

Passages from “Naming and Saying” (1962)

1. “The essay adopts the Tractarian view that configurations of objects are expressed by configurations of names.” [103]
2. “Two alternatives are considered: The objects in atomic facts are (1) without exception *particulars*; (2) one or more particulars plus a *universal* (Gustav Bergmann). On (1) a mode of configuration is always an empirical relation: on (2) it is the logical nexus of ‘exemplification’. It is argued that (1) is both Wittgenstein’s view in the *Tractatus* and correct. It is also argued that exemplification is a ‘quasi-semantic’ relation, and that it (and universals) are “in the world” only in that broad sense in which the ‘world’ includes linguistic norms and roles viewed (thus in translating) from the standpoint of a fellow participant.” [103]
3. The crucial passage, of course, is 3.1432, “We must not say: ‘The complex sign “aRb” says “a stands in the relation R to b”’; but we must say, ‘That “a” stands in a certain relation to “b” says *that* aRb.’” [104]
4. “But the crucial point that Wittgenstein is making emerges when we ask ‘What are the parts of the statement in question the relation of which to one another is essential to its character as statement?’” [104]
5. “What Wittgenstein tells us is that while superficially regarded the statement is a concatenation of the three parts ‘a’, ‘R’ and ‘b’, viewed more profoundly it is a two-termed fact, with ‘R’ coming in to the statement as bringing it about that the expressions ‘a’ and ‘b’ are dyadically related in a certain way, i.e. as bringing it about that the expressions ‘a’ and ‘b’ are related as having an ‘R’ between them.” [104]
6. “Indeed, he is telling us that it is philosophically clarifying to recognize that instead of expressing the proposition that a is next to b by writing ‘is next to’ between ‘a’ and ‘b’, we could write ‘a’ in some relation to ‘b’ using only these signs. In a perspicuous language this is what we would do. Suppose that the Jumblelies have such a language. It contains no relation words, but has the same name expressions as our tidied up English. Then we could translate Jumblese into English by making such statements as
 

‘<sup>a</sup><sub>b</sub>’ (in Jumblese) means *a is next to b*

 and be on our way to philosophical clarification.” [105]
7. “[T]o represent that certain objects satisfy an n-adic concept, one makes their names satisfy an n-adic concept.” [105]
8. The second category of unperspicuous name-like expressions for LW is: “those which would not translate at all into that part of a perspicuous language which is used to make statements about what is or is not the case in the world. It is the latter which are in a special sense without meaning, though not in any ordinary sense meaningless. The ‘objects’ or ‘individuals’ or ‘logical subjects’ they mention are pseudo-objects in that to ‘mention them’ is to call attention to those **features of discourse** about what is or is not the case in the world

which ‘show themselves’, i.e. **are present in a perspicuous language not as words, but in the manner in which words are combined.** Thus it is perfectly legitimate to say that there are ‘objects’ other than particulars, and to make statements about them. These objects (complexes aside) are **not in the world, however, nor do statements about them tell us how things stand in the world.**” [106]

9. “Now one can conceive of a philosopher who agrees with Wittgenstein that in a perspicuous language the fact that two objects stand in a dyadic relation would be represented by making their names stand in a dyadic relation, but who **rejects the idea that the only objects or individuals in the world are particulars.** Such a philosopher might distinguish, for example, within the fact that a certain sense-datum (supposing there to be such entities) is green, between two objects, a *particular* of which the name might be ‘a’, and an item which, though equally an *object* or *individual*, is not a *particular*. Let us suppose that the name of this object is ‘green’. Let us say that **green is a universal rather than a particular,** and that among universals it is a quality rather than a relation. According to this philosopher, the perspicuous way of saying that a is green...is by putting the two names ‘a’ and ‘green’ in some relation, the same relation in which we would put ‘b’ and ‘red’ if we wished to say that b is red. Let us suppose that we write ‘Green a’. Our previous discussion suggests the question: What would be the *unperspicuous* way of saying what is said by ‘Green a’, i.e. which would stand to ‘Green a’ as, on Wittgenstein’s view ‘aRb’ stands to, say, ‘ $\overset{a}{b}$ ’? The philosopher I have in mind proposes the following answer:

a exemplifies green.” [107]

10. “I share with Professor Bergmann the sentiment which might be expressed by saying that **ordinary grammar is the paper money of wise men but the gold of fools.**” [108]
11. Summary: “According to the Tractatus, then, the fact that a is below b is *perspicuously* represented by an expression consisting of *two* names dyadically related, and *unperspicuously* represented by an expression containing, in addition to these two names, a two-place predicate expression. According to Professor Bergmann, if I understand him correctly, such facts as that a is below b are perspicuously represented by expressions consisting of *three* names triadically related, and unperspicuously represented by an expression containing, in addition to these three names (suitably punctuated) an expression having the force of ‘exemplifies’. What exactly does this difference amount to? And which view is closer to the truth?” [108]
12. “[T]he difference can be reformulated in such a way as to bring out its kinship with the old issue between realists and nominalists. Wittgenstein is telling us that the only objects in the world are particulars, Bergmann is telling us that the world includes as objects both particulars and universals.” [108]
13. “If we so use the term ‘relation’ that to say of something that it is a relation is to say that it is perspicuously represented in discourse by a configuration of expressions rather than by the use of a separate expression, then **for Bergmann there is...only one relation, i.e. exemplification, and what are ordinarily said to be relations, for example below, would occur in the world as *relata*.**” [109]

14. “To keep matters straight, it will be useful to introduce the term ‘nexus’ in such a way that **to say of something that it is a nexus is to say that it is perspicuously represented in discourse by a configuration of expressions rather than by a separate expression**. If we do this, we can contrast Bergmann and Wittgenstein as follows:

*Wittgenstein*: There are many nexus in the world. Simple relations of matter of fact are *nexus*. All objects or individuals which form a nexus are particulars, i.e. individuals of type 0. There is no relation or nexus of exemplification in the world.

*Bergmann*: There is only one nexus, exemplification. Every atomic state of affairs contains at least one (and, if the thesis of elementarism be true, at most one) individual which is not a particular.

If one so uses the term ‘ineffable’ that to eff something is to signify it by using a name, then Wittgenstein’s view would be that what are ordinarily called relations are ineffable, for they are all nexus and are expressed (whether perspicuously or not) by configurations of names. For Bergmann, on the other hand, what are ordinarily called relations are effed; it is exemplification which is ineffable.” [109]

15. Discussion of attributions of *monadic* properties as “configurations of objects”: “[C]ould there be a configuration of one object?” [110] He discusses passages, and concludes: “the cumulative effect is to buttress the thesis that there is no provision in the *Tractatus* for monadic atomic facts.” [110] “Thus one can imagine a philosopher who says that in a perspicuous language, monadic atomic facts would be represented by writing the name of the single object they contain in various colors or in various styles of type. The idea is a familiar one. Is there any reason to suppose that it was not available to Wittgenstein?” [110]

16. Next, Jumblese is extended to variables. First point is that there can be “neutral styles” of writing names, in which they are *just* names, not yet claims. It is important to WS to work out how Jumblese might handle these things. It is enough for us that it can. He concludes: “The topic of perspicuousness with respect to variables and quantification is an interesting and important one in its own right, and the above remarks have barely scratched the surface.” [114] It is, however, a detour and a distraction from his line of argument.

17. He discusses a bad argument about perspicuity that might lead one to the Bergmannian view: “As I see it, therefore, it is of crucial importance to ontology not to confuse the contrast between *constant* and *variable* with that between *name* and *variable*.” [114] The important thing is that there can be *predicate constants*, even in Jumblese, without our being obliged to understand them as *names*.

18. The conclusion is this: “But I see no reason to infer that because the expression’s being a case of a certain name, and the expression’s pertaining to green are each bound up with a monadic (though not, of course, atomic) fact about the expression, that both its being about a and its being about green come into the picture in the same way, i.e. that they are both *named*.”

**For the being about a and the being about green could each be true of the expression by virtue of monadic facts about it, and still not pertain to its meaning in the same way in any more important sense.** The crucial thing about an expression is the role it plays in the language, and **the fact that a certain expression is an ‘a’ in some style or other, and the fact that it is in boldface, may both be monadic facts and yet play different roles in the language.** In which connection it is relevant to note that the monadic

fact about the expression by virtue of which it pertains to green is not the monadic fact that it is thick, but the monadic fact that it is a thick instance of a name or name variable.” [115]

19. “Before continuing with the substantive argument of this paper, I shall say something more to the historical question as to whether Wittgenstein himself ‘countenanced’ monadic atomic facts.” [115] Another detour, but the whole of Section II is devoted to it. The crux of the issue is this: “Now **if a philosopher combines the two theses, (1) there are no atomic facts involving only one particular, (2) all objects are particulars, it would be reasonable to say that he is committed to a doctrine of bare particulars.** For, speaking informally, he holds that though objects stand in empirical relations, they have no qualities. ... Now in my opinion Copi is correct in attributing to Wittgenstein the second of the above two theses (all objects are particulars). If, therefore, he were correct in attributing to Wittgenstein the first thesis, his claim that Wittgenstein is committed to a doctrine of bare particulars would be sound. Conversely, if Wittgenstein did hold a doctrine of bare particulars, then he was committed to the thesis that there are no monadic atomic facts.” [116]

20. The overall discussion in Section II is nuanced and textually sensitive. WS admits that there are passages on both sides. He concludes by offering two attitudes LW might have taken on the issue of monadic atomic facts: “Thus, perhaps the correct answer to the historical question is that Wittgenstein would have regarded the question ‘Are particulars bare?’ as, in a deep sense, a factual one, a question to which he did not claim to have the answer, and to which, as logician, he was not required to have the answer. The second remark is that Wittgenstein may well have thought that there are monadic atomic facts, indeed that their existence is obvious, but that no statement in ordinary usage represented such a fact, so that no example could be given in the sense of written down.” [120]

21. Footnote 13, at [118] says: “I find here the implication that primitive one-place predicates (configurations)—if not all primitive predicates—come in families (determinates) and that objects are of different logical form if, for example, one exists in the logical space of color, the other in the logical space of sound.”

22. “The danger arises from the fact that such a word as ‘red’, for example, is really three words, an adjective, a common noun and a proper name, rolled into one. Thus we can say, with equal propriety,

The book is red.  
Scarlet is a color.  
Red is a color.” [121]

BB: I think this display is a mistake on Sellars’s part. The middle one should be:

Scarlet is a red.

That is the use as a common noun. (Sadly, we did not fix this, or mark it, in our edition.)

23. Appreciating this danger depends on a subtle but important argument:

“Now what makes this move all the more plausible is that there *is* an object *green* and that there *is* a relation which is often called exemplification, such that if a is *green* then it is also true that a exemplifies *green*. Thus it is tempting indeed to say that  
a exemplifies green

is simply an unperspicuous way of saying what is said perspicuously by

Green a

And the fascinating thing about it is that this claim would be absolutely correct *provided that 'green a' was not taken to say what is ordinarily said by 'a is green'*.

The point stands out like a sore thumb if one leave colors aside and uses a geometrical example. Thus consider the statement

a is triangular

or, for our purposes,

Triangular a

It would clearly be odd to say

a exemplifies triangular

although it is not odd to say

a exemplifies green.

The reason is that 'triangular' unlike 'green' does not function in ordinary usage as both an adjective and a singular term. What we must say is

a exemplifies triangularity.

Now in a perspicuous language, i.e. a language which had a built-in protection against Bradley's puzzle we might say *that a exemplifies triangularity* by concatenating 'a' and 'triangularity' or *that Socrates exemplifies Wisdom* by writing

Socrates : Wisdom.

Our language is not such a perspicuous one, and to bring this out in this connection, we might write,

We must not say, 'The complex sign "a exemplifies triangularity" says "a stands in the exemplification relation to triangularity",' but we must say '*that* "a" stands in a certain relation to "triangularity" says that a exemplifies triangularity.'

Thus it is correct to say that

Green a

says perspicuously what is said by

a exemplifies green

only if 'green' is used in the sense of the singular term 'greenness'. And when it is used in this sense, the statement

Green a

does not have the sense of the ordinary statement

a is green,

though it is logically equivalent to it." [122]

24. "Professor Bergmann thinks that

Green a

consists of two names, 'a', the name of a particular, and 'green', the name of a universal, and, by being their juxtaposition, asserts that the one exemplifies the other. On his view, philosophers who insist that 'a is green' says that a exemplifies green but do not realize that 'a exemplifies green' is simply an unperspicuous way of juxtaposing 'a' with 'green' are attempting to eff the ineffable. **He thinks**, to use the terminology I proposed earlier, **that exemplification is the nexus, the mode of configuration of objects which can only be expressed by a configuration of names**. Professor Bergmann sees configurations of particulars and universals where Wittgenstein saw only configurations of particulars." [123]

25. “But what does

a exemplifies triangularity  
say if it isn’t an unobscured way of saying  
“Triangular a ?”

26. Now if

a exemplifies triangularity  
triangularity is true of a  
triangularity holds of a

are to be elucidated in terms of

That a is triangular is true

then exemplification is no more **present in the world of fact in that narrow sense which tractarians like Professor Bergmann and myself find illuminating**, than is meaning, or truth, *and for the same reason.*” [124] The reason being that both are metalinguistic.

27. “The crucial ineffability in the *Tractatus* concerns the relation between statements and facts. Is there such a relation? And is it ineffable? The answer seems to me to be the following. **There is a meaning relation between statements and facts, but both terms are in the linguistic order.**” [124]

28. “To say that a statement means a fact is to say, for example,  
‘Grün a’ (in German) means *Green a*, and it is a fact that Green a,  
The first conjunct appears to assert a relation between a linguistic and a nonlinguistic item, between a statement and an item in the real order. And the second conjunct to say of this item that it is a fact. As I see it, the first conjunct does assert a relation, but the relation obtains between a German expression and an English expression *as being an expression in our language*. It has the force of  
‘Gruen a’ (in German) corresponds to ‘Green a’ in our language.” [124]

29. “What, then, does it mean to say

That green a is a fact

Clearly this is equivalent to saying

That green a is true

which calls to mind the equivalence

That green a is true  $\equiv$  green a

This, however, is not the most perspicuous way to represent matters, for while the equivalence obtains, indeed necessarily obtains, **its truth depends on the principle of inference—and this is the crux—**

**From ‘that green a is true’ (in our language) to infer ‘green a’ (in our language). And it is by virtue of the fact that we draw such inferences that meaning and truth talk gets its connection with the world. In this sense, the connection is done rather than talked about.**

Viewed from this perspective, Wittgenstein’s later conception of a language as a form of life is already foreshadowed by the ineffability thesis of the *Tractatus*. But to see this is to see that no ineffability is involved. **For while to infer is neither to refer to that which can be**

**referred to, nor to assert that which can be asserted, this does not mean that it is to fail to  
eff something which is, therefore, ineffable.” [125]**