

Some Basic Presuppositions

1. There is an objective reality that exists independently of our representations of it.
2. Statements or propositions are true if, and only if, they correspond to that objective reality.
3. Language is a set of devices for conveying meanings from speakers to hearers.

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1. Just as all my experience is, at bottom, experience *of*—of a reality given to it and independent of it—so all my understanding and, therefore, all my thought and speech are, at bottom, understanding *of*, and thought and speech *about*, that same reality. (If they are not of and about what is actually the case, then they are of and about what could possibly be [or have been] the case. And in any event, they are of and about what could not possibly *not* be the case, i. e., the strictly necessary structure of reality as such that, being the least common denominator of all possibilities, is and must be experienced and, at least implicitly, understood, thought, and spoken about insofar as there is any experience and understanding, thought and speech, at all.)

2. My understanding of reality, however, may always be a misunderstanding of it, and what I think and say about it may always be false rather than true.

3. And yet, however difficult it may be to do so, it is always possible to distinguish correct understanding from misunderstanding, and true thought and speech from false, by appealing, in one way or another, to what we all experience and understand, although here, too, the fallibilism affirmed in 2 above must be acknowledged.

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