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Do Metaphysical Judgments Say Something About the World or Not? Wittgensteinian Roots of Deflationary Metaphysics and its Models

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Many of contemporary philosophers argue against metaphysics putting forward a thesis that metaphysical claims are deflationary. This way of thinking seems to be not only persuasive but above all it rightly expresses a main difficulty of metaphysical inquires. In this paper I am trying to shed a little light on the problem of deflation of metaphysical judgments. In the first section I refer to some Wittgenstein’s ideas from Tractatus logico-philosophicus and I focus on the phenomenon of manifestation as a possible source of deflation of metaphysics. The second section is devoted to the Wittgenstein’s concepts of language games on the one hand and rules on the other; both of them are a key to understanding of the deepest dimensions of deflationary metaphysics. The third section is an elaboration of three models of deflation of metaphysical expressions: 1) deflation in regard to the informative status of metaphysical judgments; 2) deflation in regard to the metasemantic properties of judgments about the world, and 3) deflation in regard to the semantic ground of ontological judgments. The fourth and last part of the paper is an exposition of two crucial problems which metaphysics has to face with. I call the first of them ‘a problem with conceptualization of the metaphysical experience’, whereas the second one is labeled ‘a problem with semantic inclusion of metaphysical expressions into judgments about facts’.