

From Theory to Mysticism

From Theory to Mysticism:

*The Unclarity of the Notion
'Object' in Wittgenstein's
Tractatus*

By

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To my father

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations, listed alphabetically, are sometimes used to refer to Wittgenstein's works.

<i>BB</i>	<i>The Blue and Brown Books</i>
<i>BLF</i>	<i>Letters to Ludwig Ficker</i>
<i>CV</i>	<i>Culture and Value</i>
<i>LRKM</i>	<i>Letters to Russell, Keynes and Moore</i>
<i>NB</i>	<i>Notebooks 1914-1916</i>
<i>NL</i>	<i>Notes on Logic, printed as Appendix I of NB</i>
<i>NM</i>	<i>Notes Dictated to G.E. Moore in Norway, printed as Appendix II of NB</i>
<i>NWLR</i>	<i>Extracts from Wittgenstein's letters to Russell, 1912-20, printed as Appendix III of NB</i>
<i>LE</i>	<i>A lecture on Ethics</i>
<i>LO</i>	<i>Letters to C.K. Ogden</i>
<i>PG</i>	<i>Philosophical Grammar</i>
<i>PI</i>	<i>Philosophical Investigations</i>
<i>PO</i>	<i>Philosophical Occasions 1912-1951</i>
<i>PR</i>	<i>Philosophical Remarks</i>
<i>RLF</i>	<i>Some Remarks on Logical Form</i>
<i>RPP</i>	<i>Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology</i>
<i>TLP</i>	<i>Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, translated by D.F. Pears & B.F. McGuinness</i>
<i>TLP*</i>	<i>Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, translated by C.K. Ogden</i>
<i>WLC 32</i>	<i>Wittgenstein's Lectures Cambridge 1930-32</i>
<i>WLC 35</i>	<i>Wittgenstein's Lectures Cambridge 1932-35</i>
<i>WVC</i>	<i>Ludwig Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle</i>

INTRODUCTION

Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* is considered one of the most important and difficult philosophical works of the 20th century. The work's scholars agree on that they disagree since the way the work has to be read is not clear because of its obscurity. This book focuses on the German term 'Gegenstand' which is translated in English as 'object', which is the main constituent of the 'Bild theory of sentences'¹ formulated in the *Tractatus*. One of the things that attracts the *Tractatus*' readers is that while there is use of the notion 'object', a notion on which the whole architecture of the terminology of the *Tractatus* is based, the notion is not specified in this work. This is encouraged by the fact that the *Tractatus* not only refuses to give examples of objects but does not allow any possibility for them to be given. This impossibility creates a sense of mystery since we are not allowed to know what objects are, only some of their properties are known. The theoretical role of objects which primarily seems to be to promise an ontological frame for a theory of language is not clarified. As a result of this, the corresponding requirements of language are not clarified either.

This work focuses on the indeterminacy of the notion 'object' and examines more deeply this unsolved difficulty that arises. In their effort to escape from or sidestep the problem of objects, many commentators have stated that the notion of the *Tractatus* is obscure. However, this is not obvious. It must be demonstrated by shedding light on the specific issue at hand here. This book examines two crucial questions about the difficulties over the nature of objects: (a) Is there a fundamental asymmetry between different kinds of things or expressions in the *Tractatus*? and (b) Are there objects in experience? Through this discussion since the notion of 'object' remains indeterminate I hold as a central worry whether Wittgenstein held an unstable position on purpose about the notion 'object'. When the

¹ I keep the German term 'Bild' instead of using the translated English notion 'picture' and translate the German term 'Satz' as 'sentence' instead of 'proposition', as Pears, McGuinness and Ogden do for reasons that I will explain later.

indeterminacy of the notion ‘object’ is explained in a deeper way the issue that arises is what the importance of this unspecificity is. Particularly, it seems that the *Tractatus* does not offer us a theory of language which can show us a specific kind of analysis to reach the form of sentences – in the true form of language. Additionally, the *Tractatus* does not contribute to the clarification of the relations between elements of language and elements of the world. In other words, it remains unclear how the elements of language have meaning because there is no possibility to attribute objects a meaning. Finally, what I will show through this work is that despite the unclarity of the notion ‘object’, *Tractatus*’s work as a whole is not undermined since it continues to function in a very specific way. To become familiarised with this way, we need a *special kind feeling* which I explain in this work to have as a core the idea that the indeterminacy of the notion ‘object’ (that encourages the paradox) helps the sense of mysticism. The steps this work follows are:

Chapter One explains the theoretical role of objects and fundamentally the role of being a counter part to the role of the technical term ‘name’ in the *Tractatus*. The role of the notion ‘object’ constitutes a requirement of the ‘Bild theory of sentences’ since every theory of language needs an ontological frame to which it refers. The notion ‘object’ in the *Tractatus* constitutes the necessary constituent of this ontological frame. By examining the role of objects we can understand that since no examples of objects are given and that we are not allowed to know what these things are the *Tractatus* does not require to specify neither the notion ‘object’ nor the rest of the terminology. The rest of the terminology has to do: (a) with the whole ontological frame which is based on the notion ‘object’ (‘reality’, ‘logical space’, ‘world’ and ‘atomic fact’) that composes the structure of the world – a world with specific characteristics and (b) with the corresponding notions of language (‘name’ and ‘atomic sentence’) since in each ontological part of the *Tractatus* there are the corresponding requirements of language. Thus, this chapter shows that the theoretical role of objects in the *Tractatus* remains unclarified.

It is popular in Wittgensteinian studies that in the *Tractatus* the role of objects leaves them unclear creating thus, a substantial difficulty. However, the indeterminacy of the notion ‘object’ should be demonstrated. Chapter Two argues that the notion of ‘object’ is left indeterminate in two crucial respects: (a) whether objects include universals, that is to say, properties and relations. This question has to do with a fundamental question whether there is any fundamental asymmetry between different kinds of expressions? and (b) what is the relation

between the Tractarian objects and objects which we can experience? The objects we can experience we can think of in the real world to be sense-data. By examining these two questions, although the indeterminacy of the notion of 'object' is not liable to any resolution Wittgenstein seems not to worry about that.

The third Chapter explains what is the importance of the unspecificity of the notion 'object'. In other words, why it is a substantial problem for objects to be indetermined. This is explained through two crucial respects: (a) *Tractatus*'s sentences project a radical unfalsified ability and as a result the *Tractatus* does not offer a theory but a ghost of a theory. The proposed analysis from a theory which would lead us to objects cannot be done. There is no conception how this analysis could be done. Thus, we cannot know the form of sentences before a theory, therefore, we cannot know objects before a theory and (b) the unspecificity of the notion 'object' does not allow any correlations between elements of language and elements of reality. As a result of this, it is not clear how language could be meaningful. So, the unspecificity of the notion 'object' leaves us with the difficulty that we do not know how to build a theory of language through the *Tractatus*.

The fourth Chapter gives a final account on the *Tractatus* which elucidates whether the unspecificity of what is meant by 'object' in the *Tractatus* undermines the project of the work as a whole. Having in mind that the *Tractatus* does not offer a theory, but an illusion of a theory the question that arises is whether this work has some value. It is natural to think that the paradoxical *Tractatus* will have some value if it succeeds to communicate truths. Therefore the crucial question is whether the *Tractatus* succeeds to communicate truths. This work approaches the topic through three positions: (a) the 'traditional view', (b) the 'resolute reading view' and (c) my view (a view beyond the 'traditional' and 'resolute reading' views) that is differentiated from the previous two and which gives a possible resolution of the difficulty of the paradox encouraging the thought of a movement from the idea of a 'theory' towards 'mysticism' – a kind of mysticism which mainly has to do with Schopenhauerian and Kantian influences. The indeterminacy of the notion 'object' on a first level encourages the paradox and on a second level this paradox creates space for mysticism. Through this approach, the unclarity of the notion 'object' in the *Tractatus* is elucidated.

CHAPTER ONE

THE ROLE OF OBJECTS IN THE BILD THEORY OF SENTENCES

1. Introduction

In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein discusses the relationship between language and the world and formulates the so-called ‘Bild theory of sentences’.¹ This ‘theory’ claims that elements of language, namely ‘names’, correspond to fragments of reality, namely ‘objects’. To do this, it is necessary for Wittgenstein to create a conception of the structure of the world. The *Tractatus* begins its first three remarks with the term ‘Die Welt’ (‘The world’) (1, 1.1 and 1.11). The notion ‘object’ comes after the notion ‘world’ and ‘fact’. Particularly, the first reference to the notion ‘object’ (‘Gegenstand’) is in remark 2.01 but after the introduction of the notions ‘world’ (*TLP* 1) and ‘fact’ (*TLP* 1.1). It seems that Wittgenstein wants to prepare us from the beginning that to understand what objects are, the core of the ontological frame of the *Tractatus*, we need to understand their role in relation with the world as a whole.

The main body of the *Tractatus* begins with the following mysterious statement: ‘The world is all that is the case’ (*TLP* 1).² This remark states an acceptance that there is a world. This statement constitutes a promise (not a definition) in the sense to explain what the world is. What is not promised but given by the specific statement is the opportunity for the reader of the *Tractatus* to reflect on the nature of the world. At first sight, this statement lacks sense or formal coherence for it to be fully understood even if someone made a conscious effort to conceive of it in a specifically

¹ It would not be an exaggeration to claim that the relation between language and reality is the only issue which Wittgenstein is concerned with throughout his philosophical research.

² The majority of quotations from the *Tractatus* that are used in this work are taken from the translation by Pears and McGuinness (whenever Ogden’s translation is used it will be clearly indicated).

meaningful way. The mood of this statement is revealed step by step through the *Tractatus* as we will see below.

In this part it is useful to say that the ontological conception of Wittgenstein does not come up through empirical observations but by thinking about language. So, surprisingly, the *Tractatus* gives priority to the theory of language over a theory of the world. Perhaps the ontological part of the *Tractatus* (TLP 1–2.063) was written last because we do not encounter any related ideas in the whole of his *Notebooks*. With this in mind, it seems that it is only after working out the philosophy of language that Wittgenstein realizes that it commits him to a certain conception of the structure of the world. As he states: ‘To give the essence of a sentence means to give the essence of all description, and thus the essence of the world’ (TLP 5.4711). Although, perhaps the ontological part of the *Tractatus* was written last, from the first pages it gives emphasis to the terms ‘configuration’ and ‘combination’ (TLP 2.01, 2.0231, 2.0271 and 2.0272), a part of the terminology that attempts to compose the ontological frame.

This chapter examines the role of objects being a counter part to the role of the technical term ‘name’ in the ‘Bild theory of sentences’ by giving the necessary explanations to the following points:

- (a) The world as necessity in the *Tractatus*
- (b) The ontology of the *Tractatus*
- (c) The substance of the world in the *Tractatus*
- (d) The ‘Bild theory of sentences’ – the inspiration and the steps towards the theory
- (e) The notion ‘object’ as a requirement of the ‘Bild theory of sentences’.

We will therefore come to understand (or at least accept) the necessity of the notion ‘object’ in the ‘Bild theory of sentences’, whilst at the same time demonstrating the complexity of this term.

1.1 The world as necessity in the *Tractatus*

The ‘Bild theory of sentences’ makes the following key assertion: ‘A sentence is a Bild of reality. A sentence is a model [Modell] of reality as we imagine it’ (TLP 4.01). This assertion demands a conception of the structure of the world. This is because the possibility of making Bilder of reality depends, among other things, on at least one world. If the world did

not exist, it would be impossible to talk about Bilder of reality. Therefore, it would be impossible for fragments of a Bild to correspond to fragments of the world in some way. In other words, since ‘a sentence is a Bild of reality’ (*TLP* 4.01), if the world did not exist, then there would not be sentences (Bilder) that would refer to the world. Basically, there would not be sentences at all since it is very hard to imagine sentences that do not refer to the world (*TLP* 2.022). In order for there to be sentences, there must be at least one world in existence.

1.2 The ontology of the *Tractatus*

In stating that ‘the world is all that is the case’ (*TLP* 1), the term ‘world’ is not clarified and Wittgenstein refrains from saying much about this. What we therefore have to make clear is the phrase ‘all that is the case’. By taking into consideration the next remark 1.1, ‘the world is the totality of facts,³ not of things’,⁴ we can say: ‘all that is the case’ (the world) is the totality of facts (Tatsachen), not of objects (see *TLP* 2 and 2.01). Therefore, facts are different from objects and facts have objects as constituents. Here, two terms are introduced, ‘object’ (‘Gegenstand’) and ‘fact’ (‘Tatsache’) both of which depend completely on Wittgenstein’s theory of language, particularly on the terms ‘name’ (‘Name’) and ‘sentence’ (‘Satz’) correspondingly. Wittgenstein states: ‘A name means an object. The object is its meaning. (“A” is the same sign as “A”)’ (*TLP* 3.203) and ‘In a sentence a name is the representative of an object’ (*TLP* 3.22). By shedding light on the terms ‘name’ and ‘sentence’, it becomes easier to show how the notion of the ‘object’ in the *Tractatus* has its place there simply for the role it plays in the ‘Bild theory of sentences’.

The totality of facts (Tatsachen) in logical space is the world (*TLP* 1.13). Facts are in logical space, the space of all possibilities, rather than being constitutive of it. It is difficult to ascertain what he means exactly by logical space since *TLP* 1 and 1.1 identify the world with the totality of facts, and facts exist in logical space as opposed to functioning in some

³ In their translations, Pears and McGuinness as well as Ogden use the term ‘fact’ to mean ‘Tatsache’.

⁴ According to Ogden’s translation in sentence 2.01, Wittgenstein uses the term ‘objects’ (‘Gegenstände’) by explaining the term ‘Gegenstände’ in brackets with two terms ‘Sachen’ and ‘Dinge’ (‘entities’ and ‘things’). Pears and McGuinness translate only the term ‘Dinge’ as ‘things’. Here, it seems that Wittgenstein uses the terms ‘Gegenstand’, ‘Sache’ and ‘Ding’ in the same way.

constitutive way. Logical space includes all possible facts. The *Tractatus* refers to possible facts (not actual facts) but also implies actual facts. Actual facts are only some of the facts in logical space. It is a possible fact that Wittgenstein was born in Paris but both actual and possible facts are part of the logical space. ‘All that is the case’ – the totality of facts – is nothing other than the existence of states of affairs (atomic facts, Sachverhalte) (*TLP* 2 and 2.04).⁵ A fact is constituted by atomic facts. Thus, facts that do not consist of a combination of other facts are called ‘Sachverhalte’ (‘atomic facts’), whereas facts which consist of two or more facts (Sachverhalte) are called ‘Tatsachen’ (‘facts’). Whatever complexity is found in the world can be perceived as a ‘Tatsache’. Wittgenstein in 19.08.19 wrote to Russell:

Sachverhalt is, what corresponds to an Elementarsatz [elementary sentence] if it is true. Tatsache is what corresponds to the logical product of elementary props when this product is true.
(*NWLR* p.130).⁶

With the above words, Wittgenstein states the relationship between atomic facts and atomic sentences. An atomic fact consists of objects (*TLP* 2.01 and 2.0272), and an atomic fact therefore depends on objects.⁷ Particularly, Wittgenstein states:

Things are independent in so far as they can occur in all *possible* situations, but this form of independence is a form of connexion⁸ with states of affairs, a form of dependence. (It is impossible for words to appear in two

⁵ In their translation, Pears and McGuinness, to render the term ‘Sachverhalt’ in English, use the term ‘state of affairs’, while Ogden also uses the term ‘atomic fact’. Although Pears’ and McGuinness’ translation is closer to the sense of the German term, ‘Sachverhalt’ means an etymological arrangement of things, and Wittgenstein approves of Ogden’s translation. Perhaps, he considers that it is better to stress the indivisibility of ‘Sachverhalt’, by keeping the atomic character of the term in this way.

⁶ Russell in the *Tractatus*’ Introduction says that we cannot strictly speaking define facts but we can explain them by saying that facts are that which make sentences (Sätze) either true or false (wahr oder falsch) (*TLP* p.xiii-xiv).

⁷ Russell, by formulating the logical atomism, starts with the notion of ‘simple’ to reach the notion of ‘complex’. While *Tractatus* starts with the notion of the ‘world’ he continues with the notion ‘facts’ and ‘atomic facts’ to reach the crucial notion ‘object’.

⁸ The German term is ‘Zusammenhang’ which etymologically means a hanging together.

different roles: by themselves, and in sentences).
(*TLP* 2.0122)

What is an object?

We do not know.⁹

In the *Notebooks* it is stated that: ‘Our difficulty was that we keep on speaking of simple objects and were unable to mention a single one’ (*NB* p.68, 21.06.1915). In the *Tractatus*, by terms of language, Wittgenstein states: ‘If I cannot say a priori what elementary sentences there are, then the attempt to do so must lead to obvious nonsense’ (*TLP* 5.5571). According to the *Tractatus*, what we need to know in order to know an object is not its external but its internal qualities (*TLP* 2.01231). If I know the internal qualities of an object then I also know ‘all its possible occurrences in atomic facts (Every one of these possibilities must be part of the nature of the object)’ (*TLP* 2.0123). The external (material) qualities (that are shown in atomic sentences) are contingent, (it is a material property of an object that stands in a specific relation with another object) while internal qualities are essential – they are possible combinations of objects in all possible worlds (*TLP* 4.123 and 4.1221). The internal (formal) quality of an object is its possibility to combine with other objects in some determinative way (it is a formal property of an object to be possible for it to stand in a specific relation with another object). This idea is expressed as follows: a property is internal if it is unthinkable that its object does not possess it (*TLP* 4.123). That is to say, if an object *a* has the internal property to have the possibility of having a relation *R* to *b*, *a* could in no case lose this property. A generalization of sentence 2.0123 is followed by sentence 2.0124: ‘If all objects are given, then at the same time all *possible* states of affairs are also given’.¹⁰

⁹ Wittgenstein worries about the term ‘object’ before beginning to write the *Tractatus*, particularly in the *Notebooks* since he dedicates many pages to the examination of the specific term. Specifically, he introduces the notion from the beginning of his *Notebooks* (*NB* p.3, 3.09.1914) and he focuses more systematically, especially on pages 45–72.

¹⁰ The remark *TLP* 2.0124 as well as *TLP* 5.524 refer to the term ‘gegeben’ (‘given’), a term that can mislead somebody to the idea that objects are sense-data. All these remarks are not affirmations but assumptions. I will explain below why objects should not be conceived to be sense-data.

If we limit ourselves to the idea that we do not know what objects are, this does not get us very far. It is important to insist on a clarifying answer that will emerge gradually. An atomic fact depends on unclarified elements. So, the task that presents itself here is to deal with the term ‘object’ in the proper way. What is the proper way? We have to think about the properties of an object that are given in the *Tractatus* to it.

Since ‘the world is the totality of facts’ (*TLP* 1.1) and a fact is constituted by atomic facts (*TLP* 2), the world itself consists of atomic facts. The reason why Wittgenstein does not state this in remark 1.2 (he simply states that the world is divided into facts) is presumably because he has not introduced the term ‘atomic fact’ yet. By taking into consideration the notion that an atomic fact is a combination of objects (*TLP* 2.01), we are led to the idea that the world is constituted of atomic facts that are combinations of objects. Why does Wittgenstein assert in 1.1 that the world is not the totality of objects? What he seems to believe is that: (a) the totality of facts or atomic facts is not equal to the totality of objects and (b) the world is something more than the totality of objects. In terms of Wittgenstein’s theory of language, we can say that: (a) the totality of sentences (or atomic sentences) is not equal to the totality of names and (b) language is something more than the totality of names.¹¹

If Wittgenstein was asserting that the world is the totality of objects, what remains to be clarified is the way in which objects are connected with each other. This would necessarily lead Wittgenstein to take a position on whether objects include relations and qualities. However, Wittgenstein chooses to keep the specific issue open. That is to say, he does not finally clarify whether objects include relations and qualities, as we will see in the second Chapter. What the *Tractatus* implies is that for an object to include relations and qualities it has to be part of an atomic fact. In other words, an object includes relations and qualities only when it is combined with at least one other object (*TLP* 2.0121). How is the combination of objects managed? ‘In the atomic fact objects hang [hängen] one in another, like the links of a chain [Kette]’ (*TLP** 2.03).

¹¹ Russell does not miss this point since in the *Tractatus*’ Introduction among others he states: ‘The world is not described by merely naming all the objects in it; it is necessary also to know the atomic facts of which these objects are constituents’ (*TLP* xiv).

At this stage, what we have to keep in mind is that objects are combined in atomic facts and this combination does not need any external agent to be achieved.¹² Moreover, in no case can an object occur in isolation but only as a part of an atomic fact (*TLP* 2.011), in other words, it is impossible for an object to be excluded from all atomic facts. In terms of language this idea transforms as follows: ‘Only sentences have sense; only in the nexus of a sentence does a name have meaning’ (*TLP* 3.3). A name, for example, occurs in a sentence only within the nexus of an atomic sentence (*TLP* 4.23). In no case can an object occur in the world as an entity in isolation. This is expressed in the remark 2.0121, as follows: ‘If I can think of an object in the context of an atomic fact, I cannot think of it apart from the *possibility* of this context’.¹³ The impossibility of the accidental is explained as follows:

In logic nothing is accidental: if a thing *can* occur in an atomic fact the possibility of that atomic fact must already be prejudged in the thing.
(*TLP** 2.012)

Objects contain the possibility of all situations [atomic facts].
(*TLP* 2.014)¹⁴

As Wittgenstein states: ‘It is essential to things that they should be possible constituents of states of affairs’ (*TLP* 2.011) and ‘Logic deals with every possibility and all possibilities are its facts’ (*TLP* 2.0121). The world includes all possible combinations of objects, that is to say, the

¹² At the beginning of the *Notebooks*, Wittgenstein leaves the implication that there is a bearer (someone) who will do the correlations between the elements of a Bild and the elements of reality. Particularly, he says: ‘By my correlating the components of the picture with objects, it comes to represent a situation and to be right or wrong’ (*NB* p.33–34, 26.11.1914). Moreover, at two other places (*NB* pp.52–53, 30.05.1915 and p.60, 15.06.1915) he refers to the correlation ‘I’ between names and objects. Later, in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein distances himself from the idea of the necessity of the bearer.

¹³ Here Ogden’s translation is used.

¹⁴ It seems that Wittgenstein uses the term ‘situation’ (‘Sachlage’) as an equivalent of the term ‘state of affairs’ or ‘atomic fact’ (‘Sachverhalt’). As a result of this in 2.014 he states that: ‘Objects contain the possibility of all situations’. See also *TLP* 2.202 and 2.203. Wittgenstein was not happy with this translation. What he said to Ogden when he translated *Tractatus* proves this: ‘The word “Sachlage” has been translated “state of affairs”. Now I don’t like this translation but don’t know what to suggest in its place. I have thought of the latin “status rerum” (?) would this be better?’ (*LO* p.21).

limits of what is possible (of any possible world). The possibility of all combinations of objects in the world is nothing but the form of the world. Wittgenstein asserts: 'If all objects are given, then at the same time all *possible* states of affairs are also given' (*TLP* 2.0124). By taking into consideration that the form of an object is the possibility of its occurring in atomic facts or the possible ways it can be combined with other objects in atomic facts (*TLP* 2.0141), then remark 2.0124 can be transformed in the following way: if all forms of objects are given, then at the same time, all possible forms of atomic facts are given too. This means that if all forms of objects are given, at the same time the form of the world is also given. Wittgenstein considers that the world includes the limits of the empirical world (or of the sensible world), with actual facts being only some of the facts.

Wittgenstein somewhat awkwardly claims that although it is impossible to imagine objects without logical space, it is possible to imagine logical space as empty. Specifically, he states: 'Each thing is, as it were, in a space of possible states of affairs. This space I can imagine empty, but I cannot imagine the thing without the space' (*TLP* 2.013). The sentence 2.013 is a reminiscent of Kant in the sense that it evokes the transcendental character of space and time, or the so-called 'Transcendental Aesthetic' which underpins his *Critique of Pure Reason*. Kant states: 'One can never represent that there is no space, although one can very well think that there are no objects to be encountered in it' (Kant 1998 p.158). Both Kant and Wittgenstein consider that the existence of space is a necessity. While Kant asserts that we can think of space without objects, without space disappearing, Wittgenstein, by using the term 'empty logical space', cannot mean a logical space empty of objects, but a space without atomic facts (this does not mean that there would not be actual facts but these (actual facts) would not be atomic facts).¹⁵ The *Tractatus* does not support the idea that it would be possible for a space of possible atomic facts to exist without objects. Logical space would cease to constitute the space of all possibilities if the objects which are the basic constituents of atomic facts did not exist. Therefore, in no case can we imagine Tractarian logical space without the fundamental constituents of all possibilities, namely 'objects'.

¹⁵ This idea is expressed in M. Morris' work (Morris 2008 p.38).

1.3 The substance of the world in the *Tractatus*

Wittgenstein states: ‘Objects make up the substance of the world’ (*TLP* 2.021). Among others, this comment constitutes an acceptance that the world has substance. Here, two questions arise:

- (a) What is the substance of the world according to the *Tractatus*?
- (b) Why must this world have substance according to the *Tractatus*?

Concerning the first above question, the remark that claims that the substance of the world is made up of objects (*TLP* 2.021), I am led to pose the crucial question again:

What are objects?

Thinking about the properties that are given about objects in the *Tractatus* we can understand that these things must not be confused with the objects to which we refer in our *ordinary language* such as chairs, tables, cars or the objects which we can encounter in the experienced world and used by Frege and Russell as examples of objects.¹⁶ In the history of philosophy we very often encounter the tendency to reference the world in indivisible entities.¹⁷ What differentiates things in the case of the *Tractatus* is that it introduces the notion of ‘object’ in a very abstract way in comparison with the physical atomism of ancient philosophers such as Leucippus, Democritus, Epicurus and others. This is imposed since the objects of *Tractatus* do not compose the substance of the physical world as ancient philosophers support but they compose that substance in which all logical possible worlds would be referenced.¹⁸ Particularly, Wittgenstein states: ‘It

¹⁶ According to Waismann’s recorded conversations, Wittgenstein states: ‘When Frege and Russell spoke of objects they always had in mind things that are, in language, represented by nouns, that is, say, bodies like chairs and tables’ (*WVC* p.41).

¹⁷ Wittgenstein in the *Notebooks* poses the question about whether there is something indivisible or not, as follows: ‘Does the visual image of a *minimum visible* actually appear to us indivisible? What has extension is divisible. Are there parts in our visual image that have no extension? E.g., the images of the fixed stars?’ (*NB* p.51, 25.05.1915).

¹⁸ Max Black states characteristically: ‘By the “world” he [Wittgenstein] does not mean the physical cosmos, but something vaster and philosophically more interesting [...] Wittgenstein is trying out a new way of looking at the world, which forces him to twist and bend language to the expression of his thoughts’ (Black 1964 pp.385–386).

is obvious that an imagined world, however different it may be from the real one, must have *something*—a form—in common with it' (*TLP* 2.022). Therefore, the substance of the world has to be common in every possible world through a common form which defines every possibility. Wittgenstein states:

The substance of the world *can* only determine a form, and not any material properties. For it is only by means of sentences that material properties are represented—only by the configuration of objects that they are produced.
(*TLP* 2.0231)

At this point I have to say that since I have not given a complete account about what objects are, the constituents of substance, the notion of 'substance' remains also unclarified. This reveals to a certain degree the complexity of the notion 'object', something that the whole work deals with.

Let us turn to the question why must the world have substance according to the *Tractatus*? According to the *Tractatus*, the world must have substance so that the sense of all sentences are independent of the truth of any of them. The sense of an atomic sentence can never depend on the truth of another atomic sentence (*TLP* 2.0211 and 4.211). In other words, from the truth of an atomic sentence 'p', one cannot logically infer the truth or falsity of an atomic sentence 'q' (*TLP* 2.062 and *TLP* 5.134–5.135). So, the molecular sentence p&q can be neither a tautology nor a contradiction (*TLP* 4.211 and 6.3751). According to the *Tractatus*, substance is that which is independent of what is the case (*TLP* 2.024), in other words the possibilities are independent of what is the case. Wittgenstein states: 'If the world had no substance, then whether a sentence had sense would depend on whether another sentence was true' (*TLP* 2.0211).

However, for Wittgenstein, the world does indeed have substance and objects consist of substance which cannot be composite (*TLP* 2.021). Objects are connected among them and create atomic facts which are independent of each other (*TLP* 1.21, 2.061 and 2.062) and atomic sentences which describe possible atomic facts are also independent of one another. This is encouraged because of the main characteristic of the notion of 'objects' (beyond their simplicity), that we do not know what the properties of objects are.

If the *Tractatus* asserted that objects had some specific properties, perhaps this would limit the set of their possible combinations. Thus, Wittgenstein adopts the idea of the independence of atomic sentences, an affirmation that concerns him in the case of colours. In sentences 6.375 and 6.3751, he admits that it is logically impossible that two colours be located at the same time at the same place, something that arises by the logical structure of colour.¹⁹ Therefore, the statements ‘A is red all over’ and ‘A is yellow all over’ (where A refers to a point in the visual field at a given time) constitute a contradiction.²⁰ Stating that ‘A is red all over’ excludes the statement that ‘A is yellow all over’, something that shows that these two statements are not independent between them. The truth of the first statement has as a logical consequence the falsity of the second statement. So, these statements cannot be conceived to be atomic sentences (*TLP* 4.221); hence, they need more analysis²¹ (the words ‘red’ and ‘yellow’ are not names of simples). Therefore, the statements the ‘A is red all over’ and ‘A is yellow all over’ do not correspond with atomic facts.

In the 1929 text entitled *Some Remarks on Logical Form*,²² Wittgenstein admits that atomic sentences are not independent of one another but at the same time through his words, he tries to explain this contradiction by saying that the colour ‘red’ constitutes ‘all degrees of red’ and none of ‘yellow’ and *vice versa* (*RLF* pp.34–36). This concerns an effort which would show that statements of degree of a property could be analysed in terms of truth functions. Knowing the problems of this position, concerning the independence of sense, Wittgenstein considers that they can be solved through symbolism but he never proposes an alternative to them. This constitutes the main reason for the fall of ‘Logical Atomism’²³ which adopted the notion that atomic sentences are logically independent as a main idea.

¹⁹ This idea is repeated in *PR* p.105.

²⁰ This is not an *a priori* truth, but a logical truth.

²¹ In 1930 Wittgenstein explains this point to Desmond Lee (*WLC* 32 p.119).

²² Wittgenstein would have read his remarks of logical form to the *Aristotelian Society and Mind Association Joint Session* in July in 1929 but he never did (*PR* Editor’s note p.349). He referred to this essay as ‘weak’ in one of his letters to the editor of *Mind* (see comment by G.E.M. Anscombe *RLF* p.31).

²³ Russell in his work entitled *Logic and Knowledge* refers to the notion ‘logical atomism’ as follows: ‘The reason that I call my doctrine *logical atomism* is because the atoms that I wish to arrive at as the sort of last residue in analysis are logical atoms and not physical atoms’ (Russell 2007a p.179).

In ‘Some Remarks on Logical Form’, Wittgenstein eventually admits that atomic sentences ‘exclude’ and do not ‘contradict’ one another (*RLF* p.35). This is because the form of the sentence contains the forms of entities to which it refers. Therefore, it is possible for two entities to conflict in this logical form and as a result, one excludes the other and there is no contradiction (*RLF* p.36).

In *The Blue and Brown Books*, Wittgenstein again states that two colours cannot be in the same place simultaneously, adding ‘this is a grammatical rule and states a logical impossibility’ (*BB* p.56). What I have to say here is that no analysis looks as if it will avoid reduplicating the problem and this was what the whole discussion of *RLF* was trying to show.

Moreover, Wittgenstein claims that if the world did not have substance, then ‘in that case we could not sketch any Bild of the world (true or false)’ (*TLP* 2.0212). As I will explain below the crucial statement of the ‘Bild theory of sentences’ is that ‘A sentence is a Bild of reality. A sentence is a model of reality as we imagine it’ (*TLP* 4.01). Therefore, in terms of language if the world did not have substance, then in that case we could not formulate sentences (true or false) for the world.

Taking into consideration that the *Tractatus* moves from general considerations of representation to more specific considerations of representation of language, the question why must the world have substance can be transformed as follows: Why do sentences of the world necessarily depend upon a world of substance? Having in mind that objects make up the substance of the world (*TLP* 2.021), this question will lead us to a crucial question: Why does the ‘Bild theory of sentences’ require objects? In other words why the role of the notion ‘object’ constitutes a requirement of the ‘Bild theory of sentences’. This question pushes us to examine how the ‘Bild theory of sentences’ in the *Tractatus* is being built by clarifying the role of objects in a deeper way.

1.4 The Bild theory of sentences – the inspiration and the steps towards the theory

Before I examine what the ‘Bild theory of sentences’ claims, consideration of two more important points will help us to understand this ‘theory’, especially the way in which the notion of the ‘object’ is involved in it. The first concerns what inspired Wittgenstein to formulate the ‘Bild theory of sentences’; the second concerns the steps that he followed to formulate this ‘theory’, which is primarily based on the idea that ‘a sentence is a Bild

of reality [Wirklichkeit]' (*TLP* 4.01). Moreover, it is worth mentioning at this point that the German term 'Bild' in the *Tractatus* is translated by Pears and McGuinness (see *TLP*) as well as Ogden (see *TLP**) as 'picture'. By taking into consideration that the term 'Bild' covers not only paintings, a form of two-dimensional pictorial representations, but also three-dimensional pictorial representations namely 'models', it is more preferable to keep the German term 'Bild' instead of the English term 'picture'. In this way we do not ignore the three-dimensional pictorial representations since the 'Bild theory of sentences' acquires a more generalised representational character. Wittgenstein in the remark 2.12 states that 'a Bild is a model of reality' by using the German term 'Modell', a representational means with a three-dimensional character to introduce the idea of the 'Bild theory of sentences'. Therefore, instead of referring to the 'Picture theory of language' or to the 'Model theory of language', we will refer to it as the 'Bild theory of language'.

1.4a Wittgenstein's inspiration for the Bild theory of sentences

In 1931 Wittgenstein states to Waismann that:

I have inherited this concept of a picture from two sides: first from a drawn picture, second from the picture [model] of a mathematician, which already is a general concept. For a mathematician talks of picturing [Abbildung] in cases where a painter would no longer use this expression.
(*WVC* p.185)

Reflecting on this quotation, which comes from a later period in his philosophical career (a period where the inspiration behind the *Tractatus* might well have been obscured or forgotten), I must note with regard to the first side that his 'theory' does not arise from a drawn picture. The first side is understood in terms of the second. In referring to a mathematician, Wittgenstein specifically means Heinrich Hertz,²⁴ who wrote about the representation of physical theories:

We form for ourselves images or symbols of external objects;²⁵ and the form which we give them is such that the necessary consequences of the

²⁴ Wittgenstein was aware of Hertz's work and in the *Tractatus* he refers to his name twice (*TLP* 4.04 and 6.361).

²⁵ A similar idea is expressed in *TLP* 2.1. According to the translation of Pears and McGuinness 'We picture facts to ourselves' (attention here: we do not picture objects to ourselves); according to the translation of Ogden 'We make to ourselves

images in thought are always the images of the necessary consequence in nature of the things pictured. In order that this requirement may be satisfied, there must be a certain conformity between nature and our thought.

(Hertz 2003 Introduction p.1)

What I should note here is that Wittgenstein does not seem to generalize the theory of models proposed by the physicist Hertz to adopt a general idea and then create his ‘theory’. Rather, it seems that Wittgenstein believes that ‘Bilder’ function in the way he mentions. We cannot affirm that the way in which he conceives the concepts ‘Bild’ and ‘object’ are the same as the way in which Hertz conceives them, although we can recognise some loose analogies (similarities) between their work through the following passage:

The relation of a dynamical model to the system of which it is regarded as the model, is precisely the same as the relation of the images which our mind forms of things to the things themselves. For if we regard the condition of the model as the representation of the condition of the system, then the consequents of this representation, which according to the laws of this representation must appear, are also the representation of the consequents which must proceed from the original object according to the laws of this original object. The agreement between mind and nature may therefore be likened to the agreement between two systems which are models of one another, and we can even account for this agreement by

Bilder of facts’ (attention here: we do not make to ourselves Bilder of objects). The translation of Pears and McGuinness seems to emphasise the way in which we picture a fact directly; it is not a process which is composed structurally following developing stages until its completion. Facts are there (in logical space) and we ‘transfer’ them by picturing them to ourselves. Ogden appears to be closer to the German text since his translation states that a Bild is not something which rises directly to us as a whole. A Bild is essentially something which we *make* bit by bit (thus *understanding* the whole arrangement of the fact), a process which aims to connect these bits in such a way as to constitute the final Bild (which will represent the certain fact or not). Perhaps we could say that Ogden perceives a Bild as something which is made through its pieces (these pieces can be nothing else but the elements which correspond with objects) (*TLP* 2.13), while Pears and McGuinness seem to perceive a Bild as something which has arisen through the Bild itself. Moreover, we encounter a similar idea with the remark 2.1 in Kant’s work *Critique of Pure Reason* in which he says: ‘By means of outer sense (a property of our mind) we represent to ourselves objects as outside us, and all as in space’ (Kant 1998 p.174).

assuming that the mind is capable of making actual dynamical models of things, and of working with them.

(Hertz 2003 p.177 §428)

While Hertz claims that models serve as representations of their relevant systems, a relation between pictures of the mind, or thoughts, and things of nature, or empirical objects ('material particles' or 'material points'), Wittgenstein considers that thought which is expressed through language serves as a representation of reality. More particularly, atomic sentences represent atomic facts, combinations of objects.

Apart from Hertz's influence on Wittgenstein, George Henrik von Wright, one of Wittgenstein's biographers, recounts the following story with regard to Wittgenstein's inspiration of the 'Bild theory of sentences':

It was in the autumn of 1914, on the Eastern Front. Wittgenstein was reading in a magazine about a lawsuit in Paris concerning an automobile accident. At the trial, a miniature model of the accident was presented before the court. The model here served as a sentence, that is, as a description of a possible state of affairs. It had this function owing to a correspondence between the parts of the model (the miniature houses, cars, people) and things (houses, cars, people) in reality. It now occurred to Wittgenstein that one might reverse the analogy and say that a sentence serves as a model or picture, by virtue of a similar correspondence between its parts and the world.

(Wright 1982 pp.7–8)

According to Wright, the car model showed Wittgenstein correspondence between parts of language and parts of the world. However, Wittgenstein did not need this car model to conceive of the correspondence between its parts and things in the empirical world to use it for the 'Bild theory of sentences'. What the car model might have shown to Wittgenstein?

1.4b From the car model to the Bild theory and finally to the Bild theory of sentences

What the car model might have showed Wittgenstein was the notion of *form*. It is natural to think that Wittgenstein did not need to know the story of the car accident for thinking the correlations between the elements of the world and the elements of language. What the car model probably pushed him to think was the idea of form – the idea of possibilities. The possible ways in which 'elements of the model' ('Elemente des Modells') could be arranged (the form of the model) were the same as the possible

ways in which elements of a part of the empirical world could be arranged (the form of a part of the empirical world). This means that a specific form includes the possibility of a set of relations due to various combinations among its elements but it does not include the possibility of another set of relations due to the non-availability of some other elements. Let us take a model which does not include a specific thing, for example a glass. Since the specific glass does not constitute a part of the model, the elements of the specific model cannot create any combination which will include the specific glass (it is important to remember that we should not conceive of a glass as to constitute a Wittgensteinian object). A form is determined by its elements.

By returning to the car model, we can say that the elements of the model and some empirical objects of reality have similar possibilities of arrangement. In other words, the range of possibilities for the arrangement of the elements of the model is the same as the range of possibilities for the arrangement of elements of a part of the empirical world. Thus, the empirical fact (the car accident) and its relevant model have a sameness of form. This presupposes the following:

- (M1) The elements of the model and the objects of its relevant part of the empirical world are distinct from each other.
- (M2) There are the proper correlations between the elements of the model and the empirical objects of its relevant part of the empirical world.
- (M3) The range of ways in which the elements of the model could have been arranged is the same as the range of ways in which the correlated objects in the world could have been arranged.²⁶

Therefore, the idea of a common form (a common range of possibilities of combination) between a car model and a part of the empirical world (an idea that has as requirements (M1), (M2) and (M3)) requires certain kinds of elements, namely those of the model and some of the empirical world.

The idea of the sameness of form is transferred firstly from the case of Bilder to the case of sentences and then it is generalised to become the form of reality.²⁷ In other words the idea of form in *Tractatus* is related to

²⁶ Here, I hold M2 and M3 as they are presented in M. Morris' work (Morris 2008 p.122).

²⁷ In July 1932, Wittgenstein, among others, says to Waismann: 'I thought that there was "a connection between language and reality"' (*WVC* p.210).

two notions: firstly, the ‘grammatical notion’ or the notion of the ‘logico-syntactical rule’. This means that there is a ‘grammatical order’ of names, atomic sentences and sentences. Secondly, the ‘ontological notion’, that is to say, there is an ‘ontological order’ of objects, atomic facts and facts – all objects combine into atomic facts whose totality is the world divisible into facts. This must be clarified.

Taking into consideration remarks 2.0122, 2.02 and 2.021 (that are related to the distinctiveness of Tractarian objects) and 2.13–2.14 and 2.15 (that are related to the correlations between the distinct elements of a Bild and the distinct elements of an atomic fact (Tractarian objects)) as well as 2.014 and 2.0271 (that are related to the possibility of all situations), the (M1), (M2) and (M3) in terms of a Bild are transformed as follows:

- (B1) The elements of a Bild and the objects of its relevant atomic fact must be distinct from each other.²⁸
- (B2) There must be proper correlations between the elements of a Bild and objects of its relevant atomic fact.
- (B3) The range of ways in which the elements of a Bild could have been arranged is the same as the range of ways in which the correlated objects in an atomic fact could have been arranged.²⁹

(B1), (B2) and (B3) are required for a common form between a Bild and an atomic fact. Here, the notion of ‘form’ requires particular elements, the elements of the Bild and the Tractarian objects which, as we will see below, cannot be conceived of as empirical objects; in other words, they are not the basic elements of experience. Thus, the idea of a common form between a Bild and its relevant atomic fact arises. It is essential for Wittgenstein that Bilder and facts can have the same form. He formulates this as follows: ‘A Bild is a fact’ (*TLP* 2.141). This must be clarified further.

Since the ontological part of the *Tractatus* has been given, which affirms that an atomic fact consists of objects (*TLP* 2.01) and he has formulated remark 2.141, the obvious thought is that, a Bild also consists of distinct elements that are correlated to the elements of its relevant atomic fact

²⁸ Here, I have to clarify that the term ‘distinct’ refers to what Wittgenstein means by the term ‘independent’ in remark 2.0122: ‘Things are independent in so far as they can occur in all *possible* situations’.

²⁹ Here, I hold and B3 as a reflexion of M2 and M3 as they are presented in M. Morris’ work (Morris 2008 p.122).