

Wittgenstein and capturing a logical form

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Wittgenstein on logic

- As virtually with everything in Wittgenstein, it is difficult to say that he defended a specific thesis on logic
- Nevertheless, I would like to examine what he says about logic explicitly and extrapolate something that he might have implied about it
- My aim is to show that Wittgenstein can still provide valuable insights into the nature of logic and also into logical form

From the Tractatus - 4.12

- Der Satz kann die gesamte Wirklichkeit darstellen, aber er kann nicht das darstellen, was er mit der Wirklichkeit gemein haben muss, um sie darstellen zu können - die logische Form. Um die logische Form darstellen zu können, müssten wir uns mit dem Satze ausserhalb der Logik aufstellen, das heisst ausserhalb der Welt.
- Propositions can represent the whole reality, but they cannot represent what they must have in common with reality in order to be able to represent it - the logical form. To be able to represent the logical form, we should have to be able to put ourselves with the propositions outside logic, that is outside the world.

How to understand it?

- Logic seems to be inexpressible for Wittgenstein
- He does not give many explicit reasons for it
- It is on par with ethics, aesthetics, religion and philosophical doctrines such as solipsism
- There might be the temptation to regard this just as an aberration of his young years

Contemporary attitude

- Logicians typically seem to think that they can express the laws of our logical reasoning
- Due to the vast number of logics, they would be inclined to say that in various contexts, different logics may apply
- Then there is only more to be expressed

The early vs. the later Wittgenstein

- As it certainly is not arbitrary or illegitimate, the distinction certainly has its limits
- Maybe not completely, but to some degree it is arbitrary
- There are some obvious common motifs between the two Wittgensteins
- And we can attend also to the transition period to understand their connections

Here comes Moritz Schlick

- In the thirties Wittgenstein had many discussions with Moritz Schlick and his student Friedrich Waismann
- Being a member of Vienna circle, it might be difficult to discern the specifics of his philosophy
- I focus on his philosophy of game and playing
- He presents it in more articles, particularly in *Vom Sinne des Lebens* the topic was central for him since his early writings

Schlick on playing

- For Schlick, games are activities which have their purpose in themselves
- Other activities are done for something else, which we typically expect in future, e.g., we work to earn money
- Playing is for Schlick therefore the very meaning of life, the center of our existence
- What happens to games in Wittgenstein?

Games and language games

- Wittgenstein is known for making the notion of a language game central in his later work
- Language games seem to be a quite fundamental notion for his philosophy of language and its rules
- The scope of phenomena seems to include mathematics and logic
- Logic is in his view a linguistic activity guided by our rules

Games in general

- Wittgenstein notes that we understand what games are
- Nevertheless, this does not mean that we can provide a satisfactory definition of what a game is
- The phenomena are too variegated - reaching from chess, through football to just throwing ball without very specific rules
- Wittgenstein seems to use the notion of a game for illustration of how it is with all notions in general

Why games?

- Would something go lost had Wittgenstien chosen a different notion as an example?
- Wittgenstein wanted to highlight some features of concepts
- The concept of game seems to wear these features on its sleeves more than others
- These characteristics are in particular its lack of foundation or justification - it justifies itself, has its purpose in itself
- Games enable also the free flourishing of our creativity - they do not correspond to anything, cannot be correct or wrong

Foundations of language games

- Wittgenstein was particularly interested in those layers of language which did not admit of justification
- This is because they enable the language games we play, in particular also argumentation
- By being playful games, they cannot be really correct
- They even lack a specific shape which could be captured

Expressing logic

- Since Frege and particularly Russell, logic has the ambition to capture the logical forms of our statements
- A logical form is contrasted with the grammatical form
- While the grammar is the surface, logic is supposed to penetrate into the hidden depths
- This is exactly what Wittgenstein refuses
- It is typical for playing that it dismisses the boundary between semblance and reality

Certainty

- In his last work *On certainty* Wittgenstein examines the character of particularly certain sentences
- These work as rulers or measuring instruments - they cannot be meaningfully measured
- This is why expressing them fails - by being expressed, they lose their meaning
- The sentences of logic can be seen to have this status
- One can then recur to the *Tractatus* and maintain that what they purport to express can be merely shown and not said

Summary

- There does not seem to be a clear reason to suppose that Wittgenstein has modified his view of logic
- His position is a challenge for the formal logic
- Logicians, in his view, try to express what cannot be meaningfully expressed
- The plurality of logics thus appears rather as a symptom of the impossibility to fulfil its goal rather than a sign of great success and richness