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FIL 217/317
Wittgenstein Studies

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Today's programme

- Background of the TLP
 - Frege
 - Russell
- What is Wittgenstein trying to do in the TLP?
- Some problems in TLP
 - Saying and showing
 - The limits of language: Sense and nonsense
 - Logic
 - Philosophy

Background

- Engineering, problems of mathematics and its foundations, logic ... Frege and Russell
- Wittgenstein inherits from Frege and Russell the view that logical analysis is fundamental: the analysis of inference (in mathematics, but by extension in any language) presupposes an analysis of the structure of propositions

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Background

- Adequate *syntactic* analysis has priority
- Frege and Russel tried to develop a perspicuous logical notation, a means of representing the logical structure (syntax) of natural language
 - Modern logic as *the* tool for analyzing and understanding language.

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TLP, preface

How far my efforts agree with those of other philosophers I will not decide. Indeed what I have here written makes no claim to novelty in points of detail; and therefore I give no sources, because it is indifferent to me whether what I have thought has already been thought before me by another.

TLP, preface

I will only mention that to the great works of Frege and the writings of my friend Bertrand Russell I owe in large measure the stimulation of my thoughts.

- Gottlob Frege (1848-1925)
 - *Begriffsschrift, eine der arithmetischen nachgebildete Formelsprache des reinen Denkens* (1879)
 - *Die Grundlagen der Arithmetik: eine logisch mathematische Untersuchung über den Begriff der Zahl* (1884)
 - “Funktion und Begriff” (1891)
 - „Über Begriff und Gegenstand“ (1892)
 - “Über Sinn und Bedeutung”(1892)

Stimulation from Frege:

- Frege's logicism and his three principles
- The distinction between Sense and Reference (*Sinn und Bedeutung*)
- The idea of expressions as functions
- The idea of a *Begriffsschrift* as a tool for logical analysis

Frege's logicism

- Mathematics, as well as other forms of "pure thought", must be grounded in logic.
- Logic is strictly universal. It contains its own substantive truths, and also is a canon for all correct inference.
- There is no thought outside of logic (no "illogical" thought), strictly speaking. Cf. *TLP* 5.473

Frege's three principles

"In the enquiry that follows, I have kept to three fundamental principles:

 always to separate sharply the psychological from the logical, the subjective from the objective;

 never to ask for the meaning of a word in isolation, but only in the context of a proposition;

 never to lose sight of the distinction between concept and object."

(In Introduction to *Grundlagen der Arithmetik*)

1. anti-psychologism

- F works in a neo-Kantian tradition, but is strictly opposed to the attempts to assimilate philosophical and psychological questions
 - ‘the extrusion of thoughts from the mind’ (Dummett)
- we can understand thought, i.e. the process of concept formation without appeal to extraneous psychological considerations

2. The context principle

„Nur im Zusammenhang eines Satzes bedeuten Wörter etwas.“

- the basic unit of sense is the proposition/sentence, which is the smallest unit of language which can be used to say/think anything at all.
- The meaningfulness of names and predicates is a matter of the place they occupy in the sentence, and also whether the sentence is true.

2. The context principle

- Asserts that the existence of objects comes down to whether sentences that contain terms referring to them are true.
- Ontological and epistemological questions about what exists, and how, are approached as questions about the truth of sentences.

- When it comes to the question of numbers, it is the linguistic behaviour of numerical expressions together with the truth of the propositions in which they are found that settles the fact that numbers are objects.
- Numbers are *logical objects*, not empirical generalizations, intuited forms, or entities existing in a Platonic world of ideas

The context principle

- Sentences express propositions, thoughts or judgments. It is these that can be true or false, not just the bare signs.
- This is also a leading principle in the TLP, and lies behind, eg., the central distinction between sign and symbol.

3. The distinction between object and concept

- Different parts of the proposition play different roles
- Names (such as 'John', 'the cat', etc) refer to objects, and predicates (such as 'is good', 'was asleep', etc) to concepts.

- Frege uses “name” broadly, It is meant to to apply to any definite singular noun phrase — including both proper names (‘Cicero’, ‘Plato’, ‘Fluffy’, the cat) and definite descriptions (‘the most famous Roman orator’, ‘the teacher of Aristotle’, “my favourite cat”).

Sinn und Bedeutung

- What about the following?
- “The current president of the United States is orange.”
- “The 45th president of the United States is orange.”
- In one respect, they seem to say the same thing, in another respect, not.

- Frege would say that the two sentences have the same reference, but have two different senses.
- They express different thoughts, even though they both pick out the same individual (under current circumstances).

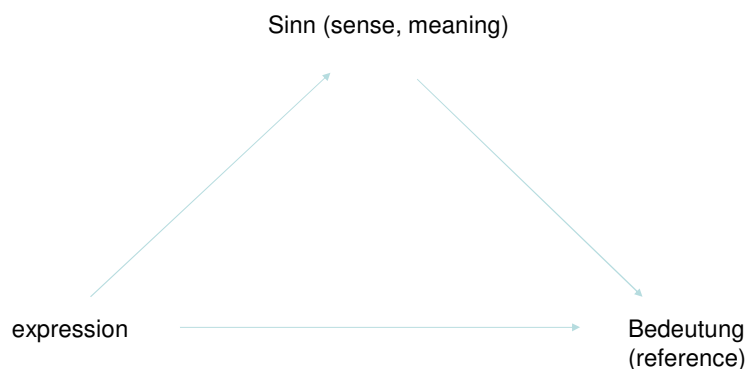
Frege on "Sinn" (sense) and "Bedeutung" (reference)

- Frege distinguishes between "Sinn" and "Bedeutung" of an expression (1892):
 - "Evening Star" and "Morning Star" have the same *Bedeutung* (namely the planet Venus) - but they have different *Sinn*
- (Mostly) equivalent distinctions:
 - Sinn vs. Bedeutung (Frege)
 - Sense vs. Reference (most common translation)
 - Sense vs. Nominatum (in some translations)
 - Bedeutung vs. Referenzgegenstand (standard German philosophical terminology)
 - Sense vs. Meaning (Ogden)
 - Meaning vs. Denotation (Russell)
 - Intension vs. Extension (Carnap)
 - Meaning vs. Reference (Quine)

Frege on "Sinn" (sense) and "Bedeutung" (reference)

- The *Bedeutung* of a name is the object that the expression refers to.
- The *Sinn* of a name is the "mode of presentation" of the referent, or the cognitive content associated with the expression in virtue of which the reference is picked out.

The «semantic triangle»



- “The Morning Star” and “the Evening Star” are two different modes of presenting the same object (the second planet from the sun).
- Thoughts, senses, or modes of presentation generally, are common intellectual property for Frege. Two people can grasp the same thought. The same thought can be expressed by different sentences.

Concepts

- Frege treats concepts as functions
- In arithmetic, complex terms like ‘2²’ and ‘3 + 1’ are formed with the help of ‘incomplete expressions’ such as the squaring function ‘()²’ and the binary addition function ‘()+()’
- Similarly, a statement like “Donald Trump is president of the US” can be analysed into two parts:
‘DT’ and ‘is president of the US’
- The second part is incomplete or «unsaturated»(i.e.contains an «empty place»)
- Only when this empty place is properly filled up, complete sense appears

- A concept is a function from objects to truth-values
- e.g. from Donald Trump to truth (or falsity)
- The principle of bivalence: a proposition takes on either the value “true” or “false”.

Sense and reference (and truth) of sentences

- The sense of a sentence is a thought (proposition) : Nonsensical sentences do not express thoughts
- The reference of a sentence is its truth value (a sentence which is true refers to the True)
- The truth value of a sentence is a function of the references of its parts
- To understand a sentence is to have grasped its truth-conditions
 - i.e. you must understand how the world must be in order for the sentence to be true.

- NB: this means we have to understand a sentence in order to judge its truth value: meaning (sense) comes before truth!

The idea of logical analysis

- The linguistic form of a sentence often disguises the logical form of the proposition it can be used to express (cf. TLP 3.323-3.325; 4.002)
 - “The man saw the boy with the binoculars.”
(syntactical ambiguity)
- Every sentence expressing a thought (proposition) must have a determinate sense. The aim of the analysis is to reveal the logical grammar or syntax of a proposition.

Frege's "Begriffsschrift"

- Hence we need a suitable symbolism that precisely reflects logical structure and eliminates vagueness and ambiguity. Cf. *TLP* 3.325
- Frege calls his devised symbolism a *Begriffsschrift*, or concept script. In devising it (1879), he founded modern logic.
- The aim is to construct a universal, logically ideal language for the analysis and advancement of science and human knowledge (at least in all areas of "pure thinking" – mathematics and the foundations of natural science): "*eine der arithmetischen nachgebildete Formelsprache des reinen Denkens*"

A page from the *Begriffsschrift*

BEGRIFFSSCHRIFT 71

(55) ::
 $d \mid x$
 $c \mid z$

(104).

§ 30.
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(52) ::
 $f(x)$
 $c \mid z$
 $d \mid \frac{x}{\beta} f(x, z)$

(105).

(37) ::
 $a \mid \frac{x}{\beta} f(x, z)$
 $b \mid (z = x)$
 $c \mid \frac{x}{\beta} f(x, z)$

(106).

Whatever follows x in the f -sequence belongs to the f -sequence beginning with x .

(106) ::
 $x \mid z$
 $a \mid \frac{x}{\beta} f(x, z)$

(107).

(102) ::

Frege's notation vs. modern notations

Basic concept	Frege's notation	Modern notations
Judging	$\vdash A, \Vdash A$	$p(A) = 1$ $p(A) = i$
Negation	$\neg A$	$\neg A, \sim A$
Conditional (implication)	$\begin{array}{l} \top \\ \quad \vdash \\ \quad \quad A \\ \quad \quad \vdash \\ \quad \quad \quad B \end{array}$	$B \rightarrow A$ $B \supset A$
Universal quantification	$\forall x \neg F(x)$	$\forall x: F(x)$
Existential quantification	$\exists x \neg \neg F(x)$	$\sim \forall x: \sim F(x)$ $\exists x: F(x)$
Content identity (equivalence/identity)	$A \equiv B$	$A \leftrightarrow B$ $A \equiv B$ $A = B$

Frege's *Begriffsschrift*

- A *Begriffsschrift* should
 - show where one does not say anything (though one thinks one does)
 - show what one actually says (what one actually says may be different from what one thinks that one says)
 - provide a symbolism which permits to say what one wants to say clearly and precisely, and thus helps avoid misunderstandings and renders in a precise way logical distinctions that are blurred in ordinary language

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Frege's *Begriffsschrift*

- A standard example of the functionality of a *Begriffsschrift* regards the use of "is" (TLP 3.323).
 - Cf. "Alois is diligent" vs. "2 times 2 is four" vs. "God is". Through the use of disambiguating logical language the three cases can be distinguished and the "is" can be rendered accordingly in different ways:
 - $P(a)$ (predication)
 - $2 \times 2 = 4$ (sign of equivalence, identity)
 - $\exists(x): G(x)$ (existential quantification)

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Problems with truth and reference of names

- Do proper names ("Alois Pichler") have both sense and reference?
- How to deal with "empty names" ("Pegasus", "Sherlock Holmes")?
- Can there be sense without reference?
 - "The greatest integer"
- What is the relation between names and "definite descriptions" (e.g. "the director of the Wittgenstein archives", "the teacher of Plato", "the current emperor of the USA")?
- Do functional symbols in logic (including connectives, negation, and quantifiers) have sense and reference?

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Problems with truth and reference of sentences

- Truth, reference and sense of sentences
 - Can a sentence be true and still senseless?
 - Can a sentence be senseless and false?
 - Can it be that while parts of a sentence have reference and sense, the whole sentence does not make sense?
 - Can a sentence have sense but no reference?
- TLP attempts to solve these problems

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Stimulation from Russell

- Russell's paradox and the theory of types
- Logical analysis and the problem of descriptions (philosophy as "critique of language", cf. TLP 4.0031)

- Bertrand Russell (1872-1970)
 - *The Principles of Mathematics* (1903)
 - "On Denoting" (1905)
 - *Principia Mathematica* (1910-13) (with A. N. Whitehead)

Differences from Frege:

- a. Ostensive meaning (non-contextual)
- b. More psychologistic
- c. More empiricist
- d. Less universalist in logic in order to avoid Frege's contradiction - Theory of Types(cf. *TLP* 3.331-3.334)

Russell's "theory of types" began with ...

- Frege's definition of "number" in the *Grundlagen der Arithmetik* which presupposes that all classes must be capable of being members of other classes.
- The definition leads to a paradox which Russell points out in 1901: Does "the class of all classes which don't contain themselves as their own elements" contain itself as an element or not?
- Frege was devastated by this, because it means there is a contradiction in his system, and thus the whole idea of building mathematics upon logic is jeopardized
- Russell proposed his "theory of types" as a solution to the paradox

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Other antinomies

- The Barber paradox:
 - The barber is a man in town who shaves those and only those men in town who do not shave themselves. **Who shaves the barber?**
- "This sentence is false"
 - Is it true or false?
- "I am always lying."
 - Always false?

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Russell's solution: A "theory of types" (1908)

To solve the paradox, Russell develops the theory of types / of hierarchy of classes.

- There are principal differences of *type* between
 - (A) Classes of individuals and
 - (B) Classes of classes of individuals
 - The elements of (A) are individuals; the elements of (B) are classes. One must not mix the two and make a class an element of itself.

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Russell's Theory of Descriptions (1905)

- A solution to Frege's problems with names and descriptions
- "The present king of Norway is bald." **True**
- "The present king of France is bald."
 - False or meaningless?
- "The present king of France" looks like it functions as a name in the sentence, but it is really a disguised existential claim.

Result of analysis:

$\exists x(Fx \ \& \ \forall y(Fy \rightarrow x=y) \ \& \ Gx)$

- F: a is a king of France
- G: a is bald

- So now we see that the original sentence is false, with no resort to anything tricky.
- The analysed prop SHOWS us what must be the case if the prop is to be true.

- We also see that the logical form of the proposition is more complex than we might have expected from the “surface” form of the sentence
- 4.0031 All philosophy is "Critique of language" [...]. Russell's merit is to have shown that the apparent logical form of the proposition need not be its real form.

Presuppositions about logical analysis
shared by Frege and Russell (but *not*
by W)

- logic is an essential framework of all thought, a system of maximally general truths (universalist conception of logic)
 - logic is conceived of as a science of objective laws of truth; laws of logic are distinguished from the laws of the special sciences only by their absolute generality

Presuppositions about logical analysis
shared by Frege and Russell (*and* by W)

- it must be possible to give a clear, completely explicit and unambiguous expression to the propositional contents judged true or false (otherwise we are dealing with nonsense)

What is Wittgenstein trying to do in the *Tractatus*?

My *whole* task consists in explaining the nature of the proposition [*Satz*].

(NB p. 39, 22.1.1915)

So a major question in the *Tractatus* is how to distinguish sentences with sense from sentences that are senseless or nonsensical (i.e. do not express thoughts):

Everything that can be thought at all can be thought clearly. Everything that can be said can be said clearly.
(TLP 4.116)

Overview of the TLP

- <http://tractatus.lib.uiowa.edu/map/>

Die Hauptsätze des TLP

1. Die Welt ist alles, was der Fall ist.
2. Was der Fall ist, die Tatsache, ist das Bestehen von Sachverhalten.
3. Das logische Bild der Tatsachen ist der Gedanke.
4. Der Gedanke ist der sinnvolle Satz.
5. Der Satz ist die Wahrheitsfunktion der Elementarsätze.
6. Die allgemeine Form der Wahrheitsfunktion ist: $[p-, \xi-, N(\xi-)]$.
7. Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muss man schweigen.

The main propositions of the TLP (Ogden trans.)

1. The world is everything that is the case.
2. What is the case, the fact, is the existence of atomic facts.
3. The logical picture of the facts is the thought.
4. The thought is the significant proposition.
5. Propositions are truth-functions of elementary propositions. (An elementary proposition is a truth function of itself.)
6. The general form of a truth-function is: $[p-, \xi-, N(\xi-)]$. This is the general form of a proposition.
7. Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent.

- 1 and 2: the «metaphysics» of the TLP
- 3 and 4: The picture theory (isomorphism between language and reality)
- 5: the thesis of truth-functionality
- 6: an algorithm for generating molecular propositions by giving the general form of a truth-function
- 7. Saying and showing. *What can be shown cannot be said.* (4.1212)

The metaphysics of the TLP

1. Die Welt ist alles, was der Fall ist.
The world is everything that is the case.
 2. Was der Fall ist, die Tatsache, ist das Bestehen von Sachverhalten.
What is the case, the fact, is the existence of atomic facts/
states of affairs.
- “Logical atomism”: the world consists of ultimate "facts" (or "atoms") that cannot be broken down any further, and the logical structure of propositions mirrors the structure of reality

The «picture theory»

1. The logical picture of the facts is the thought.
2. The thought is the significant proposition.

There is a structural likeness (isomorphism) between language/logic and the world: language represents the world through logical pictures, meaning we can think and talk about it

The isomorphism between language and world

Language (Sprache)	World (Welt)
complex proposition (zusammengesetzter Satz)	a group of states of affairs (Sachlage?)
elementary proposition (Elementarsatz) [sense]	state of affairs (Sachverhalt)
true elementary proposition (wahrer Elementarsatz) [truth]	fact (Tatsache)
name (einfaches Zeichen, Name) [reference]	simple object (einfacher Gegenstand)

- What are objects (Gegenstände)?
- There are no examples of simple objects in the TLP.
- W is not interested in this issue; for him it is enough to have shown that if language is to be possible objects must exist. Language is (obviously) possible: therefore, there are objects.

What kind of metaphysics is implied by TLP?

- Realist interpretation: the objects are part of reality itself, its simplest parts. The isomorphism between language and reality means that language reflects this reality.
- Idealist interpretation: what counts as the simplest constituent parts of reality is dependent of our system of thought or language. The isomorphism means that our way of representing reality makes it appear as if reality was structured in a certain way.
- Deflationist (quietist) interpretation: in the end, talk of objects is nonsensical. The isomorphism of language and reality cannot and need not be explained by any metaphysical theory.

See Child: 55-60

Saying and Showing

W on the *Tractatus*:

The main point is the theory of what can be expressed (gesagt) by prop[osition]s – i.e. by language – (and, which come to the same, what can be *thought*) and what cannot be expressed by prop[osition]s, but only shown (gezeigt); which, I believe, is the cardinal problem of philosophy.

– Letter to Russell August 18th, 1919.

The truth-functional view of language

- 5. Propositions are truth-functions of elementary propositions. (An elementary proposition is a truth function of itself.)
- 5.101 The truth-functions of every number of elementary propositions can be written in a schema

Truth-tables

Where P, Q, and R are variables ranging over all declarative sentences and the symbol & represents a conjunction operator joining P and Q:

P	Q	P	&	Q
T	T		T	
T	F		F	
F	T		F	
F	F		F	

Truth-Table for Conjunction

In this table, P represents the left conjunct, Q represents the right conjunct, and the formula P & Q represents the conjunction as a whole.

Cf. TLP 4.31, 5.101

- But what about expressions that seem to defy a truth-functional characterization, say ethical propositions like «It is wrong that people are starving in the world», etc.
- According to the TLP, these are not really propositions, but nonsense:
- There can be no ethical propositions (6.42)

In philosophy, we should actually say nothing

- The right method of philosophy would be this: To say nothing except what can be said, *i.e.* the propositions of natural science, *i.e.* something that has nothing to do with philosophy: and then always, when someone else wished to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate to him that he had given no meaning to certain signs in his propositions. This method would be unsatisfying to the other -- he would not have the feeling that we were teaching him philosophy -- but it would be the only strictly correct method.

6. The general form of a truth-function is: $[p-, \xi-, N(\xi-)]$. This is the general form of a proposition.

- Describes an algorithm or a procedure which can generate all other propositions from given elemental propositions.
- Builds upon Scheffers proof that all truth-functions can be obtained out of «not-p and not-q» («nand»)

- W demonstrates this by showing that the concept number is the general form which is common to all numbers.
- The general form of a cardinal number is:
 $[0, \xi, \xi+1]$

7. Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muss man schweigen.

7. Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent.

Saying and Showing

W on the *Tractatus*:

The main point is the theory of what can be expressed (gesagt) by prop[osition]s – i.e. by language – (and, which come to the same, what can be *thought*) and what cannot be expressed by prop[osition]s, but only shown (gezeigt); which, I believe, is the cardinal problem of philosophy.

– Letter to Russell August 18th, 1919.

The preface again...

The book deals with the problems of philosophy and shows, as I believe, that the method of formulating these problems rests on the misunderstanding of the logic of our language. Its whole meaning could be summed up somewhat as follows: What can be said at all can be said clearly; and whereof one cannot speak thereof one must be silent. ... the *truth* of the thoughts communicated here seems to me unassailable and definitive. I am, therefore, of the opinion that the problems have in essentials been finally solved. And if I am not mistaken in this, then the value of this work secondly consists in the fact that it shows how little has been done when these problems have been solved.

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And again...

The book will, therefore, draw a limit to thinking, or rather—not to thinking, but to the expression of thoughts; for, in order to draw a limit to thinking we should have to be able to think both sides of this limit (we should therefore have to be able to think what cannot be thought).

The limit can, therefore, only be drawn in language and what lies on the other side of the limit will be simply nonsense.

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- It follows from section 5 in TLP that «propositions» that are not truth-functional do not have sense (since they cannot picture states of affairs or express thoughts)
- Bipolar propositions are either true or false
- Unipolar propositions are always true (tautologies) or always false (contradictions) and therefore senseless (*sinnlos*)
- Nonsensical (*unsinning*) «propositions» do not have a truth value at all

Nonsensical sentences include:

1. Sentences which contain value concepts: propositions of ethics and aesthetics.
 - Propositions cannot express anything higher (6.42)
 - But even though statements attempting to express something “higher“(ethics, aesthetics, religion) are nonsensical, they still seem to state something important and convey some kind of truth, even though not in logically correct ways. How is this possible? Are there «unsayable truths» we can just gesture at through language?
 - There is indeed the inexpressible. This *shows* itself; it is the mystical. (6.522)
 - W struggles with this tension for instance in the *Lecture on Ethics* (1929).

Nonsensical sentences include:

2. Any proposition that contains a sign without meaning. (TLP #5.4733)

Frege says: Every legitimately constructed proposition must have a sense; and I say: Every possible proposition is legitimately constructed, and if it has no sense this can only be because we have given no *meaning* to some of its constituent parts. (Even if we believe that we have done so.)

"Socrates is identical" says nothing, because we have given *no* meaning to the word "identical" as *adjective*. For when it occurs as the sign of equality it symbolizes in an entirely different way -- the symbolizing relation is another - - therefore the symbol is in the two cases entirely different; the two symbols have the sign in common with one another only by accident.

Saying and showing: sense and nonsense

- Russell: Certain combinations of signs are to be excluded from language as "nonsensical", e.g. "The class of all humans is a human". The explanation / justification for this exclusion is provided for by the theory of types.
- Wittgenstein: Nonsensical combinations *are* already excluded from language, they are not possible. They may occur on the linguistic surface, but if we look at language's deep logical structure, we will see that the nonsensical combinations cannot occur there.

Saying and showing: sense and nonsense

- Thus, to try to exclude certain combinations of signs does not make sense: It amounts to trying to *say* that something is not possible which language (through logic) *shows* itself not to be possible.

5.4733 [...] A *possible* sign must also be able to signify. Everything which is possible in logic is also permitted. ("Socrates is identical" means nothing because there is no property which is called "identical". The proposition is senseless because we have not made some arbitrary determination, not because the symbol is in itself unpermissible.)

What about logic?

Logical properties *show* themselves

Logical so-called propositions *shew* [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.

(Notes dictated to G. E. Moore in Norway, April 1914)

- This means that logical propositions are *tautologies*.
- Tautologies are senseless (sinnlos) «pseudo-propositions», because they can never be false.
- They do not tell us anything about the world, but show us the «scaffolding» (das Gerüst) of our representational system (6.124)

The nature of logic

- Logic tells us nothing about the world and in the end it can only collect tautologies. Tautologies are complex propositions whose truth value is always True; they are really not "propositions" in the proper sense.
 - "It rains or it does not rain"
- Traditional (Aristotelian) «laws of logic», such as the law of excluded middle [$p \vee \sim p$] and the law of contradiction [$\sim (p \ \& \ \sim p)$] can be shown to be tautologies.
- NB this also applies to mathematics, since mathematics is «a method of logic». Thus, equations like $2+2=4$ are tautologies, that do not tell us anything about reality.

6.1 The propositions of logic are tautologies.

6.11 The propositions of logic therefore say nothing. (They are the analytical propositions.)

6.111 Theories which make a proposition of logic appear substantial are always false.

6.112 The correct explanation of logical propositions must give them a peculiar position among all propositions.

6.113 It is the characteristic mark of logical propositions that one can perceive in the symbol alone that they are true; and this fact contains in itself the whole philosophy of logic. And so also it is one of the most important facts that the truth or falsehood of non-logical propositions can not be recognized from the propositions alone.

6.12 The fact that the propositions of logic are tautologies shows the formal—logical—properties of language, of the world.

6.1251 Hence there can *never* be surprises in logic.

6.13 Logic is not a theory but a reflexion of the world.

Logic mirrors the world = there is no «philosophical logic»

But what about philosophy?

As we noted, any proposition that contains a sign without meaning is nonsensical. (TLP 5.4733)

"Socrates is identical" says nothing, because we have given *no* meaning to the word "identical" as *adjective*. For when it occurs as the sign of equality it symbolizes in an entirely different way—the symbolizing relation is another—therefore the symbol is in the two cases entirely different; the two symbols have the sign in common with one another only by accident.

Philosophy is an area where this kind of misunderstanding of the logic of language abounds. Therefore, most of philosophy is simply nonsense (*einfach Unsinn*).

4.003 Most propositions and questions that have been written about philosophical matters, are not false, but nonsensical. Consequently we cannot give any answer to questions of this kind, but can only point out that they are nonsensical. Most of the propositions and questions of philosophers arise from our failure to understand the logic of our language. (They are of the same kind as the question whether the Good is more or less identical than the Beautiful.)

But what about TLP itself?

- Also sentences which contain formal concepts are "*unsinnig*".
 - Examples for formal concepts include "object", "complex", "number" (TLP 4.126ff)
 - TLP 4.1272: *So one cannot say, e.g. "There are objects ..."*
- But the TLP still seems to say a lot about this!

Performative inconsistency?

Russell in his introduction to TLP:

“What causes hesitation is the fact that, after all, Mr. Wittgenstein manages to say a good deal about what cannot be said, thus suggesting to the sceptical reader that possibly there may be some loophole through a hierarchy of languages, or by some other exit.”

W is prepared to bite the bullet

6.54 My propositions are elucidatory [erläutern] in this way: he who understands me finally recognizes them as nonsensical [unsinnig], when he has climbed out through them, on them, over them. (He must so to speak throw away the ladder, after he has climbed up on it.)

He must surmount these propositions; then he sees the world rightly.