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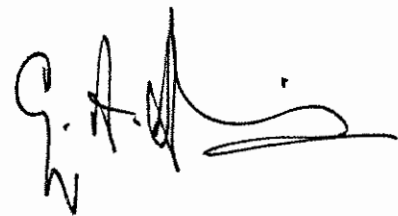
**The Later Wittgenstein and Contemporary
Theories of Meaning: A Dialectical
Analysis**

A thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
of the Australian National University

Gerald Atkinson

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Except as otherwise indicated,
this thesis is my own original work.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. A. [unclear]". The signature is stylized with a large "G", a small "A", and a long, sweeping horizontal line at the end.

Acknowledgements

The final form of this thesis substantially reflects the valued assistance of my supervisor Kim Lycos and the timely editorial advice of my friend William Grey.

A special vote of thanks is due to my typist, Anne Louttit, who, over at least the last four years, has consistently and uncomplainingly produced typescript of the highest standard from my constantly evolving and ever-reconstructed manuscripts.

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Abstract

In this study I expose, in part I, the semantic core of the later philosophy. It emerges as the result of the intersection of two extremely powerful analytical confrontations run in tandem by Wittgenstein.

In one he overturns the following fundamental notions (which characterise what I style as 'a priorism'): that the expansion of a rule is present in advance of the rule's use; that logical inference and mathematical calculation unpacks, or otherwise brings out, what is already there in the given premises or arguments; that meaning and necessity are contained in the expression of a rule or command, the utterance of a (well-formed) sentence, the coming to hand of a canonical proof or the experience it represents, or in the (intentional) act of producing a picture or sign; that something in our brains, our physiology, a functional state, a platonic object, a clear and distinct idea, stands behind and gives 'life' to our creation and reproduction of language.

In the other arm of his fundamental analytical pincer movement, Wittgenstein crushes what I style as 'cognitivism'. In philosophy of language, the 'cognitivist impulse' manifests as the fundamental idea that, somehow, meaning, understanding and modality, proof and certainty, are objects of knowledge, or at least, functions of a theory, a grasp or apprehension of which is attributed to the language-user. The epistemic relation of theory to use so envisaged ipso facto secures linguistic competence. In critically rejecting this semantic Weltanschauung, Wittgenstein thus rejects the very idea of any truth-conditional

treatment of meaning: the dissolution of the cognitivist impulse shows that sense and necessity cannot be constituted or reconstructed by or from veridical functions; it shows that the True - False logical calculus is semantically impotent such that whatever it is that logicians have been, and are, doing, it cannot be semantics.

The way is thus opened to grasp Wittgenstein's crucial insight that use, as the moment of making the world meaningful, is non-cognitive constitutive praxis. This means that taking use seriously -- once we are cured of the cognitivist impulse -- in fact requires the rejection of verificationism, intuitionism, anti-realism and the attendant idealist legacy, as well as the eschewing of the poverty of behaviourism and empiricistic materialism. The result for philosophy of language is an unprecedented semantic - analytical position. It lies in a radical -- anti-a priorist -- 'rehabilitation' of the concept of analyticity combined with the equally radical -- non-cognitivist -- realisation of the determination of sense independently of and prior to truth and falsity, facticity and theory, science and reflection. Consequently, content -- the 'world' understood by the language-game player -- is an achievement of linguistic labour, which labour is directed at (and seeks to dominate, master and transform) the pre-linguistic material world. The result, in stark contrast to the resistances we address in part II of this study, is an anti-metaphysics that is distinctly materialist and fundamentally naturalistic, but which, above all, is 'realism without empiricism'.

Notes on Symbols Used in Formalisations

Due to both logistical and financial restrictions a measure of improvisation has been necessary in the production of formalisations in this text:

$\exists$ constitutes the sign for existential generality

$\forall$ constitutes the sign for universality

$\sim$ is the (handwritten) sign for negation

$\vee$ is the (over-printed) sign for disjunction

$\wedge$ is the (handwritten) sign for conjunction

$\rightarrow$ stands, in formalisations, for implication, as does $\supset$. (Both these signs are hand-drawn.) In informal contexts however, $\rightarrow$ (usually with reference to samples) represents (the act of) pointing to, or otherwise indicating, the sample/object/paradigm case, etc.

$\leftrightarrow$ symbolises intersubstituability, usually in the form of sign - object, or name - object, intersubstitutability. (This sign is handwritten.)

$\in$ indicates 'co-extensionality' or 'contingent identity', and is handwritten.

ψ, ϕ and φ are handwritten Greek letters

With three exceptions, all the diagrams in the text are hand-drawn reproductions or originals.

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