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Sam Matthew von Mizener
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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Sam Matthew von Mizener entitled "The *Tractatus* as an Ethical Deed: Seeing and Feeling the World "*Sub Specie Aeternitatis*." 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 Holt, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Richard Gale, Allen Dunn, Richard Aquila, Kathleen E. Bohstedt

Accepted for the Council:

Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

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

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John Nolt, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:

Vice Chancellor and Dean of
Graduate Studies

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The *Tractatus* As an Ethical Deed: Seeing and Feeling The World "*Sub Specie Aeternitatis*"

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

Sam Matthew von Mizener
August 2006

Dedication

All that is good, right and true in this work is dedicated to my wife and son, Natalya and Valerii. They have spurred me on in ways that I never imagined. It is because of them that this work has heart.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the patience and perseverance of Professor John Nolt. He gently dragged me through this whole process. My committee members, Professor Richard Aquila, Professor Kathy Bohstedt, Professor Richard Gale, and Professor Allen Dunn have offered me invaluable comments and criticism, and at rather late notice! Thanks also to Ann and Susan for sharing their cigarettes with me every time I quit.

I am also deeply indebted to my friend, mentor, and sometimes father figure, Mark Potts. On many occasions he would listen to me go on and on about Wittgenstein's "ethical deed", and what this might mean. His intelligence and keen insight made this work better than it otherwise would have been.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge a debt of gratitude to the late Professor Barbara Humphries. While I was a graduate student at Wayne State University she made me realize that "I don't understand" is a perfectly good answer to many questions. I have tried to keep alive her principle that Philosophy teaches us how to think better, so that we can more easily recognize that frequently we do not know what we are talking about.

Abstract

The *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus* is primarily the expression of a transcendental perspective with respect to language and the world – "viewing the world *sub specie aeterni*" (6.45) – that has an aesthetico-ethical aspect to it – "feeling the world" *sub specie aeterni* (6.54). Interpreting the *Tractatus* in this way enables me to explain, in a way that no other interpretation of his early work has (1) why Wittgenstein regarded the *Tractatus* as an "ethical deed" or has having an "ethical point"; (2) how his 'propositions' about the connection between language and the world are nonsense but at the same time intelligible; (3) how his 'propositions' about value, ethics and *Das Mystische* are nonsense but at the same time intelligible; (4) why he identifies ethics with aesthetics and what this means; and (5) why "resolute" or "austere" readings of the *Tractatus* are fundamentally wrong. Viewing or contemplating the world "*sub specie aeterni*" or as a "limited whole" (6.45) is to view it as a collection of all the facts and *at the same time* to take an aesthetico-ethical perspective with respect to the world. It is in this sense that Wittgenstein regards ethics and aesthetics as identical. The aesthetico-ethical aspect of this perspective amounts to our "feeling the world as a limited whole" (6.54). What it means to "feel" the world in this way cannot be given any descriptive meaning, and is indeed characterized by Wittgenstein as " the mystical", but there are certain experiences that point toward it. According to Wittgenstein, it is our sense of wonder that the world *is* that is the quintessential mystical experience. And it is in virtue of taking the transcendental perspective on language and the world that the mystical "shows" itself (6.522) in this way. Thus, "seeing the world aright" (6.54) is to see it from the "right" perspective both logically and aesthetico-ethically.

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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The early work of Ludwig Wittgenstein is designed to enlighten us not so much with any philosophical theses, but by bringing us to a perspective that transcends (in a way to be characterized shortly and fully developed in this work) the world and the language we use to represent or describe the world[1]. The chief aim of Wittgenstein's *TLP* is to get us to see the "world aright" (6.54). I argue that seeing the world in the right way is to see it from its limit, according to Wittgenstein. The transcendental perspective is the view of the world "*sub specie aeternitatis*", or, synonymously, "as a limited whole" (6.45).

This perspective with respect to the world has an aesthetico-ethical dimension to it that is, in the end, quite mystical[2]. On my view, the aesthetico-ethical aspect of this perspective is a concomitant of our seeing the world as being comprised of facts—and these being all the facts. Indeed, to see the world as a "limited whole" or "*sub specie aeternitatis*" is to take up an extra-perspectival view with respect to both descriptive

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[1] For brevity I shall refer to this world when talking about Wittgenstein's transcendental perspective, but it must be kept in mind that his view is a view of all possible worlds. Thus, Wittgenstein's perspective transcends all possible worlds and all representational or descriptive language. By "possible worlds" I mean every possible collection of facts in this world – the different ways in which the actual world might be. I am not reifying possible worlds.

[2] William James gives four characteristics of mystical experience, but only two of these features are relevant to the experience of *Das Mystische* in the *Tractatus*: (1) "Ineffability" and (2) "Noetic quality". Wittgenstein makes clear that "the mystical" is inexpressible, or, in James's language "ineffable". But there is also a quality of *knowing* in Wittgenstein's mysticism, a quality that makes such a state more than purely emotional. Indeed, if a mystical state is merely an emotional state, then it is nothing more than a psychological fact about us, and thus is a fact in the world like any other. James Writes: "[Mystical] states are states of insight into depths of truth unplumbed by the discursive intellect. They are illuminations, revelations, full of significance and importance, all inarticulate though they remain" (*Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 414-415). Although I am uncomfortable with the idea that we are apprehending "unplumbed truths", there is something right about the idea that our experience *of* the mystical must be more than just an emotional state for Wittgenstein: "There is indeed the mystical, it shows itself". The mystical "shows itself" in our "feeling" the world at its limit. We have insight into something about which nothing can be said according to Wittgenstein.

language and the world. Precisely what this perspective comes to, and how and why Wittgenstein thought that an aesthetico-ethical attitude emerges from a treatise on the logic of our language is the central topic of my dissertation.

Both the logic of any possible language and ethics are, according to Wittgenstein, "transcendental" (6.13 and 6.421). And in his *NB* he remarks: "ethics does not treat of the world…ethics must be a condition of the world, like logic" (p. 77). One of the implications of ethics being transcendental and a condition of the world is that it seems to have almost nothing to do with what we usually take ethics to be about – that is, with our actions *in* the world. Instead, ethics appears to be tied up with a perspective or attitude toward the world. There is in the *Tractatus* a disconnection between the facts *in* the world and ethical value. And this disconnect appears to turn ethics and value into something wholly irrelevant to our lives. There is some truth in this on Wittgenstein's admittedly peculiar view of ethical value.

On the other hand, Wittgenstein claims that "the good life is the world seen *sub specie aeternitatis*" (*NB*, p. 83). The problem, then, is reconciling how it can be the case that ethics "does not treat of the world" while at the same time "the good life" results from what I am calling Wittgenstein's transcendental perspective with respect to the world. How, given the disconnection between ethics and the world, are we to understand the expression "the good life" here? Is it a way of living or merely seeing the world? Or is it perhaps both?

Absolute Value and Ethics versus *ethical* Judgments in the World

There is a distinction that needs to be made immediately, and that must be kept in mind throughout this work. When Wittgenstein's says that ethics is transcendental he does not have in mind particular actions and behaviors we deem "good" or "bad" in our everyday conversations; he is not referring to ethical judgments made about facts in the world. We can obviously talk about *ethics* in this sense; in fact, Wittgenstein frequently (and sternly) moralized to his favorite pupils (Drury and Malcolm for example). It is only when it comes down to the very nature or 'essence' of ethics or more generally value that we cannot speak. Wittgenstein comes closest to capturing the way in which he approached the ethical in his *TLP* in his "Lecture on Ethics"[3]. There he talks about value in an "absolute" versus a "relative" sense. We will fully investigate what he is driving at by this distinction in part (b) of chapter three. Whatever else it might be, value in an "absolute" sense cannot be contained in the world, and is itself mystical. For now, it is enough to notice that when he speaks of ethics and value in his *TLP* he has in mind something like the "absolute" sense he refers to in his *LE*; ethics and value in *this* sense cannot be articulated.[4] In short, when I talk about Wittgenstein's view of "ethics" I mean the stance that he takes in the *Tractatus* regarding what I have been calling the transcendental perspective on the world: it is ethics and value in this sense that is shown and cannot be said.

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[3] Which was delivered to the Heretics Group in 1929/30.
[4] To say "*this* sense" makes it sound as if he defines it – he doesn't; rather, he alludes to it via certain mystical experiences.

I contend that Wittgenstein's "good life" amounts to a kind of quietism *in* the world that results *from* our seeing the world from the transcendental perspective. This is why he says: "the good life is the world seen *sub specie aeternitatis*" (*Ibid.*). This way of seeing the world is primary, and results in a renunciation of just this or that collection of facts in the world being significant, important, or having value in an absolute sense. But it is not a complete resignation, since it involves a working on oneself; one strives to accept the world just as it is.

The practical 'ethic', if this is what it can be called, that falls out of Wittgenstein's perspective is for us to fit into the mold of the world and not to attempt to mold the world to fit our life. In the end, the transcendental perspective results in an *attitude* to the world as a "limited whole". This attitude is a kind of stoic asceticism. This is an oversimplification, but it at least begins in the right direction.

Wittgenstein is not making descriptive (or quasi-descriptive) claims about the nature of value or ethics in the "sixes" of his *TLP*[5]; rather, he is imploring, inviting[6], and directing us to see that the right perspective on any language-world relation 'leads' to an aesthetico-ethical attitude toward the world. The perspective that Wittgenstein is trying to get us to appreciate cannot be *said* because it does not consist of truths; it is not propositional[7]. The 'propositions' of the *TLP* that deal with *Das Mystische* are not

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[5] Many years later, in a conversation with Friedrich Waismann, Wittgenstein said: "In ethics, one constantly tries to say something that does not concern and can never concern the essence of the matter" (*Wittgenstein and The Vienna Circle*, p. 68).

[6] Alan Dunne suggested that it is perhaps more appropriate to see Wittgenstein's pronouncements about ethics, value, and the mystical as "invitations", not imperatives, to see the world in a different light. I think he is right here.

[7] This is not quite correct. On a contemporary view many of Wittgenstein's remarks (especially concerning his "model theory" of language) can – and I think should – be interpreted as metalinguisitc truths. For example, Wittgenstein's talk about what a name means: "A name means an object. The object is its meaning" (3.203). Now if this is 'true', it is not a truth that can be articulated within our picturing language

gestures toward *truths* that cannot be said, but instead serve as directives or invitations whose function is to get us to take a very particular attitude toward the world.

"Ethics and Aesthetics are One" (6.421): The View "Sub Specie Aeternitatis"

In what follows I take seriously Wittgenstein's suggestion that "ethics and aesthetics are one" (Ogden, 6.421) and try to make sense of his oracular pronouncement that "contemplating the world as a limited whole" is to view it "*sub specie aeternitatis*" (6.45) and that "the good life is the world seen *sub specie aeternitatis*" (*NB*, 7.10.16). Indeed, I try to connect Wittgenstein's view of the ineffability of semantics with what I call his aesthetico-ethical perspective on the world. Wittgenstein's *TLP* was taken by "his family and friends as an ethical *deed*, which *showed* the nature of ethics"[8] (p. 24) .[9] But

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at all. Such remarks are closer to being metalinguistic truths about the function of certain terms or expressions within Wittgenstein's picture theoretic view of descriptive language. The same can be said about Wittgenstein's pronouncements on the nature of the proposition: "A proposition is a picture of reality" (4.01). Clearly Wittgenstein thought that this latter claim was right or true, but it cannot be *said* in an object language (which, for Wittgenstein, consists only of contingent propositions that picture possible facts in the world).

[8] Janik and Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna*: Simon and Schuster; NY: 1973.

[9] There are some who think that quoting what Wittgenstein's "family and friends" had to say about the book is a mistake. Richard Gale, for example, thinks this is a dangerous business because such lay-people are not qualified to comment on what Wittgenstein's work does or does not express. After all, how can they know what it is all about given that they are not trained in Philosophy? I would say, and I think that Wittgenstein would agree, that rather than impeding their judgment, this better qualifies them to judge the *ethical point* of the book. This is *not* to say that an analysis of the more technical parts of the work such as a discussion of the nature of "simples" or "objects" is not better left to academic philosophers. This is also not to say that one can get the ethical thrust of the work without having a clue about what Wittgenstein means by meaningful language – i.e., his "picture theory". Be that as it may, there is independent evidence that Wittgenstein thought that he had written an ethical book (not a book on ethics): Wittgenstein wrote to von Ficker that the "point of the book is an ethical one". Finally, one should keep in mind that Wittgenstein thought that Paul Engelmann, an architect by trade, best understood the main thrust of the *Tractatus*. Engelmann was not a trained philosopher, and understood the book to be deeply ethical (*Letters from Ludwig Wittgenstein, With a Memoir*, 1967).

exactly what is the 'nature' of ethics on Wittgenstein's view and just how is its nature *shown* in his *Tractatus*? Janik and Toulmin never make this clear.[10]

Now if Wittgenstein's work is (in some sense) an ethical deed and if ethics and aesthetics are (in some sense) one, then it is plausible to take the *TLP* as an aesthetic deed or has having an "aesthetic point" as well. So the book is an aesthetico-ethical deed? But what can this mean?

First, the identity of ethics with aesthetics is not an identity of *subjects*, but is instead best interpreted as an identity of perspectives. I argue for this in Chapters Three and Four. The "steps" of Wittgenstein's ladder are all designed to make "manifest", "show", or "indicate" that the proper *perspective* with respect to the world – the vista from which the world is seen "aright" – is one that contemplates the world from the outside, as it were.[11] It is this perspective that I will sharpen and defend throughout this work. On my view, the main point of the *Tractatus* is to get the reader to "view" and "feel" the world as a "limited whole" (6.45). Second, I argue that according to Wittgenstein it is this perspective that imbues the world with value, meaning, or significance in something like an absolute sense. And it is in virtue of this perspective on the world that the *Tractatus* can be considered an aesthetico-ethical "deed". But how, exactly, does Wittgenstein lead us to this transcendental perspective in the first place?

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[10] To be sure, *Wittgenstein's Vienna* is a fine book. It shows that Wittgenstein's was concerned with far more than just figuring out the foundations of logic, the meaning of logical propositions, and how language is able to say anything about the world. And Janik and Toulmin do so by filling in his Viennese heritage. But nowhere do they satisfactorily explain how a treatise on logic is at the same time an ethical deed

[11] The idea that Wittgenstein is taking us to a transcendental *perspective* reflects on the way in which vision or visual immediacy works as a metaphor in the *Tractatus*. The visual immediacy of this extra-perspectival view overleaps abstract reasoning with a non-inferential apprehension – we are instead "shown" how to look at, see, or contemplate the world. Thanks to Alan Dunne for his help in bringing this point to the foreground.

I contend that the 'propositions' of the *Tractatus* function in one of two ways: either as meta-linguistic assertions about the connection between descriptive language and the world or as directives or invitations to see and feel the world in a certain way. Most of the 'propositions' of the *TLP* (from the "twos" to the "fives" roughly) are best interpreted as meta-linguistic assertions as to how to see the connection between language and the world in the right way. This perspective is, in the end, the most literal kind of meta-view one can take because it is at the very limit of any possible descriptive language and any possible world. Moreover, on my view the ultimate function of these meta-linguistic assertions is to pave the way for seeing "the world aright" (6.54) from *both* a logical and an aesthetico-ethical perspective.

We will discover that the best way to interpret the role that language plays in the "sixes" of the *TLP* is to compare it to the way in which an aesthetician or an art critic uses language. One of the ways in which an aesthetician or an art critic uses language is in an exhorting, directive,[12] and invitational manner, so as to focus our attention on certain features of an object, thereby causing us to see it as having value in something like an absolute sense. Analogously, Wittgenstein uses language in the "sixes" to direct our attention to the limits of the world, thereby enabling us to see the world as having, if anything does, absolute value. The details on the two ways in which the 'propositions' of the *TLP* function will be fleshed out in chapters two and four, respectively.

[12] I recognize that an art critic might very well use language in other ways as well. She might simply describe a work of art. But a directive or invitational use of language is common as a way of getting someone to look at an object (be it a painting or a mountainside) in a different light.

It should be clear that on my reading of the *TLP* Wittgenstein is attempting to express more than merely the negative conclusion that language cannot say (describe) what it is that's really important. A major part of my project is to determine not just why he regarded logic and ethics as "transcendental" (6.13 and 6.421 respectively), but why he thought that a treatise primarily on the connection between descriptive (or representational) language and the world is simultaneously an aesthetico-ethical view on the world.

A proper understanding of Wittgenstein's transcendental perspective entails investigating his distinction between saying and showing. On my view whatever is 'seen' from the transcendental perspective is "shown", and cannot be said in anything like a descriptive sense. Indeed, all of the 'propositions' of his work serve to show or "elucidate" (6.54) his transcendental view on language and the world – a "view" which cannot be communicated in anything like an ordinary way (witness Wittgenstein's despair that no one would understand him, p. 3, preface).

Recall that Wittgenstein regards both logic and ethics as "transcendental". It appears that both ethics and logic are shown in the generic, uncontroversial, but somewhat technical sense that their nature cannot be articulated because neither of them are 'subjects' that describe states of affairs in the world that can be "pictured" or "modeled" (*gebildet*).[13] But do they have more in common than that? In answering this

[13] A.B. Worthington rightly points out that the "usual interpretation" of why ethics is inexpressible is "not the argument presented in Wittgenstein's text." According to Worthington the "usual interpretation" goes something like this: "Sentences acquire meaning by picturing facts and ...ethics is therefore ...incapable of expression in language because it is non-empirical and therefore non-factual" (p. 15). Worthington points out that the "non-factual" status of ethical claims is *not* what renders ethical propositions "inexpressible", but is instead Wittgenstein's identifying ethics as being "non-accidental" (at 6.41) that renders ethics inexpressible. Worthington argues that the "non-factual" status of ethics is not a reason to think that we

question we will need to discover why Wittgenstein thinks that "logical form" or the "form of reality" (2.18), a key feature of his picture theory of language, can only be "exhibited" and "cannot [be] expressed by language" (4.I2I), and then consider whether the "mystical" is "exhibited" or made "manifest" in a similar or very different way.

To anticipate, "logical form", dealing as it does only with those features that any descriptive language capable of representing facts in any world must share, is shown by Wittgenstein's metalinguistic assertions. As a result of the "unsayability" of the connection between descriptive language and the world, Wittgenstein draws us to the very limits of what can be said regarding the connection between any descriptive language and all possible worlds. The ethical or aesthetical aspect of this perspective is then brought into relief by our sense of the total disconnection from the world of facts that this perspective engenders. All of our feelings and attitudes *in* the world are just so many facts that make up the world. As a result of being projected out of the world and the

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cannot express ethics. Indeed, he holds that we might "turn Wittgenstein upside down and use the semantic system of the *Tractatus* as an argument for [ethical]...objects". (He has in mind something like Moore's "non-natural properties"). He suggests that we "would then start with the common sense assumption that ethical propositions do have meaning and argue a posteriori, on the strength of the semantic system of the *Tractatus*, that this can be explained only if there are ethical objects" (p 16). First, I have no quarrel with Worthington's point that nowhere in the *TLP* does Wittgenstein explicitly argue that the inexpressibility of ethics is the result of their non-factual status. He is right in thinking that Wittgenstein's argument for the inexpressibility of ethics occurs in 6.41: The non-contingent or "non-accidental" nature of value (ethics) is why we cannot express ethical propositions. All and only contingent or "accidental" propositions can be pictures of states of affairs in the world. But ethics, whatever else it is, is necessary and "non-accidental", and necessary propositions (of whatever kind) cannot picture states of affairs in the world. However, it seems obvious (to me anyway) that a consequence of the "non-accidental" status of ethics and value *is the impossibility* of there being ethical 'propositions' that picture reality. And since it is only contingent facts that can be pictured by propositions, it follows that ethics does have a "non-factual" status. So the "usual interpretation", even if it is not explicitly stated in the *TLP*, is at least a consequence of ethics and value being, according to Wittgenstein, non-contingent; that ethical propositions cannot picture facts is a consequence of the "non-accidental" status of value. Second, and more obviously, it seems perverse to attribute to Wittgenstein anything close to Moore's "non-natural properties". "Turning Wittgenstein's (*Tarctatrian* semantics) upside down", although possible, is surely far from a charitable reading of the *TLP*. Moreover, why Worthington would criticize an interpretation on the grounds that it is nowhere explicitly in the text, and suggest, in its place, a possible interpretation of the text that is not even implicit in it is beyond me.

language we use to describe or represent the world, we apprehend that value in an absolute sense cannot belong to anything *in* the world, but can only attach – if indeed it can be said to 'attach' to anything – to the world seen under the aspect of eternity. What gives the world its meaning, significance, value, sublimity is our *feeling* it as a "limited whole." This is the paradigmatic experience of the mystical according to Wittgenstein.

Logical form or the form of representation is shown via Wittgenstein's metalinguisitc assertions. And what is shown is the purest connection between descriptive language and the world. The aesthetico-ethical aspect of the perspective on the world is in turn shown via his directive and invitational use of language near the end of the *Tractatus* as a result of our having seen how the picture theory of language takes us to the very limit of descriptive language and the world.

It is essential that the reader appreciate that I am ultimately concerned with demonstrating that Wittgenstein's transcendental perspective encompasses both the logic of our language *and* ethics/aesthetics/value. In addition to being a thinker who took ethics very seriously, Wittgenstein was a logician. To focus only on the cryptic 'claims' he makes on value, ethics, and the mystical, and ignore his obsession with how language is able to picture the world, is just as lopsided as focusing solely on Wittgenstein the logician, brushing aside the "ethical point" of his work.

Indeed, Janik and Toulmin are guilty of focusing too much on the ethical dimension of Wittgenstein's early work, to the exclusion of investigating why he thought that logic is also "transcendental" and inexpressible.[14] To be fair, however, given just

[14] This point is made nicely by Hodges in his *Transcendence and Wittgenstein's Tractatus* (1990); see especially pages 11-12.

how lopsided the treatment of Wittgenstein had been in the other direction (the "Frege-Russell" direction), Janik and Toulmin's focus on the Viennese Wittgenstein is excusable.

To be sure, I think that tracing the influence of Karl Kraus and, to a lesser extent, Leo Tolstoy, is important as a way of demonstrating that before he wrote the *Tractatus* the idea that value is best shown through silence (Kraus) and that the inexpressible is more than mere nonsense (Tolstoy) was very much a part of Wittgenstein's way of approaching anything having to do with the significance, value, or meaning of life and the world. I argue for this in chapter one.

But even more important than the idea of giving equal weight to logic and value in the *Tractatus*, is to understand that Wittgenstein regarded his rather peculiar stance on value as *a concomitant of* his perspective on language and its relation to the world. Put differently, Wittgenstein thought that getting clear about how the logic of any descriptive language is shown (or reflected) in any world is what brings out the aesthetico-ethical point of the *TLP*.

At any rate, while it is true that there is throughout Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* an unbridgeable gap between fact and absolute value, this is better put as a gap between (1) facts and (2) the logic of any language *and* absolute value. And it is the latter that can only be shown. Both seeing and feeling the world in the "right" way requires a kind of meta-view; a view of the world "*sub specie aeternitatis*." And, at least according to

Wittgenstein, when we view the world from this perspective, we see also feel it as having absolute value.[15]

The transcendental perspective encompasses the ultimate way in which any language is able to represent any world. A complete model of the actual world is nothing more than a catalog of all the facts there are: "The world is everything that is the case" (1). But if any world is no more than a collection of all the facts there are, and if none of these facts can have value in an absolute sense, then the only place for absolute value to as it were take hold is at the very limit of any possible world. The aesthetico-ethical aspect of the transcendental perspective is appreciated only when we contemplate language and the world at their limit (6.632 and 5.633). Such contemplation includes both "viewing" and "feeling" the world "*sub specie aeternitatis*" (6.45).

In chapter two I argue that Wittgenstein's perspective on the ultimate language-world relation requires interpreting many of his 'propositions' as a kind of meta-language. His assertions *say* in a metalanguage what cannot be said in the language of contingent propositions that picture reality. But wouldn't this be a transgression of the saying/showing distinction? Only if we think that what can be shown cannot be said in *any* type of language at all! Of course on Wittgenstein's view a higher-order language is an attempt to say what can only be shown according to the letter of what is to count as meaningful language in Wittgenstein's *Tractatrian* semantics.

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[15] But "must" we feel the world as having value at all? Can't someone (like Bertrand Russell for example) see the limits of language and the world without also feeling the world in this peculiar way? The answer has to be "yes." There is certainly nothing in the transcendental perspective on language and the world that *causes* us to marvel at the existence of the world or feel the world as a "limited whole." I am not even sure that we could say that someone who doesn't feel the world in this peculiar way is missing something. But I am pretty confident that Wittgenstein thought that seeing the world from its limit ushers in this feeling for some of us – it did for him at least!

But wouldn't Wittgenstein reject outright any higher order language as impossible? Let me say for now that Wittgenstein *is* using a higher-order language to *say* what, in the end, he thinks can only be shown; though Wittgenstein would not put it this way.

For now it is enough to note that on this interpretation what can be said about the world must be said in a single language consisting of all contingent propositions; propositions that picture the world, truly or falsely, and which are all "of equal value" (6.4) – which is to say that contingent propositions that picture possible facts are equally valueless. Within the *Tractarian* framework there is no "sayable" meta-language. According to Wittgenstein nothing can be said outside of the one language; that is, outside of propositions that are pictures of the way the world is or might be: "A proposition states something only insofar as it is a picture" (4.03). To think that we could *say* something meaningful outside this language is tantamount to claiming that we can go beyond language and the world. Thus, on my view his meta-linguistic assertions are quite literally a way for him to *show* or make manifest what language (picture) and the world (pictured) must have in common in order for the former to be able to say anything at all about the latter.

Now the fact that the only things we can say are contingent propositions implies that any value that we find in the world, i.e. in some state of affairs obtaining or not obtaining, whichever the case may be, must be contingent and hence "accidental" (6.41). And this shows us, Wittgenstein thinks, that there can be no place for absolute value *in* the world. The meta-linguistic view shows us that the proper way to view the world as being ethically significant and meaningful is to see it as a "limited whole" (6.45). And

this just means that in taking such a perspective we come to see that the world as a whole is "limited" in the sense that a list of all the contingently true propositions is all that there is to the world regarding its descriptive meaning. There is nothing more to say about the world and thus there is nothing to *say* about the value or meaning of life and the world.

In chapter three I argue that Wittgenstein's transcendental perspective does not require a subject that stands as it were at the limit of language and the world. Wittgenstein colorfully refers to the metaphysical subject as being at the limit of the world in terms of both the logic of our language (5.632) and ethics – with respect to ethics he refers to the subject as the "willing subject" (*NB*, p. 79). The influence of Schopenhauer's talk of both the "pure" and the "purely knowing subject" is evident in Wittgenstein's view of the "limits" of the world and in establishing the aesthetico-ethical aspect of this perspective as one that is will-less and timeless.

On my view neither the metaphysical subject nor the willing subject need to be reified, but are instead better thought of as two different aspects of the transcendental perspective. My view does not commit Wittgenstein to a subject that stands outside or at the limit of language and the world. One might think that a transcendental perspective requires a transcendental subject. It does not. Too many philosophers refer to something like a "metaphysical self"[16] when they try to explicate Wittgenstein's view from the limit

[16] James C. Edwards, for example, writes: "the metaphysical self that proceeds from the world viewed *sub specie aeterni* is the willing subject" (*Ethics Without Philosophy*, 1982, p. 89). Now Wittgenstein, especially in his early *NB*, does write as if there were a willing subject over and above individual subjects in the world, but I think that this is his way of talking about an attitude that we, as individual or empirical subjects, can take to the world as a whole, an attitude that, in the words of Edwards, "infuses [the] world with an ethical aspect" (p. 89). And Allan Janik writes: "the subject as willing…is the noumenal in Wittgenstein's early writings" (*Essays on Wittgenstein and Weininger*, p. 43). Finally, Michael Hodges thinks that Wittgenstein is committed to a "transcendental subject" or what he sometimes calls an "ethical subject" that lies outside the world and "makes ethics possible" (*Transcendence and Wittgenstein's Tractatus*, pp. 108-109).

of the world. Such an approach is not in keeping with Wittgenstein's Spartan ontological commitments.

But a huge problem still remains: even if we interpret Wittgenstein's 'propositions' as meta-linguistic instructions and assertions as to how to look at the relation between language and the world, what *sense* can we make of Wittgenstein's transcendental perspective manifesting or exhibiting "*Das Mystische*?" How does his perspective point to the world's having value, meaning, or significance in an absolute sense? Put differently, how do his meta-linguistic descriptions of language and its connection with the world (if that is what they are), illuminate his perspective on ethics (value) and the world? Is any attempt to say anything about what he is trying to get us to see regarding value impossible? And how does this perspective show that "there is indeed the inexpressible?" (6.522)

I must admit that the insights about value and meaning in the *TLP* are veiled in a way that the insights regarding language and its connection to the world are not. Put another way, the things that are "shown" about the logic of language and the world are not nearly as mysterious as how *Das Mystische* is supposedly manifested in the world. I have said that the ethical aspect of Wittgenstein's perspective is a concomitant of his view on the ultimate connection between the logic of our language and the world. Simply stated, the ethical dimension of Wittgenstein's transcendental perspective is made manifest once we see that nothing *in* the world can have value in an absolute sense. But how does this work? And what does it mean to say that the world as a "limited whole" has value in an absolute sense? Can any sense be given to this? This is by far the most difficult and tenuous part of my thesis. In seeing the world as a "limited whole" we are

also brought to "feel it as a limited whole" (6.45) according to Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein identifies the mystical with a "feeling" or sense of the world: It is to sense the existence of the world as a miracle. To appreciate that there is something rather than nothing is ultimately what confers absolute value, if anything does, on the world: "aesthetically, the miracle is that the world exists" (*NB*, p 86). In his *LE* he writes: "If I want to fix my mind on what I mean by absolute or ethical value…one particular experience presents itself to me which…is…my experience *par excellence*…[and that] "when I have it *I wonder at the existence of the world*" (p. 68). And in the *Tractatus* he writes: "It is not *how* things are in the world that is mystical, but *that* it exists" (6.44).

In chapter four I say more about what these remarks are meant to illuminate, and suggest that the mystical experience *par excellence* results from our taking up the transcendental perspective with respect to the world. For now it is enough to see that Wittgenstein points us toward what absolute value 'means' by relating particular experiences of his. This suggests that some will come to feel the world as having absolute value and some will not depending on whether or not the transcendental perspective 'leads' them to "feel" the world in the way characterized. Indeed, regarding such experiences, Wittgenstein says that "this is an entirely personal matter and others would find other examples more striking" (*LE*, p. 68). Thus, this leaves room for those people who do not "feel" the world in any way at all.

In order to see that the transcendental perspective has an ethical aspect to it we must understand the connection between "viewing the world as a limited whole" and "feeling the world as a limited whole" (6.45). There is both an objective (but not conceptual, more like a pure seeing) and a subjective (affective) aspect to the

transcendental perspective. My suggestion here is that seeing or viewing the world as a "limited whole" is that aspect of the perspective that deals with the logic of our language, and that feeling the world as a "limited whole" is the ethical aspect of the perspective – it is the attitudinal dimension of the perspective. But both aspects are tied up with seeing the world "*sub specie aeternitatis*" (6.45). It is my contention that Wittgenstein is suggesting that there is something about *seeing* or *viewing* the relation between the logic of our language and the world from "the point of view of eternity" that simultaneously is – at least for some – an experience *of* the mystical. We marvel that there is a world at all. As Wittgenstein says in his *LE*: "I wonder at the existence of the world" (p. 68). The Transcendental perspective, then, incorporates both an objective (pure seeing) and a subjective (affective) view of the world as a "limited whole". The best way to make sense of this is to interpret such a perspective as being a kind of aesthetico-ethical perspective on the world.

Nonsense is Nonsense:[17] Or is it?

Many philosophers have seen more than an air of paradox in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. Philosophers like Cora Diamond ("Throwing Away the Ladder; How to Read

[17] In Chapter Five we will see that that some commentators (Cora Diamond and James Conant especially) divide nonsense into two categories: "resolute (or "austere") nonsense" vs. "substantial nonsense". The new Wittgensteinians (Conant, Diamond, and Warren Goldfarb) think that Wittgenstein's early (and late) work is concerned primarily with demonstrating that all nonsense is resolute, and that Wittgenstein engages his readers in disguised nonsense to get them to stop misusing language in the way that metaphysicians before the *TLP* did. There is absolutely no room in a 'resolute' reading of the *TLP* for the distinction between saying vs. showing, or for gleaning from the text an aesthetico-ethical view of the world. With some qualifications, my own view is that the *TLP* is engaging in "substantial nonsense". And for now this means only that Wittgenstein is trying to show us something about both language and the world that cannot be expressed by contingent propositions.

the *Tractatus*"[18]) think that the book cannot be read at face value.

Wittgenstein claims, on the one hand, that the "thoughts expressed" in his work are "unassailable and definitive" (Preface, p. 4), and, on the other hand, claims that his propositions are "nonsensical" to those who have "understood" him (6.54). But how can we understand anyone who is speaking nonsense? How can thoughts be "definitive and unassailable" but nonsensical at the same time?

Even more generally, if what "can be shown cannot be said" (4.1212), how can anyone *say* anything at all about what Wittgenstein is trying to *show* us? One might wonder how any project that purportedly gives an account of a perspective that is at the very limit of language and the world, and that somehow points toward the inexpressible and absolute value, can even get off the ground.

On their view (e.g., Cora Diamond, James Conant, and Warren Goldfarb) Wittgenstein is not trying to get us to appreciate some sort of aesthetico-ethical perspective on the world as a whole: any interpretation of the *TLP* that pretends to be more than the clarification of scientific claims broadly construed is just plain nonsense. Such a view is pretty popular and chapter five is devoted to showing that it is mistaken.

I argue against those Philosophers (above) who think that Wittgenstein's 'propositions' are, quite literally, nonsense, *and* that Wittgenstein himself was mainly trying to demonstrate that *nothing* is retained (no ultimate perspective on the world) by us once the ladder has been discarded. Their shared view of Wittgenstein's early work is variously termed "resolute" or "austere" in that they think that he was determined to demonstrate that nonsense is nonsense, pure and simple: there is no such thing as

[18] Printed in Diamond's *The Realistic Spirit*: 1991

"substantial nonsense". Diamond and Conant argue that the saying/showing distinction itself – thought by many to be crucial in understanding Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* (and indeed by Wittgenstein himself on my view!) – is just another bit of nonsense that Wittgenstein wants to see "thrown away". Unlike these so-called "new Wittgensteinians, I do not regard the task Wittgenstein set himself as purely negative: Wittgenstein was not *only* concerned with drawing a limit to sense and nonsense. Once the ladder has been discarded, we are to take away with us an aesthetico-ethical stance or attitude toward the world, and this stance results from our seeing the world "*as a limited whole*". It is this affective aspect of his perspective that it is the ethical point of his work.

There is an immediate problem that faces anyone interpreting Wittgenstein in an "austere" way. In order for their position even to get off the ground, they need to suppose that certain of Wittgenstein's statements are not straightforwardly nonsensical; Diamond and Conant distinguish the "frame" – i.e., the preface, and the concluding remarks – as instructions on "how to read" the *Tractatus*.[19] "The frame" is not nonsense. I will show that helping themselves to some of the claims of the *Tractatus* as meaningful, while rejecting (most) of the others as disguised nonsense, is, in the end, arbitrary and eccentric.[20] Indeed, Diamond argues that Wittgenstein is trying to get the reader to engage with him in "imaginative nonsense" in order to ultimately reveal that nothing has been said, shown, or in any way pointed to, other than the negative claim that all of traditional philosophy is disguised nonsense. This is all that Wittgenstein intended by his

[19]Diamond in her article "Ethics, Imagination, and Nonsense in The *Tractatus*, printed in *New Wittgenstein* (2000), and Conant in his paper "Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein, and Nonsense", printed in *Pursuits of Reason; Essays in Honor of Stanley Cavell* (1993).
[20] P.M.S. Hacker makes a similar point in his "Was he trying to whistle it?"(*New Wittgenstein*: 2000).

pseudo-propositions according to Diamond and Conant.

Their reading of early Wittgenstein makes much of what he says ironic or tongue in cheek: a view not at all in keeping with the gravity with which Wittgenstein approached ethics and life generally. What's dismissed is a serious effort to interpret Wittgenstein's early work as an ethical perspective on the world. This project consists, I shall argue, in putting forward a transcendental perspective on the world "as a limited whole".

I contend that there is *something* that he is trying to *show* us, but it is *something* about which *nothing* can be *said* in descriptive language. And nothing can be said not because Wittgenstein is pointing us towards ineffable truths, but rather because his whole ethical project is geared towards getting us to view the world at the limit of what can be said. My position is that there is a perspective that Wittgenstein is leading us to in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. He is attempting to acquaint us with something *ineffable;* but it is not "truth" (for truth, if we have it, can be said).[21] He is putting forward a perspective that is at the very limit of the world, and he attempts to bring us to this perspective through the use of a one-time metalanguage.

The main benefit of my interpretation, even if it is ultimately wrong, is that it tries to give an account of both Wittgenstein's view of the logic of our language and his

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[21] If the "new Wittgensteinians" are committed only to the conclusion that Wittgenstein does not leave us with any *unutterable truths* once we have thrown away the ladder, then I agree with them, but with this qualification: such truths are unutterable *once* we apply Wittgenstein's picture theory of language since nothing can be said that is not a picture of a possible fact. But this leaves open the possibility of truths in a higher order language; and they are ineffable according to the picture theory of language (I discuss this point in chapter five when I consider Jaakko and Merrill Hintikka's view that Wittgenstein's picture theory is an ineffability theory of semantics. At any rate, the "new Wittgensteinians" never consider that perhaps Wittgenstein's notion of seeing the world "aright" is more than simply seeing what we can and cannot do with descriptive language, and that it is the view of the world as a limited whole – the world seen under the

perspective on value (and the mystical more generally) by taking seriously his claim that both are shown (4.121 and 6.522, respectively) and that both are transcendental (6.13 and 6.421, respectively). It also takes seriously his 'claim' that "Ethics and aesthetics are one" (6.421).

Other approaches have been rather lopsided in one of two ways: either one adopts too positivistic an account, like the "New Wittgensteinians", whose views I critically examine in chapter five, which is really out of character with the spirit of Wittgenstein's work and cannot even account for the "sixes", or one attempts to make sense of his very oblique and cryptic comments on ethics and the meaning of life (what's really important for him) *exclusively* within the framework of his views on the relation between language and the world, ignoring what he has to 'say' about "ethics", and anything having to do with absolute value generally.

The first alternative entails ignoring all the mystical elements of the *Tractatus*, what he has to say in certain passages of his early *NoteBooks (1914-1916)* that made their way into his *Tractatus*, and his avowal that what *is most important* is what "cannot be said".

The second alternative – what I will call the "logician's approach" (the Hintikkas, for example) – is respectable as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough in that it leaves the "Sixes" of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* completely empty of all content. Furthermore, it requires extending the saying/showing distinction to the point of vacuity, and, in the end, still leaves us wondering how that which is outside of language and the

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aspect of eternity – which we are to take away with us once the ladder has been discarded. Such a view of the world (a "world-view" quite literally) is not truth-valued at all.

world – what's "higher" (ethics, and value generally) – is made manifest in any way, *even* through a perspective on the world. This second alternative does provide a way of showing how ethical language is senseless, but it does so based on the more general theme that Wittgenstein regards all semantics as ineffable (Hintikka, Merrill and Jaakko: 1986). On this view the ultimate ineffability of the language-world relation merely encompasses any purported 'claims' about the *meaning* or *value* of life and the world as a whole.[22] Since ethical language or the language of value falls under the purview of the ineffability thesis of how language is connected to the world, the claim is that ethics, value, etc., are 'subjects' about which we must remain silent. While it is not incorrect to interpret Wittgenstein so conservatively, it cannot give any positive account of how the mystical shows itself in the world. It leaves us wondering: "What reasons do we have for thinking that the mystical manifests itself in the world at all?" (6.522)

And so I hope to demonstrate how my interpretation of what Wittgenstein is attempting to get us to see is an improvement over those commentators who attribute *some* meaning to his mystical pronouncements, but fall short of finding anything close to a perspective that ties together his view of ethics and the logic of our language. Again,

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[22]For now, it is enough to note that it is only those attempts to try to say wherein the ultimate sense of the world or the meaning of life consists that he regards as hopeless On the other hand, there is no trouble grounding particular valuings *in the world*. For example, the intrinsic value of an object or an event for a particular individual can always be explained by reference to a person's own inclinations and desires, which will include relevant bits of the individual's history and psychological make-up. Moreover, even something as general as the value of having experiences can be accounted for in the world. Perhaps one values those experiences that afford pleasure. Or, more likely, what we value are *lived* experiences, as I think Nozick makes clear with his example of the "experience machine" (*Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, pp.42-45: 1974). But we can always ask, again and again, why we should *value* anything? And the answers to this question will be something like "it is a brute fact about human beings that we value life" or "we are simply the kind of beings that find "living" life – having a range of experiences – to be worthwhile". The spade is turned here; and it turns *in* the bedrock of the world. Such valuing is not what Wittgenstein has in mind, for it *can* be articulated and ultimately reduced to facts about us. Absolute value and meaning, however, cannot be explained by appeal to the facts in the world, however brute they are.

the reason why so many have fallen short here is because they have failed to connect "showing" in the logic of any language to Wittgenstein's admittedly peculiar sense of the ethical via seeing the world *under the aspect of eternity*. Attributing the transcendental perspective to Wittgenstein is an attempt to do just this. My interpretation is therefore an improvement over other philosophers who regard Wittgenstein's saying/showing distinction as key to understanding his theory about how the logic of our language connects to the world, and who attempt to wrest *some* meaning from his mystical pronouncements, but who, relying so heavily on logic, language, and its relation to the world, ultimately fail to capture the real spirit of Wittgenstein's early work.

Wittgenstein's ultimate vision in the *Tractatus* is to show us that "seeing the world aright" (6.54) is very closely tied to willing it in the right way. (I will explain what I mean by "right willing" in chapter three.)[23] Put another way, when we see the world in the right way we are led to take up the right attitude toward the world. This is yet another way of saying that the transcendental perspective has two aspects: a kind of pure objectivity or seeing the world under the aspect of eternity and an affective aspect – a sensing or "feeling the world as a limited whole" (6.45). And for Wittgenstein the right perspective on language and the world is absolutely essential in getting us to adopt the

[23] My interpretation of Wittgenstein's perspective as will-less is rather paradoxical. To anticipate a problem that I deal with fully in chapter three, let me say that on my view Wittgenstein's perspective is, in part, aimed at getting us to want in the right way. He seems to be committed to a cessation of willing in the world, will that is attached to some object or fact in the world. In this sense his transcendental perspective is will-less. However, he also, at least on my view, is trying to instill in us an attitude toward the world as a whole. This requires will, but it is will directed at the whole world, not some part of it. Thus, with respect to this or that aspect of the world or some fact in the world, Wittgenstein's perspective is will-less, but insofar as he is trying to bring about a particular attitude in us toward the world as a whole, will is required. Finally, there is a sense in which willing can never vanish, for to attempt to cease willing or to *try* to be free of desire, requires will.

right (ethically speaking) attitude toward the world. Thus, one might say that seeing and feeling the world in the right way are two sides of the same coin for Wittgenstein.

Wittgenstein's theory of just how language is related or connected to the world is at the same time the vehicle by which he expresses his mystical outlook on, if you like, what is "higher" (6.42). As he says, his model theory of language "draws" a "limit…to the expression of thought…in language" and "*what* lies on the other side of the limit will be simply nonsense" (*TLP*; p 27, my emphasis).

Notice that the last sentence is ambiguous: it can be given either a positivist or "new Wittgensteinian" (we will see that there's not much difference between the two) spin or it can be given a more Kantian (via Schopenhauer) interpretation. I think that the latter is more in keeping with the spirit of Wittgenstein, in both his work and his life. Notice Wittgenstein writes that "*what* lies on the other side of language will be simply nonsense", and not, more *resolutely* or *austerely*, that "*nothing* lies on the other side" or "there is nothing that lies on the other side" of language. One would think that a thinker as fastidious as Wittgenstein would have made it clear that there simply is *nothing* about which nothing can be said. But instead we have the suggestion that "that which lies" on the other side of language cannot be expressed through language.

It is this more natural – albeit far more mysterious – reading that is ignored by the positivists and the new Wittgensteinians. And if we take Wittgenstein to mean what I think he means then his entire project looks more like an attempt to draw the limit of language in order to make room for *Das Mystische*. Again and again we will see that there is far more evidence, from Wittgenstein's own mouth, from those who knew him best (Engelmann), from pre-Cambridge intellectual influences (especially Kraus), and

from an examination of all that is quintessentially Viennese in him, that he is far closer to Schopenhauer than he is to Schlick or Carnap. In his attempt to show that the most significant features of life and world are those about which we must remain silent, Wittgenstein has been seriously misinterpreted. I am sure that the following aphorism from Kraus's *Beim Wort Genommen* (1955) would have resonated with Wittgenstein: "It is better not to express what one does mean than to express what one does not mean" (p.121). The logical positivists and the new Wittgensteinians have taken Wittgenstein to "express" what he "does not mean", instead of leaving what he was trying to show us as both vital and inexpressible.

Now whether Wittgenstein would have approved of my calling his ultimate perspective on the logic of our language and value a "transcendental perspective"[24], likening his use of language in the "twos" and "threes" to a meta-language, and suggesting further that the use he makes of language in his veiled references to ethics, value and *Das Mystische* is similar to the directive use of language in aesthetics I cannot say—he probably wouldn't have liked it. (He might just hate it!) In any event, the really substantive part of this thesis is to make perspicuous such a perspective. And I cannot help believing that such a perspective best *expresses*, in so far as anything at all can be 'expressed' here, Wittgenstein's ultimate stance once the rungs of the ladder have been discarded.

[24] I have already remarked (see p. 2) that Wittgenstein considered both logic and ethics to be "transcendental" (6.13 and 6.421, respectively). So perhaps Wittgenstein wouldn't have thought that I am that far off the mark.

Let us now attempt to discover where Wittgenstein first got his idea that value is something that can only be shown, and not said, and that value demands silence. He most certainly did not derive such ideas from Frege or Russell.

From Frege and Russell he got the tools to demarcate the line between sense and nonsense and lighted on a method to forever (so he thought) draw a line between factual language and everything higher. But for the initial insights into silence, showing, and the inexpressible we need to turn to Karl Kraus and Leo Tolstoy.

CHAPTER ONE

Silence, Showing, and Value; The Influence of Karl Kraus and Leo Tolstoy

Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* is both an enigmatic and bold treatise on the limits of the expression of thought as well as being, on my view, (an even more enigmatic) expression of an ethical outlook with respect to the world.[25] It is enigmatic because the reader has to fill in the arguments for himself. In fact, 'arguments' is too generous; the claims made in it are more like oracular pronouncements than anything resembling reasoned positions. This is especially true when it comes to anything having to do with value or, as Wittgenstein writes, with what is "higher" (i.e., ethics, aesthetics, value, the meaning of life, God, *and* Logic—although he does 'say' a good bit about the latter). The work is audacious because in it Wittgenstein takes himself to have shown, once and for all, that "the problems (of philosophy) have in essentials been solved" (preface, p 29).

He believes that his own theory of how language "pictures" the world provides the solution by drawing the boundary between sense and non-sense. Pre-*Tractatus* metaphysicians were really producers of problems and confusions since they would try to articulate views (whether ethical, religious, or philosophical) that were quite beyond the bounds of sense or meaning, but not because such claims transgressed our knowledge, but rather because they sinned against the logic of our (any) representational language. It

[25] C.K. Ogden's translation of the *Tractatus* is considered to be the most accurate. Indeed, Wittgenstein, Ramsey, and Moore all helped him with it. In addition, it has the German text on the left, so that the English can be checked against it. Finally, I like the fact that Ogden renders "unsinnig" as "senseless", and not as "nonsense". The importance of this will be seen later, when I critically evaluate Diamond's (and other's) "austere" interpretation of the *Tractatus*. For these reasons I shall primarily use the Ogden text. However, the Pears and McGuiness translation is also excellent and I will occasionally use it as well.

is no wonder Wittgenstein is referred to as a "Kantian with a vengeance." 'Claims' that do not fall under Wittgenstein's model theory of language are pseudo-propositions: this includes propositions of logic, ethics and aesthetics (and value generally), as well as the propositions of the *Tractatus* that talk about these 'subjects'. For Wittgenstein, the really important areas are those that fall under the "mystical" – under what cannot be said, but only shown. His letter to von Fricker (October 1919) makes abundantly clear the two main points of his *TLP*:

> ...My work consists of two parts: the one presented here plus all that I have not written. *And it is precisely this second part that is the important one.* My book draws limits to the sphere of the ethical from the inside as it were, and I am convinced that this is the ONLY *rigorous* way of drawing those limits. In short I believe that where *many* others today are just *gassing*, I have managed in my book to put everything firmly into place by being silent about it...(*LLW*, pp. 143-4, my emphasis).

No doubt these comments and Wittgenstein's recommendation to Von Fricker to first read the preface and conclusion of the *Tractatus* made everything clear to the editor! At the very least we have Wittgenstein's testimonial that the importance of the work lies in what cannot be said. And what cannot be said (described is better) is anything having to do with value and the *very means by which* Wittgenstein tries to get us to see the world "rightly" (6.54); that is, the very 'propositions' of the *Tractatus* itself are – on his own theory – not genuine propositions. Such 'propositions' do, however, *show* us something about the nature of the language-world connection and what it is to take an aesthetico-ethical view of the world.

A key point here is to appreciate that Wittgenstein's propositions reveal or "show" what they do in virtue of what they try to *say*. P.M.S. Hacker is right when he says: "The *Tractatus* does not show what it is to make sense – it tries to *say* what it is

(namely to agree and disagree with the possibilities of the obtaining and non-obtaining of states of affairs: *TLP* 4.2). And since, according to the *Tractatus*, one cannot say what cannot be other than it is, the endeavour to spell out the essential nature of sense inevitably transgresses the bounds of sense" ("Wittgenstein, Carnap and the New American Wittgensteinians", p. 1). Ethics, aesthetics, and philosophy itself (including the very claims made by the author of the *TLP*) are simply areas about which nothing can be *said*, and Wittgenstein's propositions reveal that nothing can be said here by '*saying*' what it means for a proposition to make sense. On my view Wittgenstein's propositions are higher order remarks that say a great deal. Wittgenstein's propositions, then, are not pure nonsense. He is able to do much with them. But I anticipate myself here.

My thesis is that Wittgenstein's early work, by drawing a limit to what can be said, reveals that the "right" way to view the world, both logically *and* ethically, is from a transcendental perspective. The topic of this work is precisely what this appreciative view or stance is and how he arrives at it.

Avoiding Missing the Forest for the Trees (specifically the branches of logic and math): The Importance of Pre-Tractatus Influences

Wittgenstein's "picture" (or "model") theory of how language reaches out to the world is fairly intuitive (even if the details are not). According to Wittgenstein, in order for language to be meaningful it must represent, model, or "picture" reality: "A picture is a model of reality" (2.12); "A picture depicts reality by representing a possibility of existence and non-existence of states of affairs" (2.201); and, "a proposition states

something only insofar as it is a picture" (4.04). What we can glean from these pronouncements is that meaningful propositions are pictures of possible facts. Wittgenstein is talking only about *descriptive* language, and whatever can be described could be other than it is. What's pictured, then, is a contingent fact and is thus either true or false (4.023). Thus, all meaningful statements are bivalent.

Finally, a meaningful statement or proposition must represent a possible state of affairs. This permits Wittgenstein to accommodate meaningful *false* propositions. A statement need not be true in order for it to be a picture of reality: The picture can be right or wrong, true or false, and yet still be a "model of reality" (2.12). What is excluded from counting as meaningful language is the language of ethics and value generally (6.42), as well as the propositions of the *TLP* (the significance of these 'propositions' is discussed in chapters two and four). Thus, the propositions of the *Tractatus* and ethical propositions are nonsense ("...it is impossible for there to be propositions of ethics" 6.42) because such propositions cannot picture a possible state of affairs.[26]

We can straightaway see that Wittgenstein's "model theory" of representational or descriptive language goes some way in formally explaining why he thinks that some things cannot be said— they cannot be pictured. However, his model theory of language

[26] This needs some clarification. To say that normative claims cannot be expressed by propositions means that when we utter a normative claim the resulting proposition cannot be a picture of the way the world is or the way it might be, and thus is not, on Wittgenstein's view, a proposition at all. This does not imply, however, that people cannot attach a sense to our words. This is a psychological matter and not a logical one. For example, in claiming that "torturing puppies for fun is wrong", I have not expressed a proposition because no fact is depicted (according to Wittgenstein). But this does not mean that no sense at all can be attached to my utterance. A utilitarian will take the claim in one way, an emotivist another way. But for all that, no proposition has been expressed. Wittgenstein would reject any such normative 'theory' as telling us what ethics comes to.

does not explain the smattering of cryptic remarks he does make about those areas that cannot be touched by his critical philosophy.[27] As Yanik and Toulmin (1973) aptly note:

> After some seventy pages apparently devoted to nothing but logic, theory of language and the philosophy of mathematics or natural science, we are suddenly faced by five concluding pages (propositions 6.4 on) in which our heads are wrenched around and we are faced with a string of dogmatic theses about solipsism, death and 'the sense of the world' which 'must lie outside the world.' (*Wittgenstein's Vienna*, p. 23)

Thus, to begin with the Tractatus leaves more than an air of mystery as to why Wittgenstein thinks there is anything to be gained by discovering that what is really important is beyond sense, and that his ensuing silence is meant to put his ethical point in sharp relief. Indeed, it is too easy to dismiss the mystical bits of the Tractatus as poetic fluff (witness logical positivism), thereby dismissing all that Wittgenstein thought to be really important as trivial, insignificant, and even vacuous. To be sure, it is enough on the picture theory of meaning to respond to those who try to say something about the meaning of religion or ethics with the admonishment that they have failed to "give sense" to the words they use (6.53). But a reproach such as this is too negative in that it leaves one wondering what the point of all of Wittgenstein's strained and torturous gesturing amounts to. It leaves one puzzled as to why Wittgenstein's road to ultimate silence is so elaborate. Most importantly, with such a simple silence, how can we ever get at the ethical point of the *Tractatus*? Thus, it is absolutely essential to *say* a great deal about Wittgenstein's strained gesturing if we are ever to see what he is attempting to show us.

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[27] "Model" theory is better than "picture" theory for the following reason. According to Wittgenstein, he acquired the idea of how language connects with the world when he read about a court case in Paris concerning a car accident. Small models of cars and people were used to show the relative positions of the cars and the people that were involved in the accident. "Model", unlike "picture", suggests that language is projected onto three-dimensional situations in the world, whereas the latter term intimates a flat two-

The gestures and what they reveal is the really important part of Wittgenstein's early work. Stressing the difference between Wittgenstein and the logical positivists, Engelmann aptly notes:

> Positivism holds – and this is its essence – that what we can speak about is all that matters in life. *Whereas Wittgenstein passionately believes that all that really matters in human life is precisely what, in his view, we must be silent about.* When he nevertheless takes immense pains to delimit the unimportant, it is not the coastline of that island which he is bent on surveying with such meticulous accuracy, but the boundary of the ocean (*LLW*, p. 97).

It is the mystical seas that we must attempt to navigate if we are to do justice to his work. And the best way to do this is to closely follow Wittgenstein's voyage. If we begin with the *Tractatus* we will not see the need to understand why Wittgenstein thought that anything of any importance is shown by our need to *try* to say what cannot be said. And we can get a better understanding of how showing is Wittgenstein's answer to what cannot be said by investigating the tremendous influence of Kraus, and, to a lesser extent, Leo Tolstoy. Moreover, we must keep in mind that Wittgenstein regarded the urge to say what cannot be said as a tendency in human beings that is very important (this is clear in his *LE*).

That Wittgenstein thought that our tendency to attempt to say what can't be said is important can be seen in his remarks about solipsism in his *TLP* and in his *Lecture on Ethics*. At 5.62 Wittgenstein writes that what "solipsism *means* is quite correct, only it cannot be *said*, but it shows itself". This suggests that Wittgenstein thought that some nonsense leads to valuable insights without our being able to directly state what those insights are. For example, the notion that the only thing that exists is my mind and the

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dimensional inert image. Moreover, the German "Bildung" can be rendered as either "picture" or "model".

contents of my mind is shown in the sense that the world is through and through not only representation – "the world is the totality of facts, not things" (1), and it is the proposition or thought that represents facts – but *my* representation, and thus "my world" (5.62). Solipsism, then, gives us the world as pictured.[28] And it is clear from his *LE* that he thinks our attempts to get at the essence of ethics is really an attempt "*to go beyond* the world and that is to say beyond significant language", and that he "respects deeply such a "tendency" and "would not for [his] life ridicule it" (p. 296).

Two points are in order here: first, it is clear that Wittgenstein thinks that something important is achieved in *trying* to say what cannot be said; and, second, the nonsense that results from our trying to articulate the very thing that is ethics shows us that the nature of value or the meaning of life cannot be put into words at all. And he intimates that this is as it should be: "I see now that these nonsensical expressions [e.g., the feeling of being absolutely safe or wondering at the very existence of the world] were not nonsensical because I had not yet found the correct expressions, but that their nonsensicality was their very essence" (Ibid, p. 296). And so it is at least apparent that he

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So "model" seems best.

[28] What Wittgenstein thought solipsism "shows" goes beyond the scope of my project, but I should like to draw the readers' attention to a passage that suggests that Wittgenstein thought that solipsism leads 'us' to the world as pictured or represented when he says… "Solipsism, strictly carried out coincides with pure realism. The I in solipsism shrinks to an extensionless point and there remains the reality co-ordinated with it" (5.64). Here we see that the "I" about which Wittgenstein speaks or rather doesn't speak, is, on some understandings of solipsism, a receptacle for all my thoughts, disappears on Wittgenstein's view. It vanishes with the world as pictured, since it cannot be characterized, represented, or pictured at all. It just disappears, and is like Schopenhauer's "clear mirror of the world" (*WWR*, Vol. 1, p. 152). I should like to investigate Wittgenstein's remarks about what his brand of "pure realism" amounts to. I suspect that it is fairly close to Schopenhauer's transcendental idealism. But this is a future project.

does think that some very profound things can be meant or pointed to or in some sense "shown" by our attempting to say what cannot be said.[29]

Without understanding the importance of trying to say what cannot be said it is difficult to understand and appreciate why Wittgenstein thinks that in our attempt to point beyond language we are pointing to something rather than nothing. It is no wonder that the logical positivists thought that the reason why there is nothing to say is because there is nothing *there* to say anything about. But this is not Wittgenstein's view. Rather, Wittgenstein's position is that the limits of our language show us something that cannot be articulated. And all of what he writes in the *TLP* is designed primarily to elucidate this important insight. All of this is missed if one begins with the Tractatus.

Indeed, Janik and Toulmin advise us to investigate "the issues which occupied the center of (Wittgenstein's) mind by looking, rather, at the ideas and writers he was already familiar with, before he ever turned to Frege for help and advice" (P. 28). By taking such a tack we will be better equipped to understand the *Tractatus* as having primarily an

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[29] Indeed, many of the valuable insights that Wittgenstein makes in his later philosophy (in the *BB* and *PI*, for example) are the result of his showing us that what we are tempted to say in many cases – at least when doing philosophy – is wrongheaded. But in order to appreciate what Wittgenstein is doing in his later work we must *first* be tempted to investigate certain problems in the wrong way (as Wittgenstein himself thought he had done in his *Tractatus*). We cannot fully understand or appreciate why Wittgenstein claims that description must replace conceptual analysis without first seeing that conceptual analysis leads to a disconnection between language and the world: "language goes on holiday." For example, unless we are first tempted to provide an analysis of what it means to be in pain, we cannot see the value of describing the various contexts in which we say "p is in pain". Wittgenstein was himself aware that people would read him as denying that pain is an inner state, and even Ryle's "logical behaviorism" is an attempt to articulate Wittgenstein's insights about what it means to be in pain or some other mental state in terms of behavioral dispositions, and thus into a philosophical *theory* of mind. The idea that pain is an inner process or event that is in need of a public criterion or that pain behavior is more often than not the expression of an inner state is Wittgenstein's way of saying that we cannot talk about pain, as some inner, occult state, independent of the expression of that state. So Wittgenstein is neither a Cartesian nor a logical behaviorist. The point of this rather long digression is that Wittgenstein's insights here cannot be grasped without our first being moved by a philosophical urge to provide a theory of, in this case, mind and mental states or processes. The result of this urge is, in the end, confusion and nonsense, according to Wittgenstein. But it is necessary to travel down that road. And this in itself is a valuable insight.

ethical point. There is simply no way to make sense of this reading if we begin and end with him as an admittedly strange Cambridge philosopher of language and logic. This point is made again and again in *Wittgenstein's Vienna*. And it is a point that is succinctly made by his friend Paul Engelmann, who knew Wittgenstein as well as anyone could know the man: "... We do not understand Wittgenstein unless we realize that it was philosophy that mattered to him and not logic, which merely happened to be the only suitable tool for elaborating his *world picture*"[30] (*LLW*, p. 96, my emphasis).

The fact that Engelmann reads the *Tractatus* as "elaborating a world picture" is yet more evidence that Wittgenstein is trying to get us to appreciate a *Weltanschaung* and not simply and only drawing the line between sense and nonsense. We want to discover not only why Wittgenstein thought that drawing the line between sense and nonsense (and between what can be said and what can only be shown) makes his work an "ethical deed", but what significance the smattering of cryptic remarks on ethics and value is supposed to have. What is the point of these remarks? Wittgenstein thought that through his work he could satisfy what Engelmann calls the "eternal metaphysical urge" by showing us that what we want to say cannot be said (Ibid, p.96). In a letter to Engelmann, thanking him for the poem by Uhland[31], Wittgenstein writes: "The poem by Uhland is really magnificent. And this is how it is: if only you do not try to utter what is unutterable

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[30] Here I think Engelmann exaggerates slightly, for the logic of language was a central concern of Wittgenstein's. For Wittgenstein, coming to see the nature of the logic of our language and its relation to the world is what constitutes a worldview (and one that involves an aesthetico-ethical perspective as well). But is it wrong to say that Wittgenstein used logic (or the logic of language) simply as a tool to elaborate this world-view. The logic of any language is constitutive of such a perspective.

[31] Monk summarizes Uhland's poem nicely: "['Count Eberhard's Hawthorn' recounts] 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 any adornment and without drawing any moral" (*Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*: 1990).

then *nothing* gets lost. But the unutterable will be – unutterably – *contained* in what has been uttered" (*LLW*, p.83). So my job is really to discover, if I can, what is "unutterably contained" in the TLP.

Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin: The *Tractatus* as an "Ethical Deed"

Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin formed an alliance in their masterful work, *Wittgenstein's Vienna* (1973). In it they paint a picture that is very different from the (then) standard view of the author of the *Tractatus* as a rather eccentric Viennese logician whose main (only!) influences were Frege and Russell, and whose chief concern was to articulate the meaning of the propositions of logic and demonstrate how the logic of any language is related to the world. This is indeed a very lopsided view.

The notion that Wittgenstein's early work was an "ethical deed" was either completely missed or simply ignored by most thinkers until the publication of *Wittgenstein's Vienna* (1973). Wittgenstein was seen as being chiefly concerned with how language manages to represent states of affairs or situations in the world. The idea that the main purpose of his book was to provide a critique of the logic of any language in order to forever stop the mangling of ethics, aesthetics, and value generally, by showing that any purported analysis of such 'subjects' could only result in nonsense, was missed by most thinkers. Although this is less true of Russell, it is certainly true of Frege[32], the logical positivists, and many others. It wasn't until Paul Engelmann published his *Letters*

[32] Frege, according to Wittgenstein in one of his letters to Russell, did not "understand a word" of the *Tractatus* (*Ludwig Wittgenstein; Cambridge Letters*: von Wright: 1995).

From L.W. with a Memoir (1967) that both Janik and Toulmin got some hard evidence that Wittgenstein's philosophical problems concerned cultural and philosophical issues in Vienna, as much as they did Russell and Frege's concerns with logicism. Janik, in Chapter One of his monograph *Essays on Wittgenstein and Weininger* (1985) writes that it was Engelmanm who "convinced us more than ever that our alternative Wittgenstein was the Wittgenstein that Paul Engelmann actually knew, a figure who was as passionately involved in Hertz's[33] mechanics as much as he was Tolstoian religion" (p 19). Janik and Toulmin write:

> The letters to Engelmann gave us...sufficient data to: 1) confirm our views about Wittgenstein's *general* philosophical preoccupations and their link with his personal beliefs and attitudes; 2) establish the centrality of Hertz's *Bildtheorie* for the understanding of the *Tractatus* beyond question; and 3) provide us with information about just which aspects of Viennese culture we ought to consider in order to set Wittgenstein into the proper Milieu, i.e. he directed our attention to Karl Kraus. After Engelmann's memoir, Kraus clearly had to be the focal point for any study which would link *fin de siecle* Vienna to Wittgenstein's concern for language and ethics in the *Tractatus* (p 19).

Chapter One of Janik's *Essays on Wittgenstein and Weininger* is in fact both an explanation of how he and Toulmin came to write *Wittgenstein's Vienna*, as well as a summary of that groundbreaking work:

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[33] We do know that Wittgenstein was greatly impressed by the work of H. Hertz, and that Wittgenstein was planning on studying with Boltzmann, Hertz's student, before Boltzmann killed himself in 1906 (see Hacker's *Insight and Illusion* (1972) here, pp. 2-5). In *The Principles of Mechanics* (Translated by D.E. Jones and J.T. Walley; Macmillan, London, 1899), Hertz explains that the logical structure of a scientific theory is always to picture reality: "the necessary consequents of the images in thought are always the images of the necessary consequents in the nature of the things pictured" (Intro., p. 1). Also, Hertz's method of reducing the number of terms in order to give an account of how any scientific theory should be set up greatly influenced Wittgenstein as well. The emphasis is on reducing conceptual confusions by showing that many of the problems scientists set for themselves are, as Hacker says, "pseudo-problems": "Hertz intended to eliminate the concept of force from mechanics as anything other than an abbreviating convenience. The only primitive notions he employed were space, time, and mass. By displaying the logical structure of the theory, he dispelled the illusion that physicists had not yet been able to discover the true nature of force" (*Insight and Illusion*, p. 4). The parallel to Wittgenstein's method of showing us that many philosophical problems are conceptual confusions and thus "pseudo-problems" is striking.

> Our central thesis is presented in Chapter Six, "*The Tractatus Reconsidered: An Ethical Deed*". That chapter aims at establishing the connection between Wittgenstein, the committed Viennese intellectual, and Wittgenstein, the philosopher who wrote the *Tractatus*. What precedes, Chapters Two to Five, consists of continually narrowing foci which helped to establish that there was indeed a Viennese context in which writing a book about what *could only be shown and not said could be construed as an ethical deed* (p 21, my emphasis).

Much of my first chapter, then, is an analysis of the work of Karl Kraus with a view to understanding what it means to see value as something that is shown and that the apprehension of it demands silence. It is hard – almost impossible – to see how the so-called 'doctrine' of showing in the *TLP* is connected to value in anything like a positive way. Ultimately, I want to see if I can unify Wittgenstein's saying and showing theme in both logic and ethics. Wittgenstein certainly thought that both logic and Ethics (including value, aesthetics, and the Meaning of life) were shown. Did he think that they were both shown in the same way or are they just lumped in the same category by dint of their unsayability? That is, are there very particular ways in which each is shown or are both logic and ethics shown only in the general sense that neither can be said? If they are shown in particular ways, how different are the ways in which each is shown? Such questions are not, to my mind, resolved by the work of Janik and Toulmin.

I begin with Karl Kraus for the following reasons. First, Kraus continually tried to keep separate factual discourse from anything having to do with value (ethics, aesthetics, etc.). Second, it was Kraus who made so much of the idea that the best way to make an ethical point was to remain silent. Finally, Kraus tried to live his life in such a way that his insides matched his outsides. He tried to live as he wrote: simply and honestly, without pretense or hypocrisy. In this respect, he was a living example for Wittgenstein as well as for many other Viennese intellectuals and artists.

Wittgenstein and Karl Kraus

The influence of Karl Kraus on the early Wittgenstein is seen in both the form (aphoristic and spartan) and the content (separating value from facts) of the *Tractatus*. Indeed, Janik and Toulmin write: "the central notion that unifies the life and work of Karl Kraus is… the 'creative separation' of the two spheres of factual discourse and literary artistry" (pp. 87-88). The same can be said of Wittgenstein's approach to fact and value, only the separation is an absolute separation of factual discourse from both the logic of any descriptive language and value. At any rate, given that Wittgenstein's early work was read, at least by those who knew him best, as an "ethical deed", we can get a better understanding and appreciation of just what this means by examining the work of Vienna's foremost critic of culture, character, and language (most especially language).

J. P. Stern has written of Kraus's *Die Fackel* ("The Torch"), the journal that the latter wielded with such consummate skill against all forms of moral hypocrisy that "to delimit the intellectual region in which to place the journal, one would have to think of…the early Wittgenstein's equation of 'language' and 'world.'"[34] And in his work, *Lichtenberg: A Doctrine of Scattered Occasions*, Stern suggests:

> In appraising the intellectual link which exists between Karl Kraus and Wittgenstein it would be necessary to consider …their determination to build, each from his own vision of language, a fortress that should stand inviolate against the corruption of words and morals all around them (pp. 163-164).

[34] "Karl Kraus's Vision of Language", *Modern Language Review*, LXI, Vol. 73, p. 69:1966

Stern leaves this suggestive comment for others to pursue. Stern is right in his claim that both Wittgenstein and Kraus consider the corruption of language as a corruption of morality. But how does this happen? What is the connection between messy language and a messy moral character?

For Wittgenstein the real problem is thinking that we can express "what is higher" in descriptive language. Even Kraus, as we shall see shortly, thinks that we err when we try to say, what, through our silent actions, we show. Indeed, both thinkers hold that when anything of real value is taken as a fact or is thought of as some state of affairs to which facts are adduced, the spoiling of language and value has begun. For Kraus, the corruption of language is seen more in the hypocrisy of what men say over and against what they do. The hypocrisy goes unnoticed, Kraus thinks, because people no longer see the essential distinction between the language of facts and commerce, and everything trivial, on the one hand, and the world of art, morality, and value more generally, on the other hand.

Die Fackel was far more than a satirical journal, but was instead an uncommon tool, sharpened to a razor's edge in the hands of Karl Kraus, with which he tried to affect change in the world. Karl Kraus, like Wittgenstein, was warning people who would listen. And the way he warned them was through his satire, which was always a critique of language. Indeed, Harry Zohn points out that Wittgenstein himself, in his *TLP*, "comes to the conclusion that all philosophy is a critique of language" (*Karl Kraus*: 1971, p. 62).

With some misgivings, we can conclude that Wittgenstein most likely regarded Kraus as a kindred spirit.[35]

For Kraus, as for Wittgenstein, a person's character was exhibited by his use of language. For Wittgenstein, ornament of any kind, especially in philosophy, was taken as a sign of, at best, muddle-headedness and, at worst, rottenness. Kraus was also concerned with preventing the egregious error of confusing factual language with the expression of art, "fantasy", and value generally. Kraus thought it a great mistake to mix and conflate the language of facts with the expression of value or anything higher. This confusion is seen, Kraus thinks, in the smallest details of a culture:

> Adolf Loos [a Viennese Architect] and I – he literally and I grammatically – have done nothing more than show that there is a distinction between an urn and a chamber pot and that it is this distinction above all that provides culture with elbow room. The others, those who fail to make this distinction, are divided into those who use the urn as a chamber pot and those who use the chamber pot as urn (Kraus, *Werke*, Vol. III, p. 341).

Janik and Toulmin note that "Kraus here expresses his deep conviction that the sphere of values is altogether distinct from the sphere of facts" (*Wittgenstein's Vienna*, p. 89). The distinction between a chamber pot and an urn was, undoubtedly, carefully chosen by Kraus. Kraus most likely chose the distinction between the urn and the chamber pot to prevent people from fouling objects de art.[36]

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[35] It is far more likely, however, that Wittgenstein is thinking about Russell's logical critique of language than Kraus's idea that a critique of language is also an ethical deed (though I think that Wittgenstein was committed to something like this). For in the *Tractatus* at 4.0031 Wittgenstein says "all of philosophy is a critique of language (though not in Mauther's sense)". And all of this is said in the context of applauding Russell for being the first to show that "language disguises thought" (4.002). Still, I believe that Wittgenstein is committed to something very close to Kraus's idea that a critique of language results in the proper perspective on the world. But perhaps this is only suggested in Wittgenstein's work and can only come at the end of the *Tractatus*.

[36] The urn and the chamber pot are just symbols for Kraus. Throughout his work and life he was concerned with keeping art (including literature, architecture, painting, sculpture), ethics, and value more generally, free from muddy factual discourse. We will see why shortly.

Presumably, then, the cultural "elbow room" that Kraus has in mind requires, at the very least, keeping art (and value generally) separate from factual discourse: refrain from befouling culture and value with factual knowledge. Kraus uses language as a means and method of trying to make people aware of such a distinction:

> Kraus's insistence that he is trying to effect, by a polemic analysis of grammar and language, the same 'creative separation' between the sphere of reason (or fact) and that of fantasy (or value) as Adolf Loos was doing in his critique of bourgeois Viennese taste, by distinguishing merely functional artifacts from genuine objects of art, should be taken quite literally (Ibid, p.89).

Wittgenstein's overriding aim in his *Tractatus* is to keep separate the sphere of facts from the sphere of value (and all that is "higher"). Wittgenstein, unlike Kraus, attempts to do so *once and for all*, by drawing the limits of language "from the inside", and thus showing that anything we try to say about value cannot have any factual meaning (or cognitive content) or that anything that has factual sense cannot have absolute value.[37] Wittgenstein tries to accomplish this by drawing the distinction between what can be shown vs. what can be said. Indeed, his model theory of language is itself a theory that shows that all meaningful language must be a model or picture of some particular state of affairs in the world. His model theory captures the essence of the language of science. Thus, an analysis of the logic of descriptive language must come first in Wittgenstein's treatise; for it is the nature of descriptive language (the nature of the proposition) that shows that ethics and value cannot be represented at all. Kraus's use of language is limited to a critique of (then) contemporary Viennese culture only, whereas Wittgenstein has a formal method for demonstrating that nothing can be *said*

[37] However, value in a "relative" sense can be reduced to facts in the world. I discuss this sense of value in part (b) of chapter three.

about value. For Wittgenstein this project is a full stop, but for Kraus it must be an ongoing activity. What's clear, however, is that Wittgenstein is carrying out this Krausian project (of keeping a "creative separation" between facts and value) by using philosophy (in a unique way), the area in which Wittgenstein excelled.

In terms of personal character, Harry Zohn has written about Kraus (*Karl Kraus*: 1971):

> [He] tried to lead an exemplary life, a kind of "public life" that was intended to be blameless, wholly consistent, and almost ascetic, a life that would serve the work he was trying to do and be entirely in keeping with it…Karl Kraus's life was his work and his writings constitute his biography. With rare courage and consistency, and in marked contrast to the "timelessness" of ivory-tower poets, Kraus made himself the measure of the unworthiness of his age, of his era's moral bankruptcy. He strove to be a shining light of integrity in a morass of dubious morality, a beacon of genuineness in a sea of spuriousness (p. 18).

At the very least, Wittgenstein would have admired such a man. Indeed, Wittgenstein's own character, whether or not he was emulating Kraus, is strikingly similar. Their moral perfectionism is evinced by their constant efforts to improve themselves, the identification of their work with their own moral character, their dislike of "ivory-tower" academe, and the earnestness with which both thinkers sought to stand out from what might be considered popular morality. On this last point, one need only think of the opinion held by Wittgenstein toward the superficiality and the irreverence of his fellow students at Cambridge. Wittgenstein wanted no part of the slick and clever "Disciples" in 1913, nor could he stomach the vogue Bloomsbury bunch.

It seems to me that Ludwig Wittgenstein was no more emulating Karl Kraus than he was Adolf Loos, but rather that they were all grown in the same soil. Interestingly, von Wright notes that he and Wittgenstein discussed what Wright calls the "morphological"

or "physiognomic" similarities of thinkers; where any direct or indirect causal influence is irrelevant as far as our apprehending and appreciating such similarities. As a method in biography, Wittgenstein found such an approach "interesting" according to von Wright (*Wittgenstein: A Life*, 1982, p. 2). In fact, they discussed it frequently. So whatever similarities we find between Kraus and Wittgenstein, we can at least be confident that Wittgenstein would not object to such a method. (But still it is likely that Wittgenstein was influenced by Kraus, just as Loos was).

At any rate, turn of the century Vienna was filled with brilliant artists who used their respective crafts both as tools to criticize popular morality and art while at the same time trying their best to separate value (art, ethics, etc.) from facts. Indeed, the attack on popular morality and art, as well as the separation of value from facts, are two sides of the same coin.

This is best illustrated by Loos's architecture. Here form and function were really one. Loos saw Decorative cornices and baroque vaulted ceilings as *de trop* and wholly without value. Here the value of a building is evinced solely in its functionality. Everything unnecessary to form and function is left out. The baroque and the fanciful are separated from the value of the architecture. We can think of everything that is unnecessary to form as extraneous *facts* that detract from the building's value. (Couldn't the same thing be said about the compressed and unadorned style if Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*?) The value in architecture is streamlined: all that is unnecessary to function is excised. This removal of the unnecessary, the inessential and the irrelevant is a very "Krausian" endeavor. Kraus, owing to the different medium that he worked in, separated

fact from value in a very different way than did Loos. Let us see how Kraus accomplished this task.

The best evidence of Kraus's consummate skill in separating fact from literary pretensions is his attack on the French "feuilleton", a style of journalism that blends factual reporting with literature. It is a journalistic style that Kraus thought well at home in France, but anathema to Vienna and the German language generally. Reporting and intellectual creativity are distinct types of literary skills according to Kraus. Harry Zohn aptly notes: "Kraus objects to the blending of intellectual with informational elements, to journalists brazenly encroaching on literature" (p. 54).[38] This is exactly what the "feuilletonists" practice. Heinrich Heine, the German poet and feuilletonist responsible for bringing this form of journalism to Vienna, is credited with having "provided a great inheritance on which journalism has drawn to this day: its function as a dangerous intermediary between art and life and as a parasite on both" (ibid, p. 54). So what, ultimately, is the real danger of the feuilleton? Is it just that value, art, and intellectual creativity vitiate, good, accurate reporting? It is far more than this: "False literary material is introduced into journalism, and emptiness and corruption are given a high gloss" (ibid, p. 55). Kraus thought that the feuilleton was dangerous to language and society. Why?

[38] Similarly, we can say of Wittgenstein that he did not like philosophers "encroaching" on ethics or value. Of course, ordinary people are less inclined to think that there can be a science of values, but philosophers needed a lesson here. The *Tractatus* is, in part, that lesson.

It appears that Kraus's chief complaint against the feuilleton is that it creates a mode of expression, by combining journalism and art, which forbids an accurate appraisal of truth. Such a literary style dresses up the facts so fancifully that it is no longer clear what facts are being reported. Too much 'art' is infused into the reporting to say *what* has happened. The feuilleton, Zohn writes, "has led to a confusion of linguistic values. Everything is talked to death. If there is a streetcar accident in Vienna, they write atmospherically about the nature of streetcars, the nature of streetcar accidents, the nature of accidents in general, all viewed from the perspective 'What is man?'" (p. 54)

The Austerity of Language and Ethics: Stop All the "Gassing"!

In his epoch play entitled "The Last Days of Mankind" Kraus provides a synoptic and satirical view of the cultural climate of Vienna during the whole of WWI. There are about a thousand characters, most of whom represent the prevailing, and, according to Kraus, ridiculous view of moral progress in a time of complete horror. And Kraus's entire critique of turn of the century Vienna is accomplished by looking not at what men do, but what they say and how they say it. Max Spalter has written about this play that in it "Kraus carries through brilliantly his aim to make language the moral index of a dying way of life. A world literally talks its way to perdition" (*Brecht's Tradition*: 1967; p. 149). Similarly, Wittgenstein's letter to Ficker expresses the idea that silence is the best way to get at what is really important: "where most people today are simply gassing, I have expressed what's most important by being silent about it" (*Brenner Studien*, Vol. I, p. 28). Kraus's play, like Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, expresses the implicit idea that when

hot air and wind – "gassing" – is taken for something more, then all hope of discovering value and meaning in life is lost. This is why Kraus's characters are characterized as talking their "way to perdition". Both Kraus and Wittgenstein are telling us, Kraus indirectly through his noisy wind-making characters, Wittgenstein directly in the last line of his *Tractatus*, to shut up! Their message to us is simply that the best way to rediscover value and meaning in life is to see that nothing we can say about value and meaning can have any sense.

Both Kraus and Wittgenstein regard simple and unadorned speech as the mark of a good mind and a good character. More precisely, both considered "gassing" as intellectually and morally reprehensible. Their shared position is nicely characterized by Jaakko Hintikka in his masterful little essay "What Does the Wittgensteinian Inexpressible Express" (*The Harvard Review of Philosophy*, Vol. XI: 2003).

> Wittgenstein's leading idea was the same as Karl Kraus's. For both of them, the test case of ethical authenticity was the authenticity of language. Here, for Wittgenstein, the inexpressible internal boundaries of language that exclude what cannot be said do not have only an intellectual significance. They also have an ethical significance. They mark the limits of honest, unaffected discourse (p. 16).

Now in the context of Hintikka's work, the ethical silence is really just a result – a "corollary", as he says – of the inexpressibility of semantics. (Much more will be said of his work regarding language as the "universal medium" and the saying/showing distinction as fundamentally a theory used by Wittgenstein to demonstrate or explain his view of how the logic of our language connects with the world in chapter five). For Hintikka, both logic and ethics are inexpressible because they mark the "limits of language" (p. 16). And, according to Hintikka's Wittgenstein, we have a moral duty not to transgress those limits. Hintikka asks:

> Isn't the *Tractatus* at bottom nothing more than a sermon on the text, 'let what you say be simply "yes" and "no"; anything more than this comes from evil" (*Mathew* 5:37)? Isn't this biblical injunction echoed by *Tractatus* 4.023: 'A proposition must determine the reality so that one only needs to say "yes" or "no"'? (pp. 16-17).

I think that Hintikka is right here. He expresses very nicely the connection between intellectual and moral integrity in Wittgenstein's silence.

Hintikka, ever the conservative logician, makes no attempt to say anything more than what logic calls for. He doesn't characterize the pregnant silence of *Das Mystische* as being any different from our futile attempt to *say* what both language and the world must have in common in order for the one to be able to mirror the other. Language as the universal medium entails the impossibility of articulating the ultimate connection between language and the world. Hence, on Hintikka's view, the reason for Wittgenstein's silence concerning the mystical is no different in principle from the silence that's entailed by the view of language as the universal medium. And perhaps he is right in this. He thinks the "the semantical theory of the *Tractatus* serves ipso facto ethical purposes…[and that]… both (i.e. semantics and ethics) are inexpressible for the same reason" (p. 16). Both "mark the limits" of language. However, there is a problem with Hintikka's interpretation of Wittgenstein's silence (which will be addressed in chapter four). For now it is enough to say that Hintikka has no way of explaining what Wittgenstein means when he says that "there is indeed the inexpressible…it is the mystical" 6.522. His approach cannot give any positive account of how the mystical is "shown." Furthermore, Hintikka cannot account for Wittgenstein's (admittedly bizarre) remarks about value and "seeing the world under the aspect of eternity". This last remark seems to require some explanation. I think that more *sense* can be given to Wittgenstein's

aesthetico-ethical attitude. On my view, this perspective is the ultimate *expression* of Wittgenstein's silence. That aside, Hintikka is definitely right in seeing the similarity between Kraus and Wittgenstein as regards our intellectual and moral duty to stop blathering, (the present writer excepted).

Good Journalists Show, and do not Say

I believe that the more practical reason why Kraus denounced the feuilleton so completely has to do with the fact that it both permits moral hypocrisy to go unnoticed, and generally leads to the trivialization of value. Conflating and confusing the language of fact with matters of value can bring about not only moral hypocrisy, but it also leads to moral rhetoric. The implication here is this: if one is unable to distinguish journalism (reporting) from literature (and art), then one cannot avoid hypocrisy. For the hypocrite condones in a single breath what he disapproves of in another breath, only because of the mix of "linguistic values" he is not aware of it. On the other hand, if he is aware of what he is doing, then he can be accused either of not caring about what happens or about what ought or ought not to be happening. The feuilleton facilitates this by mixing facts and value (art, ethics, etc.), so that it is all one fiction, and no harm is ever really done, for no *events* are being reported. The following example best illustrates what I think Kraus has in mind. A reporter on the frontlines in WWI *ought* (on Kraus's view) to write only about the number of wounded, dead, the strength and plan of the enemy army, the men's morale or lack thereof, the outcome of particular battles, and whatever else constitutes relevant events related to the war. But the reporter who fancies himself an artist is apt to confuse

issues if he talks about the *honor in meeting* death *bravely*, or the men's morale flagging *though they are fighting for a noble cause.* Attempts to be fanciful or literary here obscure the events, and end up *painting* them, in this case, in too rosy a light (or just a light that is more than what is happening). After reading such an account one might well be left with the sense that the death and destruction of war is not such a bad thing in itself. Perhaps the feelings and emotions elicited by the above account are similar to what one feels when reading a novel. After all, not much good or bad can happen to characters in a novel! It was this kind of thing that Kraus was vehemently opposed to. With a literary turn of phrase one could make an awful state of affairs seem not so bleak or vice versa – one could make the event other than it is.

This should not be taken as an attack on editorializing, for Kraus did plenty of that himself. Such a blend of fact and fancy is different from an editorial in that in the former case the writer does not say that she is giving her opinion or view about what's happening, but simply characterizes it in more literary terms. In the case of our war reporter, this mixture of reporting and purple prose is like wrapping a pig in fur. We lose the pig!

Closely connected to Kraus's desire to see the feuilleton's popularity perish in Vienna is his own method of "showing" moral hypocrisy. Kraus would "juxtapose…two or more newspaper items without comment, one of [his] most frequent and most effective techniques" (Zohn, p. 51). In one of his articles, entitled "White Culture, or Why Roam Far? From a Berlin Newspaper", published in his book *Die Chinesische Mauer* (1910):

> The left-hand column carries an item from a newspaper deploring the correspondence between German girls wishing to add to their stamp collections and natives of German colonies in Africa to whom they send photos and other

> mementoes. The right-hand column contains a number of marriage ads from the same paper, all from men desirous of dowries or of marrying into a business (Ibid, p. 51-52).

Nothing needs to be said here. The hypocrisy stands out—it is *shown.* Kraus's method of showing moral hypocrisy is to use the very words that were written or spoken by the principals against them. Blathering about "ethics" is entirely useless and devalues value: "Again and again Kraus castigates the deleterious mixture of intellect and information, reportage and literature, *Tachles* (brass tacks) with *Schmonzes* (trivia), fact with fancy" (*Ibid.* p. 57). And I suggest that his preferred way of doing this is through saying absolutely nothing, but instead showing the distinction between fact and value by being silent about the distinction, while gesturing in this direction by carefully placing the words of those he considers to have transgressed this distinction in their 'proper' context. And by 'proper' here I simply mean a context in which what is said is clearly seen to be hypocritical. As Janik and Toulmin note, "less and less effort was required to expose the duplicity in the language of the corrupt: often, it was enough to quote that person's own words in *Die Fackel* without comment, and the context was enough to reveal the truth about its author" (p. 90).

Perhaps for Kraus the key element in showing is having one's words jibe with one's actions, so that one's words become, at best, otiose. Certainly one method of battling hypocrisy is to get people to stop talking about what's right and what's wrong: for then their actions cannot contradict what they have not tried to say. Zohn holds that "Wittgenstein's concept of "mystical silence" is akin to Kraus's wartime invitation to those who really had something to say in the cacophony of "patriotic" verbiage to step

forward and – be silent" (Ibid, p. 63). I believe Wittgenstein was doing just this (and more) when he joined the Austrian war effort and repeatedly sought to be stationed at the front. There were, of course, other reasons for Wittgenstein's desire to be put into the thick of the fighting, but at the very least we see here an extreme example of action, of doing, and a total silence. Interestingly, Wittgenstein never discussed with anyone his 'reasons' for going to war. There are only oblique references to finding meaning in his life by risking it in his *Notebooks (1914-1916)*.

In some of Kraus's poems and aphorisms we see his overarching goal to restore language to a kind of purity; to make it suitable as an expression of what is higher. Perhaps even, like Wittgenstein, to gesture towards what cannot be expressed within language, but what we can sense and feel through language. Janik and Toulmin are of the opinion that the purpose of Kraus's "language mysticism" was to "show the world how every statement had an unspoken moral dimension, by virtue of what might be termed its 'pre-established harmony' with morality" (pp. 90-91). What is this but Wittgenstein's notion that what is most "important" in his book is what is "not said"? And Zohn writes: "Wittgenstein learned from Kraus how to think in and through language, yet he thought *against* language—which, for him was an obstacle to thought that had to be painstakingly surmounted—whereas Kraus fought *for* language, mystically discovering thought through it" (pp. 62-63). It is true that Wittgenstein was guarding us against illicit uses of language—guarding us against speaking nonsense, and so was in this sense fighting against language. Wittgenstein, however, regarded language and thought to be of a piece. Hence, he would reject the very idea that there are "mystical thoughts" that could be "discovered" by "fighting for language": there can no more be mystical "thoughts" for

Wittgenstein than there can be a mystical "language". There are, however, mystical experiences, feelings, and perhaps even an attitude. Indeed, on my view of Wittgenstein there are certain mystical experiences that result from his transcendental persepctive. (In Chapters three and four, where I develop the aesthetico-ethical aspect of Wittgenstein's transcendental perspective, we shall see that a kind of mystical experience does seem to be part of – or perhaps a consequence of – the perspective. Experiences such as "feeling absolutely safe" in his *LE* and "feeling the world as a limited whole" in his *TLP* (6.45) seem to be consequences of his transcendental perspective on the world. But this discussion will have to wait).

It is in the unsayable or unutterable that Wittgenstein finds value and meaning; it is in the silence. What Wittgenstein is fighting for is a philosophy of language that reigns in language in such a way that we can see that there is more to meaning and value than what can be expressed. This is what he is getting at when he says at 4.115: "It (philosophy, as practiced in the *Tractatus*) will *refer to* the unspeakable by clearly displaying the speakable".[39] And this mystical appreciation is enjoyed in silence. Both Kraus and Wittgenstein are drawing a line between sense and nonsense; and, with this, keeping the language of fact separate from value. Wittgenstein is doing it systematically[40] and Kraus is doing so piecemeal, with one hypocrite at a time.

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[39] I have changed the Ogden translation somewhat: The German is "Sie wird das Unsagbare bedeuten, indem sie das Sagbare klar darstellt" (4.115). Ogden translates "bedeuten" as "means" here, and I think that this is somewhat misleading. I have translated it as "refers to", given that throughout his work Wittgenstein suggests that the "mystical", the "inexpressible", and the "unspeakable" are shown or pointed to by drawing a limit to the thinkable or speakable. What Wittgenstein thinks he is pointing us towards cannot be articulated.

[40] An Important distinction needs to be made between Kraus and Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein is not the activist that Kraus was, but not because Wittgenstein didn't feel strongly about certain things. Wittgenstein's ethical perspective is tied to "seeing" the world in a particular way, and is not concerned with an evaluation of our actions. Kraus had nothing like an ethical perspective – a "seeing" the entire

Good Philosophers Show and Do Not Say: The Aphoristic Form of the Tractatus

Kraus writes: "An aphorism need not be true, but it should overtake truth. It must get beyond it *in einem Satz*" (*Beim Wort genommen*, p. 116). Is Wittgenstein attempting to "get beyond" or "overtake truth" in his early work? Did he choose the aphorism as his mode of gesturing at what is most important because the aphorism "need not be true", or, by parity of reasoning, false? Such questions cannot be answered definitively, but it is plausible that Wittgenstein chose an aphoristic style *because* the truth or falsity of an aphorism is never what's most important in it (even if one thinks that an aphorism is, once fully analyzed or fleshed out, true or false). But given the riddling and metaphorical nature of Wittgenstein's aphoristic writing style, it is highly doubtful that anything is gained from focusing exclusively on whether his aphorisms are true or false. They serve as a kind of metaphorical splash of cold water, directly in the face. They are the perfect means for communicating indirectly what one wants someone to see. We are not to stare only at the aphorism, but beyond it. And it seems that too many philosophers have been like fetching dogs: following the pointing finger of their master not in the direction of the pointing, but back up the length of the arm of their master. Wittgenstein is imploring us to "look beyond" what he *says* for the most important part of his work is what is "not said" (Letter to von Ficker, 1919). At any rate, Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* is composed primarily of aphorisms.

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world in a particular way – in mind, and was concerned only to make men's lip service to value (in art or ethics) jibe with their actions and how they lived (or so it seems to me). Note that the person who lives honestly won't need to talk all that much about how and why his life is an honest one. (And this latter point is true for Wittgenstein and Kraus).

For example, his work begins with the avowal that (1) the world is everything that is the case. Is this true? Well, he spends a good bit of time filling in why we should accept his model theory of language. Here we will see (in chapter four) that Wittgenstein's 'propositions' are in some respects more like directives as to how to see the world from the outside, as it were. But it is also true, (as we shall see in chapter two) that many of Wittgenstein's 'propositions' are best interpreted as metalinguisitc assertions, and that with them he builds his picture theory of meaning. Still, his metalinguistic assertions serve a "higher" purpose: to project us out of any picturing language and so out of the world. In one sense, then, he gives a defense of this 'hypothesis' that the essence of language is to picture reality. But in another sense, it matters little if the model theory is ultimately justified because the oracular pronouncement here is designed to cut across or jump over the reasons why this is so.[41]

Perhaps the purpose of Wittgenstein's aphoristic writing style is, at least in part, to get us to see the world in a different way. One might say that in terms of content, the numbered passages have to be carefully analyzed in order to understand what Wittgenstein is saying, as is true in any work; but in terms of form, the aphoristic style invites us to look beyond what's said, to keep our eye on the horizon which is not, strictly speaking, part of the work.

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[41] In a letter to Lady Ottoline Russell writes: "I told Wittgenstein he ought not simply to *state* what he thinks true, but to give arguments for it, but he said that arguments spoil its beauty, and that he would feel as if he was dirtying a flower with muddy hands" (BR to OM, 15.3.12). Perhaps this only demonstrates Wittgenstein's contempt for laying out the reasons why he thought this or that claim true (which is evident in his *TLP*). But perhaps he thought that if he gave detailed arguments that the ethical point of his work – what is not said – would be lost (as it was anyway). In any even, an aphoristic style is perhaps the best way of getting us to appreciate his gestures. (My hands might be a little cleaner if Wittgenstein had not been so averse to getting his dirty).

Is this not why Wittgenstein says to von Ficker "the book will say a great deal that you want to say. Only perhaps you won't see that it is said in the book" (*Brenner Studien*; Vol I, p. 28). The reason why Ficker (or, for that matter, anyone) wouldn't "see" what's "said in the book" is not because it is hidden, but because it is not *said*. Wittgenstein is *showing* von Ficker and the rest of us that what we "want to say" about what gives life its value and meaning cannot be said, but it can be shown. And if we will just look beyond what's said in the *TLP* or take what is said there as pointing to what is most important, we will see that what we want to say is shown by Wittgenstein.

Wittgenstein and Tolstoy

I want to trace another key influence on Wittgenstein: Leo Tolstoy. Indeed, Tolstoy's approach to the felt problem of finding meaning and value in life and the world helps to illuminate why Wittgenstein regarded his own task – drawing a limit to thought and language – as an ethical deed, and as something that is shown in his work.

That Wittgenstein thought of Tolstoy as a kindred spirit is evident in a letter to Malcolm (*Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Memoir*: 1984). Wittgenstein writes about what he most likes in Tolstoy:

> You see, when Tolstoy tells a story he impresses me infinitely more than when he addresses the reader. When he turns his back on the reader then he seems to be *most* impressive…It seems to me his philosophy is most true when it's latent in the story (p. 43).

Isn't this passage a way of saying that Tolstoy's 'philosophy' about life is more "impressive" when it is *shown*? It seems so.

Recall Wittgenstein's cryptic pronouncement: "It (philosophy) will mean the unspeakable by clearly displaying the speakable" (*TLP*, 4.115). Now of course the "unspeakable" includes not only the mystical, but, for example, logical form[42] as well. Still, what is unspeakable relative to ethics and value is "the mystical." At any rate, when Tolstoy "turns his back on the reader" he is doing just this – he is showing, not saying. It is in the silence, in what is left unsaid, that gives Tolstoy's work acquires its ethical significance or oomph.

I believe that Wittgenstein's comments about the "mystical" or the "inexpressible" being made "manifest" (6.522) can be made more pointed if we compare Tolstoy's failed attempt to find meaning in the world of facts. Let us turn now to *A Confession* (1882).

Although there is no direct evidence that Wittgenstein ever read *A Confession*, it is unlikely that he was unfamiliar with it. In fact, Wittgenstein was very familiar with William James' *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1899), and in that work James frequently refers to Tolstoy's account of his despairing at ever finding meaning in life as a paradigmatic example of the "sick soul" (pp. 167-169). Moreover, even if Wittgenstein somehow overlooked such passages there are still important parallels between the two thinkers that are brought out by an examination of Tolstoy's search for the meaning of life in this short work.

[42] But as we shall see, Wittgenstein does 'say' a good deal about the connection between language and the world with his metalinguistic assertions.

The *TLP* and *A Confession*: Some Parallels

Caleb Thompson offers up a view of Wittgenstein that "embraces Tolstoy the confessor, for whom the meaning of life falls away, and rejects Tolstoy the Christian proselytizer. There is a part of Wittgenstein that is Leo Tolstoy, but there is also part of Wittgenstein that is Karl Kraus" (p.106).[43] (Thompson also speculates that "'what *can* be shown *cannot* be said'...is an idea that... originated with Kraus" (*Ibid.*). Obviously I think this is right.)

The urge to discover the answer to the meaning or value of life *in* the world is rejected by Wittgenstein as impossible. Thompson sees both Tolstoy's *Confession* and Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* as an attempt to show us that life's value and meaning is not a question of knowledge. Thompson thinks that both of their projects end in silence because nothing can be said about the value, meaning, or significance of life. Wittgenstein's silence is rather more austere than Tolstoy's. Thompson reads Tolstoy's dream at the end of his confession as Tolstoy's way of telling us not to look for the solution to the problem of life in the facts. For Tolstoy, the solution to the problem of life – which for Tolstoy as for Wittgenstein was "why go on living?" – requires that we embrace a Christian faith that is stripped of anything that cannot be reconciled with reason. This includes miracles, theological Dogma, etc.

Caleb Thompson sees both Tolstoy and Wittgenstein as attempting to show us that the difficulty we have in finding meaning and value in life is not a question of our

[43] "Wittgenstein, Tolstoy, and the meaning of life" (1997)

lacking this or that piece of knowledge. The fact that Tolstoy is at great pains to discover the meaning of life, should not be interpreted as an attempt on Tolstoy's part to find some *bit of knowledge* that will put an end to the question of life's meaning. In fact, following Anthony Flew,[44] Caleb interprets Tolstoy as rejecting from the outset the whole idea that propositional knowledge could provide us with an answer. Flew regards Tolstoy's incessant questions about life's meaning (and why one ought to go on living rather than committing suicide) as an "arrest of life" (Flew, p 111). This sense of befuddlement on the part of Tolstoy is meant to indicate his hopeless state of ever finding any *answer* to such a question. And it is just *this* looking in the wrong direction that is the real problem. He is not really looking for some piece of knowledge that will settle his concerns about what meaning, if any, life has. Thus, "what he learns is not that the meaning of life is such and such, but how to live in such a way that these questions no longer arise" (Caleb, p 103).

For Tolstoy, then, there could be no knowledge of "mystical truths" that could give his life meaning. Similarly, Paul Engelmann notes that Wittgenstein's mysticism was not a "Gnostic-mysticism" where fanciful pictures of "another world" are painted (p. 79). There is no "bluish hue surrounding" the mystical, as Wittgenstein once quipped to Engelmann (p. 98).

In the end Tolstoy's approach to the solution to the problem of life is to cease to ask questions about life's meaning because there can be no answer – no piece of knowledge can be "the thing". For Tolstoy there is only a purified faith – the very essence of Christianity without all the religion – that manifests itself in loving others.

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[44] "Tolstoi and the Meaning of Life"; Ethics, Vol. 73 (1963)

Of course, Wittgenstein's solution is far more austere: he thought that there could be no answer where no question can even be asked. He sees the "problem" of the meaning of "life" being solved by the "disappearance" or "vanishing" of the problem (*NB*, p. 74 and *TLP* 6.521). It is when life's meaning or value is called into question and one begins to look for an answer to it that the problem arises. There never was a problem about meaning in the sense that abstract, conceptual (i.e., propositional) knowledge could solve it.

However, The problem of life as *felt* is very real for both Tolstoy and Wittgenstein. But the "answer" is to turn away from any purported explanation – from any intellectual attempt – to solve it. Instead, one needs to learn how to live so that the problem is no longer *felt* as requiring an *answer* in the form of this or that bit of knowledge. The question will no longer nag at us when we see that knowledge is not what's needed (nor is it even possible) here. But, unlike Tolstoy, Wittgenstein's ends his discussion of this felt problem with total silence.

It is significant that immediately after discussing the "solution" to the problem of life that Wittgenstein asks, parenthetically at 6.521, "is not this the reason why men to whom after long doubting the sense of life became clear, could not then say wherein this sense consisted?"

One wonders if Wittgenstein had Tolstoy in mind here. That such "men" could not *say* anything here is not because the saying is so very esoteric, but rather because the "sense of life" cannot be said. But it can be *felt*.

Immediately after his suggestion that the sense, meaning or value of life cannot be put into words by those who have become "clear' about its meaning, he writes: "There is

indeed the inexpressible. This shows itself; it is the mystical" (6.522). One of the implications here is that the meaning or value of life and the world as something "felt" is the mystical, and so is shown through a kind of experience. Another implication is that there is *something* that such men are acquainted with – for *it* has become "clear" to them. For Tolstoy it becomes clear through faith. How does it become clear to Wittgenstein? I suggest that for Wittgenstein the dawning comes when one sees "the world aright" (6.54).

The Limits of Reason and The Limits of Language

According to Tolstoy, reaching the limit of reason or the explicable is essential for seeing that life without faith cannot have any meaning or value. For Wittgenstein, on the other hand, the limit of "language" or (what comes to the same thing for Wittgenstein) "thought" results in certain experiences of the world that amounts to an experience of *Das Mystische* (I examine these experiences in chapters three and four). Both Tolstoy and Wittgenstein regard being brought to the limit of reason or language, respectively, as a path that is essential for appreciating the inexplicable, the unutterable – the mystical. Let me close with a quotation from *A Confession* that is strikingly similar to the value or significance of the inexpressible in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*:

> I know that the explanation of everything, like the commencement of everything, must be concealed in infinity. But I wish to understand in a way that will bring me to what is inevitably inexplicable. I wish to recognize anything that is inexplicable as being so not because the demands of my reason are wrong (they are right, and apart from them I understand nothing), but because I recognize the limits of my intellect. *I wish to understand in such a way that everything that is inexplicable shall present itself to me as being necessarily inexplicable*, and not as being something I am under an arbitrary obligation to believe (pp. 80-81, my emphasis).

Isn't Wittgenstein also showing us that the unutterable or unsayable is such not because it is pure nonsense, as the new Wittgensteinian's claim (and the logical positivists before them claimed), but because the logic of our language shows us that there are inexplicable and so unutterable mysteries that cannot be described in language? But how are we to be led to the "inexpressible", the mystical, or, to use Tolstoy's expression, the "inexplicable"? According to Wittgenstein – at least on my view – the mystical is made manifest by a perspective that is at the very limit of descriptive language and the world.

Seeing the World "Aright"

Ultimately, what Wittgenstein is trying to *show* us is how to see the world "rightly" (7). And in part this means that if we take the right perspective with respect to the world we will also take the right attitude toward the world as a whole – we will come to see it as sublime or as having absolute value. Of course, what exactly this consists in and how we take up such an attitude is the subject of the rest of my dissertation. Let me now state, without argument, how such an attitude is acquired and what it amounts to for Wittgenstein. It begins, as we shall see in the next chapter, with Wittgenstein's view of how any meaningful (descriptive) language is able to say anything at all about the world. Something very important is shown by the shared structure of language and world. And Wittgenstein shows the connection with a meta-language. It is a God's eye perspective inasmuch as it is at the "limit" of the world of representation. In the logic of our language

this perspective is reflected in positions that take semantics to be ineffable; that regard (a `la the Hintikkas) language as the "universal medium" (*Investigating Wittgenstein*: 1984).

With respect to the ethical (including the meaning of life, aesthetics, etc.) this perspective takes quite literally the *Tractarian* notion that what has value cannot lie *in* the world of facts. The similarity, then, between showing in logic and showing in ethics is that both require taking this transcendental perspective. But the perspective on the language-world relation comes first, for it is in virtue of *seeing* the world as a "limited whole", that we are (in some sense) led to "feel it as a limited whole" (6.45). Thus, it is the logic of our language, and the picture theory specifically, that brings us to the limit of the world. And at this limit a kind of contemplative ethic – the mystical, if you will – is shown.[45]

Thus, before we investigate the ethical aspect of his transcendental perspective, we must determine not only what Wittgenstein means by "seeing the world aright", but why he thought that one is (in some sense) brought to see the world in the "right" way, ethically speaking, based on his 'theory' of how language connects with the world. This is the very beginning of his saying/showing distinction. Chapter two is therefore a detailed exegesis on the main function of Wittgenstein's 'propositions' with respect to the language-world relation in his *TLP*: These 'propositions' are metalinguistic assertions about language and the world. Wittgenstein's aim with these higher-order assertions is to clear up conceptual confusions in the logic of any descriptive language, set up of his

[45] It is not completely contemplative in that there are some hints at how to live in the world; but these are really a result of taking up the transcendental perspective, and should not be understood as ethical "truths".

"picture theory" of meaning, and pave the way for our seeing and feeling the world under the aspect of eternity.

CHAPTER TWO

The *Tractatus* Shows the Relation Between Descriptive Language and the World via a Metalanguage

Logic and the World in The *Tractatus-Logico-Philosophicus*

In large part, Wittgenstein's TLP deals with *how* sentences are able to communicate information *about* the world. According to Wittgenstein, meaningful sentences are those sentences that represent or describe the world. Wittgenstein thinks that he can "show" just how descriptive language is able to do this: sentences (or propositions) are, quite literally, pictures or models of reality. Wittgenstein is also concerned with clearing up what he regards as philosophical confusions about the logic of our language, so that we may clearly see that the nature of a proposition is to picture reality. Of course, in setting up his picture theory of meaning and clearing up certain philosophical confusions Wittgenstein *uses* language. And the language that he uses is rejected at the end of his treatise as "nonsense" (*unsinnig*, 6.54). The questions before us in this chapter are these: what *sense* can we make of the 'propositions' that deal with logic and the world in the *TLP*? How can we take his 'claims' as *illuminating nonsense*? And even more importantly, for my purposes, how does this illuminating nonsense lead us to see the world "*sub specie aeternitatis*" (6.45)?

I contend that Wittgenstein's 'claims' about logic in the *Tractatus* are best interpreted as meta-linguistic instructions of what Wittgenstein regards as the right perspective on the logic of descriptive language and its connection with the world. On my

view, Wittgenstein uses a higher order language that he rejects in the end as nonsensical. My interpretation permits one to reconcile Wittgenstein's 'propositions' as *both* nonsense and, at the same time, intelligible; "nonsense" because they do not picture states of affairs in the world; "intelligible" insofar as they are meta-linguistic assertions as to *how to see* the connection between language and the world.[46] Seeing the connection between language and the world – that language "pictures" reality – is part of what Wittgenstein means in saying that his 'propositions' aid us in "seeing the world aright" (6.54).

Meta-language

I admit that it is anachronistic to claim that Wittgenstein's utterances in his *TLP* are best interpreted as metalinguistic. After all, the concept of a metalanguage was not articulated until Alfred Tarski's work on theoretical semantics in 1944, well after the *TLP* was written. I will justify interpreting Wittgenstein's 'propositions' as a kind of meta or higher-order language by first giving a definition of a metalanguage, and then showing throughout this chapter that Wittgenstein's use of language meets the criteria of a metalanguage.

In his paper, "The Semantic Conception of Truth and the Foundations of Semantics"[47], Alfred Tarski gives the first formal definition or criteria for a

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[46] John Nolt has suggested that some of Wittgenstein's 'propositions' be regarded as straightforward metalinguisitc truths. This is plausible, just so long as we realize that Wittgenstein would not regard them as such.

[47] From *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, V. 4 (1944), pp. 341-375. Reprinted in A.P. Martinich's, *The Philosohy of Language*, 3rd ed., Oxford Univ. Press: 1996. Page references are to the Martinich anthology.

metalanguage. Although he does so within the context of providing an account of the semantic notion of "truth", the concept of a metalanguage is useful in other areas of semantics, as Tarski makes clear. This is worth quoting in full because it is suggestive of the role language plays in the *TLP*:

> Since we have agreed not to employ semantically closed languages[48], we have to use two different languages in discussing the problem of the definition of truth and, more generally, any problem in the field of semantics. The first of these languages is the language that is "talked about" and which is the subject matter of the whole discussion; the definition of truth that we are seeking applies to the sentences of this language. The second is the language in which we "talk about" the first language. We shall refer to the first language as "the object language", and to the second as the "metalanguage" (p 67).

And in the next paragraph Tarski goes on to say:

> It should be noticed that these terms "object language" and "metalanguage" have only a relative sense. If, for instance, we become interested in the notion of truth applying to sentences, not of our original object language, but of its metalanguage, the latter becomes automatically the object language of our discussion; and in order to define truth for this language, we have to go to a new metalanguage – so to speak, to a metalanguage of a higher level. In this way we arrive at a whole hierarchy of languages (*Ibid*).

First off, I want to make clear that I am not attributing to Wittgenstein anything like a full-blown conception of a metalanguage. Instead, I am suggesting that Wittgenstein makes use of a language of a higher order or level in order to *show* us how any descriptive language connects with any possible world.

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[48] "Semantically closed" is a notion that need not concern us here. The idea is simply that whenever a semantic term, like "is true", is applied to descriptions of sentences of the language the result is also a sentence in the language. A semantically closed language is one that contains all definitions of semantic terms as expressions in the language. Put differently, a closed language is one that both uses and mentions its own expressions. This is irrelevant for my purposes because Wittgenstein seems to regard all semantics as impossible or ineffable, whether the language is "open" or "closed". Incidentally, a semantically "open" language is one that does not contain its own semantics: semantic terms do not occur in the lower level language and are neither used nor mentioned there. In either case, whether the language is open or closed, Wittgenstein regards semantics as impossible or, at best, ineffable.

The second point that I wish to make is that Wittgenstein *seems* to endorse the idea that all semantics is, at best, unnecessary, and, at worst, impossible. As we shall see, it appears that Wittgenstein would not countenance talk of a higher order language at all. Indeed, he would say that the 'meaning' of any semantic term (such as " is true") is "shown" through the use we make of meaningful sentences in our language. Thus, what I am suggesting is that Wittgenstein regards all semantics as impossible. This is just to say that on Wittgenstein's view there can be no definition of semantic terms in either an object language or a metalanguage.

But I want to argue that Wittgenstein does not really provide us with any good reasons for thinking that semantics is impossible or ineffable (though his 'propositions' are "senseless" in that they do not picture facts). Indeed, we will see that Wittgenstein's own picture theory of language requires him to give definitions of certain terms in a higher-order language.

In regarding all semantics as impossible, or, as the two Hintikka's say, "ineffable" (*Investigating Wittgenstein*: 1986), Wittgenstein would reject the idea that terms such as "truth", "meaning", etc., can be *defined* at all. Thus, even in the only legitimate language that there is ("legitimate" according to Wittgenstein) – i.e., our ordinary language, the language we use to depict facts in the world – there can be no semantic meaning (no logical definition) for a term such as "truth". Rather, the *semantic meaning* of terms such as "truth" and "falsity" cannot be defined at all, but their meanings can be *shown* in virtue of what counts as a meaningful sentence in any descriptive language.

Now the main reason that I do not think that Wittgenstein is correct in thinking that semantics is impossible (or inexpressible) is this: he is doing it himself! Of course,

his own account of what is to count as a meaningful sentence – all of which is carried out in a higher-order language – is summarily dismissed as meaningless based on his own picture theory of meaning. Indeed, Wittgenstein's language in the *TLP* is in part designed to get us to appreciate that the only language that has full-blown meaning is the language of science broadly construed. And whether we agree with him or not here, he makes his philosophical points in a language very different from the one that he is talking about – i.e., those sentences that picture reality. Thus, on my view his attempt to "show" what cannot be said is much like 'saying' something in a metalanguage about an object language.

A third important point about metalanguage is that it is always relative to, as Tarski says, an "object language". I will show that the object language in Wittgenstein's *TLP* – the language that is talked about – shifts. Sometimes Wittgenstein talks about Russell's own theory of types and what is wrong with it, but more often Wittgenstein is defining a logical language – namely that meaningful language must depict, model, or picture reality. But in either case the object languages that are talked about are discussed in a language quite different from the ordinary language that pictures facts. It is my contention that this language that Wittgenstein uses is best interpreted as a meta- or higher-order language.

A fourth and final point, and one that I will investigate more fully later, is Russell's suggestion that perhaps Wittgenstein can do away with the concept of "showing" and talk instead about a "hierarchy of languages":

> ...Every language has, as Mr. Wittgenstein says, a structure concerning which, *in the language*, nothing can be said, but that there may be another language dealing with the structure of the first language, and having itself a new structure, and that

> to this hierarchy of languages there may be no limit. Mr. Wittgenstein would of course reply that his whole theory is applicable unchanged to the totality of such languages (*TLP*, xxii).

Note that Russell's notion of languages with different structures is similar to Tarski's point about higher and higher levels of meta-languages. Wittgenstein would, as we shall see, want to deny anything like a hierarchy of languages, but it seems that he is committed to at minimum a kind of one-time meta-language to "elucidate" or make perspicuous the connection between language and the world.

Showing and Metalanguage in the *TLP*

In saying that the 'propositions' in the *TLP* are meta-linguistic assertions whose purpose is to reveal the pure structure of how any descriptive language is able to depict facts in any possible world, I am in effect saying that Wittgenstein is (at least in part) providing us with *rules* whose purpose is to make clear the picture theory, and that he takes his picture-theoretic view to apply to all possible descriptive language. Thus, on my account it is a *meta-* or higher-order language that *does the showing* here.[49] And Wittgenstein himself says in his early *NB*: "Pseudo-propositions are such as, when analyzed, turn out after all only to *shew* what they were supposed to *say*" (p. 16). The bulk of Wittgenstein's remarks in the *Tractatus* are "pseudo-propositions". Wittgenstein

[49] In correspondence, Gary Levvis characterized the 'propositions' of the *TLP* "as part of an impossible meta-language" because such "propositions cannot be part of a representational medium". I claim Wittgenstein's 'propositions' are 'nonsense' because they cannot describe of represent reality. So Levvis and I are on all fours here. Like Levvis, I think that the same thing can be said about Wittgenstein's attempts to *say* anything about semantic terms such as "showing", "saying", and remarks like "a

is attempting to 'say' what, by his own semantic theory (the "picture theory) cannot be said, but only shown. As PMS Hacker aptly notes:

> The *Tractatus* does not show what it is to make sense – it tries to *say* what it is (namely, to agree and disagree with the possibilities of the obtaining and non-obtaining of states of affairs: *TLP* 4.2). And since, according to the *Tractatus*, one cannot say what cannot be other than it is, the endeavour to spell out the essential nature of sense inevitably transgresses the bounds of sense (p. 22).[50]

More specifically, I argue that meta-language is the means by which Wittgenstein (1) clears up certain philosophical confusions, (2) sets up his picture theory of meaning, and finally (3) paves the way for seeing and feeling the world *sub specie aeternitatis*. In this chapter I will focus mainly on (1) and (2), leaving a full account of (3) to chapters three and four. Here I shall only be concerned with those 'claims' that deal with how the logic of our language relates to the world, suggesting in the end that Wittgenstein's picture theory of language projects us out of the world, thereby paving the way for our seeing the world *sub specie aeternitatis.*

Two preliminary points need to be made before we survey examples of Wittgenstein's use of meta- or higher-order language in the above two areas. First, we will have to pay close attention to the context in which Wittgenstein makes his meta-linguistic 'claims' in order to discern what is to count as the object language. In some cases his meta-linguistic 'claims' take Russell's own theory of types – a theory of a

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proposition states something only insofar as it is a picture" (but other examples abound). The point is that such talk "cannot be part of the representational medium", as Levvis has remarked.

[50] From "Wittgenstein, Carnap, and The New American Wittgensteinians"; *The Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 53, No. 210, Jan. 2003. Note that Hacker's main reason for thinking that Wittgenstein's picture theory "transgresses the bounds of sense" is connected to its "essential nature." For Hacker, the propositions that clarify the picture theory cannot have sense because we cannot say what the world would be like if the picture theory were false – that is, we "cannot say what cannot be other than it is." And this just means that the propositions that bring the picture theory into relief cannot have sense because they are not bipolar, but

hierarchy of propositional functions – as the object language, and in other cases his meta-linguistic 'claims' have as their target the contingent propositions that model reality – that is, the propositions that, on Wittgenstein's account, have sense. In short, there are two languages in the *TLP* that Wittgenstein speaks *about*: either a formal language (like Russell's theory of types) or our ordinary language. When Wittgenstein speaks about the former it is with a view to clearing up certain philosophical confusions and when he speaks about the latter he is in effect stipulating how his picture theory of meaning applies to any possible world. (Of course, the picture theory applies to the world whether we recognize it or not according to Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein is attempting to make perspicuous just how descriptive language connects to the world).

Second, before demonstrating why Wittgenstein's 'propositions' are best interpreted as meta-linguistic, and why this counts as "showing", I need to give a cursory account of the distinction between saying and showing in the *TLP*.

Showing Vs. Saying

In a letter to Russell Wittgenstein wrote:[51] "The main point (of the TLP) is the theory of what can be expressed (gesagt) by propositions (and, which comes to the same, what can be

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are instead a clarification or elucidation of what any descriptive language and any world must share in order for contingent propositions to be able to picture the world at all.

[51] *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Letters to Russell, Keynes and Moore* (p 71); ed. By G.H. Von Wright; Cornell Univ. Press, Ithaca, NY: 1974. In the *TLP* Wittgenstein does not repeat this, but says instead that his "fundamental idea is that the logical constants are not representatives" and that "there can be no representatives of the *logic* of facts" (4.0312). This "fundamental idea" is defended by the saying/showing distinction for Wittgenstein. A truth table does not require positing the existence of some quasi-empirical entity that "&" or "v" refer to. Instead, we can just see that the truth conditions for any molecular proposition is a function of the truth values of the elementary propositions that make it up. Thus, making explicit what the "cardinal problem in philosophy" amounts to; viz., the failure to make the distinction

thought) and what can not be expressed by propositions, but only shown (*gezeigt*); which, I believe, is the cardinal problem of philosophy" (*Cambridge Letters*: 1995). What does this distinction come to and what philosophical problems and confusions does Wittgenstein think it solves? Let's first get clearer about what Wittgenstein means by "saying".

What can be "said" in Wittgenstein's sense of the word is pretty close to at least one standard meaning of the term: what can be said is what can be described.[52] When some statement is made a thought is articulated. We say that such a thought has content. But what does this mean? The content just is a description of an actual or possible situation. For example "The cat is on the mat" expresses a proposition that describes the way the world is or the way it might be. Thus, what can be said is what can be described.

We ought first to note that what is said in descriptions like the one above can also be shown. I could just as easily show or demonstrate to someone that "the cat is on the mat". Generally this is done demonstratively, with a gesture, as a shortcut to any description. This, however, is not what Wittgenstein means by "showing". For in this case what is shown *can also be said* and vice versa. So our first observation is that showing and saying, in this descriptive and explanatory sense, are not mutually exclusive, as the above example illustrates. Hence, this is not what Wittgenstein means by "showing".

That this is not what Wittgenstein has in mind is clear, for at 4.1212 he writes: "what *can* be shown *cannot* be said". Thus, by "shown" Wittgenstein must mean

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between what can be said and what can only be shown, is still the main point of Wittgenstein's *TLP*. His idea that there can be no *logic* of facts is *shown*, in part, by the truth table method.

[52] Of course, in ordinary usage "said" covers areas that Wittgenstein would reject as un-sayable. Its scope is broader in its normal use. The same is true for the term "described". For example, people take themselves

something different here. What then does it mean for *something* to be shown in this radical way? Bertrand Russell suggests an approach that avoids the notoriously mysterious "showing" that is so prevalent in the *TLP*.[53] Let's begin here.

Russell's Hierarchy of Languages: Avoiding "Showing"

In his introduction to the *Tractatus*, Russell notes that Wittgenstein does "manage to say a good deal about what cannot be said" (xxi). Moreover, Russell himself suggests a kind of meta-linguistic approach (or, better, a hierarchy of languages) to avoid Wittgenstein's notoriously cryptic distinction between saying and showing. The foregoing is quoted on page 69, but for convenience I will repeat Russell's words:

> ...Every language has, as Mr. Wittgenstein says, a structure concerning which, *in the language*, nothing can be said, but that there may be another language dealing with the structure of the first language, and having itself a new structure, and that to this hierarchy of languages there may be no limit. Mr. Wittgenstein would of course reply that his whole theory is applicable unchanged to the totality of such languages (*TLP*, xxii).

Russell then goes on to say that "the totalities concerning which it is impossible to speak logically are nevertheless thought by [Wittgenstein] to exist, and are the subject matter of his mysticism" (ibid). In other words, Russell is suggesting that Wittgenstein would claim that there is nothing that can be said about the logical structure of any such "totality" of languages.

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to be "saying" things about the nature of God and the meaning of life or about semantic terms like "truth", "meaning", or "proposition".

[53] D. Pears said of the doctrine of showing: "A baffling doctrine, bafflingly presented" (*The False Prison*, vol. 1, p. 147).

It is doubtful, however, that Wittgenstein would even allow the first step that Russell takes here; that is, Wittgenstein would probably reject the idea that there could be another language, with a *new structure*, from which we could *say* anything at all about the lower level structure.[54] And Wittgenstein would certainly reject the idea of their being a "totality of languages" whose structures are ultimately all shown. Still, there is evidence that Wittgenstein is using some sort of higher-order language whose purpose is to show us the logical grammar or syntax of our language: "In logical syntax the meaning of a sign should never play a role. It must be possible to establish logical syntax without mentioning the *meaning* of a sign: *only* the description of expressions may be presupposed" (3.33). And at 3.334 Wittgenstein writes: "The rules of logical syntax must *go without saying*, once we know how each individual sign signifies." He seems to be clearly rejecting theoretical semantics here. But we should ask: "How does one "presuppose" ... "*only* the description of expressions" without (at least once) resorting to a higher-order language?" If an example is needed we do not have far to look. At 4.242 Wittgenstein writes: "Expressions of the form '$a = b$' are, therefore, mere representational devices. They state nothing about the meaning of the signs 'a' and 'b'." Here we have a straightforward use of a higher-order language. Wittgenstein is describing the use of the expression '$a = b$'. The expression within the quotes is being described. And there are other examples that are less explicit: "A name means an object. The object is its meaning" (3.203). Such descriptions as these are elucidated in a higher-order language.

[54] In his *Discussions of Wittgenstein* (1970), Rush Rhees writes: "Wittgenstein always thought that 'meta-languages' were an evasion" (p. 3). The whole idea that meta-languages could *say* more about semantic

Note first that the expression "description of expressions" is just the kind of thing that is carried out in a higher order language. So how can Wittgenstein have his cake and eat it too? If I am correct, how can Wittgenstein be opposed to Russell's proposal of higher order languages while at the same time using a higher order language to provide a "description of expressions" or "signs"? What is Wittgenstein objecting to here?

It seems that one of the implications that we are to draw from 3.33 and 3.334 is that *if* we have to resort to saying what our signs mean, presumably in some other higher-order language, then we are on the wrong track. The point of 3.334 seems to be that we cannot mention the meaning of a sign, though we can describe the sign itself. That is, we can 'say' syntax, but not semantics. We might say that according to Wittgenstein semantics speaks for itself once we have a description of the signs *first*. But can we interpret Wittgenstein's prohibition against mixing semantics and syntax in a way that is more philosophically interesting than this?

Recall that Wittgenstein seems to be against the idea of a higher-order language, one that has a different structure than the one that is below it. Why is he so opposed to such a language? Presumably, he is opposed to such a program because we would then be required to give an account of the logical syntax of that higher-order language, and would thus be forced to say what counts as the *meaning* of the signs for *this* higher order language. Such an approach appears to lead to an infinite (or at least a finite) regress, where at each level of language we must go higher still in order to explain the meaning of

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terms (what Wittgenstein called "formal concepts") was, according to Wittgenstein, misguided.

the signs in the language below.[55] Perhaps Wittgenstein wants to block the need to posit an infinite (and even a finite) series of languages, each with their own structures.

Certainly Russell is committed to something like higher and higher levels of languages (an approach, as we have seen, that Tarski endorses much later). And this approach does seem to lead to an infinite series of higher and higher order signs *and* their meaning (as Russell admits). In 3.33 we see Wittgenstein implying that we need not resort to a language with a *different structure* in order to give our signs meaning. All that's needed is a description of the use of signs: their syntax. In doing so Wittgenstein is using language to "show" that the semantic meaning of any term is seen once we have the right notation – that is, once we have a correct description of our signs. What I am suggesting is that the 'language' of the *TLP* purports only to provide us with a description of signs, and has nothing to say about the semantic meanings of signs, for their meanings with be shown once we have the logical syntax right.

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[55] Rush Rhees lends support to my interpretation when he writes: "Wittgenstein was still less satisfied (than he was with Russell's theory of types) by the later developments which have spoken of a hierarchy of languages or 'meta-languages'...[and that]...what Wittgenstein calls 'formal concepts' are what some would now call 'semantical concepts...[and that a meta-language] can 'establish' these concepts, and establish, for instance, the relation of propositions to reality, in terms of a meta-language" (p. 3, *Discussions of Wittgenstein*, 1970). On Rhees view, these "developments" miss the crucial point of the distinction between saying and showing. What is said in a meta-language can only be shown, according to Rhees interpretation of Wittgenstein. In the end, Rhees thinks that for Wittgenstein higher order languages were "an evasion of the problem" (p. 3). But Rhees only hints at how "showing" works with respect to the logic of our language. Rhees suggests that any attempt to *say* what the meaning is of a proposition such as "p is a proposition" or what it means to "give an account of 'expressing a proposition'" is impossible, and that the proposition as picture is as close as one can get to *showing* what it means (p 4). Still, Rhees is left in the uncomfortable position of explaining just how Wittgenstein gets across ideas about the picturing relation ("*abbilden*"). Isn't this accomplished via a meta-language? On my view it is just such a language that makes the picturing relation so plausible – at least with respect to descriptive language. And once we see it, we no longer need Wittgenstein's higher-order language But there is something right about Rhees suggestion that nothing informative can be said about what, for example, is meant by the 'proposition' '"p' says that p' (p. 4) and that once we are shown that a proposition is a picture we at once see that any attempt to *say* anything about the essential nature of the proposition can only entangle us in empty verbiage.

This is quite different than what Russell says in introducing the idea of a hierarchy of languages. In talking about a "hierarchy of languages" we see Russell suggesting something *like* the use of higher-level languages to describe the structure of lower level languages *ad infinitum*. Moreover, Russell's talk of higher-level languages involves (at the time anyway) reference to objects or entities ("classes"), and thus is not purely syntactic. And we know that Wittgenstein was adamantly opposed to any justification of the logic of our language (syntax) that required reference to logical facts or entities: ""There can be no representatives of the logic of the facts" (4.0312). This is perhaps another reason why Wittgenstein was so opposed to Russell's method.

Notwithstanding the reasons why Wittgenstein found Russell's approach wrongheaded, it seems obvious that the 'propositions' of the *TLP* are meta-linguistic in just this sense: Wittgenstein is using a higher-order language to reveal or lay bare the pure form of descriptive language and its connection to the world. It does appear that Wittgenstein is giving us *instructions* as to how to see the connection between language and the world; that is, he is both clearing up certain confusions (of which "the whole of philosophy is full…" 3.324) and laying out the rules for the picture theory of meaning. If Wittgenstein's 'propositions' are not minimally giving an account of what he regards as the fundamental connection between language and the world, then it is hard to see not just what sense, if any, can be made of them, but what possible *role* his 'propositions' play – how do they "clarify thoughts" and "propositions" (4.112)? How does his use of language "elucidate" anything (6.54)?

I contend that Wittgenstein's attempt to clear up problems that result from "our failure to understand the logic of our language" (4.003) requires the use of a *one- time*

metalanguage so that we may see the proper role that our signs play. This is the main difference between Wittgenstein's use of a higher-order language and Russell's commitment to a hierarchy of languages. For Wittgenstein, once this is accomplished – that is, once a description of our signs has been given – there is no further need for any higher-order language at all. The instructions can all be discarded as nonsense in the end.

This is one of the areas where he differs from Russell, who is more than happy to have an infinite series of languages, each with a different logical structure, and each capable of *saying* something about the structure of the language below it. Moreover, Wittgenstein most likely would have rejected the idea that there exists a "totality of languages", as would Russell, but for a different reason. Wittgenstein would reject such a totality not because there is an infinite hierarchy of languages (a `la Russell), but rather because there is only one full blown language, one with both meaning and a logical structure: the language that we use everyday – that is, the contingent propositions of natural science broadly construed. This is evinced by the following comment: "the totality of propositions is language" (4.001). That the "totality of propositions" covers only contingent propositions that model reality is made clear at 4: "A thought is a proposition with a sense." Hence, by "propositions" in 4.001 Wittgenstein means that all and only those propositions that picture reality, whether truly or falsely, have meaning. When Wittgenstein says at 4.01 that "the totality of propositions is language" he is in effect identifying language with just those propositions that picture or describe or represent or model reality. Any other *use* of language will be geared either to getting us to see that "the totality of propositions [*with sense*] is language" or it will have a function altogether different (such as exhorting, praying, cursing, etc.). Wittgenstein's use of

language in the *Tractatus* is best construed as higher-order instructions whose logical structure only mimics that of our ordinary contingent propositions, but does not express facts at all – that is, the 'propositions' of the *TLP* do not picture the way the world is or the way it might be.

No doubt Russell's way of characterizing languages and their different structures would not have appealed to Wittgenstein's linguistic parsimony. On Wittgenstein's view there is, as I have already suggested, only one such structure; namely, the contingent propositions that picture reality. Any language used to 'describe' or explain this structure cannot itself have a structure that can be *explained at all.* This is most likely why Wittgenstein regards his own 'propositions' as "elucidations", and, strictly speaking, "nonsensical" (6.54). Indeed, any higher-order language is technically nonsense according to Wittgenstein's picture theory because such a language does not model facts in reality.

One point that I wish to emphasize in all this is that perhaps Russell did not get the *TLP* as wrong as Wittgenstein claims he did. Indeed, perhaps one of the things that Wittgenstein did not like about Russell's introduction is Russell's speculation that there might be an "infinite" hierarchy of languages, each with its own structure. For on Wittgenstein's view this is really an evasion of the problem and not a solution to it. Again, Wittgenstein's solution is to provide, *once and for all*, an analysis of how the contingent propositions of any language link up with the world. And once this goal *has been accomplished*, there is no need for the sort of higher-level language that is used to speak about the structure of a lower level language. Indeed, that Wittgenstein wanted to do away with talk of higher-level languages is evinced by his comment on Russell's

theory of types: "...It can be seen that Russell must be wrong, because he had to mention the meaning of signs when establishing the rules for them" (3.331). A plausible interpretation of this remark is that it is illegitimate to attempt to *say* anything about the meaning of the signs we employ in any language, but why? According to Wittgenstein it is because paradox results from the attempt to do semantics (to say what our signs mean) in the language that is being talked about and because higher order or metalanguages are merely an evasive artifice that pushes the problem back a step.

We have already seen that Wittgenstein is using a kind of higher order language in making perspicuous what he thinks is wrong with Russell's approach. We see the same use of a higher-order language here: "the simple signs employed in propositions are called names" or "The name means the object" (3.202 and 3.203, respectively). I will come back to this when we investigate the function that a higher-order language plays in setting up the picture theory of meaning. Let us now discover how Wittgenstein uses a kind of meta-language to correct what he regards as a fundamental confusion in Russell's type theory. More generally, how is it that a higher-order language helps us to "understand the logic of our language" (4.003)?

The Russell/Frege Paradox and Russell's Solution to it: Type Theory

In his attempt to reduce all of mathematics to logic Russell encountered a serious problem. He tried to show that numbers could be reduced to classes, that they could be defined in terms of classes. It was Frege who first had the idea that numbers could be analyzed as classes of things. Hence, the number two could be reduced to the class of

pairs; three to the class of triples, etc. In his attempt to carry out this project, Russell needed to give an account of classes of classes.

First, we can see that there are classes of classes, such as the numbers just described. Some classes seem to be members of themselves and others do not. For example, the class of all classes with infinitely many members is a member of itself. But now suppose we ask whether the class of all non-self-membered classes is a member of itself. It was precisely here that Russell discovered that the assumption that to every open formula there corresponds a class resulted in paradox. For if such a class is a member of itself, then it is not a member of itself; and if it is not a member of itself, then it is a member of itself. Here we have a logical contradiction.

The solving of this paradox was of paramount importance to Russell's program of reducing mathematics to the foundations of logic. Why? If the assumption that a class corresponds to every open formula is false, then there must be something wrong (somewhere) with the assumption that mathematics can be reduced to class logic. What Russell develops, then, in order to avoid this contradiction, is a hierarchy of types of *objects*. This is reminiscent of the distinction between an object language and a meta-language, though Russell did not characterize it this way. His approach is a forerunner of the meta/object language distinction.

Russell's approach blocks the contradiction in the following way: The contradiction results from "the formation of what we may call 'impure' classes, i.e., classes which are not pure as to 'type'...[for]... to construct symbolically any class whose members are not all of the same grade (type) in the logical hierarchy is to use symbols in a way which makes them no longer symbolize anything" (*Introduction to*

Mathematical Philosophy, p 137). We can only apply the term "class" to those objects that properly fall under it. For at any given level, one can refer only to objects of previous levels, and classes at any given level can contain only classes of previous levels. Hence, one cannot talk unrestrictedly of *the* class of *all* non-self-membered classes. In Russell's language, this is an example of an "impure" class, as mentioned above. Note that this hierarchy of types of objects and what can be predicated of them is very close to a hierarchy of languages.[56] Russell's solution is simply that what can legitimately be said about "non-self- membered classes" of a certain level cannot be said about "*the class* of all non-self-membered classes", since there is no such "impure" class. Russell's type theory, then, will not permit us to ask if *the class* of all non-self-membered classes has the property of having itself as a member. The paradox never gets off the ground because what we can say of classes we cannot say of classes of classes, etc.[57] Again, it is

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[56] But it is not, strictly speaking, a pure hierarchy of languages, for it involves a reference to *things* or *entities*, to the most general facts of the universe, as Russell would say. PMS Hacker reminds us: "The theory of types was an attempt to justify logical syntax by reference to reality, i.e., by reference to the nature of what is represented – and there can be no such justification." ("Wittgenstein and the New American Wittgensteinians"; *Philosophical Quarterly*; vol. 53; no. 210; Jan., 2003) We have already seen that Wittgenstein was adamant that logic did not represent the facts at all (4.0312 and *NB*, p 106), and so it might be that Russell's connecting logical syntax to very queer entities was what put Wittgenstein off Russell's theory of types, and not simply a hierarchical structure of language.

[57] The assumption that there must be an infinite hierarchy of these objects (classes) is a consequence of Russell's solution. It is therefore impossible to speak about "The *class* of all classes", for there is no such class. In his introduction to the *TLP* we see Russell suggesting that there might be an infinite hierarchy of languages (not objects or classes), each with a different structure. What can be said about the structure *of* a language cannot be said *in* the language that has that same structure. But another, higher level language, one with a different structure, can be used to speak about the structure of the first, lower-level, language. Wittgenstein, on the other hand, seems to completely reject the idea of their being a hierarchy of languages, each with their own structure, for the following reason: if I try to explain the structure of some language using the language that shares that *structure*, then I end up making illicit use of the structure that wants explaining: It is illicit because anything said about the structure of a certain language from within that language is begging the question by using the very structure that one purports to explain. Hence, nothing gets explained. The foregoing appears to be Wittgenstein's view. Although the context in which Russell talks about a hierarchy of languages has more to do with avoiding Wittgenstein's notion that the meaning of formal concepts are shown, we once again see Russell having no qualms about positing infinite hierarchies (in this case of languages, not classes). Wittgenstein is very uncomfortable with infinite (and even finite) hierarchies because he regards them as a kind of evasive artifice.

important to see that Russell takes the term "class" and the term "class of classes" to *refer* to abstract entities (specifically, propositional functions), and hence Russell's hierarchy is technically concerned with different *types* of objects, not different *types* of languages[58] (though admittedly this distinction gets blurred).

The Use of Meta-Language in *Showing* what's Wrong with Type Theory

In Wittgenstein's opinion type theory is both baroque and unnecessary. In the *Tractatus* we see Wittgenstein going to great lengths to avoid a hierarchy of types of objects, and instead advocating a more 'horizontal' approach; that is to say (less metaphorically), everything that can *meaningfully* be said is said by the class of propositions that picture reality; that is, ordinary propositions. For Wittgenstein a meta-language (though he wouldn't have used this expression) is otiose.[59] He perhaps might have said a hierarchy of signs that are about (refer to) different types of objects is unnecessary *in the end*. Put slightly differently, the objects that are referred to (above level 1) that Russell thinks are required to avoid the contradiction are, on Wittgenstein's view, dispensable. Such higher-level objects are a result of being confused by language. Indeed, Wittgenstein regards the term "class" as a "nonsensical pseudo-concept" that is properly "expressed... by a variable name" (4.1272). At any rate, it was Russell's

[58] As P.M.S. Hacker makes plain: "...Russell originally conceived of entities, not expressions, as being of one type or another." (*Wittgenstein's Place in Twentieth Century Philosophy*, p 12) Russell first made this move in adopting typed variables. Later, Tarski that made the move from different types of entities to different types of syntactical expressions more explicit.

[59] Wittgenstein is very specific about this: "All grammar (syntax) is a theory of logical types: and logical types do not talk about the application of language. Russell failed to see this." (*Wittgenstein's Lectures, Cambridge 1930-32*, p. 13: 1980)

attempt to say what can only be shown that led to this superfluous (according to Wittgenstein) hierarchy of different types of objects.

But notice how Wittgenstein makes these points against Russell's theory of types: By using a kind of meta or higher-order language: First, Wittgenstein's characterization of Russell's theory is in a meta-language (3.332): "No propositional sign can say anything about itself, because the propositional sign cannot be contained in itself (that is the "whole theory of types")." This is his (very brief) summary of Russell's theory of types. Now if we look at an example of a self-referring sentence or proposition we see that the meaning of the sentence or proposition (however ambiguous) can only be articulated by making use of semantic terms.

The following example is (perhaps) the kind of thing Wittgenstein has in mind: "This statement is false." If this statement is taken to refer to itself, and we ask, 'is this statement true or false?' we immediately run into paradox. If we assume that it is false, then we must conclude that it is true since it says of itself that it is false. But if we assume that it is true, then it must be false since it says of itself that it is false and thus says so truly. Here we have a contradiction that results from our using the sentence to analyze the meaning of the proposition expressed by that very sentence: we are using the sentence to refer to the meaning of the sentence. One explanation as to why we end up in paradox is that we are making syntax – the logical structure of the sentence – dependent on what we take the sentence to mean, that is, on semantics.

Russell and Wittgenstein take very different approaches to this type of problem. Russell's method (which became much clearer after Tarski) was to resolve the contradiction by showing that such self-referential sentences collapse the distinction

between a meta- (or higher-order language) and an object language. This collapsing of the distinction results in our both defining *and* applying the semantic term "true" in the language in which it is *used*. The paradox results in our not making the sharp distinction between a higher-order language (a metalanguage), in which the semantic term 'is true' is first *defined*, and then *applying* it to sentences of the language that we are talking about, the object language. Both Russell and Tarski favor this type of approach. The second method, the one that Wittgenstein seems to favor, is to show that such propositions could not have a sense or meaning in the rather peculiar way in which Wittgenstein *defines* "sense". Recall that according to Wittgenstein all and only those propositions that depict facts have sense. Thus, Wittgenstein's approach seems to be that the statement "This statement is false" is a pseudo-proposition – it is nonsense – *because* it not only refers to itself but makes illicit use of a formal concept ("is false") as if it were a concept proper, like, for example, "is a horse." Formal concepts such as "is true" or "is false" cannot be said according to Wittgenstein – they do not have semantic meaning. However, their meaning is "shown" in the use we make of ordinary contingent propositions.

But notice that either approach (whatever we may think of them) requires our resorting to a higher-order language to solve this problem. In the method favored by Russell and Tarski this is obvious. Wittgenstein's approach, however, would also seem to require a metalanguage to explain (define) what it means for a proposition to have sense. What is it about the nature of the proposition that rules out such self-referring expressions as meaningless? Whether we ultimately agree with Wittgenstein or not is irrelevant. The important point is that he must resort to a higher-order language to provide us with some criterion as to what is to count as a proposition with sense, so that we can see why such

self-referring expressions are nonsense. And on my view he attempts this very thing in his *TLP* with a meta- or higher-order language.

Thus, in order to show how certain self-referring sentences result in paradox we must 'say' – *in a kind of higher-order language* – what we take the sentence to mean or more properly what we take the predicate "is false" to mean. And this logical definition will be given in such a language. And in order to show that self-referring expressions are nonsense, we must be given a kind of logical definition or criterion as to what is to count as a sentence with sense (one that is meaningful). And this, so it seems to me, must be given in a language that is of a higher-order, even for Wittgenstein. It is important to see that even if we do not regard the 'propositions' of the *TLP* as a metalanguage, it is a language that contains semantic terms such as "true", "meaning", "denotes", etc. Thus, Wittgenstein's language has functions that are typical of a meta-language in Tarski's sense. Indeed, it is not clear what other function the 'propositions' of the *TLP* – at least those that deal with the connection between the logic of our language and the world, which is the bulk of them – can have, given that they certainly do not picture facts, and are thus, in this sense, without meaning.

In his criticism of Russell's theory of types Wittgenstein is also using a meta-language to *show* where he thinks Russell goes wrong: "It can be seen that Russell must be wrong, because he had to mention the meaning of signs when establishing the rules for them" (3.331 again). By "meaning of signs" Wittgenstein means something like "what the signs refer to" or what they are "about" – i.e., the semantic meaning of the signs. And by "rules" for the signs Wittgenstein means how the signs can be legitimately used – that is, their logical syntax. The charge against Russell amounts to the idea that we ought

never, according to Wittgenstein, make the logical syntax of our language contingent on the meanings of the signs. John Nolt sums this up nicely when he writes: "The charge against the theory of types is that it makes syntax dependent on semantics because one cannot set up the theory without mentioning the meanings of the signs in establishing syntactic rules for them" (from John Nolt's lecture on logic[60]).

However, it is apparent that Wittgenstein, in order to make clear ("elucidate" 3.263) what he regards as confusion on Russell's part, must himself *use* certain formal concepts that his own semantic 'theory' (the picture 'theory') regards as unsayable. What Wittgenstein is 'saying' cannot, by his own lights, be *said*. The charge that Russell is guilty of relying on semantics to explain the use of his syntactic signs is a charge that can only be made in something like meta-language. Wittgenstein is forced to use a higher-order language to clarify what he regards as a mistake on Russell's part. Moreover, as we shall shortly see, it appears that in setting up his picture (model) theory of language, Wittgenstein does exactly the same thing as Russell – that is, he uses a higher order language, one that gives the semantic meaning of signs[61], to explain the syntactic use of those signs. Indeed, as early as 1914 Wittgenstein wrote: "Every connexion of signs which appears to say something about its own sense is a pseudo-proposition (like all propositions of logic)" (*NB*, p. 12). Thus, the propositions of the *TLP* are "pseudo-propositions" because they attempt to *say* where Russell goes wrong and they attempt to

[60] Professor John Nolt thinks that this is not an insurmountable problem for Russell, but this need not concern us here. I am only interested in what Wittgenstein *took* to be the problem with Russell's theory of types.

[61] The distinction between "sign" and "symbol" is simply that the former is merely a scratch on a piece of paper until we give it a meaning or a role to play, whereas a symbol is a sign that has a role to play in our syntax.

say what the meaning of ordinary propositions consists in. What I am doing is basically interpreting Wittgenstein's "pseudo-propositions" as meta-linguistic assertions.

At the end of the day, Wittgenstein's chief objection to Russell's theory of types is that it is unnecessary or superfluous. There is, according to Wittgenstein, no need for a hierarchy of types. For *the meaning* of any sign will be apparent in the use we make of the sign. And it is *the* role or function of the sign that determines the signs meaning: "If a sign is *useless*, it is meaningless; that is the point of Occam's maxim"(3.328). The context of this observation falls within Wittgenstein's criticism of Russell's type theory, but it applies equally to Wittgenstein's own project to set up a 'theory' of how propositions "show" their sense. Wittgenstein wants to say only what he regards as being minimally required in order for us to see *how* propositions have sense – that is, in order to set up his picture theory of meaning. And in order to do this I maintain that he must use a higher order language. It is to the setting up of his picture theory that we now turn.

"Elucidating" the Picture 'Theory' Via a Higher-order Language

Much is 'said' by Wittgenstein before we can appreciate what he means when he says that "a proposition *shows* its sense" (4.022). We are told that a proposition "*shows* its sense" in virtue of its being a "picture of reality" (4.01), and that "a picture is a fact" (2.141). The question before us is this: How does Wittgenstein build his picture theory?

Wittgenstein rather notoriously begins his *TLP* with a view of the world as a whole: "The world is all that is the case" (1), and proceeds to work backwards from this God's eye view, showing us just how the connection between language and the world is

forged at the deepest level. It is this linking up, as it were, of the language-world relation that is accomplished by and through a higher-order language. In demonstrating that he uses such a language to build his picture theory, I will start from what Wittgenstein regards as the basic constituents of reality – the "objects that make up the substance of the world" (2.021) – and proceed up and out, if you will.

Names and Objects; the Most Basic Language/World Relation

One couldn't have a better example of the use of higher-order expressions or sentences than Wittgenstein's 'claim' that "a name means an object. The object is its meaning" (3.203). Here a simple sign, such as '*A*' refers to (*bedeutet*) a simple object, *a*. Here "simple" means that neither the sign nor the object is complex; they cannot be analyzed or broken down any further. These simple objects are absolutely indefinable, as are the signs that refer to or name them. Unfortunately, Wittgenstein does not provide us with any examples of such signs or simples.[62] But we can appreciate his point if we assume that something like a sense datum (e.g., a point of red on a visual field) is simple and that the indexical "this" serves as a simple sign used to name it. At any rate, we clearly see Wittgenstein using the term "name" to mean (to refer to) the name of a simple object. If this is not a higher order language then I do not know what is to count as one.

[62] I am not even going to touch the issue of what is to count as an object, as this issue goes well beyond the scope of what I am trying to establish here; namely, the role played by Wittgenstein's 'propositions' in setting up his picture theory.

Wittgenstein instructs us further as to how his sign language or logical syntax works when he writes: "every sign that has a definition signifies *via* the signs that serve to define it; and the definitions point the way" (3.261). Here Wittgenstein is stipulating, via a higher order language, how we are to apply his picture theory of language. But how are we to understand 3.261? Wittgenstein is instructing us that certain "primitive signs" (names) which cannot be defined further (see 3.26) serve to define those expressions that are built up from them, that have a "definition". More specifically, an "elementary proposition" is defined as "a…concatenation of names" (4.22).

On the language side of the language/world relation – on the logical syntax side – we go from a simple sign (a "name") to the building up of an "elementary proposition" (a "nexus" or "concatenation of names"). Wittgenstein is "pointing the way" to his picture theory of language through the use of such stipulative definitions. Witness 4.24: "Names are the simple symbols: I indicate them by single letters ('*X*', '*Y*', '*Z*')." All of this can be said, according to Wittgenstein, for we are dealing here with logical syntax, not semantics. More importantly, the simple signs or names refer to simple objects in the world; that is the primary function of the simple signs. And it is the link between language and the world that cannot be "said". The language-world relation involves semantics, whereas the language side alone, such as giving a description of the way signs are to be used, involves logical syntax. Let us now see what role is played by the "elementary propositions".

Elementary Propositions and States of Affairs

At 4.21 we are told that the "simplest kind of proposition, an elementary proposition, asserts the existence of states of affairs". And we already know that "a state of affairs is a combination of objects (things)" (2.01). Thus, an elementary proposition depicts a state of affairs in the world. But notoriously, once again, Wittgenstein does not provide us with a single example of what is to count as an "elementary proposition". (We might suggest something like Neurath's protocol sentences as examples of elementary propositions merely for illustrative purposes. Thus, "red here now" might count). But why can't we at least illustrate what is to count as an elementary proposition—why can't we at least point to one? More to the point, why should we think that there are such linguistic entities as "elementary propositions" and the (ontological) "states of affairs" that they correspond to?

Wittgenstein's argument for this is in a higher-order language as well. At 3.23 Wittgenstein writes: "The requirement that simple signs be possible is the requirement that sense be determinate." And at 4.2211 he writes: "Even if the world is infinitely complex, so that every fact consists of infinitely many states of affairs and every state of affairs is composed of infinitely many objects, there would still have to be objects and states of affairs." Wittgenstein holds that the meaning of any proposition must be, in theory, determinate – a proposition is "articulate" (3.251). A proposition is articulate because it means whatever it does in virtue of being a picture of reality. But the sense of a proposition could not be determined if there were no states of affairs, and there could be no states of affairs if there were no simples. Now in this argument as to why there must

be "states of affairs" and "simples" we see the use of a higher-order language. For all these terms or expressions ("states of affairs", "simples", etc) are defined in a language that is distinct from the ordinary language we use to picture facts. Sentences of ordinary language – the language of science broadly construed – are the only sentences with sense.

Let us revisit Wittgenstein's argument for simples. Without simples there could be no picture (right or wrong, true or false) of reality. The fully articulated proposition, then, even if we cannot empirically give its complete logical analysis, must in principle be analyzable into simple signs ("names") that correspond to simple objects. According to Wittgenstein, we could never map our language onto the world without positing the existence of simple objects (simples are a necessary or transcendental requirement for sense in any descriptive language). That Wittgenstein has something like this in mind is clear: "If the world had no substance, then whether a proposition had sense would depend on whether another proposition was true" (2.0211. Why is this so unacceptable? Wittgenstein tells us at 2.021: "In that case we could not sketch any picture of the world (true or false)." No proposition could picture a fact if the analysis did not end with simple objects, for the truth of any proposition would then depend on the truth of another proposition and we would thus never arrive at the pure correspondence between language and world. We might put it by saying that the simple objects (whatever they are) are what anchor our descriptive propositions to the world. There could be no facts and so no (describable) world without simple objects. "The world is all that is the case" (1) would be a completely empty instruction as to how to see the world if we did not posit the existence of simple objects. The reason is plain: each and every sentence that has meaning (sense) acquires it in virtue of depicting either the way the world is or the way it

might be. But in order to do this a sentence (a picture) must be "articulate" (3.141), and by "articulate" Wittgenstein means that a sentence must in principle be capable of being analyzed down to its most basic constituents, names. And the names must correspond in reality to objects (simples). If names do not correspond to simples, then we could not "sketch any picture of the world (true or false)" (2.0212) because the truth of any sentence would depend on the truth of another sentence, and thus language would never get to the "substance of the world " (2.0211). This is why I say that "The world is all that is the case" would be vacuous if there were no simple objects and the names that refer to them. We could not "sketch a picture" of any possible world if there were no simples [what Wittgenstein calls "the substance of the world" (2.0211)].

The existence of "simple signs" and simples seems to rest on the idea that their existence is required in order for "sense" (meaning) to be "determinate" (3.23). There is a Kantian flavor in all this in that Wittgenstein appears to be giving a kind of transcendental argument for the existence of objects or simples. In order for sense or meaning to be determinate, we must posit the existence of simples. Wittgenstein does not peer into the world, discover that there are simples as a matter of fact, and then argue on a posteriori grounds as to how a proposition has a determinate meaning (this explains the conspicuous absence of anything remotely resembling an example of a simple in his early work, as well as his dismissal of the need to provide any examples). Rather, his ontological commitments are dictated by his view of what is required in order for descriptive language to picture this or that fact. The requirement that simples exist (the "substance of the world") is a transcendental condition for the possibility of sense

(meaning). If we are to describe the world at all, then the existence of simples must be posited.

Note that what makes Wittgenstein's 'pseudo-propositions' both semantic and higher order is his use of terms such as "true", "means", "refers" or "denotes", etc. This is the most telling characteristic of any higher order language. And Wittgenstein then uses his 'propositions' to build his picture 'theory' of how descriptive language connects to the world. Even if you regard my interpretation of Wittgenstein's picture 'theory' of language as mistaken it appears that the building of it is *said* in a higher-order language: That "names" are simple signs which "mean an object"; that an "elementary proposition" refers to a state of affairs; and that "propositions" depict possible facts in the world. The 'meanings' or definitions of such terms and what they refer to are all given in a higher order language: we have "names" corresponding to objects (simples); "elementary propositions" corresponding to states of affairs; and lastly "propositions" corresponding to pictures. The 'meanings' of all the terms in quotations are given in a metalanguage with a view to *showing* us how ordinary contingent propositions depict reality. In order to see how propositions are meaningful (or what it means to say that propositions have sense) we must see that the meaning of a "simple sign" is its bearer. All this is done in a higher-order language, for such claims cannot occur in the language that Wittgenstein is *talking about*. Much the same could be said for all the other terms (e.g., "states of affairs", "elementary propositions", etc) that Wittgenstein introduces. All are introduced so that we may see what it 'means' to 'say' that a proposition has sense only in virtue of its being a picture of reality (2.221).

Thus, all of these terms have only a meta-linguistic *meaning*, if they have meaning at all. Of course, according to the letter of Wittgenstein's view as to what counts as a proposition with sense they have no meaning at all; such 'claims' do not picture facts in the world. What I am suggesting is that their only purpose is to *show* us how contingent propositions depict facts. And once this is accomplished these "elucidations" can safely be discarded.

Propositions and the Facts They Picture

At 4.021 Wittgenstein writes: "A proposition is a picture of reality: for if I understand a proposition, I know the situation that it represents." And at 4.024 he writes: "To understand a proposition means to know what is the case if it is true. (One can understand it, therefore, without knowing whether it is true.) It is understood by anyone who understands its constituents." First, a proposition is made up of simple signs or names. These are its constituents. We have already examined the parts that make-up a proposition, and have seen that the definitions of these parts are carried out in a meta-language. We are now in a position to see that the definition of a proposition is something like this: the sense of a proposition just is "the conditions that make it true." This definition permits us to understand true as well as false propositions. A false proposition has sense (meaning) so long as we can articulate the way the world would need to be in order for it to be true.

In grasping what it means for a proposition to have sense (meaning) we must interpret Wittgenstein's 'claims' as meta-linguistic. What he defines as a proposition with

sense can only be defined in some higher-order language. He fills in what he means when he says "a proposition *shows* its sense" (4.022). And at 4.021 where we are told that it is in virtue of being a "picture of reality" that a proposition's sense is shown. But how does Wittgenstein get us to see this? By in effect '*showing'* (or stipulating or elucidating) that the only propositions that count as meaningful ones– that is, the ones with sense – are those that "picture reality". And this is all accomplished via the use of a meta-language. Indeed, Wittgenstein is providing a criterion of meaning for our ordinary contingent propositions. Put another way, Wittgenstein is giving us a definition in a higher order language of what is to count as a meaningful proposition in our lower-level language. The lower-level language is simply the set of contingent propositions of science broadly construed. These are the propositions that have sense because they depict possible situations in the world. What Wittgenstein is in effect 'saying' is this: "The criterion of meaning for ordinary contingent propositions is that they represent or picture a way in which the world might be". We might call this the picture theory criterion of meaning. Notice that this 'claim' is of a higher-order than the contingent propositions that it speaks *about*. It *cannot have* the kind of meaning that it requires of ordinary propositions. Yet, for all that, it seems quite intelligible. We understand it. And I submit that we should understand it as a higher-order 'claim' about what is to count as a meaningful proposition in ordinary language.

Indeed, understanding Wittgenstein's picture theory of meaning in this way paves the way for seeing the world as a "limited whole", for we can see that a complete list of all true propositions would give us a complete description of the world: "The world is all that is the case" (1). His higher order language is required in his account of everything

from the deepest connection between any descriptive language and all possible worlds ("a name means an object") to his picture 'theory' of meaning (a proposition with sense is by definition one that represents a possible situation in the world). And it leads, in the end, to his invitation to us to view "the world as the totality of facts, not things" (1.1). His metalinguistic account of the picture theory of meaning leads nicely into his invitational and evocative use of language whose function is to cause us to feel the world as a "limited whole".

The Logic of Descriptive Language Results in Our "Seeing the World as a Limited Whole"

Wittgenstein begins his treatise with the oracular pronouncement "the world is all that is the case" (1) and ends with the pronouncement "what we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence" (7). Much of his work consists in directing our attention to his picture theory of language. (1) Directs us to see the world from a God's eye view. But Wittgenstein fills (1) in, so speak, by providing us with metalinguistic assertions as to how we can come to see the world in this way. I have argued that he does so by using a higher-order language. Wittgenstein begins by projecting us out of the world ("the world is all that is the case", 1) and ends with a demanding silence about anything that does not involve a sentence about some possible fact in the world ("whereof one cannot speak thereof one must remain silent", 7). He begins and ends with a transcendental view of the connection between language and the world. In the bulk of his work he 'says' something about this connection. But the connection between language and the world turns out to

have rather negative consequences in terms of our saying anything about the importance or meaning of life and *where in the world* value is to be discovered. For in showing us that the world is "all that is the case" (and nothing more), we are forced to see the impossibility of saying anything about what, according to Wittgenstein, really matters. I have argued that all of this is done with a higher order language; a language that 'says' what cannot technically be *said* by his picture theory: a language which "shows" us that the right way to see the world is to see it as nothing more than a complete description of all true contingent propositions.

But what is the ultimate purpose of this language that is, by Wittgenstein's own lights, not a language? How does any of this take us to the really important stuff that cannot be said? The picture theory shows us that all that we can speak about are the facts in the world. For the logic of our language – that is, the logic of any representational language – can do no more than this. As he says in his *LE*, all that language can give us are "facts, facts, and facts but no ethics" (p. 67). As far as the logic of our language is concerned, seeing the world as a "limited whole" means no more than that a complete description of all the facts in the world is to see the very limits of the world. Should (7), then, be understood as no more than the admonition that we are stuck only with facts, and that the world is totally without value and meaning in an absolute sense? Can anything positive be said about value at all? More importantly, how does his view of the logic of our language lead to anything remotely related to the ethical? (For one of my main contentions is that the logic of our language (in some sense) leads to a perspective on the world that has an ethical aspect to it.) Must we suppose, in order to wrest some sense of the ethical from Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, that when he refers to what we cannot "speak

about" he is referring to some noumenal realm of value, something *about which* we cannot speak, but is ineffably there?[63] Or is (7) suggesting that there is *nothing* to keep quiet about *and* so we should keep quiet?

I will try to tread a path between these two extremes, arguing instead that Wittgenstein's God's eye view of the world opens the door for our feeling the world as having absolute value. This feeling or experience is the experience *of* the mystical. I want to suggest that the mystical "*shows* itself" (6.522) when we "feel" the world as a "limited whole" (6.45) Whether or not Wittgenstein is right about this, it is pretty clear that he thought that seeing the world under the aspect of eternity has an aesthetico-ethical dimension to it. But this aspect of the perspective can only be appreciated once we have been brought to the limit of descriptive or representational language, and thus to the limit of the world (5.61).

The limit of our language shows us that ethics cannot be discovered in the facts of the world, and thus the only place left for absolute value is in our perspective on "the world as a limited whole". But two nagging questions still remain: First, how can we characterize the aesthetico-ethical dimension of the transcendental perspective on the world if the perspective is at the very limit or outside of language and the world? Second, what, if any, practical good comes out of this perspective – does the view have nothing to do with ethics in the more ordinary (and intuitive) sense at all?

I answer these questions in Chapters Three and Four. In Chapter three I argue that Wittgenstein's perspective on the world can be characterized as will-less and

[63] Engelmann, for example, says this about the "significance" of the *TLP*: "It consists in having established the irrefutable separation between the higher sphere, which exists, and its expression, which is

timeless, and that this, in part, is what enables us to feel or experience the world as having absolute value. I also argue that when Wittgenstein speaks about the "metaphysical subject" and the "willing subject" he is not committed to any type of noumenal self that apprehends value in some transcendent realm. Instead, I contend that his use of these terms is a kind of dramatic way for him to express his transcendental perspective on the world. Here it is important to notice that I avoid the positivistic view that nothing at all is elucidated by Wittgenstein's remarks on ethics, value, and the mystical.

I also demonstrate that Wittgenstein does have a way to talk about ethics, in the more ordinary sense, if we attribute to him a view of moral claims that is very like Philippa Foot's position in here article "Morality As A System of Hypothetical Imperatives" (1972). If we interpret Wittgenstein talk about "relative" value *in* the world as something akin to Foot's view that moral claims are basically hypothetical imperatives, we have a way to reconcile the idea that value, in an absolute sense, can have nothing to do with the facts in the world, whereas ethical claims made about this or that action (which is a fact in the world) can be said, but have only a hypothetical status.

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problematical, and in having shown up the fundamental dubiousness of such expression" (*Letters from L.W. with a Memoir*, p. 98).

CHAPTER THREE

(a) An Aesthetico-Ethical Perspective with Respect to The World; The Influence of Arthur Schopenhauer

> For the man who studies to gain *insight*, books and studies are merely rungs of the ladder on which he climbs to the summit of knowledge. As soon as a rung has raised him one step, he leaves it behind. On the other hand, the many who study in order to fill their memories do not use the rungs of the ladder for climbing, but take them off and load themselves with them to take away, rejoicing at the increasing weight of the burden. They remain below forever, since they are carrying what ought to have carried them. (Schopenhauer: *WWR*, Vol. II, p. 72)

> My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical, when he has used them – as steps – to climb up beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it.)
> He must transcend these propositions, and then he will see the world aright. (Wittgenstein: *TLP*, 6.54)[64]

The above passages makes clear that Schopenhauer and Wittgenstein regard "insight" or a kind of perceptual knowledge – in Wittgenstein's language, "seeing the world aright" – as the primary goal of any philosophical work (or, for Schopenhauer, any work of genius), and that we are to use "books and studies" as rungs on a "ladder" to gain such insight. Only then can the "books and studies" – the 'propositions' – be left behind or discarded.

And this is not the only overarching, if rather loose, parallel between the two thinkers. Indeed, Schopenhauer regards conceptual, abstract knowledge as second rate compared to intuitive perception: "The source of true wisdom lies not in the abstract

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[64] Wittgenstein's claims here are far more extreme than Schopenhauer's. However, both passages demonstrate the influence that Schopenhauer had on Wittgenstein (the obvious reference to "throwing away the ladder"), as well as the fact that both thinkers regarded "books and studies" (especially Philosophy) and philosophical 'propositions' as a means to gaining "insight" or the right perspective. It might be called wisdom.

rational knowledge, but in the correct and profound *apprehension of the world in perception*" (my emphasis, *WWR*, p. 80). This is very like Wittgenstein's talk of coming to "*see* the world aright" (6.54, my emphasis). Moreover, Wittgenstein's picture theory of language is, in the words of James Edwards, the apotheosis of "rationality-as-representation" (p. 60).[65] What can be represented (described or said) by propositions of natural science broadly construed is "abstract rational knowledge", and *all* that can be so represented or pictured is not the really important part of Wittgenstein's work. In his preface Wittgenstein says that the "*truth* of the thoughts that are here communicated... seem... unassailable and definitive...[and]...this shows how little is achieved when these problems are solved" (*TLP*, p. 4). Why is so little achieved? All he has shown is how to draw the line between sense and nonsense; and propositions with sense, I am suggesting, are very like the kind of knowledge that Schopenhauer regards as second rate. D. A. Weiner has written: "According to Schopenhauer, only abstract knowledge can be communicated in words; intuitive knowledge, on the other hand, can be shown, but not said" (p 38).[66]

Today it is a pretty well known fact that Schopenhauer had a tremendous influence on Wittgenstein's early work.[67] But it is very difficult to trace those influences in a detailed and illuminating way, especially when it comes to Wittgenstein's remarks

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[65] In his *Ethics Without Philosophy* (1982)

[66] *Genius and Talent: Schopenhauer's Influence on Wittgenstein's Early Philosophy* (1992)

[67] G.E.M Anscombe quotes Wittgenstein as saying: "Schopenhauer was fundamentally right, if only a few adjustments and clarifications were made" (*Introduction to the Tractatus*, p 11). But who in the hell knows what "clarifications" and "adjustments" Wittgenstein had in mind. He certainly does not tell us. Indeed, what is so frustrating about Wittgenstein's *TLP* (one of the things anyway) is that he does not give due credit to Schopenhauer anywhere. Yet it is clear that much of his ideas come from Schopenhauer. It is really a mystery as to why he so conspicuously leaves Schopenhauer out. For an intriguing answer to this question, see the marvelous little book *Genius and Talent: Schopenhauer's Influence on Wittgenstein's Early Philosophy* by D. A. Weiner (1992).

about ethics and aesthetics. In what follows I will focus on those aspects of Schopenhauer's work that clarify the aesthetico-ethical aspect of Wittgenstein's transcendental perspective with respect to the world. The above parallels, though somewhat loose, do suggest that both thinkers regarded intuitive perception (I hesitate to refer to this as "knowledge" on Wittgenstein's narrow view of what can count as such) as more profound and harder to come by than rational knowledge, and both seemed to think that philosophy shows us something vital about the world as a whole. Still, we need to get to the details of Schopenhauer's influence on what I am calling Wittgenstein's transcendental perspective on the world.

What metaphysical and ethical presuppositions did Wittgenstein borrow from Schopenhauer, and, more importantly, how do they show up in his draconian approach to ethics and value in his *TLP*?

Relating "Das Mystische" to the World

Wittgenstein claims that ethics, aesthetics, and (even) logic are "transcendental" (6.421 and 6.13, respectively). But he sheds very little light on what he means by "transcendental" (6.421), except to say that it is what's shown (6.522), and cannot be said; it is also what is "higher" (6.42), if that helps. Nor does he give us more than a few hints as to what the relation is between the world that is pictured through descriptive language and the other areas (above) that he characterizes as "transcendental". What is the relation of ethics, aesthetics, and value to the world?

There *must* be some connection or relation, for if no such connection exists it is hard to see why Wittgenstein regarded whatever it is that's "higher" as vital to our seeing the world "aright" (6.54). Magee's comment about Schopenhauer's philosophy is equally pertinent to Wittgenstein's work: "Of course, all these things [i.e., what's "higher": ethics, the value of the world, etc.] must have what one might call an interface with the world of phenomena: if they did not, they could have no import for us whatsoever" (Magee, p. 317).[68]

We are left with wondering just what the relation is between what's "transcendental" and the world of facts. What is the connection between the "*thing* that indeed cannot be put into words", but "makes *itself* manifest" (6.522) and the world? How do the two "interface"? Put differently, the problem reduces to this: If ethics is "transcendental" (6.421) and value "lies outside the world" (6.41), then it seems that the connection between ethics and the world in which we live is hopelessly mysterious and even irrelevant.[69] The transcendental perspective on the world must, it seems, make a difference in our attitude toward the world as a "limited whole" (6.45)—in how we come to see and "feel the world" (6.45). I will argue that this perspective is an attitude that we take to the world: "The will is an attitude of the subject to the world" (*NB*, p. 87). Now the term "will", as it is used here, is to be distinguished from the will of individual subjects *in* the world; that is, will that takes as its object some particular fact or facts in the world.

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[68] Magee, Bryan: *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer* (1983)

[69] Perhaps "irrelevant" is not quite right. Certainly Wittgenstein's conception of ethics has little to do with our actions in the world. It is more appropriate to say that the ethical in Wittgenstein's *TLP* is "far removed" from the facts in the world. This is what I mean by "irrelevant."

I will argue that Wittgenstein has two senses of will at work in his *Tractatus*: the first takes the whole world – the world as a "limited whole" – as object. It is in this sense that will is essentially involved in the aesthetico-ethcial dimension of Wittgenstein's transcendental perspective with respect to the world. Witness: "If the good or bad exercise of the will does alter the world, it can alter only the limits of the world, not the facts – not what can be expressed by means of language. In short the effect must be that it becomes an altogether different world. It must, so to speak, wax and wane as a whole" (6.43). The second notion of "will" or "willing" is the more ordinary will of this or that subject in the world, and is essentially connected with the actions of individual subjects. This notion of will is the one that Wittgenstein refers to as being a "phenomenon [that is] of interest only to psychology" (6.423). Will, in this latter sense, is to be disconnected or divorced from the transcendental perspective on the world *if* we are to see the "world aright".

I contend that there are interesting parallels between Wittgenstein's "metaphysical subject" (5.633 and 5.641) and Schopenhauer's "pure knowing subject." Neither Schopenhauer nor Wittgenstein use these terms univocally, as we shall see. I will argue that when Wittgenstein refers to the "metaphysical subject" he is best interpreted as referring to a perspective that is disconnected from the individual subject's will *in the world*. The perspective amounts to a kind of pure objectivity with respect to the world. Indeed, it is in large part the will-less and timeless (*qua* individual subject in the world) aspect of Wittgenstein's "transcendental perspective" that lends the perspective its aesthetico-ethical dimension.

Now the language used by Wittgenstein suggests that it is the "metaphysical subject" that *takes up* such a perspective. However, it is my view that what Wittgenstein calls the "metaphysical subject" is better thought of as any individual subject that views the world from a timeless and will-less perspective. The primary ethical goal – the ethical point – of the *Tractatus* is to bring us to this perspective.

To see the world "sub specie aeterni" (6.45) is to take up the transcendental perspective. Moreover, it is precisely this perspective that serves as "the solution of the riddle of life" – a solution that "lies *outside* space and time" (6.4312). Having said that this solution "lies outside space and time", it is natural to want to interpret Wittgenstein as suggesting that value, ethics, and will, which is "the bearer of good and evil" (*NB*; 21.17.16, p. 76) is some*thing* that stands outside the world, in a kind of "noumenal" reality in the following sense: the ethical will stands beyond the totality of facts, and thus is beyond our ken, but if, *per impossible*, we were in a position to know something about it there would be much that we could say.

Such a view treats the metaphysical subject as part of some super-worldly reality; something forever out of reach but required as a kind of touchstone for value in this world. This is a mistake.[70] Again, the "metaphysical subject" is best interpreted as a will-less and timeless perspective on the world; an attitude to the world *as a limited whole*.

I want to begin with a brief and very conservative account of Schopenhauer's distinction between the world *as* will and the world *as* representation. This will be

[70] "The thinking, presenting subject; there is no such thing" (5.631).

followed by an account of the distinction between Schopenhauer's "pure knowing subject" and his "purely knowing subject". Then we will investigate those unmistakably Schopenhauerian passages of Wittgenstein's *Notebooks* (1914-1916) that made their way (albeit in abbreviated and different form) into the *Tractatus*. These passages concern: ethics, aesthetics, the metaphysical subject, and the world seen "sub specie aeternitatis."

World as Will and Representation: The Two Poles[71]

According to Schopenhauer will is the ultimate ground[72] of all our representations and so our world: it is the matter/energy that is required for the existence of a world of representation in the first place. Will is manifested in all things, inanimate and animate objects. Will, energy or force manifests itself in the phenomenal world – the world of representation – through particular bits of matter, that is, through objects.

In addition, there is another aspect of will – one that cannot be represented; this is will as *it is in itself*. It should be noted that Schopenhauer usually just distinguishes between will as "the thing in itself" and as "phenomena" or "objects."

But there are some passages that support reading Schopenhauer in terms of a three-fold distinction. For example, in Volume I he talks about matter as "nothing but causality" (*Wirken*[73]), suggesting that matter is not any type of *object* or *thing* within the

[71] Richard Aquila has been instrumental in helping me to understand the broad strokes of Schopenhauer's view.
[72] Will should not be thought of as the cause of the world; it is not a ground in this sense. For will is, strictly speaking, independent of the principle of sufficient reason. This means that it is outside the phenomenal world and so outside of space, time, and causality. It just *is*. However, without will there is no world of representation.
[73] Richard Aquila suggests "effectuality" or "effectivity" in place of "causality" as a translation of *Wirken*.

world as presentation, but that it is rather an expression of the "in-itself" on a level that is more fundamental than the objects and things within the phenomenal world (p.8). And in Volume II he mentions that the matter "pole", when divorced from our way of viewing or representing it, is "quite dead" (p. 15). In any case, Schopenhauer emphasizes that we cannot know will "as it is in itself."

Indeed, since will just is force or energy that constitutes the world as representation, it cannot be pictured or represented outside of the way in which it manifests itself in the phenomenal world. Whatever qualities or characteristics belong to will, outside of the way in which it is manifested in the world of representation, is forever beyond our ken. We can only 'characterize' it as being a kind of undifferentiated unity.

(1) The Pure Knowing Subject and (2) the Purely Knowing Subject

In order for there to be a world of representation in the first place there must, in addition to will (matter/energy/force), be a knower to which the world as representation presents itself. There are essentially, then, two "poles" in Schopenhauer's philosophy: There is will, which can be thought of as the "matter/energy pole", and there is the knower, which can be thought of as the "subject pole". Neither of these poles can themselves be represented according to Schopenhauer: the matter pole because it just is the force or energy which makes possible what's represented, and the subject pole because it is what's required for the world as representation to be apprehended or cognized at all: "The world as representation, the objective world, has thus, so to speak, two poles, namely, the knowing subject plain and simple without the forms of its

knowing, and crude matter without form and quality. Both are absolutely unknowable: the subject, because it is that which knows; matter, because without form and quality it cannot be perceived" (Vol II, p. 15). This former "pole" is the subject of pure knowing: "That which knows all things and is known by none is the subject" (Vol. I, p. 5). Thus the subject pole, since it is not part of the world as presentation, cannot be an object of knowledge at all. But there cannot be a world of representation without a subject and there cannot be a subject without a world of representation (whatever is known presupposes an object of knowledge and whatever is an object of knowledge presupposes a knower). There are then, on Schopenhauer's view, "two essential, necessary, and inseparable halves. The one half is the *object*...but the other half...[is]...the subject...[that is]...whole and undivided in every representing being" (p. 5).

Now the term "subject" (immediately above) is somewhat ambiguous. Here Schopenhauer is not talking about an individual subject *in* the world as presented; that is, he is not referring to a subject that is instantiated in this bit of matter, but is referring only to the "knowing subject plain and simple" (p. 15). Richard Aquila characterizes the subject pole in the following way: "Schopenhauer is discussing the 'subject pole' wherever he is talking about the process of cognition as such, i.e., with respect to whatever there is in cognition that is *not explicable* wholly in terms of the particular material medium or substratum through which it is operating, or in which it is realized or instantiated" (Richard's Notes).

Thus, "the pure subject of knowing", cannot, in the sense in which it has been explicated above, be thought of as a particular subject, for any particular subject would be instantiated by this or that bit of matter, and so could be an object of representation. This

latter subject just is "...the subject of knowing, who appears as an individual only through his identity with the body..." (p. 100).

There is another distinction that needs to be made before we can appreciate the way in which Wittgenstein made use of Schopenhauer's talk of a "pure knowing subject." Schopenhauer also refers to the "purely knowing subject". This is more like a cognitive state of an individual. The idea that the purely knowing subject is more like the most objective state of an individual clearly stands out in those passages where Schopenhauer is talking about contemplative "genius":

> Genius is the capacity to remain in a state of pure perception [what Schopenhauer also calls "the most complete objectivity", Vol. II, p.185], to lose oneself in perception, to remove from the service of the will the knowledge which originally existed only for this service. In other words, genius is the ability to leave entirely out of sight our own interest, our willing, and our aims, and consequently to discard entirely our own personality for a time, in order to remain *purely knowing subject*, the clear eye of the world (p. 186).[74]

Frequently, when Schopenhauer refers to the purely knowing subject he is referring to a cognitive state that is the purest form of objectivity. We will shortly consider some additional passages to support this claim.

The importance of the distinction between (1) the pure subject of knowing and (2) the purely knowing subject is that it sheds light not only on Wittgenstein's remarks about the "metaphysical subject" that is a "limit of the world" (5.632), which is closer to (1), but provides more evidence that Wittgenstein is attempting to bring us to a perspective – a purely objective contemplative state with respect to the world – that is divorced from

[74] Thanks to Richard Aquila for pointing out that E.J. Payne mistranslates an adverbial expression ("pure*ly* knowing subject) as an adjectival expression ("pure knowing subject"). The "*purely knowing* subject" is more clearly a contemplative *state* that we can be in.

the will in much the same way that Schopenhauer characterizes the "pure perception" of the "genius" as will-less, which is closer to (2).

The exact way in which Wittgenstein understood Schopenhauer's talk of a "pure knowing subject" in (1) is unclear. Wittgenstein does refer to a subject "at the limit" of the world, as we have just seen (and we will discuss what this means in greater detail later). But Schopenhauer does not characterize the pure knowing subject as being at the limit of the world in the way that Wittgenstein characterizes the "metaphysical subject" as being a "limit of the world". Schopenhauer says only that the forms in which the object can be represented, viz., space, time, and causality are a "limit" between the pure knowing subject and the object (Vol. II, p.25). He writes that subject and object "limit each other" in the following way: "The common or reciprocal nature of this limitation is seen in the very fact that the essential, and hence universal, forms of every object, namely space, time and causality, can be found and fully known, starting from the subject, even without the knowledge of the object itself, that is to say, in Kant's language, they reside a priori in our consciousness" (Vol. II, p.5; cf. p. 25). The "boundary" or limit here is not the pure knowing subject as such – this is not what is being described as a boundary; rather, it is space, time, and causality that is being characterized as the boundary between the subject and the object. The "a priori" forms of knowledge are a "boundary" between the world as represented and the subject of knowing, not the subject. Perhaps, then, we must say something weaker; namely, Wittgenstein's "metaphysical subject" is a limiting point or a "boundary" by virtue of being that aspect of the world as representation that expresses nothing more than conditions imposed by Schopenhauer's pure subject of knowing as understood in (1). And it is just in this sense, in turn, that Schopenhauer's

pure subject can be said to be a limit or boundary as well. In any case, I hope to make clear that Wittgenstein embraced something very close to Schopenhauer's "purely knowing subject" understood as a state of pure objectivity (2), and that this pure objectivity is what gives Wittgenstein's transcendental perspective its aesthetico-ethical aspect.

Schopenhauer's Characterization of the "Purely Knowing Subject" *qua* Contemplative State

Schopenhauer thinks that "the subject as pure subject of knowledge [is] free from individuality and from servitude to the will" (Vol. II, Book III, p. 180). Here are some of the ways in which Schopenhauer characterizes the purely knowing subject in the context of aesthetic contemplation: "Such a subject of knowledge no longer follows relations in accordance with the principle of sufficient reason; on the contrary, it rests in fixed contemplation of the object presented to it out of its connection with any other, and rises into this" (p. 178). And a little further down he writes:

> We *lose* ourselves entirely in this object…in other words, we forget our individuality, our will, and continue to exist as pure subject, as clear mirror of the object, so that it is as though the object alone existed without anyone to perceive it, and thus we are no longer able to separate perceiver from the perception, but the two have become one, since the entire consciousness is filled and occupied by a single image of the perception (pp. 178-179).

And…

> Now whoever has, in the manner stated, become so absorbed and lost in the perception of nature that he exists only as purely knowing subject, becomes in this way immediately aware that, as such, he is the condition, and hence the supporter,

> of the world and of all objective existence, for this now shows itself as dependent on his existence (p. 181).

Finally, in discussing what is characteristic of artistic "genius", witness:

> ...Genius is the ability to leave entirely out of sight our own interest, our willing, and our aims, and consequently to discard entirely our own personality for a time, in order to remain *purely knowing subject*, the clear eye of the world... (pp. 185-186).

Together, the above characterizations of the purely knowing subject make clear two pertinent points: First, this perspective stands outside Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason.[75] More specifically, the perspective of the pure knowing subject is both timeless and (in some sense) detached from will. Second, the individual self becomes "lost", and there is no longer the dualism of particular subject and object. The individual subject drops out, and the object of apprehension becomes everything. According to Schopenhauer, knowledge of anything in the world of representation is determined by one of the four forms of the principle of sufficient reason, including space and time. Juxtaposing the difference in the kind of knowing had by "the knowing individual" (a particular knowing subject), against that had by the "purely knowing subject", Schopenhauer writes:

> The knowing individual as such and the particular thing known by him are always in a particular place, at a particular time, and are links in the chain of causes and effects. The pure subject of knowledge and its correlative, the Idea[76], have passed out of all these forms of the principle of sufficient reason. Time, place, the

[75] *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason* (1915)

[76] Schopenhauer makes use of Platonic "ideas" in a very different way than Plato did. For Schopenhauer such ideas are direct manifestations of the essence or type of a thing in the world as presented to us, but they are not to be thought of as giving us knowledge of the ultimate nature of reality, as they were for Plato. Indeed, if there is any ultimate nature of reality for Schopenhauer, it cannot be "known" outside of representation. Rather, "ideas" in Schopenhauer's sense are best understood as what's universal and timeless in the world. But this universal quality is apprehended through some particular thing, like a painting or piece of sculpture, etc. Schopenhauer's 'Platonic' ideas are intermediaries between the world of representation and the world as it is in itself. Wittgenstein has nothing comparable in to this in the *Tractatus.*

individual that knows, and the individual that is known, have no meaning for them (p. 179).

Again, Schopenhauer holds that everything that we know within the world of representation is a manifestation of will. But with the sole exception of "Ideas", any object of knowledge as manifestation of will is apprehended as subordinate to the principle of sufficient reason. And causality is one of the four forms of this principle. With respect to individual subjects, the cause of any action is cashed out in terms of motive. And motive is one of the four forms of the principle of sufficient reason within the world of representation. Hence, every action we take and any goal we pursue is conditioned by will (in the form of motive). (Of course, there are forces other than motive at work as well). What follows from this is that even the pursuit of knowledge is subordinate to will. More specifically, there are always motives that drive us to acquire this or that bit of knowledge. The aim of all scientific knowledge, for example, is guided or driven by our interest or desire to understand the world. We may have only a practical interest in a part of the world or we may simply be interested in acquiring knowledge out of intellectual curiosity or we may, as sometimes happens, not be sure what drives us. Still, in any case it is the will that is primary here, and knowledge is a goal that satisfies will.

Being outside of the principle of sufficient reason entails that the pure knowing subject cannot be causally influenced: it (somehow) escapes will in the sense that it is not conditioned by it. Thus, the view that is taken up by the "pure knowing subject" involves a detachment from will in the form of motive; that is, will as it is in the midst of the

world. Let us now compare Schopenhauer's remarks about the pure knowing subject to Wittgenstein's remarks about the "metaphysical subject."

Wittgenstein's Metaphysical Subject

What we find in the *Tractatus* (at 5.632 and 5.633) is the following comment and question: "The subject does not belong to the world: rather, it is a limit of the world". "Where *in* the world is a *metaphysical* subject to be found"? Unlike Schopenhauer, Wittgenstein characterizes the metaphysical subject as something that is at the very limit of the pictured world. Wittgenstein makes use of Schopenhauer's metaphor of this subject being like an eye in the visual field in that it is no part of the visual field (the world), but is rather a limiting point from which the entire world is viewed: one "does not see the eye" (5.633). This metaphor suggests that the subject is at the limit of the world in the same way that my eye is the limit of my visual field: if my field of vision is understood as the world and my eye stands in for the metaphysical subject, then clearly the subject is at the limit of my world just as my eye is at the limit or boundary of my visual field.

The "metaphysical subject", being at the "limit" of the world as pictured, suggests that whatever it is it cannot be pictured or represented at all. Indeed, Wittgenstein claims that the only "sense" in which we can speak about it is to say what it is not: it is "not the man", "not the body or the human soul", but rather "the limit" and "not a part of the world" (5.641). Just as "nothing *in the visual field* allows you to infer that it is seen by an eye" (5.633), nothing in the world allows you to infer that the world is seen by a

metaphysical subject. Wittgenstein does not explicitly draw this parallel, but it is clear that he does not think one needs to posit some subject over and above individual subjects in the world. Thus, the "metaphysical subject" is more plausibly thought of as a kind of God's eye view of the world. Indeed, such a 'subject' is better interpreted as the conditions necessary for us (as individual subjects in the midst of the world) to view the whole world – the world at its limit, which for Wittgenstein means the world as pictured (as "the totality of facts" and these being "*all* the facts", 1 and 1.1).

But is this all that Wittgenstein's "metaphysical subject" has in common with Schopenhauer's "pure knowing subject"? Are both, in their different ways, a limit to the world as pictured or represented? It appears that this is all they have in common. However, Schopenhauer's purely knowing subject *qua* state seems to have more in common with the way in which Wittgenstein is attempting to get us to see the world. If my view is correct, Wittgenstein transcendental perspective is detached from both will and time in the same way that Schopenhauer's "purely knowing subject" is. Let's try to make sense of the individual subject's will being detached from the world (just what this might mean) by first investigating why Wittgenstein identifies ethics with aesthetics.

Ethics and Aesthetics are the same: In What Sense?

At 6.421 Wittgenstein writes: "It is clear that ethics cannot be expressed. Ethics is transcendental. (Ethics and aesthetics are one)". Does Wittgenstein think both aesthetics and ethics are the same only because of their inexpressibility? Is this what makes both transcendental? We know that neither subject can be pictured or represented in the

contingent world of facts, and that this is why they cannot be said. But this is a purely negative characterization of such subjects. In order to take a stab at a more positive way to characterize what it means for ethics and aesthetics to be transcendental according to Wittgenstein, we need to see what Schopenhauer thinks the relation is between the "pure subject of knowing" and the aesthetic perspective (Book III, sections 32-34). In chapter four I investigate in more detail why Wittgenstein identifies ethics with aesthetics.

According to Schopenhauer, when the artist contemplates an object of art, the blind, driving force which is will[77] is detached from his perspective or apprehension of the object to the point that he no longer makes a meaningful distinction between himself, with his particular inclinations and desires, and the object of his perception. Interestingly, Schopenhauer places philosophy alongside the fine arts because the former, like the latter, is not in the service of the will:

> Not merely philosophy but also the fine arts work at bottom towards the solution of the problem of existence. For in every contemplation of the world, a desire has been awakened…to comprehend the true nature of things, of life, and of existence.[78] For this alone is of interest to intellect as such, in other words, to the subject of knowing which has become free from the aims of the will and is therefore pure; just as for the subject, knowing as mere individual, only the aims of the will have interest (Vol. II, p. 390).

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[77] Though in exactly what sense will is detached is not clear. For according to Schopenhauer everything in the phenomenal world is a manifestation of will. Thus, a detached and disinterested perspective must involve will in some sense. Wittgenstein, as we will see, talks of will as "phenomenon", the will that is "of interest only to psychology" (6.423). This is just the willing *individual subject*. It is will in this sense that is detached from the world of facts for Wittgenstein. Schopenhauer does not make such a distinction, and so it is more difficult to see how his pure knowing subject escapes the fetters of will.

[78] Notice that Schopenhauer puts Philosophy in with the fine arts, suggesting that the value of Philosophy is more closely tied to insight and perception, and that abstract, conceptual knowledge is what's most important. I suspect that the perspective Wittgenstein is trying to bring us to in his *Tractatus* is designed to

And in characterizing Schopenhauer's account of aesthetic experience, Magee writes:

> To the object's being seen as independent of the principle of sufficient reason there corresponds the subject's seeing it as independent of anything to do with his willing – not as useful, or protectively enveloping, or obstructive or dangerous, or in any other way instrumental or mediating, but simply as itself (p. 165).

And Schopenhauer describes the artists' perspective as a "*gift of genius*":

> [Such contemplation] demands a complete forgetting of our own person and of its relations and connections, ...[and] "is nothing but the most complete *objectivity*, i.e., the objective tendency of the mind, as opposed to the subjective [tendency of the mind, which is] directed to our own person, i.e., to the will (p.185).

I want to suggest that for both Schopenhauer and Wittgenstein, this *tendency of the mind* is not just tied to aesthetics, but is the apotheosis of the moral outlook on the world as well. Indeed, according to Christopher Janaway "morality for Schopenhauer is not a matter of duty or of 'ought'; nor can it be founded in rationality. It is a matter of 'seeing the world aright', to use Wittgenstein's later phrase" (*Schopenhauer*, pp. 73-74).

According to Schopenhauer, the right ethical attitude or outlook requires will-less-ness or what Schopenhauer refers to as the "surrender of all willing" (Sec. 66) in much the same way as the aesthetical perspective does. This is clear from the following passages:

> Thus through the reduced interest in our own self, the anxious care for that self is attacked at its root; hence the calm and confident serenity afforded by a virtuous disposition and a good conscience... (p. 374)

And in Section 66 Schopenhauer writes:

> ...Whoever is still involved in the *Principium individuationis*...knows only particular things and their relation to his own person, and these then become ever renewed *motives* of his willing. On the other hand, that knowledge of the whole, of the inner nature of the thing-in-itself, which has been described, becomes the

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dissolve just such problems. We cease to ask such questions when we see that they cannot be given any descriptive meaning, and are thus nonsensical. I address this in the next chapter.

> *quieter* of all and every willing. The will now turns away from life; it shudders at the pleasures in which it recognizes the affirmation of life. Man attains to the state of voluntary renunciation, resignation, true composure, and complete will-lessness (p. 379).

And finally in Section 68 Schopenhauer comes close to equating the aesthetic contemplation of some object, divorced as such contemplation is from the will, as very close to the right ethical attitude toward "the heavy atmosphere of the earth" (p. 390). Schopenhauer goes on to say:

> We can infer how blessed must be the life of a man whose will is silenced not for a few moments, as in the enjoyment of the beautiful, but forever, indeed completely extinguished, except for the last glimmering spark that maintains the body and is extinguished with it (*Ibid.*).

Here, of course, Schopenhauer's truly ethical or saintly disposition or attitude toward all that happens in the world is rather more substantial than anything Wittgenstein says. Nowhere does Wittgenstein indicate that the individual willing subject is in some sense illusory, and thus part of a "veil of maya" (Sec. 68, p.379). Nor Does Wittgenstein claim: "the right ethical view or attitude is one that negates the will." Still, it is clear that a cessation of willing in the world – or something very like it, as we shall soon see – is connected with Wittgenstein's transcendental perspective on the world.

Now the similarity that Wittgenstein sees between art and ethics is amplified in his *Notebooks (1914-1916)*: "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" (*NB*, p. 83). Indeed, I believe that the connection that Wittgenstein is alluding to here essentially involves viewing or contemplating the world-as-object in much the same way that Schopenhauer's purely knowing subject *qua* state aesthetically contemplates an object: it is the most complete kind of objectivity that one can take with

respect to the world as a whole for Wittgenstein. This is the point that Wittgenstein is making when he writes: "The usual way of looking at things sees objects as it were from the midst of them, the view *sub specie aeternitatis* from outside" (*Ibid*). Here seeing from the "outside" most likely means disconnected from the service of the will in the same way that Schopenhauer's purely knowing subject is disengaged from servitude to the will when it apprehends an object aesthetically. The 'object' here, however, is not some object *in* the world, but rather it *is* the world and life seen from an aesthetic point of view.

Immediately after his remark that "ethics and aesthetics are one" (*NB*, p. 77 and 6.421), Wittgenstein asks: "Is it, according to common conceptions, good to want *nothing* for one's neighbor, neither good nor evil?" (*NB*, *Ibid.*). And he goes on to comment: "in a certain sense not wanting is the only good" (*NB*, *Ibid.*). Undoubtedly the tension that he feels here is the result of his trying to square an aesthetico-ethical perspective *on* the world with how one "ought", in the more ordinary sense, to live *in* the world. For how one ought to live in the world essentially involves willing in the world. We will leave the issue of how, if at all, this tension is resolved for the moment. The important point now is simply that Wittgenstein most likely held that aesthetics and ethics, in the admittedly peculiar way in which they are connected above, involve a kind of detached and disinterested view of the world.

The Timelessness of the Transcendental Perspective

In addition to being detached from will, the perspective that Wittgenstein is elucidating is also timeless. Recall that Wittgenstein's transcendental perspective is at the

limit of the world as pictured and is thus not subordinate to the principle of sufficient reason in any of its forms. Thus, any view outside the principle of sufficient reason is *a fortiori* outside of space and time. Hence, in addition to escaping from the dictates of will as motive, this perspective is also timeless. Indeed, time is only a determination of objects and events as they are represented and pictured *in* the world. That Wittgenstein's transcendental view of the world is timeless, and so transcendental in this further sense, is shown by the following comments:

> "If we take eternity to mean not infinite temporal duration but timelessness, then eternal life belongs to those who live in the present" (*NB*, p. 75 and *TLP*, 6.4311).

And in his *Notebooks (1914-1916)* he asks:

> "But is it possible for one so to live that life stops being problematic? That one is *living* in eternity and not in time"? (p. 74)

And later he writes:

> "Only a man who lives not in time but in the present is happy" (p. 74) and "whoever lives in the present lives without fear or hope" (p. 76).

In seeing the world from its limit; that is, in seeing all the facts that comprise the world,[79] timelessness is a necessary concomitant. For there can be no before or after, there is only an eternal *now* given that all the possible ways in which the world might be is laid out before us, and all at once, so to speak. Thus, fear and hope, which can only be tied to the future, and which involve our identifying with the individual subject in the world (which I will say more about), cannot be part of this perspective.

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[79] Recall that Wittgenstein's transcendental perspective is a view of all possible worlds. Thus, we see all the combinations of facts in "logical space" that might have been realized in this world. Such a perspective exhausts every possible way in which the world can be pictured.

The timelessness of Wittgenstein's "solution" to the problem of finding absolute value and meaning in life is ineluctably tied to his transcendental perspective: "The solution of the riddle of life in space and time lies *outside* space and time" (6.4321). What is this "solution" but a transcendental view of the world? It is a turning away from any purported solution to the problem in the world of facts. Schopenhauer's influence is obvious here. Witness the following comments from Book IV on the eternal life being timeless:

> We must clearly recognize that the form of the phenomenon of the will, and hence the form of life and of reality, is really only the *present*, not the future or the past. Future and past are only in the concept, exist only in the connection and continuity of knowledge in so far as this follows the principle of sufficient reason (p. 278).
>
> For permanence no more belongs to…the pure subject of knowing, to the eternal eye of the world, than does transitoriness, since passing away and transitoriness are determinations valid in time alone, whereas…the pure subject of knowing lies outside time (p. 284).
>
> The present is the only real form of the phenomenon of the will. Therefore no endless past or future in which he will not exist can frighten him, for he regards these as an empty mirage and the web of Maya (*Ibid.*).

Ultimately, then, the "pure knowing subject" or the "clear eye of the world" (Wittgenstein's "metaphysical subject") is nothing over and above a will-less and timeless perspective on the world as a limited whole. The result of taking such a view on the world is that the individual subject lives timelessly – *eternally*, i.e., in the present – thus detaching his will from the midst of the world: only by taking this transcendental perspective does one come to see the perspective as having an aesthetico-ethical aspect to it. One sees the world as an object of beauty – as something sublime, significant, and mystical – when one views it from a will-less and timeless perspective.

The Contemplation of the World "*Sub Specie Aeternitatis*" (6.45)

For Wittgenstein, then, our "contemplation of the world *from the point of view of eternity*", just is the contemplation of the world as a kind of object writ large; an object whose value and meaning stands out only when we view the world from a will-less and timeless perspective. According to Wittgenstein the mystical "*shows* itself" (6.522) from our taking the transcendental perspective with respect to the world. Such a perspective is what permits us to see that anything of value *in the world* is contingently and accidentally attached to our will, that is, our interests, inclinations and desires, and so lacks the kind of absolute value that Wittgenstein is trying to get us to appreciate. Wittgenstein's position here is that there can be no absolute value or meaning *in* the world; there can be only "relative" value and meaning in the world (*LE*, p. 66).

Thus, anyone who attempts to build a theory of absolute value or ethics that is grounded in the world is taking on an impossible task. The task is an impossible one because anything in the world has value only insofar as it is an object of our will in the world. Furthermore, Wittgenstein uses the metaphysical subject as a tool to get us to appreciate that we can (as individual subjects in the world) view the world as a "limited whole", and that in so doing we are taking a detached and disinterested perspective with respect to the world. When Wittgenstein says that "art and ethics are one" he means, in part, that the value of an object of art and the value of the world are only fully seen and appreciated when the will of the individual subject is detached from our contemplation of them. This is a key ingredient of the transcendental perspective on ethics. It is to 'see' the world from its limit: "The usual way of looking at things sees objects as it were from the

midst of them, the view *sub specie aeternitatis* from outside" (*NB*, p. 83). And of course whatever is outside the world is outside language. This is why it is impossible to articulate what this absolute value consists in – it is "indeed the inexpressible" (6.522)

The Transcendental Perspective and Will

At this point I have to admit an *apparent* problem with my interpretation of what I have been calling Wittgenstein's transcendental perspective. What I am calling Wittgenstein's transcendental perspective on the world is not simply a pure "knowing", but involves an *attitude* to the world as a whole. Now "attitude" normally involve will. So how can Wittgenstein's perspective be will-less if will is (in some sense) involved? Schopenhauer faces a similar paradox since the world is through and through will. In the *Notebooks* Wittgenstein's view of the will's relation to the world comes down to an attitude of detachment from anything in the world. This perspective, then, cannot be a complete cessation of willing. If it is, then it is a cessation of will only in terms of the *individual* willing subject, not willing *simpliciter*. In the *Tractatus* he writes:

> If the good or bad exercise of the will does alter the world, it can alter only the limits of the world, not the facts – not what can be expressed by means of language. In short the effect must be that it becomes an altogether different world. It must, so to speak, wax and wane as a whole. The world of the happy man is a different one from that of the unhappy man (6.43)

Here we see the familiar talk of the "limits of the world", only now no mention is made of a metaphysical subject being at the limit of the world, but instead the "exercise of the will" is said to "alter only the limits of the world, not the facts – not what can be expressed by language". Does this involve a willing subject that is at the limit of the

world, a willing subject in the sense of a subject over and above individual willing subjects? It does not. And for the same reason that apprehending the world as "the totality of facts" does not require a metaphysical subject in the sense of a subject over and above individual knowing subjects. Indeed, we have even more reason to reject the notion that the metaphysical subject was ever anything more than Wittgenstein's way of introducing a transcendental perspective on language and the world – quite literally a *meta*view – for clearly if we were prepared to say that Wittgenstein had in mind a metaphysical subject, in the sense of a knowing subject over and above individual knowing subjects, we would be equally committed to saying the same thing about his talk of a willing subject. We would then have two subjects at the limit of the world, a metaphysical knowing subject and a metaphysical willing subject. But such a bloated ontology is hardly in keeping with Wittgenstein's overly parsimonious sense of reality. Anyone who doesn't think that the logical constants refer to abstract entities is hardly likely to countenance two subjects at the limit of the world. Again, it is the transcendental perspective that involves both knowing (logic) and willing (ethics/aesthetics).

This notion of willing – where the "world waxes and wanes as a whole" – is indeed very strange. It is not the typical willing of an individual subject, for such a subject does "alter" the facts of the world, and not "its limits". Particular willing subjects are engaged in the world – they are in the midst of the world. As such, they effect change; they do things. Moreover, we can and do speak about particular willing subjects. This is the notion of will and willing that is "a phenomenon" and "is of interest only to psychology" (6.423).

Willing, at the limits of the world, is a very particular attitude to the world: "The will is an attitude of the subject to the world" (*NB*, p. 87). But what sort of an attitude is this? It is an attitude of detachment to anything in the world: one should detach or free the *particular willing subject's* desires and longings for objects and events *in* the world. And it is the transcendental perspective that shows that the "right" (6.54) way to see the world is to contemplate it from a detached and disinterested perspective; we no longer see ourselves merely as objects in the midst of the world, but instead relinquish our control (or rather the illusion of control) over the happenings and events in the world.

At a more practical level; that is, at the level of how to live in the world, Wittgenstein is trying to show us, in a rather cryptic way, that contentment or happiness can only be found when we relinquish the illusion that happiness results from satisfying the desires of the particular willing subject. The illusion that makes the world an unhappy place is that we can wrest satisfaction from this life if only we manage well. And for Wittgenstein "the life of knowledge is the life that is happy in spite of the misery of the world" (*NB*, p. 81). This is a hyperbolic way of saying that whatever contingent worldly happenings are thrown our way they needn't dictate our attitude to the world as a whole. We can live contentedly by living "the life of knowledge". And it is the transcendental perspective that shows us that the contented life just is the "the life that can renounce the amenities of the world" (*NB*, p. 81). Michael Hodges, in his book *Transcendence and Wittgenstein's Tractatus* (1990), is definitely on the right track when he writes: "The ethical will in its ultimate fulfillment aims at nothing, for what is, is what ought to be. It is rather for the will to come to "own" and "appreciate" what is as what ought to be" (p. 112). And such a perspective must entail a detached and disinterested view of events and

happenings in the world in just this sense: We no longer want nor are we inclined to change anything *in* the world, but embrace the entire world just as it is. Thus the transcendental perspective "owns" and "appreciates" the whole world just as it is. But to adopt this stance means that there is no distinction between the way the world is and the way that it ought to be.

The transcendental perspective does collapse the distinction between is and ought here. But the only way it can achieve this collapse is to show that absolute value cannot be attached to anything *in* the world. According to Wittgenstein, it is only our individual wills – will in the world – that attaches value to things and events in the world. (The value that attaches to anything in the world is always a "relative value". I will say more about this when I come to Wittgenstein's "Lecture on Ethics").

When the world's events do not go according to our plans and designs or when a particular moral code that we embrace is not being adhered to, we balk. Here our perspective is very much one that is in the midst of the world, for we are saying that we know what is right, that we know how things ought to go, and that we find reality – the unfolding of events in the world or "*how* the world is" (6.44) – unacceptable. And it matters not whether our reasons are good or bad, noble or ignoble, for what we are failing to do is take the perspective that views the entire world under the aspect of eternity. This is in part why Wittgenstein says: "*How* things are in the world is of complete indifference for what is higher" (6.432). And of course the transcendental perspective is one of the things that rank as "higher."

But is there no Value in an Absolute Sense?

The only room for absolute value, if there is indeed any such thing, is at the very limit of the world. I say "if there is any such thing" because Wittgenstein himself is not committed to there being such value: "*If* there is a value which is of *value*, it must lie outside all happening and being-so (my emphasis). For all happening and being-so is accidental. What makes it non-accidental cannot lie in the world, for otherwise this would again be accidental" (6.41). We will look more closely at this passage in the second part of this chapter. For now it enough to see that Wittgenstein's transcendental perspective on the world does not commit anyone to feeling the world as having absolute value or meaning. Indeed, there can be no logical or even causal connection between our seeing the world from on high and the mystical showing itself.

Having said this, I think Wittgenstein's perspective on language and the world led him – and could lead others – to feel the world as having value, meaning, and significance in something like an absolute sense. Thus, if there is indeed a place for absolute value, and even if such value cannot be described, it seems to come about for Wittgenstein only when we see the world *sub specie aeternitatis*. When we can take up the transcendental perspective on language and the world open ourselves up to marveling at the existence of the world, and thus to an experience of "the mystical" (6.44). I think that Wittgenstein is committed to something very close to this.

This perspective on the world can, in part, produce in us an attitude toward the world that is detached and disinterested. We cease to be the arbiters of what, ultimately, is right and wrong *in* the world when we look at the world under the aspect of eternity.

Indeed, to see the world from such a vista is at once to see that a description of the entire world is exhausted by Wittgenstein's picture theory, and that no part of this picture – no propositions that picture this or that fact or any possible fact – can have value in an absolute sense.

On the other hand, that there is a world that exists at all is something marvelous and inexpressible. According to Wittgenstein, it is coming to this realization that lends the world absolute value. Wittgenstein attempts to express this mystical sense (or "feeling", 6.45) of the world in his *LE*.

In this lecture Wittgenstein offers, as an attempt to characterize the value of life and the world in an "absolute" sense, the following experience: "[The experience] is, what one might call, the experience of being *absolutely* safe. I mean the state of mind in which one is inclined to say 'I am safe, nothing can injure me whatever happens'" (Kenny, p. 292). Now we can make better sense of this type of experience if we frame it against the background of Schopenhauer's notion that the truly ethical viewpoint requires the denial or negation of will in man, and the recognition that the *Principium individuationis* is illusory.

According to Wittgenstein, we are in some sense experiencing the world from a kind of will-less center (as purely knowing subject), for otherwise any such experience is absurd given that we are, as a matter of fact, never absolutely safe. Such an experience is a result of viewing the world from a transcendental perspective; i.e., a will-less and timeless perspective that frees us from fear, desire, and hope. In part, this means that although we are objects in the world, and hence liable to all the dangers concomitant with being in the midst of the world, we can experience the world as a kind of object of art, as

something that is neither "obstructive, or dangerous… but simply as itself". Indeed, it is the contemplation of the world from this will-less and timeless perspective that gives both life and the world as a whole meaning according to Wittgenstein.

There is another experience that Wittgenstein describes – one that he calls the experience "*Par Excellence*" – in an attempt to get at absolute value. It is the experience we have when we "wonder at the existence of the world" (*LE*, p. 70). In part such an experience results from our viewing the entire world as something beautiful in itself, in much the same way that an artist views an object of art: "Aesthetically, the miracle is that the world exists. That there is what there is" (*NB*, p. 86). I will have a great deal more to say about such experiences, especially as regards how they relate to *Das Mystische*". For now it is enough to see that these kinds of experiences seem to require our taking a perspective on the world that is detached, disinterested, and timeless.

It is important to not that when we take up the transcendental perspective we are no longer trying to wrest some satisfaction from contingent facts in *the world*. We are not, as Wittgenstein notes, trying to "bend the happenings of the world to [our] will" (*NB*, 11.6.16). Trying to satisfy our will leads only, in the end, to frustration and unhappiness, and we are unable to marvel at the existence of the world. As long as we are imposing our individual wills in the world, and are thus only concerning ourselves with the facts as these facts affect us, we cannot "experience the world as a miracle" (*LE*, p. 70). And to "wonder at the existence of the world" or "experience the world as a miracle" is to view the world as more than just a collection of contingent facts, including the doings and strivings of individual willing subjects (which are also facts). Thus, the meaning of the world – its "waxing" – just is to see it "from the point of view of eternity." This means

that we are experiencing the world as an object of art, as something detached from our individual will. It is this disinterested perspective that confers the kind of meaning and value on the world that Wittgenstein has in mind.

Ethics, Value, and the Negation of (Individual) Will in Schopenhauer

We are primarily embodied will according to Schopenhauer, closer to apes than gods. Man's essential nature, if you like, is not, for Schopenhauer, the *res cogitans* of Descartes, but is the blind, driving force of will. Given that this is the kernel of man (and, for that matter, everything else in the world) man cannot be happy or content: for we are always either wanting this or that or else suffering from ennui once our desires are sated. So where does the value of life come from? From whence does one wrest satisfaction, contentment, or happiness in this world of strife? And what place is there for ethics and value in such a world?

According to Schopenhauer the manifestation of will – in the individual subject – can never bring us any permanent contentment. For such acts of will always fasten on to particular objects or states of affairs within the world. But such objects are fleeting and so is any happiness or contentment we may have once we have obtained them:

> All willing springs from lack, from deficiency, and thus from suffering. Fulfillment brings this to an end; yet for one wish that is fulfilled there remain at least ten that are denied. Further, desiring lasts a long time, demands and requests go on to infinity; fulfillment is short and meted out sparingly. But even the final satisfaction itself is only apparent; the wish fulfilled at once makes way for a new one; the former is a known delusion, the latter a delusion not as yet known. No attained object willing can give a satisfaction that lasts and no longer declines; but it is always like the alms thrown to a beggar, which reprieves him today so that his misery may be prolonged till tomorrow. Therefore, so long as our

> consciousness is filled by will, so long as we are given up to the throng of desires, with its constant hopes and fears, so long as we are the subject of willing, we never obtain lasting happiness or peace (Vol. I, p. 196).

I believe that Wittgenstein's transcendental perspective on the world is designed to bring about an attitudinal shift toward the entire world, and that this shift was at least in part inspired by Schopenhauer's depressing account of will in the world.[80] Wittgenstein's solution to this problem is to bring us to a perspective that transcends the world as pictured so that we no longer identify with the individual willing subject – that is, with ourselves in the midst of the world – as having any more value than anything else in the world. The facts are all of equal value in that all facts are valueless. This is in part what Wittgenstein means by "seeing the world aright" (6.54). In part, this perspective requires an attempt on our part to negate the will of the individual subject. For this reason it is very similar to Schopenhauer's negation of will as the ultimate ethical desideratum. But it must be noted that Schopenhauer rejects the very possibility of implying any "ought" in connection with the truly ethical; rather, one is led to a negation of "will-to-live" when one realizes the illusory nature of individual subjects by coming to see that will is really all-pervasive and one.

For Wittgenstein the denial of will in the individual subject amounts to a breaking away of our being in the midst of the world, as I have suggested, that comes as a result of our viewing the world as a "limited whole". Wittgenstein's transcendental perspective on the world has an aesthetico-ethical aspect to it, as I have been at pains to show.

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[80] Though here I admit I have no direct evidence for this other than claims such as this one: "I can only make myself independent of the world – and so in a certain sense master it – by renouncing any influence on happenings" (*NB*, p. 73).

The aesthetic perspective is disinterested and detached in the sense that we do not consider the object of art (whether an object in nature or some created work of art) in any of the more usual and more practical ways. The ethical aspect of the perspective is tied to man's disengaging his will from the world of facts.

We have seen that Wittgenstein's transcendental perspective on value and the world involves a detached and will-less perspective. Now I want to begin to give an account of why he thought that such a perspective permeates the world with value in an "absolute" sense.

Wittgenstein and the Good Life: The Metaphysical Subject and Absolute Value

I will now attempt to tie together the disparate elements of Wittgenstein's transcendental perspective on the world and its value. First, we have already seen that Wittgenstein's "metaphysical subject" is best interpreted as a variation on Schopenhauer's "pure knowing subject". I say "variation" because Wittgenstein's subject is both a knowing and a *willing* subject, one that is at the very limit of the world as pictured. Schopenhauer's pure subject of knowing, on the other hand, appears to be entirely will-less. Equally important, neither Schopenhauer nor Wittgenstein is suggesting that there is some subject that literally *stands* at the limit (or outside) the world. Their talk about a "subject" here should not be interpreted as a reification of some sort of metaphysical entity. Instead, as I hope I have made clear, such talk is Wittgenstein's way of bringing us to see the world from its limits—of bringing us to a transcendental perspective on it.

At the end of the day, Wittgenstein's notion of will at the limit of the world is best understood as a kind of stance or attitude toward the world. Indeed, Wittgenstein suggests that perhaps even thinking is an act of the will: "Or is the mistake here this: even *wanting* (thinking) is an activity of will"? (*NB*, p. 77) He suggests that if we could "conceive" of "a being" that only perceives – that merely "sees" – then we could imagine "a world without ethics" (*Ibid.*). So it appears that to "think" about or contemplate the world involves will. Hence, Wittgenstein's perspective has an aspect of will about it—it is not just "purely knowing"; unless, of course, one wants to say that "thinking" about the world as a "limited whole" collapses into pure knowing. The passage is worth quoting in full, especially since Schopenhauer's influence is incontrovertible here: "But can we conceive a being that isn't capable of Will at all, but only of Idea[81] (of seeing for example)? In some sense this seems impossible" (*Ibid.*).

This clearly points to the willing and the knowing subject as being two sides of the same coin according to Wittgenstein; or better, two aspects of the very same transcendental perspective: knowing and willing. The former represents the picturing aspect of the perspective (the logic of our language), whereas the latter is the attitudinal aspect of the perspective (the aesthetico-ethical).

This notion of willing – where the "world waxes and wanes as a whole" (6.43) is indeed very strange. He amplifies his "waxing and waning" comment in his *NB* where he writes: "As if by accession or loss of meaning" (p. 73). Hence, the "willing subject" is best understood as another facet of the transcendental perspective. We are able to lend the

[81] *Vorstellung* : "representation"

world more or less meaning (and presumably absolute value) by taking a particular attitude toward it.

Thus, the subject that is the "bearer of good and evil" (*NB*, p. 76) is Wittgenstein's way of expressing what it is about us, as individual willing subjects that enables us to color the world with value; that is, with good and evil:

> "Good and evil enter only through the *subject*. And the subject is not part of the world, but a boundary of the world" (*NB*, p. 79).

And again:

> "It would be possible to say (a` la Schopenhauer): it is not the world of idea (*Vorstellung*) that is either good or evil; but the willing subject" (Ibid, p. 79).

Just as there is no "metaphysical subject", some subject over and above individual knowing subjects, so there is not a "willing subject", one that stands over and above individual ethical subjects. Both aspects, willing and knowing, make up the transcendental perspective that can be taken up by individual subjects in the world.

The aesthetico-ethical aspect of the perspective is more closely tied to willing (in the admittedly "strange" sense above), whereas the perspective on the logic of our language and its relation to the world as pictured (chapter two) almost exclusively involves pure knowing (just "seeing"). The idea that the metaphysical subject involves both knowing and willing is an important one, for many commentaries on Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* (Hodges, for example) treat the "metaphysical subject" and the "willing subject" as two distinct subjects. This is an unnecessary reification of entities. In fact, we have seen that there is no need to think of the metaphysical subject as a subject that is distinct from particular (knowing and willing) subjects.

The term 'subject', then, is inappropriate in that Wittgenstein does not have in mind some subject that exists over and above individual willing subjects in the world, but a perspective at the limit of the world that can be taken up by individual subjects in the world. This perspective shows us that value in an absolute or unqualified sense requires a perspective that is at the very limit of the world.

At any rate, this transcendental perspective on value and the world is best thought of as a kind of pure objectivity with respect to the world. The perspective is, to steal the title of Nagel's book, "The View From Nowhere" (1986), but with a vengeance, in the sense that we try to strip away *all* our attachment to objects and events in the world, and view the whole of the world from a disinterested and detached perspective. And this is fundamentally a stripping away of our desires and inclinations to shape the world so that it suits us.

Both aspects of Wittgenstein's transcendental perspective, knowing and willing, stand at the limit or boundary of the world (*NB*, p. 79 and *TLP*, 5.632 and 6.43). And it is this perspective that colors the world with value and meaning. Just as this perspective is a condition for there being a world that is represented through the logic of our language, in a similar way this perspective is a condition for the world being seen as having value: "ethics must be a condition of the world, like logic" (*NB*, p. 77). Ethics is a condition of the world in virtue of our seeing the world "*sub specie aeternitatis*". Wittgenstein says that "the good life is the world seen *sub specie aeternitatis*" (*NB*, p. 83). This will be further amplified in chapter four.

But how exactly does this transcendental perspective illuminate the good life, the "happy" and "harmonious" life (*NB*, p. 78), and how are we to reconcile the ethical goal

of detaching will *in* the world *while* at the same time it is the "willing subject" that is the "bearer of good and evil" (*NB*, p. 76)? We will see that Wittgenstein's perspective on ethics (value) and the world is radically different from the more typical (and intuitive) conception of ethics being tied to our actions and our relations with others in the world.

Let me start with the second part of the question first: How to reconcile the detachment or negation of will as part of "the good life" while simultaneously it is we who take a particular attitude toward the world as a "limited whole". It seems that in order to see that "the world of the happy is quite another than that of the unhappy" (6.43) we must adopt a particular attitude toward the world, and adopting an attitude normally involves willing: "The will is an attitude of the subject to the world" (*NB*, p. 87). But isn't this a flat-out contradiction? How can one at the same time take a disinterested view of events in the world while taking a particular attitude toward the whole world? I will now try to ease this tension.

Recall that Wittgenstein makes a tacit distinction between the (1) Metaphysical (willing) subject as a limit to the world (5.633 and 6.43) and (2) particular willing subjects that are *in* the world. The "subject" in (1) is defined negatively: it "is not the human being, not the human body, or the human soul, with which psychology deals, but rather the metaphysical subject, the limit of the world – not a part of it" (5.641). The "subject" in (2) is "a phenomenon" that is "only of interest to psychology" (6.423). And for Wittgenstein this must be the willing of an individual subject, for it is only individual subjects that "alter" the facts of the world, and not the world's "limits". Particular willing subjects are engaged in the world – they are in the midst of the world. As such, they effect change; they do things. Moreover, we can and do speak about particular willing

subjects and the actions taken by them; that is, these actions can be said or described. Furthermore, we deem some of the actions taken by particular willing subjects "good" and some "bad." But we shall see that the kind of value that attaches to the actions of individual willing subjects – the kind that we can speak about in the world – is relative and contingent, never absolute.

According to Wittgenstein, willing that is in the "midst" (*NB*, p. 83) of the world cannot really be separated from our actions: "This is clear: it is impossible to will without already performing the act of the will. The act of the will is not the cause of the action but is the action itself. One cannot will without acting" (*NB*, p. 87). Now it is this notion of will, I submit, that particular willing subjects engage in. There is nothing transcendental about this notion of willing. This way of characterizing will is clearly not an attitude toward the world as a whole, but is rather the more ordinary notion of willing as an intention to act or simply acting: "But, of course, it is undeniable that in a popular sense there are things that I do, and other things not done by me" (*NB*, p. 88). Wittgenstein also 'mentions' a subject that stands at the limit of the world at 5.631 and 5.632:

> If I wrote a book *The world as I found it*, I should have to include a report on my body, and should have to say which parts were subordinate to my will and which were not, etc., this being a method of isolating the subject, or rather of showing that in an important sense there is no subject; for it alone could *not* be mentioned in that book.—
> The subject does not belong to the world: rather, it is a limit of the world.[82]

[82] It seems that this 'method', if it "isolates" any subject at all, only isolates the individual subject. This is the subject that *can* be mentioned in "the book". Why then does Wittgenstein think that the subject that is isolated is the metaphysical subject here? What reasons does he give us for thinking that this is so? This passage is extremely difficult to make sense of. I suggest that what he is getting at is simply that there seems to be something about us that enables us to view the world from a disinterested perspective; a view of the world that is disengaged from the facts in the world, one that only alters the limits of the world. He is intimating that there is some aspect of us, as individual subjects, that is left over, as it were, even after we have given an account of the individual willing subject and everything that such a subject can affect *in* the world. It is the perspective on the world as a limited whole that requires a subject that "cannot be

Clearly, when Wittgenstein talks about 'the subject' in the above passage he does not have in mind a particular willing subject in the world. Again, this would just be a "report on his body" – the will that is of interest to "empirical psychology" – a thing that is very much in the world. However, the 'subject' as "limit" is best interpreted as a perspective that we as individual subjects can attain: in taking up this perspective we regard or contemplate the entire world in a very particular way. It is a mistake to interpret Wittgenstein as suggesting that there is in fact some meta-subject that stands at the limit or outside the world as a limited whole. Rather, we should take him as intimating that both the perspective at the limit of the world and the "subject" is one and the same. This is in part what he means when he writes: "The self of solipsism shrinks to a point without extension, and there remains the reality co-ordinated with it" (5.64). There is nothing left over from the limits of the world other than a complete picture of all the facts.

The "self of solipsism" just is the "philosophical self", the "metaphysical (and willing) subject"; it is that 'subject' that stands at the limit of the world and collapses into the transcendental perspective on the world. This 'subject' is what "shrinks to an extension-less point", in Wittgenstein's language. Put another way, there simply is no "transcendental subject" at all; only a transcendental perspective on the world. And it is this perspective that imbues the world with value in an absolute sense—this is the ethical perspective on the world.

Thus, the notion of will and willing that Wittgenstein thinks must be detached in order for us to take the right attitude or perspective on the world as a whole is our

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mentioned" in the world: on my view this is just Wittgenstein's way of characterizing a perspective at the limit of the world.

individual wills. As individual willing subjects, in the midst of the world, we are always imposing our will on the world and trying to arrange life to suit us.

We are now in a position to explain how the transcendental perspective illuminates the "good life." According to Wittgenstein, it is willing *in* the world that we must attempt to negate if we are to obtain the right attitude: "In order to live happily I must be in agreement with the world. And that is what "being happy" *means*" (*NB*, p. 75). Now being "in agreement with the world" involves detaching from the world in the sense that one tries to become free of those desires that fasten on to events and objects *in* the world. Here it is the individual willing subject – Sam or Socrates – that detaches from the worlds events and happenings. It is in this way that I can "make myself independent of fate" (*NB*, p. 74). And fate, Wittgenstein thinks, is the "same thing" as "the world" (Ibid). Hence, we can make ourselves independent of the world and, by so doing, live a "happy" life: "I can only make myself independent of the world – and so in a certain sense master it – by renouncing any influence on happenings" (*NB*, p. 75).

One might wonder how it is possible to be in "agreement" with the world while simultaneously detaching from the world. Is not agreement with the world similar to embracing the world as it is? But then to embrace the world as it is – with the unfolding of just these particular events – seems to be inconsistent with a disinterested and detached perspective on the world. This is only a seeming inconsistency. It is practically impossible to "renounce *any* influence on happenings". After all, "renouncing *any* influence on happenings" is best interpreted as an ideal—and hell, we need to eat. But what we *can* do is recognize that as individual willing subjects, very much in the midst of the world, and so in the midst of the world's "happenings", we are both agents and

observers. As agents we do try to affect changes in the world, in our own lives and in the lives of others. But we can also notice that our will only goes so far. Events unfold in ways that we could never foresee, and we are absolutely powerless in determining what the ultimate results of our actions in the world will be. Thus, the detached and disinterested perspective is one that observes the individual subject's actions as part and parcel of the world's events and happenings, recognizing that all individual subjects impose their will in the world, but at the same time takes a detached and disinterested view of the *consequences* of the individual subject's actions in the world. The detachment, then, is in part a complete resignation toward the consequences of one's actions. We see the limit of our will *in* the world, and view the results of what we do with a kind of disinterestedness.

However, the case is quite different regarding will "at the limit of the world". Here we can choose to embrace the entirety of the world's events and be "happy"[83] or we can view the world with an unhappy eye, judging that the world is not how it "ought" to be. Here *will* is boundless in the sense that we can be in "agreement" with the entire world without simultaneously finding any of the events that unfold *in* the world agreeable to us as individual willing subjects.

We are now in a position to see that it is the individual willing subject that must learn to detach from objects and events in the world. It is will in this sense that wants detaching, not the transcendental notion of the 'willing subject', from which this will-less perspective emerges. Indeed, since all individual willing subjects can work at taking up

[83] "Happy" is not the best term here. I think Wittgenstein means something closer to "contentment", "peace of mind", or "serenity". For "happy" suggests more of a feeling or emotion than a continuous state.

this disinterested and detached perspective, the metaphysical willing subject is best thought of (as I have already suggested) *as* the individual willing subject *after* detachment from events and objects in the world. Put another way, the individual willing subject that takes up the transcendental perspective is all there is to Wittgenstein's talk of the "metaphysical subject" or the "the willing subject." This is why I suggested earlier that this perspective is a kind of pure objectivity with respect to the world – one that we can all obtain – and one that should not be thought of as requiring some kind of metaphysical subject *in addition* to individual subjects. There are not, then, two types of subject here.

The individual willing subject that takes up the transcendental perspective on value and the world is detached from the world and thereby is able to take an attitude to the world that is independent of what *happens* in the world. "Will" is, in this sense, "independent of the world" (*NB*, p. 73 and *TLP*, 6.373). Here will is not cashed out in terms of what we do in the world, the actions we take, the ends we try to bring about, etc., etc., and thus should *not* be understood as being on a par with all the other events in the world. This notion of willing can "only affect the boundaries of the world, not the facts, what cannot be portrayed by language but can only be shown in language" (*NB*, p. 73). In this sense will can only be an attitude toward the whole world.

The attitude is, as I argued earlier, very much like the artists attitude towards an object of art (which needn't be an artifact). In seeing an object as disconnected from any and all practical concerns, from a detached and disinterested perspective, the artist sees the object as something sublime, significant, and has having value absolutely. Similarly, when the individual subject's will is detached from the unfolding of events and

happenings in the world, a kind of disinterested and detached perspective reigns, and he can see and feel the world as something sublime.

Thus, the entire world becomes ("waxes"? *NB*, p. 73 and 6.43) something miraculous for us, and we lose ourselves in the contemplation of it. We no longer make the distinction between our empirical (individual selves) and the world. Thus, our own designs and interests, our strivings and longings, and all our carrying's on simply evaporate into the world. They are simply more facts that make up all there is in the world. It is this "feeling of the world as a limited whole" (6.45) – what Wittgenstein equates with "the mystical feeling" – that results from taking what I have been calling Wittgenstein's transcendental perspective on the world. In the end it is a psychic change toward the world: we are able to rise above what is happening with this contemplative and disinterested perspective. However, at the same time we are not apathetic and despairing, for we see the entire world in a different light, as a miraculous whole, and become lost in our feeling or sense *that* there is a world at all. And I contend that it is this "sense" of the world that imbues it with value in an absolute sense according to Wittgenstein.

In this part of the chapter we have seen just how Schopenhauer's "purely knowing subject" illuminates what I have been calling Wittgenstein's aesthetico-ethical aspect of transcendental perspective with respect to the world. We have also seen that it is a mistake to interpret Wittgenstein's remarks about a "willing subject" or a "metaphysical subject" as super-subjects over and above individual subjects in the world. Furthermore, the detached and disinterested character of the transcendental perspective is detached from will in the world, but is not a complete cessation of willing. Willing at the limits of

the world as pictured amounts to our taking an attitude toward the world that results from the transcendental perspective. Finally, the "happy life", the "good life", is the life that is lived in agreement with the world—a kind of stoic quietism.

But what are we to say of ordinary moral claims, such as "stealing is wrong" or "one should tell the truth"? What becomes of ethics *in* the world? Does Wittgenstein have no way to accommodate such sentences within his *Tractarian* Framework? I think he does, but we must turn to Philippa Foot's position regarding ethics *in* the world as nothing more than disguised hypothetical imperatives to see how Wittgenstein can make sense of ethics in the more ordinary sense.

(b) Making Sense of Ethical Claims *in* The World; The Hypothetical Status of *ethics*[84]

I want to give a more positive account as to why Wittgenstein thinks that ethics and value cannot be contained within the world. In addition, I will explain just what kind of value Wittgenstein thought could be attached to facts in the world. Furthermore, I will explain how ethics in the world can be "said." By drawing from material in his "Lecture on Ethics"[85], material that essentially amplifies his comments on ethics and value in his *TLP*, I believe that I can give an account of what he is trying to get us to see in the following passages. At 6.4 and 6.41 Wittgenstein writes:

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[84] I am not suggesting that Wittgenstein would endorse any 'theory' of what ethical judgments mean, but rather that what he says regarding the impossibility of expressing what we want ethics to be about resonates with Foot's point that morality cannot have the "magical" must that we want to attribute to it. I am only arguing that we can make sense of what Wittgenstein calls the "relative" value of ethical judgments by interpreting them as hypothetical imperatives.

[85] *Philosophical Review*; 74, pp. 3-11, (1965): First read at Cambridge in 1929/30 to the society known as "The Heretics". Reprinted in *Moral Discourse and Practice*; Edited by Darwall, Gibbard, and Railton; Oxford Univ.Press: 1997

> All Propositions are of equal value.
> The sense of the world must lie outside the world. In the world everything is as it is, and everything happens as it does happen: *in* it no value exists – and if it did exist, it would have no value.
> If there is a value which is of value, it must lie outside all happening and being-so.
> For all that happens and is the case is accidental.
> What makes it (value) non-accidental cannot lie *within* the world, since if it did it would itself be accidental.
> It (value) must lie outside the world.

And at 6.42 Wittgenstein continues:

> So too it is impossible for there to be propositions of ethics.
> Propositions can express nothing that is higher.

Finally, at 6.421 Wittgenstein writes:

> It is clear that ethics cannot be put into words.
> Ethics is transcendental.
> Ethics and aesthetics are one.[86]

These passages continue to baffle and frustrate anyone who tries to say something (anything!) about what in the world – so to speak – absolute value amounts to for Wittgenstein. It is important to see that all events in the world are on a par for Wittgenstein. There is, then, no distinction between the unfolding of some natural event versus the action taken by an individual subject in just this sense: All events (including human actions) *in the world* are equally value-less in anything like a "necessary" or "absolute" sense. This is what Wittgenstein is driving at in 6.41.

All events are "accidental" in the sense that they are contingent. There is no logical necessity to the world's events turning out as they have. Wittgenstein recognizes

[86] Pears and McGuinness have "ethics and aesthetics are one *and the same*", but the original German is "Ethik und Aesthetik sind Eins".

only logical necessity (Wittgenstein does not consider anything like nomological or physical necessity in his *TLP*): "There is no compulsion making one thing happen because another has happened: the only necessity that exists is *logical* necessity" (6.371).[87] Since logical necessity is the only type of necessity there is, it follows that *any* event in the world is "accidental" or contingent: "Whatever we can describe at all could be other than it is" (5.643).

But what is it that makes value in the world "accidental" or contingent? What I suggest is this: just as there is no (logical) compulsion that causes one thing to happen rather than another, there is no necessary connection between an action and that action's having value as a matter of logic—there is no "compulsion" here either. In order for "non accidental" or "absolute" value to attach to ethical judgments about this or that fact in the world, the value would have to result from the fact (event, action) as a matter of necessity for Wittgenstein. But given that he recognizes only logical necessity, there can be no place *in* this world for ethical judgments of absolute value. But again, what does it mean to say that value must be "necessarily" attached to such judgments? Let us see if we can amplify and sharpen this idea by investigating what Wittgenstein has to 'say' about "absolute" value in his *LE*.

[87] Incidentally, the fact that Wittgenstein recognizes only logical necessity explains why his conception of free will is so paltry: "The freedom of the will consists in the impossibility of knowing actions that still lie

"Absolute" Value and Categorical Imperatives

With respect to moral claims such as "you ought to keep your promises", we do not believe that the "ought" evaporates the moment people decide that they no longer *want* to be regarded as honest or no longer give a flip about morality at all. Wittgenstein makes this very point in his "lecture" when he says, in so many words, that the person who is "behaving like a beast" is not let off the hook when he says that he "doesn't want to behave any better" (*LE*, p 66). We do not withdraw the *ought*, but insist that he "ought to want to behave better" (*Ibid.*). Moreover, we believe that everyone should be able to see, almost as a matter *of logic*, that "behaving like a beast", is something that one has reason not to do. Wittgenstein is pressing this point when he writes: "*The* absolutely right road...would be the road which *everybody* on seeing it would, *with logical necessity*, have to go, or be ashamed for not going. And similarly, the *absolute good*, if it is a describable state of affairs, would be one which everybody, independent of his tastes and inclinations, would *necessarily* bring about or feel guilty for not bringing about" (pp, 67-68). (Of course, Wittgenstein does not believe that the "*absolute good*" is "a describable state of affairs.") No proposition could ever picture any such 'fact' in the world.

Wittgenstein's comments here strongly suggest that he thinks of absolute value as being necessary in the sense that it must have an absolutely overriding quality: as a matter of necessity or logic, moral principles must, so to speak, force our hand (here we

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in the future. We could know them only if causality were an *inner* necessity like that of logical inference" (5.1362).

have a kind of logical "compulsion"). Implicit in all this is the familiar notion that moral imperatives are categorical, not hypothetical.

That something like a hypothetical imperative is tied to, what Wittgenstein calls, a "relative" sense of "good" (or value) is clear from the following example: "The right road is the road which leads to an arbitrarily predetermined end and it is quite clear to us all that there is no sense in talking about the right road apart from such a predetermined goal" (p 67). Now implicit in this is that a particular road is the "right" one because it will get me to where I *want* to go or where it is in my interest to go, etc. But such a use of "right" has nothing to do with ethics and value in the absolute sense, Wittgenstein thinks.

Let us look a little more closely at the difference between hypothetical and categorical imperatives in order to see more clearly what Wittgenstein might be driving at when we says that ethics and (by extension) absolute value cannot be "contained" in the world.

Philippa Foot on Categorical and Hypothetical Imperatives

Foot argues that all moral claims are really just disguised hypothetical imperatives. Following Kant fairly closely, Foot characterizes a categorical imperative as simply an injunction to do or to refrain from doing some act, x, where the reason for doing or refraining from doing x is independent of our own or society's inclinations, desires, and interests. Foot writes: "When we say that a man should do something and intend a moral judgment we do not have to back up what he says by considerations about his interests or his desires; if no such connexion can be found the "should" need not be

withdrawn" (*Moral Discourse and Practice*; p, 313). Thus, the determination of what we *ought* to do, in the categorical sense, has nothing to do with what may or may not be in our own *interests* to do. On this view moral injunctions provide us with an overriding reason for following them: a reason that is action-guiding independent of our own inclinations, interests, and desires.

Hypothetical ought claims are, however, ultimately tied to our interests, inclinations, and aims in the following way: The only sense in which it makes sense to say that I "ought" to do *y* in a hypothetical sense, is a case where *y* is the best (or at least an efficacious) means of obtaining some goal, *z*, where z is some end that is either in my interest to have realized or that I want realized. But ultimately, in order to justify z, I must implicitly will z. The "ought" here only has hypothetical force: "Do *y*, *given* that you want to accomplish *z*." Like Kant, we can think of these ought claims as imperatives of prudence. Such imperatives are a species of hypothetical imperatives.

Now according to Foot, all moral claims are disguised hypothetical imperatives in a somewhat broader sense than imperatives of prudence. For a moral ought frequently demands that I act contrary to my desires and sometimes in conflict with my own self-interest. For example, when I ought to do something for the greater good. But notwithstanding the difference between imperatives of prudence and moral imperatives, Foot argues that the latter are ultimately hypothetical. *If* I regard being a virtuous person as something important and as a goal worth pursuing, then I ought to be fair, honest, etc. I can even be held to be inconsistent if I claim to regard morality as something important, yet flout certain moral obligations and duties. But *if I do not regard moral principles as worth pursuing*, then it is not clear what force they are supposed to have on me (or

anyone else), other than the usual force of moral sanction such as disapproval, punishment, etc. But these "reasons" (motives really) have nothing to do with why we think we ought to obey moral principles.

Foot of course recognizes that hypothetical imperatives are often tacit, and frequently have to do with the interests and desires of society or some segment of society:

> The desires on which a hypothetical imperative is dependent may be those of one man, or may be taken for granted as belonging to a number of people engaged in some common project or sharing common aims (p. 314).

Thus, the fact that one may not *want* or *desire* to conform to some moral principle is irrelevant in terms of what society or some segment of society deems morally appropriate. For example, one may not *want* to be honest in one's dealings with others, but this fact does not make lying morally appropriate or permissible. We must look, therefore, not just at the desires and interests of a single individual, but at the desires and interests of society in order to accurately represent hypothetical imperatives. Let us take something like "human flourishing" to be in the interest of any society.

But then we have to ask what reason(s) we have been given for thinking that one "ought to do what is conducive to (or at least does not thwart) human flourishing"? Why should I care about that? To say that I am bound by society is no answer, for I might retort that I do not care what society cares about.

We have simply pushed the problem back a step. What reasons are adduced, independent of my (and society's) interests, projects and goals, in support of the claim that "one should contribute to (or at least not do anything to thwart) human flourishing"? Remember that this more general moral principle (whose status is purportedly categorical) must provide us with a reason for following it that is independent of the

aims, desires, inclinations, etc. of a particular individual or society as a whole. Moral principles are supposed to be followed not because society deems them right or efficacious, but *because* they are right. But what role does this mysterious "because" play here? Foots point is that here we have no more than the assumption that there exist objective values that anyone can recognize and that are essentially action guiding, and this is no justification at all.[88] It simply assumes that there are moral facts that serve as reasons independent of an agent's inclinations, desires, concerns, etc. There doesn't seem to be anything irrational or inconsistent in disregarding all morality as nonsense. As Foot notes, such a person might well be "convicted of villainy but not of inconsistency" (p. 316).

What I have tried to show is that in the end human flourishing derives whatever value it has from the importance it has for us as human beings. In short, it is only our *regard* for human flourishing as a worthy pursuit, and whatever thwarts this admittedly open-ended project is regarded as morally reprehensible. Thus even this philosophical construction of what imbues actions with value is ultimately tied to our wills. And it is this fact – that morality is ultimately tied to our will; that is, to our interests and desires – that gives it its "relative" and "hypothetical" status.

It therefore appears that our reasons for thinking that moral claims are categorical, not hypothetical, has do with our greater concern for (and our "feeling" about) something

[88] Of course, Foot's ultimate conclusion is that moral "oughts" can be interpreted as hypothetical imperatives without destroying morality. Her position is that instead of looking for the chimerical categorical "must", we need only see that an agent can be moral without their being an overriding reason (one independent of the agent's goals, aims, desires, etc.) for the agent. For example, if I am honest because I think that being a virtuous person involves honesty, and want to treat people as I would have them treat me, it does not follow that because I have these moral goals in mind, that I am not acting morally. The case

like human flourishing. It is more important to us, and this is why we value it. Moral principles thus derive from social practices, which are, in the end, contingent and so "accidental", in Wittgenstein's sense of the word.[89]

The implication of seeing morality as a system of "hypothetical imperatives" is that there can be no overriding reason to do what one *ought* to do: there is no logical (and hence necessary) connection between facts and *absolute* value (in Wittgenstein's sense). Certainly Foot thinks that *it* (the "overriding reason" or "must") cannot be discovered in morality: it is an "illusion" and no more than an attempt to "give the moral 'ought' a magic force" (p 319). Absolute value is the kind of value that would attach to some action or some end, independent of prudential reasons, inclinations and desires, either my own or the desires and inclinations of society or some segment of society.

"Relative" Value and Hypothetical Imperatives

In short, if moral claims are all hypothetical imperatives, then the value that attaches to them cannot, to use Wittgenstein's language, be absolute but only "relative" (p 66). This means that talk of "human flourishing" or "contributing to human happiness" is in the end a contingent matter, and so reducible to the facts. The facts, of course, include our *regarding* such principles as being worthy ends. And thus what we have are "facts, facts, and facts, but no Ethics" (*LE*, p 67).

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is quite different for the shopkeeper who is honest *only* because it is good for business. His reason (if this is his only one) is clearly selfish and self-serving.

[89] Richard Rorty, a strange bedfellow with early Wittgenstein I admit, is expressing a similar take on the impossibility of grounding ethics in the world when he writes about the "liberal ironist": "For liberal

Another characteristic of judgments of relative value is that they can be expressed, unlike so-called judgments of absolute value. Indeed, James Edwards notes that relative value claims "*are* just descriptions of sociological facts, so they are perfectly capable of being expressed in propositions" (p. 85).[90] This enables Wittgenstein to talk about ethics in a "relative" sense, but not in an "absolute" sense.

Hence there can be no further justification as to why we regard such ends (e.g., human flourishing) as having value *absolutely* other than our *feeling* that they do. What's lacking is the possibility of telling any story as to why we *ought* to regard such ends as having value as a matter of necessity. In the end the facts that lead one to regard human flourishing as a "good" thing must ultimately come down to an *original regard* for certain ends or pursuits as having value. And thus the absolute sense of value – the value with a "magical force" – cannot be justified or explained. It cannot be expressed at all: "It seems to me obvious that nothing we could ever think or say should be *the* thing" (*LE*, p 67).

Wittgenstein, like Foot, does not think that there is any way to justify the supposed logical "compulsion" of ethical value in the way that is needed. Moral claims, then, while certainly having this *prima facie* overriding or absolute quality in the world, are all ultimately tied to our (and society's) interests, wants, and inclinations – in short, morality is attached to our wills in the world.

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ironists, there is no answer to the question "Why not be cruel?" – no non-circular theoretical backup for the belief that cruelty is horrible" (*Contingency, irony, and solidarity,* p.xv).

[90] *Ethics Without Philosophy* (1982)

Put another way, morality can be justified for a given person only if that person *wills* its implicit goals; that is, accepts its hypothesis. Hence, it is the apron strings of the will that reduce ethical claims to hypothetical imperatives

The Will of the Individual Subject

When I say that it is "the apron strings of the will" that render ethics and value "relative" and so "hypothetical" for Wittgenstein I mean will *in* the world, and not will *as* an attitude toward the world as a limited whole. What gives ethics in the world its "relative", "contingent", and "hypothetical" status for Wittgenstein is simply that the individual subject's will is engaged with this or that *aspect* of the world. This is to say no more than that the object of our desires *and* interests is always some particular part of the world; either something that we want to bring about or something that we do not want to occur. As subjects in the midst of the world we are engaged only with the facts, and never with the world as a whole. Recall Wittgenstein talks about "the will as a phenomenon…[that]… is of interest only to psychology" (6.423). This notion of "will", at least minimally, includes our wants and desires. What I am suggesting is that it is will in this *sense* that renders ethical judgments in the world hypothetical, and thus as having only a relative status. And it does so because the will of the individual subject (the empirical will, if you like) always takes some object in the world. And whatever the object of our will is, whether the object is world peace or to be a better neighbor, the value that attaches to such objects (goals, projects) can only ever be hypothetical. It is only our initial regard, interest, and desire – our wills in the world – that confer relative

value on this or that aspect of the world. This value is hypothetical because we are engaged with the facts in the world; we are not seeing the world *sub specie aeterni*, but are instead seeing "objects as it were from the midst of them" (*NB*, p 83).

The World and Absolute Value: Two Problems

But there are two problems associated with the idea that the transcendental perspective points to the world as having value in an absolute sense. First, since feeling or experiencing the world as having value or meaning in an absolute sense is contingent upon our seeing the world from its limit, it appears that absolute value is also hypothetical. But on my view absolute value is not hypothetical, only relative value is. This tension needs to be resolved.

Second, it seems highly doubtful that anyone who takes the transcendental perspective on language and the world must (or is even caused to) feel the world as having absolute value. After all, there is no logical entailment (or causal connection) between our taking a transcendental perspective on language and the world and our subsequently "feeling" the world in any way at all.

I am imagining someone (perhaps Bertrand Russell) who says: "I take the point about seeing both language and the world as a "limited whole", but I for one do not have anything like a mystical feeling or attitude toward the world as a result of this perspective. What's more, if anything the world becomes totally devoid of any value as a result of this detached and disinterested perspective. That's how I see it."

I believe that I can answer the charge that absolute value is, like relative value, ultimately hypothetical. Relative value is hypothetical because it is conditioned upon some particular fact (or set of facts) in the world. Here the individual subject is not taking a perspective that is detached and disinterested. This is a perspective that is very much in the world. The transcendental perspective, in virtue of its being a view that is at the limit or outside the world of facts cannot be conditioned by any fact (or set of facts) in the world. Thus, *if* the world does have value in an absolute sense, that value cannot be hypothetical in the way that relative value is. Any notion of absolute value being hypothetical *in this way* is incoherent.

The second charge is rather more difficult to answer. To the Bertrand Russell's of the world what are we to say? Can we demonstrate that by failing to feel the world in the way characterized by Wittgenstein – that there is something mystical about there being a world at all – that they have missed something? Have they not fully appreciated the transcendental perspective on language and the world? Are they suffering from some type of cognitive (or non-cognitive) dysfunction? Are they 'meaning' blind? What are we to say to someone who says: "The world is a cold place and it is ridiculous to think that the world has any value at all."

I think the best we can do here is explain Wittgenstein's gestures toward the mystical as a kind of invitation to see the world in a different light. It is a kind of "seeing as" – an aspectual seeing – that some will be lead to appreciate and others will not. One can see the world as merely a collection of all the facts and not be moved to feel the world's existence as something miraculous or marvelous or one can RSVP to Wittgenstein's invitation to feel the very existence of a world as the manifestation of the

mystical – as an experience of the mystical. There can be no reason's adduced in favor of one way of feeling the world (as something miraculous) over the other (as a cold and indifferent collection of facts).

We have seen how Wittgenstein's transcendental perspective on the world is detached from will in the world in much the same way as Schopenhauer's "purely knowing subject" *qua* state is. I have also suggested that we interpret Wittgenstein's talk of a "metaphysical/willing subject" as simply a colorful way for him to flesh out a perspective on the world that is at the very limit of the world. I have also argued that according to Wittgenstein the object that we see from a detached and disinterested view is the world as a "limited whole". In addition, I have attempted to illuminate what it might mean to see the world as having value in an absolute sense by looking at certain mystical experiences that Wittgenstein describes in his effort to point toward absolute value (I will come back to this in chapter four). Finally, I have demonstrated that Wittgenstein does have a way to make sense of ethical judgments made about actions and behaviors in the world only if we understand such judgments as having a hypothetical status. There can be no judgments of absolute value in the world because the necessary logical connection between fact and value is missing.

Some of the themes in this chapter, specifically Wittgenstein's identifying ethics with aesthetics (6.421), require amplification. In addition, I want to demonstrate that others have taken Wittgenstein only to be identifying certain similarities between ethics and aesthetics, and have rejected out of hand the idea that when he identifies the two he is doing so strictly. I hope to demonstrate that any identity of ethics with aesthetics other than the one I propose raises more problems than it solves. I also need to investigate more

thoroughly whether or not Wittgenstein's higher-order language can "show" us anything about value in an absolute sense. Thus far I have simply assumed that his 'claims' about ethics, aesthetics, value, and the mystical are not nonsense.

In chapter two we saw that interpreting Wittgenstein's 'propositions' as meta-linguistic assertions, specifically with respect to the building up of his picture theory of meaning, is a nice fit. But how does a higher-order language work when it comes to ethics, value, and the mystical? How should we understand the way in which language functions when it comes to Wittgenstein's remarks that have nothing to do with the picture theory of meaning? I want to begin with this last question first, for if no sense can be attributed to Wittgenstein's 'claims' about ethics, aesthetics and value, then 'saying' anything at all about the point of his gestures in the "sixes" appears hopeless. We shall see that the function of language here directs us (or, more gently, invites us) to a view of the whole world, and so is a kind of higher-order language, but not in the way his meta-linguistic assertions about the connection between language and the world are.

CHAPTER FOUR

"(Ethics and Aesthetics are one)" in Virtue of Perspective Alone

Is any attempt to give some positive characterization of Wittgenstein's *ethical* purpose or point in writing the *Tractatus* doomed to failure because of his own dismissal of his 'propositions' as "nonsense" (6.54)? How do his 'propositions' manage to "elucidate" anything at all about ethics, aesthetics, and value? And *how* on earth, so to speak, do his 'propositions' show or manifest what's mystical? [91] Let me begin with the last question first. We need to understand the role language plays in the *Tractatus* regarding ethics, aesthetics, value, and the mystical.

Language of the *TLP*: Language and the World "Under the Aspect of Eternity"

The 'propositions' of his work function in one of two ways: either (a) as meta-linguistic assertions of how a perspicuous language – that is, a language purified of the kinds of philosophical confusions that we investigated in chapter two – is related to the world or (b) in the manner in which an art critic[92] uses language to draw our attention to

[91] Note that simply making the distinction between propositions with sense (those that picture reality) and those that are "sinnlos" (literally senseless or without sense) cannot help here. According to Wittgenstein, tautologies and contradictions are "sinnloss" in that they do not picture any state of affairs in the world. But the 'propositions' in the "sixes" of the *TLP*, although they are "senseless" insofar as they cannot picture facts (like tautologies), they are clearly not *like* tautologies in other respects. Thus, lumping them with tautologies (in terms of their "senselessness") does not help us to ferret out what additional purpose the pronouncements about value, ethics, and the mystical serve. It does not get us anywhere.

[92] I am not here suggesting that the *language* of art criticism – I do not even think there is such an animal – is essentially directive or imperatival. All that I am suggesting is that the directive use of language is *a* use of language that plays an important role in getting us to see some work of art in the right light, so to speak. It seems more natural that a directive use of language could get us to appreciate the finished product, rather than the process by which the work was created. (It is for this reason that I think Wittgenstein's imperatival

certain features of a work of art – features that imbue it with value. In (a) Wittgenstein is clearing up certain philosophical confusions that result from a misunderstanding of the logic of our language (chapter two). He is clearing the ground in order to "show" us certain features shared by language and the world. We should, then, think of his (a) metalinguistic assertions as having smaller scope (even though there are a lot more of this type of assertion in the *Tractatus* than the (b) type); their function is to prepare us for "seeing" the world as a "limited whole". The function of (b) is more straightforwardly directive, invitational, and evocative in that their purpose is not to direct us to what Wittgenstein regards as philosophical confusions or problems about the logic of our language, but instead serve to direct our gaze toward the big picture – the forest, as it were. The (b)-type directives are more like invitations to see and feel the whole world in a certain light; they do not focus on detailed analysis of the language-world connection in the way that the meta-linguistic assertions do. Moreover, (b)-type directives are usually connected more directly with ethics and value. On my view the 'claims' made about

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use (b) is geared toward getting us to see the whole of language and the whole of the world). In instructing us as to how to best appreciate a work of art an art critic might say: "look at it from a greater distance" or "dim the lights" or perhaps "note the sense of movement in Van Gogh's flowers" or some such comment. These are all commands as to how to look at a particular object of art (it could also be an object in nature). Notice that such directives change the way in which *we* see the object. Nothing about the object has changed at all; we simply see it differently. The rabbit-duck is a great example of "seeing-as" or aspectual seeing. There is an important parallel here with the "world of the happy man". The unhappy man and the happy man occupy the same world of facts, yet Wittgenstein says that the world of the happy is "a different world" from that of the unhappy. Why? Presumably because the happy man, as a result of seeing the world differently, *lives* in a different world from that of the unhappy man, who sees the world of facts only *from* the midst of the world. Wittgenstein also talks of the world "waxing and waning as a whole" as "if by accession or loss of meaning"". Again, there is the view of the whole that he is directing us to. What I want to say is that for Wittgenstein the value of an object of art is analogous to the value of the whole world in that both must be seen in the right way. Another point in favor of reading some of Wittgenstein's 'propositions' in this way is that he seems to be committed to the admittedly peculiar idea that the ethical perspective on the word is fundamentally an aesthetic view of the world as a "limited whole". So it seems natural that he would attempt to get us to *see* the world as a kind of object of art writ large.

ethics, aesthetics, and value are better understood as directives or invitations, not as meta-linguistic assertions.

Notice that the goal of both (a) and (b) is to bring us to a view that is at the limit of the world. The 'propositions' of the *TLP* serve, albeit in slightly different ways, as a vehicle for the *expression* of Wittgenstein's transcendental perspective on language and the world. In a nutshell this expression is simply that the right view of the world is to see it *under the aspect of eternity or as a limited whole*. In the first part of this chapter I clarify and flesh out the function of the (b)-type directives.

I then critically evaluate what others have taken Wittgenstein to mean by the gnomic remark: "(ethics and aesthetics are one)" (6.45). Here I show where their views fall short (specifically, Diane Collinson's, Cyril Barrett's, and B.R. Tilghman's). We already know that on my view the identity of ethics and aesthetics is not an identity of 'subjects' in any sense, but indicates rather the *same* perspective on the world as a "limited whole". Fleshing out more fully why this is an identity of perspectives is my second concern in this chapter. But before getting to this we need to provide a way of understanding how Wittgenstein thinks he can show us anything at all about ethics and aesthetics (and the mystical more generally), given that he dismisses his 'propositions' as nonsense. I believe that interpreting his 'propositions' in one of the two ways characterized above – (a) or (b) – facilitates both an understanding and an appreciation of the transcendental perspective.

More than a few philosophers have regarded the *TLP* as ironic or tongue-in-cheek or even an exercise in disguised nonsense. (On this view Wittgenstein realizes that his propositions are disguised nonsense, but uses them as a kind of "transitional" language in

order to get us to stop speaking nonsense).[93] Ultimately, I hope to show that they are mistaken. The central issue here revolves around attributing some meaning to the 'propositions' of the *TLP* that deal with ethics, aesthetics, and value.

The Language of the Art Critic: A Directive and Invitational Use of Language

Recall that Wittgenstein places logic, aesthetics, and ethics under what can only be shown (and "what can be shown, cannot be said" 4.1212). I think Wittgenstein could be clearer here: what he really means by "said" here is closer to "described": what can be shown cannot be *described in language*. After all, we can and do say things that cannot be described or pictured (in poetry for example) by language, but few would claim that poetry or music does not "express" anything. At any rate, if Wittgenstein is attempting to bring us to a kind of aesthetic perspective on the world, then it seems to me that we should take seriously the idea that his 'propositions' – his *practice* of philosophy ("philosophy is not a body of doctrine but an activity" 4.112) in the *TLP* – are carefully designed to *show* (illuminate, highlight or exhibit for) us a view of the world in much the same way that an art critic uses language to draw our attention to features of some object that *lend* it (or *imbue* it with) value. Here, of course, the object in question – the thing that is aesthetically contemplated – is the "world as a limited whole". In part this means that Wittgenstein's "gestures" are designed to get us to aesthetically appreciate the world in a

[93] In Chapter Five we will look at Cora Diamond's "Throwing away the Ladder: How to Read the *Tractatus*" (1984-85) in her *Realistic Spirit: Wittgenstein, Philosophy and the Mind*; MIT: 1991. She sees Wittgenstein's 'propositions' as a kind of "transitional language" – a kind of imaginative nonsense – that is used by Wittgenstein to lead us to the view that nothing whatever is "shown", and that the very

certain way – in, he thinks, the "right" way.[94] (Notice that in drawing our attention to some object of art, the art critic is attempting to get us to see it in the right way. But the directives we are given need not be taken as pointing to "truths" at all.)

Wittgenstein is using language with the purpose of focusing our attention on features of language and the world in hopes of getting us to *look* at certain aspects of both that we would otherwise miss. I have already said that such a use of language is analogous to what an art critic does in getting us to attend to certain features of a work of art.[95] But just how is he using language to do this? If his 'propositions' are similar in meaning to the way in which an art critic uses language, then Wittgenstein is using language in a directive sense.

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saying/showing distinction is itself another example of the kind of nonsense that Wittgenstein wants to see discarded.

[94] Perhaps seeing the world in the "right" way or from the "right" aesthetico-ethical perspective means that it is "right" or "correct" not in the sense that the conclusion of an argument is said to be right or correct. His claims about the language-world connection can be understood as meta-linguistic truths (chapter two), so we needn't worry about them. But here the term "right" means something like what it means in aesthetics broadly construed, as when we say that that particular musical note is not "the right" one. Here the suggestion is that it does not fit or go with the notes that came before. Examples of this use of "right" and "correct" abound in *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology, and Religious belief* (Ed. By Cyril Barrett; Oxford: 1966). Helping myself to this material is, I admit, anachronistic, but it might help explain how Wittgenstein's overall perspective on the world is "right" without being a "truth". I am suggesting that "right" means something like harmony or overall fittingness, etc. Now of course in back of such a perspective in most cases is a wealth of knowledge about the artistic medium, and what counts as "fitting". For example, someone who knows tailoring will say (Wittgenstein's example in *LCAPR)* when looking at a suit, "that's not right - the sleeves are too long, etc". Now the right perspective on the world as a whole is very different from this: Minimally, I think Wittgenstein's idea is that once we see the limitation of what we can do with any picturing language, we begin to "feel" the world in the right way. And part of this "feel" of the world involves "wondering" at its existence and accepting everything as it is. This is meant to be suggestive only. I am not confident that this is right.

[95] Thanks to John Nolt for his suggestion that perhaps the way in which Wittgenstein is using language in his *TLP* – in pointing out certain features of language and the world – is closer to the way in which an *art critic* uses language – in focusing our attention on certain aspects of an object of art (or more generally an aesthetic object – than the way in which an *artist* uses language to draw our attention to features of a work of art. An art critic points out certain features of a work of art in order so that we may better appreciate its significance or meaning. Originally I had it that Wittgenstein was using language as an artist does. But what an artist "says" about a work of art is often too subjective, personal, and lacks the kind of distanced

A Directive Use of Language

Of course, Wittgenstein's use of imperatival or directive language does not have the same objective as typical imperatives and commands do. For example, imperatives such as "Shut the door" or "leave my classroom", etc., aim instead at getting people to perform certain actions in some small part of the world. Wittgenstein's aesthetico-ethical perspective has nothing to do with action, but rather with *seeing* and *feeling*. And of course the function of a directive use of language in art is geared towards getting us to view a particular object *in the world* in a different light. Wittgenstein's directive or imperatival use of language is aimed, instead, if I am correct, at getting us to *see* and *feel* the *entire* world differently.

Wittgenstein is trying to get us to see the entire world in a wholly different light – from a perspective that is at the limit of the world. My interpretation of Wittgenstein's 'propositions' in the "sixes" gives a voice to the connection between value and the world as a whole by suggesting that his transcendental perspective be understood as a species of an aesthetic perspective. Such an interpretation makes better sense of the oracular and imperatival nature of Wittgenstein's propositions. It makes better sense of the idea that Wittgenstein's "elucidations" are geared to *show* us that there is value in viewing and feeling the world as a "limited whole": these 'propositions' do not "say" in anything like a descriptive sense. This is just to say that he is not guilty of *trying to say* something

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and objective perspective that is required. Ultimately, as John Nolt has observed, "the artist may say just about any damn thing – and usually does!"

about value that cannot be said. Thus, on my reading, the ethical aspect of the transcendental perspective is not incoherent.

Indeed, Wittgenstein begins with a *view* of the *whole world*, and thereby directs us to see the world from a God's eye perspective right off the bat. We are being directed to consider the entire world, and not some part of it. Wittgenstein begins his treatise from a view that is outside the world: "The world is all that is the case" (1). In looking at the world as (1) directs us to we are already being projected out of the world. Let me attempt to flesh this out a little more.

We might preface many of his pronouncements with *"Look at the world in this way"*: "The world is the totality of facts, not of things" (1.1). He is imploring us to see the world in a certain light; he need not be interpreted as "arguing" for his various and sundry 'claims'. So perhaps we should resist the temptation to understand Wittgenstein's pronouncements as conclusions to un-stated or oblique arguments or as directing us to ineffable *truths* about language and the world. I admit it is hard to do this; however, doing so blocks the very troublesome issue of taking Wittgenstein's pronouncements to be quasi-descriptive claims or ineffable necessary truths about the world (such as Kant's "synthetic-a priori" claims).[96]

[96] More evidence that Wittgenstein cannot be giving us necessary truths about language and the world is that according to him only contingent propositions are meaningful; for only contingent propositions can picture or represent facts in the world. Thus, the "philosophers" necessary truths about the world cannot be meaningful propositions on Wittgenstein's view. In addition, necessary *truths* about the world ("synthetic a priori" truths) are typically taken to be *stateable* by philosophers. And he gives no indication that these truths are what can only be shown.

Perhaps the best evidence of the imperatival or directive function of Wittgenstein's 'propositions' comes from the "Sixes" of his work. If we consider the following pronouncements we see that there is (quite literally) no room for descriptive language to do any work in terms of further illuminating Wittgenstein's perspective on the world as a "limited whole" (6.4321 – 6.5):

> The facts all contribute only to setting the problem, not to its solution.
> It is not *how* things are in the world that is mystical, but *that* it exists.
> To view the world sub specie aeterni is to view it as a whole – a limited whole.
> Feeling the world as a limited whole – it is this that is mystical.
> When the answer cannot be put into words, neither can the question be put into words. *The riddle* does not exist.

Now if we preface all of the above instructions as to how to see the world with *"Look at it this way"*, we at once see that we needn't argue for or against Wittgenstein's 'position' because "arguing" only makes sense in the context of "claims" that one is attempting to defend or refute. But by Wittgenstein's own admission, what he is trying to illuminate "cannot be put into words". Thus, "words", in anything like a descriptive sense, either for or against what we take Wittgenstein to be showing us, cannot do what they normally do, especially in *Philosophy* as traditionally conceived (i.e., pre-*Tractatus* Philosophy). (One does well to keep in mind the typical view that metaphysics is in the business of giving the most general description – like some type of "super-science" – of what there is; a view that Wittgenstein flatly rejects): "The result of philosophy is not a number of 'philosophical positions', but to make propositions clear" (4.112).

Can we interpret the above remarks as meta-linguisitc assertions like we did regarding his claims about how language is connected to the world in chapter two? It seems that we cannot. For in making pronouncements about "seeing" and "feeling" the

world as a "limited whole", that this " is mystical", Wittgenstein is not expressing truths at all – not even meta-linguistic ones. He is not talking here about the details of any language-world connection here. And thus he is not *showing* us certain features of the language-world relation that can be 'said' in a higher-order language. So we must find a different role for language to play here.

Is the implication, then, that absolutely nothing can be said about the aesthetico-ethical point that Wittgenstein is trying to make? If we interpret Wittgenstein's 'propositions' in the "sixes" as *describing* any metaphysical facts, or as asserting meta-linguistic truths, then the answer is "yes". But this does not mean that we cannot interpret the 'propositions' of the "sixes" as directives whose main function, once the meta-linguistic rules for a perspicuous notation are grasped (chapter two), is to bring us to a perspective that is at the very limit of the world. He is imploring us to see the world from a God's eye view so that we can see that the "solution" to the "problem of life" (6.521) is to cease to look to the facts of the world for any kind of answer.

Let us give *some voice* as to what Wittgenstein is trying to get us to appreciate regarding "the problem" here and why he thinks his perspective leads to "the vanishing of the problem" (6.521). First, the "problem" of life or the world, which amounts to the same thing for Wittgenstein – "the world and life are one" (5.621) – is a felt problem for us (or at least for many of us): we feel that there must be some meaning or value to life, and we attempt to articulate just what we mean by talking about "the meaning of life." Put slightly differently, the "problem" comes into view when we try to attach some meaning to the notion that the "absolute value" (*LE*) of life, and its discovery or the discovery that there can be no such thing, *must* lie in the facts of the world. Where else

can the problem and its solution lie? Both ways of framing "the problem" assume that there is some fact or set of facts in the world that, once discovered, will enable us to breathe easy – to rest. We have the idea that what we are lacking is some bit of knowledge or information that will give us the answer to the question: "What is life's value or meaning or what makes it really important?" Or perhaps we believe that some set of facts or piece of information can at least show us that there is no such thing as *the* value of life, it's meaning, or what makes it truly important. And Wittgenstein is suggesting that there can be no such answer to "the problem" (in either direction) in anything like a descriptive sense. To realize this is to see "the problem" dissolve. (Tolstoy, in his *A Confession*, came to the same negative 'conclusion' as Wittgenstein did, chapter one.) Thus, the solution is simply to see that "*The riddle* does not exist" (6.5). In its shortest form the answer to this "problem" is to stop philosophizing about it, and just live: "The man (who is) fulfilling the purpose of existence (is one) who no longer needs to have any purpose except to live". But in order to appreciate this insight one must first wrestle with the problem as if it were an empirical one. Wittgenstein is I think suggesting that it is only in seeing the world *sub specie aeternitatis* that we appreciate the remark that there is indeed no riddle at all, for then we stop looking to the world to give us answers.

The above passage (6.4321-6.5) is Wittgenstein's attempt to get us to look at the world and language so that we can see that descriptive language cannot solve the riddle: what's illuminated is that descriptive language cannot do for us what we want it to do: "The urge towards the mystical comes from the non-satisfaction of our wishes by science. We *feel* that even if all *possible* scientific questions are answered *our problem is still not*

touched at all. Of course in that case there are no questions any more; and that is the answer" (*NB*; 25.5.15 and 6.52).

The very paradigm of meaningful language in the *TLP* (expressed through his "picture theory") is quite useless in solving the problem of life. In pointing to the "problem of life" this means that Wittgenstein cannot be using language to *describe* the *problem.* Hence, the use he is making of language must be quite different than the role played by contingent propositions. We can, then, see his 'propositions' as being senseless in that they do not meet the picture theory criterion of meaning. This is certainly true. But we can say more than this: they do not meet this criterion because they are not an instance of the descriptive use of language at all. And so I suggest that the 'meaning' of Wittgenstein's 'propositions' that are *about* the mystical are akin to 'the meaning' language has when the art critic uses language to instruct us to view something so that we can see what lends it aesthetic value.

When we are brought to see that the essence of meaningful language is its *descriptive* nature we are also shown that the felt problem of life cannot be touched by language at all. This is, in part, what it means to see the world "aright" or from the right perspective. Part of the "solution" to the problem, then, is just this: having acquired the "right" perspective we at once realize that there is no such problem that can be *described at all*: "...I at once see clearly, as it were in a flash of light, not only that no description [of absolute value or what makes life really important, etc.] that I can think of would do to describe what I mean by absolute value, but that I would reject every significant description that anybody could possibly suggest, *ab initio*, on the ground of its significance" (*LE*; p 70). This is purely a result of our seeing the limits of our language:

We stop asking such questions about the meaning or value of life and the world, and, instead, simply live (and, following Wittgenstein, perhaps live simply).

But surely there is more to it than this? How is ethical *action* accounted for in this perspective? Does Wittgenstein's perspective have nothing to *say* (by implication anyway) about *how* we *ought* to live? I have tried to give some suggestions in chapter three regarding some of the practical consequences of Wittgenstein's perspective; namely, our living in such a way that our individual, blind striving will is disengaged from the world. This is to take a contemplative and disinterested perspective on what happens in the world. This is, in part, a recipe for happiness according to Wittgenstein: it amounts to a kind of quietism.

I wrestle with this issue again in my attempt to fill out his aesthetico-ethical perspective. We should, however, be aware that Wittgenstein's conception of ethics – in the broadest sense of "conception" – has little to do with what we take ethics (in the world) to be about; namely, the way in which we "ought" to behave and act towards others.

Another main consideration for interpreting the transcendental perspective as falling under an aesthetic perspective has to do with the notion that an aesthetic view of things (an object, a world) is not purely intellectual, but involves *affect* or *attitude* as well. The transcendental perspective has a dual aspect to it: both "seeing" and "feeling" (6.54). Recall that Wittgenstein thinks of the will as an attitude toward the world. And it is my contention that this attitude involves feeling or sensing the world in a very particular way.

If the transcendental perspective on the world involves both "seeing" and "feeling" (affect, attitude), as I think it does, then it is well characterized as an aesthetic perspective. For an "aesthetic perspective" is both "contemplative" and "affective". The "contemplative" aspect of Wittgenstein's perspective is cashed out in terms of "*seeing* the world as a limited whole", whereas the affective aspect of Wittgenstein's perspective is cashed out in terms of "*Feeling* the world as a limited whole" (6.45). And Wittgenstein is enjoining or directing us to see and feel the world from its limit.

What Do Aesthetics and Ethics have in common according to Wittgenstein?

I have been emphasizing Wittgenstein's equation of aesthetics and ethics throughout this work: "Ethics and aesthetics are one and the same" (Pear and McGuiness, 6.421). I should, however, be more cautious here. Diane Collinson ("Ethics and aesthetics are one"; 1985[97]), B.R. Tilghman (*Wittgenstein, Ethics, and Aesthetics*, 1991) and Cyril Barrett ["(Ethics and Aesthetics are one)?", 1984[98]] make the point that it is a mistake to see Wittgenstein as strictly identifying ethics with aesthetics. Barrett points out that a strict identity between the two, as suggested by the Pears/McGuiness translation, cannot be right. What can be meant by such an identity? Barrett denies that the identity is a strict numerical identity (in the sense that we say "the morning star is the evening star", p 17), and instead interprets Wittgenstein as suggesting that there are relevant similarities between the two areas.

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[97] *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 25, No. 3
[98] *Aesthetics; Proceedings of the 8th International Wittgenstein Symposium*, Part 1

Following in Barrett's stead, B.R. Tilghman also rejects the idea that Wittgenstein is suggesting something like strict identity, and proceeds to look for similarities between the two 'subjects: "Wittgenstein is not offering a statement of identity, but is rather claiming that there is some kind of important similarity and link between them" (p 45). In due course we will investigate what they take the relevant similarities to be.

Diane Collinson, although she does not deny that ethics and aesthetics are one in a strict sense, makes it clear that she reads Wittgenstein as suggesting important similarities between the two. For example, she says that "the attitude that is common to ethics and aesthetics is a way of seeing" and that both ethics and aesthetics are concerned with "absolute value" (p. 267). None of them explore the idea that this "way of seeing" (and, I would add, "feeling" so as to include the affective aspect of this perspective) is the *very same* perspective. I will argue that what Wittgenstein is offering us is an *aesthetic-ethical* perspective on the world as "a limited whole". Thus, the ethical "way of seeing" and the aesthetic "way of seeing" are one and the same.

Thus, Collinson, Barrett, and Tilghman may be begging an important question. They bring with them certain presuppositions about what constitutes ethics as a subject and what constitutes aesthetics as a subject (to be fair we all do). This is why they regard it as absurd to interpret Wittgenstein as suggesting that ethics and aesthetics are "one and the same". (Incidentally, the German is "Ethik und Aesthetik sind Eins", which minimally says that "ethics and aesthetics are one"; not, as Barrett rightly says, "one *and the same*", as the Pears/McGuiness version has it). However, in saying that both "are one" ("sind Eins") Wittgenstein is suggesting *that the ethical and the aesthetical perspectives are the very same.*

My point is that we should not presume that Wittgenstein was *not* strictly identifying them (in some sense). What makes this interpretive problem doubly tricky is that it is not clear whether Wittgenstein is identifying (in some sense) ethics *qua* subject with aesthetics *qua* subject or whether he is identifying an ethical and aesthetical *perspective* on the world as being the same.

Barrett and Tilghman assume that Wittgenstein is identifying the "subjects" as being similar (qualitatively the same), but not identical. If this is what Wittgenstein is doing, then I agree that ethics and aesthetics are not identical. But again it seems that too much is assumed here. I am inclined to see Wittgenstein as suggesting an identity between the ethical and aesthetical *perspective* with respect to the world. The evidence for my interpretation comes from Wittgenstein's own words:

> 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* (my emphasis; *NB*, 7.10.16).

What "connects" both art and ethics here has nothing to do with anything like moral and aesthetical principles, but rather a certain outlook or way of seeing something; namely, in the case of art, *seeing* some object "under the aspect of eternity", and in the case of ethics ("the good life"), *seeing* the world "under the aspect of eternity". Wittgenstein goes on, in the same passage, to amplify what he means by seeing anything *sub specie aeternitatis*: "The usual way of *looking* at things sees objects as it were from the midst of them, the view *sub specie aeternitatis* from the outside" (my emphasis; *NB*, 7.10.16). At present, the most important point to note in all of this is that what links both ethics and aesthetics is a way of "seeing" and "looking". Indeed, it may even be the case that the ethical and aesthetical perspectives are, as I have already suggested, one and the same.

I will come back to this strict identity of "perspective" – rather than similarity of 'subjects' – shortly. Now let's turn to what Collinson, Barrett, and Tilghman regard as the relevant similarities between the two areas. All three of them attempt to show how the 'subjects' are similar, marking "*sub specie aeternitatis*" as simply one of the features that both subjects or areas have in common. They do not, mistakenly in my view, identify an aesthetic *perspective* with an ethical *perspective*, but instead see the view "from the point of view of eternity" as simply one *feature* of what both ethics and aesthetics have in common according to Wittgenstein.

Diane Collinson

In her "'Aesthetics and ethics are one'", Collinson argues that Wittgenstein's take on ethics – specifically his view on the ways in which ethics is similar to aesthetics – is not as "idiosyncratic" as it first seems (p 266). Collinson suggests that Wittgenstein is, in fact, putting forward a "view of ethics" [that is] very much part of a mainstream in ethical thinking" (p 266). What Collinson attempts to do is show how Wittgenstein's conception of ethics is not that far removed from our more ordinary "judgements of good and evil" in the world: "Our particular judgments of good and evil are not independent of our attitudes to life as a whole, nor of our views as to its meaning or lack of meaning" (p 266). This suggests that Collinson interprets Wittgenstein as putting forward a view of the ethical that is connected to our way of acting in the world and the "judgments" we make about such actions. But however intuitive such a view is, I am not at all sure that it is Wittgenstein's position.

Collinson rightly point out that Wittgenstein, in his *LE*, identifies the good life or "the enquiry into what is valuable", as falling under "Aesthetics". This, she says, places Wittgenstein squarely under the "Kantian strand" of the ethical and the aesthetical as dealing with "intrinsic value", and not as directed to some particular end, but rather that what's done in ethics or aesthetics is an end in itself or "for [its] own sake" (p. 267). All this is correct in that "absolute value" cannot be means/end related for Wittgenstein. (I have tried to show that this is right in section (b) of chapter three, where I discuss how Phillipa Foot's position is related to what Wittgenstein 'says' about absolute value in his *LE*).

The first important similarity Collinson notes in Wittgenstein's identifying ethics with aesthetics has to do with, as she says, a "way of seeing" (p 267); this is simply the view *sub specie aeternitatis*. According to Collinson, this shared "way of seeing" is an attitude taken up by the "metaphysical self" (ibid). What makes both attitudes similar is that we contemplate things from the "outside", and not, as Wittgenstein says "from the midst of them" (7.10.16). This means, Collinson suggests, that just as we take a disinterested and "detached" perspective when perceiving some work of art, we do the same with the world as a whole; that is, we view the world from a detached perspective or take a disinterested attitude toward the world: "We are to think of the ethical as sharing this [detached] attitude" (p 267). The ethical attitude, then, is, according to Collinson, a detached and disinterested one toward the world as a whole. In summing up what the aesthetical and ethical attitude or "way of seeing" have in common she writes: "Just as the aesthetic object is the single thing seen as if it were a whole world, so the ethical object, or life, is the multiplicity of the world seen as a single object" (p 269). Much of

what Collinson says here I have no quarrel with, except that I think more needs to be said about what it means to see the "world as a single object", which is to say no more than that what she does say is rather vague. I will get to this in due course.

There are three other features shared by ethics and aesthetics, and she thinks that Wittgenstein tacitly endorses all three of shared characteristics. First, there is a kind of dualism inherent in Wittgenstein's view of the absolute good or value. There is a "transcendental self" (the "metaphysical subject") which serves as the "logical condition of the apprehension of the good" (p 270). According to Collinson, in the same way that Kant posits a "noumenal self", Schopenhauer the "will-in-itself", so Wittgenstein has his "metaphysical self", to serve as the interface between what's absolutely good and the world of facts. Second, she notes that there is in Wittgenstein (as well as Kant, but in a very different way) the notion that "absolute value" confers a kind of "logical necessity" on our actions; that is, if any state of affairs had absolute value, we would recognize this out of necessity, and not from any inclination or desire on our part. Collinson points out that this is what Wittgenstein is illustrating with his talk of the "absolutely right road" and "the absolute good" in his *LE*. And thirdly, Collinson thinks that all of this points to a real difficulty in Wittgenstein's take on ethics; namely, the impossibility of demonstrating how a transcendental, otherworldly notion of absolute value or good, can get any purchase in our world of facts. How can there be any relation between absolute value or the absolute good and good deeds or our judgments of what we regard as being ethically good in the world? (This was certainly a problem for Plato). She thinks that this leads Wittgenstein into a kind of dualism; dualism in the sense that none of the acts performed by the "empirical self" can have any value because there can be no connection

between the "metaphysical self", which is the "logical condition of the apprehension of the good' and particular judgments we make about our actions being good or evil in the world. And it is precisely *here* where I believe that Collinson goes wrong.

The fundamental mistake that Collinson makes is this: She assumes that ethics must be tied to the actions we take and the judgments we make *in* the world. Now this is not a counter-intuitive assumption on her part. But if what she is doing is giving an account of why Wittgenstein regards ethics and aesthetics as one, then such an assumption must be jettisoned.[99] It requires great will to leave behind the notion that ethics and aesthetics, even if we cannot define them and even if there are no ethical or aesthetical "propositions", are fundamentally different *subjects*: aesthetics deals with a "way of seeing" and ethics, whatever else it deals with, has to do with "acting". She has retained this assumption about ethics.

My position is that this "way of seeing" ("under the aspect of eternity") is the alpha and omega in terms of identifying ethics with aesthetics. This is just to say, once again, that Wittgenstein is identifying ethics and aesthetics solely in terms of *perspective*, and not as *subjects*.

This means, on my view, that the "subject matters" of ethics and aesthetics are different in the usual ways in which they are taken to be different. But this is only true as

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[99] Perhaps it is too strong to say that she simply assumes that ethics involves action for Wittgenstein. Her rather loose claim that ethics is not disconnected from our "attitudes to life and the world as a whole", while in some sense true, is not *the attitude* that I think Wittgenstein is trying to bring about in us with his transcendental perspective. Moreover, although Collinson refers to a passage in the *NB* (29.7.16) that she takes as relevant in showing that Wittgenstein was "mindful" (p 266) of our more ordinary ideas of ethics in the world, what Wittgenstein says there suggests that he was at best ambivalent about the right ethical perspective. For example, he considers whether it is best (ethically) to will or not to will: "To love one's neighbor would mean to will!" But a few sentences Wittgenstein writes: "Is it, according to common conceptions, good to want *nothing* for one's neighbor, neither good nor evil?" This is tentatively answered

these subjects are applied *in* the world. In the world, ethics and value in the "relative" sense is about our actions and the judgments that we make about them. In the world, aesthetics is concerned with a way of looking at objects. But at the very limit of the world, when seeing the world under the aspect of eternity, the only way in which both ethics and aesthetics can be *one* is in terms of the transcendental perspective on the world as a whole. Thus, the aesthetico-ethical perspective has nothing to do with evaluating actions *in the world.*

Collinson's failure to appreciate that Wittgenstein is (on my view) only identifying the two in terms of perspective leads to additional problems, which I believe are related to her critique of Wittgenstein's view of ethics. She attributes to Wittgenstein a dualism based on her idea (common in the literature[100]) that Wittgenstein is committed to two selves: a "metaphysical self" and an "empirical self". The former is, on here reading, "transcendental" and thus outside the world. It is this self that "apprehends" the good or absolute value. While I myself was at one time tempted by such an interpretation – an interpretation that is, as Collinson notes, in the vain of Plato and Kant – I now regard treating Wittgenstein's "metaphysical subject" or "self" as some sort of noumenal subject as an unnecessary reification of his way of getting us to see the world under the aspect of

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in the next remark: "And yet in a certain sense it seems that not wanting is the only good". This is a far cry from our "common conceptions" of the ethical.

[100] Janik, for example, in his essay "Schopenhauer and the Early Wittgenstein", suggests that Wittgenstein is committed to something like a noumenal subject: ... "[That] which is higher than the world, that which cannot be said, the sense, value and meaning of the world lies outside the world in the willing subject, its limit...In so far as this is the case we may identify will as the noumenal in Wittgenstein's early writings" (*Essays on Wittgenstein and Weininger*; Rodopi; Amsterdam: 1985. p 43). Janik suggests that this is like Schopenhauer's noumenal will. But it is not at all clear that Schopenhauer ever conceived of a subject as noumenal. Indeed, the sense that can be made of the will as noumena or thing-in-itself in Schopenhauer is more of a negative characterization: it is whatever cannot be represented as idea – the stuff that makes up the phenomenal world (force, energy, matter). Hence, even if Wittgenstein's willing subject were

eternity. In positing a metaphysical subject or self, Collinson at once creates an unbridgeable gap between the ordinary, empirical world and a transcendental, otherworldly realm. Once we have this rift, it is easy to see the impossibility of tying ethics in an absolute sense to anything in the world. And these two problems – that is, identifying the ethical with acting and reifying the metaphysical self – are related in that once we have it that ethics for Wittgenstein must involve actions, and that the metaphysical subject cannot act in the world (for it is transcendental and other-worldly), we are forced to concede that it is a complete mystery as to how the metaphysical self's apprehension of the good can be the ground for good deeds and actions in the world. Recall that it cannot, on this view (as well as on mine) be the empirical subject that confers value (in an absolute sense) on actions in the world. For the empirical subject or self is just another part of the world, and nothing in the world has or can confer absolute value (6.41).

But these problems can be avoided – albeit somewhat at the expense of our intuitions regarding what ethics is (or "ought" to be) about *in the world* – if we instead interpret Wittgenstein as strictly identifying the ethical and aesthetical perspective as being the very same. On my reading, both ethics and aesthetics involve only a "way of seeing" (as Collinson says), and ethical action per se is not the mark of absolute value in *any* sense. Moreover, if we take my advice in chapter three, and read Wittgenstein's talk of a metaphysical/willing subject as his way of getting us to appreciate a perspective on the world that has a "pure knowing" aspect (having to do with the logic of our language)

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noumenal, such a conception would be a radical departure from Schopenhauer's notion of will-in-itself. This point is owed to Richard Aquila.

as well as an "aesthetico-ethical" aspect (having to do with attitude and feeling), then we need not worry over the issue of how to connect the transcendental world of the metaphysical self – as the apprehender of absolute value – with the nitty-gritty actions we take in the world.

First, there simply is no transcendental realm and no metaphysical subject or self (either outside or at the limit of the world) on my view.[101] Second, on my account nothing *in the world* can have value in an absolute sense. Thus, there can be no grounding of ethical actions and judgments in an absolute sense in the world. Notice that this leaves untouched the idea that there are ethical actions and ethical judgments, but such actions and judgments will have only "relative" [see chapter three, (b)], not absolute, value. Therefore, Wittgenstein need not worry over how to connect absolute value to facts in the world, since, *ex hypothesi*, nothing in the world has value in an absolute sense.

Moreover, even if Wittgenstein were committed to something like a "metaphysical self", that stands outside the world and apprehends absolute value, it is still a mistake to see Wittgenstein as failing to give an account as to how ethical deeds get whatever value they have from this other-worldly "absolute good". The reason is plain: Wittgenstein's notion of "absolute value" does not confer value on *anything in the world*. His 'ethics' is not about the actions we take and the judgments we make in the world. (Of

[101] One might wonder how I can account for Wittgenstein's comment: "There is indeed the inexpressible. It shows itself; it is the mystical" (6.522, Ogden). Isn't he committed to something standing outside the world of facts—some*thing* transcendental? No. When Wittgenstein refers to the "mystical" he is referring to certain experiences ("wondering at the world", "feeling absolutely safe", etc) that *result from* our viewing the world as a "limited whole". For what can it mean to say that there is something standing outside the world that (in some sense) *causes* us to have the experiences we do? Such a view is not in keeping with Wittgenstein's Spartan mysticism – his is not a Gnostic mysticism. Positing some mystical realm does not do any work. It is his perspective on the world that leads to our having certain experiences that are mystical, and hence inexpressible, and not our experiencing some other-worldly realm.

course, we might regard this as a problem for any "account" of ethics. But this is a separate matter.) My point here is simply that Wittgenstein is not in the business of trying to show how an "apprehension of the Good … [can] ground …particular good deeds, decisions, and judgments" (p 270) *in the world*. If Wittgenstein's perspective points to anything as having absolute value, then it can point only to the world as a "limited whole" as having such value or meaning, and not to anything *in* the world.

Now let us turn to Cyril Barrett's position. We will see that he makes (roughly) the same mistake that Collinson does in connecting ethics and value with our actions and deeds.

Cyril Barrett's Position on the Connection between Ethics and Aesthetics

Barrett's take on why Wittgenstein regards both ethics and aesthetics as one is meant to be suggestive only, and he leaves it "open to discussion" – always a safe move with Wittgenstein. At any rate, a few of the points he makes resonate with mine. He does a nice job of tying ethics and aesthetics together in terms of their involving "mystical experience". I want to pursue the connection between mystical experience and the aesthetico-ethical. Such a connection is consistent with my view that Wittgenstein is identifying an ethical and aesthetical perspective as being the same.

As I have already noted, Barrett is explicit in rejecting the identity between ethics and aesthetics in a strict sense. Barrett begins by making the obvious point that both ethics and aesthetics are the same in the sense that both belong to the "mystical" insofar as both are "unsayable" (p 17).

According to Barrett, there are three substantive similarities between the two areas: "(1) Both involve seeing *sub specie aeternitatis*; (2) both are concerned with what Wittgenstein calls the mystical, the experience of absolute value; (3) [and both concern] happiness, the happy life, [and] being happy" (p 20). All three features remain pretty much unconnected in Barrett's treatment of the similarity between art and ethics. I want to see if I can connect them through a strict identity of the ethical and aesthetical perspective.

Barrett quotes the usual passage from Wittgenstein's *NB*, which I will supply (again) for convenience:

> 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 is to sees objects as it were from the midst of them, the view *sub specie aeternitatis* from outside; in such a way that they have the whole world as background (7.10.16).

As further comment on this entry, Barrett quotes the remainder from 7.10.16:

> Is it something like this perhaps – in this view (*sub specie aeternitatis*) the object is seen *together with* space and time instead of *in* space and time?
> Each thing modifies the whole logical world, and the whole of logical space, so to speak. (The thought forces itself on one): The thing seen *sub specie aeternitatis* is the thing seen together with the whole logical space.[102]

Finally, Barrett enlists one more entry to help shed light on what are, admittedly, very mysterious passages. On 8.10.16 Wittgenstein refers to our seeing a "stove" as a "thing among things" versus viewing it as a "world". As one thing among many, the stove is "insignificant", but as a "world each thing (a "stove", etc) is equally significant". The example Wittgenstein offers here is extremely bizarre.

[102] "The whole of logical space" is perhaps a metaphor for "possible worlds" or all the possible ways in which the world might be.

Barrett suggests that Wittgenstein is intimating that an artists' perspective on an object can make whatever it is meaningful and significant by viewing it as a world unto itself. Barrett mentions "Van Gogh's chair or Bed, or Cezanne's apples" as examples. These are admittedly ordinary objects, without significance, but seen from the artists' perspective they take on meaning and "significance". One could, I suppose, view a painting by Van Gogh (or any great artist) as a "world" unto itself. But does this mean any more than that artistic appreciation involves our viewing the object in such a way that we lose ourselves and everything else in contemplating it? We as it were tune out everything else, and focus solely on the object—the rest of the world becoming, as it were, mere background. This experience is common enough. But how are we to apply this to Wittgenstein's notion of absolute value and the world?

It is not clear that this really helps us to better understand why Wittgenstein thought that ethics and aesthetics involve the same or a similar perspective. Moreover, any work of art (or even a particular object in nature) stands out as a discrete thing; and we are invited to consider a work of art as a world. The idea that a work of art is to be viewed as, in some sense, a world unto itself, as not one thing among many things, is fairly intuitive. But how are we to apply this idea to Wittgenstein's pronouncement that "the good life is *the world* seen under the point of view of eternity"? It seems that there is a very important connection between "the good life" and a perspective on the whole "world". But what is this connection?

Barrett suggests that what we can glean from these entries is that ethics and aesthetics both "(a) involve viewing *sub specie aeternitatis*, which in some way involves a detachment from space and time; and (b) a relationship with the 'whole world', the

'whole logical world', the 'whole logical space'" – which is really just the set of all possible worlds (p 18). It is not clear that Barrett is mistaken here, but neither is it clear that he is right: one simply does not know what to do with these very general remarks. Regarding (a) I have already suggested (chapter three) that the detachment that Wittgenstein has in mind involves a negation of our will in the world, and that Wittgenstein most likely got this idea from Schopenhauer. As regards (b), although Barrett has nothing further to say about it as falling under the "view from eternity", he does make some points about the "mystical" which I believe are relevant in shedding light on what Wittgenstein was driving at with his talk of "the whole world" and "the whole logical space" in the context of the ethical. Once again: what is the connection between "the good life" and seeing the world "*sub specie aternitatis*"? Barrett has nothing to say here.

At the very least this connection appears to involve our seeing the world in such a way that we are unaffected by anything *in* the world. When we take this perspective at the limit of the world we view the empirical self as simply another object in the world, and thus do not identify ourselves with *this subject*. We are no more concerned with *it* than we are with any other object in the world. From this perspective "a stone, the body of a beast, the body of a man, my body, all stand on the same level" (NB, 12.10.16). As subjects in the world we do not occupy a pre-eminent place. Hence, form such a vista we do not worry about what might or might not happen to us, and so we are "absolutely safe". But there is more to it than this.

From a timeless (eternal)[103] perspective with respect to the world as a whole, events do not *occur,* they merely are. The occurrence of events requires time. And to see the world "under the aspect of eternity" is to see the world from a timeless perspective. Seeing and appreciating the world in this way is to (in some sense) live "eternally". This is in part the meaning of Wittgenstein's cryptic remark: "If we take eternity to mean not infinite temporal duration but timelessness, then eternal life belongs to those who live in the present" (6.4311). Nothing can happen to us in the world, for all "happenings" require time. And if *nothing* can happen to us in the world, then, *a fortiori*, nothing good or bad can happen to us. This means that there can be no worries and no harm for there is no past and no future, only an enduring now, as it were. If we reside in a kind of timeless eternity nothing can touch us. It is in this sense that the transcendental perspective on the world consists in "the good life".

Finally, such a perspective results in a particular attitude toward the world. If we can see the world "under the aspect of eternity" we can see the world with a "happy eye" (*NB*, 20.10.16). Wittgenstein asks: "Is the will an attitude towards the world" (4.11.16)? The answer seems to be "yes". But what sort of attitude is it? A kind of awe that there is what there is—that there is a world at all (*NB*, 20.10.16 and 6.44). Thus, it seems that Wittgenstein is suggesting that whatever happens to us as empirical subjects in this world

[103] In *The Phenomenon of life: Towards a Philosophical Biology* (1966), Hans Jonas Suggests that eternity consists not in our enduring forever, but rather in the recognition that our deeds, once done, cannot be undone, and hence are written into eternity. All actions or deeds have a timelessness about them. And with this realization comes an enormous sense of awe and responsibility. Although there is no direct evidence that Wittgenstein thought of eternity in any sense other than "timelessness", his life suggests that perhaps he thought of eternity in the way that Jonas characterizes it. Throughout his life Wittgenstein took very seriously (perhaps too seriously) all that he did, as if he were writing his deeds into an eternal ledger (pp 278-279), and would one day be judged. In fact, he was fond of saying to his closest friends (Engelmann, for example), that they would perhaps meet again "at judgment day". In seeing the entire world "under the

is irrelevant, for we no longer care about wresting satisfaction from life by managing well, but are instead projected out of the world, seeing all that exists from the point of view of eternity. From such a perspective there can be no good and no evil; everything simply is. And that everything is as it is or that there is anything at all is a kind of miracle. This is the attitude of the will to the world. (And tall this shows that ethics cannot be about our actions in the world for Wittgenstein.)

Aesthetics and "Seeing"; Ethics and "Acting": A Wrong-headed Approach

Barrett goes on to say that "The difference, so far, is that whereas art and aesthetics is concerned with objects (of whatever kind), ethics is concerned with a way of life" (p 18). This, he thinks, shows that aesthetics and ethics are not the same in a strict sense. He amplifies what he means in saying that ethics concerns "a way of life" when he writes: "Aesthetics has to do with looking at things; ethics has to do with living and acting" (p 20).

Ultimately, Barrett thinks that ethics "involves action and living" and that ethics "has to determine which is the preferable way of living (and what constitutes) the good life" (p 20). Aesthetics is relevant here, Barrett thinks, because ethics "is a sub-class of aesthetics" for Wittgenstein (p 20). The cash value of Barrett's placing ethics under aesthetics is his conviction that according to Wittgenstein "if an action is not aesthetically acceptable, then it cannot be ethically acceptable either" (p 20).

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aspect of eternity" we see all of our actions as timeless, and so judge them to be momentous not as events in the world, but as eternal deeds.

Barrett gives a host of examples as to what he has in mind by this last claim. There are actions and behaviors that we regard as "ugly", such as: "raping a child of eight, robbing old-age pensioners, torturing an innocent victim to death", etc. (ibid). Now he admits that the term "ugly", used here, is "metaphorical", but "it is an aesthetic concept for all that" (ibid). Barrett sees an "analogy between mugging an old lady, raping a child, blowing up innocent people, etc. and a body disfigured by dreadful burns or a devastated landscape: neither are as we think they ought to be" (ibid). The implication in all this is that nothing can count as an ethically right or appropriate action unless it is, at minimum, "aesthetically acceptable". This is an interesting interpretation as to why Wittgenstein thinks both ethics and aesthetics share a similar perspective, but I am not convinced that this is Wittgenstein's view.

First, there is Barrett's assumption that "ethics", whatever else it involves, is connected with action. He explicitly says this, and provides us with very colorful examples of horrible actions. Barrett quite obviously interprets Wittgenstein's talk about "the good life" as involving our actions. So Barrett sets out to find what anyone would regard as "ugly" acts. While I find this view intuitive, it seems to ignore Wittgenstein's identifying "the good life" with the whole "world seen *sub specie aeternitatis*". Wittgenstein nowhere provides us with examples of 'ugly' acts, nor does he give us examples of how to live an ethical life: his perspective does not seem to be about acting and actions at all.

Moreover, in all of his discussions on aesthetics[104] Wittgenstein never uses terms such as "ugly" or "beautiful", but uses instead terms like "right", "correct", etc. But there is another reason why this approach is wrong.

Wittgenstein's ethical perspective does not involve viewing *particular actions* as "ugly" any more than it views them as "right". His perspective is concerned with seeing the world as a "limited whole". It is an ethical outlook on the entire world. If we are to take seriously the 'idea' that "the good life is the world seen under the aspect of eternity", then we must try to make sense of *seeing the world* "aesthetically" (and, *a fortiori*, ethically): Thus it is the world, not events, actions, states of affairs, etc., that has (or lacks) absolute value.

If instead of focusing on actions as comprising or constituting "the good life" we examine the idea that "viewing the world as a whole" is what constitutes the "good life", we get an ethical perspective that has little to do with action, yet may still result in (or lead to) "the good life", but not in the way that Barrett's analysis suggests. I therefore want to explore the idea that *viewing the world as a whole* (a "bounded" or "limited whole") (6.45) is what leads to "the good life".

According to Barrett the second characteristic that both ethics and aesthetics share is that they fall under the "mystical" and the "experience of absolute value" [point (2) above]. Whereas Barrett sees this as a characteristic distinct from (1) – the view *sub specie aeternitatis* – I argue that "the experience of absolute value" and the "mystical" is *not* a separate characteristic that ethics and aesthetics (as subjects) share, but is rather to be seen as the result of taking the aesthetico-ethical perspective on the world. Put another

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way, it is seeing the world *sub specie aternitatis* that leads to the "experience of absolute value" and the "mystical" more generally. Let me try to make this perspicuous.

Barrett lumps the "miraculous", our sense of "wonder" that there is a world at all, and our "experience of absolute value" as falling under the "mystical". This is correct, as far as it goes, but it does not go very far. To say, as Barrett does, that such experiences show that "the aesthetic and the ethical are linked through the mystical" (p. 19) is exceedingly vague. It is not so much that Barrett is mistaken here, as that what he says is not very informative. At any rate, Barrett's discussion of the mystical is framed in terms of our "*experience* of absolute value", so perhaps both ethics and aesthetics are similar in virtue of such experiences.

Barrett offers the following 'claims' in support of his observation that both ethics and aesthetics are tied up with "the mystical": "Aesthetically, the miracle is that the world exists. That there is what there is" (*NB*, 20.10.16); and, "Not how the world is, is the mystical, but that it is" (6.44). Barrett then points out that the "experience of absolute value" in Wittgenstein's *LE* is of a piece with his *NB* and his *TLP*: "'How extraordinary that anything should exist' (*LE*, p. 68) etc." (p. 19). But he never offers much of an explanation as to how the mystical is connected to ethics and aesthetics. He simply states: "the aesthetic and the ethical are linked through the mystical" (p 19). Nor does Barrett make perspicuous why "wondering that anything is" is "directly linked with the aesthetic…way of looking at things" (p 19). I think I have a way to forge this "link" and so make clear the connection between aesthetics, ethics, and the mystical.

Wittgenstein begins his attempt to characterize "absolute value" with the following remark (in italics no less): "If I want to fix my mind on what I mean by

absolute or ethical value…I believe the best way of describing it is to say that when I have it *I wonder at the existence of the world"* (p 68). My suggestion is that *Das Mystische* and our attempt to characterize "absolute or ethical value" begins with our sense of wonder that there is a world at all. It thus appears that the more substantive implication here is not the (rather vacuous) notion that both ethics and aesthetics are tied up with mystical experiences, but that *the* experience "*par excellence*" of "absolute or ethical value" is, according to Wittgenstein, our "*wondering at the existence of the world*" (*LE*, p. 68).

In his *LE* Wittgenstein spends some time explaining what he means by this expression, only to reach the conclusion that the expression is without any *descriptive* sense. It defies analysis according to Wittgenstein because in order for us to properly wonder at the existence of anything we must, he thinks, have some idea as to what it means for the thing (whatever it is) not to exist. This is why we can wonder at the existence of a very large dog because we have seen small dogs, and are amazed at the size of this particular dog (Wittgenstein's example, p. 68). We can wonder at the sky being a particular shade of blue because we have seen other shades, and are struck by just this hue for example (Wittgenstein again, *ibid.*). But what does it mean to say that we "wonder at the existence of the world"? Well, we are amazed that there is something rather than nothing. This is the most that we can say here. We are in awe at the world's existence. But our wonder, awe or amazement at the existence of this world cannot be the result of our acquaintance with other non-existent worlds, and thus based on the fact that we experience an existing – as opposed to a non-existing – world. We cannot wonder that there *not* being a world. The wonder that Wittgenstein has in mind here cannot parallel

typical cases of wondering (as in the case of the dog being so large or the color of the sky being so blue). It seems that we cannot give any descriptive meaning to the experience of "wondering at the existence of the world".

I want to anticipate an objection that might be raised against connecting the above experience (wondering at the existence of the world) to absolute value. Absolute value, whatever it is, is *not* something that can be reduced to the facts in the world. Wittgenstein is really clear on this point when he says in so many words that nothing we can say about value in an absolute sense can be "the thing" (*LE*, p. 69). Now if we take "wondering at the existence of the world" to be the paradigmatic mystical experience (6.54), and if we take Wittgenstein's claims about the impossibility of saying anything about absolute value seriously, then it appears that we can never experience the world as having absolute value. The reason is obvious: any experience is an experience *in* the world, and thus can be reduced to psychological facts about us. Such facts can be stated or described. Thus, such a fact about us, about how we feel, or about our attitude towards the world, cannot, it would seem, be connected to absolute value. It is just another valueless fact in the world.

The way to handle this objection is to see that the expression "wondering at the existence of the world" is, strictly speaking, nonsensical according to Wittgenstein. Thus, it cannot be reduced to the facts because we cannot say what it means. When Wittgenstein says he is tempted to give a description of absolute value (what he *means* by "absolute value") *by* relating his experience of "wondering at the existence of the world" (*LE*, p. 68), this should be taken to mean that the closest he can come to pointing towards the meaning of absolute value is by giving us what he regards as a truly mystical

experience. I say mystical experience because this experience cannot be described at all, according to Wittgenstein. Thus, as an experience it cannot be reduced to a psychological fact about us. It cannot, strictly speaking, be said. And "ineffability", according to William James, is one of the marks of a mystical experience (*VRE*, p. 414).

I wanted to spend some time fleshing the above "experience" out, because it is I believe a key to our seeing that ethics and aesthetics are one and the same in virtue of perspective for Wittgenstein. The primary mystical experience (or the experience *of* the mystical—perhaps there is no distinction here for Wittgenstein) that results from the identity of the ethical and aesthetic perspective is our "wondering at the existence of the world". Such an experience does not involve any judgments about how the world ought or ought not to be. We might say that as an experience of the world it is most peculiar in that when we have it we "feel" or experience the world at its limit. But more than that, it is different from typical experiences because it is not clear that it is reducible to psychological facts about us owing to its ineffability and it "noetic quality" (*VRE*, p. 414).

Now I want to suggest that this experience results from our seeing the world at its limit. Given that Wittgenstein regards "absolute or *ethical* value" as best *characterized* by an experience; namely, our "wondering at the existence of the world", it seems to follow that in taking up the view of the world under the aspect of eternity we also come as close as we can to apprehending absolute value. What I am ultimately suggesting is that the mystical "shows itself" in our experiencing wonder at the existence of the world. The fact that Wittgenstein is committed to there being the "inexpressible" suggests that

we apprehend it in some way in having the above type of experience. Again, there is a very direct kind of knowing or insight here, and not mere feeling.

In order to spell this out we must look once again at what Wittgenstein is getting at when he talks about "seeing" the world as a "limited whole" versus "feeling" the world as a "limited whole". The logic of our language – Wittgenstein's "picture theory" – instructs us to *see* the world as a collection of facts: the facts are the world. But what, then, makes the world a "bounded" or "limited whole"? We might put it like this: if the world is comprised of all the facts, then a description of the facts; that is, the set of all true propositions, constitutes a description of the world. And the world is "limited" in the sense that these are all the propositions there are. At 4.5 Wittgenstein expresses it thus: "The propositions are everything which follows from the totality of all elementary propositions (of course also from the fact that it is the *totality of them all*)". The clause that occurs in parentheses is what gives the world its "limited" or "bounded" status. Seeing the world as a collection of facts, and seeing that *these are all the facts there are*, is to see the world "under the aspect of eternity". As a perspective that is outside of space an time it lacks a "here" and a "now". More metaphorically, this is just to see what God sees: everything that is the case.

But what can it mean to "feel" the world as a limited whole and how does it (in some sense) *result* from our "seeing" the world in the way that I have just characterized? First, seeing the world in this way involves our grasping and appreciating Wittgenstein's picture theory of language. Now my suggestion is that "feeling" the world as a "limited whole" is tantamount to our "wondering at the existence of the world". We are in awe

that there is a world at all.[105] To attempt to characterize this experience more positively is go beyond what can be said.[106] To go farther than this would be to transgress language, according to Wittgenstein, as well as to go beyond the textual evidence of the *TLP*.

We are now in a better position to make sense of the idea that "the good life is the world seen *sub specie aeternitiatis*" (*NB*, 7.10.16). The "good life" or "the happy life" is the world "seen under the aspect of eternity" means, first and foremost, that Wittgenstein is characterizing "the good life" in terms of our perspective on the world as a limited whole, and not in terms of our actions or deeds, as Barrett has it.[107] By "good life" Wittgenstein does not mean anything like a recipe for living, nor is he suggesting that certain actions are morally preferable (less "ugly") than other actions; rather, he is

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[105] Like Wittgenstein, Hans Jonas regards the existence of the world as a cause for marvel: ... "*There is no necessity of there being a world at all.* Why there is something rather than nothing – this unanswerable question of metaphysics should protect us from taking existence as an axiom, and its finiteness as a blemish on it or a curtailment of its right. Rather is the fact of existence the mystery of mysteries..." (ibid, p 279). Jonas goes further than Wittgenstein in suggesting that instead of taking our existence (and the existence of the world) for granted, as simply as a condition for our getting (or not getting) what we want from life, we would do better to see that we (and the world) might never have been. His indirect advice is "be grateful for the world". I cannot help but think that Wittgenstein had the same attitude toward there being something rather than nothing.

[106] B.R. Tilghman (*Wittgenstein, Ethics, and Aesthetics*, 1991) suggests that Wittgenstein's "stance" toward the world is like the attitude one might take towards a "gift". It is akin to accepting everything that happens, "not just the slings and arrows of fortune...as a necessary part of life" (p 74). Tilghman's remarks occur in the context of our "being in agreement with the world" and with "the will of God", which Wittgenstein identifies as being "the same" in his *NB* (8.7.16). I think that Wittgenstein's "stance" is something akin to this, but it is perhaps a stance or attitude that is only made manifest in how we live in the world—in how well we fit in to the world's mold. But this could be thought of as a kind of resignation, having nothing to do with seeing the world as a "gift". Still, I believe that this attitude of resignation would betray itself: resignation typically involves accepting things because one must, and hence a man can be resigned and miserable; accepting the world just as it is however, is to "happily" resign oneself to the facts. And this means that the gratitude that there is a world at all is never put to one side.

[107] More evidence that Barrett links ethics with action in his interpretation of Wittgenstein's view of the ethical is evinced is his insistence (once again) that ethics involves living and aesthetics involves seeing: "It should be noted that the distinction (ethics tied to action, aesthetics tied to seeing) between ethics and aesthetics is preserved. In the context of ethics it is the happy *life*...and... in the context of aesthetics, it is the happy *eye* or the way of *looking* at the world" (p 19). Barrett's emphasis of "*life*" as connected with ethics and "*looking*" as connected with aesthetics is not enough to show that the two are not primarily concerned with a way of viewing the world. For it is clear that he has ignored Wittgenstein's identifying the "good life" with the view of the world under the aspect of eternity: "The good life is the world seen *sub specie aeternitatis*" (*NB*, 7.10.16).

intimating that the happy and "*harmonious*" life – the good life – is the life that takes a very particular attitude toward the world as a result of seeing the world "under the aspect of eternity". "The good life" results in our feeling "absolutely safe"; it is a kind of "peculiar immortality", for, seen from this perspective, nothing can harm us. The world is both "distant and sublime". This perspective on the world as a limited whole leads to an attitude that is best characterized as our "wondering at the existence of the world", and this attitude or experience is as close as we can come to seeing the world as having value in an absolute sense. In all this we can clearly see that Wittgenstein's identity of ethics and aesthetics is, from first to last, an identity of perspective on the world, and has little to do with our actions and deeds in the world.

And so it is the "happy eye" that makes for a "happy world" and "the good life": it is our way of seeing and feeling the world that makes it a happy one. And this way of seeing is completely within our power, Wittgenstein thinks. This is why nothing that happens *in* the world need affect our attitude toward the world as a limited whole: "I can only make myself independent of the world – and so in a certain sense master it – by renouncing any influence on happenings" (*NB*, p. 73). Such a "renunciation" entails our being "in agreement with the world", and being in agreement with the world is what "being happy *means*" (*NB*, p. 75).

This brings me to the final characteristic that Barrett sees in what he regards as Wittgenstein's loose connection of ethics with aesthetics: both involve (3) "happiness, the happy life, and being happy". It should be clear by now that the "happy life" has far more to do with the way we see the world than with how we live *in the world*. But obviously (one wants to say) the two are connected in some sense. Barrett suggests that we

understand the "happy life" (or the "good life") in terms of "harmony" or fitting in. But how are we to understand this? Wittgenstein says that the happy life is more "harmonious" than the "unhappy"; but then asks, "In what sense?" (*NB*, 30.7.16). Barrett suggests that "harmony" be understood in terms of our intuition that some things in the world are not as "we think they ought to be" (p 20). We have already seen his unharmonious and "ugly" list of actions. But this cannot be what Wittgenstein means by the happy life (at least if I am right) because this would mean that the happy life is constituted (at least in part) by the absence of ugly acts and events. Moreover, such a perspective, insofar as it makes a judgment about how this or that part of the world ought or ought not to be, is a perspective from within the world, not from its limit. Recall that on my view the distinction between the way the world is versus the way it ought to be collapses from the point of view of eternity.

Wittgenstein asks: "what is the objective mark of the happy, harmonious life?" and answers, "here it is again clear that there cannot be any such mark that can be *described*" (ibid.). Thus, it seems that nothing in the world – no actions or events, however "ugly" – can constitute or mark the "happy life". On my view it is only the transcendental perspective that marks the "happy life" – the view of the world seen under the aspect of eternity. Indeed, Wittgenstein's next comment is instructive: "This mark cannot be a physical one, but only…a transcendental one" (*Ibid.*).

But can we characterize this transcendental mark at all? Only negatively, but at least we can see what it can not be and thus perhaps have a better idea of what must be left over to "mark" it. If it is not constituted by anything in the world, nor by anything outside the world (for Wittgenstein, there is no 'world' of absolute value – like Plato's

"Good" for example), then it must be marked by our accepting the world just as it is, and perhaps seeing that we must cease to even make the distinction between the world as it is and the world as it ought to be. Again, this is just to say, as Wittgenstein does, that the happy and harmonious life is the one that is in "agreement with the world." This implies that the harmonious life is the life that does not resist the world, whatever the reason and motives we have for doing so. Note that within the world we can and do make the distinction between some events and actions that are not as they "should be", but this is *not* an absolute sense of value, but is our ordinary conception of what ought or ought not to be done. This can be accommodated by Foot's notion that all morality is a "system of hypothetical imperatives" (see part b of chapter three). At any rate, in "wondering at the existence of the world", in being struck by this experience, there can be no distinction between the world as it is and the world as it ought to be.[108] "The good life" (the happy and harmonious life) consists in this perspective.

By identifying ethics with aesthetics solely in virtue of perspective, we can make sense of the idea that "the good life is the world seen *sub specie aeternitatis*". My view also makes better sense of what I have been calling Wittgenstein's "quietism", for on this

[108] Some indirect evidence that the distinction between the way the world is and the way it ought to be collapses from the transcendental perspective is Wittgenstein's comment at 6.432: "*How* things are in the world is a matter of complete indifference for what is higher. God does not reveal himself *in* the world." I suggest that by "complete indifference" Wittgenstein means that any other happenings or events in the world have no more and no less value than any other set of events or happenings (and not that God simply does not care). (Indeed, it is not clear that in speaking of "God" Wittgenstein is referring to some *being* that is "higher", but rather that any such being could not be concerned with how the world actually is given that any other way in which the world might be would be equally without value). Now if the transcendental perspective is a God-like view of the world, then in taking up such a perspective whatever is happening in the world is a "matter of complete indifference" to us as well. This must be true of whatever contingent events are realized in the world. Moreover, any set of contingent events that we could imagine would remain a matter of indifference from the transcendental perspective. There can thus be no distinction from the transcendental perspective between the way the world is and the way it ought to be. For any other set of

view anyone who is really involved in the world[109] – seeking to change some part of the world either for the better or for the worse (making it beautiful or ugly, as the case may be) is not, on the view I am attributing to Wittgenstein, taking up the aesthetico-ethical perspective on the world,[110] for indeed we can only make sense of "better" and "worse" as judgments of relative value about this or that part of the world.

Such a perspective leads us to want for nothing: "in a certain sense it seems that not wanting is the only good". Finally, my view makes sense of Wittgenstein's seemingly bizarre comment that "ethics does not treat of the world…[but] must be a condition of the world, like logic" (*NB*, 24.7.16). Both are conditions of the world, but in very different ways: Logic is primary in than it is the logic of our language that represents any world in the first place. Once we see the world as nothing more than a collection of all the facts, we see also that there can be no place for the sublime *in* the world. Instead, it is the world at its limit that waxes and wanes with meaning and value, and this will depend on how diligently we maintain the transcendental perspective on the world. Wittgenstein's position seems to be that without this transcendental perspective, the meaning and value of the world wanes, and with it, the world's meaning and value waxes. And thus it is the

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events would have as little value as the actual set given that there can be no value in an absolute sense in the world.

[109] Wittgenstein's distaste for ethical plans and projects can be seen in his contempt of Russell's practical work in a society for peace. Russell said to Wittgenstein: "I suppose you would rather be for the advancement of slavery and war". Wittgenstein replied "rather that, rather that"! (McGuiness, Brian: *Wittgenstein: A Life*: 1986, p ?)

[110] In "Wittgenstein, Schopenhauer, and Ethics", A. Phillips Griffiths nicely expresses what makes Wittgenstein's ethical attitude toward the world very different from our ordinary conception of ethics: "So what ethics is about is a will which is not in the world and therefore cannot be spoken about; it (ethics) is not in any way about how we should act, what attitudes we should adopt to others and to our lives and to what happens to us; it does not speak to a man as he is *in the midst of things*" (*Understanding Wittgenstein; Royal Institute of Philosophy Lecture, VII*; St. Martin's Press; NY: 1974, my emphasis). I think Griffiths' talk about a "will which is not in the world" should be replaced with my "transcendental perspective on

aesthetico-ethical aspect of the transcendental perspective that permeates the whole with "absolute value". This permeating the world with absolute value is what makes ethics "a condition of the world." Wittgenstein would have done better to say that "the ethical and aesthetical perspectives are one", not that "ethics and aesthetics are one" (6.421).

B.R. Tilghman's Position on Wittgenstein's Identity (in some sense) of Ethics with Aesthetics

In setting out to make the connection between ethics and aesthetics, we see Tilghman make the same kind of mistake that so many make when they begin digging around in the *TLP* with the purpose of *saying* how ethics and aesthetics are similar. This is recognized by Tilghman as a breach of the very conditions of what counts as meaningful language, and hence, on *Tractarian* grounds, is an exercise in speaking nonsense. After all, Wittgenstein writes: "It is clear that ethics cannot be put into words" (6.421). And if this is true, then aesthetics cannot be put into words either. So how, Tilghman want to know, can we possibly say how the two are similar or related when neither subject can be spoken about? Tilghman's approach is one that I am sympathetic with:

> A good bit can be *said about them* (ethics and aesthetics) even if that entails stepping for the moment beyond the limitations of the *Tractatus* structure of concepts or at least constructing some ladders that can be pulled up after us and thrown away once we have achieved a clearer view of what we are looking for (p 46, my emphasis).

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value and the world". Once again we see an unnecessary reification of a metaphysical will. Still, I agree with his account of what ethics is not about.

It is very tempting to put aside *Tractarian* restrictions on meaningful discourse so that one can *say* how ethics and aesthetics are similar: we feel we must say something about the *nature* of ethics and the *nature* of aesthetics, so that we may then compare the subjects and see how they are relevantly similar. But this is somewhat of a cheat because one can help oneself to a more usual understanding of ethics and aesthetics, and then insinuate this material into Wittgenstein's admittedly cryptic remarks about either area. More importantly, on my view it is not essential that we step outside *Tractarian* bounds and *say* something about what we take their nature to be or what Wittgenstein, if he could say something about them, took their nature to be. It is not necessary to do this on my view because Wittgenstein is not putting forward – as I have been at pains to show – a view *of ethics or aesthetics*, however inchoate his view might be, but is rather expressing an ethical and aesthetic view (perspective) toward the world. An aesthetico-ethical stance is not a view on the nature of either 'subject': it is rather a perspective on the world. Thus, it is not the subject matter of ethics and the subject matter of aesthetics that needs to be compared. For Wittgenstein this is not possible since there are no such 'subjects'.

What do the Aesthetic and Ethical Perspectives have in Common?

I suggest, then, that when Wittgenstein says that 'ethics and aesthetics are one", he is not suggesting that the "subjects" are similar, but that the ethical and aesthetic perspective is identical. Such an approach does not involve breaching *Tractarian* constraints on what constitutes meaningful language. Why? Because we are not trying to say anything about the nature of either ethics or aesthetics, and how such subjects are

related, but are instead only pointing to the ethical and aesthetic perspective on the world being one and the same.

It is only "from the point of view of eternity" (6.45) that the relation of language and ethics (absolute value generally) to the world can be seen. To view the world *sub specie aeternitatis* or "under the aspect of eternity" comes from Spinoza's *Ethics* (Part II, prop. XLIV). Spinoza means by the expression "under the aspect of eternity" something like our grasping the essence of a thing. Tilghman writes: "for Spinoza it is to see something… in its logical connections, its necessary connections, with everything else" (p 53). Tilghman goes on to remark that seeing the world under the aspect of eternity "is very much the same thing for Wittgenstein" (*Ibid.*). But what can Tilghman mean by this? He writes: "the essence of the world is that it consists of just these logically independent facts amongst all the logically possible state of affairs" (ibid.). But this is nothing more than Wittgenstein's idea that "the world is all that is the case" (1). What work is the term "essence" doing here? It seems otiose. Furthermore, "essence" cannot be right for another reason; this term usually implies that we can give a logical definition or the nature of a thing – in this case the world – and Wittgenstein is certainly not up to anything like that. On Wittgenstein's view *the whole of reality* is pictured or depicted by the totality of true propositions. And such propositions are contingently true, not necessarily true. But talk of the "essence" of the world suggests that we are being given metaphysical super-facts about the world as a whole. Finally, the view of the world "under the aspect of eternity" is the view of the world as a "limited whole", a view that is outside of space, time, and, more importantly, descriptive language. Thus, one cannot give the "essence" of something that is quite literally outside of language.

In my view the main theme of the *Tractatus* is Wittgenstein's view of the world from "the point of view eternity", the transcendental perspective, and the other elements of this work (such as the picture theory, the nature of logical propositions) are all designed to bring us to such a perspective. They do so by bringing us to the limits of what can be represented or described in language. Once we see the limit – that is, once we view the world as a "limited whole" – we are 'urged' or invited to "feel" the world as a limited whole.

The 'propositions' of his work serve as "elucidations" in the sense that they are designed to get us to see language and its relation to the world from on high – from the transcendental perspective. And here it is important to see that Wittgenstein is not, strictly speaking, providing us with a perspective on language and the world that can be *articulated outside* the world and the language that we use to represent it (a view that is suggested by Tilghman's talk of Wittgenstein's giving us the "essence of the world" in our view of the world "*sub specie aeternitatis*"). Wittgenstein makes it clear that he is drawing the "limit…[to the expression of thought] *in* language" (preface, p 27, my emphasis). We cannot speak about, i.e., describe, what lies outside of language and the world; and Wittgenstein's transcendental perspective does not make this illicit move. Thus, on my view Wittgenstein is not transgressing the bounds of sense.

But there are some who think the perspective from which the *TLP* is written is itself an over-reaching – a going beyond the bounds of sense – and is thus an incoherent view of language and the world and that Wittgenstein intended it this way. The implication is that the view of the world that I have been pressing – the transcendental perspective – cannot even be articulated. Let us now consider a position that regards the

theme of transcendence in Wittgenstein's work as a view of language and the world that is ultimately incoherent.

Michael Hodges: The *TLP* as an Impossible Project

In his work, *Transcendence and Wittgenstein's Tractatus* (1990), Hodges is the first to see transcendence as a major theme in the *Tractatus*. Moreover, Hodges argues that for Wittgenstein a "right view" of the world leads to "willing" the world in the right way: that seeing the "world aright" and willing it aright are closely united for Wittgenstein. He sees Wittgenstein's ethical project as being very closely tied to aesthetics in the sense that the world, as "a limited whole", is "appropriated" as an aesthetic object. All this I believe is (more or less) on the right track, and indeed much of what Hodges says about Wittgenstein's overall project is on target. Many of Hodges' ideas resonate with mine. On the other hand, Hodges goes too far in rejecting Wittgenstein's transcendental view as incoherent and thus ultimately "an impossible" project (p. 23).

Hodges argues that Wittgenstein's early work is essentially concerned with "transcendence" in the sense that the work aims to offer a perspective on language and the world that is beyond language and the world. Now there is a sense in which this is correct, but Hodges view of *how* transcendence works is, I think, mistaken. He finds such a position fundamentally paradoxical and even incoherent. Hodges overall aim is to shed light on the early work and why Wittgenstein later repudiated it by taking Wittgenstein at his word when the latter suggested in his preface to the *PI* that his later work would be

best understood alongside his early work—that "the two should be published side by side".[111] Hodges thinks that such an approach ultimately illuminates the failed project of the *Tractatus* in addition to illuminating the later work. Such a comparison of this early and later work aside, Hodges thinks that the failure of the *Tractatus* results from the incoherent theme of "transcendence" and the "saying vs. showing" distinction. According to Hodges, it is not clear how we are able to say what insight we glean from the text, since there are no philosophical "propositions" according to Wittgenstein. Moreover, the idea of "showing" as opposed to "saying" only highlights the problem given that anything that is shown cannot be put into words. How does "showing" (whatever it means) help? This is what Hodges has to say about Wittgenstein's early work:

> The 'transcendental point of view' is, of course, explicitly rejected in the doctrines of the *Tractatus*, so the positions expressed in it stand in dramatic conflict with the perspective the work takes. There can be no resolution of this conflict within the philosophical framework of the *Tractatus*. Wittgenstein's famous distinction between what is said by a sentence and what that sentence shows is designed, at least in part, to overcome the difficulty. Even if we cannot "say" what the *Tractatus* seems to express, language nonetheless shows it. If we

[111] In his *Tractarian Semantics* (1989), Peter Caruthers argues that we should attach almost no significance to such a proposal (even though made by Wittgenstein). Caruthers argues first that there was an "eleven year gap" between the publication of the *TLP* and "the conversation recorded by Waismann...in 1929". Wittgenstein didn't do any Philosophy in these eleven years. Second, Caruthers points out that the *TLP* was written over a "two month period ...at the Italian front ... under desperate urgency, [and that] this was not a frame of mind in which to distinguish carefully between ideas, and in which to set out and assess the strengths of competing arguments – even had he normally been disposed to such modes of working" (and, of course, we know that Wittgenstein was not so disposed). Caruthers goes on to point out that it is "small wonder" that Wittgenstein found it "impossible to think himself back into the full richness and complexity of his finished text" (p 7). But in addition to these considerations, Caruthers also notes that Wittgenstein was drawn back into Philosophy by new ideas – ideas with which he was unfamiliar; "phenomenalism" via the Vienna Circle and "Brouwer's Intuitionism" in mathematics. (Incidentally, Wittgenstein's initial interest in Philosophy began with topics about which he new very little and had no formal training in). Carruthers suggests that these unfamiliar ideas "turned Wittgenstein's thinking in new directions" and that this fact, "coupled with the restless and forward looking nature of Wittgenstein's intellect, suggests that he would have viewed his earlier writing very much through the medium of his new interests, rather than from the standpoint of dispassionate memory and self-interpretation" (*Ibid*). This shows that the facile and attractive idea that we can better understand the failed project of the *TLP* by comparing it with Wittgenstein's *PI* is not only mistaken, but is an approach that may lead to a distortion of the ideas in his early work.

> will pay attention not to what is asserted or denied, that is, to what facts are "said" to obtain, but rather to what is displayed in the very saying itself, the doctrines of the *Tractatus* will become accessible. Unfortunately, that distinction does not solve the problem; it merely gives it a name. If we ought to attend to what language shows and remain silent, what are the "propositions" of the *Tractatus* supposed to do? Do they attempt to "say" what language "shows?" But what *can* be shown *cannot* be said" (*T* 4.1212) [pages 24-25].

And later he writes:

> The attempt to think and will from the transcendental point of view is finally and unavoidably incoherent. What it requires us to do is to treat ourselves both as individuals in the world and as transcendental subjects seeing and willing the world from outside as "the totality of facts". We are, at one and the same time, individuals – items in the world – and "conditions of possibility of the world." The ethical and logical goal of the *Tractatus* is to achieve a relation to the world such that "there are two godheads: the world and my independent I" (*NB* p. 74, 8.7.16). This requires on its logical side the apprehension of the world as a limited totality. Ethically it involves not merely that apprehension but the willful appropriation of the whole as an aesthetic object. Of course, the subject apprehending or appropriating must be set over against and beyond the "totality of facts", that is, the world. It must be a transcendental subject. At the same time, this "independent I" – this godhead – as actually achieved, is a particular thinking and willing individual situated within that totality. The project of the *Tractatus* as a theory of language, as an account of the world, and as an ethical vision is "the project to become God". But that project is incoherent. The *Tractatus* cannot be written because the perspective from which it would have to be written is said to be inaccessible on the basis of "seeing" what can only be seen from that perspective (pages 26-27).

Seeing the world and willing the world from a God's eye view, is, according to Hodges, impossible. The perspective that Wittgenstein's view of language and value requires is more than simply paradoxical on his view. Whereas I admit that the *Tractatus* is paradoxical, I reject Hodges claim that the "project is incoherent" and "impossible". Why does he think that a transcendental perspective is "impossible"?

Now if one takes Wittgenstein to be applying his picture theory of meaning to the *meaning* or *significance* of his transcendental perspective, then the perspective is impossible and incoherent. But by now it should be clear that Wittgenstein need not be

interpreted as *describing* the world seen "under the aspect of eternity". A second assumption that Hodges makes is that Wittgenstein is committed to two selves, an empirical self that is in the world (the "empirical self"), and a "transcendental subject" that quite literally sees the world from "outside" the world, as the "totality of facts". Such an interpretation of the transcendental perspective posits a subject that stands outside both language and the world (since "*the limits of my language* means the limit of my world" 5.6), and thereby creates an unnecessary dualism. The same mistakes made by Collinson are being made by Hodges. With these two presuppositions in place: (1) Wittgenstein is *describing* a transcendental perspective on the world; and, (2) Wittgenstein is positing the existence of a transcendental subject outside the world (and, *a fortiori*) meaningful language, it is not hard to reach the conclusion that such a perspective is incoherent and impossible.

Hodges has two main arguments. The first and more fundamental is his idea that the very propositions of the *Tractatus* must be a language that is not a language,[112] for (on Hodges reading) the entire project is an attempt to articulate a vision that is beyond language and the world. But of course there can be no such language. Thus the project is incoherent.

I have already shown that this is not the best way to interpret the "sense" or "meaning", nay, the very point of what Wittgenstein is trying to achieve with his

[112] Which in a sense is certainly right, but it must be qualified: on my view many of the propositions of the *Tractatus* are meta-linguisitc. And any metalanguage is not a language according to the picture theory of meaning.

Tractarian 'propositions'—namely a transcendental perspective with respect to language and the world via metalinguisitc assertions and directives.

His second argument focuses more on Wittgenstein's ethical vision. Here he thinks that Wittgenstein's "metaphysical subject", being something outside the world, and thus transcending it, is at odds with individuals that are in the midst of the world. It is only particular individuals that are ethical subjects, but such subjects need to view the world from outside the world, like the metaphysical subject that stands outside or at the limit of the world. This he finds incoherent. My solution to this is pretty straightforward: there is, strictly speaking, no "metaphysical subject" that stands outside or beyond the world. We can take up Wittgenstein's ethical vision as *subjects situated in the world.*

Let's begin with the paradoxical nature of the work. Certainly Wittgenstein's paradigm of language that means or has sense is the language that "pictures" (truly or falsely) states of affairs in the world. But the propositions of the *Tractatus* do not picture facts in the world. Thus, based on the picture theory of meaning only, the propositions of the *Tractatus* are absolutely meaningless.

However, if we construe meaning in a broader manner than the narrow criterion of meaning propounded in the *Tractatus*, we see that Wittgenstein's 'propositions' or "elucidations" are meaningless only in the sense that they do not meet his picture theory criterion. It is a mistake to take Wittgenstein as stating or suggesting that the *only use* that can be made of language is the one provided by his criterion for the picture theory of meaning. Strictly speaking, Wittgenstein does restrict *meaningful* propositions to the class of contingent propositions of science, both natural and social. Still, he takes himself to be doing *something intelligible* with his propositions or "elucidations".

Indeed, one could argue that if this were Wittgenstein's view – if he genuinely believed that the only legitimate function of language is descriptive – then his attempt to show anything at all by his *Tractarian* propositions is all for nothing. But to attribute to him the view that we can only *do* something with descriptive language – that only those propositions that picture reality have a *use* – is a blunder. 'Propositions' which do not have sense in the way that the bivalent contingent propositions that picture reality do, do not by that criterion cease to have a use or a function or a meaning. Remember, he took himself to be showing us something important, and not "just gassing". But then of course he must take himself to be using language in such a way that we can at least follow his directions, so that we can see where he is pointing. The propositions of the *Tractatus* serve to show us something about value and the world according to Wittgenstein.

Now we have already seen that an art critic uses language in a very different way from someone who is trying to communicate to us some fact in the world. The former is trying to get us to look at certain features of a work that we otherwise might pass over. Isn't this just what Wittgenstein is doing? Isn't Wittgenstein directing us to see the world and features of our language in such a way that we see the "world aright" (6.54)? And seeing the world in the right way involves at least two things: First, it is to see that when we take ourselves to be *articulating thoughts* about ethics or absolute value we are "just gassing". Philosophers who think they are communicating information about the nature of absolute value or the meaning of life *are* speaking nonsense. Secondly, and I think more importantly, Wittgenstein is trying to get us to see that descriptive language (although the paradigm of meaning for the scientist) is good as far as it goes, but it doesn't go very far. Indeed, when it comes to all that is important in life it is useless.

Whatever is beyond language and the world is beyond description, but saying and describing are not coextensive. Many things can be said that are beyond description. If I am right, Wittgenstein is "elucidating" things that cannot be said or, more accurately, described, but that point us in certain directions—that get us to look at the world in ways that we otherwise would not have done. It is the 'nature' of ethics and value, logical form, and "the mystical" generally, that it cannot be *described*, but can instead be *shown.*

Hodges also maintains that the saying/showing distinction is also ultimately incoherent for the same basic reason: Wittgenstein cannot tell us what his 'propositions' show us – "for what *can* be shown *cannot* be said" (4.1212). But if he cannot "say" what his 'propositions' "elucidate", then it is not clear what it is they are supposed to make manifest.

Hodges interprets Wittgenstein as using a language that is beyond language and the world. Hodges writes: "the positions expressed in [the *Tractatus*] stand in dramatic conflict with the perspective the work takes" (p 24). Presumably the "positions expressed" are in "conflict" with the overall "perspective" because the overall perspective on the work denies that we can take a transcendental perspective about the ultimate nature of language and the world, whereas the "positions expressed in the *TLP*" appear to be claims *about* the ultimate relation between language, value, and the world.

But I find Hodges distinction between "positions expressed" within the *TLP* over against the "perspective the work takes" to be puzzling because they are so vague. Perhaps Hodges means that Wittgenstein is illicitly describing language-world relations. That this description is illicit is evinced by the "perspective the work takes" because the overall perspective (the conclusion of the work?) is that we cannot describe language–

world relations, and that any 'claims' that purport to describe or explain or give an account of this relation must be nonsense: must be "a language that is not a language" (p 24) in Hodges' words.

One thing is clear. By the phrase " the perspective the work takes" Hodges does not mean what I mean by the expression "transcendental perspective", for on the view that I am attributing to Wittgenstein his transcendental perspective turns out to be a kind of wordless meta-view (quite literally). The perspective of my Wittgenstein is a wordless one and thus does *not* involve truth at all, effable or ineffable.[113] Perhaps, then, Hodges simply means that Wittgenstein has built a view of language and the world that is incoherent in just this way: the transcendent view of the world is built up from 'propositions" dealing with the ultimate relation between language and the world; and, since the conclusion of the work regards any such descriptions as impossible (because nonsensical), any transcendental view of the language-world relation must be incoherent.

Thus, according to Hodges, Wittgenstein is saying something (or takes himself to be saying something) in his work that his ultimate conclusion (the perspective of the work as a whole) cannot countenance. Hodge's view of the *Tractatus* amounts to the idea that Wittgenstein's transcendent perspective is ultimately an impossible one. It is impossible because we cannot get outside language and the world, yet Wittgenstein's "positions" in his work all express the idea that the main aim of the work is to do just that – with his talk of the "limit" for example. But one cannot do what is impossible.

[113] Except in the sense that Wittgenstein's metalinguistic assertions express truths about the connection between descriptive language and the world. Wittgenstein, of course, would not be happy with this way of putting it.

And so perhaps it is something like this that Wittgenstein intended: we should all shut up once we see that any perspective that purports to transcend language and the world (which will include the nature of absolute value or ethics) is incoherent, and therefore must be abandoned. But if this is so, how in the world can Wittgenstein even *bring us* to see the "world rightly" (6.54) if the 'propositions' of the *Tractatus* are themselves *beyond* language and the world? Hodges thinks that Wittgenstein's overall perspective requires that "the propositions of the *Tractatus*, in order to accomplish their purpose, must be a language that is not a language! They must give linguistic expression to what cannot be said. And this is exactly what Wittgenstein thought they did" (p. 24).

Of course, Wittgenstein thought the propositions of the *TLP* conveyed meaning by showing, not by saying. But we must at least *understand* the propositions (in some sense) if we are to see what they show us. This seems to be Hodges main point. And the moment we admit that we understand what Wittgenstein's propositions show us we have the paradox because we have then admitted that Wittgenstein's propositions "give linguistic expression to what cannot be said" (p. 24).

In my view Hodges is too narrowly focused on Wittgenstein's criterion of meaning vis a` vis the picture theory. Wittgenstein's propositions do indeed point to[114] that theory, but they do not themselves satisfy the conditions of that theory. This is no different from the positivists' notion that meaningful propositions are *only* those propositions that can be verified or falsified.

[114] One can grasp a view or theory without the theory satisfying itself.

The verifiability criterion of meaning cannot be itself verified or falsified. Are we then led to the conclusion that the theory itself is meaningless? We are forced to accept this conclusion only if we apply the very criterion to the theory. But it is not clear that we must do this. That we needn't do so can be seen by the fact that we all *understand* the verifiability criterion of meaning notwithstanding the fact that it does not pass its own test. My point is simply that just as we need not interpret the criterion's scope as being unlimited, we need not interpret Wittgenstein's picture theory criterion's scope as being unlimited. We can then see what both the verifiability criterion of meaning and the picture theory of meaning are pointing out, without at the same time rendering either theory meaningless.[115] It is this kind of mistake that Hodges is making. (I look more closely at the analogy between Wittgenstein's picture theory of meaning and the verifiability criterion of meaning in the next chapter).

Wittgenstein was quite aware that his propositions did not meet his picture theory's conditions for meaning. So Wittgenstein's ultimate view is paradoxical in this sense: the way he is using language in the *TLP* fails to meet his criterion of meaningful *descriptive* language. But notice that we only get to Hodges conclusion that the *Tractarian* project is "incoherent" and "impossible", if we take Wittgenstein to be *saying something* in a descriptive language about what it means to transcend the world and language.

[115] It may well be that Wittgesntein intended in the end to apply his picture theory criterion of meaning to the very 'propositions' of the *TLP*. This is why he says that his "propositions are nonsense" to "those who have understood me". The most plausible way in which his 'propositions' can be said to fail to meet his picture theory criterion of meaning is by interpreting them as metalinguisitc assertions about the connection between language and the world. Such assertions cannot describe contingent facts in the world, and thus can be regarded as non-sense, but they needn't be thought of as out and out nonsense.

And this is just what Hodges does when he says that the *Tractatus*, in order to bring us to the God's eye view of language and the world, a view that transcends the world and language, requires "a language that is not a language": that the *TLP* requires the expression of thoughts for which there is no linguistic medium of expression. Put another way, he takes Wittgenstein to be *describing* a view of language and the world that is quite literally outside language and the world: an impossible task.

On my view Wittgenstein is providing a *meta-description* of the relation between language and the world. Wittgenstein is not "saying" (in the sense of describing) anything about language and the world from *within* language-world relations – that is, his descriptions do not meet his picture theory criterion of meaning at all. Thus, Wittgenstein can say that his "propositions" are nonsense (owing to the fact that they do fall under his picture theory of meaning), while at the same time expressing a transcendental perspective on language and the world (owing to the fact that he is using language meta-descriptively).

In this chapter I have shown that Wittgenstein's transcendental perspective on language, value, and the world is not incoherent. By attributing to Wittgenstein a directive use of language in the "sixes", we can avoid convicting him of the charge that he is tacitly and illegitimately making use of a meaningless language. I have also shown that Wittgenstein's identification of ethics and aesthetics is an identification of perspectives, rather than an attempt on his part to show relevant similarities between the two "subjects". This nicely avoids the problem of how ethics and aesthetics can be (in some sense) the same given that there can be no such "subjects" within the *Tractarian* framework. It is the aesthetical and ethical perspective that is the *same*.

CHAPTER FIVE

Nothing is Shown: (Or) Where "Austere" Interpretations Go Wrong

There are philosophers (Cora Diamond, James Conant, and Warren Goldfarb being the principles) who are of the opinion that Wittgenstein is solely concerned with demonstrating to us that there is only one kind of nonsense – pure and simple nonsense – and that Wittgenstein himself was engaging in disguised nonsense (or a "transitional" language", to borrow Diamond's phrase) so that we might all stop blathering.[116] On their view we are left with nothing at all once the rungs of the ladder have been discarded; nothing, save the cold consolation that we are now aware of the happy distinction between sense and nonsense, including the nonsense that makes up the *Tractatus*.

According to "austere" or "resolute" readings of the *Tractatus* we are not left with any insight into the nature of the connection between descriptive language and the world – all that we have insight into can be said. Indeed, the very distinction between saying and showing is regarded by them as another piece of nonsense that Wittgenstein wants to see thrown away. In my view such a position is wrongheaded for a number of reasons.

The first, and most important, reason is that Wittgenstein says to Russell that the saying/showing distinction is the "cardinal problem in philosophy" (in a letter previously quoted). Now I suppose that one could interpret this to mean that the "cardinal" problem lies in anyone thinking that any such distinction between saying and showing can be

[116] This of course is not all wrong, but it is only, on my reading, part of what Wittgenstein was attempting in his work. Moreover, on my view – and against austere readings – Wittgenstein's own propositions are not in the end pure nonsense, however disguised.

made; that those who take themselves to be speaking sense when they talk about what is said versus what is shown are really talking nonsense. But this implies that others (before Wittgenstein) had been concerned with such a distinction, and that Wittgenstein was determined to disabuse them of the idea that they were making sense. The problem here is that there does not seem to be any such nonsense going on in philosophy (at least before Wittgenstein) regarding this distinction. Wittgenstein is the first to bring it up! Why would he feel the need to invent a nonsensical distinction to demonstrate a problem – and a cardinal problem at that – that no one seemed to be making?

In Wittgenstein's mind the problem is that thinkers as astute as Bertrand Russell were attempting to say things about the structure (or logic) of any language that cannot be said, but only shown. Thus, far from being nonsense, the distinction between saying and showing is the solution, in Wittgenstein's mind, to the rampant nonsense going on in philosophy. The distinction is not the problem. But it seems that the new Wittgensteinians want to lump the saying/showing distinction – used to straighten out the many problems we have in understanding the logic of our language, at least according to Wittgenstein – in with the nonsense that results from our missing the distinction. Are they being deliberately obtuse here?

The second reason against austere interpretations is that there seems no way to explain (or even explain away) why Wittgenstein thought that his work constituted an "ethical deed".[117] Indeed, on the view that all Wittgenstein is doing is laying bare the distinction between sense and nonsense we cannot even hint at what might have been his

[117] Unless one wants to say that Wittgenstein's making sharp the distinction between sense and nonsense constitutes an ethical deed. But then why does he make the remarks he does about ethics, value, God, and

motivation for the esoteric remarks he makes on value, ethics, and "*Das Mystische*." It certainly appears that the "sixes" of his *TLP* were designed by their author to do more than just draw the line between what can be said and what is plain nonsense. His comments seem to have a more positive purpose than this. What's more, it is not even clear how the remarks about value and the mystical help draw the line between sense and nonsense. But what other purpose could they serve on a resolute reading of the *Tractatus*?

Another reason against such an interpretation of Wittgenstein's early work is that it seems to make everything he 'says' about a host of issues pointless: the problems with Russell's type theory; the building of his own picture theory; the nature of the proposition – such concerns must either be ignored or explicated only insofar as they highlight or illuminate the distinction between sense and nonsense. It seems wildly implausible to claim that these concerns are simply more examples of the kind of nonsense that Wittgenstein wants to see exposed. Such an approach brushes aside some of the most interesting concerns of the author by making everything subordinate to the following theme: Wittgenstein's writes nonsense to get us – i.e., philosophers – to stop engaging in it ourselves. There must be more to his early work than that. I am not alone in thinking this. If this was Wittgenstein's only purpose, then such thinkers as Bertrand Russell, G.E.M. Anscombe, David Pears, Brian McGuiness, Peter Geach, Max Black, Jaakko and Merrill Hintikka, and P.M.S. Hacker (and this is not an exhaustive list) have all been way off track. Indeed, they have all been talking nonsense.

"the mystical"? This seems a very strange way to draw the line between sense and nonsense, if this is his only goal.

We have already seen that Wittgenstein's 'propositions' are best interpreted as metalinguisitc instructions on how to look at the world as a whole: Wittgenstein is at least minimally using language to talk *about* the connection between ordinary language and its connection with the world (even if we think that his view is wrong, Wittgenstein is talking about language and its connection with the world). This permits one to make sense of the idea that Wittgenstein is attempting to say what – by his own criterion of meaning; that is, the picture 'theory' – cannot be said. His metalinguistic propositions show ("elucidate") the nature of language and the world. They are clarifications about how ordinary descriptive language connects to the world. However, since they are not part of ordinary descriptive language they are, strictly speaking, nonsense.

My own view on the kind of nonsense that Wittgenstein says attaches to his 'propositions' is closer to the views of P.M.S. Hacker and Jaako Hintikka.[118] Hacker makes the following points regarding Wittgenstein's use of the term "elucidations" in the *TLP*. First, Hacker points out that the term "*Erläuterung*" is best translated as "clarification", a "garden variety" term, one that does not suggest that we are dealing with a "term of art" ("Wittgenstein and the New American Wittgensteinians", 2003). Second, Hacker points out that it is not clear that the term has a univocal sense, for there are different ways in which something can be clarified.

Indeed, according to Hacker there are three uses of the term "elucidation" (clarification) in the *TLP*. At 3.263 Wittgenstein is "concerned with explaining the meanings of primitive signs" or indefinables (p 21). At *Tractatus* 4.11-4.116 Wittgenstein

[118] I will discuss Hintikka's view on this matter later.

is "concerned with specifying the status, aim and nature of philosophy"[119], which is to clarify the logic of ordinary sentences. And finally, at 6.54 Wittgenstein does not speak of "elucidations" or "clarifications", "but merely says that '*my sentences clarify*', in as much as someone who understands their author will eventually recognize them as nonsense" (p 22). According to Hacker, such clarifications are "the self-conscious attempts of the author to say what can only be shown, and which is shown by the well formed propositions of language. They (the propositions of the *Tractatus*) transgress the bounds of sense, and, in so doing, they gradually bring the perceptive reader to a correct logical point of view" (*Ibid.*). I am most concerned with the way in which Wittgenstein's sentences "clarify" at 6.54. Hacker leaves the issue of exactly how Wittgenstein's sentences are nonsense and simultaneously "elucidate" the "correct logical point of view" a mystery. Hacker says Wittgenstein's propositions "show" by making clear what the "well formed propositions of language" are. Such propositions are presumably those that picture states of affairs. But this is all rather vague, and we are not told how Wittgenstein's propositions accomplish this task. Interpreting Wittgenstein's propositions as meta-statements about language and the world fills in the gaps.

Notice that Hacker says that Wittgenstein is himself attempting to say what can only be shown. This resonates with my idea that Wittgenstein's use of a higher-order

[119] Hacker makes the astute point that Wittgenstein's specification of the aim and status of philosophy (the way it is practiced in the *TLP*) is "programmatic" and that it is a "moot question" as to "whether the conception of philosophy that is adumbrated applies to the *Tractatus* itself" (*Ibid.*). Instead, Wittgenstein is concerned with a "programme for future philosophy, envisaged as the only correct way to proceed once the lessons of the *Tractatus* have been learnt." (*Ibid.*) An important implication here is that it is not clear what there is to be "learnt" if we suppose that the 'propositions' or "clarifications" of the *TLP* are pure nonsense. Moreover, even if we apply the criterion of meaning or sense (the picture theory) adumbrated in the *TLP* to the 'propositions' of the *TLP*, it would seem that any understanding of the nature of philosophy in the *TLP* "once the lessons of the *Tractatus* have been learnt" requires admitting that something is shown by Wittgenstein's clarifications. All this is incoherent on austere and resolute readings of the *TLP*.

language is, at bottom, an attempt to *say* what, by his own picture theory of meaning, cannot be said, but only shown. This is undoubtedly why Hacker says that Wittgenstein's own propositions "transgress the bounds of sense" – that is, Wittgenstein's own propositions do not meet the conditions of his picture theory of meaning. In all this the distinction between saying and showing is far from nonsense, but rather the very heart of what Wittgenstein is trying to get us to appreciate. Let us now turn to the foremost authority on nonsense in Wittgenstein, Cora Diamond.

Cora Diamond: Nonsense is nonsense

We will discover that the so-called "new" Wittgenstein is not so new. In fact, we will see that the views of Diamond, Conant, and Goldfarb, respectively, are variations on a positivistic reading of the *Tractatus*. They all ignore what I take to be the main point of Wittgenstein's work – namely, that what is most important cannot be said, but only shown, and that this distinction is especially crucial in appreciating Wittgenstein's transcendental perspective on the world. Their interpretations appear to turn Wittgenstein into what he never was – a logical positivist.[120]

[120] Even though both Diamond and Conant claim that they do not want to place Wittgenstein in the positivist camp, I maintain that they do just that. It seems that the only legitimate conclusion that they can draw from the *Tractatus* is that philosophers speak nonsense and that Wittgenstein is joining in with them in order to get them to see that they are speaking nonsense. Thus, Wittgenstein must be lumped with the positivists, whatever the protestations of Diamond and Conant. I do not wish to imply that Wittgenstein has no affinities with the positivists, far from it. He did think that much of what passed for philosophy was nonsense. But Wittgenstein is trying to show us a way out without throwing away important insights into the connection between language and the world, and the aesthetico-ethical stance that his perspective engenders. The positivists and the 'new' Wittgensteinians are happy to see the baby go with the bathwater.

In order to understand and appreciate much of what Wittgenstein 'says' about the connection of language to the world, the problems with Russell's theory of types, and the "mystical" it is essential once and for all (if possible) to destroy the popularity had by what Cora Diamond has called (as a proponent of the view in her essay "Throwing Away the Ladder: How to Read the *Tractatus*"[121]) an "austere" reading of that work. Put baldly, the "austere" interpretation of the *Tractatus* is that there is no meaning whatsoever (save for a kind of imaginative one) in any of the 'claims' that purportedly shows us something about the connection between language and the world as a whole. This means that anything like an ethical attitude or stance to the world cannot be attributed to Wittgenstein since his "propositions" are quite literally nonsense. Any such ethical attitude is an attitude that we read into his work. In a recent article, "Ethics, Imagination and the Method of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*" (*New Wittgenstein*: 2000), Diamond describes what can be called the "plain nonsense" view thus: "I believe that the *Tractatus* takes what you might call an austere view of nonsense. Nonsense is nonsense…So if there are no ethical propositions… then there are no propositions through which we are able to gesture, however ineptly, at unspeakable truths, and anything we take to be an ethical proposition has no more sense than 'piggly wiggle tiggle'" (p. 153).

In this article Diamond makes a distinction among three types of sentences: (1) "straightforwardly intelligible sentences", (2) "sentences that are nonsense but that would mean these things if they could count as sense"[122], and (3) "mere nonsense" sentences

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[121]Printed in Diamond's *Realistic Spirit* (1991)

[122] Sentences of type 2 originally come from G.E.M. Anscomb's *Introduction to The Tractatus*. Anscomb suggests that when Wittgenstein talks about what is shown by his propositions he means something like truths that we recognize but that cannot be articulated by us.

She then pairs sentences of type (1) with "what can be spoken about" and sentences of type (2) with "what cannot be spoken about", but that we would recognize as true *if* they could be articulated (p. 150). Her position is that Wittgenstein's view, if carefully interpreted, commits him only to sentences of type (1) and that he is trying to get us to see that sentences of type (2) are just disguised type (3) sentences. There cannot be sentences that gesture, "however ineptly", at unspeakable truths. Strictly speaking there are no sentences of type (2), just type (1) and nonsense. Thus, all sentences that have sense are those that meet the picture theory's criterion of meaning, and any other sentences are quite literally nonsense.

On her view, the chief aim of Wittgenstein's gesturing in the *Tractatus* is to get us to appreciate that whenever we think we are showing something that is true or correct, but that language cannot quite get at, we are really talking out of out hats. In order to sharpen her view and our objections to it, let us examine in more detail what is meant by type (2) 'claims'.

Any and all talk of what can be shown, but not said; that is, 'truths' that cannot be spoken about in principle, count as strict nonsense for Diamond. One of the implications here is that philosophers who do mental gymnastics to attribute some type of meaning to sentences like "ethics and aesthetics are one" or "there is indeed the mystical", etc. are really just "chickening out" according to Diamond. They "chicken out" in the sense that they want to have their cake and eat it to: "the 'propositions' of the TLP are nonsense, for Wittgenstein tells us so, but not *really* nonsense." This is to chicken out. On her view, to admit that Wittgenstein's propositions are nonsense *and* then to attribute some meaning to his pronouncements on ethics, value, or the mystical is to "chicken out. According to

Diamond this is to fail to appreciate that Wittgenstein is himself trying to demonstrate that most of what passed for philosophy was nonsense and that the propositions of the *TLP* are a kind of self-consciously disguised nonsense geared towards unmasking the distinction between sense and nonsense. On Diamond's view this is all that Wittgenstein is trying to accomplish with his pseudo-propositions. I have more than a few misgivings about her view.

However cryptic some of Wittgenstein's remarks are – however "ineptly" he gestures – it seems rash to dismiss his 'claims' as, in the end, "mere nonsense". He agonized over the "sixes", when he could have just said "piggly wiggle tiggle". Diamond is at pains to soften some of her austerity when she writes: "I read it (the *Tractatus*) in the austere view of nonsense; yet I then try to articulate what I think Wittgenstein is committed to in ethics, and I find myself using language incompatible with the ascription to him of that austere view" ("Ethics, Imagination and the Method of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*", p. 153).[123] This is surely an indication that something is wrong with her view. If Wittgenstein intended the book to be taken as "an ethical deed", it is only natural that we should try to discover what sort of deed has been done – even if the "deed" is to show that all of ethics, when treated as a science or subject about which one can speak, is nonsense. But on the austere reading no sense can be made of anything like an ethical stance or position being evinced or shown in the *Tractatus*, since, on such a view, the very distinction between saying and showing is simply another bit of nonsense that Wittgenstein wishes to uncover for us.

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[123] Printed in Diamond's *Realistic Spirit* (1991)

Another difficulty with her interpretation is that it places Wittgenstein in the unhappy role (and unhappy he was) of the father of logical positivism. Diamond herself says just this: "This (the austere reading), however, looks like the view of the logical positivists...and yet I do not believe that Wittgenstein's consigning of ethical talk to the realm of nonsense should be likened to that of the positivists" (p. 153). And so the problem, as she sees it, is to "distinguish Wittgenstein's view of ethics from that of the logical positivists, without giving up the ascription to him of what (she has called) an austere view of nonsense" (p.153).

Does Diamond have any "Wiggle" room?

The first direction in which she is inclined to attribute to Wittgenstein an ethical view while holding onto her austere reading is to ascribe to him a stance or "attitude" "toward the world and life" that rejects any notion of ethics as a subject matter (p 153). I think she is quite right in doing this. Clearly Wittgenstein thought there could be no "philosophy of ethics": "It is clear that ethics cannot be expressed" (6.421). So what Diamond does is make a distinction "between ethics as a sphere of discourse among others and ethics tied to everything there is or can be, the world as a whole, life" (p. 153). The second way that she is inclined (again, in tension with her austere reading) to read Wittgenstein is to interpret him as suggesting that we human beings need (or ought) to make our wills as independent from the world as possible in order to be happy. The idea here is to accept the world and all that happens in it just as it is. What is suggested is that being happy requires making peace with things just as they are, and so not making one's

contentment contingent on any worldly state of affairs. It amounts to, as Diamond notes, accepting that one is "in a sense 'powerless'" (*NB*, p.73) over all that happens in the world. Now whether the temptation to interpret Wittgenstein in either of these ways is correct (actually, as should be obvious from Chapters Three and Four, I think that Diamond is correct here) irrelevant. The main difficulty, again, is how to reconcile finding anything in the *Tractatus* that is even remotely connected to an ethical attitude while at the same time hanging on to the idea that everything he says about the ethical is quite literally nonsense.

Diamond's Attempted Reconciliation

The way in which she tries to ease this tension is to suppose that Wittgenstein is trying to get those who are steeped in philosophical nonsense to see what he is driving at by engaging in the same nonsense himself: "...The *Tractatus*...supposes a particular kind of imaginative activity, an exercise of the capacity to enter into the taking of nonsense for sense, of the capacity to share imaginatively the inclination to think that one is thinking something in it (the nonsense)" ("Ethics, Imagination, and the *Tractatus*", p. 158). Diamond never really makes clear what is involved in imagining that one is making sense when one is not. She does say that that "there is an important resemblance between ethical sentences and philosophical ones, seen imaginatively as apparently making sense: both ethical and philosophical nonsense reflect the attractiveness of the idea of a *point of view* on the world as a whole, whatever may happen in it" (p. 161, my emphasis). But it seems to me totally mysterious how any type of literal nonsense (imaginative or

otherwise) could "reflect" a "point of view", a *Weltanschauung*, or even a stance toward the world.

A Reductio of Diamond's view

If in fact any of Wittgenstein's pronouncements on value, ethics, and the meaning of life in the "sixes" are just as nonsensical as "piggly wiggle tiggle", then we ought to be able to substitute this phrase, or a suitably nonsensical one, for any of the remarks in the sixes without losing any meaning. We shouldn't lose any meaning because on her view there is no meaning to be lost. But it seems obvious that the phrase "piggly wiggle tiggle" cannot perform the same function as Wittgenstein's admittedly cryptic remarks that "ethics and aesthetics are one" or that "*how* things are in the world is a matter of complete indifference for what is higher" (6.432).

We ought not to confuse what is mysterious, cryptic, and perhaps even wholly unclear with pure nonsense. There are many things that we can ask regarding the meaning of Wittgenstein's remarks here. But there is little to be asked about the 'meaning' of "piggly wiggle tiggle". What does Diamond think can be done with this phrase or another that is suitably nonsensical? She does not tell us. It will not do to let this phrase stand for something else, for this would be to give it meaning it doesn't have. But there is much that we can ask regarding the meaning of the "sixes" in the *TLP*. We can ask for the *point* of his remarks. At bottom, there is prima facie evidence that there is some meaning in Wittgenstein's sixes since we can *ask* just what he is trying to get us to see. This is an appropriate question. It may turn out that there is nothing he is attempting

to show us or that what he is saying is so hopelessly mysterious that we don't know where to look. But these answers only make sense on the assumption that what he has said has some sense to it.

But can we ask the meaning of the phrase "piggle wiggle tiggle?" We can, but there are few options here. The person who utters this phrase might simply be dismissing something else as nonsense in a humorous way, or she might be letting the phrase stand in for some other expression that does have meaning. It seems that Diamond is using such a phrase to dismiss the propositions of the *Tractatus* as, in the end, straightforwardly nonsensical. But if she is correct here, how does she think Wittgenstein gets us to see that his propositions are, in the end, real nonsense without there being some meaning, sense, or significance in the propositions he uses to bring us to this conclusion? He obviously cannot do so with phrases like "piggly wiggle tiggle."

There is, as I have said, little we can do with such an expression, save taking it as an example of the kind of plain nonsense that Diamond thinks the *Tractatus* is trying to uncover for the perceptive reader. Diamond's position is that Wittgenstein's program is to get us to stop talking nonsense by engaging us in language that is only apparently intelligible, but that is nonetheless, at the end of the day, plain nonsense. But it would seem, then, that there must be *more* that the sixes can do than a phrase such as "piggly wiggle tiggle" can.

But perhaps I am being uncharitable here. After all, Diamond only says that the propositions of the *Tractatus* (except the frame of the work – that is, the preface, 6.54 and 7) are, *in the end*, just as nonsensical as the expression "piggly wiggle tiggle." She does not say that Wittgenstein's propositions *appear* to be as nonsensical as this phrase, only

that, at bottom, they are just as nonsensical. Indeed, they *seem* to make a kind of sense and they *appear* to be intelligible. But how do they appear to be meaningful and how are we to understand how his apparently meaningful assertions are really nonsense?

Understanding *Him*, not His Propositions: Pushing the Problem Back a Step

Diamond sees Wittgenstein as engaging the reader in language that seems to have meaning (but doesn't) in order to get the confused metaphysician to see that, ultimately, all *talk about* philosophy, ethics, and the mystical is nonsense – pure, plain, and simple nonsense. The problem, then, is this: how does anyone understand anything that Wittgenstein says in his work? It is here that she makes much of the claim near the end of the *Tractatus* where Wittgenstein writes: "My propositions serve as elucidations in this way: anyone who understands *me* finally recognizes them as nonsensical" (6.54; Pears & McGuiness Trans.). The point she makes is that understanding *him*, and not the propositions he uses to clarify or "elucidate", permits one to reconcile his project as an intelligible while maintaining that his propositions are, strictly speaking, nonsense: Wittgenstein makes *himself* understood, and so the point of his work intelligible, through elucidations that are plain nonsense.

Proposition 6.54 is part of the "frame" of the work ("Ethics, Imagination, and the *Tractatus*, p. 155),[124] according to Diamond, and is therefore not to be taken as a piece of nonsense, but as an instruction on how to read the work. Diamond writes:

> So my claim now is that we cannot see how we are to read the remarks on ethics in the *Tractatus* without seeing how Wittgenstein thought of its philosophical method, and crucial to that is his conception of what it is to understand a person who utters nonsense. What is it then to understand a person who talks nonsense? (p. 156)

Notice the emphasis on understanding a "person" uttering "nonsense." This is a key point for Diamond because she takes Wittgenstein really and truly to be speaking nonsense: there is no "that" clause that can be made sense of – we cannot fill in a "that clause" with any of the propositions of the *Tractatus* and thereby obtain an intelligible sentence:

> The understanding of a person who talks nonsense uses the type of linguistic construction that we use when we understand someone who talks sense. 'You are under the illusion that p' is modeled on 'you believe that p.' But sentences of that structure make sense only when they contain, in the clause giving the content of what is believed or thought or denied or said or whatever, an intelligible sentence. 'You are under the illusion that p' does not do that (p. 157).

The "method" of the *Tractatus* is to pretend to talk sense so that those who are under the impression that they are saying something intelligible when they utter a philosophical statement can be brought to see that they have "failed to give a meaning to certain signs in [their] propositions" (6.53). This is true of all the propositions of the *TLP*, excluding the preface, 6.54, and 7 (the "frame"). Thus, there is absolutely nothing but nonsense in any of Wittgenstein's remarks about ethics. But still we want to know how it

[124] The other part of the "frame" is the preface, specifically the bit about the main point of the work: "to draw a limit…to the expression of thoughts…and that what lies on the other side of the limit will simply be nonsense" (*TLP*, p 3).

is that Wittgenstein can seem to say *anything at all* with out-and-out nonsense. How does all this "pretending to make sense" work? According to Diamond, Wittgenstein's propositions have an imaginative sense in that psychologically they are significant, but, from a strictly logical point of view, they are nonsense. But what, exactly, is this supposed to mean? Diamond leaves this rather vague when she writes:

> ...The *Tractatus*, in its understanding of itself as addressed to those who are in the grip of philosophical nonsense, and in its understanding of the kind of demands it makes on its readers, supposes a kind of imaginative activity, an exercise of the capacity to enter into the taking of nonsense for sense, of the capacity to share imaginatively the inclination to think that one is thinking something in it (nonsense) (*Ibid.*).

I for one find this really thin as well as mysterious. In order for a person to be understood, however murkily, it would seem that there must be some sense in what he says, and that that sense must be the result of the intentions with which the words are uttered. So for my part the distinction between sentences that have *real* sense (though not in the technical way in which this is meant in the *Tractatus*) and sentences that have sense only imaginatively does not do any real work. I cannot even make sense of this distinction. For in either case we must grasp the significance of what is being said in order to follow the author.

So my own view (which is hardly just my own) is that there is a distinction between nonsense that attempts to say what can only be shown [sentences of type (2)[125]], which would include "logical form", the "picture theory of meaning", and anything like

[125] To explain showing in terms of truths that cannot be articulated or in terms of propositions that, if they had sense, would be seen to be true is perhaps the worst way to understand sentences of type 2. The recognition of something's being true presupposes that it can, in principle, be thought or otherwise articulated. This is why I think it best to explain showing in terms of a higher-order language, a language that instructs us as to how to look at descriptive language and its connection to the world. Now we needn't

an aesthetico-ethical perspective on the world, and plain nonsense which would include such phrases as "piggly wiggle tiggle".

A consideration that is perhaps equally important in any rejection of Diamond's reading is that it does not do justice to Wittgenstein's seriousness when it comes to that which is higher: "There is indeed the inexpressible. This *shows* itself; it is the mystical" (Ogden, 6.522). No doubt this is mysterious, and he may be wholly mistaken or even deluded—but pronouncements such as these are a far cry from "piggly wiggle tiggle."

What I am suggesting here is that pure nonsense (however disguised) cannot account for the grave attitude Wittgenstein took toward ethics, value, and, if I am correct, for the peculiar attitude or perspective he took toward the world as a "limited whole".[126] On an austere reading, these expressions must either be ignored or taken as ironic remarks, that serve only to point towards the opposite – namely, that nothing *is* inexpressible, except of course pure nonsense! And at the end of the day we still do not have a good explanation as to how pure nonsense can elucidate or clarify anything at all.

Still, there are other proponents of the "new Wittgenstein", James Conant and Warren Goldfarb being the two most prominent players. Let us see how they have taken Diamond's view and made it their own.

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suppose that Wittgenstein is gesturing towards truths that cannot be said, but rather getting us to appreciate how any representational language gets anchored to (or corresponds with) the world.

[126] Wittgenstein continued to think of certain talk as nonsense, but very important nonsense. In his *LE*, for example, he speaks about our using language in an ethical or religious context "*to go beyond* the world and that is to say beyond significant language ...[and that this]...running against the walls of our cage is perfectly, absolutely hopeless...[but that]...it is a document of a tendency in the human mind which [Wittgenstein] personally cannot help respecting deeply and [that he] would not for [his] life ridicule"(p. 70). This passage, far from suggesting that all nonsense is on a par, and that Wittgenstein is concerned to stop all the nonsense, as Diamond intimates, implies instead that important nonsense is the best talk there is

James Conant: "Resolute" Versus "Substantial" Nonsense

Like Diamond, James Conant is opposed to any reading of the early Wittgenstein that hints at the idea that there might be something toward which Wittgenstein is gesturing, something that cannot be said but only shown, or, to use Kierkegaard's wonderful phrase, "indirectly communicated". If there is anything that is shown for Conant, it is the "activity of unmasking nonsense", but there is no "it" that is shown, and nothing to which Wittgenstein is attempting to draw our attention; rather, there is only the discovery that we are (or have been) speaking nonsense (p. 344).[127] Conant follows Diamond's lead here: anyone who thinks that some features or characteristics of language and the world are being pointed toward after the ladder has been discarded is guilty of "chickening out" ("Throwing Away the Top of the Ladder" (1989), p. 338).

Conant's salvos are fired at so-called "ineffable truth" interpretations of the *Tractatus*. Included in this group are the Hintikkas (*Investigating Wittgenstein*: 1986), P.M.S. Hacker (*Insight and Illusion*: 1972), and Brian McGuiness (*Wittgenstein: A Life*: 1988) – though frequently Conant does not mention whose views he is taking issue with.)[128] Conant says of McGuiness' work (*Wittgenstein: A Life*) that McGuiness is

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and that we should carry on with it. Why would anyone want to carry on speaking nonsense if it all ultimately amounted to "piggly wiggle tiggle"?

[127] "Throwing Away the Top of the Ladder", *The Yale Review*, vol. 79, 1989, pp. 328-364

[128] Perhaps it does not matter that he does not name names, given that on Conant's reading any commentator who wrestles with Wittgenstein's comments on solipsism, value, or indeed any topic other than sense and nonsense has missed the point of Wittgenstein's work.

"sensitive in places to the "problem of chickening out" ("Throwing Away the Top of the Ladder", p 338), but that in the end McGuiness (like so many others) wants to get rid of "the top of the ladder", keeping some of the lower level rungs as providing real insight into, for example, the distinction between saying versus showing or the inexpressible nature of the language-world connection. Conant thinks that any interpretation of Wittgenstein's early work that makes it look as if there is something that cannot be expressed or stated, something that we cannot do, is completely misguided.

It is rather doubtful that all these authors (above) see Wittgenstein as gesturing towards ineffable *truths*—ineffable characteristics or features of language and the world, maybe.[129] It is simply not clear that what Wittgenstein is trying to get us to see or what he is drawing our attention to are truths. Conant attributes to many "commentators … the conclusion that the early Wittgenstein draws limits to language in order to point to the ineffable truths beyond language (that can only be indicated with the aid of language but can never be embodied in language)" ("Must We Show What We Cannot Say?", p. 248).

But Conant never considers that perhaps Wittgenstein's propositions are an attempt to get us to *look* at language and the world differently. Nor does he consider that Wittgenstein's propositions or elucidations are geared towards making perspicuous the connection between language and the world, and that it is the agreement or disagreement of representational language with the world that is shown by Wittgenstein's

[129] Hacker and Rhees, for example, take Wittgenstein to be showing us that there must be certain features that are shared by representational language and the world in order for us to be able to say (describe, represent) anything about the world. These shared features can be named, but they cannot be explained or described at all. Names and the objects that they denote are on this reading, transcendental conditions for language and the world. But these shared features are hardly "truths" about the world given that they do not represent the world at all, but make representational language possible.

propositions.[130] Here we need not speak about ineffable "truths" at all. In short, Conant never considers that perhaps Wittgenstein's propositions are meta-linguistic instructions – not a part of our ordinary descriptive language at all – and that their nonsensicality results from Wittgenstein's applying his picture theory criterion of meaning to the propositions that serve to illuminate that criterion, and much else besides.[131] On such a

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[130] Indeed, a plausible interpretation of what Wittgenstein is trying to bring to our attention with his talk about the connection between representational language and the world amounts to "showing" us what truth is. On such a view, "truth" cannot be said at all, but is made manifest or depicted by what is involved in the picturing relation. Here Wittgenstein can be interpreted as directing us to a pure correspondence theory of truth that is shown. This is close to Hintikka's idea that Wittgenstein is putting forward an "ineffability theory" of semantics. On this view, one of the things we are left with, once the ladder has been discarded, is a crystalline correspondence relation between language and the world that cannot be said, but is made manifest by Wittgenstein's picture theory. It also meshes nicely with Rhees suggestion (in *Discussions of Wittgenstein*, pp. 3-4) that Wittgenstein *shows* the meaning of "semantical concepts" (such as "truth" and "proposition") by getting us to see a proposition as a picture of a possible fact.

[131] Though what else "besides" is very hard to *say*: It should be clear by now that I interpret Wittgenstein main ethical task as one involving an attempt on his part to get us to see the world under the aspect of eternity. This is to bring about in us an attitude toward the world as a limited whole. It involves appreciating the greatest mystery of all – namely, that there *is* a world. Brian McGuiness writes: "The reading of the book, then, has a purpose: it is like an initiation into the mysteries, and when they are reached it can be forgotten" (*Wittgenstein: A Life; Young Ludwig, 1889-1921*, p 303). This is suggestive but rather vague (as so many hints at what Wittgenstein is trying to get us to appreciate must be). Still, McGuiness is on the right track here. Wittgenstein brings us to the brink of mystery or "mysteries": The sense or meaning of life and the world, any understanding of absolute value, the logical form of language and the world, etc. These might be called "ineffable truths", but I cannot see why one must think of them as such. Indeed, it seems to me that labeling them as 'truths' only gives the advantage to those who propound the austere reading: (Indeed, how can we *say* that any statement is true unless we can also *say*, at least in principle, what the conditions for the truth of the statement are? This seems to be their starting point. This is different from saying that there are truths about the universe that we have not yet discovered. Here one is only saying that there are very many truths about which we are presently in the dark – and might always be in the dark. But none of these truths are in principle ineffable.) At any rate, it is far easier for proponents of the austere view of nonsense to attack the 'theory' that there are truths that cannot in principle be stated, than it is to refute the claim that there are ultimate mysteries that no amount of philosophical analysis can lay bare. This seems to be what Wittgenstein is driving at when he writes in the last line of his preface: "...The second thing in which the value of this work consists is that it shows how little is achieved when these problems are solved" (p 4). Wittgenstein is intimating that the most important areas are left untouched; that the mysteries of life cannot be plumbed by analysis. But for Conant (and Diamond) there can be no mystery here, only the illusion that there is more to life and the world than can be captured in language. For my part, it is the height of hubris to think that there are no real mysteries – only confused talk or nonsense. Yet something very close to this is present in austere readings. Here it is exceedingly difficult to defend Conant and Diamond, for they allow only the preface, 6.54 and 7 to count as having meaning, and only insofar as these remarks clarify how we are to read the *TLP*. But perhaps we might say, in their defense, that the point of Wittgenstein's remarks at 6.5 and 6.521, where he says in effect that the "riddle of life" or the "problem of life" "does not exist" or "vanishes" – that this realization results from our seeing that there can be no way to state what it is we are trying to get at when we blather on about the meaning or "problem" of life. And where no question can be asked, there can be no answer either (6.5). Thus, there is a

view as this, Wittgenstein's propositions fail to meet his own criterion, and are thus nonsense. But this does not render them pure nonsense. Nor need we interpret them as sentences that only appear to be intelligible. Indeed, we do understand Wittgenstein, and that is why we can see what he is driving at when he tells us that, in the end, his propositions "serve as elucidations", and should be finally discarded as nonsense.

The only alternatives to silence are, according to Conant, the following three: "(1) plain ordinary effable speech, (2) unintelligible though apparently intelligible chatter (in this he is following Cora Diamond), and (3) mere gibberish" (p 249).[132] Conant continues: "the latter two alternatives differ only in their psychological import: one offers the illusion of sense where the other does not. Cognitively, they are equally vacuous. My interlocutory commentators, on the other hand, insist on a fourth alternative: the possibility of speech that lacks sense while still being able to convey volumes" (*Ibid.*).

First, one should note the similarity to Diamond's breakdown of sense and nonsense. Just as Diamond reduced "sentences that are nonsense but would mean these things if they could count as sense" to statements of "mere nonsense", so Conant follows

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sense in which the unmasking of nonsense is an ethical deed for it frees us from thinking that we can discover the sense or meaning of life. When we see that any talk of "life's meaning" or the "problem of life" is nonsense, we will stop blathering and henceforth cease to be vexed by such questions. We will then realize that "the man who is fulfilling the purpose of existence [is he who] no longer needs to have any purpose except to live" [*Notebooks (1914-1916)*, p 73]. The idea that the unmasking of such ethical questions as nonsense leads to a kind of existential freedom is not altogether wrong as an interpretation of Wittgenstein's point in the sixes, but unfortunately it is not an option that is open to austere readings since the very idea that Wittgenstein is expressing a kind of existential solution to nonsensical questions is itself an ethical attitude or stance that cannot be countenanced on austere readings: For it requires attributing some meaning to what Wittgenstein *says* about questions that deal with the meaning and sense of life. And, as we are seeing, there can be no understanding of what Wittgenstein *is trying to get at* with his talk of ethics and value in the *Tractatus* except to show us that we have been speaking nonsense. This is why I said it is so hard to defend austere interpretations, especially when it comes to Wittgenstein's remarks in the sixes.

[132] "Must We Show What We Cannot Say?" in *The Senses of Stanley Cavell*, edited by Richard Fleming and Michael Payne, Bucknell Univ. Press; PA: 1989

her lead here and wants to reduce sentences that appear to have sense or seem intelligible to "gibberish."

Second, Diamond talks about "imaginative" nonsense: sentences that are "pure nonsense" from a logical perspective, but are, from a psychological perspective, meaningful. She interprets Wittgenstein as engaging in such nonsense to win those philosophers over – the ones still speaking nonsense but who are unaware of it – to his way of seeing matters. Third, both regard the idea that sentences wholly lacking sense can "*say* volumes" (my italics) or point to "ineffable truths" as the wrong way to read Wittgenstein.

And, framed in this way, I agree with them both. But we must ask: is there not a better way to understand how Wittgenstein could take himself to be illuminating something important with nonsensical sentences? If my view is correct (or at least more plausible than austere readings) we can.

Notice that Conant stresses that both the "chatter" that "appears to be intelligible" and the "mere gibberish" are "equally vacuous" in terms of *cognitive* content. But if Wittgenstein is applying his picture theory of meaning – that those and only those propositions that picture facts in the world have meaning – then we should expect those propositions that are *about* the relation between language and the world to be cognitively vacuous.[133] For according to Wittgenstein propositions that have cognitive content are

[133] Here I am using the expression "cognitively vacuous" in a rather narrow way. I mean only that the propositions of the *Tractatus* do not picture facts in the world. They are, in this sense, "cognitively vacuous." As we have seen (in chapters two and four), Wittgenstein's remarks are better characterized as a higher-order language that both directs us to the relation between language and the world and invites us to see or look at the entire world and language from a perspective outside the world. Wittgenstein's Delphic pronouncement that opens the work ("the world is all that is the case") is an excellent example of both his aim to project us out of the world and to direct our attention to the connection between descriptive language

propositions that agree or disagree with reality – propositions that represent, truly or falsely, facts in the world. By hypothesis Wittgenstein's higher-order propositions cannot represent a way in which the world might be, and so lack cognitive content. But this does not imply that they are gibberish.

Putting aside my interpretation of how we are to understand the point and purpose of Wittgenstein's propositions, it remains to be seen what Conant takes to be the point of Wittgenstein's work. Thus far, Conant's Wittgenstein is only concerned with "unmasking nonsense". One is tempted to say, if this was all Wittgenstein was concerned with, then the point hardly seems worth all the effort. Let us see if there is something more to Conant's position than this.

James Conant on Wittgenstein and Kierkegaard: An Ironic Reading of the *Tractatus*

Conant argues against the usual parallels that are drawn between Wittgenstein and Kierkegaard.[134] In "Must We Show What We Cannot Say?" (1989) and "Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein, and Nonsense"[135] (1993), Conant draws what he regards as the correct parallel between the *TLP* and Kierkegaard's "Concluding Unscientific Postscript."[136]

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and the world: the facts – and there being all the facts – constitute the world. But anyone would be hard-pressed to give the cognitive content here.

[134] In a footnote (#3) in his paper "Must We Show What We Cannot Say?", Conant claims that he "take(s) issue with virtually all of the secondary literature on both Kierkegaard and the early Wittgenstein", with the exception of ... "Henry Allison and Stanley Cavell" (p 270).

[135] I will restrict my comments to the first article, for much of what I say here applies to the other article.

[136] Conant draws heavily on Kierkegaard's work as a way of illuminating Wittgenstein's final message to "remain silent". It is true that Wittgenstein admired Kierkegaard very much, and even told Drury that he thought "Kierkegaard was by far the most profound thinker of the last century" (Maurice O'C. Drury, "Some Notes on Conversations with Wittgenstein, in *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Personal Recollections* (1981), p 102), and, in a letter to Norman Malcolm, Wittgenstein remarked "Kierkegaard is far too deep for me" (*Ludwig Wittgenstein; A Memoir*, by Norman Malcolm (1984), p 106. But, as is so often the case with

Perhaps we can discover if there is anything more to Conant's resolute reading by first examining what he regards as the usual parallels between the two thinkers, and then investigate why he thinks such interpretations go wrong.

What emerges is an interpretation of the *Tractatus* in which Wittgenstein never really means what he says; a view that is, to my mind, contrived, ironic, and tongue in cheek. Indeed, P.M.S. Hacker has said: "Conant represents the book as an exercise in Kierkegaardian irony" ("Was He Trying To Whistle It?", p 359, published in *New Wittgenstein*, 2000).

In "Must We Show What We Cannot Say?", Conant lists "five similarities" that other "commentators (he doesn't say who) believed they noticed…in these two famous works" (p 243):

> (1) Both [Wittgenstein and Kierkegaard] were concerned to draw a distinction between sense and nonsense (or between what can and cannot be objectively comprehended) and to relegate matters of importance (ethics, religion) to a realm beyond the limits of sense; (2) both works attempt to show what cannot be said (or directly communicated) and what can only be shown (or directly communicated); (3) both works attempt to show what cannot be said (or thought) by drawing limits to what can be said (or thought); (4) both works consistently climax in a final moment of self-destruction in which we are asked to throw out the ladder we have just climbed up (or to throw away the pseudonym named Johannes Climacus or John of the Ladder); (5) both works end with a proclamation of silence and with the implication that silence *is* the only correct form that an answer to their questions can take (pp. 243-244)

Conant does not discuss the merits or demerits of these parallels, but instead claims that "he has never seen anyone perspicuously lay out these five similarities" as clearly as "he has just done" (p 244). Indeed, he draws our attention to these parallels only to mention

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Wittgenstein, it is impossible to determine just where and how the influence shows up (save for those cases where Wittgenstein explicitly mentions certain thinkers (Russell, Frege, Schopenhauer, etc – and even here

that "these apparent parallels are symptomatic of deeper affinities between the writings of these two authors" and that "what exactly those deeper affinities ...[amount to]... is one of the many things [his article] never arrived at a satisfactory formulation of" (*Ibid.*).[137]

But for all his hemming and hawing, Conant does tell us what he thinks the deeper affinities are and why other philosophers have missed them. First, Conant's dissatisfaction with other commentators – excluding Henry Allison and Stanley Cavell – is that they imply a pregnant, profound, and heavy silence. It is the old problem of attributing, in this case, to both Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein, the view that their "indirect communications" or "elucidations" point to some*thing* (or things) that language cannot capture: "I wanted to instruct them to read these texts in a different light and to say to them: there is no particular thing that cannot be said. The "what" in "what cannot be said" refers to nothing" (p, 244) at all. Now Conant feared that such a view of both Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein would meet with the usual objection that goes something like this: "aren't you just warming up logical positivism?" But on Conant's view there can be no such thing as deep and significant nonsense (and put like this who could argue?). Once again he is objecting to there being two different categories of nonsense: genuine nonsense and profound nonsense. I will come back to this.

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the influence is hard to ferret out).

[137] This article begins in rather dramatic fashion: it is written as an "obituary" for an article that Conant found impossible to write (this I understand only too well). In the article that he couldn't write he meant to say what the real parallels are between the two authors. In this article – the obituary to the one he didn't (couldn't) write – he attempts to explain the deeper affinities by explaining why he couldn't write the original. In short, he felt that he could not make his thoughts transparent to those who disagreed with him, and that his article would be "intelligible to someone who already shares [his] dissatisfactions with these commentators" (p 245). This idea of course echoes what Wittgenstein says in his preface to the *TLP*, and Conant intends this.

What about the apparent parallels which are enumerated but never discussed by Conant? I want to restrict my comments to parallels (2) and (5). The idea that Johannes Climacus is indirectly communicating what, strictly speaking, cannot be directly communicated regarding *what it is to be a Christian* does indeed have some affinities with Wittgenstein's attempting to *say* via the propositions of the *Tractatus* what can only be shown. The method, but not the content, is similar. But with respect to both authors it is far from clear how this parallel is to be further developed: that both Wittgenstein and Climacus, through there oblique comments, are pointing to something that cannot be said, and that this is what is really important is just a start. What is *it* that is so important?

Well, for Kierkegaard it is none other than what is means to be a Christian – the essence of Christianity. Kierkegaard, through his pseudonym "Climacus", regards what he "says" about what it means to be a Christian (which needn't concern us here) as a subjective truth (Conant gives "ethics" and "religion" as examples of "subjective truths", p. 248.) This is indeed paradoxical; and much ink has been spilled trying to make sense of truth being "subjective." But the silence is supposed to come as a result of our reason or intellect reaching its limits, of our seeing that nothing we could say, to quote Wittgenstein, could ever count as "*the* thing" (*LE*, p. 67). Then, and only then, can one silently *be* a Christian. (I do not pretend to understand how this works – perhaps that is part of the point).

One might argue that just as Kierkegaard thought that the question "what does it mean to be a Christian?" could only be indirectly communicated, Wittgenstein thought that the right ethical perspective on the world could only be shown. And that just as we cannot describe what it means to be a Christian so we cannot describe the right ethical

perspective on the world. But here is where the parallels end on my view. Wittgenstein, unlike Kierkegaard, thinks that far more can be "indirectly communicated" (*shown*) than just the mystical. Furthermore, nowhere is it suggested that the mystical, which "makes itself manifest" (6.522), is a "subjective truth". Such an ironic expression as this is never hinted at in the *Tractatus*. There is no evidence that Wittgenstein is being deliberately paradoxical when he writes: "there is indeed the mystical, it shows itself" (Ogden, 6.522). But even more importantly, Wittgenstein's distinction between saying and showing does a great deal more work than bringing into relief the correct ethical stance toward the world as a "limited whole".

According to Wittgenstein (if I am correct), the very distinction between saying and showing is made apparent *by* the higher-order propositions of his *TLP*. Thus, contra Conant, the 'propositions' that are about the saying/showing distinction do *say* a great deal. Wittgenstein is not just concerned with leading us to the right stance or attitude toward the world – the view "*sub specie aeternitatis*" (and notice here that we need not talk about ineffable truths of ethics, but only an attitude or a *Weltanschauung* – or is it a meta-*Weltanschauung*?) – but is also concerned to *show* the connection between language and the world, the nature of truth, and the nature of the proposition (to name a few).

Thus, Wittgenstein thinks that much is "shown" in his work. Conant, like Diamond, thinks that the distinction between saying and showing is just more nonsense that Wittgenstein is trying to expose. He interprets Wittgenstein as suggesting that the distinction between saying and showing is not the cure, but a "diagnosis of the problem" ("Must We Show What We Cannot Say?" p. 248): Commentators "tend…to mistake the

views that are under scrutiny in the *Tracatatus* for the view the author wishes to espouse" (p. 248, *Ibid.*). Presumably, one of the views under scrutiny is the view that some things can be shown and not said. Admittedly, what Conant says here is pretty vague, but he does make reference to commentators who think that some features of reality are "revealed" (P. 248). But in the end it doesn't matter if we cannot say which views Conant thinks are under "scrutiny" and which are being "espoused" because his position seems to border on being incoherent. How can nonsense, disguised or otherwise, be espoused or scrutinized?

Let me leave the reader with the real parallel that Conant thinks he sees in Wittgenstein and Kierkegaard. Just as there can be no such thing as indirect communication, there can be nothing that is shown and not said: both authors are only concerned to unmask disguised nonsense. They both use language in a way that makes it appear that what they say has some meaning or significance, but it doesn't. And so what we are ultimately to draw from their work is the impossibility of communicating anything other than what can be said or "directly communicated". My objection here is the same as it was before, and can be put in the form of a question: "why on earth would anyone go to all the bother to make just this point?" The motto of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* is instructive here: "...And whatever a man knows, whatever is not mere rumbling and roaring that he has heard, can be said in three words" – Kürnberger (preface). It seems very bizarre that Wittgenstein would end his treatise with remarks about value, aesthetics, ethics, and God, if his main point begins and ends with the unmasking of nonsense. Why all this "rumbling and roaring"?

Before turning to a restoration of the old Wittgenstein, I want to investigate a third and final player on the resolute field, Warren Goldfarb. Gorldfarb, though not as significant a contributor on the topic of nonsense as Diamond and Conant, gives a clear explanation of what he thinks is right in "resolute" readings.

Goldfarb on Resolute and Irresolute Readings: Revisiting Diamond

In "Metaphysics and Nonsense: On Cora Diamond's *The Realistic Spirit*" (1997)[138] Goldfarb is primarily concerned with explicating the important role played by nonsense in Diamond's work. In part, Diamond is concerned to undercut interpretations of early Wittgenstein as realist and the later Wittgenstein as an anti-realist. She thinks that this way of approaching Wittgenstein is mistaken because it fails to bring out the real similarities and the differences between his early and late work.[139] It is misguided to read the *Tractatus* as realist, and interpreting Wittgenstein's propositions as plain (albeit disguised) nonsense demonstrates why this is so.

Now what is so misguided about attributing to Wittgenstein an ontology that is realist?[140] Doesn't Wittgenstein write: "objects make up the substance of the world" (2.021) and "substance is what subsists independently of what is the case" (2.024)? This

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[139] Obviously a comparison of early and late Wittgenstein goes well beyond the scope of my work here. However, I want to spend a little time seeing just how austere/resolute readings help deal with the "intractable problems of realism" in the early work (Goldfarb, p. 57). I want to see, once again, what role nonsense is supposed to play according to Goldfarb and Diamond.

[140] In correspondence Gary Levvis told me that at an APA meeting "Goldfarb and a contingent of his Harvard buddies nearly had seizures" when Levvis described the austere interpretations as "anti-realist". Goldfarb said: "we don't affirm OR deny an ontology". Levvis's retort (to me): "Fine, so they are Dummettian anti-realists. Big deal!" Diamond is non-committal here as well, hence the title of here book *The Realistic Spirit* (1991).

looks and feels like realism.[141] According to Goldfarb, the difficulty with interpreting the *Tractatus* as propounding a realist conception of the world is that any such reading lends itself to, what Goldfarb calls, "irresolute" interpretations of the work (p 64). This is what Conant would call a "substantial nonsense" reading and what Diamond would call a "chickening out" interpretation of the early work. The reason is plain: Realist interpretations lend themselves to the idea or intuition that *something or things*, *some characteristics or aspects of language and the world*, only what they are we cannot *say*, are being pointed toward with Wittgenstein's propositions. Thus, the silence that ensues at the end of the work is pregnant with meaning (in terms of reference at least). Realism and substantial nonsense are a nice fit in that the nonsense is taken as gesturing to features of language and the world that cannot be said, but only shown.

And hence we are left with a series of questions that cannot be answered at all: What are these 'things'? Are they truths? Are they features of the world? And if they are one or the other, then why can't we say anything about them? The reason both Goldfarb and Diamond shy away from ascribing any ontological commitments to early Wittgenstein is best captured by a comment Wittgenstein made many years later in his *PI*: a something about which nothing can be said is as good as nothing. The thorny problem of just what is being gestured towards is avoided, according to Goldfarb and Diamond, if one reads the *Tractatus* as engaging in disguised nonsense – a "transitional" language – to enable us to see that all metaphysics is real nonsense. And of course if all

[141] I think that the sort of realism one gets in the *Tractatus* is ineluctably tied to the world-as-pictured. I even tried to argue that Wittgenstein's simple objects are logical objects that must be posited in order for the sense of contingent propostions to be determinate. Indeed, I toyed with the idea of attributing to Wittgenstein a kind of transcendental idealism a` la Schopenhauer. But such a project is well beyond the scope of this work.

metaphysics is real nonsense, then Wittgenstein cannot be thought of as either a realist or an anti-realist. Indeed, nonsensical propositions cannot give us any type of ontology. Hence the realist/anti-realist issue is moot on their reading. Perhaps the problem is avoided, but at too great a cost. Goldfarb and Diamond avoid having to say anything about what's shown by treating all of Wittgenstein's 'propositions' as disguised or imaginative nonsense.

According to Goldfarb, *the* problem with irresolute (what Conant call "sunstantial nonsense") readings is that they appear impossible. Goldfarb points out that Ramsey was perhaps the first to be sensitive to this, as the latter's comment makes plain: "If you can't say it, you can't whistle it either" (p. 64).

According to Goldfarb, Diamond thinks that ascriptions of realism to Wittgenstein are the result of commentators (all those I have mentioned) failing to grasp that when Wittgenstein says his propositions are nonsense, he means *real nonsense.* And sentences that are resolute/austere/plain nonsense cannot have reference,[142] and thus cannot point to (or show) anything. Goldfarb quotes the later Wittgenstein as a way to

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[142] Diamond uses Frege's context principle to explain the kind of nonsense she claims Wittgenstein is self-consciously making use of. Frege thought that only in the context of a proposition does a word have meaning (that is, reference). Diamond, according to Goldfarb, takes this maxim "very seriously" (p 59). She thinks (following one interpretation of Frege's principle) that expressions or terms cannot refer on their own, but have meaning only in a proposition (sentence). Whatever meaning we think they have on their own is parasitic on the meaning of the proposition in which they occur. Goldfarb gives a Fregean type example to illustrate this: consider the expression "Is a horse is a mammal". These two categories "clash" because what we need in the subject place is an object and "is a horse" does not introduce an object, but is rather a predicative expression that introduces a concept. Goldfarb point out that one way to deal with this problem is let the first predicative expression "is a horse" mean (refer to) "man-o-war". Now we have a first order concept that refers to an object, and thus the proposition makes sense. This is where Diamond's approach is different. On Diamond's reading of the context principle, it is impossible to give a meaning to the first predicative expression because no expression can have meaning independent of its role in a sentence. According to Goldfarb, "we can see expressions as referring only in sentences" on Diamond's view (p 59). The implication here is that we cannot give a predicative expression a meaning in a nonsensical sentence such as "Is a horse is a mammal", for that would be to admit that we can see what the

illuminate just the kind of thing that we think we can do with *Tractarian* nonsense on an "irresolute" reading: "The great difficulty here is not to represent the matter as if there were something one *couldn't* do" (*PI*, 374). The idea here is that it is wholly wrongheaded to think that the propositions of the *Tractatus* come as close as any propositions can to revealing logical form, the nature of the proposition, or even an aesthetico-ethical perspective on the world, but that they all ultimately fail to "say" what's being gestured towards. Anything that we take to be shown by the propositions of the *Tractatus* is an illusion on our part, according to Diamond and Goldfarb. The idea that there is something that the propositions of the *Tractatus* cannot do – namely, *say* what it is that is *shown* – is to miss the entire point of Wittgenstein's work.

Of course, on my view Diamond, Goldfarb, and Conant have missed the point. For if we take Wittgenstein's propositions as metalinguistic assertions about the connection between language and the world – an impossible metalanguage – then it is Wittgenstein's assertions that *show* us a great many things about language and the world. They do so by 'saying' in a higher order language what cannot be said with ordinary contingent propositions.

Other than helping us resist the temptations of realism in the *Tractatus*, if that is what we are inclined to do, what else is this nonsense good for? What does it accomplish? Why did Wittgenstein think it was so important? We have already seen (in all of the austere interpretations), that Wittgenstein uses this disguised or "transitional" (as Diamond also calls it) language to unmask the nonsense philosophers speak. Closely

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first expression is *trying to mean*, which is to say that *we can see it as attempting* to (unsuccessfully) function as a concept. But, on this reading of the context principle we cannot do this.

related to this is an awareness of the proper role for philosophy, to clarify our ordinary language (though it is still not at all clear to me how this is accomplished on austere readings). But can it do anything more positive or particular than this?

Goldfarb takes a stab at demonstrating how we are to unpack the remark "Propositions cannot represent logical form" on a resolute reading of Wittgenstein's work. He puts this challenge to the austere interpretation very honestly when he writes: "Can we arrive at a position where we have discarded his propositions about logical form, yet not feel that there is a feature of states and affairs and propositions, a feature that they have in common, but one we cannot represent?" (p. 66) Here he suggests, following Diamond, that if we think of

> Logical form [as] what we discern in a proposition *over and above* the names it contains, [and that] it is the contribution (if I may put it thus) to the sense of the proposition made by the juxtaposition of those names, then it obviously makes no sense at all to think that one can see a name going proxy for *that*, or a complex of names representing *that*" (p 66).

And thus "all we are doing is noting that names have to be put together in one way or another in order to make sentences" (*Ibid.*).

Several points are in order here. First, keep in mind that this disguised bit of nonsense ("Propositions cannot represent logical form) is a tool in getting us to appreciate *all* of what Goldfarb has just said. I am not convinced that nonsense (disguised or otherwise) can shoulder this burden. Second, and far more damaging, is Goldfarb's leaving out what is essential to *any* explanation of logical form (whether on an austere or substantial reading of nonsense); namely, any analysis of "logical form" seems to require a discussion (or at least an explaining away) of how propositions are connected to the world; for logical form is, at minimum, what proposition and world have in common in

order for the former to be able to "picture" the latter (2.18 and 4.121). Perhaps what I have just said is more disguised nonsense. Sill, if disguised nonsense cannot account for this, then I would rather attribute more sense to Wittgenstein propositions. My final objection to the role played by nonsense in explicating Wittgenstein's talk of logical form is Goldfarb's rather suspicious use of the term "discern". What is being "discerned" "*over and above* the names [the proposition] contains"? (p. 66) To "discern" is to see something that is shown, something, perhaps, that is not apparent. What I am suggesting here is that, at the end of the day, the "transitional language" or the "disguised nonsense" seems to be *showing* us a relation between language and the world. Thus, notwithstanding all the talk about the propositions of the *Tractatus* being pure nonsense, they seem to show quite a lot. Indeed, with the help of Wittgenstein's propositions we are able to "discern" what he is trying to get us to see.

Restoring the Old Wittgenstein: Jakko Hintikka and P.M.S. Hacker

Both of these thinkers regard the saying/showing distinction as absolutely essential for a proper understanding of Wittgenstein's logical or semantic theory in his *TLP*. They also regard the "showing" theme as vital, albeit in different ways, for a proper understanding of Wittgenstein's pronouncements concerning ethics and value generally. Finally, both think that Wittgenstein was committed to certain metaphysical presuppositions in his "picture theory" of language, and that the idea that one can draw a clear line between his theory of logic in the *Tractatus* and his metaphysics is absolutely hopeless. What this suggests is that Wittgenstein, contrary to Diamond, Conant, and

Goldfarb, doesn't regard all metaphysics as nonsense. Indeed, one of the things that Wittgenstein's took himself to be showing in his account of logic is the absolute necessity of simple objects. For all these reasons, they regard the saying and showing distinction as anything but nonsense.

Hintikka: Language as the "Universal Medium"

Here it is necessary to see just what Jaakko and Merrill Hintikka have in mind when they say that Wittgenstein never abandoned the idea that language is the "universal medium" (*Investigating Wittgenstein*: 1986; pp. 1-27). Their view makes clear that the real source of Wittgenstein's view that logic and Ethics are transcendental stems from such a view of language. Moreover, it makes perspicuous just what it means to say that some things can only be shown and not said. Our language is the only means by which we manage to say anything at all about the world. For Wittgenstein the idea of a "meta" language is impossible. This is simply to say that he regarded attempts to get outside language and the world, by *saying* what the logical relation is between the elements of a thought or proposition and the simple objects that they correspond to, as absolutely hopeless. For Wittgenstein, the model "theory" of language is itself *shown* to be correct, and what he *says* in terms of laying the foundation for an appreciation of his picture theory is not, by his lights, what demonstrates its "unassailable" truth. The basic idea of language as the "universal medium" is that there can be no method for further explaining how language *corresponds, hooks – up, or connects with reality*. For in order to *say* how we use language to mean anything about the world we have to use language in order to

explain and further elucidate that relationship. In other words, we end up using the language-world relation in order to explain that very relation. It is like using reason to critically examine and analyze reason. At some point it becomes obvious that further analysis can never get off the ground. In short, we can never get outside our mode of presentation (language) in order to say anything further about it. The idea of language as a "universal medium" is simply the idea that the way in which language connects with the world can only be shown, and cannot be further analyzed *within* language. The idea of language as the universal medium is a position that the Hintikkas attribute to all of Wittgenstein's work.

My own example of language as the universal medium, if one is needed, is the failure of the "correspondence" *theory* of truth. As a theory it is, in my opinion, quite vacuous. But what it shows is quite correct, if not obvious. The correspondence theory *shows* a proposition is true if and only if it corresponds with reality. What is it for a proposition to *correspond* with reality? We might begin by saying that a true proposition picks out, denotes, or corresponds with a fact. But what is a "fact"? Well, the standard answer here regards "facts" as "objects standing in relation to one another". A true proposition is, then, a proposition whose elements or parts *correspond* to those objects that stand in relation to one another. Still we have the correspondence relation rearing its head, and it is still essentially undefined and (on Wittgenstein's view) indefinable.[143] It is this pure "correspondence relation" that Wittgenstein was trying to *show*. Witness: "A proposition *shows* its sense. A proposition *shows* how things stand *if* it is true. And it *says*

[143] There are Philosophers, Tarski being one, who regard the correspondence theory of truth as definable. But it is only definable in a meta-language.

that they do so stand" (4.022). At bottom, one of the most important things that Wittgenstein is trying to show (by 'saying' it in a higher order language) is that there is can be no *tertium quid* that explains how the elements of a proposition "correspond" (connect) with objects in the world.

To say that the proposition "grass is green" is true if and only if it corresponds to the fact (the reality) that [grass is green] is to say nothing, according to Wittgenstein's lights. One might just as well, and more fruitfully, hold up a picture of green grass (or a token of the sentence "Grass is green") and compare it will reality. It is important to note that for Wittgenstein the token sentence "Grass is green" and the picture show the same thing. If the picture and what is pictured share the same logical form (and they must if the former is to be a picture of the latter), and if the picture agrees with reality, then the proposition "is true." Here it is absolutely vital to see that the addition of "is true" adds nothing to what is indicated by saying that a proposition "corresponds" or "agrees" with reality. A theory of truth is one of the things that cannot be defined, articulated, or described according to Wittgenstein. However, the truth of a contingent proposition is *shown* – not said – in virtue of its agreement with reality. (I leave out a discussion of negative facts. Note that the same reasoning applies. Only here we would talk about "disagreement" with reality). This failure of the correspondence 'theory' of truth to *say* more about the nature of the correspondence relation is but another example, I think, of what Wittgenstein means when he says that some things cannot be articulated, but that what they show is quite right. What the correspondence theory attempts to say cannot be said because we cannot describe the relation of language to the world from an extra-perspectival point of view; but, for all that, what it shows is correct according to

Wittgenstein. And thus we can now say that a correspondence 'theory' of truth is nonsense only in so far as what it tries to say cannot be a picture of a possible way in which the world might be, but is instead shown to be right by his picture theory of descriptive or representational language.

Keeping in mind Jaakko Hintikka's startlingly simple view that it is the universality of logic, semantics, and language generally, that Wittgenstein regarded as beyond articulation, we are now in a better position to determine the consequences of such a view regarding the treatment of ethics. How is language, understood as the universal medium, related to the ethical? For Hintikka there is no positive answer here, only a kind of *via negativa.* Specifically, because Hintikka's interpretation of Wittgenstein's logico-philosophical perspective focuses almost exclusively on how the saying/showing distinction works with respect to the logic of our language, his interpretation is silent on how an aesthetico-ethical perspective is shown, and how value is related to the world more generally. Hintkka's interpretation mainly justifies the saying/showing theme as central to understanding Wittgenstein's concern with how language in general is connected to the world (which of course is central to my demonstrating that the saying/showing theme is anything but nonsense). It leaves unsettled just how ethics and value generally is related to the world, and hence offers little in the way of illuminating Wittgenstein's comments on ethics, value, and the mystical. Now let us move on to Jaakko Hintikka's objections against the "new Wittgensteinians."

The Austerity of Wittgenstein's Logical Theory

In Jaakko Hintikka's work on Early Wittgenstein (from *Investigating Wittgenstein* with Merill Hintikka to his paper "What Does the Wittgensteinian Inexpressible Express"?) his focus is on Wittgenstein's work as a "logico-philosophical" theory about language and about its relation to thinking and to reality" (p. 9). He has relatively little to say about Wittgenstein's pronouncements on ethics, aesthetics, the meaning of life, and value generally. What he does do in the above paper is provide a critical account of the "new Wittgensteinians" based on Wittgenstein's theory of logic and language. I shall now summarize his argument.

Jaakko Hintikka charges the "new Wittgensteinians" with "misinterpreting the *Tractatus* in a radical way. He begins his assessment of their view with a consideration of 6.54:

> My propositions are elucidatory in this way: he who understands them eventually recognizes them as senseless [unsinnig], when he has climbed out through them, on them, over them…
> He must surmount these propositions; then he sees the world rightly (Hintkka; 9).

First, note that Hintikka here translates "unsinnig" as "senseless", not as "nonsense". The German adjective "unsinnig" literally means "nonsensical", so either "senseless" or "nonsense" captures the meaning, though the latter is more literal. Interestingly, Ogden also translates "unsinnig" as "senseless", not as "nonsensical". The German "sinnlos" is best translated as "senseless". I suspect that both Ogden and Hintikka use "senseless" because it does not carry the negative connotation that "nonsensical" or "nonsense" does. Moreover, "senseless" better contrasts those

propositions that have sense, i.e., propositions of natural science, with those that are *without* sense, such as the propositions of the *Tractatus*. Second, he does not have Wittgenstein saying that "he who understands *me*", but instead he who understands "*them*" (the elucidatory propositions)...recognizes them as senseless". This, in itself, gives a different spin on Wittgenstein's overall position.

Recall that Diamond has made a lot of hay from interpreting Wittgenstein as saying those who understand "me". Now the German is "*mich vesteht*", which literally means he who "understands me", so we can see how it is that Diamond is able to interpret Wittgenstein in a less natural but more literal way than Hintikka. Hintikka's interpretation, however, while not as literal as Diamond's, is a more natural reading of 6.54. To understand "me" is to understand what I have said, and not, rather bizarrely, to understand *me*, the *person*. By "understanding me" Wittgenstein means understanding what he has said in his work. How else are we to *understand him*, independent of his position in the *Tractatus*? Hence, Diamond's interpretation of this passage is ambiguous between understanding Wittgenstein the man *(me)* and what he is saying. Her rather unnatural interpretation ignores the more obvious way to take him, as Hintikka's interpretation, though less literal, does not. At any rate, Hintikka's main objection against the new Wittgensteinians assumes this more natural reading.

Philosophers such as Diamond, Conant, and Goldfarb go wrong in thinking that there is a great tension in Wittgenstein's work as a whole. The "new" Wittgensteinians say that we must take what Wittgenstein says at 6.54 as literally as possible. And when we do so, they maintain that it is not at all clear how we are to take any of the so-called propositions that occur prior to 6.54, other than making them out to be pure nonsense.

There is now this huge problem as to how we are to make *any* sense of Wittgenstein's treatise at all. Diamond says that we must take Wittgenstein to mean what he says: that the entire work is nonsense. Diamond, Conant, and Goldfarb then attribute to Wittgenstein the design of writing sentences that only appear to make sense or only seem to be intelligible, but that, on closer inspection, are just as nonsensical as "piggly wiggle tiggle." This, as we have seen, is the "austere" or "resolute" reading of his early work. As Hintikka succinctly puts it: "If what Wittgenstein said before proposition 6.54 is literally nonsense, we apparently cannot understand his book at face value. And… this face value is that of a treatise in logical semantics. Hence primarily a different interpretation has to be given to the entire work – or so it has been claimed" (*Ibid*, p. 9).

Hintikka thinks that such an interpretation is a complete "misinterpretation" of Wittgenstein. According to Hintikka, a "doubly resolute" reader sees that the nonsense of which Wittgenstein speaks is a *result* of his theory of how language is connected to the world. We therefore need not worry about how to interpret what came before 6.54 as nonsense in *some sense*. Indeed, what comes before 6.54 is the bulk of his theory, a theory that leads to the conclusion that certain so-called 'propositions' are nonsensical. Hintikka does not examine any of the different interpretations that the "new Wittgensteinians" put forward. His objection is far more sweeping. He argues that the very idea that Wittgenstein's logico-philosophical view is itself nonsense (and with it the "saying/showing" distinction) is a "naïve, not to say simpleminded" reading of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* (p. 10). As a treatise on how the logic of our language is connected to the world, Wittgenstein's book is *not nonsense*. He asks: "What…is the correct reading of Wittgenstein's confession of *Unsinnigkeit*? And where do the not-so-

new New Wittgensteinians go wrong?" (p. 10). They err in thinking that Wittgenstein is confessing that everything that he has said in his treatise is nonsensical independent of what his logico-philosophical theory commits him to. Hintikka says it better: "The New Wittgensteinians are not asking what the criteria are according to which the Tractarian theses are nonsense. Yet the answer is embarrassingly obvious. They are Wittgenstein's own criteria" (p.10). And here the main criterion for determining what is to count as nonsense and what is not is the picture or model theory of language. Whatever fails to picture some portion of reality, whether truly or falsely, is nonsense according to Wittgenstein's theory. Falling under this general criterion are specific attempts to articulate what cannot be pictured or modeled in reality, but are only shown. Such failed attempts to *say* what can only be *shown* result in nonsense. Hence it is not required of an interpreter to rescue Wittgenstein's logico-philosophical view from collapsing into nonsense. One needn't find some *other* meaning of nonsense in order to salvage Wittgenstein's view from coming to nothing. Hintkka's interpretation is, as he says, "doubly resolute". He takes Wittgenstein to be propounding a position about language and the world, where the net result *of* Wittgenstein's position is that we cannot say anything at all about the ultimate semantic relations between language and the world (and much else besides). It is Wittgenstein's theory that leads to the conclusion (in 6.54) that much of what we attempt to say is, strictly speaking, nonsense. But how does he get there if he has been speaking nonsense throughout the *Tractatus*? Hintikka's point is that no such conclusion could be reached unless most of what he says in his treatise makes sense. According to Wittgenstein's thesis "meaningful discourse is restricted to truth-functions

of elementary propositions about the world" (p. 10). In summing up his rejection of the new Wittgensteinian reading of the Tractatus, Hintikka writes:

> Hence what Wittgenstein is saying in 6.54 is nothing more and nothing less than a simple corollary to the main doctrines of the bulk of the *Tractatus*. For a truly perceptive reader, proposition 6.54 does not come as a surprise, for it follows in the most literal sense from what he had *said* earlier in the book. In other words, what statements like 6.54 add up to is not that in the bulk of the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein is expressing something different from the logic-semantical theory that he seems to be expounding. What Wittgesntein is assuming is that semantics is – literally – inexpressible, and that *for this reason* his attempt to express it is *stricto sensu* nonsensical. Thus, there is no contradiction in maintaining both that Wittgenstein's statements in 6.54 have to be understood literally *and* that what he put forward earlier in the book is a logico-semantical theory (pp. 10-11, my emphasis).

Misunderstanding The *Tractatus*: Hintikka on James Conant

Central to both James Conant's and Cora Diamond's "austere" (or "resolute") reading of Wittgenstein is their interpretation of 6.54 as part of the "frame" of the work. Here Wittgenstein is providing us with instructions on how to read the work. Thus, 6.54 ought to be taken as having real meaning, and not as being only apparently intelligible. It is this passage that James Conant thinks has been misunderstood by philosophers ever since Carnap (presumably Diamond thinks so too). Here's Conant's translation of 6.54[144] (which is close to Ogden's):

> My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical, when he has used them – as steps – to climb out through them, on them, over them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it).

[144] From Conant's "Throwing Away the Top of the Ladder", *The Yale Review*, p. 332

Conant thinks that Carnap got this penultimate section totally wrong because the latter failed to see a very important distinction between two notions of "*erläutern*" (to eludicate): According to Conant, corresponding to the two different notions of nonsense, substantial nonsense and austere nonsense, are two different ways of interpreting the term "elucidation", there is the "substantial" conception of elucidation, which goes along with the substantial conception of nonsense, and there is the "austere" conception of elucidation, which is connected to an austere or resolute conception of nonsense. To understand "elucidation" in the substantial way is to think that Wittgenstein is saying that there are things that can only be shown or "elucidated", but cannot be *said*, whereas to take "elucidation" in an "austere" way (which Conant thinks is the way Wittgenstein intended "elucidation" to be taken), is to "show that we are prone to an illusion of meaning something when we mean nothing" ("Elucidation and Nonsense in Frege and Early Wittgenstein", printed in *New Wittgenstein*: 2000, pp. 176-177).

Conant reckons that Carnap mistook Wittgenstein's eludications as substantial instead of austere, and that this is why so many philosophers have thought that Wittgenstein is really trying to show us something (or things) that cannot be said, but that can be shown, instead of seeing that all Wittgenstein is elucidating is that "we are prone to the illusion of meaning something when we mean nothing" (*Ibid*). And Conant thinks that getting clear on this distinction is essential in demonstrating the correct "method" of the *Tractatus* ("Elucidation and Nonsense in Frege and Early Wittgenstein", p. 175).

Now aside from the fact that there is absolutely no evidence that an "austere" conception of "elucidation" is even implied in the *Tractatus*, we will see that such a view does not jibe at all well with Wittgenstein's violent reaction to a paper written by Carnap.

Wittgenstein's reaction to Carnap's ideas, as we shall see, only makes sense if we interpret elucidation in the more usual way – as a way of showing that there are features of language (semantical terms) that cannot be said, but only shown; what Conant call "substantial" elucidations. If indeed the right way to interpret Wittgenstein's term "elucidation" is to give it the "austere" meaning, then Carnap's ideas would have been very wide of the mark, and Wittgenstein would have been angry only because his ideas in the *Tractatus* were so badly mangled, not because he thought (as he did) that Carnap was essentially stealing his ideas. I will come back to this point.

We have already seen that the correct "method" or way of reading the *TLP* is, according to Diamond and Conant, to attribute to it a resolute view of nonsense, and that Wittgenstein is imploring the reader to "understand *him*", not his propositions, and that many have missed this important point. This is all with a view, on Conant's part, to demonstrate that it was all down hill from there: Scores of commentators failed to see that nothing is shown by Wittgenstein's propositions since all the propositions are, strictly speaking, nonsense. Thus, poor Carnap got Wittgenstein so wrong when he thought that Wittgenstein was attempting to elucidate features of language and the world that cannot be said, but only shown. Instead, the right way to take elucidation – Wittgenstein's intended meaning according to Conant – is that we are under the illusion of thinking that we mean something when we really mean nothing. This is what is really being elucidated in the *Tractatus*.

What is so striking about Conant's conviction that Carnap misunderstood Wittgenstein is the evidence that Conant adduces in support of this claim: "Wittgenstein says of Carnap that he failed to understand the passage (6.54), and therefore failed to

understand 'the fundamental conception of the whole book'" (Conant, p 175). Hintikka persuasively demolishes the idea that Carnap radically misinterpreted Wittgenstein's point in the last few lines of the *TLP* by demonstrating that Conant quotes Wittgenstein's letter to Schlick totally "out of context" (Hintikka,[145] p 13). Hintkka makes clear that Wittgenstein is being ironic when he says Carnap did not understand the "fundamental conception of the whole book". If we look at the comment in context this is obvious:

> *You know very well yourself that Carnap is not taking any step beyond me* when he is in favor of the formal and against the 'material mode of speech'; and I cannot imagine that [he] has misunderstood the last few propositions of the *Tractatus* – and hence the basic idea [*Grundgedanken*] of the entire book – so completely [as not to realize it himself] (my emphasis, Hintikka, p 14; quoting Wittgenstein's letter to Schlick; printed in Ranchetti and Nedo: 1983).

What made Wittgenstein so angry was that he thought Carnap was borrowing his ideas without giving Wittgenstein due credit. Carnap sent Wittgenstein a paper on "physicalist language as the universal language of science" (Hintikka, p 13), and, when Wittgenstein read it, he "flew into a rage"(*Ibid.*). Some of the points in the paper – as the excerpt of Wittgenstein's letter to Schlick shows[146] – were prevalent themes of the

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[145] "What Does the Wittgensteinian Inexpressible Express?" (2002)

[146] One of the themes in Carnap's paper that Wittgenstein thinks is pilfered from the *Tractatus* is the distinction between a "formal mode" of speech and a "material mode" of speech. The best explanation of this distinction is seen in another of Carnap's essay's "Empiricism, Semantics, and Ontology" (*Revue Internationale de Philosophie*, 4, 1950, pp. 20-40; reprinted in *New Readings of Philosophical Analysis*; pub. By Feigl, Sellars, and Lehrer, Meredith Corp., New York: 1972). The purpose of a formal mode of speech is to make syntactical and semantical assertions about language. For example, to say "sentences consist of subjects and predicates" is to use the formal mode. For here we are talking *about* the meaning of certain linguistic terms. Now on Carnap's view the formal mode of speech is totally acceptable as a way of defining syntactical rules and semantic terms. The material mode of speech is the metaphysical (and thus illusory) way of putting things. For example, to say "the world consists of objects and their properties", is, to Carnap's way of thinking, nonsense (a point he took from the *Tractatus*). Talk of abstract entities (such as 'objects', 'properties', or 'relations' is unnecessary according to Carnap, since we can just as easily and less confusedly talk about the meanings of linguistic terms like "subjects" and "predicates" without supposing that the world is composed of objects and properties that correspond to such terms. Two important points come out of this. First, almost everything Wittgenstein *says* about language and the world is said in the "material mode" of speech in the *Tractatus*. And it is this mode that Wittgenstein uses to show

Tractatus (prevalent, at least, according to Wittgenstein). Indeed, Carnap's *Logical Syntax of Language*, if it betrays any misunderstanding of Wittgenstein's early work, is, according to Hintikka, a misunderstanding that results from Carnap's taking Wittgenstein to be saying "that we cannot even speak of the syntax of our language" at all and that "Carnap "took Wittgenstein to deny in the *Tractatus* all self-referential use of language, not just to deny semantic self-reference" (Hintikka, p 15). But still the point remains: Carnap took Wittgenstein to be suggesting that there are certain things that we cannot say in our material language, but that can, according to Carnap, be said in a formal or "meta" language. Of course, Wittgenstein would deny that anything can be said in a meta-language—such things can only be shown.

But Carnap did not get Wittgenstein as wrong as Conant claims he did. If Carnap had, the very distinction between an object and a meta-language, would have been viewed by Wittgenstein as plain nonsense, and not a mistake or misunderstanding on the part of Carnap. We might say "for a blunder that is too big." Wittgenstein wrote to Schlick, saying "Carnap is not taking any steps beyond me when he is in favor of the formal mode and against the material mode" (letter previously quoted).

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a great many things, but rejects in the end as "nonsensical": "The world is comprised of facts, not of things" (1.1) is a perfect example. Second, Carnap takes Wittgenstein's point about "showing" to mean that there is another language – a formal mode of speech – that we can use to *say* a great deal about our language. Carnap developed Wittgenstein's point about showing in a direction that Wittgenstein did not want to go, but not because Carnap got Wittgenstein all wrong, but rather because the idea of a formal mode of language does not accomplish anything more than what Wittgenstein took himself to be showing in the *Tractatus*. This is why Wittgenstein says to Schlick: "You know very well yourself that Carnap is not taking a step beyond me when he is in favor of the formal mode and against the material mode of speech." In Wittgenstein's view, Carnap was simply calling Wittgenstein's method of showing a "formal mode of speech". And whether or not Wittgenstein is correct here, it explains why he was so angry. Wittgenstein thought that his work was simply being re-packaged. A final, and very important point, comes out of all this. If Hintikka and I are correct here, then there is even more support for my view that Wittgenstein's propositions constitute an impossible meta-language. The formal mode of speech, which, as we have seen,

It is important here to see that whether or not we agree with Hintikka's version of where and how Carnap misunderstood Wittgenstein, such misunderstandings do not "help Conant in the least" (*Ibid*, p 15). They do not help because Wittgenstein's letter to Schlick demonstrates that Wittgenstein thought that Carnap was (at least minimally) extrapolating the main ideas in the *Tractatus* without formally recognizing Wittgenstein's contributions. And Wittgenstein's main contribution to Carnap's work is, according to Hintikka, the idea that the "formal mode" of language is another way "of emphasizing the inexpressibility of semantics" (*Ibid*).

It is pretty obvious that Conant is, as Hintikka notes, "Resolute(ly) misreading" Wittgenstein (Hintikka, p. 13). The fact that Carnap was developing Wittgenstein's work farther, showing how there could be a pure syntax for the language of science, and that Wittgenstein took this to be a kind of plagiarism, indicates that there was (and is) more to the *Tractatus* than the simple (and oversimplified) aim of unmasking nonsense. On austere or resolute readings no explanation can be given as to why Wittgenstein was so angry with Carnap other than the (false) claim that Carnap genuinely misunderstood Wittgenstein, and was talking plain nonsense.

Showing and the Inexpressible

Hintikka never explicitly connects the "inexpressible" with what Wittgenstein thinks is "shown" by his logico-philosophical theory, but it is pretty clear that the two

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is according to Wittgenstein a re-tooling of what's shown, is a higher order language. And it is a language that Wittgenstein rejects in the end as nonsense.

coincide (at least this is true for Wittgenstein). Hintikka, however, carefully avoids identifying the inexpressible with what is shown, and instead more conservatively puts the inexpressible in the same camp as what cannot be said. We do not get anything positive about showing from Hintikka. Hintkka does, however, provide a laundry list of different areas that Wittgenstein regards as inexpressible: "rules of inference (5.132), truth (in the form of Frege's *the true* 4.4442), logical forms (4.12), tautology (5.1362), and above all the limits of language (preface, paragraphs 3-4)" (p. 10). What Hintikka says about Wittgenstein's showing theme is this: "The *Tractatus* is an exercise in logical semantics, but it does its job by means of showing rather than saying. And, according to Wittgenstein, that very unsayability is a consequence of his logico-semantical theory" (p. 11). Although Hintikka has little to say about what he thinks Wittgenstein shows us regarding Ethics, Value, etc., he makes clear with this last statement that the very notion of "showing" is anything but nonsense, according to Wittgenstein. Indeed, the *consequences of* Wittgenstein's semantic theory are the things that are shown. Hence, to say that "nothing is shown", as the "new Wittgensteinians" do, is completely wrongheaded.

Even on Hintikka's reading of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* as primarily a work in logic and metaphysics, putting to one side the admittedly cryptic remarks about value, the meaning of life, etc., what we see is that a "doubly resolute" interpretation of the work is one that "take[s] the main content of Wittgenstein's book at its obviously intended normal meaning" (p. 11). And this is to say that whatever falls outside the purview of Wittgenstein's logico-semantical view is nonsensical in the technical sense that it cannot be said, and is thus ineffable. But this is a far cry from saying that the above things (in the

laundry list) are shown. We still do not learn anything about "showing" on Hintikka's view. Perhaps this is why he thinks of his interpretation as being "doubly resolute." At minimum, the contrast between what can be said and what cannot be said (what's ineffable) raises the question: How is the ineffable illuminated, clarified, or brought into relief? And it is in wrestling with this question – a question that Hintikka leaves alone – that the notion of showing rears its slippery head.

What I have added to Hintikka's critique of the new Wittgensteinians is a way of characterizing how the propositions of the *TLP* show anything: as a higher-order language, they show or elucidate in virtue of what they 'say', but what they say is said in a higher-order language; a language that does not meet the criterion of Wittgenstein's picture theory, and thus cannot, for this reason, count as meaningful. Furthermore, Hintikka never gives an account of the remarks about ethics, value, and the mystical in the *Tractatus* in the way that I do. Moreover, it is not clear that he can. Wittgenstein's directive and evocative use of language has no place in Hintikka's account because the mystical goes quite beyond the scope of an ineffability theory of semantics. I am able to make better sense of the idea that Wittgenstein's invitational and evocative use of language is supposed to cause us to "feel" the world as a "limited whole."

The "Ineffability of Semantics"

I believe that Hintikka is correct in attributing to Wittgenstein something like an "ineffable" semantic theory. It makes sense of Wittgenstein's general distrust of anything that smacks of the "meta"; any attempt to *say* what must be the case in order for

descriptive language to connect with the world or to articulate the foundations of the logic of our language. If there is any real tension in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* concerning how we are to take the meaning of his propositions leading up to 6.54 it has to do with how we can reconcile a logico-semantic theory that has as its conclusion the "ineffability of semantics". Hintikka puts it well: "In a systematic perspective there nevertheless seems to remain a problem if one maintains that semantics is inexpressible while at the same time one puts forward logico-semantical views" (p. 11). Hintikka does a nice job of showing that this is a problem for Wittgenstein, "not his interpreters'" (p. 11). "Language as the universal medium", the "ineffability of semantics", "lingua universalis", and "a universalist view of logic and language" (all discussed in Hintikka: 1997) are all views that are opposed to the notion of a meta-language. All of these approaches regard the logic of our language – the *Sprachlogik* – as ineffable.

Moreover, we must not forget that the logic of Frege and Russell, which Wittgenstein was steeped in, was a kind of proto-metalanguage; a higher order language about the logic of our language and its connection with the world that Wittgenstein did not consider legitimate because any attempt to say something about its structure required using *Sprachlogik*. It required positing the very same conditions required for contingent propositions to picture the world. In Wittgenstein's mind, there was no way to get outside of these conditions. And of course meta-logic and meta-language had not yet been invented (there was no *theory* of meta-language until Tarski). Russell's theory of types is merely an attempt to distinguish between different types or properties – properties that belong only to objects from properties that belong only to classes of objects – and should

not therefore be thought of as a hierarchy of languages per se. If anything, what Russell puts forward is a hierarchy of properties (see chapter two).

At any rate, the very idea that one could use a higher order language to *say something more* about the relation of any descriptive language to any possible world was anathema to Wittgenstein. Because Wittgenstein did not think that we could get outside language and the world with a higher order language he is committed to something like an ineffability view of semantics. But of course Wittgenstein's theory is a semantic 'theory'. The picture theory 'says' that the nature of contingent propositions is that they picture reality in virtue of a shared logical form. But how can any theory that is, by its own lights ineffable, say or show anything about the ultimate connection between language and the world? If all semantic theories are ineffable, and any attempt to articulate them nonsensical, then what is the status of Wittgenstein's own semantic theory? This is not as big a problem as it appears.

The Verifiability Criterion of Meaning and Wittgenstein's Semantic Theory: A *Reductio Ad Absurdum* of Austere Interpretations of the *Tractatus*

No one has ever argued that the logical positivists' verifiability criterion of meaning is plain nonsense, even if it does not satisfy itself. No one has argued that the theory is outright nonsense or that it is unintelligible: Yet just such a move is made by those who argue that Wittgenstein's propositions are out and out nonsense.

The 'propositions' of the *TLP* that are used to build the picture theory do not meet the criterion of the theory, and are thus nonsense if the scope of the theory is unlimited. Wittgenstein's picture theory of meaning does not satisfy itself. And this is why

Wittgenstein says that those who "understand me eventually recognizes [that my propositions] are nonsensical."(6.54)

What I want to suggest is that the 'propositions' of the *TLP*, just like the 'propositions' that express the verifiability criterion of meaning, are not nonsense in a *larger* sense. Moreover, if we are prepared to say that Wittgenstein's pseudo-propositions are plain nonsense, then we are committed to saying the same thing about the verifiability criterion of meaning as well. But it is a mistake to say of the verifiability criterion of meaning that it is out and out nonsense. Thus, Wittgenstein's picture theory of meaning is not out and out nonsense.

The verifiability criterion of meaning goes as follows: meaningful propositions are ones that are either analytic (definitions, etc.) or synthetic (empirical propositions). The former are necessarily true by definition or logic or both; for example, in a sentence such as "all bachelors are unmarried men" we need only understand the meanings of the terms to determine that it is necessarily true. Empirical propositions, on the other hand, are meaningful because we could say what would need to be the case in order for them to be true. We can say what *would* in principle verify them. We could likewise say what would falsify them. For example, the proposition "Mice live on the moon", thought obviously false, is meaningful because we can say what need to be the case to make it true.

Now, certain "metaphysical propositions" fail the verifiability test of meaning in that they are not true by definition nor can we say under what conditions such propositions would be true—we do not know what would verify them. Similarly, we cannot say what would falsify them. For example, the 'proposition' "God is Love" is a

piece of nonsense on this view for it is neither true by definition nor can we say what would verify (or falsify) it.

But then it might be argued that the very propositions that purportedly express the verifiability criterion of meaning are nonsense or meaningless (this is different from saying that it is not true or absurd, which is plausible): "Propositions are meaningful either because (1) they are true by definition, and so necessarily true, or because (2) we can state what would need to be the case in order for them to be true". Now if we ask about this very criterion: "Is it true by definition"? The answer is "no." If we ask of this proposition: "Can we in principle state the conditions that what would make it true – that is, the conditions in the world that would verify it"? Again the answer is "no." This *shows* that the verifiability criterion of meaning does not satisfy itself and is thus ultimately rendered false or, at best, untrue. The criterion is self-defeating, but it is not meaningless.

Indeed, if we take the verifiability criterion of meaning to be programmatic and forward looking, we can perfectly well see how it is to be applied to some specified set of propositions *because* we understand it! We need not apply the criterion to the theory itself; we can limit its scope. If we do apply the theory recursively, we end up saying something self-defeating, but not nonsensical in a larger sense. We can perfectly well see how the theory is to be applied. The logical positivists might have said that after one *understands* how to apply the verifiability theory of meaning, the view itself can be discarded. Indeed, they might have gone farther by applying the theory unrestrictedly, dismissing it in the end as nonsense (as Wittgenstein does in the penultimate sentences of the *Tractatus*). But whether the criterion is or is not applied to itself, we are *not in the position* of having to invent some way to *find* the criterion intelligible.

There are a host of problems with the verifiability criterion of meaning, but I do not think that inventing a way to make it intelligible to us is one of them. We might say, following Wittgenstein, albeit in a direction that he wouldn't want to go, that what the verifiability criterion "shows" cannot be stated. (Again, it matters little whether one thinks what it shows is correct or not.) The main point I am trying to make is that it is a mistake to conclude that the verifiability test of meaning, notwithstanding the fact that it does not satisfy itself, is itself a piece of *plain nonsense*. Of course, if we do apply it to itself the theory does fail to be meaningful *by* its own criterion. But this does not mean that the criterion itself does not *show* us something important. We can still see and appreciate what it is trying to say even if we think that the theory itself is false, or without meaning if the scope of its application is unrestricted. If the theory was meaningless in some larger sense, then the objection that it fails its own test could not even be understood by anyone!

I think that a similar mistake is going on when philosophers believe that it is nigh impossible to reconcile what Wittgenstein says at 6.54 with everything (that is, his logico-semantical view) that comes before it. For them, the entire foundation of the book has crumbled underneath them, and they are left with a vertiginous feeling that whatever meaning they thought they gleaned from his work is now lost. To remedy this they go to great lengths to define "elucidations" as propositions that only seem to have meaning – but that are really disguised bits of plain nonsense (like "piggly wiggle tiggle"). On my view "elucidations" are simply those higher-order propositions (or invitations to see and feel the entire world differently) that direct us to those features of language and the world that cannot be "said" because they are not descriptions of states of affairs. They are thus

not propositions proper (contingent propositions) whose business is to describe the ways in which the world might be. Hence, all the 'propositions' of the *Tractatus* are, in this sense, "elucidations" on my view. The "new" Wittgensteinians (James Connant especially) and Michael Hodges in his book *Transcendence and Wittgenstein's Tractatus* (1990) agonize over what sense is to be attributed to Wittgenstein's 'propositions' (or "elucidations") because they apply Wittgenstein's own criterion of what makes a proposition meaningful (that it must be a picture of reality) to Wittgenstein's picture theory itself, and then conclude that his propositions must be, in the end, genuine nonsense that only appears to be meaningful. They fail to see that propositions can be meaningful in a larger sense than that circumscribed by Wittgenstein's picture theory of meaning. Such contortions are not, on my reading, necessary. Wittgenstein himself was well aware of the fact that his account of what made propositions meaningful, if applied to the 'propositions' of his work, would show them to be nonsensical – that's what 6.54 means in part! But this does not mean that his 'propositions' are nonsense *simpliciter*.

My interpretation makes much more sense than the view that Wittgenstein is only showing us that we (philosophers) speak disguised nonsense, and that Wittgenstein must speak nonsense himself in order to help us to see that this is what philosophers do, and need to stop doing it. This makes Wittgenstein's project so pointless. James conant, for example, attributes this paltry task as the main desideratum of Wittgenstein's work (both early and late).

Throwing Away the Ladder, but Keeping the Perspective

What I am suggesting is that what we say about the verifiability criterion of meaning we can say about Wittgenstein's picture theory of language: that, if applied to itself, it is self-defeating, absurd, or certainly false. But just as we do not say (and should not say) that the verifiability criterion is meaningless or unintelligible, even when it is applied to itself, so too we need not worry over how to save Wittgenstein's propositions from devolving into genuine nonsense. Both the verifiability criterion of meaning and Wittgenstein's picture theory fail to meet their own criterion. But Wittgenstein's picture theory of meaning, like the verifiability theory of meaning, is intelligible. Wittgenstein's propositions are not pictures of states of affairs in the world. But this does not mean that they are disguised nonsense or that he is engaging his reader in imaginative nonsense. Rather, the lesson we should draw is that Wittgenstein's 'propositions' are non-sense if we grant his picture theory. Wittgenstein might have said that his propositions, once one has "climbed over them", are nonsense *because they fail to meet his criterion of what is to count as a meaningful proposition.* And although Wittgenstein was not as direct as this, it is implied by his dismissal of his propositions as nonsense. At any rate, we are free to reject his picture theory of meaning and so reject that meaningful discourse is limited to propositions that depict possible situations in the world or accept his picture theory and thereby regard what he says as nonsense given that it does not satisfy itself. In either case we need not conclude that his picture theory is unintelligible nonsense.

Thus, both the verifiability criterion of meaning and Wittgenstein's picture theory of meaning are reduced to absurdity by their own criterion of meaning. But on the other

hand, and far more importantly, it would seem to require a very deliberate obtuseness to claim that the verifiability criterion of meaning is itself meaningless in the sense that we cannot understand it. It is not a piece of disguised nonsense. And no philosopher that I am aware of has argued that it is. Even if we think, as most philosophers now do, that the verifiability test of meaning is false or just plain wrong-headed, it is a mistake to think that it does not show us how to set up a test for determining what counts as a meaningful proposition. Yet this is just what the new Wittgensteinians do with early Wittgenstein: "How can we possibly understand Wittgenstein given that he dismisses everything he has said in his book as 'nonsense'?" They then set themselves the task of figuring out how something can be pure nonsense but seem intelligible! On my view this simply is not necessary.

Indeed, if we take Wittgenstein's propositions at face value – as higher-order propositions about language and the world – we can at once see that they do not meet the conditions of his picture theory of meaning. But we can still follow his thinking without attributing to him a pretend, imaginary meaning: without attributing to him what Diamond sometimes calls a "transitional" language (*The Realistic Spirit*: 1991). We can accommodate the idea that the 'propositions' in the *Tractatus* elucidate what Wittgenstein took to be the ultimate nature of the language-world relation. This approach is far less bizarre than supposing that all his talk about "simples", "names", "states of affairs", and "propositions"...that all of it is carefully designed to get us to see that Wittgenstein is disguising nonsense as sense so that we can, in the end, throw away his work with the conviction that philosophy only ever unmasks nonsense. On my view we throw away the ladder, but not the view that the arduous climb affords us.

If I am correct in thinking that Wittgenstein's view of both semantics and value requires a transcendental perspective – quite literally a meta-view – then the perspective itself is impossible to articulate given his picture theory, and so is in this sense nonsensical for it fails to satisfy itself. (Of course, if the picture theory is false, then such a view might not be impossible to articulate.) However, on my view such a perspective is shown by the 'propositions' of the *Tractatus*. If we interpret Wittgenstein as propounding a transcendental perspective on how language connects with the world we do have a kind of meta-view. It is a meta-view that shows not only the ultimate nature of the language-world relation, but it explains why he thought that the logic of our language cannot be "said", and is instead made manifest by his higher-order "elucidations."

Before tying the logical and the ethical aspects of the transcendental perspective together, I would like to finish with just a bit more evidence against austere readings.

P.M.S. Hacker: The Incoherence of Resolute Readings

Hacker amasses so much evidence against resolute readings that even summarizing it would take a chapter.[147] Here I will focus mainly on why he regards such readings of the text as basically incoherent. Here the evidence he gives is what he calls "internal" in that he doesn't look at what Wittgenstein or others have said *about* the text, but sticks to what's in the book. (Although he has a whole section of "external" evidence as well).

[147] In his excellent paper "Was He Trying to Whistle it?" Published in *New Wittgenstein* (2000), edited by A. Crary and R. Read

Hacker argues that Wittgenstein's objections against Frege and Russell, as well as Wittgenstein's conception of how philosophy should be carried on, illustrate the very serious problems faced by resolute or austere readings. I will confine my discussion to these two points as I have already spent some time (chapter two) explaining what Wittgenstein took to be mistaken in Russell's type theory, and have discussed briefly the nature of philosophy in the *Tractatus*. Hacker's points here further support my view.

Hacker reminds us that one of Wittgenstein's important insights: "the logical constants do not represent" (4.0312). Thus, there are no "logical objects" (Hacker, p 368). As Hacker rightly points out, this is Wittgenstein's "*Grundgedanke*" (*Ibid.*). This fundamental idea casts a pretty wide net: there are not objects corresponding to Frege's "true" and "false", Russell is mistaken in thinking that logic describes "the most general constituents of the universe", and both "Frege's and Russell's 'primitive signs of logic' are not primitive signs at all (5.43) and can be dispensed with in the T/F notation" (pp 368-369).[148] Hacker rightly notes that such objections to the views of Frege and Russell (whatever their final merit) are made by what Wittgenstein *says*. Hacker points out that "Diamond and Conant" (p 369) would undoubtedly urge that Wittgenstein's 'claims' here

[148] Hacker refers to the wrong number here. At 5.42 Wittgenstein talks about "primitive signs", not at 5.43. (At 5.43 Wittgenstein talks about "propositions of logic.") At any rate, according to Hacker's interpretation of 5.42 the truth table method allows us to see that the "logical constants" do not refer to anything; they are not names or "primitive symbols" on this view, for they are all "interdefineable" (5.42), and thus do not refer to "relations" (like "right and left" *Ibid.*) at all. For example, '~v' has the same truth conditions as '->',and that it does can be seen by inspecting truth table definitions for each. The logical equivalence of the signs is *shown*, and there is no need to suppose that 'v' or '->' refers to anything like a relation (or a logical object more generally) I think Hacker's interpretation is basically correct. Incidentally, at 5.44 Wittgenstein writes: "truth functions are not material functions". And by this I take him to mean that there is nothing in the world that the logical operators refer to. Witness: "the proposition ~~p is not *about* negation, as if negation were an *object*" (my emphasis, 5.44). This lends more support to Hacker's view that truth tables are a way for Wittgenstein to show what the logical operators mean without supposing that the symbols are "primitive signs". This is not the only role played by truth tables; they *show* that the

are to be discarded as nonsense. On my view we can discard what he *says* as nonsense, but only in a very technical sense (viz., Wittgenstein's propositions do not picture facts in the world) and only at the end of the work, once we have grasped the points that Wittgenstein is making with his remarks. Hacker sums up Wittgenstein's "fundamental idea" and why it is so implausible to regard what he 'says' about it as "plain nonsense": "All of [Wittgenstein's remarks on this central idea] involve formal concepts, and by the lights of the *Tractatus* they are illegitimate in as much as they try to say something that can only be shown. Is it really credible that the author of the *Tractatus* regarded these hard won insights into the nature of logic as 'plain nonsense'?" (p 369) The answer can only be a resounding "no."

Finally, Hacker takes issue with Diamond's and Conant's designating certain propositions of the work – the "frame" (the preface, 6.54, and 7) – as meaningful, and all the rest being nonsense because certain of the 'ideas' in the body of the book are very similar to the ideas in the frame of the text. For example, Hacker points out that 4.112 (which deals with the nature of philosophy as the "clarification" of our thoughts) is close in meaning to the point made in 6.53, but Diamond says that 4.112 is "transitional"[149] language and should not be read as part of the "frame". But surely if points made in the "frame" are similar to some of the points made in the body of the text, there can be no good reason to make such a distinction. There seems to be a flagrant inconsistency in

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propositions of logic do not refer to fundamental truths about the world, but instead that they are senseless (5.43).

[149] By "transitional" language Diamond seems to mean that the language in question is self-consciously disguised nonsense. We imagine that when Wittgenstein says "a philosophical work consists essentially of elucidations" or that "philosophy does not result in 'philosophical propositions', but rather in the clarification of propositions" (4.112), that what he has said makes sense; but, since it is not part of the "frame" of the book, 4.112 is disguised nonsense, and not to be taken at face value.

saying that the frame instructs the reader on the methodology of the work when some of the same points on the method of reading the work appear in the body of the text too! The choice of what is to count as frame and what is to be excluded appears rather arbitrary.

Lastly, no real explanation is given as to why we should not take seriously Wittgenstein's remark about the "mystical" or the "unsayable" "manifesting itself" (6.522). Wittgenstein may be completely wrong here, but that is different from saying that what he says is ultimately plain nonsense that he wants to see unmasked.

Both Hacker and the Hintikkas do a masterful job of demonstrating the very serious flaws that any austere interpretation must face. The Hintikkas make a strong case for reading Wittgenstein as putting forward an ineffability theory of semantics and Hacker does a nice job of proving that Wittgenstein's saying/showing distinction is anything but nonsense. Indeed, Hacker's suggestion that Wittgenstein's propositions are attempts to say what can only be shown fits well with my view that the function of language in the *Tractatus* is of a higher-order, and that Wittgenstein's assertions are the vehicle for showing certain features of the language-world relation.

Unfortunately, they do not offer any kind of analysis as to what Wittgenstein might be getting at with his remarks about ethics and value, and how a treatise on what's shown about language and the world manifests the "mystical" (6.522) in the world.

Although it is true that Hacker traces Schopenhauer's influence on Wittgenstein's remarks about timelessness, solipsism, and the identity of ethics with aesthetics in the early *Notebooks (1914-1916)* and the *Tractatus*,[150] he never connects this together in a

[150] Hacker's *Insight and Illusion* (1972), pp. 71-76

way that sheds light on why Wittgenstein regarded his project as ushering in the mystical or why the *Tractatus* is an "ethical deed."

And Jaakko Hintikka, as we have already seen, likens Wittgenstein's ethical point to a Krausian silence. And perhaps they are right to leave this alone for fear of uttering the unutterable.

Still, I believe that I have not transgressed the bounds of what can be uttered by arguing that the *Tractatus* expresses a transcendental perspective with respect to language and the world that, according to Wittgenstein, carries with it an aesthetico-ethical aspect.

CONCLUSION

In chapter one I argued that the roots of Wittgenstein's saying/showing distinction most likely began with the influence of Karl Kraus, and, to a lesser extent, Leo Tolstoy. Kraus was preoccupied with keeping factual language distinct from ethics, value, or, as Wittgenstein would say, anything "higher" (6.42). Indeed, Kraus made his ethical points not by talking, but simply by placing the words of another person in the right context. The main point here is that Kraus used words (the words of others) to gesture towards what he regarded as the right way to see some issue, and never *said* what constituted the right perspective, ethically speaking.

On my view, Wittgenstein turned this Krausian practice, which was at best piecemeal, into a philosophical method that logically demanded silence about anything higher (ethics and value). Wittgenstein attempted to forge a vision of representational language that was stripped of all adornment so that the value of the world would not be lost in all the "gassing". He wanted a way to safeguard value from the encroachment of the world of facts.

Wittgenstein's saturation in Kraus's approach to indirectly communicating what's significant or important made him sensitive to the idea that value could be shown. Wittgenstein took it a step farther by attempting to show that the nature of descriptive language is such that anything of value is forever shrouded in mystery: in *Das Mystische*.

I also argued that Tolstoy's *A Confession*, insofar as it shows how nothing that we could ever say could be the answer to the meaning of life and the world, lends support to

the idea that there is value in reaching the limit of what can and cannot be expressed in language. For in seeing the limit, we also see that the felt "problem" of life dissolves when we stop looking for anything in the world to 'answer' this problem.

In chapter two I argued that Wittgenstein's perspective on the logic of any descriptive language is a perspective that transcends the world of facts and the very language that we use to represent the facts. Indeed, his propositions do not themselves picture facts in the world, but are instead metalinguistic assertions that show the relation between any representational language and its connection to any world from a standpoint that is at the very limit of the world and language. Such a perspective cannot be articulated with the ordinary propositions of natural science, and so cannot count as having sense. But for all that Wittgenstein's metalinguistic assertions are intelligible; we can see what he is doing with them. This is similar to Jaakko and Merrill Hintikka's views that semantics is, for Wittgenstein, ineffable. Much, then, is shown with Wittgenstein's higher-order propositions: e.g., that the logical constants do not refer to abstract entities, the details of the picture theory of meaning, and even the nature of the proposition. Ultimately, however, I have been at great pains to demonstrate that the metalingusitic assertions of the *Tractatus* help to pave the way for out seeing the world *sub specie aeternitatis*.

In chapter three I showed how Schopenhauer's influence shed light on the aesthetico-ethical perspective of Wittgenstein's perspective by comparing and contrasting Schopenhauer's view of the "pure" and "purely knowing subject" with Wittgenstein's talk about a "metaphysical" and "willing subject" being at the limit of the world. We discovered that Schopenhauer's purely subject of knowing is detached from will in the

world, and that the aesthetic way of seeing something is to see it from a disinterested perspective. We also saw that Wittgenstein's perspective has a timelessness about it that is closely linked to Schopenhauer's characterization of timelessness in aesthetic contemplation. I then suggested that perhaps Wittgenstein's willing subject (which he says is an "attitude to the world") is best interpreted as a detached view of the world. Finally, I argued that Wittgenstein need not be taken as suggesting that there is some sort of noumenal subject that stands at the limit of the world, and that we should instead take Wittgenstein's talk about a willing subject as a dramatic way to express an attitude toward the world as a "limited whole."

In part (b) of chapter three we saw that Wittgenstein does have a way to express ethical claims in the world, but that all such claims can only express a relative value. Ethical judgments can be said or represented because they are ultimately reducible to facts in the world. Here I argued that Philippa Foot's view of moral claims as disguised hypothetical imperatives helps to make sense of how ethics in the world can be said on Wittgenstein's view. Her view also helps to show why there cannot be claims of absolute value made about facts in the world, for there can be no logical compulsion as to why this or that fact is good absolutely.

In chapter four I argued that Wittgenstein's remarks about ethics, value, and *Das Mystische* – his propositions in the "sixes" – are best thought of as directives whose main purpose is to draw our attention to the world as a whole. I also fleshed out the identity of ethics and aesthetics as an identity of perspective alone. This enabled me to deal with commentators who wrongly assume that ethics is fundamentally about actions in the world whereas aesthetics is essentially about our seeing something in the world. Instead,

what Wittgenstein offers us is an aesthetico-ethical perspective on the world. This identity of perspectives gives us a way to handle those commentators (Collinson for example) who see an unbridgeable gap between absolute value and our actions in the world. For on my view ethics is not about our actions in the world according to Wittgenstein. Finally, I argued that the closest we can come to characterizing what it means to say "there is indeed the mystical" and that it "makes itself manifest" or "shows itself" (6.522) is to examine Wittgenstein's characterizations of certain mystical experiences, such as "feeling absolutely safe" or "wondering at the existence of the world." I suggested that such experiences are the result of our coming to see the world "*sub specie aeterni*", and are not simply or only psychological facts about us on Wittgenstein's view.

Finally, in chapter five I did my best to decimate austere readings of the *Tractatus* by arguing that it is wildly implausible to regard the fundamental tenet of Wittgenstein's work – that what can be shown cannot be said – as a bit of plain, albeit disguised, nonsense. Indeed, I have argued that a great many things are shown by Wittgenstein's metalinguistic assertions. For example, the main problem with Russell's theory of types, the building of his picture theory of meaning, and the nature of logical form are all shown by Wittgenstein's metalinguistic assertions. The 'propositions' dealing with value and ethics can be taken as an evocative and directive use of language, not as metalinguistic assertions, as I have already suggested. Thus, we need not attribute to Wittgenstein the bizarre view that the only way to make sense of his pseudo-propositions is to read them as having sense in only an "imaginative" way or as a "transitional" language that is, in the end, plain nonsense. I also argued that to interpret Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* as doing

nothing more than drawing the line between sense and nonsense is to seriously impoverish his work.

The *Tractatus* is an "ethical deed" because it brings us to a transcendental perspective on the world. This perspective has an aesthetico-ethical aspect to it that Wittgenstein thought permits us to feel the world as a limited whole. In the final analysis, the ethical message or point of the *Tractatus* can only be appreciated from the limit of the world and thus the limit of language. From such a vista we are invited to see that the miracle is that the world exists – *that* there is a world is the mystical (6.44). It is our experience *of* the world "as a limited whole" or "*sub specie aeternitatis*" that is, in the end, "the mystical."

There are, to be sure, more than a few unresolved issues in my work. But I think that the chief among them is that there can be no logical entailment between seeing the world as a limited whole and "feeling" it as such. Put another way, it is simply not the case that the world *must* be felt as having absolute value as a result of the transcendental perspective on language and the world. Nor do I think that there is any kind of causal connection between seeing the world from this perspective *and* our feeling it in the peculiar way characterized by Wittgenstein.

At the end of the day, the most that can be said about the transcendental perspective with respect to language and the world 'leading to' the aesthetico-ethical apprehension of it is this: It was true for Wittgenstein and so it might well be true for others. Perhaps this is why Wittgenstein is so cautious in his preface: "This book will perhaps only be understood by those who have themselves already thought the thoughts

which are expressed in it – or similar thoughts. It is therefore not a textbook. Its object would be attained if it afforded pleasure to one who read it with understanding" (p. 27).

We can better understand Wittgenstein's reservations about getting his message across if we take him to be carrying a message that cannot be communicated via abstract, conceptual knowledge, but instead interpret him as gesturing towards a view of the world that is more direct, immediate, and quite mystical. Am I one of the few that has read the *Tractatus* with "understanding" according to Wittgenstein? I have no idea. But I am sure that this work systematically connects Wittgenstein's thoughts on the limits of language and the world with the mystical in a way that no other work has been able to do.

Finally, as far what research projects my dissertation has engendered, I think further examination of Schopenhauer's influence on Wittgenstein is worth pursuing. Specifically, I think that one could make a pretty strong case that Wittgenstein is neither a realist nor an anti-realist, but a transcendental idealist. I will just hint at how I think such a story could be told.

The *Tractatus* and Transcendental Idealism

Given that Wittgenstein never bothered too much about letting his readers know where he got certain ideas, the fact that he never discusses transcendental idealism shouldn't surprise us: "Indeed what I have here written makes no claim to novelty in points of detail; and therefore I give no sources, because it is indifferent to me whether what I have thought has already been thought before me by another" (*TLP*, preface, p. 27). What is "transcendental idealism"?

Transcendental idealism is much maligned in the history of philosophy. It is opposed to realism in a very particular way, and *claims* not to deny empirical reality at all. For Schopenhauer there exists a dualism of subject and object: the one being correlative of the other. There is both the knower and the known: we cannot possibly make any sense of the one without the other. Whatever can be known is representation, and presupposes a knower. A world of representation has as a precondition a knower and a knower presupposes something known; i.e., a world of representation. The one vanishes with the other. It makes no sense, on Schopenhauer's view, to suppose that there is any *positive notion* of objects or an objective world that is independent of the phenomenal world or the world of representation. He holds that "we must absolutely deny to the dogmatist the reality of the external world, when he declares this to be its *independence* from the subject" (*WWR*, Vol. I., p.15, my emphasis). Indeed, the "external world" just is the world of representation. Transcendental idealism, then, is quite simply the view that "the whole world of objects is and remains representation, and is for this reason wholly and for ever conditioned by the subject; in other words, it has transcendental ideality" (Ibid, p. 15). Magee puts it more perspicuously when he writes: "This whole world of experience is perfectly real, just as real as it presents itself as being, but it is unconceptualizable in any terms other than such as presuppose the existence of a subject. This is, in a nutshell, what transcendental idealism *means*" (*The Philosophy of Schopenhauer*, p. 116).[151]

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[151] Interestingly, in his fascinating book *World and Life as One: Ethics and Ontology in Wittgenstein's Early Thought* (2002), Martin Stokhof argues that Wittgenstein's position in the *Tractatus* requires that "it be read in a distinctly nonrealistic way" (p.2). But when he explains what he means by this it is apparent that he, too, has failed to appreciate that if we interpret Wittgenstein's theory of language as falling within the framework of transcendental idealism, then there is nothing anti-realist about it. This is what Stokhof

I suspect that Wittgenstein's ontological commitments are closer to transcendental idealism than to realism. This Schopenhauerian influence shows up in his picture theory of meaning and is hinted at in 5.4711: "To give the essence of proposition means to give the essence of all description, therefore the essence of the world". Here it is clear that it is Wittgenstein's picture theory – the "essence of all description" – that *determines* the "essence of the world", not the other way round. We could think of the "essence of description" as the essence of *representation* or depiction. What's clear is that it is the logic of our language that determines the nature of the world *qua* pictured. And this just is the "world as representation." There is no other world that we can think of or talk about. Recall that Wittgenstein takes himself to be drawing a limit to what can be "expressed" in language, which amounts to drawing a limit to what can be thought as well. He does not frame this limit in terms of what we can know or understand, like Schopenhauer does. For Wittgenstein the logic of our language shows us how the world *must be* represented, not how it is in itself.

Ultimately, Wittgenstein's interest in ontology extends only to his view of how language is able to picture the world: "The proposition is a picture of reality. The proposition is a model of the reality as we think it is" (4.01). Such remarks strongly

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says: "[Wittgenstein's]...ontology is not intended as a theory of the fundamental components and structures of reality per se, but rather as a description of the structure of reality that is *presupposed by language and thought*. It does not characterize reality as it *ultimately is*, but rather how reality *appears* in the medium of human language and thought. To put it differently, the *Tractatus* deals with reality so far as it can be *accessed by the discursive mind*" (my emphasis, p. 2). Implicit in his characterization of Wittgenstein's project is the dichotomy of the way the world *really* is and the way it presents itself to a "discursive mind". This is just what the transcendental idealist rejects. There is no other way to represent reality other than through our language. Hence, we see naïve dogmatic realism rearing its head. Now if we attribute to Wittgenstein something like transcendental idealism, we can claim that his ontology is determined by his theory of language without getting embroiled in the debate over whether Wittgenstein's theory is best read as an example of realism or anti-realism. What I am suggesting here is simply that one needn't suppose that the world as representation (as "pictured") is something different from the *real* world.

suggest that Wittgenstein's model theory of meaning is what determines the existence of *objects* or *simples*, not the other way round. He begins with the nature of the meaningful proposition and how it reaches out to picture the world. How is it that language can represent facts in the world? This is the question before his mind; not, what are the ultimate constituents of reality *as such*? Hence, we needn't bother about the question of whether or not Wittgenstein's approach is realist *or* antirealist.[152] Transcendental idealism allows Wittgenstein to give an account of how language connects with the world without embroiling us in debates over what the nature of his "objects" or "simples" *are*, independent of the world as pictured.

[152] Just as Pears does in his *False Prison*, vol. I. In fact, he argues that Wittgenstein should be read as a realist regarding Wittgenstein's mysterious "simples". If this were true, one would think that Wittgenstein would have taken more care to discover what these material simples in fact are. But he seems to regard the question as to the ultimate nature of simples as almost irrelevant. My suggestion is that Pears' approach is wrongheaded because it presupposes the realism vs. antirealism controversy. If we interpret Wittgenstein as working within the framework of transcendental idealism, the issue does not come up. Unless, of course, one wants to say that my view is antirealist. My interpretation is anti-realist in this sense: Wittgenstein does not set out to discover what the ultimate constituents of the world are prior to developing his semantic theory. He does not seek to discover what simples in *fact* are, and then work out his picture theory to accommodate his ontology, but rather begins with his picture theory of meaning and then posits the existence of simples as logical objects that are necessary for sense to be determinate. Hence, one could say that my view is anti-realist only in the sense that it makes no sense to talk about the existence of simples independent of Wittgenstein's theory of meaning. On the other hand, as logical objects they are required for any language to be able to say anything at all about the world. So in the sense that Wittgenstein is giving us an a priori condition for any language to be able to represent any world, the simples are part of Wittgenstein's ontology. They are logical objects that must be presupposed in order for reality (which is not *independent* of Wittgenstein's picture theory) to be pictured or represented at all. It is my hope that interpreting Wittgenstein as a transcendental idealist avoids the worry over whether or not his early work is realist or (following Diamond, Conant, and Goldfarb) anti-realist.

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