

The Topology of Existential Experience: Wittgenstein and Derrida (Between Reality and Construction)

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The sense of the world must lie outside the world. Since everything that happens and in fact, exists, is accidental. What makes them not accidental cannot lie within the world because then it would be accidental, too. (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*)

Tractatus on representation

In *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1918) the structure of sentences – the logical image – represents a situation and is sensible (meaningful), regardless whether the state of affairs takes place in reality or not. Synthesizing the structure of an image and of a situation, Wittgenstein tries to synthesize a possible fact and sense made visible within the image that structuralizes reality:

We create images of facts. (2.1) An image presents a situation within logical space – being and non-being of a state of affairs. (2.11) An image is a model of reality. (2.12) An image is a fact. (2.141) A form of mapping is a possibility that things are in such a relation as the elements of an image are. (2.151) (Wittgenstein 1970)

This is especially crucial: “Each sentence must *already* have a certain sense.” (4.064)

Does not therefore the structure fact-image-fact have *already* to project a certain sense and, at the same time, to be marked by the sense?

Thinking of the sense of a sentence endows the words with the sense: this fundamental thesis of *Tractatus* – although being a representational one – is not, in my opinion, reduced to the structure of logical mapping but it indicates the problem of a *priori* synthesis of being and sense closed within a sentence form as a logical image of reality. If a sentence is an image and the image maps the fact and it is itself a fact and if a sentence is endowed with a certain sense, we should ask: What is the difference between meaningful image-fact and pure fact if “the sense of the world must lie outside the world” (6.41) and “the world is my world” (5.641)? If we treat the sense of a sentence as an image-like interpretation which points at the limits of my world, we can trace in Wittgenstein’s early thought signs of perspectivism where the world (linguistically structuralized) acquires a shape of a horizon of possible description and experience. The problem of the being-sense relation becomes not a logical but an ontological problem, and the limits of the world are the limits of logic in the sense of aprioric grounding of the sense within being and of structuralizing being in terms of a possible sense. The problem of the world structuralization means a problem of experiencing the world which was present in Husserl in *Ideen* and *Cartesian Meditations* and later undertaken by Heidegger and Derrida who radicalized, or drew consequences from Wittgenstein’s interpretationism. From this point of view late Wittgenstein’s philosophy is not a rupture in relation to his early thoughts but it is developing and enriching them with a context. The context in Wittgenstein I treat as an ontic metaphor [Derridean *detour*, deviation].

However, on the other hand, the idea of context, as well as of a possible usage of an image, can be understood as a filling the space of possible meanings about which Wittgenstein speaks in *Tractatus*: an image would be then a fact as a possible event, or a possible discursive space bringing together the individuality of a fact (already endowed with sense since “bare” factuality could not become an element of experience) and the iterability of sense (related to a certain fact since a fact not fulfilled would be “empty”). This relationism of fact and sense temporally (contextually, in a later Wittgensteinian idiom) grounded has a paradoxical character resulting from the fact that the primary fact which cannot exist without a possible sense creates the dialectic of existential fact (Derrida). Thus I propose to treat the sentence, sense and the world relation as metaphor (image) of experience within which the passage between incongruent - *ex definitione* - spaces of reality and language has a status of conceptual transposition, impossible however, without *being* this passage. Moreover, *being* of the transposition – torn apart by factual temporality – can be viewed as spacing that opens up the place for metonymic mediation between objects and their possible meaning.

Meaning, or a dissemination of the figure of identity. In a circle of *Philosophische Untersuchungen*

When in *Logical Investigations* (1900/01) Husserl writes about a possibility of capturing meaning which refers to an object and, at the same time, about a possibility of returning to “things themselves”, he perhaps does not anticipate what 35 years after its publication he puts in question: is it not the case that

in every individual life (...) originally evident life, which on the basis of lived experience creates in its activities originally evident images, very quickly and to a greater extent does not submit to the *illusion of language*? (Husserl 1991: 19)

This linguistic mediation or an impossibility of a direct presentation of what is given places Wittgenstein in *Investigations* also on the level of language itself; the language which not only structurally reforms reality, but also – using analogy and identifying the moments of experience - is something supplementary and thus beyond direct, immediate presentation which would be more that pure living. Then, if meaning is a contextual usage, it is already inscribed within a texture of semantic relations with other usages in other possible contexts:

Can one imagine such a situation: someone for the first time in his life recalls something and says: “Yes, now I know what it means ‘to recall’, how one *feels* this.” – How does he know that this feeling is ‘recalling’? Compare: “Yes, now I know what ‘itching’ means!” (He has experienced electric shock for the first time.) – Does he know it is a recollection because it was caused by something passed by? How, still, does he know what the words ‘something passed by’ mean? The idea of things passed by man acquires thanks to the fact that he recalls something.

And how will he know in the future what feeling a recollection gives? (Wittgenstein 1972: 322)

Contextualism widened beyond the linguistic practice and strictly connected with intentionality puts into question a direct presentation of possibility of a meaning of an expression and it also deprives both categorematic and syncategorematic terms of direct referential function. Nominalization or subjectification of the state of affairs within a sentence makes the status of the interpreted and of the presented act equal: instead of saying: "I feel pain", I can point at "this" making a name out of the act. However, this deicticity of the expression does not make the supposed act present since both empirical and semantic indication are mediated and exposed to certain ontological distance which enables this semantic gesture. Indicating "this" does not name any direct quality, but just has a representative function: semantically mediated. As an ostensive term, "this" means a synthetic form of the state of affairs and their objectified meaning, moreover it has a supplementary function in reference to early possible experience.

Syncategorematic terms – being paradoxical terms in which

synthetic meaning (...) is *founded* on the actually interpretative experience only because it is also *founding* for it; synthetic meaning is an effect of interpretation only because it is also what is a ground for semantic interpretations (Lampert 1995: 121)

would have the character of supplements (Derrida) or a kind of a surplus articulated within experience as a *real construction*. The construction without any center or a final referential point, but meaning a discourse as an event in which genesis of sense is a temporal one and is endowed with the features of mythomorphic discourse: the shape of what it says.

At the same time syncategorematic terms require supplementation with synthetic forms that, paradoxically, have been "*already articulated*" (Lampert, *ibid.*: 107) For example, the conjunction "*and*" cannot be grasped in its meaning without earlier reference to some horizon of semantic possibilities, i.e. without mediation in earlier usage. Thus we can state that the meaning of syncategorematic terms (not susceptible to nominalization) is always dialectically interwoven with the factuality of their being given, about which both Wittgenstein and Derrida speak. Wittgensteinian "*usage*" is a moment mediating a meaning in the factuality of experience and expressed by Derrida as aporetic deferral / delay and difference [*differance*]:

Difference is what makes the movement of signification possible only if each element that is to said to be "*present*", appearing on the stage of presence, is related to something other than itself but it retains the mark of a past element and already lets itself be hollowed out by the mark of its relation to a future element. This trace relates no less to what is called the future than to what is called the past, and it constitutes what is called the present by this very relation to what is not, to what it absolutely is not; that is, not even to a past or future considered as a modified present. In order for it to be, an interval must separate it from what it is not; but the interval that constitutes it in the present must also, and by the same token, divide the present in itself, thus dividing, along with the present, everything that can be conceived on its basis, this is, every being – in particular, for our metaphysical language, the substance or subject. (Derrida 1982: 142-143)

Does the rule of mediation also refer to expressions undergoing nominalization, i.e. categorematic expres-

sions? Obviously, since the moment of using the expression presupposes its placing in a given context that is non-repeatable. Thus, naming does not bring an object to immediate present but presents the object in realms of factual experience:

Had not the whole shape of a sentence been intended, e.g. at the very beginning? Namely, it had already been in my mind before being uttered! If it had been, then – usually – not within another syntactical arrangement. However, here we again create a false image of 'intention', i.e. image of a usage of the word. Intention is placed in a situation, in human habits and institutions. (Wittgenstein 1972: # 337)

What, nevertheless, happens in case of adopting a scholastic rule *suppositio materialis* to which Husserl refers in his analysis of meaning of expressions, according to which every expression, regardless of whether it is categorematic or syncategorematic in its normal meaning, can appear as a name for itself, i.e. it names itself as a certain grammatical phenomenon? When we say "*Snow is a concept of thing*" or "*Snow is downiness*" is a statement, according to Husserl the subjective (re)presentation is not meaning of a given expression but (re)presentation of a statement as such. How then to explain the syncategorema "*to be*" without objective reference, which means without logical analysis of *being*? Is not the directly or – in some languages – silently present verb "*is*" as a copula a semantic supplement that, so to say, mediates within an expression or a proposition? If "*is*" is a concept of a copula in a copular verb, does it not mean only through mediation? Impossibility of direct capture of the designated and alleged concept "*is*" which means a fundamental concept in all discourse denies the possibility of direct access to meaning. Meaning is originarily contextualized and delayed.

What would be then the concept of "*is*" in Wittgenstein's philosophy, if it does not bring any meaning reflecting reality and is always an elementary *function* of every expression and statement either in a direct figure or as an alleged "element without a name" (Derrida)? Where can he place the copular verb taking into account both earlier and later works of Wittgenstein together with a letter and interpretative potentiality of *Investigations*?

In *Notebooks* (1914-1916) we read:

The reality which relates to sense of a sentence cannot be anything but its elements, since we do not know anything else. If reality means something more, it cannot be, nevertheless, named or expressed because in the first case it would be again an element, and in the second case an expression would be a sentence for which there would be the same problem as in the case of the initial sentence. (Wittgenstein 1969: 20.11.14)

If "*to be*" does not mean "*to exist*" but "*to reflect a sentence*" and if giving the essence of the sentence is to give the essence of the world, do we not have here a gesture aiming at synthetical compilation of some statements of *Tractatus*, such as:

1. Every defined sign can be deconstructed by other signs that defines it,
2. What is not expressed in signs, is shown in using them,
3. Logical statements describe the structure of the world and do not represent it,

and the thesis of *Investigations* which refers to a possible meaning of a sign as a sign of a certain activity resulting from its *being* placed in some factuality?

Taking the above statements into consideration we can say that mediation between sign and reality or *signifie* and *signified* replaces the absence of meaning both in case of a nominal or deictic definition and in the world experienced. Therefore the syncategorema "is" cannot define itself but expresses a border space between the empirical and the conceptual. Moreover, if "is" expresses a certain ontological condition and the logical form "S is P" visualizes dependence and contamination of the structural moments, one can adopt the theses of *Tractatus* postulating (logically motivated) sign-oriented reality. The act of representing the content of "is" and the very content of the presentation would relate to reality itself, which allows us to think about Wittgenstein in Derridean terms:

(..) being is not a simple predicate of a being, what more, it is not its subject. The way we treat being – as an essence or existence (as being-such or being-here), or as a copula or foundation of existence, or (deeper and more originarily) as a focus of all those possibilities – does not matter: Being of a being does not belong to the sphere of indication since it is already implied within every indication and makes it possible. It makes possible every synthetic or analytic proposition. It lies beyond a certain description and beyond categories. (Derrida 2004: 230)

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