

Some Passages from “Truth and Correspondence”

1. For, as has often been noted, the formula  
‘Snow is white’ (in our language) is true  $\Leftrightarrow$  Snow is white  
is viewed with the greatest equanimity by pragmatist and coherentist alike. [29]
2. My topic, therefore, can be given a provisional formulation as follows: Is there a sense of  
‘correspond’ other than that explicated by semantic theory, in which empirical truths correspond  
to objects or events in the world? [30]
3. Let us begin with the question : Does truth pertain primarily to forms of words such as  
would correctly be said to express propositions or to the propositions they would be said to  
express? [32]
4. I share the conviction that there is an important sense in which the truth of propositions is  
prior to the truth of the forms of words...[32]
5. Thus our provisional interpretation of the meaning statement is  
S (in L) corresponds to ‘Chicago is large’ in the language we are speaking.  
...The ‘correspondence is a correspondence of *use*, or, as I prefer to say, role...  
There are degrees of likeness of meaning and meaning statements are to be construed as having a  
tacit rider to the effect that the correspondence is in a relevant respect and to a relevant degree.  
[35]
6. It seems to me that the distinguishing feature of conceptual roles is their relation to  
inference. [35-6]
7. ...what we have here is the principle of inference:  
That snow is white is true entails and is entailed by  
That snow is white  
Which governs such inferences as  
That snow is white is true.  
So, Snow is white.  
But if the word ‘true’ gets its sense from this type of inference, we must say that, instead of  
standing for a relation or relational property of statements... ‘true’ is a sign that *something is to  
be done*—for inferring is a doing. [38]
8. (1) S (in L) pictures *aRb*.  
...If we interpret (1) as having the sense of

(1')  $S$  (in L) means  $aRb$

As we have explicated this form, we can make consistent sense of *three* ideas: (a) that elementary statements picture facts; (b) that ' $aRb$ ' does *not* occur in the "ladder language" formula (1) (or rather, occurs in a peculiar way); and (c) that "ladder language" statements are "statements" only in that broad sense in which statements can contain such words as 'shall' or 'ought' or 'correct'. [40]

9. In the passages with which we have been concerned, Wittgenstein has been...conceiving picturing as a relation between facts about linguistic expressions, on the one hand, and facts about nonlinguistic objects, on the other. [43]

10. But what if, instead of construing "picturing" as a relationship between *facts*, we construe it as a relationship between linguistic and nonlinguistic *objects*?...

1. If picturing is to be a relation between objects in the natural order, this means that the linguistic objects in question must also belong to the natural order...Specifically, although we may, indeed must, know that these linguistic objects are subject to rules and principles—are **fraught with "ought"**—we abstract from this knowledge in considering them as objects in the natural order.
2. We must be careful *not* to follow Wittgenstein's identification of complex objects with facts. [44]

11. In the following argument I shall draw heavily on a principle...The principle is as follows: Although to say of something that it *ought* to be done (or *ought not* to be done) in a certain kind of circumstance is not to say that *whenever* the circumstance occurs it *is* done (or *isn't* done), the statement that a person or group of people think of something as something that ought (or ought not) to be done in a certain kind of circumstance entails that *ceteris paribus* they actually *do* (or refrain from doing) the act in question when the circumstance occurs....

I shall put the principle briefly as follows: Espousal of principles is reflected in uniformities of performance. [48]

12. The uniformities to which I am calling particular attention fall into two categories:

1. Statement-statement. These are uniformities that correspond a the overt level to espoused principles of inference....
2. Situation-statement. These are uniformities of the kind illustrated by the person who, in the presence of a green object in standard conditions, thinks, roughly, "Green here now"...

A more elaborate discussion would require mention of a third category of uniformities, involving a transition from statement to situation...[49]

13. What Hume saw, put in terminology reasonably close to his own, was that "natural inference" supplements "recall" and "observation" to generate a growing system of "vivid

ideas,” which constitute a “likeness” (sketchy though it may be) of the world in which we live. [50]

14. Let us suppose...that observation reports have the forms illustrated by

This here now is green

This is one step to the right of that

This is one heartbeat after that

And let us imagine a super-inscriber who “speaks” by inscribing statements in wax and is capable of inscribing inscriptions at an incredible rate, indefinitely many “at once.” [52]

15. The next step is to take into account the fact that our inscriber is, in the full sense, a rational being...Let us imagine that, whatever the form of the reasoning by which one infers from the occurrence of an observed event of one kind to the occurrence of an unobserved event of another...it finds its expression at the inscriptional level in a sequence of two inscriptions, the former of which described the observed event, while the latter describes the inferred event. [54]

16. If it is objected that to speak of a linguistic structure as a *correct* projection is to use normative language and, therefore, to violate the terms of the problem, which was to define ‘picturing’ as a relation *in rerum natura*, the answer is that, while to say of a projection that it is *correct* is, indeed, to use normative language, the principle which, it will be remembered, I am taking as axiomatic assures us that corresponding to every espoused principle of correctness there is a matter-of-factual uniformity of performance. [55]

17. To bring this exploration to an end, the following remarks may serve to highlight the larger-scale structure of the argument:

1. The correspondence for which we have been looking is limited to elementary statements...
2. The foregoing can be construed as an attempt to explain the fundamental kind of role played by matter-of-factual statements...
3. ...the roles of different kinds of statements are different. My argument is that, in the case of matter-of-factual statements...this role is that of constituting a projection in language users of the world in which they live. [55]

18. ...if to understand a language involves knowing (though not at the level of philosophical reflection) that uniformities such as were described in the myth of the perfect inscriber are involved in the use of language and if, therefore, I recognize (though not at the level of philosophical reflection) that, to the extent to which roles are executed and rules conformed to, statements are complex objects in a system that is a picture of natural events, surely I must recognize in my statement ‘/9,7/ is green’ the projection of the object /9,7/. [56]