University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Trace: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange

Doctoral Dissertations | Graduate School

8-2011

# Wittgenstein and Aesthetic Reasoning with Stories in the Bioethics Classroom

Michael Woods Nash
*University of Tennessee*, woodsnash@hotmail.com

Recommended Citation
Nash, Michael Woods, "Wittgenstein and Aesthetic Reasoning with Stories in the Bioethics Classroom. " PhD diss., University of Tennessee, 2011.
http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_graddiss/1105

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at Trace: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctoral Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Trace: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. For more information, please contact trace@utk.edu.

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Michael Woods Nash entitled "Wittgenstein and Aesthetic Reasoning with Stories in the Bioethics Classroom." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Philosophy.

John R. Hardwig, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Glenn C. Graber, David Reidy, Thomas F. Haddox

Accepted for the Council:
Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

# WITTGENSTEIN AND AESTHETIC REASONING WITH STORIES IN THE BIOETHICS CLASSROOM

A Dissertation Presented for
the Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Michael Woods Nash
August 2011

## ABSTRACT

Wittgenstein once remarked that the same kind of reasoning that occurs in ordinary conversations about works of art can be found "in Ethics, but also in Philosophy." That observation has been almost entirely overlooked by his commentators. What is aesthetic reasoning? What does it look like in conversations about art? And where might we find examples of such reasoning "in Ethics"? To set the stage for my answers, I begin with an overview of the early Wittgenstein's view of ethics and aesthetics, emphasizing two ideas that were retained in his later view of aesthetic reasoning: the moral importance of non-moral descriptions, and the power of a "picture" to regulate action and thought. I illustrate those ideas by considering the moral influence of Tolstoy's parable of the Good Samaritan on Wittgenstein.

Next, I examine the passage in which Wittgenstein introduced aesthetic reasoning, and I articulate some general features of that concept. I also contend that we learn more about aesthetic reasoning by understanding Wittgenstein's invention of the language-game concept as his reasoning aesthetically "in Philosophy." Furthermore, I argue that the later Wittgenstein's notions of aspect perception and grammatical pictures further inform aesthetic reasoning, revealing that it involves the introduction of grammar that can draw a person's attention to unnoticed aspects of an object and equip him with further descriptions of that object. To illustrate that characterization of aesthetic reasoning, and to offer an example of such reasoning "in Ethics," I return to Tolstoy's parable and show that my interacting with it in a particular way involves aesthetic reasoning.

Finally, I argue that aesthetic reasoning continues to occur in ethics in that it is woven into discussions of stories in bioethics classes. A student can have her grammatical picture of the case that a story presents reshaped as she sees and accepts aspects of that story that she had not noticed, and this, in turn, might influence her ways of seeing and responding morally to other cases. I close by considering whether aesthetic reasoning occurs in ethics in other ways, and I articulate some implications of my work for further Wittgenstein studies.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter Page

I. Introduction ……. 1

II. The Early Wittgenstein's Ethics and Aesthetics …… 6

III. Aesthetic Reasoning ……. 24

IV. Aspect Perception and Aesthetic Reasoning …… 52

V. Grammatical Pictures and Aesthetic Reasoning ……72

VI. Aesthetic Reasoning with Stories in the Bioethics Classroom …. 99

VII. Conclusion ……. 136

List of References …….. 146

Vita …… 149

## ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| BB | *The Blue and Brown Books* |
| CV | *Culture and Value* |
| LC | *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief* |
| LE | "A Lecture on Ethics" |
| M | "Wittgenstein's Lectures in 1930 – 1933" (notes by G.E. Moore) |
| OC | *On Certainty* |
| PI | *Philosophical Investigations* |
| PPF | *Philosophy of Psychology – A Fragment* |
| TLP | *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* |
| Z | *Zettel* |

# Chapter I
# Introduction

For three summers, I was an underground man—a tour guide at Mammoth Cave National Park in Kentucky. Tour paths in the cave are established by the Park Service and, once set, rarely deviate from those routes. But guides are given the liberty of scripting their own tours, choosing which stories to tell and which facts to dig up. Yet, in my day, we younger guides mostly took our cues from the veterans, choosing to stop our tour groups at the regular spots, pose similar questions, and lift our lamps to the same cave features. As a result, millions of visitors are taught to see the cave in the same light. You glimpse the saltpeter mines, hear about slave guides, stop at Giant's Coffin, squeeze through Fat Man's Misery, and hover over the Bottomless Pit. Eventually, you ascend to sunlight and go get ice cream.

But not all of the guides were wedded to their rote routes—not around the clock, at least. Sometimes at night, after the last tour had ended and the cave gates locked, we went exploring. Following weathered maps, we'd search for things of which we'd only heard rumors—mushroom vats, a coffin, a pair of moccasins—or simply feel our way through new tunnels, bending into mystery. Bleary-eyed the next day, I'd lead another tour, taking my group through the same old motions. Yet, sometimes, with the cave exit almost in sight, we'd pass a dark corridor branching off the main path, and a visitor would ask, "Where does that one go?" "Oh, that one?" I'd say. "To some tuberculosis huts." Or, "That one goes to the River Styx. Down there, the fish have no eyes." "Wow," they'd say, "really?" And I'd tell a new story. Suddenly, for this visitor, the tour had changed. Her initial way of seeing the cave—carefully guided as it was by the regular route—was altered, and the cave was seen afresh.

Bioethics instructors are a bit like cave guides. Term after term, we tell stories, and there's a steady temptation to fashion those tales after a single mold—to focus on a fixed cast of

characters, pose similar questions, introduce the same concepts, and, in that way, lead students down narrow, pre-determined paths. We are at risk of teaching them to think about medical situations—and appropriate moral responses to those situations—in rigid ways.

However, it has been my experience that, like the cave visitor who asks, "What's down that way?" and receives a surprising reply, a student can have her initial way of understanding a particular medical situation reshaped through a class discussion. As we will see, such reshaping can be detrimental, but it can also be broadening and illuminating.

In a lecture at Cambridge in 1933, Wittgenstein introduced a concept that, I think, sheds light on the reshaping that a student can experience by participating in a discussion of a story in a bioethics class. That concept is aesthetic reasoning. According to G.E. Moore's notes, Wittgenstein said that such reasoning occurs in conversations about works of art, but he also remarked—without elaboration—that aesthetic reasons are given "in Ethics, but also in Philosophy." What did he mean? To my knowledge, only one of Wittgenstein's commentators has tackled that question, perhaps because—due to the obscurity of its place in print—most are unaware that Wittgenstein even said it. In *Ethics without Philosophy: Wittgenstein and the Moral Life*, James C. Edwards set his sights squarely on that section of Moore's notes. Edwards tied Wittgenstein's remark to both his early and later, value-related comments, and he went so far as to argue that the later Wittgenstein's entire "model" of philosophy was "aesthetic" in that "some of its central features can best be understood by considering the account of aesthetic reasoning recorded in the Moore lectures…."[1]

My debt to Edwards is enormous. Like Edwards, I think Wittgenstein's notion of aesthetic reasoning is connected to both the influence of Tolstoy's *The Gospel in Brief* and his

[1] James C. Edwards, *Ethics without Philosophy: Wittgenstein and the Moral Life* (Tampa, FL: University Presses of Florida, 1982), 131.

early view that value cannot be said but only shown. I discuss these points in chapter two, where I emphasize the moral importance of non-moral descriptions (i.e., one way of showing value) and the basic relationship between the "picture" that a story offers (through those descriptions) and that picture's power to regulate action and thought. Also like Edwards, I think the early Wittgenstein's use of "picture" influenced his later understanding of "grammatical pictures," and, in chapter five, I follow Edwards by investigating the relationship between aesthetic reasoning and grammatical pictures.

In chapter three, I examine Moore's notes on Wittgenstein's 1933 lecture. There, I articulate several, general features of aesthetic reasoning, arguing that my reasoning aesthetically involves my giving another person "further descriptions," drawing her "attention to a thing," and placing "things side by side" for her to compare. Such reasoning might "appeal" to and convince her, bringing her to "see" what I see, Wittgenstein said. On the other hand, my reasoning might not appeal to her in a way that brings her to share my view. Based on this characterization of aesthetic reasoning, I discuss examples of such reasoning in conversations about works of art, and I move beyond Edwards by arguing that Wittgenstein's invention of the language-game concept was an example of his reasoning aesthetically "in Philosophy." I contend that his language-game concept further informs our understanding of aesthetic reasoning.

I go beyond Edwards again in chapter four, where I argue that Wittgenstein's idea of aspect perception gives us a more detailed understanding of what aesthetic reasoning involves—namely, the possibility of having one's way of seeing some object changed by attending to previously-unnoticed aspects of it, which could equip one with new descriptions of that object. Like aesthetic reasoning, Wittgenstein related aspect perception to our ways of seeing works of art—in this case, to paintings and fiction stories. I discuss some of our ways of both continuously

seeing and aspect perceiving historical and genre paintings, arguing that, in relationship to a given painting of either genre, those ways of seeing can coincide. In several ways, that discussion sets up chapters five and six, where I offer examples of uses of stories in which continuous seeing and aspect perception also coincide.

My example in chapter five—which has to do with my interacting in a particular way with Tolstoy's version of the parable of the Good Samaritan—is also an example of my reasoning aesthetically in ethics. By that point in my argument, I will have developed an expanded conception of aesthetic reasoning according to which such reasoning involves the introduction of grammar that can draw a person's attention to unnoticed aspects of an object and equip him with further descriptions of that object. I show that aesthetic reasoning is woven into my use of Tolstoy's parable in that it leads me to see particular objects—myself and some others—through a new grammatical picture and alters my moral understanding.

In chapter six, I contend that Wittgenstein's remark that aesthetic reasoning occurs in ethics remains relevant today in that such reasoning is involved in a contemporary, ethics-oriented practice. More specifically, my thesis is that aesthetic reasoning is woven into discussions of fiction and non-fiction stories in bioethics classes. A participant in such a discussion can have her grammatical picture of the case that a story presents reshaped as she sees and accepts aspects of the story that she had not noticed. As this occurs, her moral response to that case might change, and her new grammatical picture might, in turn, influence her ways of seeing and responding morally to other cases, including those encountered outside the classroom.

Hilary Putnam cautioned that it is especially difficult to talk about Wittgenstein's later philosophy because Wittgenstein "very deliberately refuses to state philosophical theses. His purpose, as he explains, is to change our point of view, not to utter theses. If there were theses in

philosophy, he tells us, everyone would recognize them as trivial."[2] Similarly, Ray Monk observed that, for the later Wittgenstein, the task of philosophy is to look at problems afresh and from a different angle: "In fact," he continued, "this is *all* that we need in philosophy; we do not need a new discovery…a new explanation…[or] a new theory; what we need is a new perspective, a new metaphor, a new picture."[3] Following the later Wittgenstein's method, I do not propose a theory, nor do I seek to defend any far-reaching, normative thesis (e.g., that we *should* reason aesthetically in one or another, ethics-oriented context). Instead, I engage in an extended exposition of Wittgenstein, and I offer examples of activities—in relationship to both art and ethics—that can be characterized as involving aesthetic reasoning. In the concluding chapter, I consider some implications of my work for Wittgenstein studies, and I inquire into the likelihood of our finding aesthetic reasoning in contexts other than the bioethics classroom.

[2] Hilary Putnam, *Pragmatism: An Open Question* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1995), 27.
[3] Ray Monk, *How to Read Wittgenstein* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company Ltd., 2005), 64-65.

## Chapter II
## The Early Wittgenstein's Ethics and Aesthetics

This chapter is a brief exposition of the early Wittgenstein's view of both ethics and aesthetics as found in the *Tractatus*, his lecture on ethics in 1929, and several remarks from his early journals and correspondence. I do not critique or defend his view. Instead, my goal is simply to describe it. Unfortunately, many of his early, value-related remarks are obscure, and, though I appeal to some of his most influential commentators for help articulating those remarks, perhaps I fail to restate his views with greater clarity. Nevertheless, my goal is to highlight four features of his early understanding of value. As I argue in later chapters, each of these was retained and transformed in relationship to his view of aesthetic reasoning: (a) He drew moral inspiration from art, including stories.[4] (b) He thought of ethics and aesthetics as unified—or, as he put it, as "one"—and he often paired them in his lectures and writing. (c) He thought value might be "shown" in actions, attitudes, and works of art. And (d) he began to think of value statements as related in important ways to the particular contexts in which they are and are not uttered.

Beginning with the next chapter, I grapple with this question: What did Wittgenstein mean when, in a 1933 lecture, he said that aesthetic reasons are given in ethics? In trying to answer that question, I think it is helpful to return not only to his early thought (i.e., the four features noted above) but also to some of his own moral experiences—namely, those connected with his reading of Tolstoy's *The Gospel in Brief*, especially its version of the parable of the Good Samaritan. As I will explain, I suspect that, for Wittgenstein, that parable's non-moral description of the Samaritan's actions showed value and, as a depiction of the ideal of love for a

[4] In this chapter, I refer—perhaps somewhat loosely—to "moral inspiration," but, in later chapters, I refine this idea by describing a person's being convinced by aesthetic reasoning (e.g., in relationship to a work of art) and discussing ways in which his being so convinced might influence him later.

neighbor, offered him a picture or framework to which he could conform—and through which he could understand—some of his own actions (e.g., teaching poor children in rural Austria).That is, I suspect that his later view of aesthetic reasoning has roots in his early experience of both (1) the moral import of non-moral descriptions and (2) the basic relationship between the picture that a story offers (through those descriptions) and that picture's power to regulate action and thought. In chapter five, I will return to Tolstoy's parable to illustrate an instance of aesthetic reasoning in ethics. Below, I begin with (a), describing the moral significance of art and literature in the young Wittgenstein's upbringing and practices. After all: "In the beginning was the deed."[5]

## Wittgenstein's Early Experiences of Art and Ethics: Music, Mechanics, and *The Gospel in Brief*

Ludwig was born in Vienna in 1889, the eighth and youngest child of Karl and Leopoldine Wittgenstein. Between 1868 and 1898, Karl enjoyed such success in the iron and steel industry that "the Wittgensteins became the Austrian equivalent of the Krupps, the Carnegies, or the Rothschilds."[6] Their home in Vienna "was known outside the family as the Palais Wittgenstein." They owned another home in Vienna and a country estate.[7] Leopoldine "was, even when judged by the very highest standards, exceptionally musical." Under her guidance, the Wittgenstein home

> became a centre of musical excellence. Musical evenings there were attended by, among others, Brahms, Mahler and Bruno Walter….The blind organist and composer Josef Labor owed his career largely to the patronage of the Wittgenstein family, who held him in enormously high regard. In later life Ludwig Wittgenstein was fond of saying that there had been just six *great* composers: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms—and Labor.[8]

---

[5] In his biography of Wittgenstein, Ray Monk reported that Wittgenstein once suggested that this phrase from Goethe's *Faust* "might serve as a motto for the whole of his later philosophy." Monk continued: "The deed, the activity, is primary, and does not receive its rationale or its justification from any theory we may have of it. This is as true with regard to language and mathematics as it is with regard to ethics, aesthetics and religion." See Ray Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius* (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), 305-06.
[6] Ibid, 7.
[7] Ibid, 8.
[8] Ibid.

While Ludwig's siblings were variously talented in music and painting, he "exhibited no precocious musical, artistic or literary talent, and, indeed, did not even start speaking until he was four years old."[9] Still, he came to share his family's aesthetic tastes, especially their veneration for the Viennese classical tradition. For example, as an adult, Ludwig "would tolerate nothing later than Brahms, and even in Brahms, he once said, 'I can begin to hear the sound of machinery.'"[10] From an early age, his creativity was expressed in matters practical and technical. At age ten, he built a functioning sewing machine. In 1908, "at the age of nineteen, he went to Manchester to pursue research in aeronautics." During his three years at Manchester, he experimented with the design and construction of weather kites, jet engines, and propellers, patenting his own design of the latter. It was also during these years that he became interested in the foundations of math and logic, reading works by Russell and Frege for the first time.[11] Years later, between 1926 and 1928, he designed and supervised the construction of a home for one of his sisters in Vienna. "The result was a highly austere example of Austrian modernism with little attention to comfort that exemplified his exacting standards."[12]

Ray Monk has suggested that the austerity that marked the young Wittgenstein's tastes in music, mechanics, and architecture had, for him, moral—even spiritual—importance. These were the technical and artistic expressions of his struggle to be rigorously honest with himself and others, to have a simple and unadorned character, and to pursue "genius," which Weininger—much of whose *Sex and Character* Wittgenstein took to heart—called "the highest

[9] Ibid, 12.
[10] Ibid, 13.
[11] Ibid, 28-35.
[12] Eric B. Litwack, *Wittgenstein and Value: The Quest for Meaning* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2009), 77.

morality" and "everyone's duty."[13] This moral struggle would only intensify through Wittgenstein's reading and correspondence during his time as a soldier.

When Austria declared war against Russia in 1914, Wittgenstein enlisted as a volunteer in the Austrian army. In this decision, he was motivated far less by nationalism or other political commitments than by a desire to improve himself. Having read William James' *Varieties of Religious Experience*, Wittgenstein felt that he should be willing to face death heroically, that doing so would somehow "consecrate" him. A journal entry from the time reads: "Perhaps the nearness of death will bring light into life. God enlighten me."[14] However, during the early months of the war, Wittgenstein was increasingly lonely and close to despair. He was separated from his friends in England and ridiculed by his fellow soldiers, who found him strange. "What saved him from suicide," Monk wrote, was

> exactly the kind of personal transformation, the religious conversion, he had gone to war to find. He was, as it were, saved by the word. During his first month in Galicia, he entered a bookshop, where he could find only one book: Tolstoy's [*The*] *Gospel in Brief*. The book captivated him. It became for him a kind of talisman: he carried it wherever he went, and read it so often that he came to know whole passages of it by heart. He became known to his comrades as 'the man with the gospels.' For a time he…became not only a believer, but an evangelist, recommending Tolstoy's *Gospel* to anyone in distress.[15]

In a letter dating from this period, Wittgenstein remarked that those unacquainted with Tolstoy's book "cannot imagine what an effect it can have upon a person."[16]

What is it about Tolstoy's book that had such a profound effect on Wittgenstein, and what was that effect? Wittgenstein never answered these questions directly in any record that we have of what he said or wrote. However, in other ways, I think Wittgenstein offered clear answers to those questions. After the war, he taught children in poor villages in rural Austria for

---

[13] Monk, *Duty of Genius*, 3-4; 23-26.
[14] Ibid, 112.
[15] Ibid, 115-16.
[16] Ibid, 116.

many years, and he disavowed the enormous inheritance that he received from his father. These "extraordinary actions," James C. Edwards commented, "reflect his commitment to the 'Christian' values Tolstoy found in the Gospels: love of neighbor, especially the poor and untutored; rejection of personal wealth and affectation; pursuit of simplicity."[17]

Edwards' inclusion of "love of neighbor" in that list was no accident, for, in his journal during the war, Wittgenstein struggled with that very concept, asking himself how he might live according to it.[18] Here, I should note that, in *The Gospel in Brief*, the ideal of love for one's neighbor is found only in the passage that, within Christian tradition, is known as the parable of the Good Samaritan. So, I wish to propose that, before we can understand the moral significance that Wittgenstein attached to his post-war actions, we must first understand Wittgenstein's respect for *The Gospel in Brief*—and, in particular, its presentation of the parable of the Good Samaritan—as a work of art through which the ethical shows itself.

In this section, I set out to show that the early Wittgenstein drew moral inspiration from art, including stories. But that task will not be complete until I discuss a particular story—Tolstoy's version of the parable of the Good Samaritan—as a work of art from which Wittgenstein drew moral inspiration. And, to do that, I must attend to a second feature of the early Wittgenstein's conception of value that I noted in the introduction—his conviction that *value might be shown* in actions, attitudes, and works of art. So, before returning to Tolstoy's parable of the Good Samaritan, I must detour through the early Wittgenstein's distinction between what can be *said* and what must be *shown*.

[17] Edwards, 245.
[18] Ibid, 40-41.

**Saying and Showing: Meaningful Propositions and the Ineffability of Value**

The early Wittgenstein's view that value can only be *shown* must be understood in relationship to what, he claimed, can be *said*, or stated in meaningful propositions. And the latter is tied to what is often called his "picture theory" of language. According to that view of language, as Wittgenstein later wrote, "the words in language name objects—sentences are combinations of such names….Every word has a meaning. This meaning is correlated with the word. It is the object for which the word stands." (PI §1) A meaningful proposition pictures a possible state of affairs in that its words name, and can be correlated with, objects that might constitute that state of affairs. A proposition is true when the possible state of affairs that it depicts exists, and the two—proposition and world—share a single, logical form.[19]

In this way, the early Wittgenstein limited the role of "meaningful propositions…to picturing states of affairs in the world," and, on his view, "value, whether ethical, aesthetic, or religious, is not to be found *in the world*."[20] Because the language of value does not name objects, there can be no meaningful propositions in ethics, aesthetics, and religion. Only the empirical propositions of ordinary description and natural science can be said. Only they are meaningful. (TLP 6.53) For the early Wittgenstein, value is "higher"—or "outside the world" (TLP 6.41)—and propositions "cannot express anything higher." (TLP 6.42) "It is clear that ethics cannot be expressed. Ethics is transcendental. (Ethics and aesthetics are one.)"

[19] Han-Johann Glock, *A Wittgenstein Dictionary* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1996), 298-304.
[20] Monk, *How to Read Wittgenstein*, 51.

(TLP 6.421)[21] According to Glock, Wittgenstein regarded ethics and aesthetics as one in that he associated both with a mystical view of the world *sub specie aeternitatis*: "'Ethics and aesthetics are one' not just because they are ineffable, which is merely a precondition for their identity, but because both are based on a mystical attitude which marvels at the existence of the world, and is content with its brute facts…."[22] A journal entry from 1916 reads: "The work of art is the object seen *sub specie aeternitatis*; and the good life is the world seen *sub specie aeternitatis*. This is the connection between art and ethics. The usual way of looking at things sees objects as it were from the midst of them, the view *sub specie aeternitatis* from outside."[23] This unity of ethics and aesthetics is a feature of the early Wittgenstein's thought that was retained and transformed in his later thought, as I noted in the introduction.

Here, I want to draw together several threads that I have been following in this chapter. As we have seen, the early Wittgenstein held that value is ineffable and transcends the world of facts: "The sense of the world must lie outside the world. In the world everything is as it is and happens as it does happen. *In* it there is no value…." (TLP 6.41) Furthermore, he claimed that ethics and aesthetics are one in that they are "based on a mystical attitude which marvels at the existence of the world" from a perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*. These claims parallel one another: "sense of the world," or "value," parallels ethics and aesthetics, while "outside the world" parallels the perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*. In other words, Wittgenstein *identified*

---

[21] Against "therapeutic" readings of the *Tractatus*—like those advanced by Cora Diamond, James Conant, and others—I have sided with the "standard interpretations on which the book's sentences advance genuine claims which make up the steps of an argument about the representational character of language and on which its framing description of its sentences as nonsense is a conclusion which follows from that argument." In other words, I think, as Alice Crary put it, that the early Wittgenstein supposed "that the book's metaphysical sentences, although officially nonsensical by [his] lights, nevertheless somehow succeed in gesturing at what they fail to say." See Alice Crary, "Introduction," in Alice Crary and Rupert Read, eds., *The New Wittgenstein* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 12.
[22] Glock, 108.
[23] Monk, *Duty of Genius*, 143.

value, or the sense of the world, with a God-like perspective. He stated this clearly in another journal entry from 1916: "The meaning of life, i.e., the meaning of the world, we can call God."[24] And the next line, to which I will return later, reads: "And connect with this the comparison of God to a father."[25] In a slightly different way, the *Tractatus* brings these ideas together: "There is indeed the inexpressible. This *shows* itself; it is the mystical." (TLP 6.522) In short, ethics and aesthetics are inexpressible, but they are visible in, or manifested by, the mystical view *sub specie aeternitatis*. It seems that Wittgenstein imagined that mystical perspective as emanating value—like divine light flowing from God. But what did Wittgenstein mean by "God" in statements like "The meaning of life, i.e., the meaning of the world, we can call God"?

The early Wittgenstein's use of the word "God" was not entirely consistent with any religious orthodoxy. This is evident from several journal entries that occur alongside those noted above: "There are two godheads: the world and my independent I." And: "The world is *given* me, i.e., my will enters the world completely from the outside as into something that is already there." Also: "Certainly it is correct to say: Conscience is the voice of God."[26] So, it seems that, for the early Wittgenstein, one sense of "God" was identified with his own will or conscience that could stand apart from the world of facts. But, whether or not that is correct, the more important point for my purposes is this: The early Wittgenstein held that a person could attain something like a divine vantage point, or a mystical attitude *sub specie aeternitatis*, and that that perspective unifies and shows ethics and aesthetics.

---

[24] As cited in Edwards, 33.
[25] Monk, *Duty of Genius*, 140-41.
[26] Ibid, 141-42.

Now, I want to suggest that there is a peculiar tension in the early Wittgenstein's conception of value. As I have tried to show, Wittgenstein claimed that value emanates from the view *sub specie aeternitatis*. However, as I will discuss below, he also suggested that value is shown or expressed by *that which is seen or done* from that perspective. The problem here is that, for the early Wittgenstein, value is not supposed to be in the world, yet that which is done or seen from the perspective *sub specie aeternitatis* (e.g., a work of art) is, in fact, in the world. In short, the tension is this: If the world is only "the totality of facts," how could anything in the world express value?

To answer that question, I want to consider, first, part of the correspondence between Wittgenstein and his friend, Paul Engelmann, in 1917. They were discussing a particular work of art—a poem—and both men regarded the poem as showing value. After noting that, at this time, Wittgenstein was probably at work on the inexpressibility of the ethical and the aesthetic,[27] Monk continued:

> In a letter dated 4 April 1917, Engelmann enclosed "Count Eberhard's Hawthorn," Uhland's poem recounting the story of a soldier who, while on crusade, cuts a spray from a hawthorn bush; when he returns home he plants the sprig in his grounds, and in old age he sits beneath the shade of the fully grown hawthorn tree, which serves as a poignant reminder of his youth. The tale is told very simply, without adornment and without drawing any moral. And yet, as Engelmann says, "the poem as a whole gives in 28 lines the picture of a life."[28]

Engelmann also called the poem a "wonder of objectivity" and remarked further: "Almost all other poems…attempt to express the inexpressible, [but] here that is not attempted, and precisely because of that it is achieved."[29] Wittgenstein agreed: "And this is how it is: if only you do not try to utter what is unutterable then *nothing* gets lost. But the unutterable will be—unutterably—

[27] Ibid, 150.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid, 150-51. For clarity, I added the word in brackets.

*contained* in what has been uttered!"[30] So, for Engelmann and Wittgenstein, this poem expressed the inexpressible, and it did so, apparently, by presenting a "picture" of a good life without resorting to moral language. Yet, how can this poem—something in the world—express the inexpressible, for value is not supposed to be in the world? For Wittgenstein, the answer, I think, was that the poem satisfies two criteria: (1) It contains only meaningful propositions. Without using value terms such as "good" or "noble" or "honor," the poem describes Count Eberhard in ordinary, non-moral language. (2) It emanates from, or is a manifestation of, the view *sub specie aeternitatis*. The poem is like divine light that, having entered the world, is no longer transcendent but remains an expression of the transcendent. In this way, the divine shows itself in the world. So, ethics and aesthetics can be expressed in the world by a work of art as long as that work manifests the view *sub specie aeternitatis* and does not "attempt to express the inexpressible" by using the language of value.

Earlier, I proposed that, before we can understand the moral significance that Wittgenstein attached to his "Christian," post-war actions, we must first understand Wittgenstein's respect for *The Gospel in Brief*—and, in particular, its presentation of the parable of the Good Samaritan—as a work of art through which the ethical shows itself. Now, having explained how, for Wittgenstein, "Count Eberhard's Hawthorne" qualified as a work of art through which the ethical shows itself, I want to contend that *The Gospel in Brief* also qualified in that, *for the most part*, it satisfies the same two criteria: (1) it contains only meaningful propositions, and (2) it expresses the inexpressible in that it emanates from the view *sub specie aeternitatis*.

[30] Ibid, 151.

In characterizing *The Gospel in Brief*, the above *caveat* "for the most part" applies only to the first criterion, for, at times, Tolstoy's Jesus uses moral language, as when he issues commands and speaks of "evil."[31] Nevertheless, I think the profound impact of Tolstoy's book—like that of Uhland's poem—on Wittgenstein can be attributed to its powerful uses of non-moral language. As Edwards put it, Tolstoy, for the most part, "apparently thought it sufficient to harmonize the writings of the four evangelists into one coherent narrative, to restate Jesus' words in slightly different terms, and then to trust those words to do their task."[32] Here is Tolstoy's version of the parable of the Good Samaritan:

> A teacher of the law wished to try Jesus, and said: "What am I to do in order to receive the true life?" Jesus said: "You know, —love your Father, God, and him who is your brother through your Father, God; of whatever country he may be." And the teacher of the law said: "This would be well, if there were not different nations; but as it is, how am I to love the enemies of my own people?"
>
> And Jesus said: "There was a Jew who fell into misfortune. He was beaten, robbed, and abandoned on the road. A Jewish priest went by, glanced at the wounded man, and went on. A Jewish Levite passed, looked at the wounded man, and also went by. But there came a man of a foreign, hostile nation, a Samaritan. This Samaritan saw the Jew, and did not think of the fact that Jews have no esteem for the Samaritans, but pitied the poor Jew. He washed and bound his wounds, and carried him on his ass to an inn, paid money for him to the innkeeper, and promised to come again to pay for him. Thus shall you also behave toward foreign nations, toward those who hold you of no account and ruin you. Then you will receive true life."[33]

Earlier, I noted that, in *The Gospel in Brief*, the ideal of love for one's neighbor is found only in this parable—or, as Tolstoy put it, love for one's "enemies" and "brother through…God"—and that, in his journals, the early Wittgenstein struggled with how he might live according to that ideal. I also noted this journal entry from 1916: "The meaning of life, i.e., the meaning of the world, we can call God. And connect with this the comparison of God to a father." That

[31] For example, see Leo Tolstoy, *The Gospel in Brief* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 2008), 118-19.
[32] Edwards, 30.
[33] Tolstoy, 98.

"comparison of God to a father" occurs, of course, in this parable, and it is one of the dominant themes of Tolstoy's book.[34] Now, in discussing this parable, I want to bring these points together with my previous discussion of value that shows itself. In doing so, I hope to shed light on the ways in which this parable had such a profound impact on the early Wittgenstein.

The Jewish teacher of the law is stumped. He cannot imagine loving the enemies of his people, so Tolstoy's Jesus tells a story that might allow him to imagine loving them. For Wittgenstein, that story, like Uhland's poem, could express the inexpressible in that it satisfies the two criteria discussed above in relationship to Uhland's poem. First, it uses ordinary, non-moral language. Because the story contains only meaningful propositions, it can be *said*. Second, the story *shows* by presenting a "picture"—in this case, a picture of the Samaritan's actions toward a "brother" through his "Father, God"—that resonated with Wittgenstein's conscience. Here, recall that the early Wittgenstein regarded "conscience" as "the voice of God" and that he compared "God" to a "father." Accordingly, it is plausible to suppose that Wittgenstein regarded the parable as, like Uhland's poem, emanating from God, or his conscience, "outside the world." In that way, the parable expressed the perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*. So, in reading this parable, Wittgenstein stood in a position analogous to that of the teacher of the law who hears the parable, for both are presented with a picture through which they might imagine how to live differently. Edwards wrote:

> When Wittgenstein said that Tolstoy's book on the Gospels had saved his life, he was affirming a mysterious but real connection between reading that book and the alteration of his sensibilities. By reading one of Jesus' stories—frequently just a description of a familiar empirical phenomenon, like a storm washing away a house built on sand, to which description is appended an injunction like "He who hath ears to hear, let him hear"—one's attitude toward one's world can be radically changed.[35]

[34] Ibid, 2-3.
[35] Edwards, 52.

Later, when I discuss the way in which aesthetic reasoning can transform a person, I will relate the later Wittgenstein's conception of "grammatical pictures" to his earlier use of the term "picture" to characterize what he thought Uhland's poem and some passages from Tolstoy's book offer their readers. For now, I will simply note that I think Edwards was correct to speak of Tolstoy's book as altering Wittgenstein's attitude or sensibilities because, like a parable, aesthetic reasons offer a person a new vision or framework for—or a new way to imagine—action and thought. To offer a *parable* is, in etymological terms, to *cast something alongside*—that is, to offer a story to which a reader or hearer might compare and conform her life.

To conclude this section, I think we can now understand the moral significance that Wittgenstein attached to his "Christian," post-war actions: For him, those actions expressed the mystical attitude from which he thought the book itself proceeded, and he regarded his actions as conforming to those of the Samaritan in Tolstoy's parable. In other words, for Wittgenstein, *The Gospel in Brief* showed value in its descriptive uses of non-moral language, and he, in turn, drew moral inspiration from that book to show value in his attitude and actions that fit one of its descriptions. Glock put all of this succinctly when he said that, for the early Wittgenstein, value might become visible, or be shown, "in actions, attitudes or works of art."[36] And as Edwards wrote: "The content of [Wittgenstein's] ethical affirmation was wholly in his actions, and in the meaning they had for him. His life shows his affirmation of simplicity, frugality, and effective, direct service to the less fortunate."[37]

Below, in the final section of this chapter, I attend to Wittgenstein's lecture on ethics to highlight a fourth feature of his early conception of value: While, for the Wittgenstein of 1929,

[36] Glock, 108.
[37] Edwards, 64.

value remained ineffable, this lecture suggests that he began to regard value statements as related in important ways to the particular contexts in which we are tempted to utter them.

**The Lecture on Ethics: Hints of Wittgenstein's Later Turn to Linguistic Use and Context**

After the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein's claim that value is ineffable appeared again in the lecture on ethics that he gave at Cambridge in November, 1929.[38] That lecture began: "My subject, as you know, is Ethics and I will adopt the explanation of that term which Professor Moore has given in his book *Principia Ethica*. He says: 'Ethics is the general enquiry into what is good.' Now I am going to use the term Ethics in a slightly wider sense, in a sense in fact which includes what I believe to be the most essential part of what is generally called Aesthetics." (LE 4) Here, as in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein paired ethics and aesthetics, and he thought it was possible to speak simultaneously of "the most essential part" of both by insisting on the ineffability of what he called "absolute value." He said that we can use a value word, such as "good," in a meaningful proposition only in its trivial or relative sense, as in "You are a good chess player." This is because, in such a proposition, the value term merely relates something to a predetermined standard or purpose. In these cases, he said, the proposition can be restated as a factual description that lacks the value word, as in "You have a thorough understanding of chess strategy, and you often win." Wittgenstein claimed that, in this way, "all judgments of relative value can be shown to be mere statements of fact…." (LE 6) "By contrast," he went on, "the absolute sense [of a value word] is elusive, since no factual statement can ever be or logically imply an absolute judgment of value such as 'You ought to behave decently.'"[39] On his view, such statements are meaningless because they are not—and cannot be inferred from or reduced to—statements of fact, which, according to his "picture theory" of language, are the only

[38] On the date and occasion of this lecture, see Monk, *Duty of Genius*, 276-77.
[39] Glock, 108.

meaningful statements. So, his view that statements of absolute value are meaningless was based on his earlier, "narrow criterion of meaningfulness…according to which a statement is meaningful if and only if it is factual (where 'factual' encompasses both ordinary statements designating states of affairs as well as the statements of science)."[40] In this lecture, as in the *Tractatus*, his view was that both ethical and aesthetic propositions are meaningless.

In the same month (November, 1929), Wittgenstein reaffirmed that view with these remarks in his notebook: "What is Good is Divine too. That, strangely enough, sums up my ethics. Only something supernatural can express the Supernatural." (CV 5) Because the propositions of human language are merely natural, they cannot express "Supernatural" value—that is, ethics, aesthetics, and religion—which is "outside the world," as the *Tractatus* had said. So, just as Wittgenstein began this lecture by casting his remarks against the background of Moore's *Principia Ethica*, it seems that he also echoed Moore's famous claim that the moral good transcends definition. Ethics—and, Wittgenstein added, aesthetics—are indefinable and ineffable.

I side with the majority of commentators on Wittgenstein's philosophy of language in holding that, during the 1930s, he abandoned the "narrow criterion of meaningfulness" that had led him to regard value as ineffable. As noted earlier, he came to acknowledge that he had held "a particular picture of the essence of human language. It is this: the words in language name objects—sentences are combinations of such names. –In this picture of language we find the roots of the following idea: Every word has a meaning. This meaning is correlated with the word. It is the object for which the word stands." (PI §1) In both the *Tractatus* and in his lecture on ethics, Wittgenstein had reasoned that, because there are no "objects" for which the value words

[40] E.D. Klemke, "Wittgenstein's Lecture on Ethics," *Journal of Value Inquiry* 9 (Summer 1975), 124-25.

of ethics and aesthetics "stand," those words must be meaningless. "Ought" and "decently," for example, do not name objects. However, as we will see, Wittgenstein came to believe that the problem with his early "picture of language" was that "not everything that we call language" is included in that picture. (PI §3) Early in the next chapter, I seek to describe the fresh approach to language—including value language—that he began carving out in the early 1930s.

Finally, I want to suggest that Wittgenstein's lecture on ethics contains a hint of that fresh approach to language. There, beside his assertions that statements of absolute value are meaningless, he asked: When we utter such statements, "what have we in mind and what do we try to express?" (LE 7) In answering that question, Wittgenstein described several experiences that he had whenever he was tempted to use a value word in its absolute sense. One of those experiences further evinces the continuity of thought between the *Tractatus* and this lecture: It was "the mystical experience of wonder at the existence of the world."[41] In this way, Wittgenstein here associated value with a mystical, ineffable perspective "outside the world," as he had put it in the *Tractatus*. In this lecture, he identified two other experiences that tempted him to utter statements of absolute value: (1) the experience of feeling absolutely safe, that nothing could injure him, and (2) the experience of guilt.[42] Now, apart from the *content* of these experiences, I think it is more important to note the fact that, in 1929, Wittgenstein *described experiences* at all. His doing so seems to mark a turning point: Instead of continuing to attend only to propositions and their alleged logical form, Wittgenstein began to reflect on the various contexts in which a person might, might only be tempted to, or simply would not utter such propositions. As Glock commented, Wittgenstein was just beginning to believe that "we must focus not on the appearance of ethical terms, which resembles that of other words, but on their

[41] Glock, 108.
[42] Ibid, 108-09.

specific role within our whole culture….” For the later Wittgenstein, Glock continued, the ethical “*shows* itself no longer in mystical attitudes of a solipsistic self, but in social patterns of action. As a result, sibylline pronouncements on the indefinability or ineffability of ethical terms give way to (underdeveloped) investigations into their use….”[43] By asking what Wittgenstein meant when he said that aesthetic reasoning occurs in ethics, I want to recommence some of those underdeveloped investigations into our uses of moral language. In the next chapter, I explore the passage in which Wittgenstein introduced his conception of aesthetic reasoning.

## Summary

In this chapter, I briefly surveyed the early Wittgenstein’s conception of value, identifying several ideas that presage his later view of aesthetic reasoning. I argued that Wittgenstein drew moral inspiration from art and that, although he regarded value statements as ineffable, he thought value might be *shown* in attitudes, works of art, and actions. More specifically, I contended that Wittgenstein thought value proceeds from a mystical perspective *sub specie aeternitatis* and that that perspective can be expressed in works of art (e.g., Uhland’s poem “Count Eberhard’s Hawthorn” and Tolstoy’s *The Gospel in Brief*) and in actions that such works prompt. Furthermore, in light of the profound influence of Tolstoy’s book on Wittgenstein, I took Tolstoy’s parable of the Good Samaritan as my focal point for this chapter’s argument. I suggested that, for Wittgenstein, that parable’s non-moral description of the Samaritan’s actions showed value and, as a depiction of the ideal of love for a neighbor or an enemy, offered him a picture or framework to which he could conform—and through which he could understand—some of his own actions (e.g., teaching poor children in rural Austria).

[43] Ibid, 109.

Finally, in Wittgenstein's 1929 lecture on ethics, I found hints of his beginning to think of value statements in relationship to the contexts in which they are uttered.

Admittedly, there are numerous problems with Wittgenstein's early view of ethics and aesthetics—not the least of which is the obscurity of his notion of the mystical perspective *sub specie aeternitatis*—but I have not tried to resolve these difficulties. Instead, I have only sought to articulate and clarify his position, noting that, anyway, he abandoned the central premise from which that view issued. In later chapters, I will return to the four features of that view that I have emphasized, arguing that they resurface and are transformed in his conception of aesthetic reasoning. More specifically, in discussing aesthetic reasoning in ethics, I seek to show that view's affinity with his early experience of both (1) the moral import of non-moral descriptions (e.g., Tolstoy's) and (2) the basic relationship between the picture that a story offers (through those descriptions) and that picture's power to regulate action and thought.

## Chapter III
## Aesthetic Reasoning

When Wittgenstein abandoned his picture theory of language—the move that, on the traditional view of his work, distinguishes his early period from his later—his understanding of value language also changed. But the later Wittgenstein's comments on value—especially ethics—are sparse, and there is no scholarly consensus on the correct way to categorize his later views on the language of ethics, aesthetics, and religion.[44] In this chapter, and throughout this work, I will not try to place the later Wittgenstein in any category in relationship to value language. Instead, my aim is in another direction: I want to explore what Wittgenstein might have meant when he said—in what I call "the Moore passage" of a 1933 lecture—that aesthetic reasoning occurs in ethics. Most of this chapter is dedicated to an exposition of the Moore passage, and my goal is to offer a clearer view of his understanding of aesthetic reasoning. That passage has been almost entirely ignored by Wittgenstein's commentators, but there are three reasons for which I think it is very important.

First, by exploring the Moore passage, we will see that Wittgenstein had a unique and intriguing understanding of what reasoning in ethics can involve. As I will explain, Wittgenstein's view of aesthetic reasoning is a product of his observations regarding what we do when we try to convince another of something in ordinary, non-academic discussions about works of art. He said that we offer the other person "further descriptions," try to "draw [her] attention to a thing," and "place things side by side" for her to compare. Such reasoning might "appeal" to her and convince her, bringing her to "see" what we see. On the other hand, such

[44] In this vein, Litwack noted that Wittgenstein "has been characterized as a relativist, a realist, a proto-postmodernist, a forerunner of functionalism, a behaviourist and an anti-philosopher, among other things." See Litwack, 1.

reasoning might not convince her, and our conversation might reach "an end," he said, with our views unaligned. Based on these features of aesthetic reasoning and Wittgenstein's examples, I contend that, when he remarked that aesthetic reasons are given in ethics, he was referring to ordinary, non-academic conversations about ethics. In this chapter and the next, I also introduce my own examples of aesthetic reasoning about works of art. Then, in chapter five, I will be in a position to transpose the features of aesthetic reasoning noted above into a detailed example of such reasoning in an ordinary conversation about ethics.[45]

In chapter six, that example will serve as a basis for my contention that Wittgenstein's remark that aesthetic reasoning occurs in ethics remains relevant today, which is another reason that the Moore passage is important. More specifically, in chapter six, I will argue that aesthetic reasoning is woven into discussions of fiction and non-fiction stories in bioethics classes. As a participant in one of those discussions accepts aesthetic reasons, she might experience alterations in her ways of seeing and responding morally to some real or imaginary medical situations.

There is a third reason that the Moore passage is important: There, Wittgenstein claimed that such reasoning occurs "in Philosophy." What did he mean by that? As I argue in this chapter, Wittgenstein regarded aesthetic reasoning as what he called a "blurred" concept, which is a concept that can only be explained and understood completely by considering examples of its occurrence. One way of reasoning aesthetically, I contend, is through what Wittgenstein described as "the construction of fictional concepts" (CV 85), and I propose that his own construction of the fictional concept of a language-game is an example of his performing aesthetic reasoning "in Philosophy." If that proposal is correct, then, by briefly exploring the

[45] Here, I am using the term "conversation" loosely, for, as we will see, aesthetic reasoning can occur in an interpersonal discussion, but it can also be experienced in "conversation" with oneself—that is, in solitary reflection.

fictional concept of a language-game, we will gain a clearer view of what aesthetic reasoning can involve. Furthermore, attending to the language-game concept is important because the fact that Wittgenstein continued to use that concept after 1933 supports my contention that he maintained his notion of aesthetic reasoning, though he never again discussed it explicitly. Finally, if, as I propose, Wittgenstein's invention and use of the language-game concept were an example of his reasoning aesthetically in philosophy, then his conception of aesthetic reasoning sheds light on his later philosophical methods—a point that I elaborate in chapter four. Below, before discussing the Moore passage directly, I attend to the lecture notes that surround that passage, which make it clear that, by the time Wittgenstein gave this lecture, (a) he had already invented his language-game concept and (b) his view of value language was no longer Tractarian.

**The Admissibility of Value Language and the Beginning of "Language-Game"**

Between Wittgenstein's lecture on ethics in 1929 and his death in 1951, he wrote and lectured very little about ethics. An important exception occurred at Cambridge, sometime late in the academic year 1932-33, when Wittgenstein said that he would lecture on "the grammar of ethical expressions, or, e.g., of the word 'God.'"[46] (M 276) While we do not have a transcript of that lecture, we have G.E. Moore's copious notes, which often include direct quotations from Wittgenstein. Yet, despite Wittgenstein's stated intention to lecture on ethics, Moore told us that he, in fact, "said very little about the grammar of such words as 'God,' and very little also about that of ethical expressions. What he did deal with at length was not Ethics but Aesthetics,"

[46] Moore placed Wittgenstein's lecture on "the grammar of ethical expressions" in group (III) of his notes, which he dated to May 1932 and to the 1932-33 academic year. But, for the sake of simplicity, I will refer to Wittgenstein's lecture—or perhaps they were lectures—on "the grammar of ethical expressions" as "a 1933 lecture" because Moore's notes on this topic are located near the end of his 1930-33 notes on Wittgenstein. So, because of that location, I think it is more likely that the notes on ethics date to 1933 than to 1932. See Moore, 236-37.

though Wittgenstein insisted: "Practically everything which I say about 'beautiful' applies in a slightly different way to 'good.'" (M 276)

In the following portion of Moore's notes, Wittgenstein related uses of the word "game" to uses of the words "beautiful" and "good." He suggested that each of these words has various meanings and that each might have no essential meaning. Moore wrote:

> He introduced his whole discussion of Aesthetics by dealing with one problem about the meaning of words, with which he said he had not yet dealt. He illustrated this problem by the example of the word "game," with regard to which he said both (1) that, even if there is something common to all games, it doesn't follow that this is what we mean by calling a particular game a "game," and (2)…that there is "a gradual transition" from one use [of "game"] to another, although there may be nothing in common between the two ends of the series. And he seemed to hold definitely that there is nothing in common in our different uses of the word "beautiful," saying that we use it "in a hundred different games"—that, e.g., the beauty of a face is something different from the beauty of a chair or a flower or the binding of a book. And of the word "good" he said similarly that each different way in which one person, A, can convince another, B, that so-and-so is "good" fixes the meaning in which "good" is used in that discussion—"fixes the grammar of that discussion"; but that there will be "gradual transitions," from one of these meanings to another, "which will take the place of something in common." In the case of "beauty" he said that a difference of meaning is shown by the fact that "you can say more" in discussing whether the arrangement of flowers in a bed is "beautiful" than in discussing whether the smell of lilac is so. (M 276-77)

This section of Moore's notes is separated by only two paragraphs from a passage that I will quote later—what I call "the Moore passage," in which Wittgenstein first introduced his notion of aesthetic reasoning. However, before turning to the Moore passage and aesthetic reasoning, I have two tasks to complete. First, drawing on the paragraph quoted above, I show that Wittgenstein is already later—that is, he has already broken with his early view of language, including value language. For the later Wittgenstein, there can be meaningful uses of value language. Second, I point out that, at the time that Moore took these notes, Wittgenstein had already invented his notion of a language-game, and I briefly introduce that concept. These points are important because, later, they will help me argue for two, further claims: (1) *Whatever*

Wittgenstein thought reasoning aesthetically in ethics involves, on his view, such reasoning could, in principle, include meaningful uses of value language. (In fact, as we will see, understanding value language through his language-game concept, Wittgenstein held that *any* act of communication could, in principle, include meaningful uses of value language. So, if aesthetic reasoning in ethics—whatever that is—were to include meaningful uses of value language, it would not be unique in that regard.) (2) Wittgenstein's use of the language-game concept was an example of his reasoning aesthetically. So, as noted above, by briefly exploring that concept, we will gain a clearer view of what aesthetic reasoning can involve.

**The Admissibility of Value Language**

As discussed in chapter two, the early Wittgenstein's view of language depended upon a narrow criterion of meaningfulness that excluded value language from the domain of meaningful propositions. According to that early picture of language, "the individual words in language name objects" and "sentences are combinations of such names." (PI §1) Furthermore, the early Wittgenstein had assumed that language is like a bridge linking thought and the world. In the *Tractatus*, his chief presupposition had been that thought, language, and the world share "a single 'logical form'" that "a philosopher might uncover and reveal."[47] When he returned to Cambridge in 1929, that picture of the essence of language began to crack. One of its faults shook during a conversation he had with Piero Sraffa, an Italian economist. In that conversation, Wittgenstein insisted "that a proposition and that which it describes must have the same 'logical form.' To this, Sraffa made a Neapolitan gesture of brushing his chin with his fingertips, asking: 'What is the logical form of *that*?'"[48] This story, Monk continued,

> provides a good example of the kind of thing [the later] Wittgenstein means when he

[47] Monk, *How to Read Wittgenstein*, 64.
[48] Ibid.

> says…that certain preconceived ideas in philosophy can only be got rid of by "turning our whole examination round." We need to look at the problem afresh, as it were from a different angle. In fact, this is *all* that we need in philosophy; we do not need a new discovery…a new explanation…[or] a new theory; what we need is a new perspective, a new metaphor, a new picture.[49]

In this way, the earlier Wittgenstein's picture of the essence of language crumbled, for Wittgenstein saw that—among other things—we regularly communicate in ways (e.g., gesturing, using words that do not name objects) that do not instantiate the single "logical form" that he had presumed to be shared by thought, language, and the world.[50] And, of course, some of those ways of communicating involve our using value words, such as "beautiful" and "good."

I have spoken intentionally of the early Wittgenstein's view of language as a "picture" that he later renounced.[51] In *Philosophical Investigations*, he discussed his rejection of that picture:

> *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (4.5): "The general form of a proposition is: This is how things are." –That is the kind of proposition one repeats to oneself countless times. One thinks that one is tracing nature over and over again, and one is merely tracing round the frame through which we look at it. A *picture* held us captive. And we couldn't get outside it, for it lay in our language, and language seemed only to repeat it to us inexorably. When philosophers use a word—"knowledge," "being," "object," "I," "proposition/sentence," "name"—and try to grasp the *essence* of the thing, one must always ask oneself: is the word ever actually used in this way in the language in which it is at home? –What *we* do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use. (PI §§114-16)

The paragraph from Moore's notes cited earlier includes examples of Wittgenstein's trying to bring value words back to their everyday use. There, Wittgenstein insisted that we need not

---

[49] Ibid, 64-65.

[50] In his memoir of Wittgenstein, Norman Malcolm wrote: "Sraffa's example produced in Wittgenstein the feeling that there was an absurdity in the insistence that a proposition and what it describes must have the same 'form'. This broke the hold on him of the conception that a proposition must literally be a 'picture' of the reality it describes." Malcolm also said that Sraffa's gesture and question "precipitated the destruction" of the early Wittgenstein's conception of language. See Norman Malcolm, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Memoir* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 57-58.

[51] My using "picture" in this way is not be confused with the common description of the early Wittgenstein's view of language as a "picture theory" of language, according to which a proposition is a logical depiction of the reality to which it might correspond.

suppose that any particular value word has a single meaning or essence. Instead, as Moore wrote, "he seemed to hold definitely that there is nothing in common in our different uses of the word 'beautiful,' saying that we use it 'in a hundred different games'—that, e.g., the beauty of a face is something different from the beauty of a chair or a flower or the binding of a book." (M 277) Similarly, instead of continuing to deny that two people can talk meaningfully about, say, a "good man" or a "valuable life"—as his earlier view of language would require—Wittgenstein suggested that one person can convince another that someone's action, character, or life, for example, is good, and this "fixes the meaning in which 'good' is used in that discussion—'fixes the grammar of that discussion'…." (M 277) In short, while the early Wittgenstein held that value could never be said, but only shown, the later Wittgenstein regarded value language as admissible—that is, as having the potential to be said meaningfully.

Yet, if the later Wittgenstein regarded value language as admissible, how did he seek to understand the meaning of such language? Given any particular utterance of a value term or statement, how, on his view, could it be decided whether that term or statement has been uttered meaningfully? For example, if I see you in the café and the first thing I say to you is, "You know, David is a *good friend*," have I, on Wittgenstein's view, made a meaningful statement? For him, what did a successful act of communication that includes value language look like? Wittgenstein was adamant that a fresh understanding of language—including value language—would not be found in a new theory, as Monk observed. Instead, what he sought was "a new perspective, a new metaphor, a new picture."[52] In his language-game concept, Wittgenstein found a new perspective—but, on his view, that was *only one* perspective among many that a person might find useful for deciding whether a particular utterance is meaningful. In the section

[52] Monk, *How to Read Wittgenstein*, 65.

below, I briefly introduce the language-game concept. Then, after discussing the features of aesthetic reasoning noted in the Moore passage, I return to that concept to argue that Wittgenstein used it as an example of aesthetic reasoning.

**Starting a New Match: "Language-Game" as the Opening Whistle**

In his memoir of Wittgenstein, Norman Malcolm related this anecdote: "One day when Wittgenstein was passing a field where a football game was in progress the thought first struck him that in language we play *games* with *words.* A central idea of his philosophy, the notion of a 'language-game,' apparently had its genesis in this incident."[53] In Malcolm's memoir, the event described in this anecdote is not assigned a date, but it is likely to have occurred in 1931 or 1932, for Glock wrote: "The term 'language-game' is the result of Wittgenstein's extending, from 1932 onwards, the game analogy to language as a whole....Its point is to draw attention to various similarities between language and games…."[54] So, Wittgenstein's language-game concept proposes an analogy between language and games. While this might seem obvious, Monk took time to remark that it should be clear "from almost everything Wittgenstein wrote after 1930…that the construction of a general theory of language was the very last thing he wanted to achieve. Nevertheless, it is not uncommon to read commentators talk about Wittgenstein's 'theory of language games.'"[55] So, in general, we can say that Wittgenstein introduced this concept to elicit similarities between using language and playing games.

Yet, might we say anything more precise regarding Wittgenstein's understanding and use of this concept? Wittgenstein did not maintain a *single* definition of "language-game." Instead, throughout his later period, he understood and deployed that concept in a variety of ways. For

[53] Malcolm, 55.
[54] Glock, 193.
[55] Monk, *How to Read Wittgenstein*, 72.

example, in *The Blue and Brown Books* alone—a work that dates to 1933-35—Wittgenstein used "language-game" in several, distinct ways, as Rush Rhees noted in his preface to that work. (BB viii) And of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, David G. Stern commented that

> the term is introduced by describing some examples of simple practices both real and imaginary: Wittgenstein's "builders," children's games with words, such as "ring-a-ring-a-roses" (PI §7c), and the ways children learn words. But he also applies the term to almost any practice in which language is involved in some way, any interweaving of human life and language: "I shall also call the whole, consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven, a 'language-game.'" (§7d)[56]

Even Monk's attempt at a general definition of "language-game" suggested the multivalent character of that concept: A language-game, Monk wrote, "is a (usually fictitious) primitive form of language in which one particular aspect of our ordinary language—say, the role of names—is highlighted by being separated from the complicated contexts in which it is usually embedded."[57] So, Wittgenstein sometimes used "language-game" to refer to things that people really do with words in the weave of mature, human life, but, at other times, it referred to particular examples of ways in which children learn to speak. And, at still other times, the concept referred to fictional languages (e.g., the builders' exchange).

Now, I want to suggest a way to understand Wittgenstein's resistance to a single use or definition for "language-game": If, as I will argue, "language-game" is an example of aesthetic reasoning "in Philosophy," and if aesthetic reasoning is the sort of concept that can only be fully explained through examples of its use, perhaps it should not surprise us that Wittgenstein did not make his language-game concept much more precise than he made his notion of aesthetic reasoning. However, for my overall argument, nothing monumental depends on that suggestion. Instead, in this section, my goal is simply to point out that, in the 1933 lecture, Wittgenstein had

[56] David G. Stern, *Wittgenstein's* Philosophical Investigations*: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 88.
[57] Monk, *How to Read Wittgenstein*, 74.

already invented the language-game concept, which he thought of as useful for illuminating the meaning of value language. Later, that point will support my contention that, in the Moore passage, Wittgenstein might have had his language-game concept in mind as an example of aesthetic reasoning "in Philosophy." That claim is important for two reasons, as noted in this chapter's introduction: First, by considering the fictional concept of a language-game, we might gain a clearer view of what aesthetic reasoning can involve. Second, after 1933, the fact that Wittgenstein continued to use the language-game concept suggests that he maintained his notion of aesthetic reasoning, though he no longer referenced it explicitly.

The paragraph from Wittgenstein's 1933 lecture that I quoted earlier marks one of the earliest appearances of the language-game concept—a claim that finds support in Moore's note that Wittgenstein wanted to deal "with one problem about the meaning of words, with which he said he had not yet dealt." In that passage, we encounter Moore's observation that Wittgenstein held both "that there is nothing in common in our different uses of the word 'beautiful'" and that "we use it 'in a hundred different games.' —that, e.g., the beauty of a face is something different from the beauty of a chair or a flower or the binding of a book." And just prior to that remark, as Moore wrote, Wittgenstein said that "the reason why we call so many different activities 'games' need not be that there is anything common to them all…." So, Wittgenstein saw that the words "game" and "beautiful" are in a similar fix—namely, that we cannot pin either concept to any single, precise meaning. On the basis of that similarity, he supposed that diverse uses of "beautiful" might be illuminated through a comparison with the playing of various games. In other words, Wittgenstein suggested that, when we discuss the beauty of a chair, a flower, or a book, we might understand those different uses of "beautiful" if we see those discussions as our playing different games with the word "beautiful"—that is, our playing different language-games

with that word. Furthermore, recall that, at the outset of that lecture, Wittgenstein remarked: "Practically everything which I say about 'beautiful' applies in a slightly different way to 'good.'" So, in addition to relating his language-game concept to aesthetic language, it seems likely that Wittgenstein also wished to relate that concept to ethical language, for Moore noted that "of the word 'good' he said similarly that each different way in which one person, A, can convince another, B, that so-and-so is 'good' fixes the meaning in which 'good' is used in that discussion—'fixes the grammar of that discussion'…." In other words, in "each different way" that one person convinces another that something is "good," those two have played a language-game with the word "good." So, not only does "good" have the potential to be uttered meaningfully, but the fact that, in their conversation, they played a language-game with that word shows that it was uttered meaningfully. In this way, Wittgenstein suggested that he wished to apply his language-game concept to both ethical and aesthetic terms and statements. Later, we will see that he made that wish more explicit in his *Philosophical Investigations*.

Wittgenstein's examples of value language—cited in the previous paragraph—suggest that he was concerned with attending to the various contexts in which we use that language. That concern is evident in the next paragraph of the same lecture, where he remarked "that the actual word 'beautiful' is hardly ever used in aesthetic controversies: that we are more apt to use 'right,' as, e.g., in 'That doesn't look quite right yet,' or when we say of a proposed accompaniment to a song 'That won't do: it isn't right.'" (M 277) Furthermore, he said that, when we propose adjusting some feature of a work of art, such as the bass part in a song, we are trying to bring that feature "'nearer to an ideal,' though we haven't an ideal before us which we are trying to copy; that in order to show what we want, we might point to another tune, which we might say is 'perfectly right.'" (M 277) So, here, even more than in his 1929 lecture on ethics—

which I discussed in chapter two—Wittgenstein attended to the particular circumstances in which we use value words (e.g., in an aesthetic controversy, saying that a bass part is "right" instead of saying that it is "beautiful") and to the actions that accompany our uses of those words, as when we make comparisons between works of art (e.g., "that in order to show what we want, we might point to another tune"). But none of this should surprise us, for, as I have suggested, he was using his language-game concept to illuminate our uses of value language, and that concept, he told us, could be used to draw our attention to ways in which utterances are interwoven with other activities.

In his 1938 lectures on aesthetics, Wittgenstein continued to suggest that his language-game concept is sometimes useful for illuminating the meanings of value terms. There, he said that, if you want to understand value language, you should "ask yourself how a child learns 'beautiful,' 'fine,' etc…." (LC 2) He continued:

> Language is a characteristic part of a large group of activities—talking, writing, travelling on a bus, meeting a man, etc. We are concentrating, not on the words 'good' or 'beautiful,' which are entirely uncharacteristic, generally just subject and predicate ('This is beautiful'), but on the occasions on which they are said—on the enormously complicated situation in which the aesthetic expression…has almost a negligible place. (LC 2)

And later in the same lectures, he remarked that, because our value words (e.g., "appreciation") are intertwined in such complex ways with particular activities and occasions, such words cannot be precisely defined: "It is not only difficult to describe what appreciation consists in, but impossible. To describe what it consists in we would have to describe the whole environment." (LC 7) Again: "There is an extraordinary number of different cases of appreciation." (LC 7) And again: "What belongs to a language game is a whole culture." (LC 8) So, not only did Wittgenstein continue to use "language-game," he persisted in trying to understand value terms in its light.

In this section, I have observed that Wittgenstein made a variety of applications of "language-game." For him, that concept—like the word "game"—lacked a single use or definition. Similarly, he proposed that there need not be anything in common in our different uses of a value term such as "beautiful" or "good." On the basis of that similarity, he supposed that the various meanings of value concepts might be illuminated through a comparison with playing games. In other words, he wished to apply his language-game concept to value terms, as his comment that we use "beautiful" "in a hundred different games" suggests. Later in this chapter, I will argue that Wittgenstein's inventing and using the language-game concept were, together, an example of his performing aesthetic reasoning "in Philosophy," as he put it. At that point, I will propose that, for Wittgenstein, "aesthetic reasoning"—like "game" and value terms—was a "blurred" concept, which is a concept that can be given strict definition only arbitrarily. To understand a blurred concept is to be able to give examples of its use. So, we can understand the meaning of "aesthetic reasoning," in part, through Wittgenstein's uses of the language-game concept. However, as we will see, he said that aesthetic reasoning also occurs "in Ethics." Where might we look—in both Wittgenstein's life and today—for examples of such reasoning in ethics? In chapter five, I will describe a particular use of Tolstoy's parable of the Good Samaritan as involving aesthetic reasoning in ethics. Given the personal significance of that parable for Wittgenstein, perhaps this is something like what he had in mind in the Moore passage. In chapter six, I argue that aesthetic reasoning can be found in conversations about stories in bioethics classes. Before I can make those arguments, I must explore the passage in which Wittgenstein introduced "aesthetic reasoning," articulate its general features, and discuss examples of its occurrence in conversations about works of art.

## The Moore Passage: Introducing "Aesthetic Reasoning"

Earlier, I quoted a long paragraph from Moore's notes on Wittgenstein's 1933 lecture. That section of Moore's notes is found only two paragraphs before the following passage.

> What Aesthetics tries to do, he said, is to give *reasons*, e.g., for having this word rather than that in a particular place in a poem, or for having this musical phrase rather than that in a particular place in a piece of music. Brahms's *reason* for rejecting Joachim's suggestion that his Fourth Symphony should be opened by two chords was not that that wouldn't produce the feeling that he wanted to produce, but something more like "This isn't what I meant." *Reasons*, he said, in Aesthetics, are "of the nature of further descriptions," e.g., you can make a person see what Brahms was driving at by showing him lots of different pieces by Brahms, or by comparing him with a contemporary author; and all that Aesthetics does is "draw your attention to a thing," to "place things side by side." He said that if, by giving reasons of this sort, you make another person "see what you see," but it "still doesn't appeal to him," that is "an end" of the discussion; and that what he, Wittgenstein, had "at the back of his mind" was "the idea that aesthetic discussions were like discussions in a court of law," where you try to "clear up the circumstances" of the action which is being tried, hoping that in the end what you say will "appeal to the judge." And he said that the same sort of "reasons" were [*sic*] given, not only in Ethics, but also in Philosophy. (M 278)

It is unfortunate that Wittgenstein—or Moore, at least—did not elaborate on the final sentence, which has left us with some difficult, interpretive work. Because Wittgenstein discussed examples of giving reasons in aesthetics before he commented that aesthetic reasons are also given "in Ethics" and "in Philosophy," I think it wise to begin by trying to understand what he meant when he said that such reasons are given in aesthetics. If I succeed in gaining that understanding, I will, presumably, be able to use it to arrive eventually at an informed account of Wittgenstein's view of aesthetic reasoning "in Ethics" and "in Philosophy."

### Aesthetic Reasoning: General Features and Examples

The first thing we might notice about this passage is that Wittgenstein was talking about reasons that are given in *ordinary* discussions of works of art—reasons, "e.g., for having this word rather than that in a particular place in a poem, or for having this musical phrase rather than that in a particular place in a piece of music." That is, he was not talking about attempts made by

*philosophical* aesthetics to, for example, grasp the essential form of poetry or music and give reasons for the content of particular works in relationship to that alleged essence. Here, recall his later remark, quoted above, that philosophers "try to grasp the *essence*" of a word (e.g. "beautiful"), but he, in contrast, thought one should ask: "is the word ever actually used in this way in the language in which it is at home? –What *we* do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use." (PI §116) So, it is not surprising that, in the Moore passage, Wittgenstein would have addressed reasoning in ordinary discussions of works of art, for, as we have seen, he had just considered ordinary uses of "beautiful" and "good" in the same lecture.[58]

At first, my observation that Wittgenstein was concerned with ordinary discussions of art might seem innocuous, but I want to suggest that, in the Moore passage, Wittgenstein was doing something very subtle and profound. Instead of regarding "reasoning" about art as having some reified essence that it takes a philosopher to grasp and articulate, Wittgenstein was taking the same approach to that concept that he had taken to "game" and to value terms such as "beautiful" and "good." That is, to borrow from the earlier passage, he was pointing out that, when I reason in everyday conversations about art, I try to "convince another" of my way of seeing something and "that each different way in which one person, A, can convince another, B,…fixes the meaning" of the terms "used in that discussion—'fixes the grammar of that discussion.'" So, like "game" or a value term, "aesthetic reasoning" need not have, always and everywhere, only one meaning. Instead, in the Moore passage, Wittgenstein suggested that aesthetic reasoning might take various forms. That is, I think he suggested that we need not suppose, *a priori*, that one

[58] Furthermore, I do not find it surprising that Wittgenstein was more interested in ordinary discussions of aesthetics than in philosophical discussions, for he thought the latter had taken several wrong turns (e.g., the assumption that aesthetic appreciation would be "explained" if the causes of such appreciation were identified). For this and other objections to philosophical aesthetics, see his 1938 lectures on aesthetics, which began: "The subject (Aesthetics) is very big and entirely misunderstood as far as I can see." (LC 1)

thing, but not another, should count as an instance of aesthetic reasoning. Nevertheless, he made some observations as to what he thought such reasoning, in fact, tends to look like in everyday conversations about art. Below, I summarize his observations regarding the general features of aesthetic reasoning. In this work, I will not seek to challenge the accuracy of those observations—though, of course, they could be challenged. Instead, throughout this work, I take for granted the general features of aesthetic reasoning that Wittgenstein delineated, and I seek to identify plausible examples of such reasoning in conversations about art and ethics.[59] If I succeed in that, I think we will then be in a position to assess the value of Wittgenstein's notion of aesthetic reasoning on its own terms.

In the Moore passage, we find that Wittgenstein regarded aesthetic reasoning as a discursive activity that involves my giving another person "further descriptions," drawing her "attention to a thing," and placing "things side by side" for her to compare. Such reasoning might "appeal" to another and convince her, bringing her to "see" what I see, Wittgenstein said. On the other hand, my reasoning might not appeal to her—or, at least, not appeal to her in a way that brings her to share my view. In that case, if we have nothing more to say, Wittgenstein said that our discussion has reached "an end." At first glance, these general characteristics of aesthetic reasoning might seem sparse. To offer a clearer view of them, I will discuss Wittgenstein's examples of what such reasoning looks like in the context of conversations.

Moore's notes contain two examples of aesthetic reasoning, both of which focus on Brahms's Fourth Symphony. First, there is a reference to "Brahms's *reason* for rejecting Joachim's suggestion…." Second, there is this: "you can make a person see what Brahms was

[59] However, in chapter six, I will expand Wittgenstein's notion of aesthetic reasoning by introducing a new sense of "aspect perception" alongside his own sense of that concept, which I will discuss in chapter four.

driving at by showing him lots of different pieces by Brahms, or by comparing him with a contemporary author….” The wording in these two examples is important. The first example is an allusion to a conversation between Brahms and Joachim—presumably Joseph Joachim, an ancestor of Wittgenstein. The second example appears to be an imagined conversation between two, unnamed people. Yet, in both examples, the interlocutors are discussing whether the symphony should be opened by two chords. Wittgenstein described the reasoning that occurs in such conversations as “‘like discussions in a court of law,’ where you try to ‘clear up the circumstances’ of the action which is being tried, hoping that in the end what you say will ‘appeal to the judge.’”

Unfortunately, Wittgenstein’s first example of a conversation between Brahms and Joachim is, I think, not detailed enough to enable us to see how it was supposed to be consistent with Wittgenstein’s description of aesthetic reasoning. Are we to suppose that Brahms attempted to get Joachim to “see” what he, Brahms, “meant” by the Fourth Symphony through “further descriptions” of that work? For me, at least, this is not clear. But, fortunately, Moore’s notes on Wittgenstein’s other example of aesthetic reasoning are more detailed: “you can make a person see what Brahms was driving at by showing him lots of different pieces by Brahms, or by comparing him with a contemporary author….”[60] Through further descriptions of Brahms (e.g., “showing him lots of different pieces by Brahms”) and by placing things side by side for comparison (e.g., “comparing him with a contemporary author”), you might appeal to your interlocutor, bringing him to see “what Brahms was driving at” by not opening his Fourth symphony with two chords, and perhaps even convince him that an opening with two chords

[60] In a lecture on aesthetics in 1938, Wittgenstein made the following remark on comparing artists: “You can sometimes find the similarity between the style of a musician and the style of a poet who lived at the same time, or a painter. Take Brahms and Keller. I often found that certain themes of Brahms were extremely Kellerian.” (LC 32)

would be errant—which, presumably, is how you see the matter. Or, you might bring your interlocutor some distance along that path, while still falling short of aligning his view with yours.

Below, I offer another example of aesthetic reasoning in an ordinary discussion of works of art. It is an imagined conversation between my wife and me about the quality of Thomas Kinkade's depictions of light in his paintings. In this conversation, my wife seeks to show me the appeal of her view that Kinkade is not masterful. To do so, she reasons aesthetically by giving "further descriptions," drawing my "attention to a thing," and asking me to compare things in a "side by side" manner.

If I were convinced that Thomas Kinkade's various depictions of light rank him among the masters of painting since, say, the mid-nineteenth century, my wife might seek to change my way of seeing Kinkade's work by drawing my attention to the quality of light in some of van Gogh's paintings. "While Kinkade's light is rarely more than warmth or highlight," she would coax, "can't you see that van Gogh's light is well-mingled with colors in nature"—here, she could point to the reflections on the river in *The Red Vineyard*—"and that it can almost explode with the surprise of illumination?" as she gestures to *Crows over a Wheat Field*. She could also ask me to compare "the dull, welcoming glow of Kinkade's cottages and chapels"—remarking that they are almost indistinguishable from one painting to the next—with "the somber austerity of van Gogh's *The Yellow House* and the shining blues of *The Church at Auvers*." After putting Kinkade alongside van Gogh, directing my attention in these ways, and providing such descriptions, perhaps I would come to share her view that, unlike van Gogh, Kinkade is not a masterful depicter of light. If so, her reasoning has appealed to me and changed my way of seeing both Kinkade and van Gogh, for I now relate the two and, for me, the former has paled in

the light of the latter. Our conversation might even change my way of ranking other painters in relationship to van Gogh as masterful or Kinkade as less-than-enlightened.

On the other hand, despite my wife's reasoning, my allegiance to Kinkade might remain more or less unshaken, and our discussion might come to an end with our ways of appreciating light in painting unaligned. This latter scenario illustrates what Wittgenstein acknowledged when he said that aesthetic reasoning *might* reach an insurmountable "end" or impasse. This, I take it, is a familiar feature of ordinary conversations about works of art. For example, I might resist my wife's entreaties by telling her that I do not regard light's being "well-mingled with colors in nature" as a mark of mastery. Instead, I might confess that what I most appreciate about Kinkade's chapels and cottages is the very "welcoming glow" that she finds deplorable and pathetic. So, in the end, I might not agree with my wife. Though I have understood her reasons, they might not appeal to me in a way that convinces me to share her view.

Through these examples, I have tried to convey a clearer view of what Wittgenstein said aesthetic reasoning about works of art could involve. Now, before I go on to discuss his language-game concept as an example of aesthetic reasoning "in Philosophy," I want to call attention briefly to some remarks that Wittgenstein made in his 1938 lectures on aesthetics. Like his continuing to use the language-game concept, I think these remarks support my contention that, after the 1933 lecture, Wittgenstein did not abandon his notion of aesthetic reasoning.

First, recall that the Moore passage begins in this way: "What Aesthetics tries to do, he said, is to give *reasons*, e.g., for having this word rather than that in a particular place in a poem…." And such reasons, he went on to say, might or might not "appeal" to you. Now, consider how those remarks are paralleled by these comments from his 1938 lectures on aesthetics: "I write a sentence. One word isn't the one I need. I find the right word. 'What is it I

want to say? Oh yes, that is what I wanted.' The answer in these cases is the one that satisfied you…." (LC 18) And: "Suppose a poem sounded old-fashioned, what would be the criterion that you had found out what was old-fashioned in it[?] One criterion would be that when something was pointed out you were satisfied." (LC 20)

The scenarios mentioned in the Moore passage and in the 1938 lectures are, I think, similar enough for us to conclude that Wittgenstein's notion of finding another person's reasoning *appealing* is echoed, later, by his idea of being *satisfied* with the word or answer that another offers. Furthermore, I want to suggest that the later Wittgenstein's notion of finding someone's reasoning appealing or satisfying is one way in which his early claim that value *shows* or manifests itself was retained and transformed in his later thought—another point that I foreshadowed in chapter two. To get me to agree with your view that, say, a particular statue is appealing or satisfying, you might *show* me your view of it by—apart from undraping it, taking my shoulders in hand, and orienting me to it in a particular way—describing that statue to me through aesthetic reasoning. Through such reasoning, I might see—or be shown—the appeal that that statue has for you. In the next chapter, I will extend this point. There, the vision-related emphases of "show," "appeal," and "way of seeing" will resurface in my discussion of aspect perception—a concept through which, I will argue, Wittgenstein told us more about what aesthetic reasoning involves.

**"Language-Game" as an Example of Aesthetic Reasoning in Philosophy**

The Moore passage concludes with Wittgenstein's remark that aesthetic reasons are given, "not only in Ethics, but also in Philosophy." In this section, I propose that, in inventing and deploying his language-game concept, Wittgenstein provided an example of aesthetic reasoning "in Philosophy." That claim can be supported, I think, by the rough sum of three

points: (1) In the 1933 lecture, Wittgenstein had already invented the language-game concept. So, when he said that aesthetic reasoning occurs in philosophy, he could have had that concept in mind as an example of such reasoning. (2) His use of that concept would, for him, count as practicing philosophy. And (3) that concept is consistent with his characterization of aesthetic reasoning in the Moore passage. For (1), I have already argued, so I turn to (2).

The later Wittgenstein's understanding of the proper practice of philosophy is an enormously complex subject, for, as P.M.S. Hacker explained, Wittgenstein wished to reject so much of what had passed for doing philosophy for roughly two and half millennia.[61] Yet, to argue that Wittgenstein's use of the language-game concept would, for him, count as practicing philosophy, I need only follow one of the features of that practice that Hacker identified: For the later Wittgenstein, Hacker wrote, "philosophy is a quest for a perspicuous representation of segments of our language which are a source of conceptual confusion."[62] Furthermore, for Wittgenstein, the "task of philosophy is to resolve or dissolve" such confusions, and one way in which he sought to remove those confusions was by relating his language-game concept to our uses of words.[63] That is, as noted earlier, Wittgenstein sometimes used the term "language-game" to refer to things that people really do with words in the weave of human life. Just before the Moore passage, for example, he observed "that there is nothing in common in our different uses of the word 'beautiful'" and that "we use it 'in a hundred different games.' —that, e.g., the beauty of a face is something different from the beauty of a chair or a flower or the binding of a book." Here, Wittgenstein suggested that, by describing the different language-games that we play with "beautiful," the conceptual confusion that "beautiful" must have a single meaning or

[61] P.M.S. Hacker, *Wittgenstein on Human Nature* (London: Phoenix, 1997), 5-14.
[62] Ibid, 10.
[63] Ibid, 8-9.

essence could be dissolved.[64] So, this captures at least one way in which Wittgenstein would have regarded his use of the language-game concept as part of his practice of philosophy. I turn now to (3): The language-game concept is consistent with his characterization of aesthetic reasoning in the Moore passage.

As quoted earlier, Glock wrote: "The term 'language-game' is the result of Wittgenstein's extending, from 1932 onwards, the game analogy to language as a whole....Its point is to draw attention to various similarities between language and games…."[65] Here, Glock's choice of words to describe the "point" of the term "language-game" echoes Wittgenstein's own characterization of aesthetic reasoning as drawing attention to a thing and placing items side by side for comparison. That echo, I am proposing, is not a coincidence. As Wittgenstein put it in *Philosophical Investigations*, "language-games stand there as *objects of comparison* which, through similarities and dissimilarities, are meant to throw light on features of our language." (PI §130) Furthermore, by comparing some uses of language with playing games, Wittgenstein enabled "further descriptions" of language that would not be intelligible apart from that analogy. Here is a simple example of such a description from his notebooks: "In a conversation: One person throws a ball; the other does not know: is he to throw it back, throw it to a third person, or leave it lying, or pick it up & put it in his pocket, etc.[?]" (CV 84)[66] In these ways, the general features of aesthetic reasoning apply to Wittgenstein's language-game concept.

---

[64] More specifically, conceptual confusions often have to do with what Wittgenstein called the "surface grammar" of our expressions. In this case, a confusion might arise from the fact that "beautiful" often appears to modify various things in the same way, for we say "That is a beautiful X," where X could be a book, chair, flower, house, or whatever. This surface grammar of "beautiful" might lead a person to suppose that that term has a single meaning, despite the variety of things that it is used to modify. See Hacker, 10-14.

[65] Glock, 193.

[66] David G. Stern commented: "While 'game' is the best translation for Spiel, it is worth remembering that the German word is rather broader in scope than our 'game,' and covers freeform activities that in English we would call 'play' rather than 'games.'" See Stern, 89.

Yet, even if you understand the language-game concept, it might not appeal to you in a way that changes your way of seeing language. Despite another's attempts to convince you that this particular idea is illuminating by pointing out similarities between playing games and engaging in linguistic practices, your conversation about the language-game concept might end in disagreement. On the other hand, the similarities highlighted by some uses of that concept might appeal to you and change your way of seeing at least some uses of language. If that case, some of your ways of thinking about—and perhaps using—language would be reshaped and redirected.

What purpose has been served by my arguing that, for Wittgenstein, introducing and using the language-game concept was aesthetic reasoning in philosophy? First, it suggests that, because he continued to use that concept after the 1933 lecture, he also maintained his notion of aesthetic reasoning. If he did, perhaps he also maintained his view that aesthetic reasons are given in ethics, and, though he never identified examples, we might search for them, as I will do in the chapters ahead.

Second, if I am correct that, for Wittgenstein, the language-game concept was aesthetic reasoning, this might tell us more about what he thought aesthetic reasoning can involve. To see how, contrast the language-game concept with his examples of aesthetic reasoning about works of art in the Moore passage. In one of those examples, Wittgenstein said that "you can make a person see what Brahms was driving at…by comparing him with a contemporary author." Of course, "language-game" also invites comparisons, but it goes beyond mere comparisons in that it is a concept that, so to speak, embodies an analogy. At various points in his later work, Wittgenstein also compared language to a city, a toolbox, and music. In 1931, he remarked: "What I invent are new *comparisons*." (CV 16) However, with those other comparisons,

Wittgenstein did not invent and deploy a unique analogy through a new concept (e.g., "language-city," "language-symphony"), as he did with "language-game."[67] "Language-game" was a new word, a new simile. In 1929, he noted: "A good simile refreshes the intellect." (CV 3) That same year, he wrote: "A new word is like a fresh seed thrown on the ground of the discussion." (CV 4) Of course, in these remarks in 1929 and 1931, Wittgenstein would not have had his language-game concept in mind. But I cite those remarks because they suggest that he already admired the method that his language-game concept would later exemplify. In 1948, he wrote: "Nothing is more important…than the construction of fictional concepts, which will teach us at last to understand our own." (CV 85) By inventing "language-game" as a new fictional and analogical concept, we might even say that Wittgenstein sought to furnish us with a new mythology. Monk wrote:

> In his conversations and lectures, Wittgenstein drew attention to the analogy between his philosophical method and Freud's psychological methods, even to the extent of describing himself as a "disciple of Freud." However, he had no sympathy whatever for Freud's own conception of his achievement, according to which he had created a new *science* of psychology. For Wittgenstein, it was absolutely vital to realize that Freud had *not* given us a set of scientific explanations for, e.g., dreams and neuroses. His achievement was much greater than *that*, for what Freud had given us, according to Wittgenstein, was a new *mythology*, a new way of looking at ourselves and the people around us, a way that allowed us to see connections that we had not seen before. And *this* is what Wittgenstein hoped to achieve with the method of inventing language games.[68]

So, from Wittgenstein's language-game concept, we learn that a person's aesthetic reasoning might involve her proposing "a new *mythology*, a new way of looking at ourselves and the people around us…." To be sure, Wittgenstein thought that such a mythology might be a fiction, but, still, a person might find it a useful, appealing, and convincing fiction. In chapter five, when

[67] I am not suggesting that, in comparing language to a city, a toolbox, and music, Wittgenstein was not reasoning aesthetically. Perhaps he was. But, for my purposes, I do not need to argue that he was.
[68] Monk, *How to Read Wittgenstein*, 74.

I discuss aesthetic reasoning in relationship to fiction stories, I will return to the idea that aesthetic reasoning might introduce a new mythology.

Before closing this chapter, I want to point out a further reason that it was important that I discussed the language-game concept as an example of aesthetic reasoning. I think it is plausible to suppose that, for Wittgenstein, aesthetic reasoning was what he called a "blurred" concept. A person's knowledge or understanding of such a concept, Wittgenstein said, can be "completely expressed in the explanations" that she could give of that concept. In *Philosophical Investigations*, he wrote:

> What does it mean to know what a game is? What does it mean to know it and not be able to say it? Is this knowledge somehow equivalent to an unformulated definition? So that if it were formulated, I'd be able to recognize it as the expression of my knowledge? Isn't my knowledge, my concept of a game, completely expressed in the explanations that I could give? That is, in my describing examples of various kinds of game, showing how all sorts of other games can be constructed on the analogy of these, saying that I would hardly call this or that a game, and so on. (PI §75)

As the passage continues, Wittgenstein compared a concept whose definition can be formulated and made precise with drawing a sharp boundary and a sharp picture, and he compared a concept (e.g., "game") that can be "completely expressed" through a person's "explanations" of it to drawing a blurred picture and refusing to draw a boundary. (PI §§76-77) Then, he asked the reader to "imagine having to draw a sharp picture 'corresponding' to a blurred one." He gave an example of this to show that it will "become a hopeless task," and concluded:

> Won't you then have to say: "Here I might just as well draw a circle as a rectangle or a heart, for all the colours merge. Anything—and nothing—is right." –And this is the position in which, for example, someone finds himself in ethics or aesthetics when he looks for definitions that correspond to our concepts. In this sort of predicament, always ask yourself: How did we *learn* the meaning of this word ("good," for instance)? From what sort of examples? In what language-games? Then it will be easier for you to see that the word must have a family of meanings. (PI §77)

Notice several things: Here, as in his early work and the 1933 lecture, Wittgenstein paired ethics and aesthetics. Second, as in the 1933 lecture, he continued to regard his language-game concept as useful for illuminating the various meanings of value concepts. Third, he regarded our concepts in ethics and aesthetics as blurred. Now, notice that each of these points can be connected to aesthetic reasoning: Wittgenstein related that concept to both aesthetics and ethics, he used "language-game" as an example of it, and, in the Moore passage, he resisted giving it a precise definition. All of this, I think, suggests that, for Wittgenstein, aesthetic reasoning was also a blurred concept. And that point is important because, as the above passage says, aesthetic reasoning can be completely expressed by an explanation that includes examples. In this chapter, I have discussed several examples of aesthetic reasoning—two from aesthetics and one "in Philosophy" (i.e., the language-game concept). In chapter five, I will illustrate aesthetic reasoning in ethics with a specific example that revisits Tolstoy's parable of the Good Samaritan, and, in chapter six, I will offer further examples related to discussions of stories in bioethics classes. So, if Wittgenstein was correct to regard aesthetic reasoning as a blurred concept, our exploring such examples will grant us further understanding of that concept and of what he might have meant when he said that such reasons are given in ethics.

## Summary

In chapter two, I discussed the early Wittgenstein's view of language, which limited the role of "meaningful propositions…to picturing states of affairs in the world," while "value, whether ethical, aesthetic, or religious, is not to be found *in the world*."[69] Accordingly, he held that value cannot be said, or stated in meaningful propositions. Nevertheless, value, he claimed, might show or manifest itself in actions, attitudes, and works of art. In connection with that

[69] Ibid, 51.

claim, I discussed Tolstoy's parable of the Good Samaritan as an example of a work of art through which, for Wittgenstein, value showed itself in non-moral descriptions.

In this chapter, we saw that, for the later Wittgenstein, value language can be stated meaningfully, and any particular value concept might have a multiplicity of meanings. Focusing on the Moore passage and its context, I articulated several features of his notion of aesthetic reasoning, discussed examples of such reasoning in conversations about works of art, and proposed that Wittgenstein's language-game concept was an example of such reasoning "in Philosophy." Furthermore, giving special attention to the language-game concept, I followed Ray Monk in arguing that aesthetic reasoning could involve the construction of fictional and analogical concepts that introduce a new mythology. Like other examples of aesthetic reasoning, such concepts and their mythologies might appeal to another, changing her way of seeing something.

Over the next two chapters, I will extend these points, arguing that Wittgenstein's notion of aesthetic reasoning was further informed by his conceptions of aspect perception and grammatical pictures. More specifically, I will contend that those concepts, taken together, tell us more about the general features of aesthetic reasoning, but they also tell us more about the kind of transformation that someone who is convinced by aesthetic reasoning can be said to experience. In making these points, I will relate aspect perception and grammatical pictures to various works of art—historical paintings, genre paintings, and fiction stories. Returning to Tolstoy's parable as an example of a fiction story, I show how aesthetic reasoning could be woven into a particular way of interacting with that parable. That use of Tolstoy's parable, I contend, serves as an example of aesthetic reasoning in ethics—the sort of example that Wittgenstein might have had in mind in the Moore passage. Finally, in chapter six, I build on that

argument as I seek to show that conversations about fiction and non-fiction stories in bioethics classes can also involve aesthetic reasoning.

## Chapter IV
## Aspect Perception and Aesthetic Reasoning

After his 1933 lecture on "the grammar of ethical expressions," Wittgenstein did not comment again on the aesthetic reasons that, as he said, are sometimes offered "in Ethics, but also in Philosophy." Given that fact, we might suspect that, after 1933, Wittgenstein abandoned his notion of aesthetic reasoning. Contrary to that suspicion, I think there is evidence that Wittgenstein maintained and expanded his conception of aesthetic reasoning. In addition to his continuing to use the language-game concept—that is, to practice aesthetic reasoning "in Philosophy," as discussed in chapter three—there are numerous ways in which his later work echoes his earlier characterization of aesthetic reasoning. That echo, I want to suggest, can be heard clearly in his discussions of both aspect perception and grammatical pictures. While those two concepts are broader than aesthetic reasoning, I will argue that they give us a more detailed understanding of what aesthetic reasoning involves.

Aspect perception is my topic in this chapter, and I focus on grammatical pictures in the next. While large swaths of these chapters are given to exposition, they also form an extended argument. My thesis is that these concepts are significant to our understanding of aesthetic reasoning in that, taken together, they inform that idea in at least two ways. First, these concepts tell us more about the *general features* of aesthetic reasoning. We learn that aesthetic reasoning involves the introduction of grammar that can draw a person's attention to unnoticed aspects of an object and equip him with further descriptions of that object. Second, these concepts tell us more about the *kind of transformation* that someone who is convinced by aesthetic reasoning can be said to experience. His way of seeing an object has been changed in that, seeing that object

through a different grammatical picture, he has noticed and accepted new aspects of it.[70] In characterizing these features of aesthetic reasoning and the transformation that it can produce, I have used passive language because, while aesthetic reasoning can occur in an interpersonal conversation, it can also be experienced in solitary reflection. That is, even when alone, I could be convinced by aesthetic reasoning, coming to see an object through a different grammatical picture by noticing and accepting new aspects of it. Likewise, even in my solitude, aesthetic reasoning might occur in that its general features are present, yet I might remain unconvinced by such reasoning. So, in characterizing aesthetic reasoning, active language (e.g., "one person draws another's attention to…") is not always applicable. The differences between solitary and interpersonal aesthetic reasoning will be on display in my examples of such reasoning in chapters five and six.

In this chapter and the next, as I discuss various objects that might be seen afresh—such as the duck-rabbit figure and several works of art—I trust that the meaning of "grammar," "unnoticed aspects," "further descriptions," and a changed "way of seeing" will become clearer. These are the areas in which Wittgenstein's conceptions of aspect perception and grammatical pictures further informed his idea of aesthetic reasoning. Those concepts, we might say, injected aesthetic reasoning with more content. And that claim is important because, with an expanded notion of aesthetic reasoning, we will gain a clearer view of what Wittgenstein might have meant when he said that aesthetic reasons are given in ethics.

## Aspect Perception

In their introduction to a recent collection of essays on Wittgenstein's understanding of aspect perception, William Day and Victor J. Krebs referred to that concept as "a central notion

[70] As my discussion will show, such "seeing" is not necessarily visual. I am using "seeing" in the broader senses of "perceiving" and "understanding."

for Wittgenstein in the later texts….”[71] Yet, Day and Krebs also acknowledged that aspect perception remains “a conspicuous blind spot in Wittgenstein studies.”[72] Given such quiet waters, it is probably difficult for any commentator on aspect perception to avoid making ripples. Still, in my comments in the next section, I try to avert controversy by providing a brief exposition and attending exclusively to Wittgenstein’s examples found in the famous section xi of his *Philosophy of Psychology – A Fragment*. But first, in this section, I introduce some terminology and note the many appearances of aspect perception in Wittgenstein’s works.

“Aspect perception” is a term that, for Wittgenstein, denoted “a gamut of interrelated perceptual phenomena.”[73] For him, its synonyms included “aspect-seeing” and the phrase “noticing a likeness.” Wittgenstein said—somewhat obscurely—that he was interested in this concept’s “place among the concepts of experience.” He wrote: “I observe a face, and then suddenly notice its likeness to another. I *see* that it has not changed; and yet I see it differently. I call this experience ‘noticing an aspect.’ Its *causes* are of interest to psychologists. We are interested in the concept and its place among the concepts of experience.” (PPF §§113-15) I will discuss this passage in the next section. For now, I simply want to introduce the term, note that aspect perception is a perceptual experience that is related in various ways to several other perceptual experiences that will turn up later in my discussion (e.g., continuous seeing, aspect-dawning, seeing afresh), and offer a simple definition of the concept: To *aspect perceive* some object A is to *notice a likeness* between A and something else.

The remarks from Wittgenstein that are quoted above are found near the beginning of the lengthy section xi of *Philosophy of Psychology — A Fragment*, which will be the focus of my

[71] William Day and Victor J. Krebs, “Introduction: Seeing Aspects in Wittgenstein,” in William Day and Victor J. Krebs, eds., *Seeing Wittgenstein Anew* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 4.
[72] Ibid, xiii.
[73] Glock, 36.

discussion.[74] Day and Krebs called that section the *locus classicus* of Wittgenstein's investigation of aspect perception, but, as they also noted, that concept appears in several other places in his work, including *Zettel*, both volumes of *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, and in both volumes of *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology*.[75] They continued: "Related remarks can also be found in *The Blue and Brown Books*, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, *Remarks on Colour*, *On Certainty*, and *Culture and Value*."[76] Furthermore, Wittgenstein might have been interested in something like aspect perception even as early as the *Tractatus*. At one point, before introducing the figure of a cube, he wrote: "To perceive a complex means to perceive that its constituents are combined in such and such a way. This perhaps explains that the figure can be seen in two ways as a cube; and all similar phenomena. For we really see two different facts." (TLP 5.5423)[77] Whether or not we find the concept of aspect perception explicit in Wittgenstein's early work, we can conclude that, with regard to his later work, it would be "a mistake to imagine that the remarks on aspect-seeing [in PPF] are a mere diversion, a sidestreet detour in the 'long and involved journeyings' (*PI* Preface) of the *Investigations*. They are, rather, the expression of a theme whose figures and turns we might have been hearing, however faintly, all along."[78]

Before turning to section xi of *Philosophy of Psychology – A Fragment*, I will try to say more about the ways in which I want my discussion of aspect perception to link up with other

---

[74] As noted earlier, I am using the fourth edition of *Philosophical Investigations*, which was first published in 2009. This volume contains *Philosophy of Psychology – A Fragment*, which, in previous editions, was known as "Philosophical Investigations, Part II." Here, I follow the editors of the fourth edition and abbreviate *Philosophy of Psychology – A Fragment* with "PPF." See PI, xiii.
[75] Day and Krebs, 4.
[76] Ibid, 4-5.
[77] Glock noted that the appearance of this cube in TLP 5.5423 suggests that the early Wittgenstein was interested in aspect perception. See Glock, 36. Citing other passages, Cyril Barrett has also argued that Wittgenstein began developing his conception of aspect perception in his *Notebooks* and the *Tractatus*. See Cyril Barrett, *Wittgenstein on Ethics and Religious Belief* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1991), 137-40.
[78] Day and Krebs, 5.

portions of this work. And I can do that in connection with the survey of the relevant literature that Day and Krebs provided. According to them, Wittgenstein's discussion of aspect perception has been regarded as important for at least three reasons—beside, of course, its being a fascinating commentary on the experience of aspect-seeing. First, many scholars have taken Wittgenstein's discussion to be a commentary on the fact that "aspect-seeing is pertinent to describing and thinking through the central conundrum of aesthetic judgment—namely, how can an aesthetic experience that is not only prompted by, but (we feel) *attached to*, a publicly available object be had in full recognition that others may not, or will not, have it?"[79] I, too, am concerned with aspect perception in relationship to how we might see, and what we might say about, works of art, for it was in connection with how we perceive and speak about works of art (e.g., Brahms's Fourth Symphony) that Wittgenstein introduced his notion of aesthetic reasoning in the Moore passage, and I am arguing that his comments on aspect perception expand that notion.

Second, other scholars have read Wittgenstein's discussion of aspect perception as related to his thoughts on meaning, especially the meanings of individual words. On this view, his discussion is meant to draw our attention to "the familiar physiognomy of a word," to show us our "attachment" to words, and to lead us to "see aspects of the work of words in the human form of life."[80] Similarly, I am concerned not with individual words but with a particular kind of text: I want to relate Wittgenstein's conception of aspect perception to a bioethics student's way of understanding a genre of story, whether that story is fiction or non-fiction.

Third, for still other scholars, Wittgenstein's

> extended consideration of aspect-seeing is [his] indirect meditation on the difficulties of

[79] Ibid, 9.
[80] Ibid, 10.

> receiving his (later) philosophical methods….To be told, as we are by Wittgenstein, "don't think, but look" at the "complicated network" of the conditions of our utterances (PI §66) is not enough, it seems, to bring about the needed change in seeing. The aspect-seeing remarks in the *Investigations* offer, from this standpoint, both an extended allegory of how to appropriate or receive the text of the *Investigations*, and a detailed working-out of the vicissitudes that…one finds along the way.[81]

Similarly, if I am correct that, through what he said about aspect perception, Wittgenstein expanded his conception of aesthetic reasoning, and if, as I proposed in chapter three, reasoning aesthetically was part of the later Wittgenstein's practice of philosophy (e.g., his invention and use of the language-game concept), then my discussion of aspect perception will inform our understanding of the later Wittgenstein's philosophical methods. Now, having sketched these general points of convergence between my interests in aspect perception and those of other commentators, I turn to an exposition of that concept.

**Aspect Perception in *Philosophy of Psychology – A Fragment***

Section xi of *Philosophy of Psychology – A Fragment* begins in this way:

> Two uses of the word "see." The one: "What do you see there?" –"I see *this*" (and then a description, a drawing, a copy). The other: "I see a likeness in these two faces" –let the man to whom I tell this be seeing the faces as clearly as I do myself. What is important is the categorical difference between the two "objects" of sight. The one man might make an accurate drawing of the two faces, and the other notice in the drawing the likeness which the former did not see. (PPF §§111-12)

Here, Wittgenstein distinguished two senses of the word "see." There is *seeing this*, which commentators often refer to as "continuous seeing." And there is *seeing a likeness*, which goes by various names, including "aspect perception," "aspect-seeing," "seeing an aspect," and

[81] Ibid, 10-11.

"noticing an aspect."[82] The phrase "noticing an aspect" occurs in a passage cited earlier, which immediately follows the passage just quoted. Here it is again: "I observe a face, and then suddenly notice its likeness to another. I *see* that it has not changed; and yet I see it differently. I call this experience 'noticing an aspect.' Its *causes* are of interest to psychologists. We are interested in the concept and its place among the concepts of experience." (PPF §§113-15)

After he mentioned seeing a likeness between two faces as an example of aspect perception, Wittgenstein offered another example in a remark that includes a drawn illustration. He said that we could imagine that illustration appearing in several places in a textbook. With each appearance, "something different is in question every time: here a glass cube, there an upturned box, there a wire frame of that shape, there three boards forming a solid angle. Each time the text supplies the interpretation of the illustration. But we can also *see* the illustration now as one thing, now as another. –So we interpret it, and *see* it as we *interpret* it." (PPF §116) In other words, this illustration invites aspect perception in that it can be seen and described "now as one thing, now as another." In having that experience, we might be aided by something like different captions in a textbook, or we might simply "interpret" the illustration "and *see* it as we *interpret* it." However the experience comes about, when we see and describe the illustration "now as one thing, now as another," we are seeing different aspects of it. We are noticing its likeness now to one thing, now to another. So, again, aspect perception is noticing a likeness.

In his next example of aspect perception, Wittgenstein borrowed Jastrow's duck-rabbit figure: "In my remarks, the following figure, derived from Jastrow, will be called 'the duck-

[82] For a clear discussion of these concepts and their relationships to "aspect-blindness," see William Day, "Wanting to Say Something: Aspect-Blindness and Language," in William Day and Victor J. Krebs, eds., *Seeing Wittgenstein Anew* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 204-24. Another good commentary on these concepts is Stephen Mulhall, *On Being in the World: Wittgenstein and Heidegger on Seeing Aspects* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

rabbit.' It can be seen as a rabbit's head or as a duck's. And I must distinguish between the 'continuous seeing' of an aspect and an aspect's 'lighting up.' The picture might have been shown me, without my ever seeing in it anything but a rabbit." (PPF §118) Elaborating on that last sentence, Wittgenstein said that, from the first, he might have seen the figure only as a picture of a rabbit. That is, he might have *continuously seen* the figure only as what he called a "picture-rabbit": "…if asked 'What's that?' or 'What do you see there?', I would have replied: 'A picture-rabbit.' If I had further been asked what that was, I would have explained by pointing to all sorts of pictures of rabbits, would perhaps have pointed to real rabbits, talked about their kind of life, or given an imitation of them." (PPF §120) Wittgenstein went on to say that, if he had continuously seen the figure in a particular way, he would have taken it for granted that his was the appropriate description of the figure:

> It would have made as little sense for me to say "Now I see it as…" as to say at the sight of a knife and fork "Now I see this as a knife and fork." This utterance would not be understood….One doesn't "*take*" what one knows to be cutlery at a meal *for* cutlery, any more than one ordinarily tries to move one's mouth as one eats….If someone says "Now it's a face for me," then one can ask him: "What change are you alluding to?" (PPF §§122-24)

Here, Wittgenstein pointed out that, when I describe an object that I only see continuously, I do not use phrases that allude to a change in my way of seeing that object (e.g., "Now I see it as…"). Instead, when I use those phrases, they suggest that an aspect has, as he put it, *lit up* for me: "If I heard someone talking about the duck-rabbit picture, and *now* he spoke in a certain way about the special expression of the rabbit's face, I'd say, now he's seeing the picture as a rabbit. But the expression in one's voice and gestures is the same as if the object had altered and had ended by *becoming* this or that." As this passage continues, Wittgenstein related a changed way of seeing the duck-rabbit figure to a changed way of hearing a musical theme: "I have a theme played to me several times and each time in a slower tempo. Eventually I say '*Now* it's right,' or

'*Now* at last it's a march,' '*Now* at last it's a dance.' –In *this* tone of voice the lighting up of an aspect is also expressed." (PPF §§208-09)

To summarize this exposition so far, Wittgenstein distinguished between continuously perceiving an object (e.g., an illustration, a figure, a musical theme) and the experience of aspect perception, and the latter occurs when an aspect lights up, producing a change in one's way of seeing and describing that object. For some aspect of an object to light up for me just is my noticing a likeness between that object and something else. "Now it's a box," I might say of the illustration, or "It's become a duck" of the duck-rabbit, or "It changed to a waltz" of the musical theme. These points are summarized well in a single remark: "If someone searches in a certain figure (call it Figure 1) for another figure (call it Figure 2), and then finds it, he sees Figure 1 in a new way. Not only can he give a new kind of description of it, but noticing the second figure was a new visual experience." (PPF §153) I continuously saw Figure 1. Yet, when the Figure 2 aspect lit up for me, my way of seeing Figure 1 was changed, and I could "give a new kind of description of it." My new description of Figure 1 might, for example, emphasize features of its Figure 2 aspect.

So far, even from this short exposition, I think we can draw several parallels between Wittgenstein's conceptions of aspect perception and aesthetic reasoning. For Wittgenstein, both concepts had to do with the experience of a changed way of perceiving and describing some object. Furthermore, in connection with both concepts, Wittgenstein insisted that the object perceived and described anew could be a work of art (e.g., a musical theme).[83] (Below, we will see that Wittgenstein also related aspect perception to our ways of seeing paintings.) Finally, Wittgenstein's referring to an aspect's *lighting* up—or the experience of aspect-*dawning*, as

[83] In this section of PPF, Wittgenstein mentioned music in several other places (e.g., §§226, 229, and 233).

some commentators call it—seems to echo his early view that value *shows* itself and his 1933 comments about the *appeal* of aesthetic reasons. That is, in relationship to both concepts, Wittgenstein's language is colored by visual and light-related metaphors, suggesting that, on his view, being convinced by aesthetic reasons and seeing aspects might be similar, illuminating experiences. So, given these parallels, I want to suggest that it is plausible to understand Wittgenstein's conception of aspect perception as expanding his earlier notion of aesthetic reasoning.

The plausibility of that proposal is, I think, strengthened by a particular remark in which Wittgenstein drew a further connection between aspect perception and music: "Here it occurs to me that in conversation on aesthetic matters we use the words 'You have to see it like *this*, this is how it is meant'; 'When you see it like *this*, you see where it goes wrong'; 'You have to hear these bars as an introduction'…." (PPF §178)[84] This remark's references to a musical introduction and to how a work of art is "meant" bear a striking similarity, I think, to one of Wittgenstein's examples of aesthetic reasoning in the Moore passage: "Brahms's *reason* for rejecting Joachim's suggestion that his Fourth Symphony should be opened by two chords was not that that wouldn't produce the feeling that he wanted to produce, but something more like 'This isn't what I meant.'" (M 278) Given that connection and the parallels noted above, I think we can conclude that, while Wittgenstein did not mention aesthetic reasons explicitly after 1933, he continued to pursue that line of inquiry, in part, in his investigation of aspect perception.

[84] "When you see it like *this*, you see where it goes wrong" does not, on my reading, refer to seeing wrongly or incorrectly (e.g., claiming to notice a likeness that does not exist or is not there). Here, the "it" that "goes wrong" is, presumably, part of a musical piece. For example: Once you hear this part as an introduction, you will hear that it goes wrong in that its final chord is not sustained. However, later, I will discuss a person's claiming to have noticed a likeness that is either implausible or does not exist, which could be called an instance of his seeing some object incorrectly.

To be clear, I am not proposing that "aspect perception" is simply another, later name for what Wittgenstein called "aesthetic reasoning" in 1933. As discussed above, aspect perception is a broad concept that is related to a range of perceptual experiences (e.g., ways of seeing figures, illustrations, faces, and much more), while aesthetic reasoning is a concept that, for Wittgenstein, appears to have been more restricted in application. My proposal is that Wittgenstein's discussions of aspect perception give us a more detailed understanding of what aesthetic reasoning involves—namely, the possibility of having one's way of seeing some object changed by attending to previously-unnoticed aspects of it, which could equip one with new descriptions of that object. This is why I have said that aspect perception *expands*, or *further informs*, Wittgenstein's notion of aesthetic reasoning. Similarly, in the next chapter, I will argue that Wittgenstein's notion of grammatical pictures also expands our understanding of aesthetic reasoning. To do that, I will show a link between his conceptions of aspect perception and grammatical pictures. I will argue that, for Wittgenstein, when a person perceives a new aspect of an object, she can be said to understand it through a new grammatical picture that, if adopted, informs her new way of speaking about—and, in general, relating to—that object.

Below, I consider Wittgenstein's remarks that connect aspect perception to our ways of seeing historical and genre paintings, for those remarks will serve as a useful parallel for my contention concerning a common way of seeing a story in a bioethics class.

**Aspect Perception and Our Ways of Seeing Historical and Genre Paintings**

In the midst of his comments on aspect perception, Wittgenstein asked his readers "to think of the role which pictures such as paintings…play in our lives. This role is by no means a uniform one." (PPF §195) And, later, he called our attention to the fact that, in some cases, and at certain times, "we *view* the photograph, the picture on our wall, as the very object (the man,

landscape, and so on) represented in it." (PPF §197) In other words, Wittgenstein observed that, sometimes, we *continuously see a painting or a photograph as its object*. But *what kind* of painting or photograph, and *when* might we see them in this way? He continued: "I say: 'We view a portrait as a human being' –when do we do so, and for how long? *Always*, if we see it at all (and don't, say, see it as something else)?" (PPF §199) Here, Wittgenstein asked whether his concept of continuous seeing is alone sufficient to capture all of our experiences of viewing a particular kind of painting—namely, a portrait (or historical representation).[85] When viewing a painting of Abraham Lincoln, for example, do I simply see Lincoln (as I simply see my knife and fork at a meal and don't *take* them *for* cutlery)? Sometimes, that is what happens. I view the painting, and I simply see Lincoln—the object represented. Furthermore, when describing what I see when I am continuously seeing Lincoln, I might (more or less) forget that I am looking at a painting and speak as though I were describing *him*: "He looks good without a beard," I might say, or, "It's no wonder that he was so handsome—he was a native Kentuckian!" So, with a historical painting, I might continuously see—and perhaps describe—the reality of the object represented.

Yet, we need not always continuously see a historical painting as the object that it represents. We might continuously see it in other ways. For example, instead of seeing Lincoln, I might continuously see the painting as a good investment and a thing to show off: "Now step over here and let me show you one of my best, recent investments." But I might also see it continuously as a blight on the room, or as just another piece of furniture to be dusted, or as something else: "After cleaning the desk, please dust that old thing on the wall, and then…."

[85] That Wittgenstein used "portrait" to refer to a "historical representation" generally—and not only to refer to a painting of a historical person—can be seen in the following remark, which I will discuss below: "If we compare a proposition to a picture, we must consider whether we are comparing it to a portrait (a historical representation) or to a genre-picture. And both comparisons make sense." (PI §522)

And here, in transitioning to Wittgenstein's remarks on our ways of seeing genre paintings—that is, realist paintings that depict scenes from everyday life—it should be clear that each of the above ways of continuously seeing a historical painting could also be my way of viewing a particular genre painting. That is, I might see such a painting continuously as a good investment, as just another piece of furniture to be dusted, or as something else. Granting this, we might wonder whether it is possible to enumerate all of the ways in which a particular historical or genre paining could be continuously seen. Fortunately, in "giving all these examples," I can say, with Wittgenstein, that I am "not aiming at some kind of completeness. Not a classification of psychological concepts. They are only meant to enable the reader to cope with conceptual unclarities." (PPF §202) So, as I trust that the progression of my discussion will show, I am not trying to give anything like an exhaustive account of how we might continuously see these paintings. Instead, I am first discussing examples of our ways of continuously seeing historical and genre paintings so I can then seek to clarify what it might mean to aspect perceive them.

Of genre paintings, Thomas Kinkade's "I'll Be Home for Christmas" is a simple and gorgeous example. It contains a snowy valley—of lakes, evergreens, and small cottages—that stretches into the background. In the foreground, a couple in a one-horse open sleigh is being pulled toward a stone chapel that is all aglow. How might Wittgenstein's notion of continuous seeing shed light on our ways of viewing a genre painting like this? In *Philosophical Investigations*, he wrote:

> When I look at a genre-painting, it "tells" me something, even though I don't believe (imagine) for a moment that the people I see in it really exist, or that there have really been people in that situation. For suppose I ask, "*What* does it tell me, then?" "A picture tells me itself" is what I'd like to say. That is, its telling me something consists in its own structure, in *its* own forms and colours. (PI §§522-23)

So, according to Wittgenstein, a genre painting might, as he put it, tell me itself. In viewing it, I might simply see objects or colors or other features as, so to speak, *internal* to the painting. In other words, in both viewing and describing what I see, I might not "believe (imagine) for a moment that the [things] I see in it really exist" outside the painting. Accordingly, above, when I described my way of seeing a particular painting by Kinkade, I did not suggest that there is some sort of correspondence between the painting's internal features that my description named and some reality outside the painting. I did not suppose that the sleigh or chapel, for example, has ever existed apart from its painted depiction. Instead, my description referenced only things within the painting. In this way, a person might continuously see a genre painting simply as its *internal content*—a phrase that I want to use, without suggesting any theoretical commitment, as a placeholder for whatever a person might see and reference as existing only within a painting. When a person describes a genre painting's internal content, she does not suppose that the things that she describes represent or correspond to some reality outside the painting. Of course, there are sleighs and chapels outside of Kinkade's painting, but my point is that, in viewing and describing that painting, I might not take *this* sleigh and *this* chapel to be *representations* of some particular, real sleigh and some particular, real chapel. I might continuously see that painting only as its internal content.

So far, in discussing Wittgenstein's view of our ways of seeing historical and genre paintings, I have only spoken of our continuously seeing those works and not of aspect perception. That is, I have not discussed an experience of viewing a genre or historical painting and noticing its likeness to something else—as when, continuously seeing the picture-duck, you might suddenly notice that figure's likeness to a picture-rabbit. However, in the following remarks, Wittgenstein might have hinted at the experience of aspect perceiving a historical

painting: "I could say: a picture is not always *alive* for me while I am seeing it. 'Her picture smiles down on me from the wall.' It need not always do so, whenever my glance lights on it." (PPF §200) Viewing the portrait of Lincoln, for example, I admire his refined dress, his beardless visage, his dashing sweep of dark hair. But now, when I see the painting *this time*, it suddenly occurs to me that Lincoln looks a lot like his fellow Kentuckian, Jefferson Davis. I have noticed a likeness between Lincoln and Davis, and, in doing so, I have acquired new descriptions: "What irony that Lincoln and Davis should have looked so much alike in 1861!" I might declare. Or: "Both looked so gaunt and worried at the time," I might worry. Or ask: "If these two shared a style of dress and grooming, how common was that fashion among the political elite of the day?"[86] As Glock commented, "what changes in aspect-dawning is not *what* we perceive…but *our attitude* to it, *how we react* to it and *what we can do* with it."[87] The Lincoln portrait has stayed the same, but now I see his resemblance to Davis, and what I can do with that painting (e.g., say about it) has changed.

This is perhaps a convenient place to pause and note that my aspect perceptions can be mistaken. Imagine, for example, that Davis never shared Lincoln's "refined dress" or anything like his "dashing sweep of dark hair," but I suppose that Davis did, and I go right on relating to the Lincoln painting as if Davis did. I have a mistaken aspect perception of the Lincoln painting. I will return to this point in chapter six, where I will discuss implausible comparisons between stories and medical situations.

In relationship to genre paintings, Wittgenstein never commented explicitly on experiences of aspect perception. Still, his comments on a particular figure in *Philosophy of Psychology – A Fragment* hint at an experience of noticing a likeness in a realist painting. Of a

[86] In the next chapter, I will return to new descriptions like these in connection with grammatical pictures.
[87] Glock, 39. My emphasis.

"picture-face"—that is, a simple picture of a face made by drawing a circle and using dots and lines to suggest facial features—Wittgenstein remarked: "In some respects, I engage with it as with a human face. I can study its expression, can react to it as to the expression of the human face." (PPF §119) Likewise, when viewing a genre painting, we might engage with that painting's internal content *as if it were real*. While, as Wittgenstein said, we might not *believe* that its internal content has ever existed outside the painting, we might, nevertheless, adopt a certain attitude toward that content, noticing a likeness between it and reality, and interact with that content accordingly. "They sure look warm in that sleigh," I might remark of Kinkade's painting, or "what a place to be on Christmas night." Or, viewing the painting with a child, I might turn to her and ask, "Do you think the couple traveled home through that long valley?" Or, "I don't see a stable for that horse tonight, do you?" In such ways, I might engage with the painting as if its internal content were real. It was, I take it, with something like this experience of noticing a likeness to reality in mind that Wittgenstein introduced a discussion of realist paintings into his investigation of aspect perception, for it is easy to grant that such a painting, *as realist*, has internal content that can invite an as-if-real way of seeing it.

In summary, Wittgenstein noted that paintings play many roles in our lives (PPF §195), and some of those roles (e.g., what we say in conversations about them) might be understood in relationship to continuous seeing and aspect perception. For example, with a historical painting, I might continuously see the reality of the object represented (e.g., Lincoln), but I also might notice a likeness between that object and something else (e.g., Davis). And, with a genre painting, I might continuously see its internal content (e.g., a stone chapel), but I also might engage with that content as if it were real, noticing its likeness to reality.

**Previewing a Parallel between Viewing Paintings and Using Stories in Bioethics Classes**

In a specific way, my discussion of aspect perception and historical paintings has mirrored my discussion of aspect perception and genre paintings: For both types of painting, it is in relationship to a person's way of continuously seeing that painting that a new aspect (i.e., a new likeness or comparison) might light up. To notice the Lincoln painting's resemblance to Davis (or something else), I must continuously see Lincoln. To compare some internal content of Kinkade's painting with real life, I must continuously see that internal content. This is not necessarily a remark about a temporal progression, as if continuous seeing must happen before aspect perception. Instead, I am commenting on a conceptual relationship. For these types of painting, one thing (e.g., Davis) can only be regarded as—and called—an aspect in relationship to something else that is continuously seen (e.g., Lincoln).

Now, because the point will find parallels in chapters five and six, I want to point out that, in viewing both historical and genre paintings, continuous seeing and aspect perception might conceptually coincide. That is, they might, so to speak, come packaged together. To see how continuous seeing and aspect perception might coincide, recall that, about a particular illustration, Wittgenstein remarked that we might "interpret it, and *see* it as we *interpret* it." (PPF §116) I see the illustration *and* see it as an open box. I see the duck-rabbit figure *and* see it as a picture-duck. These ways of seeing can come packaged together.[88] Similarly, I might see the painting of Lincoln *and* notice his likeness to Davis. Perhaps this happens because, for example, the painting is first introduced to me with the words, "Notice how much Lincoln looks like Davis in this painting." Similarly, I might see some internal content of Kinkade's painting *and* compare

[88] However, even when these experiences coincide, it might be possible, in reflection, to distinguish between them—that is, to articulate *seeing this* from *noticing a likeness*. For example, when I see the duck-rabbit figure *and* see it as a picture-duck, I can still reflect on the fact that I am seeing only one aspect of a figure that might be seen in another way.

it to real life. When I see the horse, for example, I might see it trotting—compare it, that is, to real motion.[89] In fact, my initial description of my way of continuously seeing Kinkade's painting contained a comparison with real movement. As I wrote (with emphasis this time): "In the foreground, a couple in a one-horse open sleigh *is being pulled toward* a stone chapel that is all aglow." In my way of viewing that painting, continuous seeing and aspect perception coincided.

In chapter six, this point—that, with both historical and genre paintings, continuous seeing and aspect perception might conceptually coincide—will find a parallel in my discussion of a common way in which a story is seen in a bioethics class. As I will argue, in our use of a particular kind of fiction or non-fiction story in a bioethics class, continuous seeing and aspect perception conceptually coincide. That is, we continuously see the story, and we see it *as if it were a real case* (i.e., a medical situation). In other words, we often interact with these stories—including non-fiction—not as representations of reality but as presenting alterable situations that we merely compare with, or notice a plausible likeness to, reality. So, I will contend that, in this specific way, bioethics classes often treat both fiction and non-fiction stories like fiction.[90] And I will set up that point with a similar example in chapter five, arguing that, in my interactions with Tolstoy's parable of the Good Samaritan, continuous seeing and aspect perception also coincide.

In proposing that aspect perception can be related in analogous ways to the paintings and stories mentioned above, I have followed a hint that Wittgenstein dropped at the end of the

[89] About another horse, Wittgenstein once made the same point: "…it is strange that with some drawings our impression should be something flat, and with others something three-dimensional….When I see the picture of a galloping horse—do I only *know* that this is the kind of movement meant? Is it superstition to think I *see* the horse galloping in the picture?" (PPF §§174-75)

[90] Furthermore, as we will see in chapter six, there are other ways in which aspect perception—in both Wittgenstein's sense and another sense that I will introduce—can occur in a class's use of those stories.

following remarks—from which I quoted earlier—when he suggested that there is some kinship in our experiences of both genre paintings and "fictitious narratives."

> If we compare a proposition to a picture, we must consider whether we are comparing it to a portrait (a historical representation) or to a genre-picture. And both comparisons make sense. When I look at a genre-painting, it "tells" me something, even though I don't believe (imagine) for a moment that the people I see in it really exist, or that there have really been people in that situation. For suppose I ask, "*What* does it tell me, then?" "A picture tells me itself" is what I'd like to say. That is, its telling me something consists in its own structure, in *its* own forms and colours….Don't take it as a matter of course, but as a remarkable fact, that pictures and fictitious narratives give us pleasure, absorb us. (PI §§522-24)

What did Wittgenstein mean when he said that both genre paintings and fictitious narratives "absorb us"? *How* do they absorb us, on his view? In the next chapter, I seek to show that, to answer that question, we must first understand Wittgenstein's claim that a proposition can be compared to either a historical or a genre painting. And, to grasp that comparison, we must understand his ideas of grammar and grammatical pictures. I will sketch these connections in more detail at the beginning of the next chapter. By making those excursions, we will discover that Wittgenstein's conception of grammatical pictures, like aspect perception, tells us more about his notion of aesthetic reasoning.

## Summary

In this chapter, I gave a brief exposition of Wittgenstein's conception of aspect perception, and I argued that, for Wittgenstein, aspect perception was connected to his earlier notion of aesthetic reasoning, for both concepts had to do with the experience of a changed way of perceiving and describing some object, such as a work of art. Furthermore, in both cases, Wittgenstein used light-related language to characterize that new perceptual experience, and I noted that his remarks on aspect perception in a particular passage (PPF §178) echo parts of the Moore passage. In light of these connections, I concluded that aspect perception gives us a more

detailed understanding of what aesthetic reasoning involves—namely, the possibility of having one's way of seeing some object changed by attending to previously-unnoticed aspects of it, which could equip one with new descriptions of that object.

Furthermore, I discussed some of our ways of both continuously seeing and aspect perceiving historical and genre paintings, arguing that, in relationship to a given painting of either genre, those ways of seeing can conceptually coincide. In several ways, that discussion has prepared the ground for chapters five and six, where I will offer examples of uses of stories in which continuous seeing and aspect perception also coincide. But before introducing those examples, I turn my attention to grammatical pictures, arguing that Wittgenstein connected that concept to his notion of aspect perception and that, together, those concepts expand his view of aesthetic reasoning.

## Chapter V
## Grammatical Pictures and Aesthetic Reasoning

In this chapter, I argue that Wittgenstein's understanding of grammatical pictures was connected to both aspect perception and aesthetic reasoning. Together, grammatical pictures and aspect perception tell us more about what aesthetic reasoning involves, and, as noted in the introduction to chapter four, they do so in at least two ways. First, these concepts tell us more about the *general features* of aesthetic reasoning. We learn that aesthetic reasoning involves the introduction of grammar that can draw a person's attention to unnoticed aspects of an object and equip her with further descriptions of that object. Second, these concepts tell us more about the *kind of transformation* that someone who is convinced by aesthetic reasoning can be said to experience. Her way of seeing an object has been changed in that, seeing that object through a different grammatical picture, she has noticed and accepted new aspects of it.

I begin by discussing Wittgenstein's understanding of empirical and grammatical propositions, which will allow me to describe the relationship between grammatical propositions and grammatical pictures. Then, I argue that Wittgenstein's idea of grammatical pictures—when paired with aspect perception—supplies us with the expanded notion of aesthetic reasoning articulated above. Next, I turn to Wittgenstein's proposal that we might compare a proposition to a painting. By exploring that comparison, we will come to understand his claim that both genre paintings and fiction stories can "absorb us" in that they can draw us into the grammatical pictures that they offer. Furthermore, I contend that our being absorbed in that way can change our way of seeing some external object, for we might come to see that object through grammar that draws our attention to that object's unnoticed aspects and equips us with further descriptions of it. In other words, in coming to understand Wittgenstein's claim that genre paintings and

fiction can absorb us, we will also see that our interactions with these media can involve aesthetic reasoning. Finally, to illustrate that proposal, I return to Tolstoy's parable of the Good Samaritan, describe my interacting with that parable in a particular way, and show that aesthetic reasoning is woven into my use of it. I conclude that we can understand my use of Tolstoy's parable as an example of aesthetic reasoning in ethics, for that use has moral import, exemplifies the features of aesthetic reasoning that Wittgenstein identified in 1933, and embodies his later, expanded view of such reasoning.

## Empirical and Grammatical Propositions

While Wittgenstein held that there are "countless" kinds of proposition (PI §23), he identified two important kinds as empirical—or material, as they are sometimes called—and grammatical. In several places in *Philosophical Investigations*, he sought to clarify what he meant by empirical and grammatical propositions. For example:

> What does it mean when we say, "I can't imagine the opposite of this" or "What would it be like if it were otherwise?" –For example, when someone has said that my mental images are private; or that only I myself can know whether I am feeling pain; and so forth. Of course, here "I can't imagine the opposite" doesn't mean: my powers of imagination are unequal to the task. We use these words to fend off something whose form produces the illusion of being an empirical proposition, but which is really a grammatical one….Example: "Every rod has a length." That means something like: we call something (or *this*) "the length of a rod"—but nothing "the length of a sphere." Now can I imagine "every rod having a length"? Well, I just imagine a rod; and that is all. Only this picture, in connection with this proposition, has a quite different role from the one used in connection with the proposition "This table has the same length as the one over there." For here I understand what it means to have a picture of the opposite (and it doesn't have to be a mental picture either). (PI §251)

This remark includes three examples of grammatical propositions: "my mental images are private," "only I myself can know whether I am feeling pain," and "every rod has a length." And Wittgenstein commented that, while "every rod has a length" might *look like* an empirical proposition—that is, one whose truth could be confirmed or disconfirmed by empirical means—

it is, instead, a proposition that expresses some of the grammar of "length" by articulating a norm for the use of "length"—namely, to describe any rod. (And he further specified some of that grammar by pointing out that "length" is not used to describe spheres.) In other words, this proposition introduces the familiar entity "length" and captures a sense in which it is used—again, to describe any rod. So, in general, we can say that, for Wittgenstein, specifying the *grammar* of some concept X involves identifying the senses in which X can be used meaningfully,[91] and a *grammatical proposition* expresses some of that grammar by articulating a norm for the use of X.

Now, most of us who have learned to speak the language recognize the sense of the grammatical proposition "every rod has a length," but we would not say that it tells us something new—even if we had never quite put the matter that way before. Instead, it simply reminds us of a way we can use words—in this case, that we can use "length" to describe any rod.[92] So, a grammatical proposition need not introduce a *new* idea or entity by *inventing* a new *concept*—though, as we will see, Wittgenstein thought that some grammatical propositions (e.g., some of Freud's claims) do just that. Still, whether a grammatical proposition expresses a norm for the use of a new or an existing concept, such a proposition is, in general, a standard of sense. Or, using Wittgenstein's analogy between language and game, we could put it this way: A grammatical proposition is like a rule for a game. It articulates a norm according to which the game is played. And, extending that analogy, we could say that an empirical proposition makes one kind of move in the game.[93] The example of an empirical proposition given above ("This table has the same length as the one over there") follows, or takes as normative, the rule that is

[91] Glock, 153.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid, 151.

articulated by the grammatical proposition "Every table has a length" and makes a move in the game that that proposition regulates.

## Grammatical Pictures

So far, I trust that my exposition of Wittgenstein on grammar and both grammatical and empirical propositions has not been controversial. Now, as I discuss grammatical pictures, I want to remain equally safe. In doing so, I am preparing to elaborate on Wittgenstein's comparisons between empirical propositions and historical paintings and between grammatical propositions and genre paintings, which will equip me to say how both genre paintings and works of fiction can absorb us. Then, at the end of this section, I will be able to state concisely how, together, Wittgenstein's conceptions of grammatical pictures and aspect perception expanded his notion of aesthetic reasoning.

Wittgenstein suggested that, if a person is aware of a grammatical proposition, she might imagine its sense, and that "a picture can correspond to" what she imagines: "What is in the imagination is not a picture," he wrote, "but a picture can correspond to it." (PI §301) That suggestion was also included in the long remark quoted above: "Now can I imagine 'every rod having a length'? Well, I just imagine a rod; and that is all." And, in that remark, Wittgenstein went on to say that the role of a grammatical picture is different from that of an empirical proposition: "Only this [grammatical] picture, in connection with this [grammatical] proposition, has a quite different role from the one used in connection with the [empirical] proposition "This table has the same length as the one over there." (PI §251) More specifically, the role of a grammatical picture—like that of the grammatical proposition whose sense it depicts—is normative or regulative, for that picture guides our uses of particular ideas (e.g., "length") as we say things like "This table will be long enough" and do *not* say things like "How long is that

sphere?" To show this more clearly, I will consider some other examples of grammatical pictures. James C. Edwards assembled a useful list.[94]

> (a) "The picture that men have souls: in a drawn picture, the soul might be represented by a spot of light or a dove." (PI §422) (b) "The picture of blindness as a darkness in the head or in the soul of the blind man." (PI §424) (c) "The picture that thinking goes on in the head…." (PI §427) (d) "The picture of the carbon atoms of benzene lying at the corners of a hexagon; a familiar representation in textbooks of chemistry." (PI §422) (e) "The picture of the earth as a very old planet, existing for eons before our birth…." (Z §462) (f) "The religious picture of the all-seeing eye of God." (LC 71)

Given these examples, it should be clear that the phrase "grammatical picture" uses "picture" in a figurative sense, for—in some cases, at least—a person might not be able to draw or otherwise literally depict her grammatical picture. I, for one, do not know how I would draw the grammatical pictures suggested by (e) and (f), though I understand the sense of each of those propositions.

How might grammatical pictures like these be normative for us? Consider (c) above and the following example: The girl studying next to me has paused in her reading. She is silent. Her eyes are closed and she is massaging her temples. Now, glancing over at her, I muse silently: "I wonder what she's thinking…." In doing so, it appears that I am guided by a grammatical picture of "thinking goes on in the head," for, in light of my description of what I observed, it seems implausible that I would wonder what she is thinking if I did not hold something like (c). Furthermore, in musing about her, I have taken it for granted that I do not already know what she is thinking, and it seems that I do that because I hold another, related picture of a grammatical proposition that Wittgenstein identified: "'I can't know what is going on in [her]' is, above all, a *picture*. It is the convincing expression of a conviction." (PPF §326) Here, the grammatical

[94] Edwards, 117. In this list, the quotation marks are for Edwards' text, not Wittgenstein's.

proposition "I can't know what is going on in her" suggests a picture of another person's interior life as epistemologically inaccessible to me.

But there is more: As I wonder what she is thinking, I am taking for granted all that I have learned of the grammar of "thinking"—that, for example, we attribute thinking to *people* (even *silent* people), that we speak of thinking in connection with studying, and that, closing her eyes and massaging her temples, a person might say something like "Just let me think a moment." And, from all of this, it should be clear that the grammar of "thinking" is interwoven in complex ways with how we use that word in relationship to numerous activities in various contexts. In other words, we learn the grammar of "thinking" as we learn the complicated *forms of life* with which doing things with that word is intertwined, as Stanley Cavell wrote:

> In "learning language" you learn not merely what the names of things are, but what a name is; not merely what the form of expression is for expressing a wish, but what expressing a wish is; not merely what the word for "father" is, but what a father is; not merely what the word for "love" is, but what love is. In learning language, you do not merely learn the pronunciation of sounds, and their grammatical orders, but the "forms of life" which make those sounds the words they are, do what they do—e.g., name, call, point, express a wish or affection, indicate a choice or an aversion, etc. And Wittgenstein sees the relations among *these* forms as "grammatical" also.[95]

Borrowing language from my discussion of aspect perception in the last chapter, it is possible to restate what is happening in my example of the girl sitting next to me in terms of continuous seeing: As I am guided by one sandwich of grammar, grammatical propositions, and grammatical pictures, I *continuously see* the girl as thinking. That is, I simply see her thinking, and, curious and distractible chap that I am, I wonder what she is thinking. In such ordinary ways, our grammatical pictures are normative for us.

[95] Stanley Cavell, "Excursus on Wittgenstein's Vision of Language," in Alice Crary and Rupert Read, eds., *The New Wittgenstein* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 28.

But now I have a problem, for you just sat down across from me, glanced at the girl, and whispered to me, "She must have a headache." And I can see what you mean. Given a different sandwich of grammar, grammatical propositions, and grammatical pictures, I might have been guided to make other observations (e.g., "her jaw is clinched") and responded differently, perhaps asking the girl, "Does your head hurt badly?" In other words, given a different grammatical picture—something like that of a headache as a persistent pain in the head—and given that picture's accompanying grammar, I could have seen the girl differently. I could have *continuously seen* her in another way. With your comment, you suggested a different grammar,[96] and, in that way, you have—at least for a moment—drawn my attention to unnoticed aspects, enabled further descriptions (e.g., "her jaw is clinched"), and changed my way of seeing. Now, I see *through* a different grammatical picture, and I can describe what I see in a new way, saying things (e.g., "She has a bottle of Advil beside her") that I did not say while guided by the grammatical picture of "thinking goes on in the head." Then, I continuously saw the girl thinking. But now, having seen her through a different grammatical picture, *I have experienced a change of aspects*. Now, I notice a likeness to thinking, but I also see a likeness to a headache.[97]

Above, some of my language suggested that, for Wittgenstein, there was a connection between grammatical pictures and aspect perception. He established that connection when he

---

[96] In other words, your empirical proposition "She must have a headache" follows the rule that is articulated by the grammatical proposition "A headache is a persistent pain in the head" and makes a move in the game that that proposition regulates.

[97] Similarly, Alasdair MacIntyre observed that "one and the same segment of human behavior may be correctly characterized in a number of different ways. To the question 'What is he doing?' the answers may with equal truth and appropriateness be 'Digging,' 'Gardening,' 'Taking exercise,' 'Preparing for winter' or 'Pleasing his wife.'" See Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 206. However, MacIntyre did not relate this point to Wittgenstein's conceptions of continuous seeing, aspect perception, and grammatical pictures, as I am. Furthermore, unlike MacIntyre, I do not want to assume that the accuracy of each of these characterizations depends on the intentions of the agent who is being characterized. For that critique of MacIntyre's position, see Carl Elliott, *A Philosophical Disease: Bioethics, Culture, and Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 131-32. And see note 10, page 180, where Elliott pointed out that, when he is teaching, "some descriptions, such as 'boring my students,' are in fact contrary to my intentions."

remarked that "the aspects in a change of aspects are *those* which, in certain circumstances, the figure could have *permanently* in a picture." (PPF §166) To get at the meaning of this remark, recall Wittgenstein's comment that the duck-rabbit figure "might have been shown me, without my ever seeing in it anything but a rabbit." (PPF §118) Following that example, imagine that I continuously see the duck-rabbit figure only through rabbit-related grammatical pictures (e.g., "All rabbits have stub noses and longish ears"). In that case, I see only the figure's rabbit aspects (i.e., its likenesses to a rabbit), I regard those aspects as permanent in the figure, and I speak accordingly (e.g., saying, "Check out those long rabbit ears"). However, if I now come to see the figure through another grammatical picture (e.g., one related to a duck), the figure's rabbit aspects have, for me, lost their permanence, for, in looking at the figure, I no longer see them alone. In short, one grammatical picture can guide what I continuously see, the likenesses (i.e., aspects) that I notice, and what I might do (e.g., say) in relationship to what I see. But the introduction of another grammatical picture can alter all of those experiences.

In another context, Wittgenstein again related the introduction of a different grammatical picture to a change in a person's way of seeing something—in this case, to a change in a person's way of understanding a student's capacity to learn to write the series of natural numbers. He wrote:

> What do I mean when I say "the pupil's ability to learn *may* come to an end here"? Do I report this from my own experience? Of course not. (Even if I have had such experience.) Then what am I doing with that remark? After all, I'd like you to say: "Yes, it's true, one could imagine that too, that might happen too!" –But was I trying to draw someone's attention to the fact that he is able to imagine that? –I wanted to put that picture before him, and his *acceptance* of the picture consists in his now being inclined to regard a given case differently: that is, to compare it with *this* sequence of pictures. I have changed his *way of looking at things*. (Indian mathematicians: "Look at this!") (PI §144)

As Edwards pointed out,[98] the enigmatic insertion about "Indian mathematicians" is clarified in a parallel passage in *Zettel*: "I once read somewhere that a geometrical figure, with the words 'Look at this,' serves as a proof for certain Indian mathematicians. This too effects an alteration in one's way of seeing.)" (Z §461) "Here," Edwards commented, "we have Wittgenstein explicitly connecting the notion of a (grammatical) picture to the 'aesthetic' philosophical goal of changing one's way of seeing."[99] I am much indebted to Edwards, for, to my knowledge, he is the only commentator to have noticed that Wittgenstein linked aesthetic reasoning and grammatical pictures.

In light of these passages, I am now in a position to summarize my answer to this central question: How did Wittgenstein's conceptions of grammatical pictures and aspect perception expand his notion of aesthetic reasoning? In the last chapter, we saw that both aesthetic reasoning and aspect perception are related to the experience of a changed way of perceiving and describing some object, that that object could be a work of art (e.g., a painting), and that, in relationship to both concepts, Wittgenstein's language was colored by visual metaphors (e.g., "appeal," "light up"). Given those convergences, I concluded that aspect perception tells us more about what is involved in aesthetic reasoning. Now, in this section, I have wedded the language of aspect perception and grammatical pictures because, as I have argued, Wittgenstein linked the two. And, as my discussion of grammatical pictures has shown, the language of that concept can also be aligned with that of aesthetic reasoning. For example, I showed that, in commenting that the girl sitting beside us had a headache, we can say that you placed a particular grammatical picture alongside my contrasting picture, drew my attention to unnoticed aspects, and equipped me with further descriptions. You succeeded—at least momentarily—in changing my way of

[98] Edwards, 136-38.
[99] Ibid, 138.

seeing. In light of these experiences, we can say that you engaged in—and that I was convinced by—aesthetic reasoning.[100] Similarly, of the passage just quoted (PI §144), we might say that Wittgenstein imagined that, by introducing a different grammatical picture of "the pupil's ability to learn" (i.e., by placing that picture alongside his interlocutor's contrasting grammatical picture), he could draw his interlocutor's attention to unnoticed aspects of a given case and lead him to describe that case differently (i.e., "to compare it with *this* sequence of pictures"). In doing so, Wittgenstein wished to change "his *way of looking at things*."[101] Finally, granting all of this, we can see that Wittgenstein's conceptions of aspect perception and grammatical pictures tell us more about the kind of transformation that someone who is convinced by aesthetic reasoning can be said to experience. His way of seeing an object has been changed in that, seeing through a new grammatical picture, he has noticed new aspects of it. By putting this so briefly, I do not want to understate the profundity that such a transformation can have for the person who experiences it. As I said, his way of seeing an object has been changed, but this is not merely visual—instead, his understanding of what that object is, and how he relates to it, have changed.

Now, having briefly discussed grammar, grammatical propositions, grammatical pictures, and empirical propositions, and with an expanded notion of aesthetic reasoning in hand, I return to Wittgenstein's proposal that we might compare a proposition to a painting. By exploring that comparison, we will come to see that both genre paintings and fiction can "absorb us," as

---

[100] Recall that Wittgenstein suggested that, when aesthetic reasoning occurs in conversation, it involves my giving another person "further descriptions," drawing her "attention to a thing," and placing "things side by side" for her to compare.

[101] The "Look at this" of these remarks (PI §144 and Z §461) is echoed in a 1947 entry in Wittgenstein's notebook: "The philosopher says 'Look at things *like this*!' – but first, that is not to say that people will look at things like this, second, he may be altogether too late with his admonition, & it's possible too that such an admonition can achieve absolutely nothing & that the impulse towards such a change in the way things are perceived must come from another direction." (CV 70) In chapter three, I argued that, in his invention and use of the language-game concept, Wittgenstein practiced aesthetic reasoning "in Philosophy." Now, if I am correct that "grammatical picture" expands "aesthetic reasoning," perhaps Wittgenstein's exchange with an imagined interlocutor in these passages from PI and Z could also be described as his reasoning aesthetically.

Wittgenstein said, in that they might draw us into the grammatical pictures that they offer. Furthermore, our being absorbed in that way might change our way of seeing some external object, for we might come to see that object through a grammatical picture that draws our attention to its unnoticed aspects and equips us with further descriptions of it. In other words, as we understand Wittgenstein's claim that genre paintings and fiction can absorb us, we will also see that our interactions with those media can involve aesthetic reasoning in relationship to external objects.

## Propositions and Paintings

As quoted in chapter four, here are the remarks in which Wittgenstein said that it makes sense to compare a proposition and a painting.

> If we compare a proposition to a picture, we must consider whether we are comparing it to a portrait (a historical representation) or to a genre-picture. And both comparisons make sense. When I look at a genre-painting, it "tells" me something, even though I don't believe (imagine) for a moment that the people I see in it really exist, or that there have really been people in that situation. For suppose I ask, "*What* does it tell me, then?" "A picture tells me itself" is what I'd like to say. That is, its telling me something consists in its own structure, in *its* own forms and colours….Don't take it as a matter of course, but as a remarkable fact, that pictures and fictitious narratives give us pleasure, absorb us. (PI §§522-24)

For Wittgenstein, the difference between grammatical and empirical propositions, Glock commented, is, respectively, "akin to that between genre and historical paintings…."[102] In another passage, Wittgenstein compared a particular grammatical proposition ("I know what pain is only from my own case") to a painting, remarking: "And even if it gives no information, still, it is a picture….Imagine an allegorical painting instead of the words. Indeed, when we look into ourselves as we do philosophy, we often get to see just such a picture. Virtually a pictorial representation of our grammar. Not facts; but, as it were, illustrated turns of speech." (PI §295)

[102] Glock, 303-04.

In this section, I begin with this comparison, and later I discuss his claim that a historical painting might be compared to an empirical proposition.

What did Wittgenstein mean when he said that we might compare a grammatical proposition and a genre painting? The answer, on my view, is that both a grammatical proposition and a genre painting can introduce imaginative entities and ideas that establish norms for making sense with those entities and ideas. In other words, my viewing a genre painting—like my understanding a grammatical proposition—can be accompanied by a grammatical picture. To see this, first recall a grammatical proposition discussed earlier: "Thinking goes on in the head." (PI §427) This proposition introduces the entities "thinking" and "head" and the idea that the former is an event or activity that occurs "in" the latter.[103] Now, as we have seen, that grammatical proposition need not ever have occurred to me for me to be guided by it, for, because I have learned the grammar of "thinking," that grammar is accompanied by grammatical pictures that, so to speak, *reside* in my language and *frame* what I do with "thinking."[104] And one of those grammatical pictures is of "thinking goes on in the head." I was guided by that grammatical picture, in my earlier example, when I wondered what the girl massaging her temples was thinking, and, accordingly, it would have made sense for me to do something in relationship to her thinking (e.g., to ask her, "What are you thinking about?").

Similarly, I want to say that a genre painting is like a grammatical proposition in that such a painting, too, might introduce imaginative entities and ideas that operate normatively for a

[103] Here, I am not using "entity" and "idea" in any strict or technical sense. These are, I think, simply useful terms for picking out the creatures or things (i.e., "entities") and activities, experiences, relationships, etc. (i.e., "ideas") that grammatical propositions introduce.

[104] In support of my claim that grammatical pictures *reside in our language*, recall that, about his early "picture of the essence of human language"—according to which "the words in language name objects—sentences are combinations of such names" (PI §1)—Wittgenstein famously remarked: "A *picture* held us captive. And we couldn't get outside it, for it lay in our language, and language seemed only to repeat it to us inexorably." (PI §115)

person who interacts with it. That is, when I view a genre painting, that painting might produce in me something very similar to a grammatical picture. Yet, obviously, unlike grammatical propositions, genre paintings usually do not contain any words.[105] In the case of a genre painting, *what* those normative entities and ideas are depends on *how* that painting's internal content is *described*—and, of course, there is never any shortage of ways in which a particular painting might be described. It was, in part, with this comparison between a genre painting and a grammatical proposition in mind that I introduced the idea of "internal content" in the last chapter. As a grammatical proposition explicitly *contains*, or expresses, its entities and ideas, a person might attribute *internal content* to a genre painting (i.e., entities and ideas that exist only within that painting). For example, in the last chapter, I described the internal content of a genre painting by Kinkade in these terms: "It contains a snowy valley—of lakes, evergreens, and small cottages—that stretches into the background. In the foreground, a couple in a one-horse open sleigh is being pulled toward a stone chapel that is all aglow." Here, the stone chapel is an example of an entity, and that it is all aglow is an example of an idea. Again, the horse is an entity, and that it is pulling the sleigh is an idea. And so on. Now, if I were looking at this painting with a child, and if the child and I shared roughly this description,[106] the various entities and ideas that my description includes would be operating normatively for us when, for example, I ask the child, "Do you think the couple traveled through that snowy valley?" or when the child

[105] Of course, in various ways and in numerous contexts, genre paintings might be labeled, categorized, or otherwise described, even though they do not literally contain those words within their frames. For example, for a particular genre painting, a title might be given, a descriptive placard might be posted alongside it, and it might occur in a section of a gallery labeled "Twentieth Century American Realism." In that setting, a viewer might even carry a pamphlet that describes the painting at length. My point is simply that, unlike a grammatical proposition, a genre painting does not present or express its sense. Instead, whatever sense it is assigned must be attributed to it by some individual or group.

[106] We might share this description because, with each painting that we view, the child is in the habit of asking me, "What's in this one?" and, for this painting, I reply as quoted above. Or, we might share something roughly like this description because we can both see clearly and have learned the entities and ideas that my description contains.

asks me, "Which cottage is theirs?" or "Where will they stable that horse?" From such questions, we can imagine a conversation flowing, and our having such conversations about genre paintings is just one of their many roles in our lives. In short, when we have a description for a genre painting's internal content, we have a grammar for that painting—that is, we have a set of norms for making sense with that painting.[107] Those norms are given by the uses of the imaginative entities and ideas that are included in our description (e.g., what it makes sense to say about a "stone chapel"). Residing in our language, those entities and ideas compose part of a grammatical picture that might frame and guide some of what we do with (including say about) that painting, just as they do for me and the child.

The remarks above and my imagined conversation with the child suggest an answer to our question: How, on Wittgenstein's view, might genre paintings and fiction stories absorb us? To be absorbed by one of these media is simply to adopt and be guided by a grammatical picture of it. Yet, because there are numerous grammars that a person could have for any given genre painting or fiction story, there are numerous grammatical pictures of those works that a person could adopt. However, to simplify my argument, I will continue to focus on internal content as one source of a grammatical picture. So, in this case, my contention is that I can be absorbed by a fiction story in that I adopt and am guided by a grammatical picture of that story that is informed by its internal content. Below, I explain what my being absorbed in that way could involve.

As with any particular genre painting, we might describe a given fiction story in myriad ways, and, in *some* of our descriptions, we might restrict ourselves to internal content. That is, if a person were to describe a given fiction story's internal content, she would identify some entities and ideas (e.g., characters, events, objects, relationships, problems, themes) that she

[107] I say "we have a grammar for that painting" because any given painting might have, or be included in, numerous grammars, such as grammars for "investments," "furniture-to-be-cleaned," "items-to-rotate-in-the-gallery," etc.

regards as *existing only within* the story. She would not, in other words, "believe (imagine) for a moment that" whatever she sees "in it really exist[s], or that there have really been" such things, as Wittgenstein put it.[108]

Now, in an important and obvious way, a fiction story is unlike a genre painting: Because that story includes language, it offers us language that we might use in describing its internal content. If a story began "Once upon a time in Dallas, there was a crazy guy who drove an old Ford truck…." we would already have entities (e.g., Dallas) and ideas (e.g., driving) that we *could* use in describing its internal content.[109] In some cases, we might treat parts of a story's explicit text, or even its full text, as an adequate summary of its internal content. "What's this story about?" you ask. And I reply: "Well, here, let me read it to you. It's very short." I raise this possibility because I want to show that *some* of the explicit text of a fiction story can inform a person's grammatical picture of that story. So, to facilitate that argument in the section below, I will simply stipulate that, in developing my grammatical picture of Tolstoy's parable, that parable's full text *just is* my description of its internal content. Doing so will allow me to discuss *any* of that parable's text as I show how its internal content informs my grammatical picture of it. Furthermore, the conceptual distinction between a fiction story's internal content and external objects is important because I want to point out that, in my way of interacting with Tolstoy's parable, continuous seeing and aspect perception conceptually coincide—just as I suggested, in the last chapter, that they could coincide in my way of viewing both historical and genre paintings. I see Lincoln, and I see his likeness to Davis. I see Kinkade's painting, and I compare some of its internal content with reality by treating it as if it were real (as the child and I do in

[108] Even if a person's description of a story's internal content were to pick out things that really exist, she might, nevertheless, distinguish between *the ways or modes in which they exist* within and outside of the story.
[109] Perhaps we could also describe that story's internal content without explicitly using any of the entities and ideas that the story offers: "The story is set in this big city, and there's a wild man who goes around…."

our imagined conversation). Similarly, in the example below, continuously seeing a fiction story's internal content, I also notice likenesses between that content and external objects. As the example plays out, my doing so also involves my reasoning aesthetically in relationship to some external objects.

**A Use of Tolstoy's Parable as Aesthetic Reasoning in Ethics**

To clarify this chapter's argument, I will illustrate many of the points that I have made by returning to Tolstoy's parable of the Good Samaritan. Taking that parable as an example of a fiction story,[110] I want to point out that, when I treat its full text as my description of (i.e., as identical with) its internal content, that text has informed my grammatical picture of this parable. Furthermore, as my use of that parable will show, that grammatical picture functions normatively for me (i.e., guides some of what I do with this parable) and involves me in aesthetic reasoning *in ethics*. There are also two, specific reasons for which I am revisiting Tolstoy's parable and not some other work of fiction. First, as I argued in chapter two, that parable gave the young Wittgenstein moral inspiration to serve as a school teacher in some poorer communities of rural Austria in the 1920s. So, in 1933, when Wittgenstein remarked that aesthetic reasons are given in ethics, he might have had his own interactions with Tolstoy's parable in mind (i.e., perhaps something vaguely like my example below). Second, as my example will show, I am revisiting Tolstoy's parable because it is the kind of text for which, in a person's way of relating to it—perhaps especially in some ethics-oriented contexts—continuous seeing and aspect perception might coincide: She might both continuously see internal content and treat that content as if it

[110] Some might object to my taking this parable as an example of a fiction story because they believe that something like this exchange between Jesus and a "teacher of the law" occurred. In reply, I would ask those who pose this objection to grant, at least, that we would probably be mistaken to regard Tolstoy's story (beginning, here, with "There was a Jew who fell into misfortune" and ending "and promised to come again to pay for him") as a description of something that happened. Those who grant me that point could, I think, find common ground with my comments that are related to that portion of the parable.

were real. And, in that way, Tolstoy's parable is like the stories that I will invoke in the next chapter in relationship to the ethics-oriented context of a bioethics class.

Here, again, is Tolstoy's version of the parable:

> A teacher of the law wished to try Jesus, and said: "What am I to do in order to receive the true life?" Jesus said: "You know, —love your Father, God, and him who is your brother through your Father, God; of whatever country he may be." And the teacher of the law said: "This would be well, if there were not different nations; but as it is, how am I to love the enemies of my own people?"
>
> And Jesus said: "There was a Jew who fell into misfortune. He was beaten, robbed, and abandoned on the road. A Jewish priest went by, glanced at the wounded man, and went on. A Jewish Levite passed, looked at the wounded man, and also went by. But there came a man of a foreign, hostile nation, a Samaritan. This Samaritan saw the Jew, and did not think of the fact that Jews have no esteem for the Samaritans, but pitied the poor Jew. He washed and bound his wounds, and carried him on his ass to an inn, paid money for him to the innkeeper, and promised to come again to pay for him. Thus shall you also behave toward foreign nations, toward those who hold you of no account and ruin you. Then you will receive true life."[111]

First, how might I treat this entire parable as my description of (i.e., as identical with) its internal content? To do that, I would simply see and describe this parable as its full text. That is, just as I continuously see Kinkade's painting as its internal content, I would continuously see this parable as its full text. While my doing so might be implausible, I think we can imagine it. For example, I might memorize the parable and, whenever I think of it, I rehearse the entire story. Or, each time someone asks me, "What's the parable of the Good Samaritan about?" I produce my pocket copy and reply by reading it in full.[112]

---

[111] Tolstoy, 98.

[112] Here, there should be no worry that my describing "its full text" can mean radically different things to different people, for, as my earlier quotation from Cavell pointed out, if I have really memorized the poem or can read it in its entirety, I have learned what it is to memorize or read something. I would not, for example, read or recite the parable's sentences in a different order each time, for I would understand that others would not count my doing so as reading or reciting it. So, what it would mean for me to treat the parable's full text as my description of its internal content would, in this case, be constrained by our understanding of, for example, what it is to read or recite a text.

Now, when this entire parable serves as my description of its internal content, why does it follow that the full text of this parable has informed my grammatical picture of it? Recall that my grammar for this parable encompasses all that it makes sense for me to do with (e.g., say about) it. So, if one of the things I do with this parable is rehearse its full text whenever I think of it, or reply to your question, "What's that parable about?" by reading it in full, that text is part of my grammar for this parable. Furthermore, because my grammatical picture of this parable is an imaginative depiction of that grammar, it follows that the full text of this parable has informed my grammatical picture of it.[113]

To be clear, my description of the parable's internal content might be only *part of* the grammar that informs my grammatical picture of that parable, for that grammatical picture might be informed by one or both of at least two other sources. First, there might be entities and ideas that, while not included in my description of a particular work's internal content, are connected with the grammar of terms that do appear in that description. We have already seen this in the child's question, "Where will they stable that horse?" "Stable" is an entity that was not included in our description of the painting's internal content, but, because that concept is connected with the grammar of "horse" that the child and I have learned, it makes sense for us to speak of a "stable" as we treat what we see in the painting as if it were real. Similarly, as I relate to Tolstoy's parable, if the grammar of "help" is connected with that of "misfortune" in such a way that the misfortunate are sometimes helped, it would make sense for me to wonder, "Why do neither the priest nor the Levite help the Jew who falls into misfortune?" In such ordinary ways,

[113] Here, for the sake of being concise, I have oversimplified matters by referring to my "grammar" and my "grammatical picture" of this parable, as if I have only one of each. But, as noted earlier, in relationship to any given object, I might have numerous grammars and numerous grammatical pictures.

a person's grammatical picture of a work can be informed by terms that do not appear explicitly in her description of that work's internal content.

Second, my grammatical picture of the parable might also be informed by the grammar of *whatever use* I am making of that text in a particular context. For example, if I am using the text in the context of a religious study, it might make sense to ask whether Tolstoy's version of the parable suggests that salvation can be attained through good works. Or, if my interest is in political history, I might ask why Tolstoy would portray "a man of a foreign, hostile nation" as a hero. Or, again, if my interest is in literary criticism, I might ask whether the absence of female characters influences my experience of the text. In such ways, for me, the grammar of the text (i.e., what it makes sense for me to do with it) might shift with changing contexts, changing my grammatical picture of that text accordingly.

In summary of this section so far, I have proposed that a person's grammatical picture of a fiction story can be informed by content from some (or all) of at least three categories: (1) his description of that story's internal content, (2) other entities and ideas whose grammars are related to those of terms included in (1), and (3) the grammar of whatever use he is making of that story. This way of distinguishing between the various sources of a person's grammatical picture of a fiction story is illuminating, I think, in that it reveals ways in which that grammatical picture might function normatively for him. That is, as discussed above, it provides specific categories that we can understand as guiding his ways of relating to that story, such as the questions that he asks about that story (Does Tolstoy's version of the parable suggest that salvation can be attained through good works?) and the specific language that informs some of his questions (Why do neither the priest nor the Levite *help* the Jew who falls into *misfortune*?).

Finally, because, as I have argued, Wittgenstein's conception of grammatical pictures was linked to his view of aspect perception, I can specify an additional way in which my grammatical picture of a fiction story might function normatively for me: While I might continuously see a fiction story as its internal content, I might also notice likenesses between that content and some external objects. That is, my way of seeing a particular fiction story might involve both continuous seeing and aspect perception. More specifically, as I will seek to show, the grammar of *some uses* of a particular fiction story (i.e., (3) above) might prompt a person to respond to some external objects by taking entities and ideas of that story's internal content as applicable, normatively, for his response to those external objects. But how might a person's responding in that way involve his reasoning aesthetically? That is, how might his grammatical picture of that story lead him to see some external object through new grammar that draws his attention to unnoticed aspects of that object and equips him with further descriptions of it? To answer that question, I will to return to Tolstoy's version of the parable, imagine my using it in a particular moral context, and ask: How might my grammatical picture of that story be informed and shaped by (1) my description of its internal content, (2) other entities and ideas whose grammars are related to those of terms included in (1), and (3) the grammar of the use that I am making of this story?

Imagine that I am a member of the Viennese chapter of a Tolstoyan community that encourages the use of *The Gospel in Brief* as a moral guide. Individually, each member of our community regularly reads Tolstoy's book and seeks to apply it to his life. More specifically, when reading a particular passage, each member always poses at least three questions to himself: Does this story offer me any moral commands or principles? Does it give me any moral exemplars? How might it guide my moral decisions and judgments? So, when I now consider

Tolstoy's parable of the Good Samaritan as a moral guide, my grammatical picture of that parable is shaped, in part, by these questions, for, in my community, these are the questions that it makes sense to ask. They are part of the grammar of my use of this story (or (3), above).[114]

As I answer the three questions above, we can imagine that I might depend, in part, on my description of the parable's internal content, which, in this case, is simply the full text of the parable itself. So, as I answer those questions, some of the imaginative entities and ideas that the parable offers might function normatively for me, informing what I say about the parable and, in that way, guiding how I seek to apply it to my life. For example, as I ask whether this parable gives me any moral exemplars, I might take my cue from the words that follow the description of the Samaritan ("Thus shall you also behave….") and answer: Yes, the "Samaritan," who "pitied" and cared for the man "who fell into misfortune" and, in doing so, showed "love" for a "brother through [his] Father, God." In such ways, my description of the parable's internal content might inform my grammatical picture of it (or (1), above). Furthermore, in my answer to this last question, we also find (2) an idea whose grammar is related to that of terms included in (1). Specifically, we find the idea that the Samaritan "cared for" the Jew, and the grammar of that phrase is related to what the Samaritan does for the Jew: "washed and bound his wounds…." That is, because many of us call such actions "caring for" someone, it makes sense for me to say that the Samaritan cared for the Jew. So, in such simple ways, we can see that my grammatical picture of this story might be informed and shaped by (1) my description of its internal content, (2) other entities and ideas whose grammars are related to those of terms included in (1), and (3) the grammar of the use that I am making of this story.

[114] To simplify my argument, I have stipulated that these are the questions that members of my community always pose as we seek to use passages from Tolstoy's book to guide our lives morally. "What has to be accepted, the given, is—one might say—*forms of life*." (PPF §345) But we might have imagined that the grammar of my community's use of this parable was vastly more complicated, contested, changing over time, etc.

My answer to the last question (Does this parable give me any moral exemplars?) gives me an occasion to explain why I have spoken of the *imaginative* ideas and entities that are included in grammatical propositions and in descriptions of the internal content of genre paintings and fiction stories. As Monk commented, the distinction between grammatical and empirical propositions

> lies at the heart of Wittgenstein's entire philosophy: in his thinking about psychology, mathematics, aesthetics, and even religion, his central criticism of those with whom he disagrees is that they have confused a grammatical proposition with [an empirical] one, and have presented as a discovery something that should properly be seen as a grammatical…innovation. Thus, in his view, Freud did not discover the unconscious; rather, he introduced terms like "unconscious thoughts" and "unconscious motives" into our grammar of psychological description….The question to ask of such innovations is not whether these "newly discovered" entities exist or not, but whether the additions they have made to our vocabulary and the changes they have introduced to our grammar are useful or not.[115]

Here, recall that, in chapter three, I argued that Wittgenstein's invention and use of the language-game concept taught us that aesthetic reasoning might involve the construction of fictional concepts, or even, as Monk put it, the proposal of "a new *mythology*, a new way of looking at ourselves and the people around us…." Similarly, as I argue that my use of Tolstoy's parable involves aesthetic reasoning, we can see that a fiction story might offer a mythology of entities and ideas (e.g., "love," "God," "falling into misfortune") that—whether they exist or not—might be *used* to change a person's way of seeing himself and others. For example, as I seek to apply my answer to the last question (Does this parable give me any moral exemplars?), I might ask further: Do I, like the Samaritan, love those who have fallen into misfortune? Do I pity them and care for them in tangible, practical ways? And *who*, after all, *are* those who have fallen into misfortune? As I pose and try to answer questions like these, the parable's imaginative entities and ideas are functioning normatively for me. They are guiding my response to the parable,

[115] Monk, *Duty of Genius*, 468.

shaping how I seek to apply it.[116] I am absorbed by this story in that I have adopted and am seeking to apply a grammatical picture of it.

Furthermore, the three questions that I just posed show that, in trying to apply this parable to my life, continuous seeing and aspect perception conceptually coincide. While I continuously see the parable as its internal content, I also aspect perceive it, noticing likenesses between that content and external objects. That is, I draw comparisons between entities and ideas in the parable and external objects (e.g., between the Samaritan and myself).[117] My understanding this parable in such a way that continuous and aspect-seeing come packaged together is an additional part of the grammar of my use of this story (i.e., what it makes sense for me to do with this story, given the context of my community's encouraging me to apply it to my life).

Furthermore, in light of this last point, we can go on to see how my use of this parable involves the general features of aesthetic reasoning noted earlier—that is, my use of this parable introduces grammar that can draw my attention to unnoticed aspects of external objects and equip me with further descriptions of those objects. For example, as I seek to apply this parable, I might wonder: Could I know of anyone who has fallen into misfortune? As I do so, the parable's depiction of the Jew as "poor," "wounded," and "abandoned" might remind me of (i.e., draw my

[116] There is also an educative way in which the parable's entities and ideas might function normatively for me: They might contribute to my understanding of—to echo the earlier quotation from Cavell—*what it is* to "love," *what it is* to fall into "misfortune," etc., and this might happen subtly, without my even noticing that the parable is reshaping (or reinforcing) my understanding of "love," "misfortune," etc. For example, the parable might reinforce my understanding of "love" as an individualistic act—not an act that, say, a group or a society performs. Or, the parable might reshape my understanding of "misfortune" by teaching me that misfortune is (more) a result of intentional affliction and (less, or not at all) a result of accidental or natural affliction, as I had been inclined to think.

[117] I have tried to illustrate this point by citing only *some* questions that lead me to make *some* comparisons between the parable's entities and ideas and external objects. Of course, I might have cited and discussed other pertinent questions and comparisons to illustrate the same point. For example, as I try to answer one of the questions that I always pose (How might this parable guide my moral decisions and judgments?), I might notice a likeness between the parable's Jewish priest or the Levite and my brother, Mateo, leading me to the judgment that Mateo is a scoundrel who often fails to love the misfortunate.

attention to) something that I heard about a former mining town in rural Austria, leading me to notice likenesses between those Austrians and the misfortunate Jew in the parable. I had never noticed those likenesses (i.e., for me, those aspects had gone unnoticed, those comparisons had not been made), and I had never described those folks as misfortunate—perhaps, for example, because I had imagined that they are to blame for their burdensome lives. However I had previously seen and described those rural Austrians, we can imagine that I had seen them other than through my newly-acquired grammatical picture of this parable. But now, as I see and describe them anew through my grammatical picture of this parable, my way of seeing them has changed. Guided by some of this parable's entities and ideas, I now see and describe them as misfortunate persons to be loved and helped.[118] I have been convinced by aesthetic reasoning and transformed in this way.[119] Yet, in this example, *who* reasoned aesthetically? Recall that, in chapter four, I noted that aesthetic reasoning can be experienced in either interpersonal conversation or in solitary reflection. In this case, the latter seems to have occurred, for, though I was guided by my community's approach to passages in *The Gospel in Brief*, I interacted with this particular parable on my own. So, we can say that I offered aesthetic reasons to—and was convinced by—myself.

---

[118] In this way, a newly-acquired grammatical picture can equip a person to describe an external object in further ways because his new grammar might stand in contrast with his current grammar—or lack thereof—for that object. So, I have wished to retain a feature of aesthetic reasoning that I identified in chapter three but that it might seem that I had omitted—namely, that aesthetic reasoning places things side by side for comparison. The grammar that aesthetic reasoning introduces is placed alongside—and might even contrast with—a person's current grammar, or current lack of grammar, for some external object. So, in chapter three, my wife's grammar for masterful depictions of light in painting (e.g., van Gogh's) was placed alongside my own grammar for such depictions, which I used to describe some of Kinkade's works. And, earlier in this chapter, your grammar for "headache" was placed alongside my grammar for "thinking," leading me to see the girl sitting next to us through a different grammatical picture and enabling me to describe her in new ways (e.g., "She has a bottle of Advil beside her").

[119] Yet, for *how long* am I transformed? For three seconds? Thirty years? Again, that is the sort of question to which Wittgenstein's conception of aesthetic reasoning would not venture an answer, for such an answer would not be conceptual but a matter of prediction.

However, it might happen that, even though I interact with this parable as my community encourages, my doing so does not change my way of seeing and describing *any* external object. Just as you might not see a likeness between the duck-rabbit figure and a duck—even when someone tries to point out some likenesses to you—and continue to see and describe that figure as a picture-rabbit, I might not notice a likeness between any external object and any of the parable's entities and ideas. So, in general, we can say that my interaction with this parable has two possible outcomes that are relevant to my discussion: By adopting a grammatical picture of this parable, either I come to see and describe some external object anew, or I do not. And it has been with the latter possible outcome in mind that I have distinguished between the *general features* of aesthetic reasoning and the *kind of transformation* that someone who is convinced by aesthetic reasoning can be said to experience. We can, I think, say that aesthetic reasoning has occurred whenever its general features are present, even if no one is convinced by such reasoning.[120] That is, we can say that aesthetic reasoning occurs whenever grammar is introduced that could draw a person's attention to unnoticed aspects of an object and equip her to describe that object in new ways.[121]

Finally, it has been important that I identify an example of aesthetic reasoning in ethics because, as I suggested in chapter three, Wittgenstein regarded aesthetic reasoning as a blurred

[120] This is a grammatical remark: We do not reserve the term "reasoning" to denote *only* particular kinds of *successful* activity. We, of course, refer to some kinds of activity as reasoning even when they are not successful. If I offer you reasons to whitewash my fence, and you decline to do so, you would not say that I failed to reason *because I did not convince you*. Instead, you would say that my reasoning was invalid, irrelevant, unpersuasive, or something else that indicates its lack of success.

[121] In what sense "could" the introduction of grammar do these things? It could do them, I want to say, in a conceptual sense: It is part of the concept of grammar that to acquire a new or different grammar for something is to have one's way of seeing and one's ability to describe that thing changed. Yet, who is the "we" of this "we can say that aesthetic reasoning occurs…"? It is those of us who can imagine the introduced grammar's having such an effect on a person. For example, because you and I can see likenesses between the duck-rabbit figure and a duck, we can say that aesthetic reasoning occurs in the example above, even though the recipient of that reasoning does not come to see those likenesses.

concept, which is a concept that can be given strict definition only arbitrarily. To understand a blurred concept is to be able to give examples of its use or occurrence. Accordingly, I depended only on what I have called the general features of aesthetic reasoning (i.e., not on a strict definition) to show how all of those features are woven into a particular use of a fiction story. In that way, I have tried to help us further understand Wittgenstein's conception of aesthetic reasoning and, in particular, his claim that such reasoning occurs in ethics. In the next chapter, I consider further examples of aesthetic reasoning in ethics.

## Summary

In this chapter, I argued that Wittgenstein understood grammatical pictures in connection with both aspect perception and aesthetic reasoning. Together, grammatical pictures and aspect perception tell us more about what aesthetic reasoning involves—namely, the introduction of grammar that can draw a person's attention to unnoticed aspects of an object and equip her with further descriptions of that object. Furthermore, these concepts reveal that someone who is convinced by aesthetic reasoning has her way of seeing an object changed in that, seeing that object through a different grammatical picture, she has noticed and accepted new aspects of it. Next, I transitioned to fiction stories by considering Wittgenstein's claim that both genre paintings and fiction stories can absorb us. On his view, these media can absorb us, I argued, in that they can draw us into the grammatical pictures that they offer and change our way of seeing and describing some external objects. In short, aesthetic reasoning might be woven into a particular use of a genre painting or a fiction story. To illustrate that claim, I returned to Tolstoy's parable of the Good Samaritan and argued that, in the context of a particular moral use of that parable, aesthetic reasoning was woven into my interactions with it. So, this was an example of aesthetic reasoning in ethics. Similarly, in the next chapter, I will contend that

aesthetic reasoning is woven into discussions of stories in bioethics classes, and I will illustrate that thesis with several examples.

## Chapter VI
## Aesthetic Reasoning with Stories in the Bioethics Classroom

In this final chapter, my goal is to show that Wittgenstein's remark that aesthetic reasoning occurs in ethics remains relevant today in that a contemporary, ethics-oriented practice involves such reasoning. More specifically, my thesis is that aesthetic reasoning is woven into discussions of fiction and non-fiction stories in bioethics classes. As a person participates in such a discussion, she might be convinced by aesthetic reasoning in this way: Her initial grammatical picture of the case that a story presents is reshaped as she sees and accepts aspects of the story that she had not noticed. As this occurs, her moral response to that case might change, and this new grammatical picture might, in turn, influence her ways of seeing and responding morally to other cases, including those encountered *outside* the classroom. If those points are correct, I think they suggest that bioethics instructors should attend more closely to the ways in which aesthetic reasoning occurs in class discussions and to their own supervision of those discussions. To facilitate that effort, I close this chapter by commenting on what I regard as the proper role of a bioethics instructor in relationship to aesthetic reasoning in the classroom.

Before turning to a specific example of aesthetic reasoning in a class discussion, let me briefly say what I mean by a bioethics class, a story, and a case. Recall from chapter three that, when Wittgenstein introduced his notion of aesthetic reasoning, he did so in relationship to ordinary, non-academic discussions of works of art. His example was a conversation about the opening of Brahms' Fourth Symphony, and, following suit, my examples also invoked discussions from everyday life (e.g., with my wife about van Gogh's works, with the child about Kinkade's painting). Furthermore, with that context in mind, I also argued that we should understand Wittgenstein's remark that aesthetic reasons are given in ethics as an observation

about moral discussions in ordinary life. Accordingly, in chapter five, I imagined my being convinced by aesthetic reasoning by interacting with one of Tolstoy's parables in ways that were encouraged by my moral community. Now, in trying to show that Wittgenstein's remark remains relevant, I will attend to some common, moral conversations—namely, the informal exchanges that often occur among students in bioethics classes as they discuss stories.[122]

The bioethics class that I am imagining is very prevalent and is the kind with which I am most familiar as an instructor—a small, undergraduate class that includes a variety of students, some of whom are pursuing degrees in healthcare professions, while others are seeking degrees unrelated to the health sciences, and still others are undecided. Few, if any, are philosophy majors or minors. In general, these students also have very limited experiences in healthcare settings, especially *as* clinicians, administrators, and others who work in those settings. In such classes, bioethics instructors use stories as discussion prompts for many reasons, but I suspect that most of them would resonate with these three goals: (1) teaching moral vocabulary (including some of the moral terminology peculiar to clinical ethics) and illustrating its application to particular situations; (2) helping the pre-health professional students prepare to make difficult, moral decisions in clinical practice; (3) helping all of the students prepare to make difficult, moral decisions as patients and loved ones of patients. Here, I briefly mention these goals because I will invoke them at later points in my argument.

Above, in using the term "story," I have in mind a particular kind of story, which bioethicists—and many others—often call a case. The meaning of the word "case," however, is

[122] Of course, these discussions occur in academic settings. So, at first glance, it might seem that they would not count as examples of the ordinary conversations in which Wittgenstein was interested. But I think Wittgenstein would be interested in them because, while often overseen by a professional philosopher (i.e., the instructor), the students themselves are not trained as professional ethicists and, at least in my experience, rarely censor their comments in light of what they understand to be professional, philosophical standards. I think these class discussions are, to a great extent, suggestive of the conversations that students also have outside the classroom.

ambiguous. Sometimes, "case" is used to refer to a real or imaginary medical situation, but, at other times, "case" refers to a narrative that presents a medical situation. In my argument, it will be important to avoid that ambiguity by distinguishing between fiction and non-fiction narratives, on the one hand, and the medical situations that those narratives present, on the other. So, I will use "story" for the narrative and "case" only for the medical situation.

## Noticing New Features of a Story: Aesthetic Reasoning with Text, Context, and Moral Vocabulary

I begin by considering a very brief exchange about a particular story. Though this dialogue is fictitious and abbreviated, I trust that it is representative of some of the discussions that often occur in bioethics classes. But here, first, is the story discussed.

> A 35-year-old Puerto Rican male was found on the street unconscious and was brought to the emergency room at a large hospital. He was believed to be an alcoholic suffering from withdrawal symptoms. Tests revealed he had a severe case of pneumonia. He was febrile, and the pneumonia was becoming more severe. When he was approached for consent to treat the pneumonia, he had made it clear he wanted no treatment whatsoever. His only family was a sister who could not be reached. The house staff questioned his competency and called in a psychiatrist. The psychiatric interview found him competent and aware of the severity of his illness. No treatment was administered, and the patient experienced a rapid deterioration. When he became comatose, the house staff decided to treat him, but their efforts proved fruitless. The patient died within 30 hours after his admission to the hospital.[123]

To simplify matters, I created only three characters for this dialogue. In the bioethics class in which the following discussion occurs, Tom is the instructor, Molly a pre-med student, and Lionel a pre-law student. Tom distributes copies of the story above to each student in the class and asks them to read it silently. When all of the students have looked up from their copies of the story, the discussion begins.

[123] I have reproduced this story verbatim from Natalie Abrams and Michael D. Buckner, eds., *Medical Ethics: A Clinical Textbook and Reference for Health Care Professionals* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1983), 622.

Tom: What should the hospital staff members have done for this man?

Lionel – Despite his refusal, I think they should have treated him right after the tests came back. He arrived helpless and unconscious, and they had the power to help him, so he was their responsibility. Later, he probably didn't really understand that he could die from the pneumonia if it went untreated. So, they shouldn't have let him refuse care just because he was competent in some general sense.

Molly – At first, I was going to say that it's fine for him to refuse treatment because he probably came to the E.R. only to get help with his withdrawal symptoms, not with anything else. But now I see that he didn't choose to come to the hospital, as Lionel pointed out.

Tom: So, what do you think now, Molly?

Molly: Well, I still think it's OK for him to refuse because they would've told him that he could die from untreated pneumonia. I know the story says only that he was "aware of the severity of his illness," but they would have explained it to him in detail as they tried to get his consent. That's just standard practice.

Lionel – Well, I didn't know that that's standard practice. So, because they explained it all to him, and because he was competent, I agree with Molly that it's OK for him to refuse treatment.

Through their brief exchange, both Molly and Lionel have their ways of seeing this case changed, and, for each, that change is accompanied by an altered moral response to the case. In her first comment, Molly says that, initially, she thought of the man in the story as having come to the E.R. voluntarily. But thanks to Lionel, Molly now sees that this man was, as the story says, "found on the street unconscious and was brought to the emergency room…." So, initially, Molly does not notice this feature of the story. Now that she notices it, she still thinks "it's OK for him to refuse" treatment, but her reasoning for that moral judgment shifts slightly.

Similarly, in his initial comments, Lionel says that the man "probably didn't really understand that he could die from the pneumonia if it went untreated," and his initial judgment is that, despite the man's refusal, the staff members should have treated him. But later, in light of Molly's remark that it would have been "standard practice" for staff members to tell this man that "he could die from untreated pneumonia," Lionel concludes that "it's OK for him to refuse

treatment." So, through the discussion, both Lionel's reasoning—to some extent—and his moral judgment about this case are altered.

The examples of Molly and Lionel support my thesis: Through a discussion of a story like this, a person's initial grammatical picture of the case that a story presents might be reshaped as she sees and accepts aspects of that story that she had not noticed; as this occurs, her moral response to that case might also change.

To see that both Molly and Lionel have their initial grammatical pictures of the E.R. case altered, recall that, in chapter five, I argued that a person's grammatical picture of a *fiction story* could be composed of content from any (or all) of at least three categories: (1) her description of that story's internal content, (2) other entities and ideas whose grammars are related to those of terms included in that description, and (3) the grammar of whatever use she is making of that story. I also noted that such content might vary from one person to another (or even vary over time for an individual), resulting in their having different grammatical pictures of the same story. However, in this chapter, I want my argument to address our grammatical pictures of *cases*—not of stories—presented by both fiction and *non-fiction* stories. So, before I can speak specifically of Molly's and Lionel's grammatical pictures of the E.R. case, I have two questions to answer: Why am I speaking of grammatical pictures of *cases*? And how can I apply the three categories above—which were developed for *fiction stories*—to the *cases* presented by both fiction and *non-fiction* stories?

To see why I am speaking of grammatical pictures of *cases*, consider what I have already said about the grammar of our classroom uses of bioethics stories, or (3) above. Earlier, I noted that I think bioethics instructors often use stories as discussion prompts for several reasons, and each of those reasons has to do, in some way, with connecting the story to medical situations that

a student might encounter. And it makes sense, I think, for our uses of these stories to have such close connections with potential life situations, for, in our way of seeing these stories, continuous seeing and aspect perception conceptually coincide. That is, we see the story, and we talk about it, but we also see it as if it were real, noticing its likeness to reality. In short, we see the story, and we see it as a case. This is evidenced by our ways of speaking about these stories. For example, in their discussion of the E.R. story, it makes sense for both Molly and Lionel to talk about what the E.R. staff members *would do* (i.e., *in reality*) for this patient. In their discussion, the story functions like a frame through which they "see"—that is, imagine—a life-like medical situation. They see the story, but they also compare it with real life—as the child and I did with Kinkade's painting, and as I did with one of Tolstoy's parables. By interacting with this story, Molly and Lionel develop grammatical pictures of a case.

Turning now to the second question, it might seem that my claim that we see the story *as if it were real* would apply only to fiction stories, for a non-fiction story, some will insist, *describes* reality—it does not present something that is *like* reality or that *could be* real. But I want my see-as-if-real claim to capture some of our uses of non-fiction stories and, in that way, to show that it is appropriate to apply the three categories above to the cases presented by both fiction and non-fiction stories. More specifically, I want to argue that bioethics classes often treat non-fiction stories as presenting alterable, imagined situations—that is, in this specific way, those stories are often treated like fiction.[124]

To see *how* this occurs, it is helpful, I think, to look at the bioethics classroom for clues as to *why* it might occur. When looking at that classroom, one thing we might notice is that it provides a vantage from which instructor and students alike are often separated from the facts of

[124] Of course, in many areas of life, we do not alter fiction. But my contention is only intended to apply to the ways in which we are sometimes willing to re-imagine and change both fiction and non-fiction stories in bioethics classes.

any case that a non-fiction story presents.[125] That is, it often happens that no participant in the discussion is in a position to confirm or refute details of the specific case presented by a non-fiction story. Second, bioethics instructors sometimes simply do not know whether the particular stories that they present for discussion are fiction or non-fiction. Third, and most importantly: In pursuit of the three goals that I identified earlier, it simply makes no practical difference whether a story is fiction or non-fiction. To teach moral vocabulary and to prepare students to encounter similar cases, what is important is that stories used in the classroom portray events that *could happen*, whether or not they ever happened. As long as the medical situation depicted by the story is plausible, it does not matter whether that story is fiction or non-fiction.[126]

Given the classroom context described above, how might a class discussion treat non-fiction stories as presenting alterable, imagined situations? Even if a story is labeled as non-fiction, it sometimes happens that neither instructor nor students speak about that story as depicting an unchangeable, historical event. Instead, they feel free to portray the story's context in various and competing ways, speaking about the case in terms of what *would happen* or *might have happened*. Notice that, in the dialogue above, both Molly and Lionel add this kind of context to the E.R. story, which Tom never labeled as non-fiction—though presumably it is non-fiction[127]—and none of this strikes those of us who are familiar with such discussions as odd. Similarly, an instructor might introduce suppositions that change a non-fiction story's text in ways that explicitly contradict the received text. "Now, suppose instead that the patient's sister

[125] Near the end of this chapter, I will consider an exception to this situation.
[126] This third observation might help to explain the social acceptability of the classroom situation as described by my first two observations. That is, for the sake of the discussion's pedagogical goals, it does not matter whether (1) discussion participants are separated from the facts of the case and (2) instructors know whether the stories that they present are fiction or non-fiction.
[127] In their preface to the appendix of "cases" in their volume, Abrams and Buckner commented: "Most of the cases have been supplied to us by medical and philosophical colleagues from a variety of institutions…." Furthermore, they claimed that their "cases" give readers "a confrontation with realities of clinical life." See Abrams and Buckner, 589-90.

*was* reached," Tom might prompt, "and she insisted that her brother be treated for pneumonia. Would that influence your judgment about how the staff members should proceed?"[128] In other words, in this context, just as we might alter a fiction story's text, we often do the same with the texts of non-fiction stories, and we do so without feeling that we have, for example, betrayed their authors or violated some depicted realities. In these ways, bioethics classes often interact with non-fiction stories as they do with fiction—that is, as stories that present medical situations that can, to some extent, be re-imagined and told in alternative ways (e.g., expanded, contradicted). Their cases are not real, but as-if-real. So, given this context, I conclude that it makes sense to speak of a person's grammatical picture of a case presented by a non-fiction story.[129]

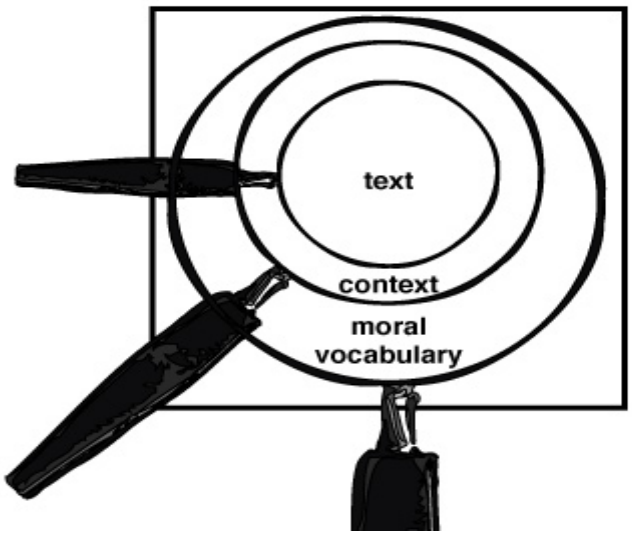
Returning to the question of how, in their discussion, both Molly and Lionel have their grammatical pictures of the E.R. case altered, I begin by proposing that a person's grammatical picture of a case is often informed by content from some (or all) of three scopes: text, context, and moral vocabulary. Here, I speak of "scopes" because each of these categories is like a lens,

---

[128] In the preface to his book, Peter Horn wrote: "Some of the book's cases are actual, some are hypothetical, and some are a combination. Many of the cases include alternative suppositions among the discussion questions. This is a standard method in teaching by means of cases." Peter Horn, *Clinical Ethics Casebook* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2003), xiv. However, Horn never identified any particular story as "actual," "hypothetical," or some "combination" of the two. So, presumably, his alternative suppositions are sometimes offered even for non-fiction stories. Similarly, regarding a "useful exercise" with their non-fiction stories, Abrams and Buckner advised instructors "to ask the students to consider hypothetical alternatives to the case as described, alternatives in which either further information is available or some of the facts are changed." See Abrams and Buckner, 589.

[129] For what it is worth, it seems that Wittgenstein would have been amenable to the idea of a person's having a grammatical picture of a non-fiction story, even though such stories are composed, in part, of *empirical* propositions. In some of his later writings, Wittgenstein suggested that the wall that he had wished to erect between empirical and grammatical propositions was not as impermeable as he had supposed. Instead, as Monk wrote, Wittgenstein began to regard that distinction as "fluid." See Monk, *Duty of Genius*, 468. Similarly, Glock commented that, for Wittgenstein, the distinction between grammatical and empirical propositions lacked "sharpness." See Glock, 155. To see this, consider an example of a grammatical picture that I cited in chapter five: "The picture of the earth as a very old planet, existing for eons before our birth…." (Z §462) Of course, on one hand, this is an empirical proposition. Yet, on the other hand, this proposition is *like* a grammatical proposition in that it expresses an idea that serves as a background standard of sense for so much that I say and do, even when I do not explicitly use entities and ideas like "very old planet" or "for eons before my birth" (e.g., when I say "These mountains began forming millions of years ago" or "Dragonflies have been around for ages before humans").

and a person might understand the presented case "through" some combination of these lenses. In the graphic below, these scopes are represented by the lenses of overlapping magnifying glasses, and surrounding these lenses is a four-sided "picture frame," which is intended to suggest that a person's grammatical picture of a case is composed—at least in part—from content from some (or all) of these scopes. These three scopes—text, context, and moral vocabulary—map, respectively, onto the three possible sources of a person's grammatical picture of a fiction story that I noted earlier: (1) her description of that story's internal content, (2) other entities and ideas whose grammars are related to those of terms included in that description, and (3) the grammar of whatever use she is making of that story. However, because I have now included non-fiction stories in my argument, I have altered (and simplified) those sources.[130]




The Inner Scope: Text
-the explicit text and its meaning(s)

The Middle Scope: Context
-further language used (e.g., by a reader) to speak about the case

The Outer Scope: Moral Vocabulary
-further, moral language used (e.g., by a reader) to speak about the case

[130] I have altered the first category because, as discussed in earlier chapters, a person's description of a story's *internal content* picks out those entities and ideas that she regards as existing *only within* the story. So, we would not say that non-fiction stories have internal content. I have altered the third category because, in discussing the grammar of our uses of stories in bioethics classes, I will focus on the moral vocabulary that those discussions introduce—not, of course, because that vocabulary is exhaustive of that grammar, but simply because it is closely tied to the three goals of those discussions: (1) teaching moral vocabulary and illustrating its application to particular situations; (2) helping the pre-health professional students prepare to make difficult, moral decisions in clinical practice; (3) helping all of the students prepare to make difficult, moral decisions as patients and loved ones of patients. For an example of a more extensive discussion of what I have called the grammar of a bioethics class's use of a story, see Tod Chambers, "What to Expect from an Ethics Case (and What It Expects from You)," in Hilde Lindemann Nelson, ed., *Stories and their Limits: Narrative Approaches to Bioethics*, (New York: Routledge, 1997).

We can say that, upon initially reading the E.R. story, both Molly and Lionel have a grammatical picture of the E.R. case, for they subsequently speak about it. That is, each has an initial, imaginative framework for making sense of the case that the story presents. For each of them, it is this initial grammatical picture of the case that is reshaped, or reconstituted, through their discussion. To see that this occurs, recall that their initial grammatical pictures of this case differ with respect to both text and context. Regarding the text, Lionel notices that the man was "found on the street unconscious and was brought to the emergency room," but Molly does not. However, once Lionel calls Molly's attention to this feature of the text, her reasoning for her moral judgment changes, as we saw above. Similarly, regarding the context, Molly supposes that hospital staff members "would've told him that he could die from untreated pneumonia," but Lionel does not. However, once Molly claims that their doing so would be "standard practice," Lionel accepts this, and this changes his moral response to the case, as we have also seen. Furthermore, while I will not discuss moral vocabulary in detail at this point, we might note that Lionel's initial grammatical picture included some moral vocabulary (i.e., his claim that "they should have treated him right after the tests came back"), but, later, his grammatical picture appears to be influenced by Molly's phrase that "it's OK for him to refuse," for, after his grammatical picture changes in other ways, he adopts the same phrase. In these ways, their initial grammatical pictures of the E.R. case are reshaped as their attention is drawn to—and as they accept—aspects of the story that they had not noticed.[131] Their *acceptance* of those new aspects

[131] I will refer to a person's accepting some bit of text, context, or moral vocabulary as her accepting *aspects of the story* that she did not previously accept, but that wording is only for the sake of brevity. That is, I do not wish for that phrase to suggest my having any theoretical commitment as to what really or essentially is, or is not, the story.

just is their being convinced by aesthetic reasoning—a point that I will discuss in more detail.[132]

Before turning to a more detailed example of aesthetic reasoning with a story in a bioethics class, I want to consider three objections that might be put to my argument thus far.

**Three Objections**

First, one might object that, when I speak of a person's seeing some previously-unnoticed aspect of a story (i.e., some bit of text, context, or moral vocabulary that she had not considered), I am departing from *Wittgenstein's* understanding of aspect perception and, therefore, departing from what I have called *his* notion of aesthetic reasoning.

To some extent, this objection is correct. As we saw in chapter four, when Wittgenstein spoke of "aspect-seeing" or "noticing an aspect," he meant "noticing a likeness" (e.g., PPF §§111-15). When you see a face and then notice its likeness to another face, you have aspect-seen the first face. And when you see a picture-duck and then notice its likeness to a picture-rabbit, you have aspect-seen the picture-duck. So, when I speak of a person's seeing new features or aspects of a story (e.g., a phrase in the text that she had not considered), I have departed from Wittgenstein's sense of aspect-seeing, for such features do not bear a likeness to something else. I accept this objection and here confess that, to this extent—and, I think, only to this extent—I have ventured away from what I have called Wittgenstein's notion of aesthetic reasoning.

However, I want to blunt the force of this objection by making two, brief comments. First, I think Wittgenstein overlooked the fact that, sometimes, what he called noticing a likeness involves what I have called noticing new features. I might notice a likeness between faces A and B because I now notice a feature of A's mouth, say, that I did not see before (and that I now see

[132] Here, recall my contention, from chapter five, that aspect perception and grammatical pictures tell us more about the *kind of transformation* that someone who is convinced by aesthetic reasoning can be said to experience. Her way of seeing an object (e.g., a case) has been changed in that, seeing that object through a different grammatical picture, she has noticed and accepted new aspects of it.

is like B's mouth). Or, I might notice a likeness between a picture-duck and a picture-rabbit because I now notice a feature of the duck (e.g., that crease in the back of its head) that I did not see before (but that I now see could be a rabbit's mouth).[133] Second, in the introduction to this chapter, I noted that a person's being convinced by aesthetic reasoning in relationship to one case (e.g., the E.R. case) might influence her ways of seeing and responding morally to other cases. So, when I reach that stage of my argument, we will see that it involves Wittgenstein's sense of aspect-seeing (i.e., noticing a likeness). In fact, my first comment is pertinent here: As we will see, *by noticing new features* of, say, the E.R. story, one might *notice a likeness* between the E.R. case and other cases. So, even though I have departed slightly from Wittgenstein's notion of aspect perception in one place, I intend to preserve it in another.

Second, one might object that, in my discussion of aesthetic reasoning in ethics in chapter five, I spoke of my treating the *full text* of Tolstoy's parable as my description of its internal content; however, in this chapter, I claimed that Molly notices a new feature of the text of the E.R. story (i.e., that she does not initially consider, and perhaps never considers, the full text). So, once again, the objection concludes, I have departed from the view of aesthetic reasoning that I have attributed to Wittgenstein.

In reply, I want to show that this objection is misguided, for a person need not ever consider the full text of a story before (or after) being convinced by aesthetic reasoning in relationship to that text. In the last chapter, I wanted to show that *some* of the text of a fiction story can inform a person's grammatical picture of that story. And, to facilitate that argument, I simply stipulated that, in developing my grammatical picture of Tolstoy's parable, that parable's

[133] In chapter five, I foreshadowed this connection when I spoke of noticing a likeness between the girl sitting next to me and a headache. My noticing that likeness involved my noticing new features (e.g., her clinched jaw, the bottle of Advil on the desk).

full text *just was* my description of its internal content. That stipulation was merely convenient because it allowed me to discuss *any* of its text as I showed how that text informed my grammatical picture of that parable. But now, in relationship to a person's grammatical picture of the case that a story presents, such a stipulation is neither needed nor plausible. First, it is not plausible because, as instructors, while we might like to think that each student always sees (i.e., considers) the *whole text* of each story that we present for discussion, we would be deluded to suppose that this always happens. My own experience of reading and rereading the stories that I want my students to discuss bears this out. On subsequent readings of those stories, I am often struck by features of the texts that I did not yet see, and I find myself saying things like, "Oh, I didn't notice that, and that could be important." So, I suspect that students, too, often hear or read these stories without noticing some aspects of them. Second, I do not need to stipulate that a student like Molly considers the full text of the E.R. story because, while some of her comments show that *some aspects* of that text have informed her grammatical picture of the case, one of her other remarks shows that she has not considered *other aspects* of the text: "But now I see that he didn't choose to come to the hospital, as Lionel pointed out." And, on my argument, those are the two points that we need to notice as we consider how, in relationship to her way of seeing the text, she can be convinced by aesthetic reasoning.

Third, one might object to my argument by pointing out that, by speaking of aesthetic reasoning as sometimes involving a person's seeing and accepting previously-unnoticed features of a story, I have opened the door to the possibility that a person could accept claims that are misleading or even false. For example, Lionel accepts Molly's claim regarding the context of the E.R. story that it would have been "standard practice" for hospital staff members to tell the man "that he could die from untreated pneumonia," but what if Molly is simply mistaken (or even

lying) about this? On the view of aesthetic reasoning that I am presenting, the objection continues, one person might convince another of *anything*, perhaps even by insalubrious means. Surely, *those* acts should not count as reasoning, and there is something wrong with my view if it counts them, the objection concludes.

In reply, I acknowledge that my view does not distinguish between good and bad—or better and worse—instances of aesthetic reasoning. Instead, as noted in chapter five, I think we can say that aesthetic reasoning occurs whenever its general features are present—that is, whenever grammar is introduced that could draw a person's attention to unnoticed aspects of an object and equip her to describe that object in new ways. Such reasoning might not be *good*—as measured against some moral, epistemic, or other ideal—and it might not be *successful* (i.e., it might fail to convince). Nevertheless, to remain consistent with Wittgenstein's view as exposited in earlier chapters, I call it reasoning. Now, to add a new point to that exposition, my speaking of a person's *accepting* previously-unnoticed aspects also echoes Wittgenstein. To see this, consider this excerpt from a longer quotation, which I discussed in the last chapter: "I wanted to put that picture before him, and his *acceptance* of the picture consists in his now being inclined to regard a given case differently: that is, to compare it with *this* sequence of pictures. I have changed his *way of looking at things*." (PI §144) Furthermore, in close proximity to another passage that I have already connected with aesthetic reasoning, Wittgenstein noted that Freud spoke of giving "the explanation that is *accepted*" as "the whole point of the explanation."[134] So,

[134] In chapter three, I drew a connection between "appealing" and "satisfying" aesthetic reasons by quoting these remarks from Wittgenstein's 1938 lectures on aesthetics: "I write a sentence. One word isn't the one I need. I find the right word. 'What is it I want to say? Oh yes, that is what I wanted.' The answer in these cases is the one that satisfied you…." (LC 18) Now, that language can be connected with "accepting," for, in the same context, Wittgenstein discussed Freud's way of explaining what is funny about a joke: "Freud transforms the joke into a chain of ideas which led us from one end to another of a joke. [This is an] entirely new account of a correct explanation. Not one agreeing with experience, but one *accepted*. You have to give the explanation that is *accepted*. This is the whole point of the explanation." (LC 18; my emphasis)

following Wittgenstein, I have simply sought to describe what aesthetic reasoning can involve (without yet passing judgment on one or another method or outcome of such reasoning): Presented with aesthetic reasons, a person might accept previously-unnoticed aspects of an object and, in that way, adopt a new grammatical picture that provides her with new descriptions of that object.[135]

Having answered three objections to my argument as presented so far, I will now consider a more detailed example of aesthetic reasoning with a story.

**Aesthetic Reasoning with "It's Over, Debbie"**

Earlier, I observed that, from the perspective of their classroom, instructor and students alike are often separated from many of the facts of the case that a non-fiction story presents. I think this point can be illustrated by an example of a discussion of "It's Over, Debbie"—a story that is presumably non-fiction and was published anonymously and without commentary by the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in 1988.[136] Furthermore, as we will see, one of the student participants in the discussion has his initial, grammatical picture of the Debbie case altered. The following is the full text of "It's Over, Debbie."

> The call came in the middle of the night. As a gynecology resident rotating through a large, private hospital, I had come to detest telephone calls, because invariably I would be up for several hours and would not feel good the next day. However, duty called, so I answered the phone. A nurse informed me that a patient was having difficulty getting rest, could I please see her. She was on 3 North. That was the gynecologic-oncology unit, not my usual duty station.

---

[135] In chapter three, I argued that Wittgenstein connected his terms "show," "appeal," and "satisfy" to aesthetic reasoning in a related way. For example, as I wrote: "To get me to agree with your view that, say, a particular statue is appealing or satisfying, you might show me your view of it by…describing that statue to me through aesthetic reasoning." Unfortunately, that terminology was somewhat ambiguous (e.g., How strongly must aesthetic reasons appeal to me before I am satisfied or convinced by them?). So, to avoid some of that ambiguity, I have altered my characterization of what aesthetic reasoning might involve so that I now speak of a person's *accepting* previously-unnoticed aspects and thereby *adopting* a new grammatical picture. To put that characterization more colloquially, such a person might say, "I see that, and, now that I see it, I'm ready to do something about it" (e.g., talk about it).

[136] I say "presumably non-fiction" because the story appeared in *JAMA* in a place designated for non-fiction pieces and because, due to the anonymous authorship, the story can be neither confirmed nor refuted. Below, I have reproduced this story verbatim from *JAMA* 259:2 (1988): 272.

> As I trudged along, bumping sleepily against walls and corners and not believing I was up again, I tried to imagine what I might find at the end of my walk. Maybe an elderly woman with an anxiety reaction, or perhaps something particularly horrible.
>
> I grabbed the chart from the nurses station on my way to the patient's room, and the nurse gave me some hurried details: a 20-year-old girl named Debbie was dying of ovarian cancer. She was having unrelenting vomiting apparently as the result of an alcohol drip administered for sedation. Hmmm, I thought. Very sad. As I approached the room I could hear loud, labored breathing. I entered and saw an emaciated, dark-haired woman who appeared much older than 20. She was receiving nasal oxygen, had an IV, and was sitting in bed suffering from what was obviously severe air hunger. The chart noted her weight at 80 pounds. A second woman, also dark-haired but of middle age, stood at her right, holding her hand. Both looked up as I entered. The room seemed filled with the patient's desperate effort to survive. Her eyes were hollow, and she had suprasternal and intercostal retractions with her rapid inspirations. She had not eaten or slept in two days. She had not responded to chemotherapy and was being given supportive care only. It was a gallows scene, a cruel mockery of her youth and unfulfilled potential. Her only words to me were, "Let's get this over with."
>
> I retreated with my thoughts to the nurses station. The patient was tired and needed rest. I could not give her health, but I could give her rest. I asked the nurse to draw 20 mg of morphine sulfate into a syringe. Enough, I thought, to do the job. I took the syringe into the room and told the two women I was going to give Debbie something that would let her rest and to say good-bye. Debbie looked at the syringe, then laid her head on the pillow with her eyes open, watching what was left of the world. I injected the morphine intravenously and watched to see if my calculations on its effects would be correct. Within seconds her breathing slowed to a normal rate, her eyes closed, and her features softened as she seemed restful at last. The older woman stroked the hair of the now-sleeping patient. I waited for the inevitable next effect of depressing the respiratory drive. With clocklike certainty, within four minutes the breathing rate slowed even more, then became irregular, then ceased. The dark-haired woman stood erect and seemed relieved.
>
> It's over, Debbie.

In the bioethics class in which the following discussion occurs, Tom is the instructor, Nancy is a nursing major, and Blake is a business major. As we will see, Blake begins with a specific grammatical picture of—and moral response to—the Debbie case, while Nancy's grammatical picture and moral response are more nebulous. Through the discussion, Nancy's grammatical picture remains indistinct, but Blake's is altered within each of the three scopes—text, context, and moral vocabulary—so that, in the end, his grammatical picture has broadened

to become what I will call a "family of concerns," and he no longer has a specific moral response to the Debbie case. My discussion of the dialogue will focus on the ways in which Blake's initial grammatical picture is transformed.

Tom distributes a copy of "It's Over, Debbie" to each student in the class and asks them to read it silently. When all of the students have looked up from their copies of the story, the discussion begins.

Tom: What do you all think about the resident's actions? Did he do the right thing?

Blake: I'm not sure, but I think he probably did. I mean, it says here that he was "bumping sleepily against walls and corners," so, at first, he probably wasn't in the best frame of mind to make such a big decision. But later, after visiting the room, he "retreated with [his] thoughts to the nurses station." So, in the end, it seems like he made a careful decision, and it was probably the right thing to do because Debbie was suffering so much and wanted to die. She made that clear enough when she said "Let's get this over with."

Nancy: Well, I doubt he did the right thing—or, I should say, I doubt *they* did the right thing. I mean, isn't the nurse responsible here, too? After all, she probably called this resident because she knew him and knew what he would do to Debbie. And she would know what the 20 mg of morphine that she drew up would do. Plus, if morphine's in a syringe, usually nurses administer it, not doctors. So, when *he* took the syringe to the room, I'll bet this nurse knew what was going to happen, and she didn't speak up or report it later. She must've even let the resident omit his actions from Debbie's chart—or chart them falsely.

Blake: OK, I didn't think about the nurse, but what about Debbie's terrible suffering? She was already dying, and she just wanted to die sooner so she wouldn't have to suffer any longer. When she died, even her mom was "relieved," it says. So, I guess the nurse is to be praised along with the doctor.

Nancy: Well, I'm not convinced that Debbie knew that the resident was going to kill her. "Let's get this over with" can mean lots of things. What if she was expecting a doctor to show up to perform some procedure or was just tired of having staff come into her room all the time, and she just wanted this doctor to hurry up and do whatever he'd come to do? Last week, I took my little sister to the doctor for a shot. She sat on the exam table, rolled her eyes, and said the same thing: "Let's get this over with."

Blake: But the doctor even said that he was "going to give Debbie something that would let her rest and to say goodbye." And if her mom didn't agree with the doctor's actions, surely she would've objected.

Nancy: Last year, my grandma had a stroke, and we'd visit her in the hospital. Each time, we'd sit with her for a while, and then one of the nurses would come in and say, "Mrs. Dawson needs to rest, so please say goodbye." Maybe Debbie thought this doctor was called in because he could give her something special to help her rest—I mean, *literally* sleep—and that it wasn't a *final* goodbye. And even if she "looked at the syringe," that doesn't mean she knew what it would do to her. Then it says that she watched "what was left of the world," but, again, that's just the resident's assumption that Debbie knew that he was going to end her life. Maybe she didn't know.

Blake: OK, I can see all of that, but what about her mom?

Nancy: I've been thinking about that. Chances are, you're right that this other woman was Debbie's mom. That's what I think the resident believed, at least, because he mentions their age difference and that they both have dark hair. But did you notice that this "older woman" never even speaks? [Blake shakes his head.] Really, she could be anyone—a friend or co-worker, an older cousin, a mentally-handicapped older sister, or even just a hospital volunteer who visits lots of cancer patients. So, I don't think we can put much emphasis on this other woman's "relieved" reaction. Also, what if Debbie had other loved ones? How did they react to not being with her as she died?

Tom: Some good observations, Nancy. But, for the moment, let's assume that Debbie asked to die and knew that the resident was giving her some sort of lethal injection, so he did that with her informed consent. Do you all think Debbie was competent to consent to that?

Blake: Of course. I mean, she knows that she has cancer, that she's dying, and that the chemo didn't work. Plus, she's 20 years old, isn't she? I'm 20, too, and I've had to make some big decisions lately, but I knew I could handle them. Looking back, I don't regret any of those choices. Deciding to die must be one of the biggest choices of all, but there's nothing in the story that would lead me to think that Debbie was immature or didn't understand her situation. So, I think she was competent.

Nancy: What about this? It says that she was "suffering from…severe air hunger" and "had not eaten or slept in two days." Did you consider that, Blake? [He shakes his head.] Once, I went 36 hours without sleep, and, let me tell you, near the end of that stretch I was foggy-headed and irritable! Now, if I try to imagine not eating, too, and the pain of cancer…. I agree that, for a lot of people, 20 is old enough to make life-or-death decisions, but I think Debbie's condition should make us question her competence.

Blake: OK. Maybe. But the resident read her chart and was familiar enough with her case to know that she "was being given supportive care only." So, in asking to die, at least she wasn't contradicting anything that she'd said before.

Nancy: Sure, he looked at Debbie's chart, but that doesn't mean that he was very familiar with her case. He even tells us that "the gynecologic-oncology unit" was "not [his] usual duty station." Did you see that? [Again, Blake shakes his head.] So, he's never seen Debbie before.

And if a nurse or someone else told him any more about her wishes for palliative care or anything else, he doesn't say so in this account. So, we don't know: When Debbie asks to die, she might be contradicting something she's said before. But, just now, we were assuming that Debbie was asking to die and knew that the resident was going to kill her, and, like I said, I'm not willing to accept any of that.

Blake: I guess you're right. Now, I don't know whether they did the right thing. For me, it all depends on Debbie's wishes, what her loved ones want, and whether she's competent to decide to die. And, like Nancy said, these areas are uncertain because there's a lot about the story—and a lot about things that *aren't* in the story—that isn't clear.

Some of Blake's initial grammatical picture of the Debbie case can be inferred from his first comment. There, he quotes three portions of the text that hold his attention, and he explains how he understands them. He also claims that the resident "probably" "did the right thing" because "he made a careful decision" and "because Debbie was suffering so much and wanted to die." This initial moral response seems to be guided by Tom's questions—"What do you all think about the resident's actions? Did he do the right thing?"—which invite the students to focus their moral responses on the resident, and Blake obliges. Later, we also learn that Blake's initial grammatical picture includes his understanding of the identity of the "second woman, also dark-haired but of middle age." Blake claims that this is Debbie's mother, and, to support his view that both women understood that the doctor intended to end Debbie's life, he cites text—"the doctor was 'going to give Debbie something that would let her rest and to say goodbye'"—and conjectures that, "if her mom didn't agree with the doctor's actions, surely she would've objected." While there is more to Blake's initial grammatical picture that I will mention later, these are many of the aspects of the story—including text, context, and moral vocabulary—that inform that picture and that some of Nancy's early comments challenge.

In her first contribution to the discussion, Nancy draws Blake's attention to several aspects of both text and context that he had not considered, and most of these have to do with

"the nurse."[137] Regarding the text, Nancy claims that this nurse calls the resident and draws up the 20 mg of morphine. To this reading of the explicit text, Nancy adds lots of context, claiming that "she probably called this resident because she knew him and knew what he would do to Debbie. And she would know what the 20 mg of morphine that she drew up would do. Plus, if morphine's in a syringe, usually nurses administer it, not doctors. So, when *he* took the syringe to the room, I'll bet this nurse knew what was going to happen, and she didn't speak up or report it later. She must've even let the resident omit his actions from Debbie's chart—or chart them falsely."

Nancy's comments above illustrate that *context*, as I am using the term, can come in many forms: questions, assumptions, speculation, and other ideas that, while not stated explicitly in the text, are added to the text.[138] Furthermore, contextual points can have a variety of content, having to do with clinical practice, organizational operations, history, characterization, and much more. Finally, I should emphasize again that both textual and contextual points can be implausible, unreliable, or even simply false. Consider, for example, Nancy's remark that "she probably called this resident because she knew him and knew what he would do to Debbie." However, is it not far more plausible to understand this particular resident's getting called as due to his just happening to be on call? Later in the dialogue, Nancy even points out that the text says

[137] The story includes three instances of the word "nurse," and it is not clear to me that the same nurse is being referenced each time. However, Nancy assumes that the same nurse calls the resident and draws up the morphine, and Blake seems to accept that assumption. Furthermore, both Blake and Nancy assume that the resident is male and "the nurse" female, and, for the sake of consistency, I follow them in those assumptions.

[138] Admittedly, the line between text and context is not always clear. For example, some might classify Blake's claim that the "second woman" is Debbie's mother as "text," regarding it as the meaning that he assigns to some of the explicit text, while others would call Blake's claim an assumption or speculation and classify it as what I am calling "context." But, for my purposes, such disagreements about how to classify ideas are not important. I have introduced the three scopes only to facilitate our understanding some of the possible sources of a person's (initial or later) grammatical picture of a case. So, what is important is *that* we understand Blake's claim about the identity of the "second woman" as part of his initial grammatical picture of the case, not *which part* (so to speak) of his grammatical picture that claim occupies (e.g., text or context). Having agreed that that claim was *some* part of his initial grammatical picture, we can go on to ask how, in relationship to that claim, his picture might have changed.

that this unit is "not [his] usual duty station," concluding—plausibly, I think—that "he's never seen Debbie before." On my view, these points cast doubt on Nancy's claim that the nurse is familiar with this resident and his clinical predispositions. Nevertheless, as noted earlier, in aesthetic reasoning, even implausible or false claims might get accepted.

From Blake's reply, it is not clear which of Nancy's contextual points he accepts. However, what is clear is that his moral response has already shifted from focusing solely on the resident to including "the nurse." Apparently, he accepts Nancy's suggestion that "the nurse" is also "responsible." That shift of focus is maintained through his final remarks, as his "they" suggests: "Now, I don't know whether they did the right thing."

Some of Nancy's later comments also alter Blake's initial grammatical picture. Instead of continuing to comment on this dialogue in a tedious, line-by-line fashion, I will use a grid to summarize some of the changes to Blake's grammatical picture of the Debbie case.

| **Blake's Transformed Grammatical Picture (GP) of the Debbie Case** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Aspects of the Text for which Blake Considers New Meanings** | **Blake's Initial GP** | **Blake's Later GP** |
| "Let's get this over with." | Debbie "wanted to die." -Blake | Debbie might have been, e.g., "expecting a doctor to show up to perform some procedure" -Nancy |
| The resident "told the two women [he] was going to give Debbie something that would let her rest and to say good-bye." | Debbie knew that this injection would end her life. | "Maybe Debbie thought…he could give her something to help her…*literally* sleep—and…it wasn't a *final* goodbye." –Nancy |
| "A second woman, also dark-haired but of middle age, stood at her right, holding her hand." | This "second woman" is Debbie's mother. | This woman "never even speaks" and "could be anyone" –Nancy |

| **Aspects of the Text that Blake Initially Did not Notice but Now Considers** | **Blake's Initial GP** | **Blake's Later GP** |
|---|---|---|
| Debbie was "suffering from…severe air hunger" and "had not eaten or slept in two days." | (N/A Because Did not Notice) | Contrary to Blake's claim that Debbie is competent, Nancy cites this text to support her claim that "Debbie's condition should make us question her competence." |
| The resident notes that "the gynecologic-oncology unit" was "not [his] usual duty station." | (N/A Because Did not Notice) | Contrary to Blake's comfort with the resident's level of familiarity with Debbie, Nancy cites this text to support her claim that "he's never seen Debbie before." |
| **Aspects of Context that Blake Did not Initially Consider but Now Does** | **Blake's Initial GP** | **Blake's Later GP** |
| Debbie might have had loved ones who were not with her when she died. | (N/A Because Did not Consider) | Nancy asks Blake to consider this as additional support for her advice to not "put much emphasis on this other woman's relieved reaction." |
| A nurse or someone else might have knowledge of Debbie's wishes related to palliative or other end-of-life care. | (N/A Because Did not Consider) | Nancy raises this point to support her claim that, if Debbie were to ask to die, "we don't know" whether she would be "contradicting something she's said before." |

There is a bit of moral vocabulary that is an additional component of Blake's later grammatical picture but is not included in the chart above. It is the idea of competence. In the dialogue, Tom introduces this term when he asks the class to "assume that Debbie asked to die….Do you all think Debbie was competent to consent to that?" Blake replies that she was competent because "there's nothing in the story that would lead [him] to think that Debbie was immature or didn't understand her situation." Then, as noted in the chart, Nancy cites some text—which Blake admits that he did not notice—to support her claim that "Debbie's condition

should make us question her competence." This wins Blake's tentative agreement, and, after some further remarks from Nancy, he concludes that he does not "know whether they did the right thing. For me, it all depends on Debbie's wishes, what her loved ones want, and whether she's competent to decide to die. And, like Nancy said, these areas are uncertain because there's a lot about the story—and a lot about things that *aren't* in the story—that isn't clear."

I set out to show that, through this class discussion, Blake's initial grammatical picture is altered within each of the three scopes—text, context, and moral vocabulary—so that his grammatical picture broadens into a family of concerns and he no longer has a specific moral response to this case. To see that I have shown all of this, first note, again, his conclusion that he does not "know whether they did the right thing." This "they" suggests that he accepts Nancy's claim that the nurse is also responsible for whatever happened. Blake's next sentence identifies the three members of the family of concerns of which I have spoken—again, with emphasis: "For me, it all depends on *Debbie's wishes*, *what her loved ones want*, and *whether she's competent to decide to die*." Regarding the text, Blake's reference to "Debbie's wishes" shows that he accepts Nancy's claim that "Let's get this over with" does not necessarily mean that Debbie wishes to die. Regarding context, his mentioning "what her loved ones want" indicates that he accepts Nancy's point that Debbie might have loved ones who are not with her as she dies. Finally, regarding moral vocabulary, Blake's concern with "whether she's competent to decide to die" shows that he accepts Tom's suggestion that this is an important consideration; however, because Blake also accepts Nancy's reference to "Debbie's condition," his

understanding of competence changes,[139] and, in the end, he doubts Debbie's competence. In other words, both the *content* of Blake's moral conclusion (i.e., "Now, I don't know whether they did the right thing") and his *understanding* of each member of his family of concerns is altered as he accepts new features of the story related to text, context, and moral vocabulary. So, all of this establishes the first part of this chapter's thesis: As a person participates in a discussion of a story in a bioethics class, he might be convinced by aesthetic reasoning in this way: His grammatical picture of the case that a story presents is reshaped as he sees and accepts aspects of the story that he had not noticed. As this occurs, his moral response to that case might also change. Furthermore, as I argue in the section below, his reformed grammatical picture might influence his ways of seeing and responding morally to *other* cases, which is the second part of this chapter's thesis.

## Aesthetic Reasoning's Influence beyond the Classroom: Shaping Future Responses to Cases

My sense is that most bioethics instructors would agree that, while a classroom-based discussion of a story can be valuable for many reasons, one of its chief merits is that it prepares students to respond to cases that they might encounter later. At the beginning of this chapter, I emphasized this point through two of the goals that I identified for such discussions: (1) helping pre-health professional students prepare to make difficult, moral decisions in clinical practice and (2) helping all students prepare to make difficult, moral decisions as patients and loved ones of patients.

[139] Initially, Blake concludes that Debbie is competent because "there's nothing in the story that would lead [him] to think that Debbie was immature or didn't understand her situation." But Nancy's reference to "Debbie's condition" introduces a new, competence-related consideration, which Blake apparently accepts, for his conclusion suggests that he is no longer confident that she was competent.

Yet, how, exactly, might such a discussion prepare students to respond to future cases? Answers to that question vary widely and depend, to some extent, on instructors' practices and aims. While some instructors want to mold students' character (e.g., instill virtues like tolerance and humility), others teach students to identify and reason analogically from "paradigm" cases, and while others emphasize special techniques of analysis, still others foster the proper application of moral theories and other vocabulary. In this section, I want to offer a different answer—and one that is, I suspect, compatible with each of the foregoing answers. I think my argument thus far sheds light on ways in which a person's being convinced by aesthetic reasoning in a class discussion can prepare him to respond to a future case by informing whatever grammatical picture will guide his response to that case. That is, earlier aesthetic reasoning might influence his ways of seeing and reacting morally to some later case.[140] That is my thesis in this section. To argue for it, I will return to the grammatical picture of the Debbie case that Blake has at the end of his class's discussion.

After taking bioethics, Blake decides to change his major from business to social work—a field in which he had planned to minor and has already taken several courses. Now, just a month after his class's discussion of "It's Over, Debbie," Blake finds himself in an upper-level social work class that includes a clinical internship at a local hospital. Blake's supervisor at the hospital is a clinical social worker and counselor, and she regularly receives requests from the clinical staff to meet with patients for counseling and mediation. One morning during his first week as an intern, Blake arrives at the hospital and finds his supervisor reading the following history, which is accompanied by a note from a nursing supervisor that says only, "Please speak

[140] In these last two sentences, I say "can prepare him" and "might influence" because, as always, I do not want to make a scientific claim (e.g., about how some earlier idea is likely to—or even must—interact causally with some later idea). Instead, I want to speak plausibly about what we can imagine happening—however often it might or might not happen.

with Mr. V this morning and help us reach an agreement with him." Blake's supervisor asks him to read this history.

> Mr. V is dying of a painful disease and has always maintained that he did not want his life prolonged "unnecessarily." He reaffirms this even from his hospital bed, although he finds it awkward and humiliating to have to ask repeatedly to be released from his suffering. Meanwhile, his doctors and nurses, for a number of reasons and causes, find it unthinkable that they should be asked to dispatch their patient. They offer Mr. V and his family a variety of options but refuse to be parties to something that they think goes contrary to their professional responsibilities. They tell him that, though he has the right to refuse treatment, he has no right to request that they murder him; for they perceive it as little better than any other murder.[141]

After Blake reads the story above, his supervisor says, "In just a few minutes, I'll go up to Mr. V's room. If you were in my place, Blake, what would you do?"

I can imagine that Blake's grammatical picture of the Mr. V case might bear several likenesses to his grammatical picture of the Debbie case.[142] Recall Blake's statement at the end of the dialogue in the last section: "For me, it all depends on Debbie's wishes, what her loved ones want, and whether she's competent to decide to die." Similarly, in Blake's reply to his supervisor, he might explain that, were he in her place, he would further explore Mr. V's wishes, what his loved ones want, and whether he is competent to make a decision about his end-of-life care. Below, I briefly discuss each of these features of the Mr. V story that Blake might notice, and I highlight some of their similarities to his way of seeing the Debbie case.

Like "It's Over, Debbie," Mr. V's story includes only a single quotation from the patient—in fact, only a single word: Mr. V does "not want his life prolonged 'unnecessarily.'" Just as Blake came to see the ambiguity of Debbie's remark—"Let's get this over with"—he

[141] I have reproduced this story verbatim from Horn, 117.

[142] In arguing for this point, I also happen to be incorporating Wittgenstein's idea of aspect perception as "noticing a likeness" into my conception of aesthetic reasoning—or, more specifically, into my conception of aesthetic reasoning's later influence on a person who was convinced by such reasoning sometime earlier—which brings my concept of aesthetic reasoning nearer to his own. Recall that, in section one of this chapter, I departed from Wittgenstein's view of aesthetic reasoning by speaking of aspect perception as "noticing new features."

might now wonder what, exactly, Mr. V is requesting. For example, what is the "variety of options" that Mr. V has been offered, and how did he respond when the staff told him that "he has the right to refuse treatment"? Furthermore, does Mr. V really regard being euthanized as the only acceptable option? In talking with his supervisor, Blake might raise such questions, suggesting that, in her place, he would seek out more information in these areas.

Second, Mr. V's story includes three words to which Blake might be especially attuned—the phrase "and his family" is found in the sentence reading, "They offer Mr. V and his family a variety of options…." Just as Blake came to question the identity of the "second woman" in "It's Over, Debbie" and accepted the importance of the contextual point that Debbie might have loved ones who are not with her in the hospital, Blake might now wonder about the identity of Mr. V's "family." Is this a reference to one person or more than one? Who are they? Do they support Mr. V's request to be euthanized—if, in fact, that is what he has requested? Will they be present when Blake's supervisor visits Mr. V's room? If not, where are they, and how involved in his care do they wish to be? Having emphasized what Debbie's loved ones want, I can imagine that Blake would raise such questions with his supervisor.

Finally, Blake's wondering about Mr. V's "family" could take on additional importance in relationship to a third consideration—Mr. V's competence. In his class's discussion of "It's Over, Debbie," Blake initially claimed that, given Debbie's mature age and her understanding of her "situation," she was competent to ask to be euthanized. However, once Blake was asked to notice that Debbie was "suffering from…severe air hunger" and "had not eaten or slept in two days," he accepted the proposal that "Debbie's condition should make us question her competence." Similarly, Blake might now notice that "Mr. V is dying of a painful disease" and, in relationship to this, wonder about several things: the severity of Mr. V's pain and whether he

is receiving any analgesic, how he has responded to any pain medications over time, and whether there is anything else about Mr. V's history that should lead the clinical staff to question his competence (e.g., dementia, disorientation).

If Blake were to notice any (or all) of the three features of the Mr. V story discussed above, it seems plausible to suppose that, in doing so, his grammatical picture of the Debbie case has influenced his way of seeing the Mr. V case. That conclusion is the first part of my thesis in this section.

To argue for the rest of my thesis (i.e., that a person's grammatical picture of one case might influence his moral response to another case), imagine that Blake, sitting in his supervisor's office, does not yet have a moral response to the Mr. V case—or, at least, he does not have a response that is any more specific than his uncertain, family-of-concerns response to the Debbie case. But Blake's supervisor has found his comments insightful and asks him to join her in visiting Mr. V's room. Agreeing to accompany her, Blake gains a vantage from which he can pursue answers to some of the questions that he raised with his supervisor and, perhaps, develop a more-specific moral response to the Mr. V case. Finally, imagine that, in relationship to any (or all) of the three features of the Mr. V story that Blake noticed, he gains some of the answers that he desires and, in light of that information, develops a more-specific moral response to this case. For my purposes, it does not matter what that information is or what Blake's moral response is in light of it. Still, to offer an example: By visiting Mr. V's room, Blake might learn that Mr. V is competent, that the "variety of options" presented to him did not include home-based hospice care, that he is willing to receive such care, and that some of his family members are willing to assist with his at-home needs as he dies. In light of this information, Blake might find his family of concerns satisfied and conclude that Mr. V's entering home-based hospice care

is the best option. Or, imagine Blake's gaining other information and, in light of it, having some other moral response. Regardless, we can now conclude that Blake's grammatical picture of the Debbie case has influenced his way of seeing and responding morally to the Mr. V case. So, this example supports my full thesis in this section.

Finally, I want to point out that there has been nothing special or mysterious about the Mr. V story or about my way of putting Blake into contact with the Mr. V case. That is, I think the family of concerns that comprises part of Blake's grammatical picture of the Debbie case (i.e., patient's wishes, patient's competence, and family's wishes) is general enough to guide his way of seeing *any number of cases*, whether he encounters them through written stories or in some other way—say, in a conversational, bedside fashion. But I have sent Blake from a bioethics classroom to a hospital office and, finally, to a hospital room to illustrate the ways in which a person's being convinced by aesthetic reasoning in the classroom can influence his ways of seeing and responding morally to cases in other settings. I also transported Blake to draw a contrast between a person's being in a position to gain further information about a case—as Blake is in Mr. V's room—with his lacking access to such information, as Blake does in his classroom-based encounter with the Debbie case.

To be clear, I have not argued that aesthetic reasoning occurs in either Blake's supervisor's office or in Mr. V's room. But neither have I argued that aesthetic reasoning could not occur in those settings—in fact, I suspect that it could. Instead, I have simply sought to show how the aesthetic reasoning that occurred in Blake's bioethics class—and by which he was convinced—might influence him later as he encounters other cases. And I began this section—and this chapter—by pointing out that class discussions of stories are intended to help students prepare to respond to future cases. Now, having seen that such discussions might invest students

with persistent grammatical pictures that influence their responses to future cases, I close by commenting on some ways in which, on my view, bioethics instructors should conduct those discussions.

**Notes for Instructors: Conducting Discussions of Stories in the Bioethics Classroom**

If my dialogues about the E.R. story and "It's Over, Debbie" are representative of discussions that occur in bioethics classes, instructors must accept that, in such discussions, some—perhaps even all—of their students are being convinced by aesthetic reasoning. By participating in such discussions, students have their grammatical pictures of cases shaped and reshaped within some (or all) of the three scopes that I discussed—text, context, and moral vocabulary. But is there a *proper* shape that instructors should seek to mold? I think so. Below, I suggest that, within a single discussion, instructors should seek to mold the family-of-concerns kind of grammatical picture that is accompanied by a tentative moral response, as Blake has with regard to the Debbie case. For many students, such a grammatical picture can be the outcome of their instructor's conducting a discussion that involves aesthetic reasoning within some (or all) of the three scopes. However, some bioethicists would be wary of an instructor's conducting a discussion in that way, so I begin by addressing them.

My argument in this chapter has reinforced a common observation about the stories used in bioethics—namely, that they are *narrow*. That is, such stories are often lacking in textual clarity and contextual details that, if supplied, might change a reader's way of seeing and responding morally to the cases presented. Noticing this, some bioethicists have contended that this narrowness can and should be corrected by writing better stories. For example, in the preface to their influential *A Casebook of Medical Ethics*, Terrence F. Ackerman and Carson Strong observed that stories "in the literature of medical ethics typically suffer from two major

defects."[143] First, both "the medical and psychosocial aspects of clinical situations" are "rarely depicted" in all of their "rich complexity." Second, and as a result, "the quality of the ethical analysis" is impaired in crucial ways. When "the factual dimension" of a case is impoverished, we can expect any subsequent, moral assessment of that case to be inadequate.[144] Ackermann and Strong went on to suggest that stories—including, presumably, those used in class discussions—need not suffer from these "two major defects." They insisted that the stories in their own volume, for example, do not fail in these areas, for each story "accurately portrays the factual and moral dimensions of ethical issues in clinical medicine. The medical and psychosocial aspects of clinical situations are developed in substantial detail," and this "permits identification of the numerous values or obligations that may be relevant to analysis of particular cases."[145]

Similarly, John Arras hinted at these "two major defects" when he argued that "an *appropriately complete* story or history is *a prerequisite to any responsible moral analysis*. Before we attempt to judge, we must understand, and the best way to achieve the requisite understanding is to tell a nuanced story."[146] For a person's moral assessment of a case to be credible, Arras proposed, she must first have a "full-bodied" story. Presumably, on Arras' view, a person could receive such a story in a class discussion and render a "responsible moral analysis." So, like Ackerman and Strong, I think Arras assumed that *all* of the morally-relevant facts of a case can be included clearly and unambiguously in a story that presents that case. The story that a class discusses can be—to use Arras' phrase—"appropriately complete." In this way,

---

[143] Terrence F. Ackerman and Carson Strong, *A Casebook of Medical Ethics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), vii.
[144] Ibid, vii-viii.
[145] Ibid, viii.
[146] John Arras, "Nice Story, But So What?" in Hilde Lindemann Nelson, ed., *Stories and Their Limits: Narrative Approaches to Bioethics* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 72. My emphasis.

these authors supposed that such a story's text could never be plausibly supplemented or reinterpreted in a way that might alter a person's way of seeing and responding morally to that case.[147]

On my view, the authors above suffer from what Abrams and Buckner called "the seductive belief" that, if only a story included "more specific and complete data, the medical and ethical decisions would be obvious."[148] To hold that seductive belief is, I think, to be deluded, for I am yet to find a story (including those written by Ackerman and Strong) that does not have textual or contextual unclarities that, I suspected, if clarified, would have redirected—or, at least, led me to reconsider—my moral response. So, I think another reply to the narrowness of such stories is needed—one that begins by acknowledging that, given such unclarities, aesthetic reasoning will often be woven into our class discussions of fiction and non-fiction stories. I begin with my suggestions as to what an instructor should do within a particular discussion, and I close with some suggestions as to what she should do, over time, with discussions of numerous stories.

First, within a particular discussion, an instructor should not assume that, having received the story, all of her students begin with the same grammatical picture of that case, for, as my dialogues indicate, such an assumption would often be mistaken. Different students often see a given case differently. The question then becomes: How should an instructor respond to their seeing it differently? First, in preparation for the class discussion, I think she should try to be cognizant of ways in which her own reading of the story might be biased and try to identify as many of the story's textual and contextual ambiguities as she can. Then, in discussion, she

---

[147] Perhaps this assumption channels the wish of ideal observer theorists that an ideal observer be "fully informed and vividly imaginative." As Brandt put it: "A person is 'fully informed and vividly imaginative' if he has all true nonethical beliefs and lacks all false nonethical beliefs that would affect his reaction of feeling or desire; and if he has these beliefs in mind as vividly as if he were perceiving the facts believed." See Richard B. Brandt, *Ethical Theory: The Problems of Normative and Critical Ethics* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1959), 173-74.
[148] Abrams and Buckner, 589.

should encourage students to articulate the differences among their grammatical pictures and be prepared to supplement their comments by drawing the class's attention to some of the ambiguities that she identified. Furthermore, she should also be well-prepared to distinguish plausible from implausible views of a story's text and context. For example, if a student proposes that something would be "standard" clinical practice (as Molly does) or that a "nurse would know" about such-and-such (as Nancy does), the instructor should be able to confirm or refute such claims accurately. Having the knowledge (e.g., clinical, organizational, political, historical, economic) to do that is, of course, one of the professional expectations of bioethicists, and those who teach bioethics without that knowledge risk shaping students' grammatical pictures in misleading ways. By doing these things—many of which Nancy does to Blake—an instructor will foster in her students the sort of family-of-concerns grammatical picture and tentative moral response that Blake has with regard to the Debbie case.

But why is an instructor's doing *that* a good idea? As we saw with Blake's response to the Mr. V case, a family-of-concerns grammatical picture equips a person with some general starting points from which he can explore a given case further in all of its particularities. And greater understanding of those particularities tends, I think, to be *better*—even though it might sometimes lead to tensions or confusions that produce moral paralysis or skepticism. But those risks are worth running because the unattractive alternative is an overly-specific, presumptive grammatical picture that ill-equips a person to respond to new cases, for he will not have a broad set of concerns for which he can be on the lookout. Such an overly-specific grammatical picture is like Blake's *initial* picture of the Debbie case—when he was all-too-confident about what Debbie wants, whom her family is (and is not) and what they want, and that Debbie is competent.

Finally, the benefits of fostering a family-of-concerns grammatical picture can compile when, over time, an instructor uses a variety of stories for discussion. When she does so, a given student might develop numerous examples of family-of-concerns-style grammatical pictures and, thus, be even better-equipped to explore and respond to new cases. By "a variety of stories," I mean stories that have a diversity of settings, characters, actions, personalities, tempos, expectations for closure, and more. For example, Tod Chambers argued that a story that fits neatly within the genre of bioethics stories often omits events that occur during the large swaths of time in which characters are outside the clinical setting. Instead, such a narrative often jumps from one clinical interaction to another. Furthermore, as Chambers pointed out, bioethics stories tend to emphasize action over both setting and character development.[149] So, my proposal is that, once we reflect—as Chambers did—on what we expect of stories within this genre, an instructor should use stories that contravene those expectations and, in that way, explode the genre. Consider, for example, the following story, which, though brief, emphasizes setting, character development, and events that occur outside the clinical environment.

> Juanita has been in and out of school for many years, working part-time as a bar tender in a large, lively city and part-time as a stats-keeper for her university's football team. She lives with several football players who often drink, take steroids, and sleep around. Now, Juanita is pregnant by one of the football players. Her multicultural friends include several women who have had abortions. Years ago, Juanita was diagnosed as bipolar, and she regularly takes a prescribed anti-depressant. She has a family history of suicide, and she sometimes imagines taking her own life. Her father lives in another state and has a full-time job as a traveling salesman, but Juanita does not have health insurance or a full-time job. How should Juanita respond to her pregnancy?

By using stories like this, an instructor can foster in her students grammatical pictures that are broad, stretching beyond the strictures to which stories in the genre tend to conform in that they

[149] Chambers, 175-80.

encompass concerns such as character development and setting. In that way, such grammatical pictures will be comprised of more diverse families of concern.

Of course, it is often difficult to *find* stories whose features run counter to the expectations of stories in the genre. So, I suggest that instructors themselves compose some of the stories that they use in class. These might be fiction or non-fiction. Consider, for example, the following non-fiction story, which I wrote. It emphasizes both character development and events that occur outside the clinical environment.

> Lori is a young woman from rural Tennessee. She was raised Catholic. She remains a Christian, but, in recent years, she has been vacillating between Protestant and Catholic faith. Now, she is unmarried, pregnant, and regretful. She prays daily, asking God for guidance. Her siblings do not live nearby, but they speak with her often and provide her with emotional support. Her parents encourage her to have the child, promising that Lori and the child can live in their home indefinitely. Lori's parents also vow to help her financially and with childcare. Though Lori lacks health insurance, her family knows several doctors in her hometown, some of whom might be willing to provide care at a reduced rate. How should Lori respond to her pregnancy?

Next to broadening her student's grammatical pictures, an instructor's composing non-fiction stories that contravene the genre has additional advantages. First, in discussion with her class, the instructor is in a position to introduce a variety of suppositions and contextual features that she knows are plausible because they happen to be true.[150] Second, if an instructor composes two or more non-fiction stories *about the same, real case*, and if those stories differ enough that her students tend to have very different moral responses to them, then her revealing that those stories are about the same case will reinforce in her students the value of their developing family-of-

[150] However, if, in doing so, she were to hold rigidly to her suppositions and contextual points and not permit students to introduce contradictory alternatives, she would no longer be treating non-fiction stories as presenting alterable, imagined situations—that is, she would no longer be treating them like fiction. Instead, her suppositions and contextual points would be expanding what she regards as a true, non-fiction text. In that case, aesthetic reasoning in Wittgenstein's sense—which, as I have argued, he related to fiction—would not occur.

concerns-style grammatical pictures and offering only tentative moral responses to the cases that stories present. Would you believe that "Juanita" and "Lori" are the same woman? They are.

## Summary

In this chapter, I proposed that Wittgenstein's remark that aesthetic reasoning occurs in ethics remains relevant in that such reasoning is woven into discussions of fiction and non-fiction stories in bioethics classes. To support that contention, I showed that aesthetic reasoning occurs in dialogues about two different stories. In one of those dialogues, Blake is convinced by aesthetic reasoning in that his grammatical picture of the Debbie case is reshaped as he sees and accepts aspects of the story that he did not notice initially. As this occurs, his moral response to that case also changes, and, as we saw, his new grammatical picture, in turn, influences his way of seeing and responding morally to another case—that of Mr. V. Finally, because, if I am correct, aesthetic reasoning will often occur in class discussions, I concluded by offering some suggestions as to how, on my view, bioethics instructors should encourage and guide such reasoning. Now, in the final chapter, I consider some implications of this work for Wittgenstein studies, and I inquire into the likelihood of our finding aesthetic reasoning in contexts other than the bioethics classroom.

## Chapter VII
## Conclusion

I began this work by asking what Wittgenstein meant when, in a 1933 lecture, he remarked that aesthetic reasoning occurs in ethics. To answer that question, I delineated several features of aesthetic reasoning (chapter three), and I elaborated on Wittgenstein's understanding of that concept by showing its connections to both aspect perception (chapter four) and grammatical pictures (chapter five). I arrived at a general conception of aesthetic reasoning as involving the introduction of grammar that can draw a person's attention to unnoticed aspects of an object and equip him with further descriptions of that object.

Given the generality of that characterization, one might suppose that aesthetic reasoning could be involved in a very wide range of diverse activities. However, I think we should not leap to that conclusion too quickly, for I have followed Wittgenstein in applying his concept to a specific kind of experience in which continuous seeing and aspect perception coincide. Recall from chapter four that Wittgenstein hinted that aesthetic reasoning in art can occur in relationship to both genre paintings and works of fiction. In our interactions with those works, we might both see *this* (e.g., some bit of internal content) and notice a likeness between that painting or story and external reality, treating that bit of internal content as if it were real. Following that model, my examples of aesthetic reasoning in ethics focused on situations in which continuously seeing and aspect perceiving something might also coincide. In chapter five, I saw Tolstoy's parable as its internal content, but my way of interacting with that parable prompted me to notice likenesses between some of that content and particular, external objects. Similarly, in chapter six, I focused on the bioethics classroom, where fiction and non-fiction stories are both continuously seen—

through, as I argued, some of at least three scopes—and aspect perceived in that, to some extent, they are treated like real medical situations.

So, as we wonder whether aesthetic reasoning occurs elsewhere in either professional or everyday ethics, perhaps we should look first to other situations in which continuously seeing and aspect perceiving something can coincide, for our doing so would be consistent with my exposition and applications of Wittgenstein's view of aesthetic reasoning. And, initially, we need not look any further than the bioethics classroom, for, like their use of the kind of story that I discussed in chapter six, some bioethics instructors also use films, novels, and short stories to prepare students to respond to cases. Students are taught to see these media and to interact with them as if they presented real cases. So, it is plausible to suppose that aesthetic reasoning is woven into discussions of these media in ways that are akin to its place in conversations about stories like "It's Over, Debbie."

But the plausibility of the above supposition is a matter for further research, and it is closely tied to a question on which I have only barely touched: In the bioethics classroom, what is the grammar of our uses of these media? In chapter six, I argued that a person's grammatical picture of a case can be informed by the grammar of whatever use she is making of that case (i.e., what it makes sense for her to do with it in her particular context), which I called the outer scope through which she perceives that case. And, as an example of such classroom-based grammar, I cited instruction related to moral vocabulary (e.g., theories, concepts). "What would a Kantian say about this story?" an instructor might ask. Or: "In relationship to this patient, has informed consent been achieved?" But, beyond such insertions of moral vocabulary, what else is built into our uses of these media in the classroom? Furthermore, to what extent is aesthetic reasoning woven into the conversations that bioethicists have about these media—in journals, at

conferences, on websites, and elsewhere—and how do their uses of these media differ from classroom-based uses?

Now, one might suppose that aesthetic reasoning occurs in other bioethics arenas just as it does in the bioethics classroom. For example, do members of clinical ethics committees not experience aesthetic reasoning? The surprising answer is no—not, at least, in the way that bioethics students do. And that is simply because, in an ethics committee's use of a story, continuous seeing and aspect perception do not often coincide. That is, ethics committees usually do not treat stories *as if* they were real, countenancing contradictory alternatives—for both fiction and non-fiction—for instructional purposes, as bioethics classes do. Instead, the stories that ethics committees handle are usually treated as *descriptive of* medical realities. There is a truth to the matter, something that really happened (or is happening), and part of the committee's work is to uncover that reality. So, if we only look for aesthetic reasoning in experiences for which seeing this and noticing a likeness come packaged together, perhaps aesthetic reasoning will be less prevalent than we might have guessed.

However, if we depart from situations in which continuous seeing and aspect perception coincide, and if we think of aspect perception as *noticing new features of an object* (i.e., the sense that I introduced in chapter six), then it is clear that aesthetic reasoning can be woven into the work of an ethics committee. As committee members seek to reconstruct the events of a particular case (e.g., hearing from various people who are acquainted with that case), a committee member's grammatical picture of that case can be reshaped as grammar is introduced that can draw her attention to features of it that she did not notice before.

Yet, just here, an objection might arise: If *that* is all that aesthetic reasoning is, such reasoning is probably rampant in both our solitary reflections and conversations with others, and

such prevalence might detract from both the uniqueness of aesthetic reasoning and whatever interest we should have in it. In other words, if we can have a grammatical picture of anything, and if that picture is altered each time we notice and accept a new feature of that thing, then so what? To take an example from John Hardwig: If you told me that "most illegal immigrants in the U.S. arrive on airplanes sporting tourist visas and simply disappear when they leave the airports, ignoring their visas' expiration dates," and, having never heard that before, I accepted your claim (whether or not it is true), it looks like my grammatical picture of illegal immigration has been changed. So, have I been transformed by aesthetic reasoning? Again, worst case: With his notion of aesthetic reasoning, did Wittgenstein merely devise a clever name for an experience that is familiar and somewhat mundane?

In reply, despite my having spoken of a person who is convinced by aesthetic reasoning as *transformed*, perhaps I have failed to make clear what a profound and remarkable change such reasoning can produce. Allow me to try again. Recall that, in chapter five, I suggested that we understand Wittgenstein's remark that both genre paintings and fiction stories can absorb us as his observing that they can draw us into the grammatical pictures that they offer. "Don't take it as a matter of course, but as a remarkable fact, that pictures and fictitious narratives give us pleasure, absorb us." (PI §524) A new grammatical picture is not inert, not a benign set of new words or beliefs. Instead, the root system of language—perhaps especially of value language—is subtle and far-reaching in a person's life. From chapter three: "We are concentrating, not on the words 'good' or 'beautiful,' which are entirely uncharacteristic, generally just subject and predicate ('This is beautiful'), but on the occasions on which they are said—on the enormously complicated situation in which the aesthetic expression…has almost a negligible place." (LC 2) Similarly: "It is not only difficult to describe what appreciation consists in, but impossible. To

describe what it consists in we would have to describe the whole environment." (LC 7) My appreciation for coffee, for example, has to do with far more than flavor and aroma. That appreciation influenced what time I awoke this morning, the pot that I brewed at home and what I chose to eat with it, my savoring a cup and missing the bus, walking to this café just to drink some more while typing, choosing this seat so I can put my cup on the window ledge, asking the proprietor where her coffee beans are grown and roasted, and so on. And that is just this morning.

Similarly, we might say that a grammatical picture can penetrate deep into a person's practices and attitudes, and to adopt a new picture is to alter some of those practices and attitudes—not merely what is said more or less frequently. And it is that kind of alteration that can be profound. My new grammatical picture of illegal immigration might change my assumptions regarding what such persons own and need, lead me to look around airports and converse with strangers on flights in new ways, change the ways that I listen to—or ignore—news stories and politicians and school board members, and much more. So, we might say that, in general, my being convinced by aesthetic reasoning will be profound insofar as my new grammatical picture will have such subtle and important consequences. Accordingly, whether an ethics committee member's new grammatical picture of a case is profound will depend on how that picture changes and guides her.

So far, we have seen that, if we are willing to locate aesthetic reasoning beyond experiences in which continuous seeing and aspect perception coincide, and if we think of aspect perception as noticing new features of an object, then aesthetic reasoning might be highly prevalent in various bioethics-related arenas (e.g., the experiences of ethics committee members) but also in our solitary reflections and everyday conversations (e.g., discussions about illegal

immigration). But do moral philosophers ever employ aesthetic reasoning in their conversations with other philosophers? In "Eating Meat and Eating People," Cora Diamond can be understood as advocating for the use of aesthetic reasoning in arguments in practical ethics. There, she criticized the argumentative methods of Peter Singer and Tom Regan, contending that it is beside the point for them to begin a philosophical defense of vegetarianism or animals' rights with a discussion of human rights and then to ask whether animals might possess something similar to whatever grounds our claim that humans have such rights. "This is a totally wrong way of beginning the discussion, because it ignores certain quite central facts—facts which, if attended to, would make it clear that *rights* are not what is crucial. *We do not eat our dead*, even when they have died in automobile accidents or been struck by lightning, and their flesh might be first class….We also do not eat our amputated limbs."[151] Diamond went on to suggest that, if the Singer-Regan style philosopher "admitted that what underlies our attitude to dining on ourselves is the view that *a person is not something to eat*, he could not focus on the cow's right not to be killed or maltreated, as if that were the heart of it."[152]

Diamond's point might be put in this way: If the philosophical opponents of vegetarianism and animals' rights are to be convinced to abandon their views, what is called for is not rights-based reasoning but the deeper change that aesthetic reasoning can produce. For example, Diamond proposed that opponents might come to regard more non-human animals as inedible if they are seen as "fellow creatures" or, like pets, as potential "company."[153] In short, these opponents must have their entire *attitudes* toward—including their ways of seeing, speaking about, and interacting with—non-human animals changed. They must be led to adopt

[151] Cora Diamond, "Eating Meat and Eating People," *The Realistic Sprit: Wittgenstein, Philosophy, and the Mind* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 321.
[152] Ibid, 322.
[153] Ibid, 323-34.

new grammatical pictures of those animals by noticing features of them that perhaps they have not noticed before (e.g., that some of them can provide people with company, have dependent offspring, show affection). So, while Diamond herself did not seek to reason aesthetically in that way, I think we can see her as supporting such an approach. And her doing so raises a vast question that is, I think, worthy of further research: How often can moral philosophers—and philosophers more broadly—be understood as engaging in aesthetic reasoning?

While my investigation of aesthetic reasoning might lead us to wonder how often such reasoning occurs—and what exactly it looks like—among philosophers, in bioethics contexts in particular, and in ordinary life, it has also raised important questions for Wittgenstein studies. For example, we might wonder: What did Wittgenstein wish to illuminate by characterizing some of what we do *in ethics* as aesthetic reasoning? In chapter two, I suggested that the later Wittgenstein's view of aesthetic reasoning had roots in his early experience of the moral importance of non-moral descriptions. Furthermore, as we saw in chapter six, Nancy's non-moral questions and descriptions helped to alter Blake's moral response to the Debbie case. And Nancy's comments might continue to influence Blake morally, for, as I also argued, his new grammatical picture of the Debbie case might guide his moral responses to other cases, such as that of Mr. V. So, by characterizing some of what we do in ethics as aesthetic reasoning, perhaps Wittgenstein wished to shed light on the moral significance of non-moral descriptions like Nancy's and change our way of seeing such seemingly innocuous comments.

Furthermore, why might Wittgenstein have regarded aesthetic reasoning as a species of *reasoning*? Might it have been because he suspected that such reasoning can inform an argument in various ways? Perhaps that it can do so is most obvious in the case of an argument from analogy, in which the strength of the conclusion depends on a relevant likeness between two or

more things. For example: “Jake, Dan, and Mark are UT football players, and each of them is morally-inferior to any UK football player. Ben is also a UT football player. Therefore, Ben is probably also morally-inferior to any UK football player.” In inviting you to accept the conclusion of this argument, we could say that I am reasoning aesthetically: I am asking you to adopt a new grammatical picture of a UT football player by having you notice a likeness among several of those players that somehow you had failed to notice. I suspect that any argument from analogy could be said to reason aesthetically in that way.

But aesthetic reasoning can also inform an argument in more subtle ways, such as by influencing the choice and articulation of the specific premises that come to be embodied in that argument. For example, if Blake’s moral response to the Debbie case were to be stated in argument form, it would, presumably, be Nancy’s aesthetic reasoning that guides Blake to his choice and ways of articulating some of the premises included in that argument. For example, Blake’s concern with “what [Debbie’s] loved ones want” indicates that he accepts Nancy’s point that Debbie might have loved ones who are not with her as she dies. That is, Nancy gets Blake to notice a new, contextual feature of the story, altering his grammatical picture of the Debbie case. And Blake’s accepting that feature of the story would lead him to articulate part of his argument in terms of “what [Debbie’s] loved ones want”—choosing that premise instead of one that would be consistent with his initial response, such as “Debbie’s mother consents to her being euthanized”—en route to his concluding, “Now, I don’t know whether they did the right thing.” In such ways, aesthetic reasoning can inform an argument’s particular content.

Finally, what broader implications might this work have for our understanding of the later Wittgenstein’s philosophy? In chapter one, I noted that James C. Edwards commented that the later Wittgenstein’s entire “model” of philosophy was “aesthetic” in that “some of its central

features can best be understood by considering the account of aesthetic reasoning recorded in the Moore lectures….”[154] Unfortunately, Edwards did not attempt to show that Wittgenstein’s approaches to particular questions or topics can be understood as instances of his reasoning aesthetically. Yet, in chapter three, I argued that Wittgenstein’s invention of the fictional concept of a language-game can be seen as his taking language as his object and performing aesthetic reasoning “in Philosophy” in relationship to it. But might there be other objects of which Wittgenstein sought to give his readers new grammatical pictures? Perhaps, in this work, I have considered one such object: It seems that, in the Moore passage, Wittgenstein took moral reasoning itself as his object and hinted at a novel grammatical picture of it, inviting us to notice likenesses between moral reasoning and the kind of reasoning that occurs in conversations about works of art. It has been my task to identify and explore some of those alleged likenesses.

[154] Edwards, 131.

# LIST OF REFERENCES

## LIST OF REFERENCES


Abrams, Natalie and Michael D. Buckner, eds. *Medical Ethics: A Clinical Textbook and Reference for Health Care Professionals*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1983.

Ackerman, Terrence F. and Carson Strong. *A Casebook of Medical Ethics*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Arras, John. "Nice Story, But So What?" In *Stories and Their Limits: Narrative Approaches to Bioethics*. Edited by Hilde Lindemann Nelson. New York: Routledge, 1997.

Barrett, Cyril. *Wittgenstein on Ethics and Religious Belief*. Cambridge: Blackwell, 1991.

Brandt, Richard B. *Ethical Theory: The Problems of Normative and Critical Ethics*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1959.

Cavell, Stanley. "Excursus on Wittgenstein's Vision of Language." In *The New Wittgenstein*. Edited by Alice Crary and Rupert Read. New York: Routledge, 2000.

Chambers, Tod. "What to Expect from an Ethics Case (and What It Expects from You)." In *Stories and Their Limits: Narrative Approaches to Bioethics*. Edited by Hilde Lindemann Nelson. New York: Routledge, 1997.

Crary, Alice. "Introduction." In *The New Wittgenstein*. Edited by Alice Crary and Rupert Read. New York: Routledge, 2000.

Day, William and Victor J. Krebs. "Introduction: Seeing Aspects in Wittgenstein." In *Seeing Wittgenstein Anew*. Edited by William Day and Victor J. Krebs. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Day, William. "Wanting to Say Something: Aspect-Blindness and Language." In *Seeing Wittgenstein Anew*. Edited by William Day and Victor J. Krebs. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Diamond, Cora. "Eating Meat and Eating People." *The Realistic Sprit: Wittgenstein, Philosophy, and the Mind*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991.

Edwards, James C. *Ethics without Philosophy: Wittgenstein and the Moral Life*. Tampa, FL: University Presses of Florida, 1982.

Elliott, Carl. *A Philosophical Disease: Bioethics, Culture, and Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1999.

Glock, Han-Johann. *A Wittgenstein Dictionary*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1996.

Hacker, P.M.S. *Wittgenstein on Human Nature*. London: Phoenix, 1997.

Horn, Peter. *Clinical Ethics Casebook*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2003.

"It's Over, Debbie." *JAMA* 259(2) (1988): 272.

Klemke, E.D. "Wittgenstein's Lecture on Ethics." *Journal of Value Inquiry* 9 (Summer 1975): 118-27.

Litwack, Eric B. *Wittgenstein and Value: The Quest for Meaning*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2009.

MacIntyre, Alasdair. *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984.

Malcolm, Norman. *Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Memoir*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984.

Monk, Ray. *How to Read Wittgenstein*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company Ltd., 2005.

_____. *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*. New York: Penguin Books, 1991.

Moore, G.E. "Wittgenstein's Lectures in 1930 – 1933." In *Classics of Analytic Philosophy*. Edited by Robert R. Ammerman. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965.

Mulhall, Stephen. *On Being in the World: Wittgenstein and Heidegger on Seeing Aspects*. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Putnam, Hilary. *Pragmatism: An Open Question*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell,1995.

Stern, David G. *Wittgenstein's* Philosophical Investigations*: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Tolstoy, Leo. *The Gospel in Brief*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 2008.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *The Blue and Brown Books*. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1965.

_____. *Culture and Value: A Selection from the Posthumous Remains*. Edited by G.H. von Wright. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1998.

_____. *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief*. Edited by Cyril Barrett. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966.

_____. "A Lecture on Ethics." *Philosophical Review* 74 (1965): 3-12.

_____. *On Certainty*. Edited by G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1972.

_____. *Philosophical Investigations*. Edited by P.M.S. Hacker and Joachim Schulte. Singapore: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2009.

_____. *Philosophy of Psychology – A Fragment*. Edited by P.M.S. Hacker and Joachim Schulte. Singapore: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2009.

_____. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1981.

_____. *Zettel*. Edited by G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967.

## VITA

Woods Nash is married to Kristen Cantwell Nash, who is a Family Nurse Practitioner. They have a daughter, Luna Brooks Nash, who was born in 2011.

Woods was born to Mary and Mike Nash in Glasgow, Kentucky in 1981. He has an older sister, Catherine, and a younger brother, Will. He was raised in Glasgow, attended Glasgow High School, and graduated *summa cum laude* from The University of the Cumberlands in 2004, where his Presidential Scholars Research considered the "religionless Christianity" of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. In 2006, he completed an M.A. in Philosophy at The University of Tennessee. His thesis was "Ethics in Times of Plague: Home Care, Obligations to Treat, End of Life, and Public Policies." Also at UT, in 2008, he completed an M.P.H. with a concentration in Health Policy and Administration. For the past three years, he has worked for Bridge Refugee Services, Inc. in Knoxville.