- like a tableau vivant -- presents a state of affairs.

2.15: The fact that the elements of a picture are related to one another in a determinate way represents that things are related to one another in the same way.

vii) A picture represents (darstellt), its sense; so from vii) and vi) a picture presents an atomic fact as the sense of an elementary Satz.

2.221: What a picture represents is its sense.

viii) The components of elementary situations are objects which have a determinate relationship to one another.

2.031: In a state of affairs objects stand in a determinate relation to one another.

We may conclude that a sentence sign is a definite connection of names; and the Satz presents something perfectly definite: viz., the particular combination of objects corresponding to its constituent names. Moreover, the elementary Satz can have only one sense -- can present only one combination of objects -- because, each Satz must have only one determinate and complete analysis. That is, there is only one completely truth functional interpretation of the Satz sign, and this analysis shows what must obtain. Since each Satz must be true or false, a truth table will show the complete range of truth functional



interpretation of the Satz sign. One linear column in that table will show what actually does obtain.

- 3.23: The requirement that simple signs be possible is the requirement that sense be determinate.
- 3.25: A proposition has one and only one complete analysis.
- 3.3442: Nor does analysis resolve the sign for a complex in an arbitrary way: for instance it would not have a different resolution every time that it was incorporated in a different proposition.
- f. Complex propositions may be analyzed in a similar way:<sup>1</sup>
  - i) All propositions (Sätze) are in some specifiable way based totally on elementary ones such that, in the Tractatus, all Sätze are truth functions of the elementary ones.
- 4.51: Suppose that I am given all elementary propositions: then I can simply ask what propositions I can construct out of them. And then I have all propositions and that fixes their limits.
- 4.52: Propositions comprise all that follows from the totality of all elementary propositions... (Thus, in a certain sense, it could be said that all propositions were generalizations of elementary propositions).
- 5.: A proposition is a truth-function of elementary propositions.

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<sup>1</sup>There are levels of complexity not here discussed. For instance "generalized propositions" or what Wittgenstein calls "entirely general propositions," are mentioned at 5.5262 and 4.411 but are not being considered here.

- ii) Because every proposition can be written in terms of elementary ones, then from the given of all elementary propositions all other propositions can be constructed.

6.001: What this says is just that every proposition is a result of successive applications to elementary propositions of the operation  $N(\xi)$ .

- iii) The sense of a proposition is its agreement or disagreement with the possible existent or non-existent state of affairs. This agreement or disagreement dictates the truth conditions of the proposition, the possible worlds in which the proposition would be true or false; the sense of any proposition is its truth conditions.

4.2: The sense of a proposition is its agreement and disagreement with possibilities of existence and non-existence of states of affairs.

4.3: Truth-possibilities of elementary propositions mean possibilities of existence and non-existence of states of affairs.

4.4: A proposition is an expression of agreement and disagreement with truth possibilities of elementary propositions.

From i), ii) and iii), and given all elementary propositions, then the truth conditions of any proposition can be established. It is possible to present a truth-table which would ensure that every proposition has a definite, specifiable sense (truth value).

The three remaining tenets of Shwayder's interpretation are these:

- g. A closed and complete language excludes the possibility of meta-language.
- h. The rules of a closed and complete language cannot be formulated in the language.
- i. The closed and complete language must make clear all that "lies behind" every assertion in the language.

All of these last tenets of Shwayder's interpretation of Wittgenstein's showing doctrine speak to much the same point. The whole of meaningful (assertional, truth-functional) discourse is closed, and complete. There is only one language for the Wittgenstein of the Tractatus. As we saw above, the whole of language (the language) can be built from the set of elementary propositions. To this extent, language is rigorously limited. It is limited to what can be meaningfully asserted or to what has a truth value. That it has these limits, and the limits themselves, cannot be formulated in language.

In order that you should have a language which can express or say everything that can be said, this language must have certain properties [limits]; and when this is the case, that it has them can no longer be said in that language or in any language.<sup>1</sup>

We can, therefore, never be in a position to devise a theory encompassing all of language, for such a theory cannot be said (asserted) in the language, since there is only one language. Moreover, if the effort is made to

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<sup>1</sup>L. Wittgenstein, "Notes Dictated to G. E. Moore," in Notebooks 1914-1916, p. 107.



distinguish levels of language, so as to say something of the whole of the logic of language from some meta-level, then what would be needed is some constructed language, in order to make that assertion. But all such "constructed languages" would be illogical, i.e., impossible to construct. For what the construction must go beyond, or be about, is all language.

It seems that Wittgenstein must rely on a doctrine of showing, rather than on meta-levels of language, ideal languages, etc., to give an adequate account of both the conditions which must be met in order to make an assertion in language and the possibility of communicating the sense of an assertion.

Shwayder has no difficulty explaining Wittgenstein's thesis regarding how the formal features of language show.

[T]o investigate the logic of language -- of my one complete language -- requires that we be able meaningfully to formulate the results of our investigations. But to be able to do this already presumes language and so presumes the logic of language. We cannot put ourselves outside of language in order to investigate its logic -- the logic must be already given. It must precede the language.<sup>1</sup>

In this context, "is given" is a synonym for "shows itself." What shows includes: the pictorial character of language, its truth functional character, its determinacy and completeness, and even some of its psychological and physical

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<sup>1</sup>Shwayder, "Critical Commentary," p. 149 B.

pre-conditions, e.g., the identity of the statement maker. Regarding these aspects, it is clear that they cannot be said, according to the Tractatus.

Shwayder does see some serious objections to this position of Wittgenstein's:

The showing doctrine is false, for we obviously can and do talk about the logic of language. What shows may also be said to hold or not...What Wittgenstein wants to show and not be said are usually just those items we would want only to show, e.g.: logical entailment, that a given name refers to a certain object, who the statement maker is...The purpose of a showing doctrine would apparently be to avoid: platonizing logical objects, or introducing mysteriously indefinable "concepts," or talking about "ideal" objects, or appealing to transcendental principles...The major argument against "showing" would be to recognize that language is not a closed and determinate system...[a further objection would be to see that] what can be said, can be shown, e.g. we can say (as well as show) who's making the statement.<sup>1</sup>

However, like other commentators, Shwayder does have difficulty in getting clear on the application of the showing thesis to statements with sense. As we have indicated at several places the center of the difficulty is in giving an exposition of 4.022 ("A proposition shows how things are if it is true. And it says that they do so stand") -- an exposition that must be understandable in light of a number of other assertions, including 4.1212 ("What can be shown, cannot be said").

An analysis of Shwayder's position reveals that he

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 303-305.



assumes that at 4.022. "presents" is an adequate translation of sagt; he also assumes that there is no real difference in meaning between "I say" and "the Satz says." A third assumption made by Shwayder is that one can't "present that" without "presenting what." Shwayder states his position in the following way:

We may analyze a presentation as a presenting that such and such truth-conditions are fulfilled.<sup>1</sup>

So too, the picture, as Wittgenstein sometimes but not always puts it, in being a presentation of sense, is an act of presenting sense, and not the sense itself; but it must show that it is a presentation of sense and what sense it is a presentation of (4.022). It presents what it shows, if it does, not because the showing and the presenting are the same (as some have interpreted Wittgenstein to be saying), but because it shows that it presents such and such; one does not in presentation, p, present that this is presentation, p, i.e., in asserting p one does not assert that he is asserting p (4.1212).<sup>2</sup>

Wittgenstein's position at 4.022 ("A proposition shows its sense. A proposition shows how things stand if it is true. And it says that they do so stand") would be given the following interpretation by Shwayder: "Says that" is to be understood as "presents," and "presents" is to be understood as a synonym for "asserts." Therefore, the Satz asserts that things do stand in just the way the Satz shows things would stand if it were true. Since there is little difference between the meaning of "my saying"

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<sup>1</sup>Shwayder, "Review," p. 306.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 307.



and "the Satz saying" then we could also conclude that we assert that things do stand in just the way the Satz shows they would stand, if true. Whether it is the Satz saying or our saying, Shwayder appears to think that Sätze are assertional acts.

Shwayder, unlike Schwyzer, does admit that Wittgenstein is not wholly rigorous regarding the view that a Satz is an act or assertion.<sup>1</sup> What the analysis of Sätze as assertions does represent, Shwayder claims, is the most defensible alternative for explicating several difficulties in Wittgenstein's showing thesis.

The showing of sense mentioned at 4.022 was in Schwyzer's reading a matter of our showing; while for Shwayder, the showing of sense is a characteristic of the Satz itself. The Satz shows its sense by showing how things would stand if it is true -- by showing itself, as it were, as a line in a truth table.

"A proposition is the expression of its truth-conditions" (4.431). The saying at 4.022 is discussed as an instance of our saying by Schwyzer; for Shwayder, the difference between our saying and the Satz saying is of little importance.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

Schwyzzer adjusted 4.022 to 4.1212 by arguing that 4.022 was "disguised" and needed proper reformulation. The reformulation of 4.022 would make it clear that we show with a Satz, and, thought Schwyzzer, the incompatibility of 4.022 and 4.1212 would then be avoided. Shwayder's solution takes a very different route: 4.1212 is simply false, Shwayder writes, if Wittgenstein intended it to refer to Satz.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, we have seen that both Shwayder and Schwyzzer agree that the showing involved in the showing that a Satz is sensible is not a case which violates the general restriction at 4.1212. The Satz shows that it says that things stand in such and such a way, and what is thus shown cannot be said.

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<sup>1</sup>Shwayder, "Critical Commentary," p. 303.

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CHAPTER III

The Doctrine of Showing in the Tractatus



The program of this chapter will be to develop and justify the contentions that there is more than one doctrine of showing and saying at work in the Tractatus; and that the structure of at least one of the theses about showing and saying entails that certain important demands be made of language. Moreover, with appeal only to Wittgenstein's own remarks, this chapter will consist of an exposition and analysis of the saying and showing materials which responds to the difficulties we structured in the first chapter (pages 2-6). As will be recalled, the major difficulties in formulating an adequate interpretation included these:

a) The interpretation must reconcile the assertions that a Satz both shows *and says something* (4.022) with the restriction at 4.1212 that what shows cannot be said.

b) We must be able to understand Wittgenstein's assertion that propositions show logical form (4.121) and understand his claim that only some (the sensible) propositions show their sense (4.022 and 4.461). These remarks of Wittgenstein lead us to believe that two different kinds of things are being shown. If so, then we need to understand how a proposition shows that difference.

c) Both 4.022 and 4.1212 must be reconciled with the assertion that the sense of a Satz is affirmed. We must be able to reconcile the assertion that a proposition

shows how things stand if it is true and says that they do so stand (4.022) with the assertion that every proposition must already have a sense: it cannot be given a sense by affirmation (4.064).

By making the interpretation and analysis in the manner to follow, I think the problems we discovered in the interpretations of Pitcher, Black, Stenius, Schwyzer and Shwayder will not arise.

### Part I

With "show" or "showing", as with many philosophically relevant terms, it may be helpful to remind ourselves that there is often available more than one grouping or category of its use. What follows is an elucidation of two such groupings. Most uses of "show" will fall under one or the other of them. The purpose of classifying the uses of "show" will be to uncover a distinction which I think Wittgenstein does make in the Tractatus, but not carefully. The distinction is borne out in the textual examples of "showing" for it is as easily made in German as it is in English; and the distinction is one which makes a considerable difference to any appreciation of the showing theses in the Tractatean philosophy of language.

- A1. "x shows  $\alpha$  to y"
- A2. "x shows  $\beta$  to y by means of  $\alpha$ "
- A3. "x shows y how to  $\beta$ "
- A4. "x shows y that  $\alpha$  is  $\beta$ "
- B1. " $\alpha$  shows its  $\beta$ " or "the  $\beta$  of  $\alpha$  shows"
- B2. "that this is an English phrase shows itself"
- B3. "that x cannot pronounce 'Mississippi' shows."

The four "A" expressions are examples of what might be called the demonstrative uses of "show." To call them "demonstrative" amounts to indicating, only, that these uses usually function to refer to presenting something. Secondly, with any of the A forms an agent is performing or doing the showing. Thirdly, there is built into these demonstrative uses some notion of an audience which receives the presentation. Finally, in all four A uses there is no restriction on saying what is shown. In each case we have no reason to think that what x shows can not also be told or told about or taught by explaining or demonstrated by x.

When the examples are considered independently, additional clarification can be made.

Re A1: "x shows  $\alpha$  to y"



1) There is no necessary condition of a conscious agent (x) to do the showing.

E.g. "the map shows the elevation of Mt. Everest to its reader."

2) The audience (y) need not be determine -- i.e., no individual need be singled out by x.

3) There may be no need for the audience (y) to be a conscious agent. It is not necessary, for example, to render ( $S_1$ ) "the reflected light of our moon shows toward Venus" as equivalent to ( $S_2$ ): "if one (a conscious agent) were on Venus he would see the reflected light of our moon." All that is demanded here is that the showing be directed to some object.

Re A2: "x shows  $\beta$  to y by means of  $\alpha$ "

This use of "show" might be termed the "pedagogical" use for there does usually appear to be some intent on behalf of x to instruct y by using  $\alpha$ . The use of  $\alpha$  is, however, as a means -- (for instance, as a model) to make clear some point (or object)  $\beta$ . Usually, both the audience and the agent in this case are obliged to be conscious agents though not necessarily human. (See the example below.) If both x and y were not conscious it would not make sense to talk of the intention of x to have

y see the instructional "point," etc., of using  $\alpha$  to illustrate  $\beta$ .

E.g. "The *god* shows, with the *moving* of the ground, his impatience to the *man*."

Re A3: "x shows y how to  $\beta$ "

1) Like A1, there is no need here for x to be an intelligent agent.

E.g. "The diagram shows you how to sew that stitch."

2) This use of show does appear to demand that it be possible that y can do  $\beta$ . That is, it must be more than possible for (logically possible) y to do  $\beta$ ; rather, there must be generally admissible evidence -- some reason to think y can do  $\beta$ . We do not for example, say "Smith showed the wall how to play the flute"; nor for the reason above, do we allow, "Smith showed his infant son how to play the flute." When asked, "What are you doing, Smith?" it is inappropriate for Smith to respond "showing my infant son how to play the flute," even though what Smith is doing may be just what he does when, with the student in his studio, he appropriately says, "showing my student how to play the flute." What all that is presupposed is the capacity to take instruction, to be able to follow x's example.

Re A4: "x shows y that... ( $\alpha$  is  $\beta$ )..."

1) With this use of the word "showing," we are to understand the showing of facts, which is the most central of uses for our interests. There is no need for an intelligent agent (x); e.g., "the experiment can show y that...." But that y be conscious (i.e., be capable of taking instruction) does seem to be demanded. "The picture showed him that the treasure was under the rock." "Her remark showed him that she no longer cared." "The argument shows us that no even integer precedes '2'."

The second set of expressions, B1 - B3, could be called the "reflexive" or "show itself" uses. These uses need not involve either agent or audience. The general form of B1 - B3 is " $\alpha$  shows its  $\beta$ " or "the  $\beta$  of  $\alpha$  shows itself." It shows itself regardless of any x or y either showing or being shown. "The  $\beta$  of  $\alpha$  shows itself," is not equivalent to any showing use of form A1 - A4; for example, "the  $\beta$  of  $\alpha$  shows itself" (B1) is not equivalent to "x shows y that  $\alpha$  is  $\beta$ ." For instance, consider the case where  $\beta$  = validity of an argument, and  $\alpha$  = the argument. We certainly don't mean by, "the validity of the argument shows (is apparent)," that some agent shows that validity to some y. For the former could be true even if no one did what is demanded by the latter. Moreover, as we have noted, A uses do demand audiences and more often



than not, audiences capable of following rules or programs. But "B" uses do not make such a demand. B showings are successful regardless of audiences.

B2 and B3 are cited not because they characterize independent forms of B; rather, their purpose is to shed some light on whether or not the "showing itself" use marks a prohibition against saying what shows itself. The remark at B2, "That this is an English phrase shows itself," shows itself as true. For us to say it is true would appear redundant, but it is not impossible for us to do it. The remark at B3 ("That x can't pronounce 'Mississippi' shows"), has I think, the structure of showing itself as true when it is true, with the odd condition that x cannot say B3 correctly. So in this case B3 cannot be said by x but only shown, although B3 could be said by some y. We will have to find a sound example of B which cannot be said by either x or y, though it does show itself to x and y; such a case may be necessary to clarify the intent of Wittgenstein's remark at 4.1212: "What can be shown, cannot be said."

The purpose of the above distinction between what we have labeled "demonstrative" and "reflexive" uses of "show" is to make possible a consistent reading of the various sorts of things Wittgenstein himself says about showing and what is shown. We will be obliged to talk of

two showing doctrines -- or at least of a doctrine of two showings; for we have noticed that what we say by means of one set of showing uses is not what we say by means of the other. If you like, we have at least two categories of showing. We have at least two senses of "show" reflecting differences in what is shown.

Two tables follow. I shall explain each. The first table indicates other German expressions than zeigen (which is, in the Tractatus, the most prominent of terms used to express "show") occasionally used by Wittgenstein for apparently no other reasons than stylistic ones. There is no evidence that Wittgenstein's choice among these alternatives reflects an intention to distinguish between the two showing uses. The second table arranges the textual examples of the different uses of "show" which we have earlier indicated could be found in the Tractatus.

Table 1 German expressions for "show":

- a. anzeigen ("indicated") 6.124
- b. spiegeln ("mirror," "reflect") 4.121
- c. speigeln-sich ("mirrors itself") 4.121
- d. Spiegelbild ("mirror image") 6.13
- e. aufweisen ("display," "show forth") 2.172, 4.121
- f. nachzuweisen (we "demonstrate," "show") 6.53
- g. darstellen ("represent") 6.124
- h. ansehen ([by] "inspection") 6.122
- i. sich ausdrücken ("expresses itself" [in language]) 4.121
- j. aus sagen ("speaks" [for itself]) 6.124

Table 2

A uses, or demonstrative uses, of "show"-related terms.

1) (4.0621) "But it is important that the signs 'p' and '~p' can say the same thing. For it shows [zeigt] that nothing in reality corresponds to the sign '~'."

2) (5.5421) "This shows [zeigt] too that there is no such thing as the soul -- the subject, etc. -- as it is conceived in the superficial psychology of the present day."

3) (6.126) "Of course this way of showing [zeigen] that the propositions of logic are tautologies is not at all essential to logic, if only because the propositions from which the proof starts must show [zeigen] without any proof that they are tautologies."

4) (6.1264) "A proposition that has sense states something, which is shown [zeigt] by its proof to be so. In logic every proposition is the form of a proof."

B uses, or reflexive uses, of "show"-related verb:

1) (4.1212) "What can be shown [gezeigt] cannot be said."

2) (5.24) "An operation manifests itself in a variable; it shows [zeigt] how we can get from one form of proposition to another."

3) (5.5561) "Empirical reality is limited by the totality of objects. The limit also makes itself manifest [zeigt sich] in the totality of elementary propositions."

4) (5.62) "For what the solipsist means is quite correct; only it cannot be said, but makes itself manifest [zeigt sich]."

5) (6.23) "If two expressions are combined by means of the sign of equality, that means that they can be substituted for one another. But it must be manifest [sich zeigen] in the two expressions themselves whether this is the case or not."

6) (6.36) "If there were a law of causality, it might be put in the following way: There are laws of nature. But of course that cannot be said: it makes itself manifest [zeigt sich]."



7) (6.522) "There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They make themselves manifest [zeigt sich]. They are what is mystical."

8) (6.127) "All the propositions of logic are of equal status: it is not the case that some of them are essentially primitive propositions and others essentially derived propositions. Every tautology itself shows [zeigt] that it is a tautology."

9) (4.121) "Propositions cannot represent logical form: it is mirrored [spiegelt sich] in them."

10) (4.1211) "Thus one proposition 'fa' shows [zeigt] that the object 'a' occurs in its sense, two propositions 'fa' and 'ga' show [zeigt] that the same object is mentioned in both of them. If two propositions contradict one another, then their structure shows [zeigt] it; the same is true if one of them follows from the other, and so on."

11) (4.126) "When something falls under a formal concept as one of its objects, this cannot be expressed by means of a proposition. Instead it is shown [zeigt] by the very sign for this object. (A name shows that it signifies an object, a sign for a number that it signifies a number, etc.)."

12) (5.515) "It must be manifest [sich zeigen] in our symbols that it can only be propositions that are combined with one another by 'v', '.', etc."

Problematic cases, which will be central objects of analysis for any adequate interpretation, include:

1) (4.461) "Propositions show [zeigt] what they say: tautologies and contradictions show [zeigt] that they say nothing."

2) (4.023) "A proposition constructs a world with the help of a logical scaffolding, so that one can actually see [auch sehen] from the proposition how everything stands in logic if it is true. One can draw inferences from a false proposition."

3) (4.022) "A proposition shows [zeigt] its sense. A proposition shows [zeigt] how things stand if it is true. And it says that they do so stand."

## Part II

If we have been careful in utilizing Wittgenstein's contention that: "[i]n philosophy the question 'what do we actually use this word or this proposition for?' repeatedly leads to valuable insights" (6.211), then the insight we have gained amounts to making clear the distinction between our using language to show that such and such or show how such and such, etc., (reflected in the A uses), and the showing which is not something we do (as reflected in the B uses). The latter showing, which is characteristic of the formal aspects of language, shows itself regardless of anything we say or attempt to show in sense A. Thus it is false or at least misleading to claim:

i) "that whatever is shown, shows itself" (for this ignores the distinction between types A and B); or ii) "that what is shown is not something we can 'express'" (for this is only applicable to some B uses). Moreover, the reported schism between saying and showing, such that there can be no case of both showing and saying, may be misleading. Most if not all of the commentators on the Tractatus presume that this schism is proclaimed by Wittgenstein's assertion that "what can be shown cannot be said" (4.1212). However, a careful look at the remark reveals that it is a

reassertion of the preceding proposition that "what expresses itself in language, we cannot express by means of language" (4.121). There is a use of showing which prohibits being said -- the "show itself" uses in the Tractatus. But there are other uses of "show," the demonstrative, A uses, which can be said. We must now examine the arguments Wittgenstein can muster for there being no case of both saying and showing of the B type; we also need to determine whether or not what Wittgenstein asserts to be both shown and said can properly be construed as shown in the A manner. In order to adequately analyze the showing and saying distinctions, it is necessary to review some of the special terminology and major theses of the Tractatus.

Propositional signs are composed of names and have meaning (sense) independently of other symbols. The composing elements (names) are simple signs which cannot be further analyzed and which, unlike propositional signs, must occur in combination with other names and logical constants: "Only propositions have sense, only in the nexus of a proposition does a name have meaning" (3.3). Some propositions are elementary, i.e., their truth value is independent of other propositions; non-elementary propositions are functions of the elementary ones. Each proposition, elementary or not, has a structure, a way in which the sign elements of the proposition (names,



constants, etc.) are connected. Understanding this connection is fundamental to understanding the manner in which propositions relate to the world. For unlike names, which refer to objects, propositions do not denote -- the relationship between propositions and states of affairs Wittgenstein speaks of as one of mirroring structure (4.0311, 4.04). What every proposition has in common with every other proposition is the general form of a proposition. Propositions are true or false. Whether they are true or false is determined by comparing them to the way things are. The sense of the proposition is what we affirm as true. Every proposition must already have a sense in the respect that the proposition is possibly true or possibly false before it has been determined to be true, or false.

To understand a proposition means to know what is the case if it is true. (One can understand it, therefore, without knowing whether it is true.) It is understood by anyone who understands its constituents (4.024).

Significant propositions are true or false of a possible state of affairs (4.2). We use propositional signs to make assertions: "With propositions, we make ourselves understood" (4.026). Using old expressions (the same names, etc.) we can communicate a new sense -- for to communicate a new sense is to picture a new situation, to think a new thought, to find a new structure with old signs. We understand a proposition when we know what

would be the case if it were true. And we can understand a proposition without knowing whether it is true or is false (4.024).

Now we can return to the doctrine of showing. The series of signs shows itself as either a tautology or not (6.1267). In doing so it shows its form, rather, it shows itself as having such and such a form (4.121). Because the series of signs may show a tautological form, we understand that the showing of form is not identified with the showing of Satz form. If it is not a tautology, but yet a proposition, then it shows itself as a Satz (as a significant proposition) by showing itself as a picture. In terms of our interpretation of the showing distinctions in the Tractatus: for any significant proposition  $p$ ,  $p$  shows itself as a significant proposition.  $p$  shows its form; it shows itself as a picture, (that it is a picture). That  $p$  shows itself as a significant proposition (a Satz) is equivalent to  $p$ 's showing itself as a picture (4.064).

Other commentators have characterized Wittgenstein's position with somewhat different labels. For instance "p's showing itself as a picture" is called showing  $p$ 's "internal structure,"<sup>1</sup> or  $p$ 's "formal features"<sup>2</sup> or,  $p$ 's "essential" features (3.34). Whatever the label,

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<sup>1</sup>Stenius, Wittgenstein's "Tractatus", p. 179.

<sup>2</sup>Black, Companion to Tractatus, p. 191.



the showing use employed here is clearly the B use. All that Wittgenstein is pointing out by remarking that a sensible  $p$  shows itself as a picture is that the form of the proposition  $p$  shows. He is here not claiming that what the proposition is about shows. That proposition  $p$  shows itself as a picture means only that  $p$  shows that it is the sort of fact (of language) which is about (is a picture of) some, at this point, indeterminate state of affairs -- some possible state of affairs.

Wittgenstein, however, says that the sensible proposition  $p$  also shows what it is about, it shows what it pictures. It is this position which makes interpreting 4.022 and its corollaries so difficult to analyze. At this point Wittgenstein makes no distinctions among significant propositions. Clearly, if the sense of a proposition shows (itself) then what shows must be in addition to that form shown as described above. If the showing of sense were not distinct from the showing of sensible form then all significant propositions would be logically equivalent.

Proposition  $p$  shows itself as a picture of " $st$ ", where " $st$ " is some specific state of affairs. What the proposition is about (is a picture of) shows itself in the use of the proposition. We would characterize this showing as of the B sort. This capacity of  $p$  justifies the



contention of Wittgenstein's that I (as a language user) can understand the sense of a proposition without having the sense explained (said, told) to me. (4.021): "A proposition is a picture of reality: for if I understand a proposition, I know the situation that it represents. And I understand the proposition without having had its sense explained to me." Note, it is not merely that I understand that it is a significant proposition, i.e. one capable of picturing some indeterminate "st", but that I do understand what the proposition does picture. In comparison to what was characterized as the showing of form, what we are now characterizing as the showing of sense has been given these labels: the "external structure,"<sup>1</sup> or the "material" feature,<sup>2</sup> or the "accidental" feature (3.34) of a proposition.

That p shows itself as a picture of "st" where "st" is some specific state of affairs, entails (but is not equivalent to the fact) that p shows that it is a picture. Having the form of a significant proposition is a necessary condition for that proposition being a picture of some possible "st". What has to be further articulated is whether or not every proposition p that shows that it is a picture (logically) must show itself as a picture of some

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<sup>1</sup>Stenius, Wittgenstein's "Tractatus", p. 179.

<sup>2</sup>Black, Companion, p. 191.

particular state of affairs "st". It seems the entailment does hold on the grounds that every proposition must have a fixed or determinate sense (3.23). For otherwise p could have the form of (the essential feature of) a significant proposition but not be a picture of some particular "st" -- i.e., not be a determinate picture. This latter possibility, however, is ruled out in Wittgenstein's picture theory of language: "What constitutes a picture is that its elements are related to one another in a determinate way" (2.14).

Consequently, 4.022 ["A proposition shows its sense. A proposition shows how things stand if it is true. And it says that they do so stand."] may be considered as using two discernible (though admittedly closely related) aspects of showing, such that a significant proposition shows itself as both having the form of a significant proposition and as a picture of some particular possible state of affairs. It must be remarked, however, that while the showing itself as a picture of some specific "st" is determinate, the proposition as a picture does not show that it is a true picture of "st". We show (an A use of "show") that a proposition is true -- that task is not a function of the proposition itself (6.1264).

A further difficulty in understanding Wittgenstein

at 4.022 appears when we notice that while proposition p shows itself as a picture of some specific state of affairs "st," Wittgenstein does not argue that p cannot say that "st" is pictured. Rather, the sense of p (what p pictures as being a possible state of affairs) is shown by p and p says that that state of affairs "st" does so stand. We have here a case of a proposition's saying something which Wittgenstein believes it can also show.

As we have remarked at a number of places, how we are to understand Wittgenstein at this point is central to any adequate interpretation of the Tractatus. First, we can assume that the saying which is done by the proposition p could be understood to mean a saying done by language users. We are justified in making such an assumption since nothing is lost by interpreting "the Satz saying" as "my saying with a Satz." In fact, Wittgenstein appears to treat these phrases as synonymous in the Tractatus, as both Pitcher and Black discovered. Secondly, we can lay out the uses of "say" (and synonyms for "say") in the Tractatus, and see whether we find some pattern as we did in Wittgenstein's uses of "show." When this is accomplished, we will be in a position to fully appreciate an adequate interpretation of Wittgenstein at 4.022 and 4.212.



Table 31. say (sagen):

(A) Example of uses where we (language users) say:

- (1) (5.61) "We cannot say what we cannot think."
- (2) (3.031) "We could not say what an illogical world would look like."
- (3) (6.53) "The correct method in philosophy would really be the following: for us to say nothing except what can be said...."

(B) Uses in the Tractatus where the proposition says:

- (1) (4.022) "And it (the proposition) says that they do so stand."
- (2) (3.221) "Propositions can only say how things are, not what they are."
- (3) (6.1264) "A proposition that has sense states (sagt) something."
- (4) (4.03) "A proposition states (sagt) something...."

2. express (ausdrucken): With the verb ausdrucken we ought to make a further distinction than just between cases of our saying and those of the proposition saying. Paired with that distinction is Wittgenstein's use of ausdrucken in which it does not mean "show" and cannot be so used (call it the " $\alpha$ " use), and his use of ausdrucken in which it does have application in some contexts to mean "show" as well as "say" (call these  $\beta$  cases). Thus the  $\alpha$  case listed below ought not be read as a showing verb; whereas, the  $\beta$  cases are to be rendered as cases which

have uses compatible with the translation of ausdrucken as meaning "show" or "showing". There is a use of ausdrucken which in part, at least, can be understood to mean showing as well as saying.

α) uses, examples which do not translate as "show  
uses of ausdrucken:

- (1) (6.1264) "Modus ponens can't be expressed by a proposition."

β) uses, examples which include a "show" use of ausdrucken (express):

- (1) (4.121) "What expresses itself in language, we cannot express by means of language."
- (2) (3.34) "Essential features are those without which the proposition could not express its sense."
- (3) A further β use of "express" occurs at 3.251:  
"What a proposition expresses, it expresses in a determinate manner."

3. enunciate (aussprechen):

(A) Examples of "say" uses where we do the saying

- (1) (4.116) "all that can be put into words (enunciated) can be put clearly"
- (2) (6.421) "...It is clear that ethics cannot be put into words (enunciated)."

(B) The occasion of aussprechen at 3.262 may be an example of a different use:

"What signs fail to express [ausdrucken], their application shows [zeigen]. What signs slur over, their application says clearly [aussprechen]."

With this remark, it should be carefully noted that it is a

sign which fails to express ("say for itself") and whose application may show something -- i.e., one may use it to show something (an A use of show). Wittgenstein is not arguing at 3.262 that a Satz may so fail to "say for itself." On the contrary, we know from 4.022 that Sätze do say for themselves that things stand in a certain way.

4. speak (sprechen): It is remarkable that its only occurrence in the Tractatus is at 7. "What we cannot speak about we must consign to silence."

5. talk (reden): Like sprechen, there is only one occurrence and it is found in the author's preface, page 3: "and what we cannot talk about we must consign to silence."

6. articulated (artikuliert): One occurrence: (3.251) "a proposition is articulated."

7. describe (beschreiben):

(A) Examples of "describe" which are like the uses of "say" where we use propositions, in this case, in order to describe, include:

- (1) (3.144) "Situations can be described, but not given names."
- (2) (4.26) "If all true elementary propositions are listed, the world is completely described."
- (3) (5.526) "We can describe the world completely..."
- (4) (5.634) "Whatever we can describe at all could be other than it is."

(B) Uses of "describe" where the describing is not



done by some intelligent agent (for instance, a proposition's describing such and such) follow.

- (1) (4.016) "Heiroglyphic writing images the derivative facts it describes."
- (2) (4.023) "A proposition describes reality by its internal properties."
- (3) (6.124) "The propositions of logic describe the scaffolding of the world, or rather they represent it."

In a manner like that supplied in the cases of "ausdrucken," the above examples of "describe" would not mislead us if they were read:

- (1) "Heiroglyphic writing images the derivative facts it shows."
- (2) "A proposition shows reality by its internal properties."
- (3) "The propositions of logic show the scaffolding...."

Of course, the reason for making the above demonstration is to enforce our view that occasionally Wittgenstein uses "describe" in the same manner he often uses "assert" and "express": viz., there is a use of these terms which includes a sense of show as well as say (we have been calling them  $\beta$  uses).

Initially, this resumé of uses of "say" serves to confirm that there is no real difference between our saying and a Satz's saying. From the examination of the A and B uses of "say" related terms, it does seem that no serious errors of analysis are committed by ignoring the

difference in "speaker." Secondly, we have noticed a use of "say" which cannot be understood as a verb meaning show or a showing activity; and we have compared such a use of "say" to those cases where an expression used to mean say may also be used to mean show.

An analysis of 4.022 and related remarks can now be given which is consistent with our interpretation of Wittgenstein's showing and saying doctrines.

- 4.022: "A proposition shows how things stand if it is true. And it says that they do so stand."
- 4.11212: "What can be shown cannot be said."
- 4.121: "What expresses itself in language, we cannot express by means of language."
- 6.1264: "A proposition that has sense states something which is shown by its proof to be so."
- 4.03: "A proposition states something only insofar as it is a picture."
- 4.031: "Instead of 'this proposition has such and such a sense,' we can simply say: 'This proposition represents such and such a situation.'"
- 4.0311: "[The proposition] like a tableau vivant presents a state of affairs."
- 4.027: "It belongs to the essence of a proposition that it should be able to communicate a new sense to us."
- 4.03: "A proposition must use old expressions to communicate a new sense."
- 4.021: "And I understand the proposition without having had its sense explained to me."

The sense of a Satz shows itself to us (4.022, 4.03, 4.0311, 4.021). Communication of a Satz does not depend on someone saying the sense of the Satz but depends on the showing aspect of a Satz itself (4.021, 4.027). When Wittgenstein says of a Satz that it "states" (4.03) or "presents" (4.0311), "communicates" (4.03), or "expresses" (4.121), he wants us to understand those terms to mean both a use of saying and a use of showing.

When Wittgenstein attributes a "saying" verb to a proposition, it makes no real difference to the analysis if we think of that "saying" verb being attributed to the language user and not the proposition itself.

When Wittgenstein writes that a Satz presents or asserts its sense he is saying that the proposition shows and it says. Now the "say" aspect of these uses can be attributed to either the proposition or the asserter. The showing, however, in these cases of presenting or asserting sense, is always attributed to the proposition itself. The Satz shows its sense (what it presents) and it says (or we say) that what it presents is so. The Satz (or what seems to be the same, the Satz user) says that the proposition as a living picture is adequate, that it is appropriate, clear, true, etc. of the way things are. Just how things are is determined by some independent routine (6.1264). The Satz shows its sense; this showing



is necessary for the communication of sense, for the public character of language. That is, language, as a totality of propositions, must be so constituted that its sensible propositions can make perfectly clear, or obvious, their sense to us as users of the same set of well formed sentence signs. In this complete language the fact that sensible propositions are communicated is not a function of some language user's saying but is due to the very nature of Sätze themselves. They show, they display their own sense.

4.064: "Every Satz must already have a sense; it cannot be given a sense by affirmation.

By interpreting 4.022 in the manner described above, we can avoid an apparent inconsistency with the demand of Wittgenstein's at 4.1212 that what can be shown cannot be said. With the interpretation here presented, there is no one fact which is both shown and said at 4.022. The fact shown is the sense (the state of affairs), the fact said is the fact that the shown sense characterizes a possible state of affairs. "It is quite impossible for a proposition to state that it itself is true" (4.442). [I think it is clear that Wittgenstein means "truly state."] The determination of what actual state of affairs does obtain is done by us independently of being shown, and thereby independently of understanding the sense of the proposition.

In comparison to the other possibilities we have seen for interpreting 4.022, the solution given above is most suitable. For example, Stenius argues that 4.022 should be interpreted as: "the proposition describes reality as having the same external structure as the proposition does." However, Stenius apparently slides between his own use of the terms "internal and external structure" and those used by Wittgenstein. For on Stenius' grounds, 4.023 ("a proposition describes reality by its internal properties...") is clearly incompatible with Stenius' own claim that a description compares the external features of the proposition to reality. Moreover Stenius fails to appreciate how "describe" is used in the Tractatus, for if Stenius were correct about 4.022 -- and "describes" is read for "sagt" -- then his interpretation would fail to distinguish what is shown in 4.022 from what is said (described).

A second interpretation, suggested by Wisdom in "Logical Construction," is to claim that 4.022 is mistaken.<sup>1</sup> It is mistaken unless Wittgenstein meant: "and it expresses a fact which mirrors a possible state of affairs." While Wisdom is right in suggesting that we may easily be misled by 4.022, he is serving no good end by

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<sup>1</sup>John Wisdom, "Logical Constructions," Mind, Vol. 40, April 1931, pp. 188-216. Reprinted in Copi and Beard (editors), p. 58n.

rendering the "say" as "express" without revealing how Wittgenstein uses those terms in the Tractatus. Some contrast between say and show is intended by Wittgenstein at 4.022, but with both Stenius and Wisdom that contrast is completely hidden.

I have argued that the fact that a proposition shows its sense presumes that the proposition shows that it is sensible -- it shows itself as a picture. It shows its sense (the state of affairs it depicts) and announces that it is a picture of some specific state of affairs. That it shows itself as a picture of some specific state of affairs is what Wittgenstein means by "a proposition shows how things stand if it is true." Both of these uses of "show" are what we have considered as B uses of "show." Finally, "and it says that they do so stand" should be read as either propositions can say that things so stand, or I can assert that they so stand, and Wittgenstein thinks there's no real difference here. However, it is mistaken to think that is the nature of a sensible proposition to truly say of itself that what it shows does obtain. The truth of a sensible proposition is always to be determined by our comparing it to the actual states of affairs.

Regarding tautologies (or contradictions), where they show themselves as having tautological (or contradictory) form and in doing so show themselves not as



pictures (6.127 and 4.462); we show in the proof in logic how each of these tautological propositions could be produced out of other logical propositions (6.126). We are warned however that the A use of "show" with regard to logical propositions cannot be characteristic of something we do which is identical to what we do when we show (A use) a proposition (with sense) to be true; for: "It is clear from the start that a logical proof of a proposition that has sense and a proof in logic must be two entirely different things" (6.1263). While we are told at 4.022 that "a proposition shows its sense"; it is we who show (an A use of show) "that what the proposition shows itself as a picture of is either true or false of the way things are" (6.1264). This latter case of showing where we show (A use) whether what shows itself (B use) is true or false of the way things are, is a showing which can be said in the Tractatus. Among the items which show themselves but can not be said are the necessary conditions of language. They cannot be said, for to say them would require their being said in a language in which they play no part -- i.e., what Wittgenstein calls an illogical language.<sup>1</sup>

Two final points need to be made in this section. One, in light of the distinctions we made early in this

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<sup>1</sup>L. Wittgenstein, Notes dictated to G. E. Moore in Norway, Appendix II, Notebooks 1914-1916, Oxford, 1961, p. 107.

chapter, we are not obliged to argue that the reflexive uses of "show" in the Tractatus need be shown by any agent to any audience, but we are obliged to maintain that the demonstrative uses of "show" do require agents (save in the one instance we noted on page 92), and in the context of the Tractatus these agents are the users of propositions. Secondly, while we have repeatedly argued that because of the complexity of the showing doctrines in the Tractatus, we are not committed to the position that all of what can be shown cannot be said, nevertheless, we need to reaffirm the view that, for Wittgenstein, there are some cases of showing where what shows itself does not and cannot be said.

### Part III

Wittgenstein considers at 4.124 that "we see the logic of language in the use of language." The only uses Wittgenstein appears to refer to in the Tractatus are two -- the making of assertions with significant propositions, and the role of tautologies in the formal characterization of a notation. Meaningful or significant propositions have sense, and as significant signs they are complete and determinate. Tautologies have no sense (4.461), no significance, but they do not thereby become nonsense (4.4611). The reason Wittgenstein gives for

their having no sense is that they show no possible state of affairs; the reason they are not nonsense is that "they are part of the symbolism." This justification is consistent with the criterion he employs at 5.473, where he asserts that "the proposition is nonsensical because we have failed to make an arbitrary determination, and not because the symbol, in itself, would be illegitimate." Thus there appear to be three levels of assertions (if we may use this term in some neutral way) in the Tractatus: A propositional sign can have sense, be significant, by being used to show a possible state of affairs. A sign may have no sense but still be arbitrarily designated to play some role in a notation and thus not be nonsense. And thirdly, a sign may be nonsense and be neither significant, nor a senseless sign being assigned some role in a notation.

Wittgenstein's argument for his thesis that what shows cannot be said involves at least these four premises:

Premise (i) The truth conditions for every significant proposition can be established (4.1213, 5.4711, 5.4731, 5.524, 6.124).

Premise (ii) No Satz can say something about itself (3.332).

Premise (iii) No components of a Satzzeichen ever



say -- they only name (3.221).<sup>1</sup>

Premise (iv) The theory of types and the subsequent effort at meta-languages is misbegotten, i.e., we do not have a hierarchy of languages in which we can say something significant about some sign.

As these premises go unchallenged in the Tractatus, the following seem to be appropriate inferences.

1) Names show themselves as referring to objects but they cannot say their function.

When something falls under a formal concept as one of its objects, this cannot be expressed by means of a proposition. Instead it is shown in the very sign for this object. (A name shows that it signifies an object, a sign for a number that it signifies a number, etc.) (4.126).

From the premise labeled above as (ii), only Sätze can say, therefore no component (name) of a Satzzeichen can say.

2) The fact that propositions of logic are tautologies shows what must be the necessary conditions for language and the world (6.12). This showing cannot be said either. Because of premises (ii) and (iv) we have no way of saying the necessary conditions of language. I

<sup>1</sup>Wittgenstein makes what we would consider a type-token distinction between "sign" and "symbol."

3.323: In everyday language it very frequently happens that the same word [sign] has different modes of signification, and so belongs to different symbols.

3.321: So one and the same sign (written or spoken etc.) can be common to two different symbols...

However, Wittgenstein only speaks of a sign being used to assert sense, and never a symbol.

can't talk (say them) because there is no language I can use other than the one which exemplifies the logical features in question.

3) The mystical cannot be said by either propositions or by us:

And so it is impossible for there to be propositions of ethics. Propositions can express nothing of what is higher (6.42). It is clear that ethics cannot be put into words. Ethics is transcendental (6.421). It is not how things are in the world that is mystical, but that it exists (6.44). There are indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They make themselves manifest. They are what is mystical (6.522).

The conditions for the significance of the mystical are not specifiable (6.4-6.522). I have said little about these remarks and will continue to do so. The notion of the mystical is one small part of the doctrine of showing, and not vice-versa. It does appear, however, that while the expressions of logic and necessary conditions of language have no sense, they would not count as nonsense; yet the expressions of the mystical are considered by Wittgenstein as nonsense, i.e., they neither present possible states of affairs nor are they assigned some role in a specific notation.

#### Part IV

There appear to be at least two reasons which could be (or have been) given for why Wittgenstein does

wish to suggest there being a sort of showing which cannot, and need not, be said.

One, the category of showing is used to introduce what we might recognize as a synthetic/analytic distinction. This is argued by claiming of any proposition  $p$  that if its sense can be said, then  $p$  is an empirical proposition; while to say " $p$  shows (its form) but does not say anything" is to hold that  $p$  is not empirical but analytic<sup>1</sup> -- it does not have a sense to show. This interpretation would allow Wittgenstein to avoid the possible charges of self-contradiction in the Tractatus (i.e., "he said what can't be said")<sup>2</sup> by claiming that "my propositions are nonsense" (6.54) should be read as "my propositions are not empirical." Nevertheless, this interpretation by itself does not suggest any explication of the complexity and structure of the various showing these we have already discussed.

Two, the case of a showing which prohibits saying (by Sätze or by us) makes unnecessary the introduction of either meta-levels of proposition or indefinables. Both of these alternatives to showing -- which appear to function toward the same end of explaining the communication

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<sup>1</sup>Black, "Wittgenstein's Tractatus," Aristol. Soc. Proc. 1938-1939; p. 50 ff.

<sup>2</sup>Carnap, R., Logical Syntax of Language, New York, 1937, p. 283.



of sensible propositions -- are objectionable to Wittgenstein. First, the meta-levels move obliges you to hold that the scope of the language about whose logic you were offering an analysis was necessarily circumscribed. This position was untenable to the author of the Tractatus, who argues that no language was without the bounds of the logic, which showed in the analysis. The second alternative, using a theory of indefinables, is not directly attacked by Wittgenstein. However, we are reminded quite often that what shows (e.g., the logic of language) is due to a commitment to a convention. There is nothing sacred about the convention. If anyone holding a theory of indefinables took "'x' is indefinable" to mean "'x' has to show no matter what the convention," then Wittgenstein would disagree.

We formulated early in Chapter One the problems that must be reconciled for any adequate discussion of the distinctions between what is said and shown in the Tractatus. We can summarize what has taken place in this chapter by reviewing our responses to the most difficult of those problems.

a) We needed to reconcile the assertion that all propositions show logical form (4.121) with the claim that only some (the sensible) propositions show their sense (4.022 and 4.461), which leads us to assume that two

different kinds of things are being shown.

b) The assertions that a proposition shows its sense (4.022) and that what shows cannot be said (4.1212) must be reconciled with the assertion that the proposition's sense is just what is affirmed or said (4.064).

And c) The assertion that a proposition shows how things stand if it is true and says that they do so stand (4.022) must be reconciled with the assertion that every proposition must already have a sense: it cannot be given a sense by affirmation.

Regarding (a): We have documented in the Tractatus two distinct uses of "show" -- what we have called the A and the B uses. These two uses of "show" reflect a distinction Wittgenstein makes between what and how something is shown. That a proposition shows its logical form is a showing which cannot be said. The assertion shows itself as having the form of either a significant proposition or as having the form of a senseless proposition. In more typical terminology, the synthetic assertion shows itself as the sort of assertion which is about some possible state of affairs; indeed it will show the specific state of affairs; or it shows itself as having the form of a tautology or a contradiction. A proposition does not, nor can it, make a statement (say something) about its own synthetic or analytic

character. But that it is synthetic or analytic is evident in the respect that it shows itself as being one or the other. A synthetic proposition shows its form by both saying and showing something in addition to its form -- it both shows and says something about the way things are or could be. Whereas, a tautology shows its form by showing that it cannot say or show anything else.

Regarding (b): From 4.022 we understand that the Satz shows its sense, it shows itself as a picture of some possible state of affairs. As a Satz (with all that Wittgenstein intends with his doctrine of picturing) it shows its sense. A synthetic proposition also says something, it makes some claim or statement that the world is a certain way. This synthetic proposition or Satz shows the very situation it says obtains. It shows because it is a picture and it says that what it shows does obtain. What the Satz shows is called its sense. The Satz can not truly state that its sense is true; that the sense of a proposition is true or false is said by me (us) after checking the way things actually are: "It is quite impossible for a proposition to state that it itself, is true" (4.442). Wittgenstein's restriction against saying what can be shown (4.1212) does not appear to be inconsistent with our interpretation. As we indicated earlier, what shows is the sense of a Satz, what is being said,



although not necessarily truly said, Wittgenstein claims at 4.022, is that what shows does obtain. Now I would not say that the shown sense does obtain unless, of course, the proposition did show its sense; but I am not saying what does show. To say what shows would be unnecessary. The communication of sensible propositions is accomplished by the showing; any saying of what shows is at least unnecessary. What I or the Satz say is that what shows does actually obtain and if the Satz is true, I or the Satz have truly said that what shows is actual. The purpose of the saying at 4.022 is not to duplicate the showing of sense; the sense is shown, that the sense does obtain is what any sensible proposition says -- it presents itself as though it were true.

Regarding (c): We have given an account of 4.022 which does appear consistent with Wittgenstein's claim at 4.064 that "every proposition must already have a sense." What is meant by "already" suggests that the proposition can not be said to be sensible prior to its showing its sense. We understand that the assertion is sensible by understanding (being shown) its sense, and before we [truly] say that its sense is true:

...I must have determined in what circumstances I call "p" true, and in so doing I determine the sense of the proposition" (4.063).

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CHAPTER IV

The Saying and Showing Theses in the Tractatus:  
A Comparison of My Interpretation  
to that of Other Commentators

The uses to which Wittgenstein puts the doctrines of showing are diverse and important. We should recall that with the doctrines Wittgenstein distinguishes nonsense from tautologies (and contradiction), and both of those from significant propositions. He uses the doctrines to give an adequate account of how it is possible to communicate significant propositions. The position he establishes on how the syntax of language is available to language users can only be understood in terms of the showing theses. The manner in which a significant proposition relates to the world, and the manner in which our thinking relates to both language and reality is interpreted by Wittgenstein as a manner understood in terms of showing and saying. Moreover, the very nature of a logical inference and the character of proof shows, and is understood because it shows.

It seems to me that the showing doctrines provide for Wittgenstein an alternative to a number of philosophical positions he thinks mistaken.

First, there is a difference between tautologies and synthetic propositions. While such a distinction must obtain, certain things often said about the distinction are false. For example, Wittgenstein thought that all of the following are false: "tautologies are propositions"; "tautologies are meaningful"; "the difference between



tautologies and synthetic propositions can be put in terms of conceptual content or intention." What has been held correctly is the historical claim that tautologies do not say anything, whereas synthetic propositions do. The difference between tautologies and synthetic propositions does show and what we are shown is that a ~~tautology~~ only shows its form and in so doing shows itself as empty of significance but not nonsensical. It has nothing to say about the world but it does show a form, a form which can be used to organize synthetic propositions.

Secondly, we can communicate significant propositions; and we can communicate them in the language. I understand what you mean by  $p$  because the sense of  $p$  is shown to me in your using the signs to assert  $p$ . Therefore, it is mistaken to hold a sceptical view which prevents us from establishing that any sensible proposition  $p$  can be communicated. In at least this regard, Wittgenstein denies the possibility of language having only private sense.

It is also a mistake to think that there must be a meta-language in which we assert the sense of proposition  $p$ , or that there must be an "ideal" or indefinable referent for any significant  $p$ . The doctrine of showing replaces any need for the meta-language or the ideal referents, both of which had been common avenues of defending a

non-sceptical position for the public communication of sensible language.

Thirdly, Wittgenstein uses the doctrines of showing to avoid untenable alternatives when he discusses the syntax of language and the nature of logical inference and proof. The formal nature of language can be established once and for all. A formal proof as well as any logical inference can be justified by appeal to a rigorous procedure, the rules of which can be clearly and definitively established. The sceptic is mistaken. The grounds for inference and proof programs are knowable and public; they show themselves. But the view traditionally opposing the sceptic -- the ideal referent view -- is also a mistaken one. While someone holding that position is correct in holding that the syntax of language, the character of a proof, and of logical constants, are knowable and public, he is mistaken in thinking that there must be ideal referents for logical symbols, etc., to account for those features. For the Wittgenstein of the Tractatus there is only "the" language, and the language has a logic which is apparent, which shows itself as having particular characteristics. In the same manner, proofs, inference, number, and logical constants show their character. We must appeal to their obviousness.



Fourth, the showing and saying theses suggest evidence for a case which can be made for the denial of any "content" theory of propositions in the Tractatus.<sup>1</sup> Wittgenstein did not appeal to the showing theses to offer an alternative to such a "content" theory; but several commentators have suggested that the showing theses could provide such an alternative.<sup>2</sup> The alternative involves interpreting Sätze as "activities of asserting..." and not items of content at all. If such a view is correct then it is mistaken to consider a proposition a sort of thing to be compared to the world. Rather a Satz is an activity of asserting with sense by employing certain signs; the asserting involves both a saying and a showing. That is, on their view, Sätze are activities that I perform as a language user. As several have described it: "what we are to analyze is talking sense: and not some thing philosophers have called a proposition."

I must now present some recapitulation. All of the commentators agree with Pitcher that there is no real difference between language saying something and the

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<sup>1</sup>A content theory would hold that a propositional sign had a content (the proposition itself) which was somehow captured in the sign and transferred from one user of the sign to another.

<sup>2</sup>We argue in Chapter II that the textual support for this view was not overwhelming -- but it does have defenders, as both the analyses of Shwayder and Schwyzer testify.



language user saying it. What Pitcher particularly emphasizes, however, is that a Satz says (or we say) only because the Satz shows. And what Pitcher thinks is shown is a state of affairs. What is said is that

the state of affairs shown does obtain.

Pitcher finds in the Tractatean material a means of distinguishing illuminating from non-illuminating nonsense -- the former being characteristic of tautologies in the Tractatus. The charge against Wittgenstein that he is involved in writing nonsense by writing the Tractatus is answered. Yet one of Pitcher's conclusions is that the major part of the showing thesis is untenable. Wittgenstein's position is untenable, argues Pitcher, because he is mistaken in thinking that we cannot say what shows.

My reaction to Pitcher has been mixed. More than with many of the commentators, the position I have developed is consistent with Pitcher's. What is not to be found in Pitcher's analysis is any development of the hints or suggestions he provides for an adequate interpretation of Wittgenstein's ideas about showing. I think Pitcher is wrong in his charge of the untenability of the showing doctrines. He is not at all careful enough with the distinctions to separate the sorts of showing which

can be said from the sorts which can not. Moreover, I think he misses part of what is involved in the Satz's showing, e.g., he neglects the showing of a Satz that it says. Pitcher is right in his reading of the saying of a Satz, and perhaps the only commentator who appreciates this element of the doctrines.

Stenius' primary move is to distinguish two senses of "show": one to be read as "depict," which is a sense of "show" which permits what is shown to be said; and one to be read as "exhibit" which is a sense which does not permit what is shown to be said. A Satz, then, depicts how things are -- it shows and says how things stand. Stenius is right, we argued, in distinguishing at least two different uses of "show." But he misses an important difference between "shown by us" (as language users, etc.) and "shown by the proposition" (independently of any language user), which is, I think, central to explaining why Wittgenstein thought that one sort of showing could not be said. Furthermore Stenius is mistaken regarding just what Wittgenstein meant by the Satz "saying" at 4.022. On Stenius' reading what is shown is also said. But if Stenius is correct then Wittgenstein is involved in an obvious inconsistency with his claim at 4.1212: that what can be shown cannot be said. To avoid such difficulties we have argued that Wittgenstein does not claim that a

Satz says what it shows; rather a Satz says that what it portrays (the state of affairs it shows) does obtain.

This is a proper place, I think, to summarize the justification I have for forcing the reading of 4.022, 4.1212, etc., in the manner described directly above.

At least in some typical cases, agent A intends to communicate something of significance to agent B. Agent A uses the signs of the language in such a manner as to assert p. To agent B, p shows itself as having a certain form -- a sensible form -- which in this case means that p shows that it has a certain set of truth conditions. P is possibly true and possibly false. What is shown by p here is what Wittgenstein calls the sense of p. The sense of p is directly communicated to agent B and by that communication B is told (by the fact of A using p or by p -- it does not seem to matter to Wittgenstein) that what is shown does obtain. However, it is not the nature of a proposition to truly say. Agents A or B could say that p was true after checking the way things are and comparing their findings to what p shows. It would be more accurate to say that A or B could not knowingly say that p is true until they have checked the way things actually are, until they have compared the sense of p -- the truth conditions of some possible state of affairs -- with the



actual state of affairs. The sense of p must be communicable and in accounting for that communication Wittgenstein is denying: (1) the sceptic's charge that no justification is adequate to account for A's communicating sensibly with B; (2) the ideal referent theory's assertion that the only way to justify the communicating of p is to have some referent (ideal referent) designated by p which is appreciated by both agent A and B. And (3) Wittgenstein is denying that p is communicated by being said in some other language or some meta-level of language. Proposition p does not say what it shows because there is no need to claim what is already apparent. There is no argument, however, in the Tractatus, which fully supports the claim that a Satz cannot say its own sense.

On Black's interpretation only a proposition can say, for the saying is part of the sense, part of what is being shown or "presented."

My objection to Black takes the following form:

a) Wittgenstein's account of sense does not permit of "parts," as Black's reading implies; b) if saying were a part of the sense of "p" then Black's reading would violate Wittgenstein's restriction at 4.1212 ("What can be shown cannot be said"); and c) Black is mistaken in his assumption that "darstellt" is always to be understood as "show" in the Tractatus. My central objection has been

with what Black considers the problem of saying and showing. He suggests that the problem is the internal inconsistency of the Tractatus, the inconsistency involved in Wittgenstein's saying (by writing the Tractatus) what he claims cannot be said. I have argued that that internal inconsistency could be generally dissolved if the problem of clarifying and analyzing the various elements of the showing and saying distinctions could be accomplished.

The interpretation provided by Black of a difference between what shows and can be said from what shows and cannot be said was on the basis of different features of the proposition itself. In his terms, what shows and can be said are called "material" features, and what shows and cannot be said are "formal" features. This, it has seemed to me, generally misses the proper emphasis. The reason for the difference is to be found in the showing and not in the features shown. There are two senses of "show," not just two things shown, and what is shown is reflected in the uses of "show."

The interpretation of a Satz in the Tractatus given by Favrholt, Schwyzer and Shwayder is primarily intended to criticize the isomorphism seen by early commentators in the relation established by the Tractatus between language and reality. A Tractatean Satz, for

these anti-isomorphism commentators, is an expressed thought. The expressing is an activity of asserting with some sign. When we express a Satz, or to put it less misleadingly, when we are "Satzing," we are thinking what it is we are asserting. "Satzing" is thinking made manifest in the use of the signs of language.

When we are "Satzing," we are presenting and this presenting includes both an activity of showing and of saying. Schwyzer reads these activities as both being performed by us as language users. In light of our both showing and saying the sense of a Satz, Schwyzer must claim that Wittgenstein's remark at 4.022 ("...the Satz shows what...and says that...") is "disguised." This, we have seen, is an unnecessary, if not mistaken, position.

On Shwayder's reading, the Satz does the showing of sense which I think is the proper interpretation; but he finds no way to reconcile Wittgenstein's remarks at 4.022 and at 4.1212. Regrettably, Shwayder's conclusion at that point is that 4.1212 is simply mistaken.

Shwayder, we have argued, is wrong here; an interpretation which reconciles 4.022 and 4.1212 can be given (our Chapter III and again in our IV). Shwayder is right, I think, in arguing that, for Wittgenstein, logic must characterize the possible relationships between



language (as Wittgenstein restricts language) and reality. This logic must be seen, it must show in our use of fact stating expressions. What we are shown is what is presumed in the language but cannot be said in that language. And the possibility of communicating sensible propositions rests on the showing of the sense of an expression when and as we engage in the activity of verbalizing our thoughts. It seems to me that on these latter issues Shwayder's position is in full agreement with the analysis we have given of the showing and saying theses in the Tractatus.

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CHAPTER V

The Saying and Showing Distinctions

in the Pre-Tractatus Material:

Notes on Logic (1913),

Notes Dictated to G. E. Moore (1914),

Notebooks (1914-1916)

This final chapter is included for the purpose of examining the writings of Wittgenstein prior to the Tractatus. It should be helpful to buttress the analysis and interpretation we have given of the Tractatus by appeal to Wittgenstein's earlier remarks and to his intellectual development. Surprisingly, there has been little commentary on the pre-Tractatean material by any of the well known Wittgenstein scholars. I assume they have the same feelings we have, viz., that until the issues in the Tractatus itself are thoroughly discussed, it would be unclear how to carry out the task of unfolding those ideas in material which is far less developed and complete, and which is, by Wittgenstein's admission, to be considered primarily as working notes.

I propose that since the effort to understand most of the elements of the saying and showing distinctions in the Tractatus has now been undertaken by us, it is possible to give support to our interpretation by making an appeal to the early notes. What we shall find is that the analysis of this early material does produce conclusions that foreshadow the conclusions we summarized in the last chapter.

The material to be examined is this: Notes on Logic (1913); Notes Dictated to G. E. Moore (1914); and



the Notebooks 1914-1916. Our discussion of the last of these will be disproportionately brief judged by the length of the material itself. The reason for our brevity is that the position of these Notebooks on the showing and saying distinctions is much the same as that in the Tractatus. Regarding the showing and saying distinctions alone, there is little change in Wittgenstein's position from 1916 to 1918.

Since we do not want to unnecessarily repeat positions already discussed, the plan here is to indicate the disparities between the early notes and the Tractatus, and to reinforce, if we can, the interpretation we have given of the showing doctrines in the Tractatus.

## Part I

Even a cursory look at the Notes on Logic would remove the feeling that all of the pre-Tractatean writings are a loose collection of notes which show little or no effort by Wittgenstein toward a developed position. Though the comments are brief and often aphoristic, which itself may only indicate how consistent Wittgenstein remained in his style of writing, the Notes of Logic display a careful arrangement of arguments and development of issues. Moreover, Miss Anscombe, the editor of the material, tells us

that there is evidence to support the view that Wittgenstein revised and improved the original notes.<sup>1</sup> In the revised version, translated and appended to Notebooks 1914-1916, we have a clear and reliable expression of Wittgenstein's position prior to the Tractatus. In six sections Wittgenstein considers the following topics: the sense and meaning of a proposition, atomic propositions and indefinables, molecular propositions and their analysis, general propositions, the complexities of symbolism, and the notion of and theory of type distinctions.

There is, I think, no explicit doctrine developed in the Notes on Logic concerning the showing and saying distinctions. However, even though the textual evidence is not very strong, we can infer from the text that Wittgenstein held the following theses:

- 1) Certain matters show themselves:
  - a) Formal elements of the logic of language show -- "That 'or' and 'not,' etc., are not relations in the same sense as 'right' and 'left' is obvious...." (p. 101)
  - b) Names and forms of sensible propositions show themselves as the indefinables of those propositions. "Indefinables are of two sorts: names and forms." (p. 98)

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<sup>1</sup>Notes on Logic, p. 93.



c) The form of a tautology shows itself. "The structure of the proposition must be recognized and then the rest is easy " (p. 96).

d) The division of names by the "poles" of a proposition shows, and in so doing whether it is true or not shows itself. "The sense of a proposition is determined by the two poles true and false. The form of a proposition is like a straight line which divides all points of a plane into right and left " (p. 97).

e) From the truth value of a proposition showing itself, its sense shows, since its sense is its truth value: "I then correlate with each class of poles one of two poles (a and b). The sense of the symbolizing fact thus constructed I cannot define, but I know it " (p. 101).

f) The composition of elementary propositions into molecular ones shows itself and the fact that those molecular propositions are understood by their being compositions of elementary ones is "apriori-likely" (shows itself): "It is apriori likely that the introduction of atomic propositions is fundamental for the understanding of all other kinds of propositions " (p. 100).

2) There are also in the Notes uses of our showing, uses which we consider in Chapter III as A uses of show.

We can show (with an argument) some point:

When we say A judges that, etc., then we have to mention a whole proposition which A judges. It will



not do either to mention only its constituents, or its constituents and form but not in the proper order. This shows that a proposition itself must occur in the statement to the effect that it is judged (N. L., p. 96.),

Only facts can express sense, a class of names cannot. This is easily shown... (N. L., p. 105.).

There is not in the Notes on Logic a clear assertion prohibiting saying what shows; that is, no remark in 1913 resembles the assertion of 4.1212 in the Tractatus. Wittgenstein, however, does make some distinctions which may be interpreted as a prelude to parts of that prohibition.

a) As in the Tractatus, there is apparently no difficulty in our saying what we show, i.e., what we prove or demonstrate.

b) The limits on what we can say are the limits of what is significant; that is, we can not say nonsense (N. L., p. 97). There is no way to say what cannot be said. The implication of this position is that saying involves asserting with sense, i.e., not just mentioning -- for we certainly can mention nonsense ("this table pen-holders the book," N. L. p. 96). It also appears that we cannot say (assert with significance) what lacks sense (e.g., tautologies), although we can and do mention them ("signs of the forms ' $p \vee \bar{p}$ ' are senseless," N. L., p. 100).

c) We find that we cannot say that constants are not tautologies, and that names are not propositions, but

both of these show. The reason, apparently, for our not being able to say these things is that to say them (e.g., "constants are tautologies") is not to say something significant and false; rather it is to say (attempt to say) nonsense, and, as Wittgenstein repeats: "nonsense cannot be said."

In addition, constants show the manner in which forms divide names, but they (the constants) cannot say that manner.

And we say now: for all p's and q's, "p/q" says something indefinable about the sense of those simple propositions which are contained in p and q (N. L., p. 102.).

In this quotation from the Notes on Logic, the second occasion of "say" must be understood as an example where "show" would be the more clear diction had Wittgenstein been as careful in 1913-1914 as he was later in the Tractatus. If it is not translated as a case of show, then there is an obvious inconsistency: "p/q says something indefinable (unsayable)."

d) Concerning the theory of judgment in the Notes we find a thought which articulates part of Wittgenstein's early effort to sharpen his view as to whether or not there are cases of showing which cannot be said. "...A proposition cannot possibly assert of itself that it is true, ...[an] assertion is merely psychological " (N. L., p. 96.).



In summary, the Notes do contain the difference between A and B uses of "show," and suggestions of differences in the uses of "say" which we noticed in the Tractatus. Of course some of the items we listed on pages 141-2 as showing do not show in the Tractatus, but the reason is always that what showed (e.g., "forms as indefinables") had been dropped or altered between 1913 and 1918. Finally, while the prohibition against not saying what shows nor showing what is said does not, as we have remarked, occur with any force in the Notes on Logic, there is one case in the 1913 material of Wittgenstein's saying what could not be said but could only show according to his position in the Tractatus (4.1211). The case is saying what the relation between a fact and its constituents is:

A false theory of relations makes it easily seem as if the relation of fact and constituent were the same as that of fact and fact -- which -- follows -- from -- it. But there is a similarity of the two, expressible thus:  $\phi a \rightarrow \phi \cdot a \cdot a = a$ .<sup>1</sup>

With this exception, then, the position on showing and saying structured in the Notes on Logic does not involve anything inconsistent with the positions we analyzed in the Tractatus.

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<sup>1</sup>Notes on Logic, p. 99. No discussion by Wittgenstein of the symbolism follows his remarks.



## Part II

Not quite a year after the Notes on Logic, Wittgenstein related to Moore a series of comments which show some growth in his analyses of logic and language. These Notes Dictated to G. E. Moore in Norway, April 1914 (known here as Notes to Moore) do not display any serious effort at organization. There is neither a system of topical headings as was the case in the Notes on Logic nor is there any numbering of the remarks so as to indicate their relative significance. However, we can characterize the showing and saying themes of this manuscript. With regard to those topics discussed in the Notes on Logic and which re-occur in the Notes to Moore there is little alteration, though there is interesting elaboration.

Fundamental to the distinction between showing and saying in the Notes to Moore as well as in the Tractatus is the supposition that something can be shown through or in the symbols that cannot be said by those symbols. Indeed, what shows is just what is essential, what cannot help but be the case with both language and the world.

Logical so called propositions show the logical properties of language and therefore of the universe, but say nothing. This means that by merely looking at them you can see these properties; whereas, in a proposition proper, you cannot see what is true by looking at it. It is impossible to say what these properties are because in order to do so, you would need a language, which hadn't got the properties in question, and it is impossible that this should be a

proper language. It is impossible to construct an illogical language. In order that you should have a language which can express or say everything that can be said; this language must have certain properties; and when this is the case, that it has them can no longer be said in that language or any language. Thus language which can express everything mirrors certain properties of the world by these properties which it must have; and logical so-called propositions shew in a systematic way those properties. Every real proposition shews something, besides what it says about the Universe; for, if it has no sense, it can't be used; and if it has a sense it mirrors some logical property of the universe.<sup>1</sup>

The prohibitions against saying what is shown occur more emphatically in the Notes to Moore than they did in the Notes on Logic. For instance, here Wittgenstein argues that the logically essential properties of language show themselves and cannot be said -- cannot be said because there is no language to say them in which the properties in question are not themselves presupposed. On the other side, however, there are "non-essential" properties or characteristics of language which may be (although they need not be) shown, said, or evidently both show and said.

In any ordinary proposition, e.g., "Moore good," this shews and does not say that "Moore" is to the left of "good" and here what is shewn can be said by another proposition. But this only applies to that part of what is shewn which is arbitrary. The logical properties which it shews are not arbitrary and that it has these cannot be said in any propositions.<sup>2</sup>

Even though we cannot say what these essential logical

<sup>1</sup>Notes to Moore, p. 107.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 110.



properties might be; that there are such properties and that they are obvious to anyone looking at the symbols or the world<sup>1</sup> gives us an indication of the restrictions Wittgenstein imposes the nature of language.<sup>2</sup> There is no explication offered, but I presume that Wittgenstein means by "proper language" (c.f. Notes to Moore, p. 107) one within which we could say anything that need be said. The logic of the proper language is the logic of any sayable language. Moreover, any proposition (rather, any "pseudo proposition") which does not comply to the shown grammar or logic of our language is not part of the proper language and is thereby not a proper proposition.<sup>3</sup>

The logic of our language can fix the limits of the language (proper language) as a whole.<sup>4</sup> If language

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<sup>1</sup>"From the fact that I see that one spot is to the left of another, or that one color is darker than another, it seems to follow that it is so...." Notes to Moore, p. 117.

<sup>2</sup>Notes to Moore, p. 107.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. Wittgenstein unfortunately uses "proper" proposition in both the manner noted here and as a synonym for a "real" proposition (Notes to Moore, p. 107). However, a real proposition is what we would call a meaningful non-analytic proposition. What can be fairly claimed is that the use of "proper" here is to indicate the satisfaction of a syntactical requirement -- and both real and analytic propositions will meet that requirement though we must recognize differences with respect to whether or not they both have sense.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 107-108. Whether or not Wittgenstein would include in 1914, as we argued he did in the Tractatus, ordinary language under the purview of "proper"



is fixed, if it is closed, then the whole of it shows its limits. "In order that you should have a language which can express or say everything that can be said, this language must have certain properties; and when this is the case, that it has them can no longer be said in that language or in any language."<sup>1</sup> This is the central force of forbidding the saying of some sorts of showing: we are never in a position to say or assert a theory encompassing all of language. The limits of what can be said must show. And that showing is a paradigm of a showing that cannot be said.<sup>2</sup>

Having now indicated the prohibitive aspects of the early doctrines of saying and showing it is appropriate to turn to the relation of those early doctrines to Wittgenstein's account of sensible propositions, tautologies, and then to his criticism of a theory of types. It need not be repeated here in detail, but it should be evident that Wittgenstein appreciate the same sorts of distinctions between uses of "show" and "say"

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is here in 1914 an open issue. He certainly makes no effort to indicate that he is not discussing ordinary language or "language at large." One is left to assume that he is.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 107

<sup>2</sup>Meta-languages, I presume, are sayable if and only if the language being talked about is not the whole of language but some particular language, e.g., the "language" of algebra, etc. There are no explicit comments on these issues in the 1914 manuscript.

as we noticed in his Notes on Logic. What we, of course, are paying attention to in this part are those items which reflect some change or difference of emphasis in his work on the showing and saying distinctions.

Apparently an overriding distinction to be made in the Notes to Moore is that between logical propositions and real propositions. Real propositions are about the world; they are meaningful only insofar as they are true or false; and their truth or falsity consists in the fact that the proposition relates to reality. To say that a real proposition is meaningful (and all real, not-illogical propositions are meaningful) is to say that it is true (or that it is false).<sup>1</sup> That p is a real proposition, e.g., that p is true or false, is shown by p's showing itself as having a sensible form. But whether p is true or is false does not show from p alone. Real propositions must be compared with reality; they show something about that reality (which can be true or false).

Every real propositions shews something, besides what it says, about the universe...It is obvious that, e.g., with a subject-predicate proposition, if it has any sense at all, you see the form, as soon as you understand the proposition, in spite of not knowing whether it is true or false.<sup>2</sup>

It is helpful to notice that the remark containing the phrase "besides what it says" in the above quote is open

<sup>1</sup>Notes to Moore, p. 112.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 109.



to different readings. I think the intent of Wittgenstein's comment is obvious: the Satz ("real proposition") shows its sense. The issue is, what does it (the Satz) say. One way, not I think the most helpful way, of interpreting the phrase is to argue that Wittgenstein holds that Sätze say something about the universe, i.e., what they say is what they show. While I think this reading may have support in that it is, grammatically, the most apparent reading, it does not seem possible that Wittgenstein could be maintaining a thesis that so clearly violates his newly and emphatically developed prohibition against saying what shows itself. The reading I propose interprets the phrase as referring to the fact that the Satz does say, but it is not to lead us to think that the Satz says what it shows. I think he is reminding us that a Satz does more than show. It does say! But what it says, I argue, is not what it shows. As I have attempted to structure Wittgenstein's thesis in the earlier chapters, the Satz says that things stand in some possible world in the way it shows them as standing. That things do stand (in this world) in just the way the Satz shows them as standing is a matter we determine after we check the world.

Logical propositions and their analysis involve other distinctions. Logical propositions cannot say



anything; but they all show --- and what they show are the logical properties of language and of the universe. All logical propositions, if they are already not clearly so, can be reduced or rendered to either tautologies or contradictions.<sup>1</sup> There is no procedure offered for the derivation of more obvious tautologies from more complicated ones. There would be a difficulty in offering such a procedure since the "prohibitive" force of the showing doctrine forbids the saying of what shows itself. In this case what shows is the relation of atomic to molecular propositions. Even though the logical properties of language (and of the world) can only be shown (we have seen that no language can say what these properties are),<sup>2</sup> language must say everything that can be said. This language, call it "L", which is needed to say all that can be said must itself have certain properties. The properties L must have, to be the language it must be (to say all that can be said), cannot themselves (the properties) be said, in any language. Language L must show certain logical properties and the way they (the properties) are shown is by logical propositions, both tautologies and contradictions, in some systematic manner. This last notion of a systematic manner is quite important.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 111.

<sup>2</sup>See pages 146-147 of this chapter.

Even real propositions show some logical properties; but the value of logical propositions is that they show logical properties systematically. And since they show these properties systematically, some description<sup>1</sup> of the kind of symbols showing these properties can be given.

Thus a language which can express everything mirrors certain properties which it must have; and logical-so-called propositions shew in a systematic way those properties. How, usually, logical propositions do shew these properties is this: We give a certain description of a kind of symbol...<sup>2</sup>

To one sort of description, in terms of the above, we give the title "tautology" (e.g.,  $\phi a \cdot (\phi a \rightarrow \psi a) \rightarrow \psi a$ );<sup>3</sup> its negation would be a contradiction. That these titles apply as they do is purely a matter of arbitrary convention.<sup>4</sup> But what is not arbitrary is that once we have fixed the rules for our descriptive terms then other rules follow in some non-arbitrary way. That these other rules are not arbitrary can be seen, they show themselves (a "B" use of show in the terminology of our Chapter III). Moreover, they can

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<sup>1</sup>Notes to Moore, p. 107. Wittgenstein uses the word "description" but I take it it means primarily something like "necessary role in the language"; i.e., the logical properties show the logical property systematically and when I describe the kind of symbol doing that, I am noting what must be the case with that kind of symbol.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

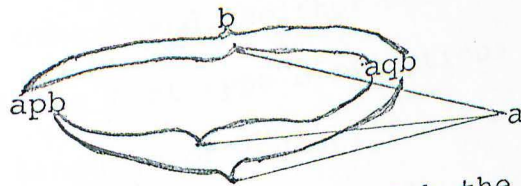
<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 107-108.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 113. "We describe a symbol, and say arbitrarily 'a symbol of this description is a tautology.'"

be seen to follow necessarily.<sup>1</sup> What cannot be done is to demonstrate (or to say) that they follow, one cannot prove that they are not arbitrary.<sup>2</sup>

Logical propositions are forms of proof: they shew that one or more propositions follow from one (or more).<sup>3</sup>

The emphasis on the showing character of propositions is apparently supported by Wittgenstein's discovery of a graphic way to present a proposition (including logical properties) in the "ab" notation. The schema has the same principle as his later truth tables but is done with lines and arrows. For example the logical form of  $p \rightarrow q$  could be shown as:



where a is the truth value "true" and b the truth value "false."<sup>4</sup> In some quite fundamental way, then, the form of this proposition is shown; and Wittgenstein apparently thought that one could see the form even though, since it is a real proposition, one cannot now say whether the

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 116.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 113.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 108.

<sup>4</sup>Tractatus 6.1203. There the "ab" is replaced by "T" and "F."



proposition is true (or false).

The relevance of showing and saying distinctions to "types" can be quickly noted. That there are types does not appear to be questioned by Wittgenstein in 1914. He saw no particular difficulties in asserting that there were type differences between, for example, things, facts, properties, relations, names and forms. Wittgenstein does not consider the related ontological issues, that might interest others, as being within the province of his purpose in this writing. He does not, then, seem to think that the type distinctions he is noting are necessarily metaphysical distinctions between different sorts of things. On the other hand, neither does he expose any argument for holding that type distinctions are purely distinctions of language or logical forms or levels. It is clear that his position is certainly closer to this latter alternative -- but that he cannot say what a type distinction is should not cause us alarm. Type distinctions must be shown --

That M is a thing can't be said; it is nonsense and improper-illogical proposition: but something is shewn by the symbol "M."<sup>1</sup>

We have to say in any symbol of this form what corresponds to "R" in aRb is not a proper name, and the fact that "'R' stands between 'a' and 'b'" expresses a relation. This is what is sought to be expressed by the non-sensical assertion: "symbols

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<sup>1</sup>Notes to Moore, p. 108.

like this are of a certain type." This you can't say...you see the type and therefore also the type of what is symbolized...you can't say anything about the symbol.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, since we are prohibited from saying the type distinction, then those propositions (especially those used by philosophers) in which we do (nonsensically) speak of things, relations, etc., are also unsayable. To avoid the charge of inconsistency Wittgenstein suggests (in a move similar to Russell's reduction of denoting phrases) a manner of analyzing these "improper" propositions into propositions not using terms like "relation", "form", etc.

In the expression  $(\exists y)\phi y$ , one is apt to say this means "There is a thing such that..." But in fact we should say "there is a  $y$ , such that..." the fact that the  $y$  symbolizes expressing what we mean.<sup>2</sup>

And as a second maneuver, Wittgenstein reminds us that while we cannot say "R says the relation between a and b"; that R is between one name and another symbolizes (i.e., shows a is related to b).<sup>3</sup> It is this second move which we saw emphasized in the Tractatus.

Finally, his criticism of any theory of types follows from the above restrictions on what we say. A theory of types, Wittgenstein argues, is impossible for it tries to say something about types, when all that can be said is

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 109-110.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 108.



of symbols which show types. Although we cannot say any theory of types, we can see the relation between types (what Wittgenstein calls "internal relations"). What we see is shown in the symbols which exhibit this type and show the relation of their type to other types. Symbols show such internal relations as identity, entailment, and comparative qualities (e.g., "darker in color than"). As we have argued, those symbols exclusively showing internal relations in some systematic manner are tautologies. That we cannot say a theory of types is no accidental feature of the Notes to Moore. For if we could say such a theory then we would be saying what the relations among types comes to, and to do that is to say the nature of a logical proposition. But to say the nature of a logical proposition is to defy the claim of Wittgenstein's that the logical properties of language must show and cannot be said in any language, not even a meta-language.

The Notes to Moore contain, as we have seen, the following emphases:

a) There are A (or demonstrative) uses of "show" including our showing with proofs, (our showing that such and such follows), and our showing that a sensible proposition p is true or false, by checking p against what is the case. There are also in the 1914 material B (or reflexive) uses of show exemplified by: "the 'formal'



features of a proposition (e.g., the form's arrangement of names) show themselves"; "that a proposition is sensible (real) shows"; "that a proposition is a tautology (or contradiction) shows itself"; and "the sense of a (real) proposition shows itself." All of these later appeared, with the exception of the showing of forms and names, in the Tractatus.

b) Regarding Wittgenstein's discussion of sensible propositions in the Notes to Moore, there is no distinction made between our saying that p is sensible and p saying that it is sensible. What is of additional interest is to notice that in the Notes to Moore Wittgenstein has at least made the initial formulations of his central thesis regarding the saying and showing of Satz found at 4.022 in the Tractatus. Here in the 1914 material as well as in the Tractatus, Wittgenstein contends that what shows is the sense, but he does not claim that what shows is also said. "Every real proposition shews something, besides what it says about the Universe: for if it has no sense it can't be used...."<sup>1</sup> Something is said (by us or the Satz) but what is said is that a possible state of affairs is actual, the possible state of affairs being what the proposition shows. So, on my interpretation, a Wittgensteinian Satz does not say what it shows, because what it shows is a possible state of affairs, whereas what

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 107.

it says is that this possible state of affairs is actual -- not, however, saying that it shows this possible state of affairs.

c) Appearing for the first time in the pre-Tractatus manuscripts is the clear prohibition against saying what shows itself. Logically essential (formal) aspects of language, or a proposition, show but cannot be said, by language or by us. However, a real (significant) proposition can be both shown (A use) and said to be true; for there is no prohibition against both saying and showing what shows in what we have called an A use. These theses are ones which do appear in just this form in the Tractatus.

### Part III

The remarks here will be brief, hardly more than a cataloging of the relevant sections from the 1914-1916 period. Contained in those Notebooks<sup>1</sup> for the Tractatus is Wittgenstein's record of his thinking regarding the analysis of propositions and the relationship of that analysis to the showing doctrines. The novel topics in this material include: the origin of Wittgenstein's development of a picture theory of propositions; the

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<sup>1</sup>M. Black, Notebooks 1914-1916 "A Critical Notice," *Mind*, January 1964, p. 140.



notion of an Urbild as a logical picture; and the full account of a proposition as an expressed (or thought) thought. The issues reoccurring in the Notebooks from the earlier pieces are that a proposition has a reference; the concept of the general form of a proposition; the reductive analysis of propositions to their component simples; and the notion of a complete and formal structure of language. The 1914-1916 Notebooks, however, are sketchy. Often only preludes to some of the Tractatus positions can be found.<sup>1</sup>

Regarding the saying and showing elements in the Notebooks 1914-1916, there is no presentation of any major themes that were not well formed by the time of the 1914 Notes to Moore; nor are there any aspects of the earlier distinctions which are dropped in the Notebooks. What is emphasized in the Notebooks includes: the prohibition against saying what in some cases shows; and the showing of the form of a proposition.

The two sorts of showing we have been

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<sup>1</sup>"On the other hand, there is almost no ontological discussion of the sort that constitutes entries 1 - 2.063 of the Tractatus; Wittgenstein's ideas about the proposition as a logical picture are still far from the elaboration they received in the book; and the same is true about the theory of propositions as truth-functions (4.26 - 4.45, 5.101 - 5.132, etc.). It is clear that Wittgenstein must have done a great deal of work in the period between the writing of these Notebooks and the publication of the final text." M. Black, Notebooks 1914-1916 "A Critical Notice," Mind, January 1964, p. 140.



characterizing are found in the Notebooks. These two varieties of showing occur there as a difference between "shown by language" and "shown by experience":

Then, if everything that needs to be shewn is shewn by the existence of subject-predicate SENTENCES, etc., the task of philosophy is different from what I originally supposed. But if that is not how it is, then what is lacking would have to be shewn by means of some kind of experience, and that I regard as out of the question.

If the existence of the subject-predicate sentence does not show everything needful, then it could surely only be shewn by the existence of some particular fact of that form. And acquaintance with such a fact cannot be essential for logic (p. 4e).

The logical constants signalize the way in which the elementary forms of the proposition represent (p. 22e).

Others more typical of the uses of "show" include:

If we tried to shew it by means of an index to "x", e.g., like this... (p. 18e).

The proposition expresses what I do not know; but what I must know in order to be able to say it at all, I shew in it (p. 18e),

Restrictions prohibiting the saying of all that shows itself are found in the Notebooks in a form that strongly resembles the Tractatus remarks at 4.12 and following.

What can be shewn cannot be said (34e).

What is mirrored in language I cannot use language to express (42e).

An argument which occurs in the Notebooks but nowhere else in the Tractatus literature regarding the prohibition against saying what shows is one directed against the

possibility of saying the necessary conditions for understanding sensible language.

What can be said can only be said by means of a proposition, and so nothing that is necessary for the understanding of all propositions can be said (25e).

His other arguments had adopted the view that without a meta-language (which he thought "illogical," since it would be a language beyond all language) there could be no language in which we could say the necessary conditions for all language. The argument above appears to stress a different line, viz., on the level of sensibly communicating any information about the whole of language I need to say it (sensibly) in a proposition. But the proposition I need to say is one no one can be in a position of sensibly understanding.

It is more than likely that neither this argument (since one may not be convinced that it is impossible to be in a position to understand a sensible proposition about the whole of language) nor the others Wittgenstein presents in the Tractatus firmly support the conclusion that nothing can (significantly) be said about all propositions. But it does not seem that the lack of such a cogent argument is good reason to doubt the plausibility of Wittgenstein's effort to maintain a clear set of distinctions between saying and showing.



In anticipation of the strictness of the distinction made between tautologies and Sätze in the Tractatus. Wittgenstein makes the following remarks in the Notebooks:

The tautology shews what it appears to say, the contradiction shews the opposite of what it appears to say (12e).

The proposition only says something in so far as it is a picture...tautologies say nothing, they are not pictures of situations (8e).

There are no such things as analytic propositions (21e).

All tautologies say the same thing. Namely nothing (58e).

The proposition must show what it is trying to say -- its relation to its reference must be like that of a description to its subject. The logical form of the situation, however cannot be described (20e).

It must show in the proposition itself that it says something and in the tautology that it says nothing (55e).

The interesting suggestion of these and similar remarks is to reiterate a thesis we have found consistently in the Tractatean literature; the sense of a Satz shows, and the Satz itself says, but, as we have argued, it does not say its sense.

The proposition must enable us to see the logical structure of the situation that makes it true or false (15e).

The proposition constructs a world by means of its logical scaffolding and that is why we can actually see in the proposition how everything logical could stand if it were true... (16e).

The sense of the proposition is what it (vorstellt) (19e).



The proposition must shew what it is trying to say. Its relation to its reference must be like that of a description to its subject (20e),

The proposition says: this is how it is and not: that. It presents a possibility and itself conspicuously forms one part of a whole -- whose features it bears -- and from which it stands out. (56e).

Because we are dealing with a series of notes and not an essay developed for publication, there are some difficulties in appreciating any one Wittgensteinian remark. I think this is exemplified in the discussion of whether or not a Satz shows its truth value.

- a) Whether a proposition is true or false is something that has to sich zeigen. We must know in advance how it will sich zeigen (23e).
- b) The proposition must contain (and in this way shew) the possibility of its truth. But not more than the possibility (16e).

The comment we have labeled (a) could be interpreted to mean that the Satz shows itself as true of the way things are, viz., that it bears some mark of being true or being false. Such a reading, however, is altogether too bizarre. What Wittgenstein must mean by sich zeigen is "make itself known" or "show up" in experience. This I think is supported by the next part of the quoted remark, "we know in advance...." What Wittgenstein thinks is apparent is "how to verify it!"

The quotation, then, at (b) seems to give us the

proper key to interpreting Wittgenstein here. A Satz must be contingent. It has a truth value, so it can be said to be possibly true (or possibly false), depending on how we find things in the world. It is this view which we have found in the Tractatus. That a Satz shows its sense is to be understood as a Satz shows a possible state of affairs. That what the Satz shows is true of the way things are is determined by us, after experience. The Satz does show a state of affairs, and it does say that the state of affairs it shows is the case. It is in this way we can understand the meaning of: "sensible propositions say something about the world."

## APPENDIX I

- June 12, 1912: Correspondence with Russell began regarding the character of logical constants.
- September 1913: The Notes on Logic were written.
- October 1913: Wittgenstein wrote a reaction to Russell's reading of the Notes on Logic; the emphasis of the reaction has to do with the analysis of a proposition in terms of "a/b" functions.
- November 1913: Correspondence with Russell occurred with the visual form of analysis of a proposition being emphasized. A proposition shows its truth ("ab") conditions.
- April 1914: Notes Dictated to G. E. Moore were written.
- August 22, 1914: The first entry in Notebooks 1914-1916 listed by the editors.
- January 10, 1917: The date of the last entry in Notebooks given by the editors.



- 1918: Wittgenstein wrote preface to the completed Tractatus.
- August 19, 1919: Wittgenstein corresponded again with Russell. Russell had seen Tractatus manuscript, and a discussion of the character of thought was the center of the correspondence.
- 1921: The first German edition of Tractatus without Russell's "Introduction" appeared in Oswald's Annalen der Naturphilosophie, Leipzig.
- May 1922: The first German and English edition of Tractatus, with Russell's "Introduction" (Ogden and Richards translation), appeared.
- 1961: The second German and English edition (Pears and McGuinness translation) appeared.

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