Let us begin by remembering the most central doctrine of the *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*.

Objects—which are simples—combine into elementary situations. The kind of way they hang together in such a situation is its *Structure*. *Form* is the possibility of the structure. Not all possible structures are actual: one that is actual is an 'elementary fact'. We form pictures of facts, of possible facts indeed, but some of them are actual too. A picture consists in *its* elements combining in a particular kind of way. Their doing so presents the objects named by them as combined in just that way. The combination of the elements of the picture—the presenting combination—is called *its* structure and its possibility the form of representation of the picture.

This 'form of representation' is the possibility that things are combined as are the elements of the picture.

Note, then, that the possibility of the structure of a picture is
the possibility that the objects to which its elements correspond are combined as are the elements of the picture.

This resolves a problem apparently raised by the 'isomorphism' of the Tractatus. Propositions are pictures. If this means that there is a projective relation between propositions and possible or actual facts, must not the fact presented by a proposition, if it is actual, be as much a picture of the proposition as the proposition is of it? Projective relations can be seen as going in both directions. So isn't the reality as much a picture of a possible proposition—which, if actual, is itself also a fact—as it is of the reality? The answer to this objection is that the elements of a proposition (completely analysed) are names. So if the reality represented by a true proposition were a picture of that proposition, the simple objects of which it was composed would have to stand for names. That some object is a name is not to be seen by looking at the object—the mark on paper or the bit of furniture or whatever is doing duty as a name. You have to understand the configuration of those objects as a logical configuration of names in order to understand it as a proposition. I don't mean that every picture is a proposition, its form of representation may be spatial and it a picture of a spatial arrangement somewhere; or temporal and a picture of a temporal arrangement. But every picture, according to the Tractatus, is at any rate also a logical picture and propositions are only logical pictures. This is so even though they represent by means of a spatial arrangement. A representation by a spatial arrangement—like a musical score—can be a representation of something temporal i.e. of a succession of sounds. Here the 'form of representation' is not the spatial form, because it isn't a representation of anything spatial; there is no form of representation in question except the logical form.

I have set forth the doctrine of the Tractatus to be found in numbers 2 to 2.22, in order to bring out Wittgenstein's solution to the ancient problem of the connexion between language or thought and reality. Thoughts (we learn from a letter to Rus-
sell) consist ultimately of elements, just as propositions consist ultimately of simple names: these are sprinkled on a logical network—so Wittgenstein described his earlier doctrine in a later notebook. The ancient problem is solved by the thesis of the identity of the possibility of the structure of a proposition and the possibility of the structure of a fact.

We can derive from this the astonishing thesis that the structure of reality within the world is logical structure. See 2.18. “What any picture, of whatever form, must have in common with reality in order to be able to represent it truly or falsely, is the logical form, that is, the form of the reality.”

What I have set forth is enough to explain, or at least to adumbrate, the Tractatus doctrines about tautology and contradiction, about propositions of logic and proofs of them, about psychological propositions and, finally, about ethics and the mystical. Before approaching this last, I will call attention to number 4.221: “It is obvious”, Wittgenstein says, “that in analysing propositions we must come to elementary propositions which consist of names in immediate combination”. He goes on: “The question arises here, how the propositional connexion comes to be”.

To this question, which obviously does arise, Wittgenstein offers no hint at all of an answer. I assume he could not think of anything worthwhile to say about it. He had already said at 3.3 “Only a proposition has sense, only in the context of a proposition does a name have meaning”. (By “meaning” he means what Russell meant, and what Frege meant by “Bedeutung”, namely, the object a word stands for.) Then the question he speaks of at 4.221 would not be how names—already there—get connected into propositions, but how names—connected into propositions as they must be—come into existence at all. This is a question about the origin of language, which knowledgeable intelligent people have banned as a topic of investigation. Wittgenstein once said to me “Why shouldn’t men have been created ploughing and sowing?”. It would seem to me
difficult to give any reason why not. And equally if you add speaking to the list. Upon the whole, then, I commend Wittgenstein for not offering any suggestion of an answer to the question "how did the SatzVerband come about?".

However, for the moment I have a further purpose in reminding you of the doctrine of the Tractatus that the things that are the case, the facts, whatever they might be, have logical structure. Lots of people, including myself at one time, would protest that logical structure and logical connections are features of the linguistic and of thought about this-and-that-being-the-case. We know from a letter of Wittgenstein to Bertrand Russell shortly after the end of the 'Great War', that he was sure that such thoughts must be composed of elements just as in the end a fully analysed proposition would turn out to consist of simple names in a logical pattern: he did not know, he said, what elements thoughts were composed of—it would be the business of psychology to find that out. Here he displayed a naïf belief in experimental psychology as one of the natural sciences which he certainly did not retain—remember what he says in what we put as the last fragment of Part II of the Philosophische Untersuchungen (for it was a loose sheet in the MS. of that writing). There he characterised the foundations of mathematics, or set theory, as methods of proof together with conceptual confusion; and experimental psychology as experimental methods also together with conceptual confusion. But in 1919 and in the Tractatus itself, he manifested a sort of belief in experimental psychology as a natural science: "Philosophy is no closer to psychology", he said than to any other natural science, and indeed after that: "Theory of knowledge is philosophy of psychology". The latter observation is indeed a valuable one, if we take it as meaning, not anything about experimental psychology as a natural science (as Wittgenstein intended the phrase there) but as about what we call psychological matters, e.g. the mind and its acts: belief, guessing, hoping, trying; and also will and the emotions. That theory of knowledge is part of philosophy of
psychology in this sense has some truth in it, except for this, that 'to know' is not a psychological verb, even though it has some of the aspects of a psychological verb. It is, I think, much to the credit of Descartes that he did not count either knowing or remembering among what he called cogitationes, though the empiricist side of the watershed that he caused did in effect think that about knowledge and memory.

However, back to my purpose: the Tractatus's conceptions of propositions and facts and the world exclude from being possible propositions any sentences about what Wittgenstein called "the ethical" or anything religious. This immediately follows from the character of significant propositions as being propositions that can be true or false: tautology and contradiction are not 'significant propositions' because, as can be seen in a truth table, one, e. g. \( p \lor \sim p \) excludes no possible truth-values of its arguments, and the other, e. g. \( p \& \sim p \) excludes all of them. Neither therefore can determine anything as being so, with other things not so. Further, this is supposed to be a proper account of logical necessity and impossibility, and there is no other kind of necessity or impossibility. Significant propositions, when true, are merely a matter of this and that being the case and they are all on a par —'gleichwertig'. We learn from Wittgenstein's later "Lecture on Ethics" circa 1930, that "Palmer was a murderer", (this is my example), may well be a fact, but, being a mere fact, it does not have the kind of weight or value that an ethical proposition would, if there could be such a thing. Or, as he said in the Tractatus "The facts all belong to the exercise" —that is to say, the exercise set one as a school teacher sets homework for his pupils— and not to the answer. Or as Ramsey translated the sentence "the facts all belong to the task and not the performance". The rendering is partly good. It does not bring out the meaning of 'Aufgabe' as an exercise set, or of "Lösung" as a solution of a problem. I don't know how to give a translation with the merits of Ramsey's, but which does also bring out that association of the German words.
That life sets us a task, and 'the facts' are relevant to the task, but our way of executing our task can't be given as among the facts of which the world is made up — this is evidently Wittgenstein's thought here. But it is not the sort of thought that fits his account of the truth and falsehood of significant propositions which just give or purport to give information about the perfectly indifferent facts going to constitute 'the world'. This explains his letter to Ficker, in which he says that the point of his book is to characterise the ethical from inside. What he meant by that is made clear if you think that the description of a body, of its shape, gives you the shape of the space surrounding it; the surface of the body is the inner surface of the space where it is.

And now I come to the matter of the penultimate proposition of the Tractatus. I think it has not been translated well. I give you what I think is a more accurate translation thus:

"My sentences are illuminating in the following way: one who understands me rejects them as nonsensical if, using them as stepping stones, he has climbed out over them. He must as it were throw away the ladder after he has climbed it. Then he sees the world rightly".

Notice that this does not say that someone who rejects the sentences of the Tractatus as strictly nonsensical understands Wittgenstein. There is a condition: the rejection as nonsense depends on the process of using the propositions of the Tractatus, i.e. climbing on them as on the rungs of a ladder; if the climber so climbs out over them and so comes to recognize them as nonsensical then they have been enlightening to him. Note that the word I translate "nonsensical" is "unsinnig" i.e. absurd, not "sinnlos". In the Tractatus "sense-less" should be used only to translate "sinnlos"; this is a characteristic of tautology and contradiction, and relates to that contrast with "significant propositions", "sinnvolle Sätze" which I have tried to explain. Wittgenstein's own propositions in the Tractatus are characterised as nonsense, as absurd, just because they
are neither "sinnvolle Sätze" nor "sinnlos" like tautology and contradiction. We may infer from number 7: "Whereof there cannot be discourse, thereon there should be silence", that in teaching philosophy it would have been strictly correct, as he also said, to teach only by uttering true significant propositions, the totality of which Wittgenstein calls "the totality of the natural sciences" —and then when someone tried to say something metaphysical, to show him that he had given no meaning to some of the words he used, i. e. that he was not using them as standing for any things.

About this I would comment: in his belief that the totality of true propositions is the totality of the natural sciences, I really do have the impression, as nowhere else in the book, that his feet have left the ground. Either he thought that e. g. "Napoleon came from Corsica" was a proposition derivable from, and so part of, the contents of a complete natural science, or he forgot all about such humble true propositions as that one.

Second, consider "Propositions cannot express what is higher" and "God does not reveal himself in the world" and "People to whom the sense of life become clear have not been able to say what it was". This last is somewhat laughable, as most people of whom it is plausible to say that the sense of life has become clear to them have done quite a lot of saying what it was. Such people may sometimes have been silent, whether they have lacked the ability to express themselves or for some other reason. And some have deserved Samuel Johnson's stricture on Boehme: "Sir, if Boehme saw the unutterable, he should not have tried to utter it". But plenty have spoken without committing what offended Johnson. Augustine, for example: "Thou hast made us for thyself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee".

Did Wittgenstein mean that they were unable to say anything significant in the sense of the 'significant propositions', the sinnvolle Sätze as spoken of in the Tractatus?

If so, one might say: so much the worse for the Tractatus
conception of the 'sinnvolle'; so much the worse, to put it in English, for that sense of 'significant'.

But also remember what he said in his preface: part of the worth of the book is that it shows how little has been done when the problems it solves have been solved.

But consider the other two examples I gave ("God does not reveal himself within the world", and "propositions can't express what is higher"), how was it that Wittgenstein so much as possessed the words "what is higher", "God", "the ineffable" except that these words belong in human languages? One wonders wildly: if we were not a fallen race, greatly given to talking real rubbish, would our race have uttered verbally only the things that Wittgenstein called significant propositions, descriptions of this and that supposedly in the world, but have lived in consciousness of the ineffable, with the seriousness he seems to indicate, but never speaking of such things.

Reading the "Lecture on Ethics", which is extremely 'Tractatus', one would not think so. There he speaks of thoughts, propositions if you like, which do not 'have a sense' but which instance something in the human spirit which he has the greatest respect for and would not for anything mock at. One example: conviction or feeling that it doesn't matter what happens; one is absolutely safe. It doesn't mean anything like a conviction that one's bank account will always be in funds an oil-rich Arab is taking care of that. I also remember the story of Wittgenstein as a schoolmaster in a poor village, bringing the children back from an expedition he had taken them on; the getting back had some difficulty — it was dark — and perhaps even a bit of danger; and he told them not to be frightened but to think of God. He once said to his friend Rush Rhees, a sighing man — not to repine and blame himself for something in himself: "That's God's fault, not yours". He greatly admired the prayers of Samuel Johnson; he loved the utterance of a certain cricketer who had become a missionary and said in his preaching "What God wants is a heart — any old turnip will do for a
head”. I could go on but these are enough, and a clue for you is his liking for something Bismarck once said. Someone quoted something to him and asked what he thought of it. Bismarck replied: “Tell me who said it and I’ll tell you what I think of it”.

What Wittgenstein rejected was the idea of a theory —a Lehre— of ethics, of theology. He disliked it. That is there already in the *Tractatus* at the final remark—which I think might be better represented by: “What there cannot be significant propositions about, we should not discourse about”, though that lacks the fine rhetorical flavour of: “What can be spoken of —on that there should be silence”.

Now what about the much later Wittgenstein? Did he come to think that the *Tractatus* not merely contained serious mistakes, but was just rubbish? —Some people think so. But it is not true: it is well known that he said “It isn’t like a bag of junk —rather it is like a clock that doesn’t tell the time right”. A good deal of what he said in the *Tractatus* is extremely solid stuff: the theory of truth-functions and the use of truth-tables in expounding it, the conception of some things showing, though you can’t state them; that “A thinks that *p*” does not state the existence of a certain relation between a person, *A*, and a proposition *p*, though its form might make you think so; that identity is not properly speaking a relation, which, as it happens, everything has to itself. One can find many such examples of very useful thoughts in the *Tractatus*.

It would be accurate to say that the book offers a strange and powerful account of meaningfulness, truth and falsehood. It would, I think, also be correct to say that the more Wittgenstein worked—and he worked immensely hard— when he resumed philosophical investigation, the more he came to see: “It’s not as simple as all that”, for one of the powerful attractions of the *Tractatus* is a sort of simplicity. This partly accounts for the fascination that it exercises on some people, like me, who do
not believe: *This is the truth*, the true account of the system of
the world and of language and of how language is significant.

That facts in the world have a logical structure — which is
the thought that makes Wittgenstein speak of logic as ‘world-
mirroring’ — this has not been refuted and, if correct, would
be a solution to one of the deepest problems of philosophy. One
thing Wittgenstein showed in his later work is that many con-
cepts are of human invention. He said “Mathematicians pro-
duce essences”, and that is something it is easy to justify in
some examples. Also, it appears to me — I have argued this
elsewhere — that there is a ‘sort of’ essence expressed in the
grammar of the term “element”, even though the grammar has
partly altered since the Greeks, and with it what we call ele-
ments are different from what they did. And I have argued that
this ‘sort-of-essence’ is a human invention. But I would never
suppose that all the essences expressed in the grammars of the
words of common speech were human inventions. It belongs to
human nature that there is speech, so they cannot be. Nor do I
even think that Wittgenstein in the end thought that they were
human inventions, keen as he was on suggesting and exploring
the possibility of some other tribe of men not having certain very
common concepts that we have. I don’t mean technical ones,
but e.g. colour-concepts. Others might have different ones: he
tried “colour-shape” concepts.

I mentioned earlier how Wittgenstein said in the *Tractatus*
“The question arises here, how the propositional connection
comes to be” — and does nothing to answer it. At a later date,
would he have rejected the notion, of the propositional connec-
tion? Yes, by a development of what he already had thought,
namely that the outer form of a sentence may be deceptive as
to its actual logical form: he praised Russell — and might also
have praised Frege — for drawing attention to this. At a later
time he would contrast the “surface grammar” with the “depth
grammar” of an expression, and held that we were often deeply
deceived by the surface grammars. He almost certainly rejected
the Tractatus idea that there is such a thing as the most general form of proposition, which all propositions share. Indeed, the actual representation of the general form in the Tractatus \([p, \xi, N(\xi)]\), he must have rejected, for there is no sign of his always continuing to believe in ‘elementary propositions’ and ‘elementary possible facts’. That the general concept of a proposition is prominent in our speech and that the thing is important by its very commonness, he positively asserted, only discounting some thoughts about it by comparing them to attributing to seen objects the shape of the spectacles we see them through. He also firmly adhered to the equation.

\[ p \text{ is true } = p \]

The Tractatus question about the Satz turns into a question; how does something's saying that something is so come about? And what account of it can we give? The first is answered, if it can be, by the judgment that men were created with speech: The second is a pretty serious problem, a present area of dispute.

It may be that some readers have formed the impression that Wittgenstein came to think that concepts were uncriticisable. This tribe has these, another perhaps different ones. Neither is right, or wrong.

This would I think make of him, in his later work, a trivialiser. It is false, as may be seen from his considerations about physiology in connection with sense perception and speech: he objects to the idea that there must be a system continuing right into and out of the brain; as also to the idea of a memory mechanism. He remarks on the possibility that we might only be able to distinguish seeds by knowing which different plants they come from: there might be no here and now difference between them discoverable by examination.

And about these possibilities he says: if this upsets our concepts of causation, well it's high time they were upset.

It would be a worthy task to explore what of that first great
work was not, and what was, rejected, gradually or suddenly, and to fill out my sketch of Wittgenstein as in effect coming to say “It’s all more complicated than that”. This task would require consideration of topics not treated in the Tractatus, not even mentioned, topics like what Wittgenstein later called the motley of mathematics — in the Tractatus he had said I think, that all mathematical propositions were really equations. And, of topics which are spoken of in the Tractatus, like the regularity of the world: “we could not say of an irregular world, what it would be like”. And such topics as understanding: “I understood what you said” surely sound like a report of an event but that betrays a deception through the surface grammar. And historical propositions — in one of his pre-Tractatus notebooks he wrote: “What is history to me? Mine is the first and only world”. He didn’t say that in the Tractatus — but his remark about the totality of true propositions, which I have quoted, shew a curious unnoticingness of history on his part. Certainty is narrowly conceived and so no adequate account of it is even suggested in the Tractatus.

These are but pointers — hints — of what such a work as I have suggested would have to include. It would also, and this would perhaps be hard, give what important thoughts, true or false, remained. With that I will close.

RESUMEN

El trabajo comienza exponiendo la doctrina central del Tractatus: la relación de figuración entre lenguaje y mundo, para explicar, a partir de ella, otras tesis (especialmente de la parte final) y mostrar la simplicidad del texto. Por último, se busca evaluar esta filosofía desde la mirada del segundo Wittgenstein.

1) La doctrina central del Tractatus es la que establece una relación proyectiva entre lenguaje y mundo. La proposición (elemental) tiene la posibilidad de combinar sus elementos —nombres— de la misma manera en que se combinan los elementos —objetos— de un hecho atómico. A esta posibilidad Wittgenstein la llama “la forma de representación” y la identifica con la forma lógica, es decir, con la forma de la realidad. Muchos piensan en la forma lógica como algo propio del lenguaje y del pensamiento; sin embargo, Wittgenstein no privilegia la perspectiva del pensamiento y considera la epistemología como perspectiva del pensamiento y considera la epistemología como “filosofía de la psicología”. E. Anscombe comenta que aunque es cierto que la teoría del conocimiento es parte de la filosofía de la psicología, no es correcto incluir el verbo conocer entre los verbos psicológicos.

2) Esta doctrina está en íntima relación con las tesis finales del Tractatus:

2.1) La concepción del Tractatus acerca de la relación entre proposiciones y hechos, excluye los juicios éticos y religiosos del campo de proposiciones significativas. Las proposiciones sólo pueden describir hechos, no valores. Por ello, Wittgenstein intentará, como dice a Ficker, caracterizar la ética desde dentro. La idea es clara, dice E. Anscombe, si pensamos que al describir los contornos de un cuerpo dibujamos los contornos del espacio que lo rodea.

2.2) Wittgenstein dice que quién entiende las proposiciones del Tractatus sabe que carecen de sentido. E. Anscombe comenta que las proposiciones de la filosofía no son sinsentidos en el mismo sentido en que son tautologías y contradicciones (de hecho el texto alemán original distingue dos tipos de sinsentidos: “unsinning” y “sinnlos”), por ello este reconocimiento del sinsentido debe ir precedido de cierto uso de las proposiciones: las proposiciones filosóficas deben escalarse como los peldaños de una escalera pues sólo así resultarán esclarecedoras.

2.3) A pesar de los límites impuestos a la significatividad, nuestro lenguaje contiene expresiones (como “dios” o “inefable”); por ello, dice E. Anscombe, la idea central de Wittgenstein parece ser prescriptiva: no debemos hacer uso de estas expresiones, sino limitarnos a hablar sobre los hechos del mundo, sin por ello dejar de tener presente la importancia de lo indefinido. Wittgenstein viola esta norma en su “Conferencia sobre ética”. Al parecer, lo que sucede
es que, aunque está hondamente preocupado por cuestiones éticas y religiosas, le desagrada la pretensión de una teoría —ética o teológica— que intente describir lo inefable.

3) El segundo Wittgenstein reconoce en el Tractatus algunas ideas sólidas. La tesis de que el mundo tiene una estructura lógica aún no ha sido refutada y constituye una solución posible a uno de los problemas más profundos de la filosofía. Por otro lado, hay tesis que han cambiado: en sus escritos posteriores Wittgenstein mostró que muchos conceptos son invenciones humanas. Se rechaza también la idea de una forma general de la proposición (aunque ello no implica que se rechace la tesis de las proposiciones elementales). Finalmente hay quienes piensan que Wittgenstein llegó a la idea de que los conceptos no se pueden criticar: diferentes comunidades pueden tener sus propios conceptos lo cual impide juzgar sobre su corrección; en la opinión de E. Anscombe esto convertirá su doctrina posterior en una trivialidad. De cualquier manera —reconoce E. Anscombe— una evaluación más completa debería detenerse en aspectos que, en este trabajo, no han sido mencionados.

[Isabel Cabrera]