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Show Me: Tractarian Non-Representationalism

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RESUMEN

En este trabajo defendemos tres tesis entrelazadas. La primera es que la deuda de la semántica tractariana con la de Frege es más profunda de lo que comúnmente se supone. La identificación de una metasemántica inferencialista para, al menos, las oraciones no elementales en el *Tractatus* de Wittgenstein es la segunda. Y de ella se desprende la tercera: que el significado de las expresiones de nivel superior, las constantes lógicas entre ellas, es expresivo. También reconocemos la dificultad de dar una visión semántica coherente de la primera obra de Wittgenstein y, en consecuencia, una visión comprensible del papel de la lógica que se dibuja en ella.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *aserción, constantes lógicas, expresivismo, Frege, inferencia, oración, pensamiento, portador de verdad, sentido, verdad.*

ABSTRACT

We argue in this paper for three intertwined theses. The first one is that the debt of the *Tractarian* semantics with Frege's is deeper than it is commonly assumed. The identification of an inferentialist metasemantics for, at least, non-elementary sentences in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* is the second one. And from it, the third one follows: that the meaning of higher-level expressions, logical constants among them, is expressive. We also acknowledge the difficulty of giving a coherent semantic view of Wittgenstein's first work and, as a consequence, a comprehensible view of the role of logic that it includes.

KEYWORDS: *Assertion, Expressivism, Frege, Inference, Logical Constants, Sense, Sentence, Thought, Truth, Truth-Bearer.*

I. INTERPRETING THE *TRACTATUS*

Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* is, at times, less a system than a kaleidoscope. Its seven-section structure suggests an organic development of much of what has been important in philosophy on a few basic theses, of which the pictorial approach to meaning seems to lie at the ground level. Nevertheless, this suggestion, solid as it is, not always delivers. So far, the *Tractatus* has proved resistant to a univocal and consistent inter-

pretation on which a significant number of scholars agree. After a century of strenuous efforts, it is time to begin to suspect that maybe the ideal of a final interpretation cannot be attained.²

There are too many doubts about what Wittgenstein meant by some of his basic notions: fact, sense, meaning, truth, object, proposition, and others. For all of them, there are apparently clear characterisations in one or several aphorisms, whose content is systematically challenged by either the content of a further one or his letters and pre-Tractarian notes. Wittgenstein himself opens up the booklet with the warning that it is not a textbook and its ‘object would be attained if there were one person who read it with understanding and to whom it afforded pleasure’ [Wittgenstein (1922/2012), p. 9].

As we see it, the contrast between what can be said and what can only be shown offers a thread to be pulled to loosen some of the conceptual knots in the Tractarian view of meaning. If anything, the *Tractatus* shows the limits of a representational approach. These are not limits that Wittgenstein imposes [cfr. Zalabardo (2015), p. 149], but limits that any representationalist view of meaning finds itself in [Anscombe (1963), pp. 79-80]. On top of that, even if representationalism, the genus of which the picture view that has been the standard interpretation of the *Tractatus* is a species, can be seen as the paradigm of a semantic approach to meaning, the *Tractatus* also offers unequivocal hints of a more sophisticated position, pointing out to inferentialist and pragmatist features that apply, at least, to complex sentences and ground the non-representational contribution of some distinguished types of words.

Our aim in this paper is to comment on some of the several varieties of non-representational meaning detectable in the *Tractatus* and to trace connections with more updated proposals that present similarities with Wittgenstein’s hints. We assume that, although there are different categories of what is shown, all of them derive from a unified semantic and pragmatic approach that distinguishes between linguistic items and what can be expressed by them. The affinity with some basic Fregean insights will also be stressed. The received view on the relations between Frege’s and Wittgenstein’s philosophies concludes that they ‘can no more be mixed than oil and water’ [Hacker (2001), p. 219]. It is common to defend that ‘Frege and Wittgenstein (...) have radically different conceptions of meaning’ [Macbeth (2002), p. 203].³ We reject this picture.^{4,5} Again, Wittgenstein is, at this point, our guide: ‘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' [Wittgenstein (1922/2012), p. 10].

We do not intend to give a historically accurate analysis of what Wittgenstein might have had in mind. Such a goal would be hardly reachable, not only because of the difficulties that any such research into the mind of a historic figure inherently presents but also because it is reasonable to think that Wittgenstein did not work out a position that is now waiting to be unfolded as a complete theory. In Cerezo's illuminating classification, our reading is a "developed rendering" from contemporary developments in logic and the philosophy of language, rather than an interpretation *strictu sensu* [Cerezo (2005), pp. 1-10]. Our interest, rather than to reconstrue, is to learn from Wittgenstein's uncommon skills to spot language's more momentous subtleties, as the development of philosophy after him has made perspicuous.

The plan of the paper is as follows. In section II, we propose an analytic apparatus most of whose insights are suggested in the *Tractatus*. In section III, we formulate the four principles that define the picture view. Section IV shows the connections between Frege and Wittgenstein on assertion and inference. Section V analyses the context principle and the principle of inferential individuation. Finally, section VI is devoted to the pragmatics of logical constants.

II. SENTENCES, THOUGHTS, SENSES

The canonical translations of the *Tractatus* into English are due to Odgen, with some support by Ramsey and Wittgenstein, and to Pears and McGuinness. In both translations, the German word 'Satz' is rendered as 'proposition'. Given the use that the philosophy of language has made of the term subsequently, it is advisable to reconsider whether this is still the best option. By 'proposition' we currently understand the content of an assertoric act in which, typically, an indicative sentence is uttered. For the most part of the work, 'sentence' would be a less misleading translation [Morris (2008), p. 144], although it is clearly inadequate for some aphorisms, as we will see shortly. This is not a mere terminological or scholar issue. Far from that, pinpointing the kind of entity named by the Tractarian 'Satz' has a profound philosophical and exegetical interest.

'Satz' occurs for the first time, leaving aside the first footnote, in 2.0122, whose last sentence is translated by Odgen as: 'It is impossible

for words to occur in two different ways, alone and in the proposition'. But propositions, due to their very nature of non-linguistic abstract entities, cannot be made up of words. Something similar happens in 3.1: 'In the proposition the thought is expressed perceptibly through the senses'. In [Frege (1918-9), p. 354], there is an almost word-by-word counterpart of 3.1. Propositions, in the current sense of the notion, are not perceptible; (token) sentences are. What they express, by contrast, is abstract contents that we currently call 'propositions', 'propositional contents', 'what is said' or 'the thought' (in a non-psychological sense). Wittgenstein also favoured the objective, 'logical', character of thought (*Gedanke*) in the *Tractatus* and *Notebooks* [T 3, T 4, T 4.1121; Wittgenstein (1914-16/1962), 10.11.14 and 12.9.16]. Nevertheless, there are other ways in which the term is used. Wittgenstein explicitly mentions, for instance, that a *Gedanke* consists of psychical elements (letter to Russell the 18-8-19). Besides, the term 'thought' occurs in (some English translations of) the *Tractatus* with two different (objective) meanings. One of them is the nominalization of the activity of entertaining propositional contents, i. e. the thinking or *das Denken*, the other refers to the contents entertained, i. e. the thought or *der Gedanke* [Wittgenstein, op. cit., p. 9]. It is the second meaning what interests us here, the meaning that makes thoughts the bearers of truth, as it is clear from the beginning of the work: 'On the other hand the *truth* of the thoughts communicated here seems to me unassailable and definitive' [Wittgenstein, op. cit., p. 10].

Thus, Tractarian semantics begins with a pair of interconnected notions: *sentences*, perceptible entities, and *propositions* or *thoughts*, the imperceptible contents of sentences.

To *sentence* and *thought*, Wittgenstein adds the 'propositional sign' or, as we prefer, the 'sentential sign'. Sentences and sentential signs are linguistic items, whereas thoughts are not. The 'perceptible sign', the 'sentential sign', of a sentence is used as a projection of the possible atomic facts [T 3.11]. It is thus a structure applicable to different configurations of objects. The sentence includes also the projection method, but not what is projected (which would be the sentence's content, or the thought expressed) [T 3.13].

The difference between sentences and sentential signs lies then in that sentences incorporate their 'projective relation to the world' [T 3.12]. In contemporary terminology, we would say that the sentential sign is the sentence, syntactically considered, whereas sentences incorporate their specific semantics.⁶

The three terms, ‘sentence’, ‘sentential sign’ and ‘thought’, still do not exhaust the analytical apparatus of the *Tractatus*. Wittgenstein includes the sense of sentences and sometimes he even talks of the ‘form’ of senses too. Senses are not contained in sentences, but sentences do contain the *form* of their senses, which is the possibility of expressing them [T 3.13]. Wittgenstein’s contrast between the *form of senses* and the *senses* gives us a hint towards the identification of two different senses of ‘sense’ in Tractarian semantics. There are reasons to believe that there could be a third sense of ‘sense’ related to the possibility of sentences of being true and false, although this sense will not interest us here.

As it happens with Frege [see, for instance, Penco (2003)], Wittgenstein seems to be distinguishing between a notion of sense as a property of sentences and a different notion independent of them. A development of ‘sense’ as a property of sentences is what linguists call ‘linguistic meaning’, a notion that bears some similarities with the form of sense, although Wittgenstein did not suggest anything along these specific lines.

The second sense of ‘sense’ is further explained in 3.5 in pragmatist terms that suggest the stance that he will adopt in his later period: ‘The applied, thought, propositional sign, is the thought’. Sentences would then still fall short at expressing thoughts. The expression of thoughts only would happen when sentences are intentionally put to work. The pairs *character* and *content* [Kaplan (1977)], *literal meaning* and *what is said* [Recanati (2003)] and *semantic value* and *content* [Rabern (2017)] are updated versions of the same intuition, which, if we are right, is also suggested in Wittgenstein’s dual use of ‘sense’. The first members of these pairs refer to schematic entities non-semantically evaluable. Only the contextually constituted second pairs are complete thoughts and thus genuine truth bearers.

The general picture would then be the following: sentential signs plus their semantics, i. e. sentences, possess a sense that reflects the sentential structure. When these sentences are intentionally applied, we say that they express a thought that, as we will argue, is neither a linguistic item nor isomorphic with the sentential sign. This thought is essentially either true or false.

The same duality of ‘sense’ occurs in ‘thought’, which is also used to refer to an entity with a specific structure [T 3] and sometimes to the content of different non-isomorphic sentences. Thoughts, contents, senses and what a sentence says are, in this latter sense, what equivalent sentences have in common.

This picture we have outlined is, by no means, clear in the *Tractatus*, possibly because Wittgenstein, as Frege before him, did not have a worked-

out position in which all these elements fit smoothly. Nevertheless, Wittgenstein's extraordinary sensitivity to the subtle complexities of language shows up in all these hints that prefigure positions only refined several decades after his work, in more mature philosophical and linguistic theories.

With this terminological apparatus at hand, we are better equipped to understand the distinction between *what is said* and *what is shown* in its different varieties. A central insight in this regard is that *what is shown* does not define a homogeneous group. But an equally central insight is that the diversity of senses in which we talk about what can only be shown belongs to an organically organised (meta)semantics, even if this is merely suggested. The thread that connects them is the combination of a pictorial semantics for elementary sentences (whatever they might be) together with the inferentialist insights that govern the identification of thoughts.

At least the following categories fall outside of what can be said: (i) ingredients of the sentential sign that do not have counterparts in the thought expressed, or alternatively put, in the state-of-affairs represented, and (ii) information relevant for communication, as for instance sentences' projection methods, that cannot be explicitly represented. In other words, (i) stresses that some information linguistically represented does not belong to what is said. (ii) claims that some conveyed information is essentially non-representable. Terms referred to in (i) can be functions of propositions, such as logical terms, truth and assertion predicates and propositional attitude verbs [see Frápolli and Villanueva (2012), Recanati (2000), p. 30 on 'conneticates'] and also functions of predicables, such as 'right', 'wrong', 'good', and 'bad' [Frápolli (2019), p. 102ff.]. All these kinds of expression are said to possess 'expressive' or 'procedural' meaning, as opposed to conceptual, representational, or descriptive meaning [Frápolli and Villanueva op. cit., Escandell-Vidal et al., op. cit., Carston (2016), Wilson (2011)]. Because they possess different kinds of non-representational meaning, Wittgenstein can claim that logic, ethic, and aesthetics are transcendental.

The implicit kind of communication that defines contemporary pragmatics [Carston (2009)] is pointed out in (ii). Implicit information in the *Tractatus* includes, for instance, the projection method. The exceeding information that converts linguistic senses into truth bearers or, alternatively, allows sentential signs to express thoughts [T 3.5] should be counted here too. Nevertheless, regarding this second kind, the *Tractatus* is silent.

An exhaustive account of these categories in the *Tractatus* would require a book-length document. In what follows, we will only give some

evidence about the expressive kind of meaning proper to the assertion sign and logical constants. We will also insist that the expressive kind of meaning of some terms fits in a general approach to language that outstrips the representationalist approach of the received view and suggests the continuity of Wittgenstein's views in the two periods standardly distinguished in his production.

But before, we will briefly survey the core of Wittgenstein's picture view to provide context for the expressive expansion.

III. THE PICTURE VIEW

Since the picture view has received huge attention, we will not discuss it in detail. Instead, we will only formulate the meta-semantic principle behind it and three Tractarian hypotheses that account for the view.

The story of how Wittgenstein came up with the picture view while reading about a trial of a traffic accident explained with a miniature model is eloquently described in [von Wright (1954), pp. 7-8], and a classical explanation can be found in [Stern (1995), p. 35]. Price provides a similarly self-explanatory metaphor of the core of representationalism with his stickers' matching game [Price (2011), p. 3].

Wittgenstein's endorsement of the representational relation between models/sentences and reality is very strong and responds to the following meta-semantic principle:

(Pict.) *Picturism*: sentences are pictures of reality.

Some further semantic principles develop (Pict.):

(QC.) *Quantitative correspondence*: there is a correlation between the parts of sentences and the parts of states of affairs.

(Isom-F.) *Isomorphism of forms*: the way in which the parts of the sentences are combined depicts a possible combination of elements in reality.

Names, as we will see, refer in the context of sentences and essentially differ from sentences in their way of meaning [T 3.144]. As Cerezo notes, there is a direct influence of Russell in Wittgenstein's account of names [Cerezo (2006), p. 82]. So (QC.) states the dual connection between language and reality: (i) *structural isomorphism*: the elements of pictures (sen-

tences) correspond one to one with the elements of the state-of-affairs; (ii) *reference of names* which ensures that these similar structures are connected to each other. It is crucial to acknowledge that structure is not a third entity between language and reality; it is something that cannot be said but only shown [T 4.1211-4.1212] and does not add a layer to the sense of the sentence.

In order to ensure the independence of sense and truth [T 4.061], Wittgenstein appeals to the notion of possibility; the possibilities of combination of objects in the state-of-affairs must correspond to the possibilities of combination of names in the sentence. This is precisely what (Isom-F.) states.

As we saw in section II, sentences do not contain their senses but the possibility of expressing them. And what we suggested there regarding 3.5, i. e. the essential intervention of an agent, is explicitly stated by Anscombe:

The reason is that the correlations are made by us [...] we do this by using the elements of the [sentence] to stand for the objects whose possible combination we are reproducing in the arrangement of the elements of the sentence [Anscombe, (1963) p. 69].

This outlines the third semantic/pragmatic hypothesis, (Proj.), behind the Tractarian picture view,

(Proj.) *Projection*: by names in sentences, we refer to objects.

Returning to von Wright's story, the miniature model represents the accident because we determine which part of the former corresponds to which part of the latter in the metaphor of projection [Glock (1996) p. 248]. Wittgenstein outlines projection as 'the thinking [*das Denken*] of the sense of sentence'. The thinking of the possibility of combination of its ingredients (names) projects them onto the possibilities of combination of the state-of-affairs depicted (objects).

The picture view establishes the representational essence of any meaningful language: 'Instead of this proposition [*Satz*] has such and such sense, one can say this proposition represents such and such states of affairs' [T 4.031]. All we can say is that objects are related in a certain way [T 4.023, T4.5].

The picture view is a significant part of the semantic story that the *Tractatus* tells, but it is by no means the whole story. Showing this is the aim of the rest of the paper.

IV. ASSERTION AND INFERENCE

The received view assumes that assertion and the judgement sign exemplify one of the most straightforward conflicting points between Frege's and Wittgenstein's approaches to logic [Geach (1976), p. 63, Proops (1997), Macbeth (2002), p. 205]. There is textual evidence that, at least in the surface, Wittgenstein is at this point as far away from Frege as he could be. In 'Notes on Logic', Wittgenstein says: 'There are only unasserted propositions (*Sätze*). Assertion is merely psychological' [Wittgenstein (1913), p. 95]. And in 4.442, we read:

(Frege's assertion sign '⊢' is logically altogether meaningless; in Frege (and in Russell) it only shows that these authors hold as true the propositions marked in this way. '⊢' belongs therefore to the propositions no more than does the number of the proposition. A proposition cannot possibly assert of itself that it is true).

Taking aside (what he thought to be) Frege's view, 4.442 admits a reading in which the distinction saying/showing takes pride of place. The unfolding of the reading requires some further terminological adjustments.

Coffa claims that, in the writings of the authors belonging to the 'semantic tradition', Wittgenstein among them, 'logic' should be understood as 'semantics' [Coffa (1991), p. 64]. We propose a further terminological modification: to understand 'psychological' as non-semantic, i. e. not pertaining to what is said. This terminological and exegetical twist opens up unexpected interpretive options that bring Wittgenstein's views closer to contemporary non-descriptivist positions.

Applied to the judgement stroke together with its argument, i. e. to asserted propositional contents, the pair logical vs. psychological becomes the Fregean distinction between content and force. Under this light, Wittgenstein's point that the assertion sign is 'logically altogether meaningless' reproduces the Fregean thesis that only judgeable contents are relevant for a concept-script. In updated terms, this is to say that the pragmatic aspects of communication are not ingredients of what is said. With these terminological adjustments, *that there are only unasserted proposi-*

tions and that assertion is psychological become the Fregean inspired thought that solely contents and not force possess logical relevance.

This updating of the classical Wittgensteinian terminology might seem to many utterly unwarranted. A closer analysis of some central aphorisms in the *Tractatus* will, nevertheless, add plausibility to our reading.

The most general form of the sentence (*die allgemeine Form des Satzes*) is that ‘such-and-such is the case’ (*Es verhält sich so und so*) [T 4.52]. Wittgenstein explains that this general form is a variable. We would currently say that *such-and-such is the case* is a prosentence, i. e. a sentential variable. Let us now compare [T 4.52] with the explanation given by Frege about the general form of all *Begriffsschrift* sentences:

We can imagine a language in which the proposition [*Satz*] “Archimedes perished at the capture of Syracuse” would be expressed thus: “The violent death of Archimedes at the capture of Syracuse is a fact”. To be sure, one can distinguish between subject and predicate here, too, if one wishes to do so, but the subject contains the whole content, and the predicate serves only to turn the content into a judgment. *Such a language would have only a single predicate for all judgements, namely, “is a fact”*. We see that there cannot be any question here of subject and predicate in the ordinary sense. *Our ideography is a language of this sort, and in it the sign ‘⊢’ is the common predicate for all judgements* [Frege (1879/1967), pp. 12-13].

As Frege says, ‘the subject contains the whole content’. The dual role of ‘is a fact’ is, first, to restore the syntactic category of sentence [Horwich (1998), Frápolli (2013)]. Second, it *indicates* that the proposition to which its grammatical subject refers is asserted, i. e. that the speaker puts it forward as true. No aspect of its meaning consists in contributing a concept to the judgeable content. In this sense, as Wittgenstein saw, ‘Frege’s assertion sign “⊢” is logically altogether meaningless’. Thus, ‘is the case’ and ‘is a fact’ are logico-semantically irrelevant. They have, if one wishes, a mere ‘psychological role’. These predicates are syntactic representations of pragmatic aspects of communication, as it happens with the ‘is true’ [T 6.111].

Besides assertion, there are other central points of contact between Frege’s and Wittgenstein’s views, all of them showing a genuine interest in the pragmatic aspects of language that is hardly compatible with the reductionist kinds of representationalism that the received view attributes to their philosophies. This is not to say that representationalism does not play some role in both authors’ general approaches to language, only that their approaches are richer than is usually conceded.

As Macbeth notes, in the Tractarian universe, inference too has a psychological status [Macbeth (2005), n. 13]. Frege manifests a similar view in *Begriffsschrift*, that ‘there are no new truths in [his] work’ [Frege (1879), p. 6] and implements an expressivist approach to logic and logical constants that Brandom has lately updated [Brandom (1994), pp. 101ff.; Brandom (2000), pp. 57ff.]. Thus, Macbeth attributes to Wittgenstein the same expressive role for logic as Brandom does to Frege. If assertion and inference are psychological activities, ‘psychological’ cannot mean ‘subjective’ or ‘devoid of all interest’. It has to mean something like ‘devoid of representational significance’. Neither assertion nor inference possesses worldly counterparts, none of them is reflected in the states-of-affairs that constitute the world and reality. From this, it follows a specific interpretation of logical words that we will touch upon in the next section.

Because there are no logical facts to be represented and the logic of language, i. e. semantics according to Coffa’s rewording, cannot be expressed in a purely representational vehicle, logic is transcendental [T 6.13]. Transcendental is what cannot be said by purely representational means, i. e. what does not correspond to any ingredient of state-of-affairs. Ethics and aesthetics accompany logic in this characterisation [T 6.42, T 6.421]. The most general laws of science [T 6.35, T 6.36] and the propositions of philosophy [T 4.112], even if some of their truths are ‘unassailable and definitive’, also fall outside the realm of what can be said.

V. SOME FURTHER FREGEAN INSIGHTS

Let us now go back to the difficulties that the *Tractatus* poses to translation. The exegetical complications of the work are well-known and explain the fact that, one hundred years after its publication, we still feel challenged by the magnitude of the task of giving a coherent and reasonable interpretation to it. Inasmuch as the insights Wittgenstein wanted to convey are not entirely clear, a correct translation of the work is also a formidable task. Even so, we have claimed that, considering how the terminology in the philosophy of language has evolved, the contemporary translation of ‘Satz’ should be ‘sentence’ instead of ‘proposition’. Nevertheless, the uniform translation of ‘Satz’ as ‘sentence’ is challenged by the content of some aphorisms. We turn now to this point that is relevant to determine the kind of semantics Wittgenstein could have had in mind.

[T 3.3] reproduces the Fregean context principle: ‘Only the proposition [*Satz*] has sense; only in the context of a proposition has a name meaning’. The context principle, in Wittgenstein and in Frege, is a meta-

semantic claim that applies to linguistic expressions. It is in linguistic expressions where names occur and, according to the principle, only sentences, i. e. a specific kind of linguistic expression, have sense. By contrast, thoughts are not linguistic entities; they do not include names and they do not have a sense, although they are the sense of sentences (in two senses of ‘sense’, the linguistic and the non-linguistic). Now, it is reasonable to defend that compositionality applies to sentences but not to propositional contents, which can be expressed by different sentences with different structures [Frege (1918-9) *passim.*, Lewis (1980), p. 82 and p. 95, Pérez-Navarro (2020)]. Contents, the thoughts expressed by sentences when they are intentionally applied, are individuated following an inferential strategy whose expression challenges our translation suggestion for ‘Satz’. [T 5.141] says: ‘If p follows from q and q from p then they are one and the same proposition [*Satz*]’. This is an explicit inferentialist principle for whose formulation the translation of ‘Satz’ by ‘sentence’ would be inappropriate. Two equivalent sentences, sentences with the structures ‘ $p \vee q$ ’ and ‘ $\neg (\neg p \ \& \ \neg q)$ ’, for instance, can express the same thought and be nonetheless different sentences.

The inferential strategy represented by [T 5.141] has consequences for the scope of a picture view for sentences. If two different but equivalent sentences express a unique proposition, this opens the door to the possibility that not every ingredient of the sentences involved has an identifiable counterpart in the proposition that both share as their content. In Frege’s writings, the scope of an inferential individuation covers elementary [*Begriffsschrift* §3] and complex sentences, as in [Frege (1918-9b) and (1923-6)].

In the *Tractatus*, variables p and q in 5. 141 could, in principle, be sentences of any kind. In fact, they are used in 4. 24 as variables for elementary sentences. Nevertheless, Wittgenstein claims that nothing follows from the existence of a particular atomic fact [T 2.061, T 2.062] and the same goes for the elementary sentences describing them [T 5.134]. To maintain consistency, we will assume that p and q in 5.141 represent complex sentences. If this is so, the *Tractatus* offers two different metasemantics, one for atomic sentences and a different one for sentences that include higher-level terms such as those mentioned in our explanation of (i). Were this charitable option rejected, [T 5.141] would imply an inferentialist meta-semantics all the way through and an explicit rejection of the picture view. This option would also be incompatible with the logical independence of elementary sentences. At this point, we prefer to resolve in favour of the first option and maintain consistency as much as possible.

VI. LOGICAL EXPRESSIVISM

Logical expressivism comes as a consequence of a non-representational (meta)semantics for complex sentences. As we have seen, Wittgenstein favoured inferentialism, a kind of non-representationalism, about propositional individuation. On top of that, he defended non-representationalism related to different linguistic categories, logical constants among them. In 4.0312, he states what he thinks is his ‘fundamental thought’, that “‘logical constants’ do not represent’. This is the negative thesis of logical expressivism. In different aphorisms, Wittgenstein applies the negative thesis to particular logical constants. Negation, for instance, ‘corresponds to nothing in reality’ [T 4.0621], and therefore, even if they ‘have opposite senses’, ‘one and the same reality’ corresponds to ‘p’ and ‘~p’ [T 4.0621]. At the same time, he affirms that negation is not a ‘characteristic’ of their senses, and that ‘p’ and ‘~p’ *can* say the same thing’. If they say the same thing having opposite senses, their sense is not what is said by them. Frege, by the same time, suggests a similar approach:

[I]t is by no means easy to state what is a negative judgement (thought). Consider the sentences ‘Christ is immortal’, ‘Christ lives forever’, ‘Christ is not immortal’, ‘Christ is mortal’, ‘Christ does not live forever’. Now which of the thoughts we have here is affirmative, which negative? [Frege (1918-9b), p. 380].

Judgements, thoughts and what is said are neither negative nor affirmative but can be represented in sentences with a negative or positive particle. What happens with negation points again towards the distinction between the two notions of ‘sense’ mentioned in section II.

Conjunction does not have any representational role, as stated in 5.1241. This is a characteristic that contemporary linguists have systematically acknowledged [Carston (2002), chapter three]. The special status of disjunction and conditional is stated in 5.42 — ‘they are not relations in the sense of right and left’.

The negative thesis of logical expressivism is complemented by several positive theses. A positive counterpart of 4.0312 occurs in 5.2341, ‘[d]enial, logical addition, logical multiplication etc., etc. are operations’. According to relevance theory, operations are what terms with ‘procedural’ meaning express. Relevance theorists oppose procedural to conceptual and apply this kind of meaning to discourse markers such as ‘moreover’, ‘after all’, ‘so’, ‘but’, ‘however’, etc., a general category to which logical constants also belong [Escandell-Vidal et al., op. cit., Wilson, op. cit.].

An alternative positive thesis related to the meaning of logical constants comes up in 5.4611, where logical terms are equated with punctuation marks. In previous aphorisms, Wittgenstein explains the role of brackets as auxiliary signs not belonging to the proposition. Logical constants would then also be auxiliary signs that delimit sentences without being part of what is said by them. The suggestion has been taken up more recently in [Došen (1989)] in the context of proof theory.

The third positive thesis is logical expressivism proper, whose central tenet is that logical constants make explicit what is implicit in inferential practices. From this, it follows that there are no logical facts. The Tractarian version says ‘that we can get on without logical propositions’ [T 6.122] since we see what follows from the propositions themselves [T 6.1221]. Logical relations are thus grounded in the inner nature of propositions [Frege (1879), p. 5]. This idea reappears in Brandom’s expressivism, which adds an explicit normative explanation according to which logical relations display the subject’s previous commitments [Brandom (1994), pp. 67ff., Brandom (2000), p. 56ff.]. These three positive elaborations of the negative thesis do not need to be equivalent, but all of them imply a non-representational approach to meaning.

We began this paper casting doubts about the possibility of a unified and articulated semantic theory behind the Tractarian aphorisms. We will insist on this idea for the case of the view of logic that Wittgenstein might have had in mind. His observations on the role of logical constants, the function of assertion and inference, and the kind of entities that sentences and state-of-affairs are, suggest that atomism about elementary facts and sentences has a difficult coexistence with logical expressivism.

If propositional signs, sentences, and pictures are facts [T 2.141, T 3.14, T 3.142], if elementary facts are independent of each other [T 5.134] and, at the same time, there is no role for logical propositions [T 6.122] because logical connections can be seen in the propositions themselves [T 6.1221, T 6.1265], there is no ground left for inferences to be triggered.

Logical expressivism is the view that logical terms make the logical relations between propositions explicit. If elementary propositions are independent, nothing can be made explicit by the use of logical constants. To be consistent then the independence of elementary sentences should be removed from the picture.

Wittgenstein was aware of some difficulties derived from the independence of elementary propositions. In *Some remarks on logical form* [Wittgenstein (1929), p. 168], he explicitly denies this doctrine and acknowledges that there are exclusion relations (incompatibility) between elementary proposi-

tions: ‘The mutual exclusion of unanalyzable statements of degree contradicts an opinion which was published by me several years ago and which necessitated that atomic propositions could not exclude one another’. In his return to philosophy, he insists on his rejection: ‘If I say for example, that this or that point in the visual field is blue, then I know not merely that, but also that this point is not green, nor red, nor yellow, etc. (...) All this I did not yet know when I was writing my book (...) At that time I had not yet seen that an inference can also have the form: This man is 2m tall, therefore he is not 3m tall’ [Waismann (1979), p. 64]. Our argument regarding the impossibility for inferences to get started in a semantic context that includes logical expressivism and sentential atomism only adds a further reason to support Wittgenstein’s own change of mind.

Let us now say a few words by way of conclusion. The analytical apparatus that we have superposed on the *Tractatus* finds exegetic support in Wittgenstein’s own words, although he did not have a detailed view in which it could enter to render a coherent picture. Only several decades after the *Tractatus* did these vague insights encounter precise formulation in pragmatist approaches to the philosophy of language. To Wittgenstein’s credit, we count his capability to envisage sophisticated notions that, by no means, were common at the time. To the Tractarian debit, we count the absence of a consistent picture. That representationalism, whose lack of explanatory power is revealed as soon as one sets oneself into the task of working out its details, had such an influence in one of the greatest minds of the century or, at least, in his first interpreters is a warning and an invitation to be vigilant.

Going back to the beginning, we do not claim a place among those who have understood this masterpiece of the philosophy of the twentieth century, even if our dedicated attempts to unravel it have imprinted forever our way of doing philosophy. Nevertheless, we proudly declare to be among those ‘to whom it afforded pleasure’ [Wittgenstein (1922/2012), p. 9]. May it continue to make philosophers happy over the next one hundred years.

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NOTES

¹ The names of the authors are in alphabetical order.

² Classical and contemporary scholars have pointed out the existence of internal tensions among Wittgensteinian remarks on different topics [see Ramsey (1923), Biletzki (2003), p. 100, Cerezo (2005), pp. 27-29].

³ For an updated discussion of the relation between Frege's and Wittgenstein's see [Reck (2002)], where most contributors stress the alleged irreconcilable differences in the views of the two most influential philosophers in the analytic tradition.

⁴ Wischin (2019) also challenges the received view, although the focus is mainly placed on the influence of Frege's philosophy on the later Wittgenstein. Regarding the specific issue of the distinction between saying and showing in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, we share Geach's position that Frege's influence was overwhelming in the Tractarian view [Geach (1976)].

⁵ The detection of the similarities would also require a reinterpretation of Frege's views, but this is not the aim of the present paper. This task is undertaken in [Frápolli (*forthcoming*)].

⁶ Despite our interest in taking profit from Wittgenstein's insights for more contemporary discussions, we do not forget that neither Tractarian *Sätze* are ordinary sentences nor Tractarian *Sachverhalten* are ordinary facts. Sentences, objects, and state-of-affairs are theoretical items of which Wittgenstein never offers an example.

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Wittgenstein on Logic as the Method of Philosophy

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