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Wittgenstein's Notion of Ethics

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Contents

Abstract

Wittgenstein's Notion of Ethics

The aim of this paper is to clarify Wittgenstein's notion of ethics, and explain how it can contribute to the understanding of the continuity of his philosophy. The broad consensus on Wittgenstein's work divides it into an early and later period; however, few have undertaken the challenge of finding the linking thread between them. Of those who have, results have in general led to prioritising the original aspects of one in favour of the other. The premise of this study is that the ethical purpose of Wittgenstein's philosophy remained essentially the same throughout his life. This means that interpretation of his work (from the *Notebooks 1914 – 1916* to *On Certainty*) through the lens of his notion of ethics, may offer a synoptic, yet non-discriminatory view of his writings. If this is correct, it should lead to a fresh reading of Wittgenstein's philosophy that avoids postulating in advance an internal discord in his thoughts and that prioritises its conception as coherent in its development. Finally, it also underscores Wittgenstein's will in contributing to the pursuit of the 'good' life.

Keywords: Wittgenstein, Ethics, Language, Will, Therapy

Resumo

A Noção de Ética em Wittgenstein

O objetivo deste ensaio é esclarecer a noção de ética em Wittgenstein e como esta pode contribuir a traçar uma continuidade na sua filosofia. Apesar de poucos terem aceito o desafio de determinar um fio condutor os ligando, o consenso geral acerca da obra do Wittgenstein o divide em um primeiro e segundo período. Dos que o aceitaram, seus resultados levaram majoritariamente a ofuscar aspectos originais de um à custa do outro. A premissa do nosso inquérito é que a finalidade ética da filosofia de Wittgenstein permaneceu essencialmente a mesma ao longo da sua vida, e que, por isso, interpretar a sua obra (dos *Cadernos 1914 – 1916* ao *Da Certeza*) através da lente da sua noção de ética, pode oferecer uma visão sinóptica e não-discriminatória dos seus textos. Caso estivermos certos, uma contribuição original será feita à leitura da sua filosofia. Uma leitura que evitaria postular antecipadamente uma discórdia interna ao seu pensar, priorizando o esforço de concebê-lo como coerente em seu desenvolvimento, e que, enfim, realçaria a vontade do nosso filosofo em contribuir à busca da boa vida.

Palavras-chave: Wittgenstein, Ética, Linguagem, Vontade, Terapia

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List of Abbreviations

NB	WITTGENSTEIN, L. (1961). *Notebooks 1914–1916* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
NL	WITTGENSTEIN, L. (1961). Notes on Logic. In G. H. von Wright & G. E. M. Anscombe (Eds.), *Notebooks 1914-1916* (pp. 93–107). Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
T	WITTGENSTEIN, L. (2016). *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Retrieved from http://people.umass.edu/klement/tlp/
LLF	WITTGENSTEIN, L. (1996). Letters to Ludwig von Ficker. In C. G.Luckhardt (Ed.), *Wittgenstein Sources and Perspectives* (pp. 82–98). Bristol: Thoemmes Press.
WVC	WAISMANN, F. (1979). *Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
LE	WITTGENSTEIN, L. (1965). Wittgenstein's Lecture on Ethics. *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 74, No. 1, 3–26.
GB	WITTGENSTEIN, L. (1993). Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough. In J. Klagge, & A. Nordmann (Eds.), *Philosophical Occasions* (pp. 118–155). Indianopolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company.
PR	WITTGENSTEIN, L. (1975). *Philosophical Remarks*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
PG	WITTGENSTEIN, L. (1974). *Philosophical Grammar*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
WL30-32	WITTGENSTEIN, L. (1982). *Wittgenstein's Lectures Cambridge, 1930–1932*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
WL30-33	WITTGENSTEIN, L. (1993). Wittgenstein's Lectures in 1930–33. In J. Klagge, & A. Nordmann (Eds.), *Philosophical Occasions* (pp. 46–114). Indianopolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company.
PHI	Wittgenstein, L. (1993). Philosophy, Sections 86–93 (pp. 405–435) of the so-called "Big Typescript" (Catalog Number 213). In J. Klagge & A. Nordmann (Eds.), *Philosophical Occasions* (pp. 160–199). Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company.
WL32-35	WITTGENSTEIN, L. (1979). *Wittgenstein's Lectures, Cambridge, 1932–1935*. New York: Prometheus Books.
BB	WITTGENSTEIN, L. (1958). *The Blue and Brown Books* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

NFL WITTGENSTEIN, L. (1993). Notes for Lectures on “Private Experience” and “Sense Data”. In J. Klagge, & A. Nordmann (Eds.), *Philosophical Occasions* (pp. 202–288). Indianopolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company.

LSD WITTGENSTEIN, L. (1993). The Language of Sense Data and Private Experience. In J. Klagge, & A. Nordmann (Eds.), *Philosophical Occasions* (pp. 290–367). Indianopolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company.

LC WITTGENSTEIN, L. (1967). *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology, and Religious Belief*. California: University of California Press.

CE WITTGENSTEIN, L. (1993). Cause and Effect: Intuitive Awareness. In J. Klagge, & A. Nordmann (Eds.), *Philosophical Occasions* (pp. 370–426). Indianopolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company

LFW WITTGENSTEIN, L. (1993). Lectures on Freedom of the Will. In J. Klagge, & A. Nordmann (Eds.), *Philosophical Occasions* (pp. 429–444). Indianopolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company.

PI WITTGENSTEIN, L. (1953). *Philosophical Investigations* (4th ed.). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

RPP I WITTGENSTEIN, L. (1980). *Remarks on the philosophy of psychology: Volume I*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

RPP II WITTGENSTEIN, L. (1980). *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology: Volume II*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

LWPP I WITTGENSTEIN, L. (1982). *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology: Volume I*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

LWPPII WITTGENSTEIN, L. (1992). *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology: Volume II*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

C WITTGENSTEIN, L. (1969). *On Certainty*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

CV WITTGENSTEIN, L. (1998). *Culture and Value*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

PPO WITTGENSTEIN, L. (2003). *Public and Private Occasions*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Introduction

This essay will examine Wittgenstein's notion of ethics, and how it may contribute to understanding his philosophy as a coherent whole. From his *Notebooks 1914–1916,* to the compilation of his last notes in *On Certainty*, the ethical dimension of his writings can arguably serve as a paradigm for understanding the trajectory of his thinking.

There seems to be a consensus that Wittgenstein had little sympathy for Russel's formalism and the Vienna Circle's logical positivism. This has contributed to further investigation into the initially uncharted realms of his metaphysics. However, rather than leading to a coalescence of interpretations, this appears to have caused more dispute. With regard to Wittgenstein's ethics, his letter to von Ficker removed all doubt about any 'ethical point'[1] in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (something at which his *Notebooks* also hints). Not only was it unclear how the *Tractatus* was meant to be ethical, it also became urgent to take a stance on the matter of Wittgenstein's so-called 'second philosophy'. Amongst the numerous answers to this question are those that consider he had "little to say" about ethics in his later period[2], and others that in contrast believe it is his later period that elucidates the *true* — ethical — goal he had been pursuing all along (to lead philosophers out of confusion), and that were hidden in the *Tractatus* to seduce readers to follow the treatment [3]. However, most people find themselves between these extremes, and believe that Wittgenstein initially considered ethics as belonging to the ineffable, transcending the world of facts, and that it was later brought down to arbitrary practices of language-games[4]. This smoothly affirms the traditional split in his philosophy without negating his later comments on ethics. These are however, not entirely satisfying interpretations. To choose between either discrediting Wittgenstein's later thoughts on ethics, denying the uniqueness of his early writings for the sake of affirming the later ethical purpose, or conveniently thinking of his reasoning as if it had emanated from two distinct minds, can only lead to the same result: an unsatisfactory account of his philosophy. This is clear for the following reasons: in the first case, if the point of the *Tractatus* is ethical, then the philosophy it springs from is ethical. Hence, if there is nothing to

1 LFF, p. 94.

2 BARRETT, p. 227.

3 CRARY & READ.

4 *i.e.* Glock, Rorty, Winch (for more on the subject of relativistic interpretations of Wittgenstein's later period see Coliva, A. (2009). *Was Wittgenstein an epistemic relativist*. Retrieved from http://cdm.unimo.it/home/dipslc/coliva.annalisa/WWAERFinal251108.pdf).

be said about ethics in his later writings, one would have to find a non-ethical reason as to why Wittgenstein continued working in the field of philosophy at all. In the second case, one would have to make all of Wittgenstein's early writings fit into what the 'new Wittgensteinians' consider his devious therapeutic scheme (something many of the Tractarian propositions barely do), making such a task as counter-intuitive as it is absurd[5]. Finally, in the third case, if one supposes that Wittgenstein became an ethical relativist of sorts as a consequence of his later writings that preached an arbitrariness of language, unless his philosophical enterprise had been inherently futile, there would be the need to justify a philosophy that does not fall prey to its own premise, and this is inconceivable. Considering these dominant positions, is there no alternative way of interpreting Wittgenstein's ethics that does not make aspects of his philosophy appear either contradictory or purposeless? Is it too farfetched to try to envision a unity between his early and later writings despite their differences?

This study proposes a reading of Wittgenstein's work that prioritises his notion of ethics above all else. Its working hypotheses are, firstly, that despite developing, the purpose of his philosophy remained unchanged throughout his life, and secondly, that the unity of his philosophy is mirrored in the conceptual network subjacent to his understanding of ethics. The answer to the question of whether it is possible to interlace his early and later periods without overlooking what makes each of them unique, is yes. To do so, one simply needs to follow the continuous thread of Wittgenstein's notion of ethics.

Due to the remit of this project, and in an attempt to avoid being overly ambitious, it is not possible to provide a full exposé of the topic here, so it should be noted that there were certain restrictions to fully achieving this goal… The principle focus, unsurprisingly, is the subject of Wittgenstein's metaphysics. The subjects of logic and mathematics have been deliberately excluded from this investigation as Wittgenstein's propositions on these subjects seem to offer exclusive answers more to the question of the *how* of his philosophy than to the *why*; saying more about its method (in particular in the *Tractatus*) than about its *raison d'être* — with the latter being the subject of interest here. Unfortunately, the subjects of aesthetics and religion are also largely absent from this inquiry; a necessary loss entailed by the priority given to tracing the continuity of Wittgenstein's thinking, without which, assimilation between his earlier and later concepts would be ill considered and unfounded. Due to the focus on arguing for continuity in Wittgenstein's work, the study has been divided into two sections: the first (chapters 1–6)

[5] Hacker (CRARY & READ, pp. 353–388) and VENTURINHA have already given good enough reasons for not following that path.

focus on the *Notebooks* and the *Tractatus*; and the second (chapters 8–11) reference almost exclusively his post-Tractarian writings. Chapter 7 offers an overview of how and why Wittgenstein made the profound changes he did to his philosophy of language. Though the reasoning will roughly follow a chronological order, it also will rely on anachronical references and comparisons within Wittgenstein's own work; this is justified as much by the project's working hypothesis as by its strategical requirements. If one takes all the above into consideration, it make sense to describe this study as more of a contribution to expanding the horizons of understanding Wittgenstein's philosophy than as a self-sufficient, impermeable interpretation of his heritage.

The paper will start by reviewing the terminology that will serve as the framework of its reasoning, and which will be consistently returned to, having gathered new concepts with which to work. Wittgenstein's *Notebooks* is a privileged reference for this purpose, mostly thanks to his series of thoughts concerning the concepts of 'God', the 'willing subject', 'life', 'world', 'good' and 'bad', and their connection to the notion of happiness. These were introduced in his *Notebooks* from 11.6.16 by asking "What do I know about God and the purpose of life?". The juxtaposition of these passages not only emphasizes their fundamental kinship, but also reveals that the core of the problem of happiness lies in life's indissoluble bond with the world, as according to Wittgenstein, to live happily is to live in 'agreement' with the world, even though, somewhat strangely, life and the world are defined as one and the same.

This leads one to consider Wittgenstein's concept of 'world', and how it denotes the phenomenal experience of the willing subject. From this point on, it is unclear how one can live in disagreement with the world, for it is not plausible to say that it is possible to experience phenomenal experience wrongly. One way out of this impasse is to consider a disjunction within the very unity between life and world; the notion of 'representation', and the hypothesis that to live in disagreement with the world is to live in disagreement with the representation of experience, and this could become a potential supposition to work on.

Wittgenstein's picture theory of language is then addressed and elucidates the conceptual network of what was initially called 'representation'. While not going into the detail of his logical analysis, this paper will also look at the fundamental role of logic, its *a priori* status as a condition of possibility of representation, and at concepts like 'form of representation', 'method of projection', 'sense', 'meaning', 'name' and 'symbol'. Once this terminology is defined, it will be possible to clarify the Tractarian philosopher's task of tracing the limits of thought.

Given that Wittgenstein sees the willing subject's conception of reality as springing from immediate experience, one must question whether he is a solipsist. In fact, he sees immediate experience as the sole reference of our representations; however, we cannot speak of this as it would mean transcending them. How this relates to ethics is linked to the world being independent of our will to live a happy life, and that a happy life is a life that lives in agreement with its representation of the world.

This makes it necessary to further investigate the notions of 'unhappiness', 'happiness', and what it means to live in agreement with the world. To do this, what Wittgenstein calls the feeling of the 'mystical' will be compared with what he calls 'the good life', and this is feasible as both refer to the experience of seeing the world from the point of view of eternity (*sub specie aeterni*). The nonsensical character of ethical propositions, and the importance of looking into oneself to solve the problem of life will also be discussed.

The study will then go to look at how the Tractarian philosopher contributes to the ethical dimension of life, and why he 'must' set the limits to what can be thought. It will also try to understand how his 'therapeutic' role is based on a form of negative metaphysics, and look at the way in which he makes his own contribution to ethics without speaking of it.

This will be followed by an examination of Wittgenstein's reasons for abandoning logical analysis and the picture theory of language, and will introduce his — not entirely — new theory of meaning. Concepts such as 'habit' and 'regularity', 'form of life', 'family resemblance', and, of course, 'language-games', will be used for the first time in the paper, and will then try to show how the ethical dimension of Wittgenstein's philosophy is of critical importance even during his later period.

The point of departure will demonstrate how Wittgenstein's linguistic agent prevails as the transcendental subject of phenomenal experience. His critique of 'private language', and the illusory division between 'inner' and 'outer' experience will be discussed and will reveal that a dimension of the participants of language-games cannot be objectified despite influencing the outcome of common practices.

From here, the influence of the last chapters' conclusions on the notion of ethics subjacent to Wittgenstein's later period will be studied. His generically named concept of 'seeing-as' may help to understand how the willing subject belongs to a plurality of language communities, and how it may think of itself as unique despite its self-awareness being determined by a shared grammar. This will thus shed light on how one's judgement of values may be sustained via diverse sources, and on how this leads us to conceive of ourselves as in disagreement with reality.

All of this upholds the idea that the linguistic agent of Wittgenstein's post-Tractarian writings is not only transcendental, but also willing, and consequently, affirms that the willing subject and the ethical dimension of life — which surpass the arbitrariness of language — remained fundamentally unchanged throughout his philosophy.

Finally, taking into consideration everything set out above, this study will comment on the ethical role of the philosopher in Wittgenstein's later writings and on how it remained essentially the same, only differing in the methods adopted. The conclusion is that Wittgenstein held the lifelong conviction that having been thrown into existence, the best thing we can do is to try to live happily — *i.e.* live in agreement with ourselves and hence with the world; and that philosophy is only worth practicing if it is therapeutic, and contributes to the struggle for a 'good' life.

1. The Purpose of Life

"Live happy!"[1]. Regardless of Wittgenstein's reasons behind what may at first glance appear to be a defence of eudemonism, he does seem convinced of the fundamental value of following such a motto. In addition, despite the often spontaneous and frequently fragmented stream of thought in his *Notebooks*, not even once does Wittgenstein question the veracity of this exclamation. On the contrary, whenever he returns to it, he does so either to insist on its self-explanatory nature and the senselessness of trying to justify it beyond its self-evidence[2], or to use it as a premise for further thoughts. Either way, this would appear to be a productive starting point for any development of the theme. Wittgenstein writes: "simply the happy life is good, the unhappy bad"[3], meaning that we face a genuine ethical standpoint. If one considers that, according to Wittgenstein, whatever is conceived as good is morally right, living happily means living a good life and living in accordance with an ethical prescription. In answer to the question "How does one live happily?" Wittgenstein answers, "In order to live happily I must be in agreement with the world. And that is what "being happy" means"[4]. There are two elements of the quotation that should be clarified in order to understand it fully: (1) the use of the first-person pronoun 'I'; and (2) the concept of 'world' as applied by Wittgenstein. As this paper will show, while the 'I' and the 'world' are interdependent of each other, they are also two intertwined concepts. Before continuing, it is important to set out the concepts, relationships, and terminology that will serve as the basis for, and furtherance of this discussion.

What we know is that to live happily is to live in accordance with that which is good, and, therefore, in accordance with an ethical prescription. Consequently, without life, there is no ethics; and, more specifically, for there to be any form of ethics, there must be an agent, a life form, whose actions are an expression of life and to whom good and bad are meaningful concepts — these being the preconditions to the possibility of living happily. If one considers that living happily means that the respective life form is in agreement with the world, it makes sense to suppose that it is equally possible to live in disagreement with the world, and that

1 NB, 8.7.16.

2 *Ibid*. 29.7.16: "It seems one can't say anything more than: Live happily!"; *Ibid*., 30.7.16: "I keep on coming back to this! Simply, the happy life is good, the unhappy bad. And if I *now* ask myself: But why should I live *happily*, then this of itself seems to me to be a tautological question; the happy life seems to be justified of itself, it seems that it *is* the only right life … ."

3 *Ibid*.

4 *Ibid*., 8.7.16.

therefore the world is a distinct entity dissociated from the life form perceiving it. There is, however, something troublesome (in the *Notebooks* as well as in the *Tractatus*) that threatens to turn what might have been seen as a clever deduction, into a sign of recklessness: "The World and Life are one"[5]. How then can it be possible to live in agreement or disagreement with the world? Surely, the unity of 'life' and 'world' would imply harmonious coexistence. Even if life and world are the same, one should be able to think of life as representing its world in a manner that does not correspond to it, and thereby, in a certain sense, living in it wrongly. The consequence of such a thought is that life is capable of living in discordance with itself — this is something that we will have to retain for further explanations.

What one can be certain of however is that if there is any sense in Wittgenstein's call to live happily, it should be thought of as a goal and aspiration. This means that it makes sense to look at excerpts from the *Notebooks,* starting from the abrupt change in his journals from matters of logic to reflections that culminate in the enunciation that served as the start of our inquiry. The passage of interest dates between 11.6.16 to 8.7.16[6]. It begins thus:

> 11.6.16.
> What do I know about God and the purpose of life? I know that this world exists. That I am placed in it like my eye in its visual field. That something about it is problematic, which we call its meaning. That this meaning does not lie in it but outside it. That life is the world. That my will penetrates the world. That my will is good or evil. Therefore that good and evil are somehow connected with the meaning of the world. The meaning of life, *i.e.* the meaning of the world, we can call God. And connect with this the comparison of God to a father.

Readers may already be familiar with some of the content. For instance, it has been established that the purpose of life is to live happily, and that Wittgenstein considers life to be the world. This also shows that, even though "life is the world", there is a place for "good and evil", which correspond respectively — in reference to earlier quotations, to living a happy or unhappy life. It is true that we haven't yet spoken of 'evil', as correlated to 'bad' or to 'unhappiness' (just as 'good' is correlated to 'happiness'), but there are reasons to believe that Wittgenstein uses the term 'evil' and 'bad' indistinctively, as demonstrated when he writes: "I am either happy or unhappy, that is all. It can be said: good or evil do not exist"[7], and this encourages an interpretation of the concepts as correlated, if not synonymous. However, there

[5] T, 5.621.

[6] NB, pp.72–74.

[7] *Ibid.*

are two further concepts that need to be looked at before continuing. These are namely, 'God' and 'will'.

In this context, 'God' is "the meaning of life, *i.e.* the meaning of the world"; the same 'meaning' that serves to designate that which is "problematic" about the world. In other passages, Wittgenstein writes: "How things stand, is God"[8], and before that: "*However this may be,* at any rate we *are* in a certain sense dependent, and what we are dependent on we can call God. In this sense God would simply be fate, or, what is the same thing: The world — which is independent of our will"[9]. 'Life' equals 'world' and 'world' equals 'God'. Does this mean that 'life' equals 'God'? This depends entirely of how we conceive 'life'. If we see it as a part of the world, as one of the things that "stand" and that is somehow given as a necessary criterion — a condition of possibility — for being able to speak of any life whatsoever, including *my own* life, then yes[10]. However, if we perceive 'life' as the whole of one's given experience, an interiority, encompassed by a greater totality, an exteriority — *i.e.* the world — this is not the case. As referenced already, "my will penetrates the world" from the outside, so it seems that the world somehow does not manage to totalize the whole of that which constitutes one's faculties, and thereby oneself. If one recalls the strong influence of Schopenhauer[11] on Wittgenstein's thinking, the former would have justified the above statement using the fact that the body of the subject is given in two different ways: "as an object among objects, liable to the laws of these objects", and also in "what is known immediately to everyone, and is denoted by the word 'will'"[12]. The reason for this is that the "act of will and the action of the body are not two different states objectively known, connected by the bond of causality, but are one and the same thing, though given in two entirely different ways, first quite directly and then in perception for the understanding"[13].

Regarding the impossibility of finding the willing subject in the world, Wittgenstein's analogy of the eye is relevant: "I am placed in it [the world] like my eye in its visual field"[14]. The eye perceives its visual field without perceiving itself as a part of the whole; likewise, I

[8] *Ibid.*, 1.8.16.

[9] *Ibid.*, 8.7.16; see also, *Ibid*., 5.7.16: "The world is independent of my will. [6.272]".

[10] This statement is analogous to the status of the subject of Spinoza in relation to God as the substance from which all that *is* derives from as modes of its attributes. Life is necessarily a part of God in as much as it is a mode of the substance God, but God cannot be reduced to one of its own modes.

[11] MONK, pp. 18–19.

[12] SCHOPENHAUER, I, p.100.

[13] *Ibid*.

[14] NB, 11.6.16.

experience the existence of the world without experiencing myself as a part of the world. It would seem natural to consider that the moment 'will' penetrates the world, it must do so through a "willing subject"[15] — the 'I' — given that one's relation to the world can only be established from one's own first-person perspective; from one's eye in the visual field, *i.e*. from one's experience of the world. This is why Wittgenstein writes, "The will is an attitude of the subject to the world"[16] — an attitude that is either good, or evil[17]. To sum up, if the purpose of life is to live happily, it must be done through the good attitude of the will to do so, an attitude that penetrates the world through the willing subject, and more specifically, through the 'I': "The world is *given* me, *i.e*. my will enters into the world completely from outside as into something that is already there"[18]. However though, the world, *i.e*. God, is also independent of our will. If there is any sense at all in speaking of a will that operates despite the world's independence of it, it must mean that the will itself is equally independent of the world. Indeed, Wittgenstein states "There are two godheads: the world and my independent I"[19]; an 'I' that, if we are right, is independent of the world due to its will. In order to confirm this hypothesis, it is necessary to seek further descriptions of the willing subject. Wittgenstein writes[20]:

> 5.8.16
> The thinking subject is surely mere illusion. But the willing subject exists. If the will did not exist, neither would there be that centre of the world, which we call the I, and which is the bearer of ethics. What is good and evil is essentially the I, not the world. The I, the I is what is deeply mysterious!
>
> 7.8.16
> The I is not an object.
>
> 11.8.16
> I objectively confront every object. But not the I. So there really is a way in which there can and must be mention of the I in a *non-psychological sense* in philosophy.

Let us begin with what we already know. Given that the will is either good or evil in regard to the attitude with which it penetrates the world through the 'I', the 'I', as far as it is a willing subject, becomes that which can be recognised as assuming one of these two attitudes in regard to the purpose of life, that is, of living happily. It is therefore the willing subject that

[15] *Ibid*., 4.11.16: "The subject is the willing subject."

[16] *Ibid*., 4.11.16

[17] *Ibid*., 11.6.16.

[18] *Ibid*., 8.7.16.

[19] *Ibid*.

[20] NB.

justify Wittgenstein's notion of ethics. If one bears in mind the analogy between the 'I' in the world, and the eye in the visual field, and if one takes into account that any kind of foundation of knowledge is based upon first-person experience, the 'I' is incapable of acquiring any knowledge of itself, simply because the will, in contrast to wishing, is essentially acting[21], performing an action[22], and only makes sense for as long as the action is realised within a given space — a given world — and as a part of its events[23]. Insofar as the will accompanies the events of the world, the will to know oneself can only be expressed through the acquisition of knowledge about the world and its objects, which also mirror the fact that when thinking of oneself, the 'I' "appears as an individual only through its identity with the body"[24] as a worldly object among other worldly objects. Nevertheless, the 'I' is independent of the world: "The I is not an object"[25], hence "I objectively confront every object, but not the I"[26]. This makes it possible to distinguish two subjects, the metaphysical 'I' — which surpasses the world and from which the latter is represented, and the object 'I' — which is the empirical subject resulting from the self-awareness of the metaphysical subject as a part of the world. It is here important to underline that even though the will manifests itself by performing an action, what characterizes the action of the will is not an effective alteration to the events of the world (which would contradict the statement of the independency of the world), but rather the idea of a willing action[27]:

> 4.11.16
>
> One cannot will without acting.
>
> If the will has to have an object in the world, the object can be the intended action itself.
>
> And the will does have to have an object.
>
> Otherwise we should have no foothold and could not know what we willed. And could not will different things.

[21] *Ibid.*, 4.11.16: "Wishing is not acting. But willing is acting.". For more concerning the relation between wishing and willing, see Ch. 10.

[22] *Ibid.*: "The fact that I will an action consists in my performing the action, not in my doing something else which causes the action".

[23] *Ibid.*: "The wish precedes the event, the will accompanies it".

[24] SCHOPENHAUER, I, p. 100.

[25] NB, 7.8.16.

[26] *Ibid.*, 11.8.16.

[27] NB.

Indeed, "The will seems always to have to relate to an idea. We cannot imagine, *e.g*., having carried out an act of will without having detected that we have carried it out"[28]. If the will always relates to an idea, then its attitude towards the world for being either good or evil[29], must relate to an idea of what is good and bad. This idea determines the manner in which these two are related to the world, whether the 'I' is in agreement with it or not. Then again, an idea must be an idea of something, of an element of the visual field, of an object of the world, already revealing in itself a form of knowledge that correlates to the value judgements and the will that is thinking them. This signifies the complete independence of the act of willing, of the 'I'. All attempts to find a causal link between the will and the world, being a thought in itself, must not only be arbitrary, but also guided by the will — and this results in the statement that any idea is potentially an act of will[30]. To clarify: insofar as thinking is action in itself, thoughts are above all wilful. This means that thought cannot think of the will to which it is correlated, as an action. Consequently, and in a Schopenhauerian fashion, if there is any subject that is capable of not being an object that is defined and, thereby determined, by the world (the contrary invalidating any attempt to legitimize ethics[31]), it should be characterized as willing and not thinking, this being "surely mere illusion" [32] due to its dependency on the higher instance of the will as action. Even though one may think about this subject, it will always be a mere idea of the world, another object, detached from the true 'I', the willing subject. It becomes clear why the 'I' in a psychological sense is inadequate insofar as psychology is the study of the idea of the psyche, of an objectified 'I' — *i.e.* an empirical subject — that consequently belongs to a different category than the 'I' which it strives to understand. Where psychology might suffer due to the impossibility of acquiring any knowledge of its object of study, philosophy is in contrast led to embrace this impossibility as the principle necessary in assuring an autonomous dimension of the subject, one not ruled by the outer world but by wilful thinking.

Finally, if the two godheads are the independent 'I' and the world, *i.e*. God, it also means that I cannot acquire any knowledge of myself, since the manner in which one thinks of the

[28] *Ibid*.

[29] *Ibid*., 11.6.16.

[30] *Ibid*., 4.11.16: "Have the feelings by which I ascertain that an act of the will takes place any particular characteristics which distinguishes them from other ideas? It seems not! In that case, however, I might conceivably get the idea that, *e.g*., this chair was directly obeying my will".

[31] *Ibid*., 5.8.16: "If the will did not exist, neither would there be that centre of the world, which we call the I, and which is the bearer of ethics"

[32] *Ibid*., 5.8.16.

objects of the world does not lie within it[33]. With the understanding that it only makes sense to speak of ethics insofar as there is a willing subject with an either good or evil attitude that penetrates the world, and recapitulating that what is good or evil is not the world but the 'I'[34], one can conclude that: (1) with no will, there is no willing subject, no bearer of ethics, and, hence, no ethics; and (2) insofar as the bearer of ethics is the willing subject — the 'I' which cannot be objectified by its own idea —, ethics itself is not an object of knowledge.

Even though the above has managed to partially elucidate the nature of ethics and its indissoluble bond with the willing subject — the 'I', one should first ask what is meant by life and world being one, and, then how to understand within this relationship the necessary dissymmetry for living in agreement or disagreement with the world. What is clear is that what is problematic with life is its meaning, God, and that it does not lie inside but outside the world[35]. This means it is necessary to keep in mind that even though God is the world, it is also the meaning of the world, which lies outside it; consequently, God seems to be not only the structure of the world but the substructure that surpasses it and from which it is raised. Moreover, the world is independent of our will. This seems to lead to a dead end. Insofar as we cannot change the world, and that living in agreement with it means searching for its meaning outside of it, it does indeed seem futile to seek a solution to this problem through its examination. However, one is then led to inspect the only available alternative, the willing — the ethical — subject, which, due to it not being an object of knowledge, impedes one from doing so. Counter-intuitively, one is thereby forced to face the world; hoping against all likelihood, that Wittgenstein might lead to its meaning, driving out confusion at the same time as providing the key for understanding how to reach a happy life. What are the properties of the world? How can it be independent of the willing subject as much as its dwelling? Finally, how can all this help in conceiving Wittgenstein's view on ethics?

[33] As SCHOPENHAUER would say, the transcendental 'I' cannot imagine what lies beyond his world as representation, of his thoughts, since "what we are imagining at the moment is … nothing but the process in the intellect of a knowing being.", (II, p. 5).

[34] NB, 5.8.16.

[35] *Ibid*., 11.6.16.

2. World

Wittgenstein writes (in Ogden's translation of the *Tractatus*),

> 1. The world is everything that is the case.
>
> 1.1. The world is the totality of facts, not of things.
>
> 1.11. The world is determined by the facts, and by these being *all* the facts.
>
> 1.12. For the totality of facts determines both what is the case, and also all that is not the case.

Proposition 1 gives the definition of the world, and is then specified in 1.1 as "the totality of facts, not of things". What one should do then is to distinguish 'facts' from 'things'. If the world is the totality of facts — 'everything that is the case' —, then "the totality of facts determines both what is the case, and also all that is not the case". To understand how 1 and 1.1 are related to each other, one needs to look at proposition 2: "What is the case, the fact, is the existence of atomic facts"; an atomic fact being "a combination of objects (entities, things.)"[1]. These objects are further delineated:

> 2.02. The object is simple
>
> 2.021. Objects form the substance of the world. Therefore they cannot be compound.
>
> 2.022. It is clear that however different from the real one an imagined world may be, it must have something — a form — in common with the real world.
>
> 2.023. This fixed form consists of the objects.
>
> 2.024. Substance is what exists independently of what is the case.
>
> 2.027. The fixed, the existent and the object are one.
>
> 2.0271. The object is the fixed, the existent; the configuration is the changing, the variable.
>
> 2.0272. The configuration of the objects forms the atomic fact.

What is set out here is that objects "form the substance of the world"[2], being therefore "simple"[3], and that their totality not only "exists independently of what is the case"[4] but traces

1 T, 2.01.

2 *Ibid*. 2.021.

3 *Ibid*., 2.02.

4 *Ibid*., 2.024.

the limits of "empirical reality"[5]. The way in which the objects are configured might change, altering the existent atomic facts — everything that is the case, and thereby the world. However, the totality of objects of reality remains the same. Thus, one is able to distinguish the 'world' from 'reality', the latter being defined as the "existence and non-existence of atomic facts"[6] — that is, the totality of things independent of the situational configuration of the world. What makes the postulate of simple objects relevant is that there must be something in common between the real world (the totality of facts) and an 'imagined' world so that the imagined can be an imagined *something*. To imagine an experience — for example, a chair; one has to be capable of imagining its constituents (such as its legs, its seat, etc.), which is a process that could go on forever, impeding one from thinking of it as a finite, complete whole if there were not, at some point, absolute simple objects in reality that coincide with what one recognises mentally as an imagined chair[7].

So how do we recognise simple objects? On the 9th November 1916, Wittgenstein wrote in his *Notebooks* that the world is "all experience". Since the world is formed by given configurations of objects, and by existent and non-existent atomic facts, the implication is that objects are the condition of possibility of actual experiences, not something that in themselves are recognisable as a part of the world. This should surely imply that the substance and objects exist independently of that which is the case[8], despite the three being one, given that what is the case is determined not by whether objects are existent or non-existent (they are the fixed form of the world[9]) but by how they are configured, something that determines which atomic facts belong to experience. These, however, must be phenomenal — or 'immediate' — experiences[10], as suggested by the nature of the diverse forms of objects of the *Tractatus* and by those that are said to be their 'internal properties':

> 2.0131. A spatial object must lie in infinite space. (A point in space is an argument place.) A speck in a visual field need not to be red, but it must have a colour; it has, so to speak, a

[5] *Ibid.* 5.5561.

[6] *Ibid.*, 2.06.

[7] MOUNCE, p. 20.

[8] T, 2.024.

[9] As Wittgenstein comments retrospectively in his *Philosophical Remarks*: "What I once called 'objects', simples, were simply what I could refer to without running the risk of their possible non-existence; i.e. that for which there is neither existence nor non-existence, and that means; what we can speak about *no matter what may be the case*" (PR, §36).

[10] PR, §225: "A proposition, an hypothesis, is coupled with reality — with varying degrees of freedom. All that matters is that the signs in the end still refer to immediate experience and not to an intermediary (a thing in itself). A proposition construed in such a way that it can be unverifiably true or false is completely detached from reality and no longer functions as a proposition."

> colour space round it. A tone must have *a* pitch, the object of the sense of touch *a* hardness, etc.
>
> 2.0251. Space, time and colour (colouredness) are forms of objects.
>
> 4.1221. The internal property of a fact we also call a feature of this fact. (In the sense in which we speak of facial features.)
>
> 4.123. A property is internal if it is unthinkable that its object does not possess it. (This bright blue colour and that stand in the internal relation of bright and darker eo ipso. It is unthinkable that *these* two objects should not stand in this relation.) (Here to the shifting use of the words "property" and "relation" there corresponds the shifting use of the word "object".)

So even though objects themselves do not have any worldly qualities ("In a manner of speaking, objects are colourless"[11]), their forms determine how the atomic facts show themselves, these defining the actual properties of the world. Moreover, if the world is indeed, experience, or, more precisely, phenomenal experience, this would also mean that ultimately, these cannot be distinguished as a sort of exteriority to which the experiencing subject would relate to as an interiority[12]: "Idealists were right in that we never transcend experience. Mind and matter is a division in experience"[13]. Actually, if one is speaking of experiences, these experiences must belong to something, namely to life, which explains why the world and life 'are one'[14], and also explains why the world is the effective source of indisputable knowledge for the willing subject.[15] The world is therefore a phenomenal world, directly correlated to life, as it corresponds to the actual experience of living. It is the actualised reality experienced by the willing subject, and can therefore only be spoken of through its reference to the 'I', as the phenomenon of life[16]. This phenomenon results from the changing configurations of the objects of an untamed reality that surpasses the will of the 'I' that perceives it. Although reality is not influenced by the life that it sustains, it nevertheless forms the world the life *lives*, and that is mirrored in the experiences of the 'I'. What remains to be seen is how, despite its unity with the world, this form of life through which things "acquire significance"[17], is capable of living in agreement or disagreement with it, and of being happy or unhappy.

[11] T, 2.0232.

[12] WL30-32, p. 109: "To talk about the relation of object and sense-datum is nonsense. They are not two separate things."

[13] *Ibid*., p. 80.

[14] T, 5.621.

[15] While commenting on his early philosophy in one of his encounters with the Vienna Circle, Wittgenstein said: "I used to believe that there was the everyday language that we all usually spoke and a primary language that expresses what we really know, namely phenomena." (WVC, p. 45).

[16] T, 5.641: "The I occurs in philosophy through the fact that the "world is my world".

[17] NB, 15.10.16.

Considering that 'will' is always a will to change the relative condition of the life that exercises it, there must be a subjacent supposition that life is capable of representing its world differently from the world one would conceive of as being good. If not, the possibility of change, and thereby of will, would be non-existent, making the willing subject one of the facts determined by reality. Insofar as life is the life of the 'I' — which acts in accordance to its representation of the world and the will to change it — to alter its experiences of life on behalf of an idealized concept of that which *should* be the case, means that what is actually at stake is not life's factual unity with the world, but rather, life's representation of this unity — the manner in which the 'I' represents the world, *i.e*. the experience of life, as *how* the world is represented, determines *which* concept of life is adopted by the 'I', and thereby its attitude towards it. One consequence is that the objects, for being real and for being independent of the world — of "the changing, the variable"[18] —, can only be said to be configured contingently, since all attempts to conceive a pattern in their modes of manifestation are a representation of that which is the case, and thereby belong to a different category from that of the immutable simple objects that uphold the facts of the world: "Whatever we see could be other than it is", and "Whatever we can describe at all could be other than it is"[19]. It is, however, curious that all that we see, all that we describe, *i.e*. that our representation of reality, comes in the last instance from our immediate experience of life[20]. If one were to want to delve deeper, it would be productive to look more closely at the means through which the 'I' represents the world — that being through language.

[18] T, 2.0271.

[19] *Ibid*., 5.634. This is perhaps the point in which Wittgenstein thoughts are closest to Hume's. The principle of causality serves as an *a priori* law for interpreting reality, but cannot guarantee a direct correspondence between cause and effect as represented in language and as present in reality due to the arbitrariness of its system of references in regard to objects of the world. Compare: "It is clear that there are no grounds for believing that the simplest eventuality will in fact be realized./ It is an hypothesis that the sun will rise tomorrow and this means that we do not *know* whether it will rise./ There is no compulsion making one thing happen because another has happened. The only necessity that exists is *logical* necessity./ The whole modern conception of the world is founded on the illusion that the so-called laws of nature are the explanations of natural phenomena." (*Ibid*., 6.3631 – 6.371); and "Matters of fact … are not ascertained in the same manner; nor is our evidence of their truth, however great, of a like nature with the foregoing [*i.e*. relations of ideas, these encompassing geometry, algebra, and arithmetic]. The contrary of every matter of fact is still possible. All reasonings concerning matter of fact seem to be founded on the relation of *Cause and Effect*. I shall venture to affirm, as a general proposition, which admits of no exception, that the knowledge this relation is not, in any instance, attained by reasoning *à priori*; but arises entirely from experience. In a word, then, every effect is a distinct event from its cause. It could not, therefore, be discovered in the cause, and the first invention or conception of it, *à priori*, must be entirely arbitrary." (HUME, IV, §2–11).

[20] PR, §225: "A proposition, an hypothesis, is coupled with reality — with varying degrees of freedom. All that matters is that the signs in the end still refer to immediate experience and not an intermediary (a thing in itself)."

3. Language

In the preface to the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein affirms that he wishes to draw the limits of "the expression of thoughts"[1] — such an expression being language. His reasons for this will be dealt with later in this study[2], so for now it is the formulation that is of interest. The desire to reveal the limits of language and of expression of thought to readers must obviously be done through language. Consequently — and as if to justify his project —, there must be expressions of thought that are indeed capable of expressing thoughts, and others that are not. Those who manage to do so must express thoughts about something, and this something is necessarily sustained by the world as immediate experience. Thus, tracing the limits of the expressions of thoughts leads to the tracing of the limits of the representation of the world, which also means tracing the limits of language. Indeed, language is only considered as such to the extent that it is comprehensible — and to the extent that it makes sense. Similarly, a thought — being a thought of experience, must necessarily make sense for the subject thinking it. For this reason, thought can be defined as "a proposition with sense"[3], just as much as a proposition of language, when "applied and thought out, is a thought"[4]. Language and thought are, therefore, one and the same, namely the means through which the world is represented. This is where Wittgenstein's picture theory of language becomes essential to this inquiry, and it is introduced by proposition 2.1 of the *Tractatus*:

> 2.1. We make to ourselves pictures of facts.
>
> 2.11. The picture presents the facts in logical space, the existence and non-existence of atomic facts.
>
> 2.12. The picture is a model of reality.
>
> 2.13. To the objects correspond in the picture the elements of the picture.
>
> 2.131. The elements of the picture stand, in the picture, for the objects.
>
> 2.14. The picture consists in the facts that its elements are combined with one another in a definite way.
>
> 2.141. The picture is a fact.

1 T, p.9.

2 Ch. 6 & 11.

3 T, 4.

4 *Ibid*., 3.5.

> 2.15. That the elements of the picture are combined with one another in a definite way, represents that the things are so combined with one another.

So, we "make ourselves pictures of facts", by presenting them in "logical space" where facts lie, as the components of the world[5]. In the *Notebooks*, Wittgenstein states that his "*whole* task consists in explaining the nature of the proposition", meaning that he wants to give "the nature of all facts, whose picture the proposition *is*"[6]. In other words, by knowing the nature of all facts, a knowledge of the nature of the world is also reached, and thereby the common nature shared by the latter and the world as depicted by the I (also called the "microcosm"[7]). If the propositions of language are pictorial, it is because, through the relation between the elements that compose it in logical space, the relation between things in the world are represented. It is important, however, to reaffirm that these 'things' are not what we call material properties. Material properties "are first presented by the propositions — first formed by the configuration of the objects [*i.e.* of the things]"[8], their arrangement being mirrored when conceived. What this means is that any sort of material, empirical object can only be denoted through a proposition whose symbols only have meaning thanks to their internal relation and structure, enabled by the configuration of simple objects (*i.e.* things) depicted by the elements of a proposition: "In propositions thoughts can be so expressed that to the objects of the thoughts correspond the elements of the propositional sign"[9]. These elements are also called 'simple signs', or 'names', and mean the objects they represent[10]. In order to clarify the consequences of this statement, it is necessary to differentiate between propositions and sense on one side, and names and meaning on the other.

A symbol is an expression that characterizes the sense of a proposition (the proposition itself also being conceived as an expression)[11]. It can be positioned in contrast to signs, which are "the part of the symbol perceptible by the senses"[12] — their material qualities. However, what is it exactly that determines whether a sign is a symbol? For this, a "content" must be

[5] *Ibid*., 1.13: "The facts in logical space are the world."; *ibid*., 1.2: "The world divides into facts."

[6] NB, 22.1.15.

[7] T, 5.63: "I am my world. (The microcosm.)"

[8] *Ibid*., 2.0231.

[9] *Ibid*., 3.2.

[10] *Ibid*., 3.201–3.203.

[11] *Ibid*., 3.31: "Every part of a proposition which characterizes its sense I call an expression (a symbol). (The proposition itself is an expression.)"

[12] *Ibid*., 3.32.

given to the sign through a "method of projection"[13], thus establishing a "projective relation" between the sign and the world[14]. However, if a content is given to the symbol, it implies that the sense does not derive from the symbol, but that the latter has the required form to receive it[15]. This form, to which the method of projection is bonded, is inscribed in logical space and the totality of logical possibilities.

For the picture, *i.e*. the symbol, to be a 'model of reality'[16] by means of its signs, its 'form of representation' must coincide with reality[17]. Providing the symbol shares a given form with reality (*e.g*. spatial, chromatic, sonorous …), it can represent all of the given reality, even if "rightly or falsely", due to the fact that the symbol "represents its object from without", meaning that the internal 'structure' of the picture[18] might not coincide with the structure of the atomic facts of the reality that is depicted[19]. The form of representation of the picture coincides with reality in logical space, and consequently, the shared aspect between a symbol and the reality it depicts is the 'logical form', *i.e*. the form of reality[20]. This is also why all pictures are necessarily 'logical pictures', regardless of their form of representation[21]. Finally, as a depiction of reality, the symbol represents the "possibility of the existence and non-existence of atomic facts"[22] — *i.e*. a given configuration of the objects of reality — a "possible state of affairs in logical space"[23]. Consequently, a picture is a fact (that may or may not be the case[24]), which, whenever depicting reality correctly, depicts an existent atomic fact, an existing combination of objects[25].

Last but not least, if it is to be considered a symbol, a sign must not only be in a projective relation to reality in accordance with the form enabling it to receive its content, but it must also

[13] *Ibid*., 3.11: "We use the sensibly perceptible sign (sound or written sign, etc.) of the propositions as a projection of the possible state of affairs. The method of projection is the thinking of the sense of the proposition"; *ibid*., 3.13: ""The content of the proposition" means the content of the significant proposition".

[14] *Ibid*., 3.12.

[15] *Ibid*., 3.14: "In the proposition the form of its sense is contained, but not its content".

[16] T, 2.12.

[17] *Ibid*., 2.17.

[18] *Ibid*., 2.15.

[19] *Ibid*., 2.171–2.73.

[20] *Ibid*., 2.18.

[21] *Ibid*., 2.182.

[22] *Ibid*., 2.201.

[23] *Ibid*., 2.202.

[24] *Ibid*., 1.12.

[25] *Ibid*., 2., 2.01.

follow the rules of logical syntax[26], also known as 'logical grammar'[27]. The latter is the system of rules that are implicit and commonly shared by all of ordinary language. This does not mean that languages are more or less logical[28], but, rather, that they are of equal logical value, even though the symbolism of one might reveal its logical structure more clearly than another[29]. The reason for this is that different symbols can share common signs, in which case they signify differently even though they are perceptibly equal on the surface[30]. A logical analysis of a proposition with signs that serve to depict a plurality of symbols will always reveal which symbol is being applied in the context of the given proposition. This is because the "proposition must enable us to see the logical structure of the situation that makes it true or false" [31] in such a way that its complete logical analysis must "image its reference"[32]. Otherwise, the proposition would lack sense. Moreover, these "symbolic rules"[33] of logical syntax cannot be refuted by language, since in order to refute them, the critique would have to be constituted outside logical syntax, which means they would have no sense and, thereby, would not belong to any language — which is necessary to formulate any sort of refutation.

Thus, for a sign to be recognised as a symbol, it must have a method of projection, a representational and logical form, and follow the rules of logical syntax. This means that the sign becomes an expression that characterises the sense of a proposition, a symbol that expresses one of its elements, if not the proposition itself as a whole. But what is this 'sense' that is being expressed?

If "the proposition *shows* its sense", it also "*shows* how things stand, *if* it is true. And it *says*, that they do so stand"[34]. What is being shown, thanks to the shared form of representation with reality, is the common structure of the proposition and the world *if* the proposition is true, that is, if it corresponds to reality[35]. The link between the structure and the world is secured by

[26] *Ibid*., 3.327: "The sign determines a logical form only together with its logical syntactic application".

[27] *Ibid*., 3.325.

[28] *Ibid*., 5.5563: "All propositions of our colloquial language are actually, just as they are, logically completely in order …".

[29] *Ibid*., 4.002: "Language disguise the thought; so that from the external form of the clothes one cannot infer the form of the thought they clothe, because the external form of the clothes is constructed with quite another object than to let the form of the body be recognized".

[30] *Ibid*., 3.321.

[31] NB, 20.10.14.

[32] *Ibid*., 25.10.14.

[33] T, 3.33.

[34] *Ibid*., 4.022.

[35] *Ibid*., 2.201: "The picture depicts reality by representing a possibility of existence and non-existence of atomic facts."

the logical form: "Every picture is *also* a logical picture"[36]. The reason why the picture can only *show*, but not *say* "how" things stand in reality, is because by doing so, a depiction (*i.e.* an expression) of what language has in common with reality would be necessary (instead of simply depicting reality); and this presupposes the possibility of language placing itself beyond its own limits, outside reality[37]. Whilst the proposition shows how things stand if it is true, it also affirms that things stand as represented. Therefore, if, in a given context, person A says "the cat is on the table", pointing to something behind person B, the latter would understand how the world would look like were the statement to be true; that is, person B would understand the sense of the proposition regardless of whether it is true or not. In other words, that the cat might be on the table is understood irrespective of what is actually the case. If B happens to not understand what is being said, A would only repeat his statement, perhaps in different ways, by, for example, insisting that person B turn around to see what is being pointed at, showing a picture of a cat on a table, or making a drawing. If one were to suppose that B sees the cat on the table while A makes his statement, he could still be confused about what A is trying to say, and in order to explicate, A would probably insist on the gesture of pointing at the cat on the table as a way of showing it. That the "picture is a fact"[38] — which is the case — stems firstly from its signs, its form of representation, being a fact of the world. A picture of a cat on a table is not an actual cat on a table, but a depiction of the depicted, a picture, an actual existent fact of the world. Secondly, it stems from the picture's common structure with the fact it depicts: the picture would not be a picture if it did not share a common identity with that which it represents. One could wonder if this would not result in a form of regression *ad infinitum*, where the depiction depicts the depicted that depicts another depiction, and so forth. There is nothing to impede one from doing so, as this is regularly represented in literature, cinema, and other mediums, where a picture might take another one as its object of representation[39]. Notwithstanding, a picture will always depict facts from the world, and nothing else. But if pictures — *i.e.* propositions — do so, they do not specify whether the depicted fact is a positive — existent — fact, or a negative — non-existent — one. According to Wittgenstein, to

[36] *Ibid.*, 2.182.

[37] *Ibid.*, 4.121: "Propositions cannot represent the logical form: this mirrors itself in the propositions. That which mirrors itself in language, language cannot represent. That which expresses *itself* in language, *we* cannot express by language. The propositions *show* the logical form of reality. They exhibit it."

[38] *Ibid.*, 2.141.

[39] As we shall see, this works differently when it comes to logical analysis. Logical propositions, for being tautological, cannot say anything about the world (even though their signs are fact themselves), but only show the language's and world's common structure.

understand the sense of a proposition, *i.e*. a picture, means to "know the state of affairs that it represents"[40], even though reality might agree with it with a yes or no[41]. This corresponds to the philosopher's famous principle of bipolarity, where propositions must be capable of being true and false, and which he held as being the essence of the proposition[42]. The state of affairs that the two poles of the proposition depict establishes the proposition's sense.

All of these considerations so far do seem to contradict Wittgenstein's goal of tracing the limits of language, and thereby of the world, considering that the sense of the proposition can be grasped independently of their correspondence to reality. If one considers that the sense of the propositions of language are independent of their veracity, does this not mean that language is independent of the world? How then can language inspect itself? Without any touchstone or any outside reference that could serve its self-critique, it would not seem possible to trace any limits of language, since there would not be anything else beyond language to suggest its finitude or the limits of its field of application.

It is possible that these questions could have pinpointed a weakness in the pictorial theory of language, were it not for the concept of 'meaning'. As Wittgenstein writes in his *Notes on logic*: "The meaning of a proposition is the fact which actually corresponds to it"[43]. It has to be distinguished from the proposition's sense insofar as the sense is bipolar, while the meaning is simply the fact corresponding to the proposition. The meaning of the proposition does not change in regard to the fact being positive or negative, as it is the same fact, *i.e*. the same meaning, that is either affirmed or negated, like a card with the same picture on both sides, but one of which has an **X** over it and thereby negating it. The card would be the proposition; its sides, the poles, one side affirming the meaning the picture, and the other negating it. Without the picture, the **X** covering it would not have the sense of a negation, as negation is only possible where there is an affirmation.

[40] T, 4.021: "The proposition is a picture of reality, for I know the state of affairs presented by it, if I understand the proposition. And I understand the proposition, without its sense having been explained to me".

[41] *Ibid*., 4.023: "The proposition determines reality to this extent, that one only need to say "Yes" or "No" to it to make it agree with reality".

[42] MCGUINNESS, 5.9.13: "Dear Russell, I am sitting here in a little place inside a beautiful fiord and thinking about the beastly theory of types. There are still some *very* difficult problems (and very fundamental ones too) to be solved … . However I don't think that will in an way affect the Bipolarity business which still seems t me to be absolutely untangible."; NL, pp. 93–107; notably *ibid*., p. 98: "Every proposition is essentially true-false: to understand it, we must know both what must be the case if it is true, and what must be the case if it is false. Thus a proposition has two *poles*, corresponding to the case of its truth and the case of its falsehood. We call this the *sense* of a proposition."

[43] NL, p. 94.

Therefore, just as the proposition shows the structure of a fact, it also shows the qualities of the fact that makes it unique, while simultaneously revealing its own uniqueness — its own meaning. Propositions can represent a plurality of facts. This means that the combination of signs at hand serves for a plurality of symbols, each of which refer to different facts, and thereby have different meanings. It is thus the meaning that makes it possible to posit that language refers to reality.

Wittgenstein's usage of the notions of 'sense' and 'meaning' echoes back to Frege's dichotomy[44]. In his article *On Sense and Reference*, Frege argues that the identity between two names (or signs) reveals a common relation to an object. In $a = b$, what differs between the two signs is their "cognitive value"[45]; even though their reference ('Bedeutung') is the same[46]. This is why the sentence "The morning star is a body illuminated by the sun" differs from "The evening star is a body illuminated by the sun"[47], as the cognitive value instigated by the two sentences differs even though both the morning star and the evening star refer to a common object: Venus. For Frege, the 'cognitive value' of the sign is its 'sense'; and when there is an identity between two or more signs, it reveals that their common reference has a plurality of "mode[s] of presentation"[48]. For instance: $2 + 2$, $8/2$, and 4 designate the same number but in diverse ways. The reference is "a truth value … having a thought as its sense"[49], which means that the reference indicates the relation of the proposition to truth. In addition to this Frege considered propositions as compound names, with each proper name standing for a truth-value. Consequently, for Frege, the sense of the proposition follows not the principle of bipolarity but of bivalence: a sentence is either true *or* false, not true *and* false, as conceived by Wittgenstein. In Frege's treatment of propositions as compound names, Wittgenstein saw one of his major mistakes[50], as it implies the supposition that a proposition can be logically insufficient depending

[44] The German word 'Sinn' is translated from Wittgenstein's and Frege's works as 'sense'. 'Bedeutung', meanwhile, is in Frege's texts commonly translated as 'meaning' as well as 'reference'. Using 'reference' as an alternative translation for 'Bedeutung' in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* might make it easier to associate the term to the picture theory of language.

[45] FREGE, p. 209.

[46] *Ibid*., p. 210: "… by "sign" and "name" I have here understood any designation representing a proper name, whose referent is thus a definite object (this word taken in the widest range) … . The designation of a single object can also consist of several words or other signs. For brevity let every such designation be called a proper name."

[47] *Ibid*., p. 215.

[48] *Ibid*., p. 210.

[49] *Ibid*., p. 230.

[50] T, 3.142–3.143: "Only facts can express a sense, a class of names cannot. That the propositional sign is a fact is concealed by the ordinary form of expression, written or printed. For in the printed proposition, for example, the sign of a proposition does not appear essentially different from a word. (Thus it was possible for Frege to

on the truth-value of the referent object — subduing logical analysis to the empirical, and thereby breaking the fundamental connection between language and reality that is necessary in order to trace the limits of the world — and the totality of facts[51].

All propositions must be legitimately constructed, as the implication is that they are constructed according to the rules of logical syntax. The thought expressed by the proposition "can never be of anything illogical, since, if it were, we should have to think illogically"[52]; the truth being that we cannot "*say* of an 'unlogical' world how it would look"[53]. So, although Frege ended up introducing contingency into logical space, Wittgenstein managed to avoid doing so by defining the meaning of the proposition not as a truth-value of an object of reality, but as the fact of reality corresponding to it. The challenge is to preserve logic, the common ground of all language as something that makes it possible to represent reality, but to also consider the possibility of showing the proposition's truth-value in case its — already comprehensible — sense should be put to test. In short, how can one possibly think of the whole of language as logically legitimate, without presupposing that all propositions are necessarily true, in agreement with reality? To do this, Wittgenstein posits a greater complexity of the internal structure of propositions and the facts of the world, ultimately coinciding in logical space. Propositions, as well as their words, are symbols serving as functions for the elements that constitute them[54]. However, these elements are not immediately transparent, as a proposition is not just a simple juxtaposition of its parts. It does not depict the agglomeration caused by its internal relations, but rather, the facts that correspond to it, that is to say, the relations themselves[55]. This is because a class of names is incapable of expressing sense, as what enables the expression of sense is the depicted state of affairs, which propositions mirror

call the proposition a compounded name.)"; *ibid*, 5.02: "It is natural to confuse the arguments of functions with the indices of names. For I recognize the meaning of the sign containing it from the argument just as much as from the index. … The confusion of argument and index is, if I am, not mistaken, at the root of Frege's theory of the meaning of propositions and functions. For Frege the proposition of logic were names and their arguments the indices of these names."

[51] *Ibid*., 5.4733: "Frege says: Every legitimately constructed proposition must have a sense; and I say: Every possible proposition is legitimately constructed, and if it has no sense this can only be because we have given no *meaning* of some of its constituent parts (Even if we believe that we have done so.)"

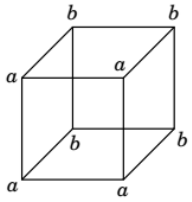
[52] *Ibid*., 3.03.

[53] *Ibid*., 3.031.

[54] *Ibid*., 3.318: "I conceive the proposition — like Frege and Russell – as a function of the expressions contained in it.". We shall try to clarify how the meaning of the names coincides with the assertion of the meaning of the proposition being the fact that it depicts.

[55] *Ibid*., 3.14: The propositional sign consists in the fact that its elements, the words, are combined in it in a definite way."; *ibid*., 3.141: "The proposition is not a mixture of words (just as the musical theme is not a mixture of tones). The proposition is articulate."

through their structures and mode of articulating their internal relations, and not through their content[56]:

> 5.5432. To perceive a complex means to perceive that its constituents are combined in such and such a way. This perhaps explains that the figure
>
> 
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> can be seen in two ways as a cube; and all similar phenomena. For we really see two different facts. (If I fix my eyes first on the corners *a* and only glance at *b*, *a* appears in front and *b* behind, and vice versa.)

Similarly, it would not be correct to say "the complex sign '*aRb*' says '*a* stands in relation *R* to *b*", as if the relation between the symbols of the proposition is systematically exposed; but rather "*That* '*a*' stands in a certain relation to '*b*' says *that aRb*"[57]. The fact of '*a*' relating to '*b*' constitutes the propositional description of a possible state of affairs where 'aRb'.

This thought leads on to another consideration of Frege. Wittgenstein writes: "If two expressions are connected by the sign of equality, this means that they can be substituted for one another. But whether this is the case must show itself in the two expressions themselves"[58]. In other terms, it seems superfluous to affirm like Frege, that two expressions '*a*' and '*b*' when equal have "the same meaning but different senses"[59], as it is already presupposed by the establishment of their common identity that they share the same meaning. Consequently, it is impossible to assert the identity of meaning of two different expressions, for if the meaning were the same with both expressions referring to the same fact, they would not be recognised as different; and if they were to be different, asserting their identity would be absurd[60].

What remains of interest is to find out how the proposition's meaning is a fact, considering that what it depicts are states of affairs. The explanation lies in the structure of the

[56] T.

[57] *Ibid.*, 3.1431.

[58] *Ibid.*, 6.23.

[59] *Ibid.*, 6.232.

[60] *Ibid.*, 6.2322: The identity of the meaning of two expressions cannot be *asserted*. For in order to be able to assert anything about their meaning, I must know their meaning, and if I know their meaning, I know whether they mean the same or something different."

proposition, the latter being a truth-function of what Wittgenstein calls 'elementary propositions'. This second class of propositions, on which complex propositions are built, can be reached through logical analysis; and even though there are no examples of what they look like, Wittgenstein considered them to be of logical necessity in order to attain some form of knowledge of the propositions truth-value. Firstly, they must refer to a positive fact, *i.e.* to a state of affairs[61], which also means asserting the existence of an atomic fact[62]. Differently from complex propositions (which can be false either by establishing non-existent relations between elements, or by the elements themselves not existing), a false elementary proposition is only false because the arrangement of its parts does not correspond to any existing atomic fact, a state of affairs[63]. This is due to the parts of the elementary proposition being 'names'. The former is an "immediate combination"[64] of the latter, or in other words, the elementary proposition is a "concatenation of names"[65]. Moreover, names are simple symbols that occur in the proposition "only in the context of the elementary proposition"[66]. What this means is that they can only be reached through logical analysis, representing the last unanalysable stratum of language. Indeed, if language *is* to represent reality, it implies that logical analysis must be finite. The names are the long-awaited finish line, and they refer directly to objects of reality: "The name means the object. The object is its meaning. ("*A*" is the same sign as "*A*".)"[67]. Consequently, names are directly correlated to objects. However, objects can only be named, not described, and this is the reason why elementary propositions might not correspond to atomic facts. Like the rings of a chain, each one of the names stand for a thing of reality, forming a "living picture" through their links, representing a possible atomic fact[68]. As the fundamental

[61] *Ibid*., 4.021: "The proposition is a picture of reality for I know the state of affairs presented by it, if I understand the proposition. And I understand the proposition, without its sense having been explained to me."

[62] *Ibid*., 4.21: "The simplest proposition, the elementary proposition, asserts the existence of an atomic fact."

[63] 'State of affairs' (*Sachlage)* differs from 'atomic facts' (*Sachverhalt*) inasmuch as 'atomic facts' are the constituent parts of facts (*Tatsache*), meaning that they are states of affairs depicted by an 'elementary proposition' that is true, which equals saying that atomic facts are existent states of affairs. As Wittgenstein wrote to Russell when trying to remove the latter's doubts concerning the *Tractatus*: ""What is the difference between Tatsache [fact] and Sachverhalt [atomic fact]?" Sachverhalt is, what corresponds to an Elementarsatz [elementary proposition] if it is true. Tatsache is, what corresponds to the logical product of elementary props when this product is true" (MCGUINNESS, 19.8.19); T, 4.25: "If the elementary proposition is true, the atomic fact exists; if it is false, the atomic fact does not exist."

[64] *Ibid*., 4.221: "It is obvious that in the analysis of propositions we must come to elementary propositions, which consist of names in immediate combination."

[65] *Ibid*., 4.22: "The elementary proposition consists of names. It is a connexion, a concatenation of names."

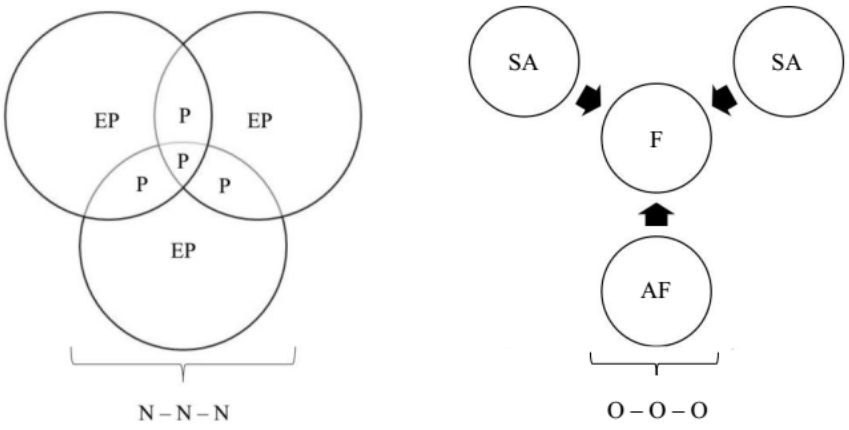
[66] *Ibid*., 4.23, 4.24.

[67] *Ibid*., 3.203.

[68] *Ibid*., 4.0311.

pieces enabling the composition of the proposition's structure and their depiction of reality, they are also that which makes the proposition possible[69].

So far, we have managed to see how the possibility of giving sense to propositions depends of their constituent parts' capacity to represent the simple objects of reality. However, how are these objects related to facts? According to Wittgenstein, the combination of objects constitutes atomic facts[70], existing states of affairs, each with internal qualities that prescribe their possible combinations with other objects, and external qualities, the actual combination of which they take part[71]. Facts, on the other hand, are complex compositions of atomic facts[72], and only that which is the case are facts, as "The totality of existent atomic facts is the world"[73] and the world is the totality of facts. Said differently, the totality of facts is the totality of existent atomic facts, *i.e.* everything that is the case. If we were to depict the relation between language and reality, it would look something like this[74]:



[69] *Ibid*., 4.0312: "The possibility of propositions is based upon the principle of the representation of objects by signs."

[70] *Ibid*., 2.01, 2.011; *ibid*., 2.0272: The configuration of the objects forms the atomic fact."

[71] *Ibid*., 2.012: "In logic nothing is accidental: if a thing *can* occur in an atomic fact the possibility of that atomic fact must already be prejudged in the thing."; *ibid*., 2.0123: "If I know an object, then I also know all the possibilities of its occurrence in atomic facts. (Every such possibility must lie in the nature of the object.) A new possibility cannot subsequently be found."; *ibid*., 2.01231: "In order to know an object, I must know not its external but all its internal qualities."; *ibid*., 2.0233: "Two objects of the same logical form are — apart from their external properties — only differentiated from one another in that they are different."

[72] *Ibid*., 2.034: "The structure of the fact consists of the structures of the atomic facts."; 4.2211: "Even if the world [the totality of facts] is infinitely complex, so that every fact consists of an infinite number of atomic facts and every atomic fact is composed of an infinite number of objects, even then there must be objects and atomic facts."

[73] *Ibid*., 2.04.

[74] Where simple signs 'N' of elementary propositions 'EP' forming complex propositions 'P' denote simple objects 'O' of a possible existent atomic fact 'AF' that combined with states of affairs 'SA' (*i.e.* existent atomic facts) form a fact 'F'.

If the world is everything that is the case (the totality of facts resulting from the totality of existent atomic facts), reality is the "existence and non-existence of atomic facts"[75]. This helps to explain why Wittgenstein's task of tracing the limits of the world does not reflect the ambition of tracing the limits of reality, the totality of possible worlds, as the touchstone of the analysis of the truth-value of propositions can only be the facts of the world that is the case. Thus, it is now possible to fully understand how the world is not the totality of things[76], as by stating the totality of things, we assume that everything *is*; whilst it only makes sense to speak of the world as "everything that is the case"[77] providing there are things that are *not* the case. If the "total reality is the world"[78], it is because the world, for being the totality of existent atomic facts of reality, can only be so in regards to the non-existent atomic facts, which together form the totality of logical possibilities that sustain it.

This said, as we have seen, propositions with sense are also propositions with meaning, and their constituents — names — 'mean', 'depict', or 'refer to', a possible combination of objects, their logical "scaffold"[79]. There are, however, two other types of 'propositions', that Wittgenstein calls 'pseudo-propositions'[80], or 'apparent propositions'[81], which can be divided into two categories of 'senseless' (*sinnlos*) and 'nonsensical' (*unsinnig*) propositions[82]. Differently from propositions with sense that show what they say, senseless propositions are propositions that show that they say nothing. They are divided in two subcategories: contradictions and tautologies: "A tautology has no truth-conditions, since it is unconditionally true; and a contradiction is true on no condition"[83]. Both of them "lack sense" — "like a point from which two arrows go out in opposite directions to one another"[84]; where the point represents the propositions, and the two opposite directions 'true' and 'false'. Senseless

75 T, 2.06.

76 *Ibid*., 1.1.

77 *Ibid*., 1.

78 *Ibid*., 2.063.

79 *Ibid*., 3.318: "I conceive the propositions — like Frege and Russell — as a function of the expressions contained in it."; *ibid*., 4.023: "… The proposition constructs a world with the help of a world with the help of a logical scaffolding, and therefore on can actually see in the proposition all the logical features possessed by reality *if* it is true. One can *draw conclusions* from a false proposition.; *ibid*., 4.024: "To understand a proposition means to know what is the case, if it is true: …. One understand it if one understands its constituent parts."; *ibid*., 4.0312: "The possibility of propositions is based upon the principle of the representation of objects by signs."

80 *Ibid*., 4.1272, 5.535.

81 *Ibid*., 5.534.

82 See McGuinness' translation of the *Tractatus*.

83 T, 4.461.

84 *Ibid*.

propositions are not nonsensical because they follow the rules of logical syntax[85], but neither do they depict reality because they "do not represent any possible situations", for tautologies "admit *all* possible situations", and contradictions "none"[86]. Tautologies, for following the rules of logical syntax without acquiring any sense, that is, without having any reference — contrary to propositions with sense which depends on referring to objects in order to acquire meaning —, show what the a priori properties of language, *i.e*. thought, have in common with reality in order to represent it. This is why logic is fundamentally tautological[87]. Logical propositions show the rules of logical syntax governing language and the world it depicts[88], making itself essentially pictorial[89]; and, since logic "treats of every possibility, and all possibilities are its facts"[90], it is "impossible to represent in language anything that 'contradicts' logic"[91]. Moreover, given that logical propositions are not bipolar, able to be true or false — and thereby able to say something about the world —, they are the only form of symbolising that which is necessarily true, and the only way of undertaking a faultless analysis of language[92]. In addition, due to logical propositions being prior to experience, *i.e*. being present in all possible propositions as the formal properties that allow any form of representation of the world, they can only show the rules already given: "there can *never* be surprises in logic"[93]. Hence, it would seem natural that logic, just like ethics, is transcendental[94]. It is a precondition of the world, of representing reality, and also the procedure through which an immutable understanding of the former can be acquired.

Finally, there are those propositions that are nonsensical. These are characterised by their constituent names' incapacity to depict possible combinations of objects due to their

85 *Ibid*., 4.4611.

86 *Ibid*. 4.462.

87 *Ibid*., 6.1: "The propositions of logic are tautologies."

88 *Ibid*., 6.12: "The fact that the propositions of logic are tautologies *shows* the formal — logical — properties of language and the world."

89 *Ibid*., 4.015: "The possibility of all similes, of all the images of our language, rests on the logic of representation."

90 *Ibid*., 2.012.

91 *Ibid*., 3.032.

92 *Ibid*., 6.11: "… the propositions of logic say nothing. (They are the analytical propositions.)"; 6.126: "… without bothering about sense or meaning, we construct the logical proposition out of others using only *rules that deal with signs*."; *ibid*., 6.121: "The propositions of logic demonstrate the logical properties of propositions by combining them so as to form propositions that say nothing. This method could also be called a zero-method. In a logical proposition, propositions are brought into equilibrium with one another, and the state of equilibrium then indicates what the logical constitution of these propositions must be."

93 *Ibid*., 6.1251.

94 *Ibid*., 6.13.

incompatible meanings. They do not respect the rules of logical syntax, and are typically present (other than in everyday language usage), in philosophical propositions[95]; the latter being a privileged target of Wittgenstein's ambition to trace the limits of thought, everything lacking references in reality being plain nonsense[96]. To sum up, if propositions with sense show what they say, and those that are senseless say nothing, nonsensical propositions show that they are saying something wrong.

Considering that the aim of the *Tractatus* is to trace the limits of the expression of thought[97], it makes sense for Wittgenstein to write…

> Philosophy sets limits to the much disputed sphere of natural science.
>
> It must set limits to what can be thought; and, in doing so, to what cannot be thought.
>
> It must set limits to what cannot be thought by working outwards through what can be thought.[98]

By "presenting clearly what can be said"[99] philosophy signifies "what cannot be said". What can be said must have sense, and propositions with sense must be empirical propositions, *i.e*. propositions grounded on the representation of the immediate experience of reality. Not accidentally, and in a very Kantian manner, the "totality of true propositions is the whole of natural science"[100], as the latter consists of struggling to establish a conformity within its depiction of the accidental. Given the principle of bipolarity, this leads to say that all propositions with sense derive from natural science — from the building blocks provided by empirical science to the axioms determining their 'form of description'[101], namely the 'laws of nature'. In trying to form a representational system that corresponds to reality, scientific systems are obliged to abide to the law of causation, which presupposes that all happenings

[95] *Ibid*., .3.323: "In everyday language it very frequently happens that the same word has different modes of signification — and so belongs to different symbols — or that two words that have different modes of signification ….''; *ibid*., 3.324: "In this way the most fundamental confusions are easily produced (the whole of philosophy is full of them).''; *ibid*., 4.003: "Most of the propositions and questions to be found in philosophical works are not false but nonsensical. Consequently we cannot give any answer to questions of this kind, but can only point out that they are nonsensical. Most of the propositions and questions of philosophers arise from our failure to understand the logic of our language…''

[96] See the already discussed preface (T, p. 9) in the beginning of this chapter.

[97] T, p. 9.

[98] *Ibid*., 4.113, 4.114.

[99] *Ibid*., 4.115.

[100] *Ibid*., 4.11.

[101] *Ibid*., 6.341.

must be explicable, and to the law of induction[102], which presupposes that our adopted form of description will suit future events as much as past ones. However, the only necessity expressed in the contingency of reality is logical, and given that logic says nothing about how things stand, there can be no logical justification of natural sciences. This means that "laws, like the law of causation, etc., treat of the network and not what the network describes"[103]. Nevertheless, all these laws follow "a priori insights about the forms in which the propositions of science can be cast"[104], and in this sense, must be in a prior conformity with logic, since thought, language, and logic coincide. What this means is that even though the *Tractatus* wishes to draw a line between what can be said — propositions of science — and what cannot be said but only shown, the point is not to make an apologia of science, as the latter cannot provide actual explanations of contingency. By tracing the limits of the expression of thought, the gesture can recognise 'the congruence of 'saying' in the scientific sphere, in opposition to the incongruence of it in the 'sphere of logic'[105]. Thereby, it seems that Wittgenstein wants to show the finitude of our thoughts by showing what they can understand, focusing not on that which is empirically given, but on the conditions of possibility of representing it and recognising it as such. This is in order to represent the nature of representation, or, in other words, to draw like a cartographer of cartography, the limited area within which the map of the intellect and all its content can be depicted. To trace this area, a formal description of the world is needed, one that is capable of showing the way in which we represent immediate experience to ourselves, and this implies that it should be a process that remains independent in regards to the depiction of reality in a given moment[106]. The difficulty, however, is in the fact that this very process is realized through truth-tables, *i.e*. through the facticity of language, so as to actualize what, when all is said and done, is the representational form of language and that which makes sense within it[107]. The problems that emerge from this will be the starting point for justifying the major changes over the passage of Wittgenstein's philosophy. However, we must first look at how the picture theory of language articulates with his notion of ethics. Aside from helping to clarify the ethical reasons behind the Tractarian philosopher's task of tracing the limits of the expression of thought, it will also offer important tools to pursue this inquiry.

[102] *Ibid*., 6.31.

[103] *Ibid*., 6.35.

[104] *Ibid*., 6.34.

[105] VENTURINHA, p. 96.

[106] T, 5.526: "We can describe the world completely by means of fully generalized propositions, i.e. without first correlating any name with a particular object."

[107] VENTURINHA, p. 86.

4. Solipsism

Before going into the details of how the enterprise of tracing the limits of thought is ethically loaded, one needs first to further inspect the subject's relation to the world, and how it can help clarify what is problematic with the meaning of life.

The *Tractatus* tells us:

> 5.6. The *limits of my language* mean the limits of my world.
>
> 5.61. Logic pervades the world: the limits of the world are also its limits. So we cannot say in logic, 'The world has this in it, and this, but not that.' For that would appear to presuppose that we were excluding certain possibilities, and this cannot be the case, since it would require that logic should go beyond the limits of the world; for only in that way could it view those limits from the other side as well. We cannot think what we cannot think; so what we cannot think we cannot *say* either.
>
> 5.62. This remark provides the key to the problem, how much truth there is in solipsism.
>
> For what the solipsist *means* is quite correct; only it cannot be *said*, but makes itself manifest.
>
> The world is *my* world: this is manifest in the fact that the limits of *language* (of that language which alone I understand) mean the limits of *my* world.
>
> 5.621. The world and life are one.
>
> 5.63. I am my world. (The microcosm.)

To summarise the above, the world as an object of knowledge is always a representation of the world through the language of the 'I'. Given that its representation is always the 'I''s representation, the represented world is solely its world, hence the insistency on the first-person possessive 'my' of proposition 5.6. The limits of language coincide with the limits of one's representation of the world, as for it to make sense it must depict an existent or non-existent atomic fact, something it necessarily does as language — given that it follows the rules of logical syntax, the rules that bind the structure of language, with the structure of the facts of the world in logical space. More specifically, the limits of representability are expressed by the impossibility of surpassing the rules of logical syntax. Meanwhile, logic 'pervades' the world, and it therefore cannot express anything beyond the totality of facts of the world, as this would mean that logic would be able to go beyond its own boundaries — which is not the case. Consequently, language is confined to the very same limits: "we cannot think what we cannot think", which obviously means that "we cannot *say* it either". However, what is the case are existing atomic facts, and we know that atomic facts are immediate experiences, *i.e.*

phenomenal, and that they must be experiences relative to a subject. Therefore, in a certain sense, Wittgenstein is a solipsist, for when I think or talk about the world, it can only be my world to which I am referring. Notwithstanding, the Wittgensteinian subject, the — philosophical — 'I', is "the limit — not a part of the world"[1], something that becomes clear if one considers that a phenomenal experience is something that appears, is seen, or shows itself from the outside. Thus, the 'I' that experiences the phenomenal experience cannot be the object of its own experience; and this is why, if one chooses to call Wittgenstein a solipsist, one must insist that his solipsist subject is a metaphysical subject — one that is not an event of the world — and can therefore neither be spoken of or thought about.

The great mistake of solipsists is that they cannot resist the temptation of saying that which cannot be said. What is the reason behind this? The clue is in Wittgenstein's denouncement of the dominant misuse of language that is present in philosophical problems. This misuse results from not mastering the rules of logical syntax — rules too often disguised in the colloquial use of language[2]. If solipsists are concerned with formulating sentences such as 'Only I exist', 'My own experience is my only certainty', and so forth, systematically referring to themselves to make their point, this must mean that they fall into the same trap over and over again, namely the one of perceiving the 'I' as a part of the world, as an object of thought, forming thus a three-layered contradiction. The first is that of believing that all experience relates to the representation of the 'I', yet nevertheless implicitly presuming through discourse that the 'I' is a part of that which it represents, *i.e*. the actual world experienced. The second is a consequence of the first, the fact that by doing so, solipsists open up the possibility of thinking that things could be otherwise, that the 'I', as a part of the world it represents, could potentially not exist despite the existence of the world; and which ultimately implies that the world could continue to exist as the representation of the 'other'; given that the world is, for a solipsist, only the world as experience, a thinkable world, and that if a solipsist happens not to exist, despite the existence of the world, another mind would have to represent it in its place.

However, what the solipsist tries to say, what he *means*, "is quite correct" and makes itself "manifest". That is, that "the world and life are one", that the 'I' lives in its own 'microcosm'. Contrarily to the futile attempt to express such a thing through colloquial language, Wittgenstein writes:

[1] T, 5.641. See also, *ibid*., 5.632.

[2] T, 5.5563: "In fact, all the propositions of our everyday language, just as they stand, are in perfect logical order. — That utterly simple thing, which we have to formulate here, is not an image of the truth, but the truth itself in its entirety." For more on the subject see Ch. 3.

> 5.541. At first sight it looks as if it were also possible for one proposition [other than as base of truth-operations, *i.e*. as constituted by names depicting objects of the world] to occur in a different way.
>
> Particularly with certain forms of proposition in psychology, such as 'A believes that *p* is the case' and 'A has the thought *p*' etc. For if these are considered superficially, it looks as if the proposition *p* stood in some kind of relation to an object A …
>
> 5.542. It is clear, however, that 'A believes that *p*', 'A has the thought *p*', and 'A says *p*' are of the form '"*p*" says *p*': and this does not involve a correlation of a fact with an object, but rather the correlation of facts by means of the correlation of their objects.
>
> 5.5421. This shows too that there is no such thing as the soul – the subject, etc. — as it is conceived in the superficial psychology of the present day.
>
> Indeed a composite soul would no longer be a soul.[3]

This means that if such statements where to be thoroughly analysed, all their constitutive elements would mirror elements of the world, the consequence being that 'object A', *i.e*. the 'I' — the 'soul', the 'subject' … — would not appear as a part of these facts due to simply not referring to an object that can serve as its own depiction, as it itself is responsible for all depiction.

As Wittgenstein stated, if the 'I' were to write a book called *The World as I found it*, "it alone could *not* be mentioned in that book"[4]. Alternatively, as Schopenhauer might have put it, if the 'I' were to attempt to represent itself in the world, it would be like "a winged cherub without a body"[5]. Analogously, there is nothing in the case of the visual field alone that allows one "to infer that it is seen by an eye"[6]. In other words, the world alone does not allow one to say that it is the world of the willing subject: "The subject does not belong to the world: rather, it is a limit of the world"[7], and this also means that the world, as experience, is essentially *a posteriori*, determined by an independent reality. It is this realisation, made possible through the rigorous analysis of colloquial language, to which Wittgenstein refers when declaring that "solipsism, when its implications are followed out strictly, coincides with pure realism"[8]. Our original depiction of the world, from which colloquial language originates, reflects the very structure of the world *as such*, as configurated by the objects of reality, with no trace whatsoever

[3] *Ibid*.

[4] *Ibid*., 5.631.

[5] SCHOPENHAUER, I, p. 99.

[6] T, 5.633.

[7] *Ibid*.

[8] *Ibid*., 5.64.

of the subject representing it: "The self of solipsism shrinks [by means of logical analysis] to a point without extension, and there remains the reality co-ordinated with it"[9].

Altogether, the truth of solipsism lies in the fact that all that can be known belongs to the world of the 'I' and its microcosm, *i.e.* its immediate experience of reality as determined by its representation of the world. The reason why solipsism equals pure realism is that when purified from all linguistic misuse, it states the 'perfect logical order' of language, its perfect mirroring of the structure of the world as presented by reality; nevertheless this "amounts to just as little as can be said by solipsism. — For what belongs to the essence of the world simply *cannot* be said"[10]. If there is "no *a priori* order of things"[11], it is due to 'things' belonging to a dominion that can only be — empirically — presented through experience, meaning above all that the 'I', as if "dependent on an alien will"[12], cannot govern the world as experience simply for not taking part of it, leading us to the familiar but troublesome statement that the willing subject cannot have the slightest impact on the contingencies of the world. The 'I' is thereby condemned to either deny or accept the world as imposed by God, embracing its destiny as a blessing or a curse. However, what would happen if the world were hostile and painful? Would the 'I' have to wait for the arbitrariness of reality to favour it again? Or would there be any chance of it seizing the reins of life and influencing its outcome? It seems that when out of luck, one can only choose to hope for the best. Yet, knowing that the world is only *my* world, *my* experience of reality, why do we feel obliged to deal with it at all? Would it not be more natural to renounce living rather than to willingly venture into something that, indifferent to our fate, can too often lead to ordeals?

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] PR, §54: "The proposition that only the present experience has reality appears to contain the last consequence of solipsism. And in a sense that is so; only what it is able to say amount to just as little as can be said by solipsism. — For what belong to the essence of the world simply *cannot* be said. And philosophy, if it were to say anything, would have to describe the essence of the world."

[11] T, 5.634.

[12] NB, 8.7.16.

5. Living in Timelessness

The experience of 'total reality'[1] is what Wittgenstein calls the 'mystical'. He writes: "Feeling the world as a limited whole — it is this that is mystical"[2]. These limits are the limits of factuality and cannot be spoken of, for it would mean that it could be described from outside language, when it can only be felt; the experienced totality not being formed by a circumstantial circumscription of a set of things of the world in contrast to the rest of it, but as the manifestation of the world as a contingent, and thereby unique, whole[3]: "It is not *how* things are in the world that is mystical, but *that* it exists"[4], that the world is as it is[5]. This feeling corresponds to what Wittgenstein describes in his *Lecture on Ethics* as his ethical experience *par excellence*, of wondering "*at the existence of the world*"[6]. The reason for this experience being ethical becomes immediately clear when referenced to the passage from 7.10.16 in the *Notebooks*: "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"; complemented by proposition 6.45 of the *Tractatus*: "The contemplation of the word *sub specie aeterni* is its contemplation as a limited whole". The similarities between the aesthetical and ethical attitude come from their analogous experiences. Works of art are seen, not at a "certain distance from oneself, and in changing relation to oneself and other things" — "not in relation to some particular thing rather than another"[7], but in Wittgenstein's words, 'from outside', "together

1 See Ch.3, p.28.

2 T, 6.45.

3 It is implicit to this statement that the idea of a 'whole', of an abstract universality, must derive from that which is the case, meaning that we have an a priori relation to the thought of 'totality' (VENTURINHA, p. 129)

4 T, 6.44; LE, p. 9: "I could of course wonder at the world round me being as it is. If for instance I had this experience [the ethical experience] while looking into the blue sky, I could wonder at the sky being blue as opposed to the case when it's clouded. But that's not what I mean. I am wondering at the sky being *whatever it is*."

5 We must remind ourselves of the crucial distinction between reality (the totality of existent and non-existent objects) and empirical reality — configurated by totality of objects as the existent atomic facts —, *i.e.*, the world (see Ch. 2). We might as well say that the mystical is feeling the empirical reality as a limited whole.

6 LE, pp. 7–8: "Then what have all of us who, like myself, are still tempted to use such expressions as "absolute good", "absolute value", etc., what have we in mind and what do we try to express? Now whenever I try to make this clear to myself it is natural that I should recall cases in which I would certainly use these expression …. Now in this situation I am, if I want to fix my mind on what I mean by absolute or ethical value. And there, in my case, it always happens that the idea of one particular experience presents itself to me which therefore is, in a sense, my experience *par excellence* …, I will use this experience as my first and foremost example …. I believe the best way of describing it is to say that when I have it *I wonder at the existence of the world*."

7 GRIFFITHS, p.97.

with the whole logical space"[8]. The good life is seen "not as a possible life of this body with its history and its future and its individual wants and wishes, but as a life with no particular pre-eminence embedded in all life"[9], as life in its entirety, *i.e*. as the representation of the whole of experience, the represented world. Considering that the good life is the life lived in agreement with the world, it can only mean that the representation of the world — language — and that which is the case are in perfect cohesion, meaning that the distinction between world and language loses sense, given that there is no distinction to make, and this is the reason why the feeling of the mystical cannot be put into words. But how can this be achieved? From the moment reality is independent of our will, how can man "be happy at all, since he cannot ward off the misery of this world?"[10].

Wittgenstein's answer to this is, "through the life of knowledge"[11]; a life that is happy "in spite of the misery of the world"[12]; and through which continuous practice preserves the "good conscience" corresponding to the state of mind of a happy form of life[13]. Taking into account that he does not hesitate to assimilate conscience to 'the voice of God'[14]; the good conscience, directly correlated to happiness, must be the conscience of the one who lives in accordance with this voice, and, only in this sense, can one conclude that "what is Good is Divine too"[15]. Likewise, insofar as the I has to be in agreement with the world to live happily, it also implies that it is "in agreement with that alien will" on which it appears to be dependent, allowing it to say, "I am doing the will of God"[16]. To do the contrary would be to 'upset' the equilibrium[17], the balance being on one side, the conscience of the 'I', and on the other, the will of God — the world which is given to me, or in other words — "how things stand"[18]. Happiness must therefore be a state where such a balance one's conscience, for being good, is in harmony with that which is the case, which is manifest. This reflects a conception of God not only as the

8 NB, 7.10.16.

9 GRIFFITHS, p.97.

10 NB, 13.8.16.

11 *Ibid.*

12 *Ibid.*

13 *Ibid.*: "The good conscience is the happiness that the life of knowledge preserves."

14 *Ibid.*, 8.7.16.

15 He goes on to say "… That, strangely enough, sums up my ethics." (CV, p.5).

16 NB, 8.7.16.

17 *Ibid.*

18 *Ibid.* 1.8.16.

creation of the world *ex nihilo*, but as the world's continuous creation[19], coherently matching the postulation that a criterion for happiness must be a depiction of the world that is sustainable by the latter's facts, possible thanks to the original harmony between thought and reality established in logical space. Consequently, the good conscience belongs to those who manage to systematically — and harmoniously — readapt their depiction of the world in accordance with its continuous reconfiguration, with that which is the case at any precise moment of time and space. To live in agreement with the world is therefore, to live continuously in agreement with the present, which, in turn entails living timelessly by not conceiving either a past or a future, but what is the case: "Only a man who lives not in time but in the present is happy"[20], and this neatly coincides with the statement that the happy man, in contrast to the unhappy man, does not fear death[21], and neither does he hope[22]. This is simply because death, as the end of all experience and hope — as the awaiting for that which one has not yet been experienced, cannot be imagined as long as one's representations are limited to the mere presence of life. All this corresponds to seeing the world *sub specie aeterni* and to the mystical, which means one could say that "the only ethics there can be is of the mystical"[23]. By living in the present, immediate experience thereby totalises all possible representations of that which is before and after. In Wittgenstein's words, if "we take eternity to mean not infinite temporal duration but timelessness, then eternal life belongs to those who live in the present"[24]. At this point, rather than considering the assertion of the contingency of reality as something to be dealt with, it disappears as a problem, as contingency can only be spoken of in regard to temporality; and, insofar as the good life and the ethical, becomes an integral part of one's experience of the world, it cannot be approached as an object of thought (as the contrary would imply its disintegration into a part of the world, when it is already coinciding with it). This leads to the statement that ethics is no longer seen as a part of language, and therefore, the deriving —

[19] PPO, p. 215: "It is strange that one says God created the world & not: God is creating, continually, the world. For why should it be a greater miracle that it began to be, rather than that it continued to be. One is led astray by the simile of the craftsperson. That someone makes a shoe is an accomplishment, but once made (out of what is existing) it endures on its own for a while. But if one thinks of God as creator, must the conservation of the universe not be a miracle just as great as its creation, — yes, aren't the two one and the same? Why should I postulate a singular act of creation & not a continuous act of conservation — which began at some point, which had a temporal beginning, or what amounts to the same, a continuous creating?"

[20] NB, 8.7.16.

[21] *Ibid.*

[22] *Ibid.*, 14.7.16.

[23] GRIFFITHS, p.98.

[24] T, 6.4311.

ethical — problem of seeing it as so disappears: "The solution of the problem of life is seen in the vanishing of this problem"[25]. This is why the reason that those who manage to overcome unhappiness and embrace the sense of life are incapable of saying what it consists of[26].

From this perspective, the subject of ethics can only be treated from the standpoint of one actually experiencing the problem of life, possible only insofar as living in disagreement with the world, which is the same as living an unhappy life[27]. However, this disagreement must result from a disjunction in language itself; that is, from the distinction in language between an independent exteriority — the world —, and an interiority, the empirical subject that depends on it. This dependency cannot be shown more clearly than through notions of birth and death, both of which are represented life events that surpass the empirical subject's will to live it. For this reason, fear of death becomes, "the best sign of a false, *i.e*. bad life" [28], and this is because from the standpoint of the happy life, and considering that language and immediate experience coincide, fearing death makes no sense, as for the happy subject there is no such thing as death, given that there is no death in the immediate experience of the world nor in the present depiction of it. The ultimate implication is that "we do not live to experience death"[29]. People who represent themselves in the world meanwhile, conceive of themselves as passing events, constituting the notion of death linguistically and from within the experience of life, as the end of *their* experience[30], that is, as the end of the possibility to live happily[31]. However, even when living in fear, hope is not truly lost, since the empirical subject, regardless of conditions, is conceived through the will of the transcendental 'I', which remains independent of the world[32]. At this point, one should ask how the empirical subject can be redeemed through its transcendental will.

[25] T, 6.521.

[26] *Ibid*.: "… (Is not this the reason why those who have found after a long period of doubt that the sense of life became clear to them have then been unable to say what constituted that sense?)"

[27] NB, 7.7.16: "When my conscience upsets my equilibrium, then I am not in agreement with Something. But what is this? Is it *the world*?"

[28] *Ibid*.

[29] T, 6.4311.

[30] PPO, p. 207: "A human being lives his ordinary life with the illumination of a light which he is not aware until it is extinguished. … It is as if the sheen was wiped away from all things, [continuation in footnote] everything is dead. This sometimes happens after a sickness, for example — but of course it is not therefore less real or important, that is, not taken care of by a shrug. One has then died alive. Or rather: this is the real death that one can fear, for the mere 'end of life' one does not experience (as I have written quite correctly)."

[31] *Ibid*., p. 185: "The horrible instant in an unblessed death must be the thought: "Oh if only I had… Now it's too late." Oh if only I had lived right!"

[32] *Ibid*., p. 119: "One could put it like this: Marvellous is that what is dead cannot sin. And that what lives can sin but also renounce sin: I can be bad only to the extent that I can also be good."

To do so, one must live in agreement with the world, meaning that *my* world as I wish it to be must correspond with it as it is. This makes the issue a linguistic concern, a matter of forming a representation of a good world that coincides with that which is the case. Wittgenstein does consider the possibility of thinking of something as good or bad independently of that which is the case, so allowing one to imagine someone capable of not recognising the world as it is as good, and consequently believing that things could be better[33]. What would then happen if the states of affairs underlying a desired representation of the world never came true? If the propositions capable of affirming that which is good were never to find their corresponding elements in the actualised reality of one's experiences? The troublesome aspect of depending on the realisation of a 'situation *p*'[34] that is good in order to be happy, is the change of roles between language and world. If language is that which mirrors the world, here, the empirical subject appears to expect the world to mirror its language. Such a desire can only cause distress, not because the world is necessarily miserable (misery being a judgement of value external to it), but because reality configures itself independently of our will — that is, contingently — which makes one's desired situation just one in an infinity of others, each which can rapidly become equally (im)probable. It suddenly becomes more challenging to keep hope alive, and wait for the world one wishes to live in; the chances of disappointment being far greater than those of being favourable[35]. Continuous suffering seems thus inevitable. One could even say that between defeatism and hope verging on despair, the former would, at least, be more realistic and, to this extent, less frustrating. Consequently, the desire to live a happy life turns into an additional burden, an endless delusion, and even a false hope, causing even greater unhappiness by reinforcing the disjunction between the empirical subject and the world, life's bad attitude towards itself, one's own bad consciousness. Happiness becomes, hence, more of a problem than a solution, suggesting the value of a search for other alternatives that could solve the problem of life. Bearing this in mind, insofar as life appears to equal systematic suffering, why would one not want to end it? Suicide does seem to be the natural solution for such a discouraging world. Not only can it be seen as the proof of one's fearlessness of death, and thereby of one's moment of happiness, but also by refusing to experience the world that is enforced as an empirical subject — as an act of the will, which could be perceived as the purest

[33] NB, 20.9.14: "*We assume*: that *p* is NOT *the case*: now what does it mean to say "that p, is good"? Quite obviously we can say that the situation p is good without knowing whether "p" is true or false."

[34] *Ibid*.

[35] T, 6.374: "Even if all that we wish for were to happen, still this would only be a favour granted by fate, so to speak: for there is no *logical* connexion between the will and the world, which would guarantee it, and the supposed physical connexion itself is surely not something that we could will."

expression of the willing subject's freedom, of its independency of the world. Could Wittgenstein be, if not explicitly, at least implicitly, promoting suicide? If not, how could taking one's own life not be preferable to any other outcome? Could there be any other reasonable solution for the problem of life?

In contrast to first impressions, far from seeing suicide as a justifiable emancipation from the misery of the world, Wittgenstein considers the possibility of labelling it life's elementary sin. On the very last page of his *Notebooks*, he states:

> 10.1.17
> If suicide is allowed then everything is allowed.
> If anything is not allowed then suicide is not allowed.
> This throws a light on the nature of ethics, for suicide is, so to speak, the elementary sin.
> And when one investigates it it is like investigating mercury vapour in order to comprehend the nature of vapours.
> Or is even suicide in itself neither good nor evil?

Considering that ethics encourages or discourages given attitudes to life, the act of ending one's own life must be a crime against the ethical realm of living and against the attainability of goodness. By putting an end to life, one can put an end to the ethical, thus committing the sin of rejecting life's responsibility towards itself — of living happily. There are two comparisons that can be made between the investigation of suicide and mercury vapour. In both cases, the investigation tries to identify that which cannot be seen, in order to understand that which encompasses it; life on one hand and the nature of vapour on the other. In the case of suicide, its *raison d'être* cannot be depicted as a fact of the world, as it is an act that springs from one's attitude towards it. To this extent, investigating suicide as a means of understanding the life form that is contemplating it, must be as hopeless as trying to observe mercury's invisible vapour with the naked eye. Furthermore, the lethality of mercury vapour may reflect the temptation raised when considering suicide as an outlet for life. A temptation that is justified by the above reasons — and by the awareness of the near impossible chance of the world coinciding with one's wishes —, and that by its very nature stresses its sinful qualities. What is it then that leads Wittgenstein to conclude his thoughts by questioning his initial statements? As the 'I' is intrinsically willing, it would be inconceivable for it to will its non-willing, as its non-willing cannot be a part of the derived experiences of willing, and thereby, cannot be a part of its language, *i.e.* of its thoughts. In this sense, committing suicide must surely always come as a surprise, as something that in a certain sense is externally imposed:

> I know that to kill oneself is always a dirty thing to do. Surely one *cannot* will one's own destruction, and anybody who has visualized what is in practice involved in the act of suicide know that suicide is always a *rushing of one's own defences*. But nothing is worse than to be forced to take oneself by surprise.[36]

In other words, one cannot will one's own death, as by definition, death is the end of experience, the end of all representations that one could ever wish for or consciously attempt to reach. Even in the case of a supposedly rational, calculated suicide, the impossibility of knowing what lies beyond someone's experience reveals the fact that the subject at hand is not choosing between two situations that have been deliberated on, as there is nothing that corresponds to death. Rather, it is denying one single situation, known as the cause of the subject's unbearable suffering. Therefore, suicide is not a moment of happiness, but the culmination of unhappiness. A culmination for which the consequences cannot be known, and, that therefore cannot be rational[37]. This implies that suicide cannot be considered an act of will, and that consequently, it cannot belong to the realm of ethics as it is "neither good nor evil", and that, finally, it cannot be a suitable case study for value judgements. However, this does not mean that suicide is freed from all criticism. Rather, the criticism does not regard the act in itself, which is always a "rushing of one's own defence". It is instead aimed more specifically at the epistemological presuppositions that could lead to the belief that suicide is a solution to the problem of life, when actually, it is a situational negation of experience, a raw desire to 'make it stop', thereby eclipsing any solution whatsoever.

The first step towards happiness is, quite correctly, to look into oneself. As Wittgenstein once wrote to Engelmann[38]:

> If I am unhappy and know that my unhappiness reflects a gross discrepancy between myself and life as it is, I solved nothing; I shall be on the wrong track and I shall never find a way out of the chaos of my emotions and thoughts so long as I have not achieved the supreme and crucial insight that that discrepancy is not the fault of life as it is, but of myself as I am…

[36] ENGELMANN, 21.06.20.

[37] This is comparable to Spinoza's stance when it comes to suicide. Since the *conatus* is led by the desire to persevere in existence, suicide cannot be caused by one's own will to end his life, but must be imposed as a lesser evil: "Nobody, I repeat, refuses food or kills himself from the necessity of his own nature, but from the constraint of external causes. … that a man from the necessity of his own nature should endeavour to cease to exist or to be changed into another form, is as impossible as that something should come from nothing, as anyone can see with a little thought." (SPINOZA, IV, prop. 20, scholium).

[38] MONK, p. 185.

With suicide not being an alternative, the only escape route from such a condition would be to correct oneself, meaning correcting one's representation of the world, and thereby, the representation of oneself as an empirical subject. If it makes sense to speak of ethics despite the willing subject's incapacity to change that which is conceived as one's exteriority, it is because "it is not the world of Idea that is either good or evil; but the willing subject" that represents the world of Idea[39]; and whose good or bad willing does not change the facts or the things expressed by language, but makes the world "wax or wane as a whole", "as if by accession or loss of meaning"[40]. This world has to be the subjective world, the word 'meaning', here does not refer to the name's denotation of simple objects (whose meaning *is*), but to the problem of life, and whether one's acting upon language gets one closer to, or farther from living in agreement with that which is the case: "That something occurs to you is a gift from heaven, but it depends on what you make of it"[41]. Of course, the empirical subject would, unless if touched by the grace of faith, struggle to make the occurrence correspond to that which they judge it should be; representing within the limits of language a given exteriority in contrast to a desired one.

This poses an immediate problem, for as we already know, Wittgenstein explicitly notes that the ethical experience of living in agreement with the world does not derive from a comparison between possible states of affairs, of which the desired one is considered to be the case[42]. Such parallelism can only be formed within the boundaries of language, and only reaffirms the disjunction between world and representation. Hence, Wittgenstein's critique of all attempts to form ethical propositions, which are actually, commonly regarded as metaphysical: those that Wittgenstein perceives as being the main cause of false philosophical problems for not respecting the rules of logical syntax. He famously condemned talk about "whether intuitive knowledge exists, whether values exist, whether the good is definable" as

[39] NB, 2.8.16: "It would be possible to say (à la Schopenhauer): It is not the world of Idea that is either good or evil; but the willing subject."

[40] NB, 5.7.16; T, 6.43. The verbs 'to wax' and 'to wane' reveal an action, and thereby, something which is realized progressively. Wittgenstein did not write in greater detail in his early works about what such progression consists of. However, his so-called second philosophy allows one to investigate the matter more thoroughly (see Ch. 9). For now, this clarifying remark from his later days, already partially quoted (here in brackets) in note 31 of this chapter should suffice: "[The horrible instant in an unblessed death must be the thought: "Oh if only I had… Now it's too late." Oh if only I had lived right!] And the blessed instant must be: "Now it is accomplished!" — But how must one have lived in order to tell oneself this! I think there must be degrees here, too. *But I myself, where am I? How far from the good & how close to the lower end!*"" (PPO, p. 185).

[41] PPO, p. 109.

[42] *Ibid.*, p. 9: "I could of course wonder at the world round me being as it is. If for instance I had this experience [the ethical experience] while looking into the blue sky, I could wonder at the sky being blue as opposed to the case when it's clouded. But that's not what I mean. I am wondering at the sky being *whatever it is*."

simply being "claptrap about ethics"[43]. On the same occasion, he even insisted that he rejected all explanation in ethics, "not because the explanation [is] false, but because it [is] an *explanation*": "If I were told anything that was a *theory*, I would say, No, no! That does not interest me. Even if the theory was true, it would not interest me — it would not be *that* I was looking for. What is ethical cannot be taught"[44]. In a response to one of Paul Engelmann's letters that suggested he seemed to have 'lost faith', Wittgenstein couldn't help but agree with his friend's impression, concluding that they might as well "cut the transcendental twaddle when the whole thing is as plain as a sock in the jaw"[45]. The polemical anecdote described by Popper in his autobiography, namely of his discussion with Wittgenstein in Cambridge's Moral Sciences Club, further strengthens this hypothesis. According to Popper, Wittgenstein challenged him to give an example of a moral rule, confident that no such rule could ever be legitimately established[46], as for Wittgenstein, ethical propositions are nonsensical. However, this says little about ethics itself, but only about the propositions trying to speak of it 'objectively'. To return to the *Tractatus*:

> 6.4. All propositions are of equal value.
>
> 6.41. 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 any value that does have value, it must lie outside the whole sphere of what happens and is the case. For all that happens and is the case is accidental.
>
> What makes it non-accidental cannot lie *within* the world, since if it did it would itself be accidental.
>
> It must lie outside the world.
>
> 6.42. So too it is impossible for there to be propositions of ethics.
>
> Propositions can express nothing that is higher.
>
> 6.421. It is clear that ethics cannot be put into words.
>
> Ethics is transcendental.

Wittgenstein does not define how he uses the word 'value', however, it is clear that 'value' implies judgement; judging whether something is good or bad, pretty or ugly, praiseworthy or not, and so forth. Indeed, statements bearing a form of judgement such as, for

[43] WVC, pp. 68–69.

[44] *Ibid.*, pp. 116–117.

[45] ENGELMANN, 16.1.18.

[46] POPPER, pp.140–142.

instance, "Thou shalt…"[47] do not seem to coincide with bipolar propositions. If, in a given context, someone says, "the cat is on the table", the interlocutor will, by understanding the sense of the proposition, know if it is true or false. Meanwhile, in the previous example, the statement does not represent any actual fact of the world, and whether the command is followed or not, does not make it true or false. In other words, a picture does not judge its content (it would be awkward if it did). The legitimacy of statements that express a judgement of value does not depend on any truth-value, they are of a different form to those of propositions with sense. Thus, if the meaning of the world (or its sense, which, from within the limits of language amounts to the same) *i.e*. God, lies outside *my* world, beyond that which could ever be depicted; and the world is the totality of facts, the totality of propositions with sense that are true; value cannot be a part if it is to have any value, as everything that is the case — the world of facts — is accidental. As 'value' is considered a matter of ethics, and if one takes into account that the willing subject is not only the bearer of ethics but also independent of reality[48], value must have its origins in the attitude of the willing subject, preserving its non-accidental, independent character in regard to the contingencies of the world[49]. It is for this precise reason that there can be no propositions of ethics[50]. The answer to the question of which type of proposition ethics belongs to is therefore *none*. This also means that Wittgenstein's disdain was never directed towards ethics itself, but towards all attempts to objectify or consider it a part of language as doing so leads to nonsensical propositions, given that the signs that compose them do not refer to any objects of the world, and are therefore fundamentally meaningless despite their attempts to mean something. All in all, ethics is not to be found in language: "it is clear that ethics has nothing to do with punishment and reward in the ordinary sense"[51]. The consequences of one's actions, taken as the realisation of a new state of affairs, must be "irrelevant"[52], or in other words; "you cannot lead people to the good; you can only lead them to some place or other", for the 'good' lies "outside the space of facts"[53]. So where *is* goodness to be found? If it does not belong in the facts of the world it can only be encountered in the "will as the subject of the

47 T, 6.422.

48 See Ch. 1, p.9.

49 T, 6.41.

50 *Ibid*., 6.42.

51 *Ibid*., 6.422.

52 *Ibid*.

53 CV, p. 5.

ethical"[54], in the already predicted actions of the transcendental 'I'. This suggests that the ethical reward and punishment for following an ethical law "lie in the action itself" [55]. An action, which necessarily is a willing action if it is to be considered as such[56], and which, therefore, is also the bearer of ethical predicates[57]. Thus, ethics does not spring only from action, but action is its own ethical reward and punishment. Action becomes the means of expression for the ethical, but also its reason to be. The 'phenomenal basis'[58] of this thought derives from the world and life being one[59], and from the fact that life is the world as the object of the will. This world is the world as representation; meaning that as long as the reward for one's actions is expected to be found in the world as a compensation for the empirical subject, one is at mercy of a contingent reality. The key to a good life thereby is to find an — ethical — meaning that determines one's representation of the world, *i.e.* one's actions; one that bends, so to say, the teleological loop of the meaning of life, the purpose of existence, and turns it into a self-sufficient cycle; where one acts for the acting itself, independently of the reality that gives life its content. If the meaning of life does indeed lie outside the world[60], cherishing and living this meaning means living it independently of what is the case, and therefore in agreement with whatever the world may be[61]. The one fulfilling the purpose of existence "no longer needs to have any purpose except to live"[62].

What one can conclude from these thoughts is, firstly, that ethics is not a matter for the empirical subject. The latter can only be recognised by means of language, by depicting it as a part of the world, and, consequently, in reference to the facts of the world. Therefore, even if an empirical subject necessarily cultivates judgements of value insofar as a form of expression of the transcendental subject, it is not the ethical agent *per se*. In addition, ethics is neither to be found in the empirical subject's limited conception of subjectivity, nor in its limited

54 T, 6.423.

55 *Ibid.*, 6.422. That the ethical reward lies in the action itself is comparable to SPINOZA's conception of virtue as its own reward (V, prop. 42).

56 NB, 4.11.16.

57 *Ibid.*, 21.7.16.

58 VENTURINHA, p.172.

59 NB, 24.7.16; T, 5.621.

60 NB, 11.6.16.

61 In more radical terms, Wittgenstein writes: "When I "have done with the world" I have created an amorphous (transparent) mass & and the world in all its variety is left on one side like an uninteresting lumber room. Or perhaps more precisely: the whole outcome of this entire work is for the world to be set on one side. (A throwing-into-the-lumber-room of the whole world.)" (CV, p. 12).

62 NB, 6.7.16.

conception of exteriority. Happiness reside in the judgement of one's own actions, that is, whenever one's own actions are judged as right, *i.e.* in accordance with one's adopted ethical prescription. In this sense, Wittgenstein's encouragement to "live happy"[63] is neither hedonist nor eudaemonist (both of which find their rewards in worldly goods); on the contrary, it is an invitation to let go of egoistic interests[64] — assuming the independency of the willing subject to devote itself to act according to its adopted resolutions. Secondly, ethics is mystical, which implies that it is ineffable. However, even though no knowledge can be gleaned from this, only a life of knowledge can lead to a happy life; this is something that is not thoroughly elaborated in Wittgenstein's early writings and is therefore something that needs to be looked at in the light of his later work[65]. This said, clearly, ethics is for Wittgenstein transcendent. It lies beyond the limits of experience: "… there can be no ethical proposition. Propositions cannot express anything that is higher"[66]. Thirdly, ethics show the waxing and waning of the world — as represented — as a whole, and alter it in relation to one's attitude towards it. Either one lives in agreement with the world, preserving language as it is, or one does not, altering language in order to try to make sense out of experience, *i.e.* of life. As we know, this kind of alteration of language follows a logic of degrees, where one pole is the fall of an empirical subject to the mercy of reality, and the other is the content of the willing subject with whatever is the case. Both poles express the omnipresence of the accidental; what changes is the transcendental subject's attitude towards it. It can be perceived as either a tyrannical alien will, or as a space within which one is allowed to act in accordance with one's resolutions and thereby live happily regardless of past or future events. Either way, within the movement of these poles, language changes or remains unchanged, and, with this, whatever might be considered knowledge can also be altered or preserved, not only partially, but in its entirety[67]. To this extent, ethics is not merely transcendent. The world as representation is the world of the philosophical self, the metaphysical 'I', whose will can penetrate the world and alter it entirely. Knowledge, as it belongs to this world, depends on the subject's attitude towards it. In all its dynamism, ethics is, the condition of the possibility of knowledge, something that allows one to say that if the

63 NB, 8.7.16.

64 VENTURINHA, p.196.

65 See Ch. 9.

66 T, 6.42.

67 This topic is particularly well developed in *On Certainty* (See Ch. 9). As a starter, we may quote C, §404: "I want to say: it's not that on some points men know the truth with perfect certainty. No: perfect certainty is only a matter of their attitude."

empirical subject is at the mercy of the will of God, knowledge is at the mercy of the willing subject: “Ethics is transcendental”[68].

[68] T, 6.421.

6. The Ethical Purpose of the Tractatus

At this point, one needs to ask what is the good of philosophy, given that most of its propositions are a complex babble that appears to be concerned with problems too abstract to treat something as down-to-earth as the desire to live a 'good life'. For Wittgenstein, "a philosophic work consists essentially of elucidations"; not of "'philosophical propositions', but rather in the clarification of propositions", without which our thoughts would be "cloudy and indistinct" [1]. It is not as if he despises what philosophy has managed to do[2], but that he considers that the main cause of philosophical problems is the method of their formulation, which "rests on the misunderstanding of the logic of our language"[3]. Philosophy should not pretend to be a supernatural metalanguage capable of formulating a sort of unquestionable 'body doctrine'[4] that treats how we should relate to the world, because the expression of thought cannot surpass the limits of language. The process of clarifying propositions does not follow self-established, independent, metaphysical rules, but those constituted by the linguistic system, the logical syntax of the language to which it belongs. Therefore, if all philosophy is a 'critique of language'[5] made from within, it cannot be considered a doctrine, but rather, an activity[6]; namely one that is of language's self-inspection. However, if one considers that philosophy is language's self-inspection — the activity of inspecting activity —, and that action is a will that endorses an ethical attitude to the world — how can philosophy, as defined by the *Tractatus*, be ethical?

If the aim of the *Tractatus* is to show how the problems of philosophy derive from attempting to say what cannot be said, the dissolution of these problems must be found in stating that they derive from what *can* be said, which originate from empirical propositions. This is not to say that empirical propositions leave nothing else to wish for, or that all the problems to life can be solved by science — as otherwise we would not wish to speak of the unspeakable in the

1 T, 4.111, 4.112.

2 As told by Drury, when they "… were discussing a suitable title for the book which later he [Wittgenstein] called *Philosophical Investigations*", Drury "… foolishly suggested he should just call it "Philosophy". He was indignant. "How could I take a word like that which has meant so much in the history of mankind; as if my writings were anything more than a small fragment of philosophy?"" (ENGEL (1970), p. 513).

3 T, p.9.

4 *Ibid*., 4.112.

5 *Ibid*., 4.0031.

6 *Ibid*., 4.112.

first place —; rather, it is to demonstrate "how little has been done when these problems are solved"[7]. What really matters does not belong to the realm of the effable — as bad examples of philosophy would have one believe —, but to the mystical. For this reason, we cannot help *feeling* that "even if *all possible* scientific questions are answered, the problems of life have still not been touched at all"[8]. Having said this, and taking into account Wittgenstein's letter to von Ficker[9], one can conclude that by showing the limits of thought, Wittgenstein is not making an apologia of science; rather, he is revealing how scientific propositions make sense solely in the sphere of representable experience, whilst remaining completely powerless in the sphere of logic — the sphere that is incapable of representing the mystical[10]. From this, one can say that Wittgenstein is certainly not taking an anti-metaphysical stance, as many of his contemporaries believed (*e.g.* Popper), not to mention the — few who still today do not hesitate to label him as a positivist. What Wittgenstein actually seems to defend is not the absurdness of metaphysics, but the absurdness of verbalising it. Hence, what one witnesses in his work is not a rejection of the meta-physical as an epiphenomenon of the physical, but a radical affirmation of negative metaphysics[11]. As expounded in Wittgenstein's eulogy of the 'magnificent' poem Engelmann shared with him (Uhland's *Count Eberhard's Hawthorn*), "… this is how it is: if only you do not try to utter what is unutterable then *nothing* gets lost. But the unutterable will be — unutterably — *contained* in what has been uttered!"[12].

Finally, if ethics is transcendental, and living in agreement with the world — living happily — means being content with one's representation of the world regardless, showing thereby complete independence of reality, the willing subject must plain and simple learn to live for the sake of living. This also means that it must find the purpose of existence in the ethical reward of acting in accordance with its own values. Indeed, if philosophy '*must*' "set limits to what can be thought; and, in doing so, to what cannot be thought", and '*must*' "set

7 T, p. 10.

8 *Ibid.*, 6.52.

9 LLF, p. 94: "… my work consists of two parts: of the one which is here, and of everything which I have *not* written. And precisely this second part is the important one. For the Ethical is delimited from within, as it were, by my book; and I'm convinced that, *strictly* speaking, it can ONLY be delimited in this way."

10 LE, p. 8: "Now let me consider these [ethical] experiences for, I believe, they exhibit the very characteristics we try to get clear about. And there the first thing I have to say is, that the verbal expression which we give to these experiences is nonsense! If I say "I wonder at the existence of the world" I am misusing language. … One might be tempted to say that what I am wondering at is a tautology, namely at the sky being blue or not blue. But the it's just nonsense to say that one is wondering at a tautology."

11 VENTURINHA, p. 96.

12 ENGELMANN, 9.4.17.

limits to what cannot be thought by working outwards through what can be thought"[13], and that "whereof one cannot speak thereof one *must* be silent"[14], it must be because all these propositions can only mean something for a life that is already in disagreement with the world; and that such unhappy life *must* stop looking for the purpose of existence in the represented world. From an ethical perspective, Wittgenstein adopts the role, not of saying where those hoping to solve the problem of life should go, but of warning them of where they should *not* go[15], for, as we know, "you cannot lead people to what is good; you can only lead them to some place or other. The good is outside the space of facts"[16]. From this perspective, the *Tractatus* embodies a therapeutic calling, but its therapy is a negative one; it dictates what one should *not* do in order to find happiness. Any path taken can, however, only be a personal path, given that the meaningfulness of life lies in actions undertaken by the willing subject, in the independent, and thereby singular, instance of one's own existence. These actions are independent of the world, and are the very foundation of the ethical. Hence, Wittgenstein's aim is to show that ethics needs to take care of itself, and that to live happily means to live ethically; that is, to make a resolution for life and live accordingly[17]. This amounts to saying that the transcendental subject should live in accordance with itself. According to Weininger (one of Wittgenstein's most polemical influences): "*Truthfulness, purity, fidelity, sincerity toward oneself*: that is the only conceivable ethics"[18]. However, if one ever reaches such a state of beatitude, then the propositions of the *Tractatus* must appear nonsensical[19] given their inscription in a world that must be wholly different from that of whoever is living happily. The meaningfulness of the Tractarian propositions depends on the internal disagreement between life and world. Likewise, whoever reaches happiness via Tractarian therapeutics, climbing up and beyond its propositions like steps towards the mystical, *must* throw the ladder away[20]. This implies that to see the world 'aright'[21] is to assume the duty of rejecting the world of the unhappy, and to stand in full responsibility for oneself and the world one chooses to live in.

13 T, 4.113, 4.114.

14 *Ibid*., 7.

15 *Ibid*., 6.53.

16 CV, p. 5.

17 VENTURINHA, p. 167.

18 WEININGER, p. 139. On Weininger's influence on Wittgenstein see Monk, pp. 19–25.

19 T, 6.54.

20 *Ibid*.

21 *Ibid*.

7. Transition

The focus of this chapter is to outline the fundamental change and distinct traits between Wittgenstein's early and later period. This entails putting aside a considerable number of remarks that many might consider relevant to a deeper understanding of the matter at hand, and which is much more complex than the treatment that will be able to be given here...

Thus, it may be useful to begin with the relation between names and objects, which enables the analysis of the truth-value of all propositions. As established, objects in the *Tractatus* are conceived as those that determine the existence and non-existence of atomic facts through their configurations — that determine immediate experience —, and that the names founding the elementary propositions denote. If no examples of elementary propositions were ever found or given, it is because this reflects a difficulty Wittgenstein already felt during the development of his logical analysis[1]. Language does not seem to provide any deeper or more accurate description of experience than what it already offers, and, when it does provide something, it does not approach experience as if it were a form of sense-data with which the elements of the description would coincide[2]:

> §1080. Imagine looking at flowing water. The picture presented by the surface keeps on changing. Lights and darks everywhere appear and disappear. What would I call an 'exact description' of this visual picture? There's nothing I would call that. If someone says it can't be described, one can reply: You don't know what it would be right to call a description. For you would not acknowledge the most exact photograph as an *exact* representation of your experience … .
>
> §1081. The description of the experience doesn't describe an object. It may subserve a description. And this object is sometimes the one that one is looking at, and sometimes (photography) not. The impression — one would like to say — is not an object.
>
> §1082. We learn to describe objects, and thereby, in another sense, our sensations.
>
> §1085. One can't look at the impression, that is why it is not an object. (Grammatically)

Similarly, returning to Wittgenstein's analogy of the eye, "there is no number of positions in visual space, any more than there is a number of drops of rain which you see. "The proper

[1] NB, 12.4.15, *ibid*., 15.4.15: "I *cannot* get from the nature of the proposition to the individual logical operations!!! That is, I cannot bring out how far the propositions is the *picture* of the situation. I am almost inclined to give up all my efforts. — —"

[2] PR.

answer to the question, "How many drops did you see?", is *many*, not that there was a number but you don't know how many"[3]. The revealed problem is that experience does not seem to offer the necessary grounds to postulate the referential relationship between simple names and objects, and this is an immediate threat to the pictorial theory of language, given that the form of the proposition is meant to show the common structure shared with the facts of the world, and that is sustained by states of affairs that are configured by objects. There cannot be any essential connection binding a proposition to the depicted fact, but only arbitrarily chosen expressions with no capacity whatsoever to make a complete analysis of the adequacy of their usage. In other words, there is no indisputable means of verifying the veracity of propositions[4]; instead, there are physical objects that serve as more or less suitable references for the development of descriptions of experience[5]. What follows, is that there are no greater reasons for prioritising any form of privileged phenomenological language, regardless of the signs that could be adopted for it, instead of using the colloquial language already intended for the same purpose[6]. Finally, there is nothing in language's relation to reality that seems to justify Wittgenstein's initial postulate that there must be some sort of simple objects determining experience, to which the simple names of the pictorial theory of language must refer if propositions are to be verifiable. This means that the "concept of an 'elementary proposition' now loses all of its earlier significance"[7]. Moreover, insofar as it does not make sense anymore to say that the simple names mean, denote, refer, to the constituents of reality, the entire purpose of logical analysis loses its meaningfulness, given that its irrefutability was based on the truth-value of propositions referring to facts; the entire referential system being dependent upon the name-object relation:

[3] WL32-35, §5. This citation contradicts Wittgenstein's past requirement that a picture must have a common 'mathematical multiplicity' with that which it depicts (T, 4.032-4.0411).

[4] PI, §486: "Does it *follow* from the sense-impressions which I get that there is a chair over there? –- How can a *proposition* follow from sense impressions? Well, does it follow from the propositions which describe the sense-impressions? No."; CE, *Appendix B*, 15.9.38: "… how does someone speak immediately about appearances – What do we call "speaking immediately about appearance"? Is it: speaking about pictures – instead of about things? And about *all* pictures of things? If I say: I shall go into the garden and sit under the big nut tree – what pictures correspond to this sentence? Well, I suppose I could illustrate the sentence with a picture. But what would be the relation between this picture and my impressions of the tree?"

[5] BB, p. 51: "To say that my finger in tactile and kinaesthetic space moves from my tooth to my eye then means that I have those tactile and kinaesthetic experiences which we normally have when we say "my finger moves from my tooth to my eye."

[6] CE, *Appendix* B, 15.9.38: "But what interests me if I speak of physical objects is what I see, hear, smell, taste and feel. So it is the sense impressions that interest me; so I can after all speak about these *straight off*." – But if this is the case I *do* speak 'about sense impressions' when I speak about physical objects."

[7] PR, §83.

> My notion in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* was wrong: 1) because I wasn't clear about the sense of the words "a logical product is *hidden* in a sentence" (and suchlike), 2) because I too [as *e.g*. Carnap] thought that logical analysis had to bring to light what was hidden (as chemical and physical analysis does).[8]

All this echoes a major weakness of the *Tractatus*, namely that the procedures for analysing propositions of colloquial language were never clarified, thus scuppering all pretentions of reaching a sort of 'final analysis' of the propositions of language[9].

What really is at stake here is Wittgenstein's early concept of meaning, which he describes in his later phase as descending from "a primitive philosophy of language", referring to Augustine's thoughts on the process of learning a language[10]. This was sufficiently important to Wittgenstein to make it the first subject he mentions in his *Philosophical Investigations*. After citing Augustine's *Confessions*[11], he comments:

> These words, it seems to me, give us a particular picture of the essence of human language. It is this: the individual words in language name objects — sentences are combinations of such names. — In this picture of language we find the roots of the following idea: Every

[8] PG, p. 210. See also: "If you want to use the appellation "elementary proposition" as I did in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, and as Russell used "atomic proposition", you may call the sentence "Here there is a red rose" an elementary proposition. That is to say, it doesn't contain a truth-function and it isn't defined by an expression which contains one. But if we're to say that a proposition isn't an elementary proposition unless its complete logical analysis shows that it isn't built out of other propositions by truth-functions, we are presupposing that we have an idea of what such an 'analysis' would be. Formerly, I myself spoke of a 'complete analysis', and I used to believe that philosophy had to give a definitive dissection of propositions so as to set out clearly all their connections and remove all possibilities of misunderstanding. I spoke as if there was a calculus in which such a dissection would be possible." (*Ibid*., p. 211).

[9] PI, §60: "… Imagine a language-game in which someone is ordered to bring certain objects which are composed of several parts, to move them about, or something else of the kind. And two ways of playing it: in one (a) the composite objects (brooms, chairs, tables, etc.) have names … ; in the other (b) only the parts are given names, and the wholes are described by means of them. — In what sense is an order in the second game an analysed form of an order in the first? Does the former lie concealed in the latter, and is it now brought out by analysis? — True, the broom is taken to pieces when on separates broomstick and brush; but does it follow that the order to bring the broom also consists of corresponding parts?"; *Ibid*., §63: To say, however, that a sentence in (b) is an 'analysed' form of one in (a) readily seduces us into thinking that the former is the more fundamental form, that it alone shows what is meant by the other, and so on. We may think: someone who has only the unanalysed form lacks the analysis; but he who know the analysed form has got it all. — But can't I say that an aspect of the matter is lost to the latter no less than to the former?". See also, *ibid*., §64, §91.

[10] PG, §19: "My earlier concept of meaning originates in a primitive philosophy of language. — Augustine on the learning of language."

[11] PI, §1: "When they (my elders) named some object, and accordingly moved towards something, I saw this and I grasped that the thing was called by the sound they uttered when they meant to point it out. Their intention was shewn by their bodily movements, as it were the natural language of all peoples: the expression of the face, the play of the eyes, the movement of other parts of the body, and the tone of voice which expresses our state of mind in seeking, having, rejecting, or avoiding something. Thus, as I heard words repeatedly used in their proper places in various sentences, I gradually learnt to understand what objects they signified; and after I had trained my mouth to form these signs, I used them to express my own desires."

> word has a meaning. This meaning is correlated with word. It is the object for which the word stands.[12]

From this point on, the described conception of meaning will be the 'ostensive conception of meaning'[13], where the meaning of a sign is the object it denotes[14]. While there is nothing wrong with the idea that the meaning of signs can be learned by indicating the objects they represent, such cases are too scarce to describe all the means by which signs acquire meaning. Consequently, ostensive definitions cannot explain what meaning is, or thereby grasp the nature of language in its entirety[15]. Indeed, one could go so far as to say that signs, even simple ones like words, can have a multitude of meanings that do not denote any specific object like a label attached to a thing[16]. Moreover, in the cases where the ostensive definition of meaning is applicable, when one asks oneself how the learning of the meaning of signs through ostensive definition proceeds, it becomes clear that, even then, the applied learning method depends on a language that the pupil must understand beforehand. After realising the thought experiment of "a language for which the description of Augustine is right" (where a builder 'A' orders his assistant 'B' to bring either a block, a pillar, a slab, or a beam, in accordance to words corresponding to each one of them)[17], Wittgenstein encourages us to see the language as the only language A and B know (conceiving also the possibility of the language being the one of an entire tribe)[18]. An important part of this language is evidently its learning method; which Wittgenstein calls the 'ostensive teaching of words'[19]. This teaching would have to use other

[12] *Ibid.*

[13] See *ibid.*, §27–30, §30, §32–34, §38, §258, §362, §380, §444.

[14] *Ibid.*, §15: "The word "to signify" is perhaps used in the most straight-forward way when the objects signified is marked with the sign. Suppose that the tools A uses in building bear certain marks on it. It is in this and more or less similar ways that a name means and is given to a thing. –- It will often prove useful in philosophy to ourselves: naming something is like attaching a label to a thing."

[15] *Ibid.*, §3: "Augustine, we might say, does describe a system of communication; only not everything that we call language is this system. And has to say this in many cases where the question arises "is this an appropriate description or not?" The answer is: "Yes, it is appropriate, but only for this narrowly circumscribed region, not for the whole what you are claiming to describe." It is as if someone were to say: "A game consists in moving objects about on a surface according to certain rules…" — and we replied: You seem to be thinking of board games, but there are others. You can make your definition correct by expressly restricting it to those games."

[16] *Ibid.*, §27: ""We name things and then we can talk about them: can refer to them in talk." — As if what we did net were given with the mere act of naming. As if there were only one thing called "talking about a thing". Whereas in fact we do the most various things with our sentences. Think of exclamations alone, with their completely different function./ Water!/ Away!/ Ow!/ Help!/ Fine!/ No!/ Are you inclined still to call these words "names of objects"?"

[17] *Ibid.*, §2.

[18] *Ibid.*, §6.

[19] *Ibid.*

signs, which do not fulfil the same purpose of those applied in the language being learned, otherwise there would be no way of teaching it. These signs would therefore have to *mean* in a different way than those of the learned language, implying that other forms of communicating must necessarily exist. If this were not the case, the signs used during the teaching could mean "anything or nothing"[20]. From here, it becomes clear why the ostensive definition of meaning "surrounds the working of language with a haze which makes clear vision impossible" whenever universalised[21]. What then is the compendious conception of meaning, capable of clarifying particular applications of language without excluding others?

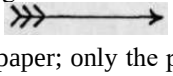
In his *Philosophical Investigation*, Wittgenstein's initial approach to the question is to state that for "a *large* class of cases — though not for all — in which we employ the word "meaning" it can be defined thus: the meaning of a word is its use in the language"[22]. However, this definition does not cover all possible scenarios. One could imagine, for instance, a language where a specific word is meant to be used in a nonsensical fashion, incoherent in regard to the context in which it is applied, and being thereby meaningless. Following the above definition of meaning, it would be challenging to identify such usage, as one would perhaps feel more tempted to associate the sign with what would seem like a coherent meaning for the given situation. Therefore, ultimately Wittgenstein is not satisfied by such a definition, and feels the need to expand on it. In *On Certainty*, he states:

> §61. … A meaning of a word is a kind of employment of it. For it is what we learn when the word is incorporated into our language.
>
> §62. That is why there exists a correspondence between the concepts 'rule' and 'meaning'.

The connection between §61 and §62 is the one established between 'learning' and 'rule'. Indeed, in order to give or recognise the meaning of an applied sign, it is not sufficient to simply 'use' it; one must also use it correctly, which means making use of it according to rules. It is

[20] *Ibid.*: ""I set the brake up by connecting up rod and lever." –- Yes, given the whole of the rest of the mechanism. Only in conjunction with that is it a brake-lever, and separated from its support it is not even a lever; it may be everything or nothing". Compare this to the apprentice's need of already mastering a form of language to comprehend what he is meant to learn (*Ibid*., §30): "One has already to know (or be able to do) something in order to be capable of asking a thing's name."

[21] *Ibid*., §5.

[22] *Ibid*., §43. See also: "… the meaning, is the *use* we make of the word." (*Ibid*., §138); "If it is asked: "How do sentences manages to represent?" — the answer might be: "Don't you know? you certainly see it, when you use them." For nothing is concealed." (*Ibid*., §435); and "Everything is already there in … ." How does it come about that this arrow  *points*? Doesn't it seem to carry in it something besides itself? — "No, not the dead line on paper; only the physical thing, the meaning can do that." — That is both true and false. The arrows points only in the application that a living being makes of it." (*Ibid*., §454).

these rules that make language coherent, giving the needed 'regularity' and 'order' to the diverse ways one can make use of its signs; ensuring the rudimentary homogeneity of their application that is needed to communicate[23]. Together, these rules form a 'system', from which the propositions of a language acquire meaning. Consequently, just like understanding a word means understanding the rules by which it is applied, to understand a language means to understand a linguistic system[24]. This is not something entirely new. As already discussed, a fundamental notion in Wittgenstein's early philosophy is that of logical syntax, described as a system established on rules that decide how the signs of logic should be employed[25]. To him, they were arbitrary only insofar as the system remains incomplete, as the establishment of the rules of usage for one sign limits the possible usage of other ones as they must all have definite, unique and necessary roles within logic[26]. This reveals another difficulty in Wittgenstein's initial will to realise a logical analysis and thereby trace the limits of the world. The possibility of logical analysis depends on its foothold in logic, which, even though it is an *a priori* requirement of language, is shown through signs determined by *a posteriori* agreements concerning logical syntax, and thereby defining their place within the realm of experience together with the same propositions that are meant to be analysed. The issue is one of temporality, a critique initially made by Favrholdt[27], and taken up again by Bouveresse[28], that sees the universe of the *Tractatus* as 'cinematographic', constituted by the juxtaposition of infinitesimal frames that make up each moment of the changing whole. Language can only 'picture' transitory configurations of the constituents of reality, and this means that, when

[23] PI, §207: "Let us imagine that the people in that country [of an unknown language] carried on the usual human activities and in the course of them employed, apparently, an articulate language. If we watch their behaviour we find it intelligible, it seems 'logical'. But when we try to learn their language we find it impossible to do so. For there is no regular connexion between what they say, the sounds they makes, and their actions; but still these sounds are not superfluous, for if we gag one of the people, it has the same consequences as with us; without the sounds their action fall into confusion –- as I feel like putting it. Are we to say that these people have a language: orders, reports and the rest? There is not enough regularity for us to call it "language".''; *Ibid*., §208: "Then am I defining "order" and "rule" by means of "regularity"? — How do I explain the meaning of "regular", "uniform", intention." — Every explanation, which I can give myself, I give to him too. — "He guesses what I intend" would means: various interpretations of my explanation come to his mind, and he lights on one of them. So in this case he could; and I could and should answer him."

[24] PG, §122: "'Language' is languages. — Languages *are* systems. It is units of languages that I call "propositions"; BB, p.5: "The sign (the sentence) gets its significance from the system of signs, from the language to which it belongs. Roughly: understanding a sentence means understanding a language."

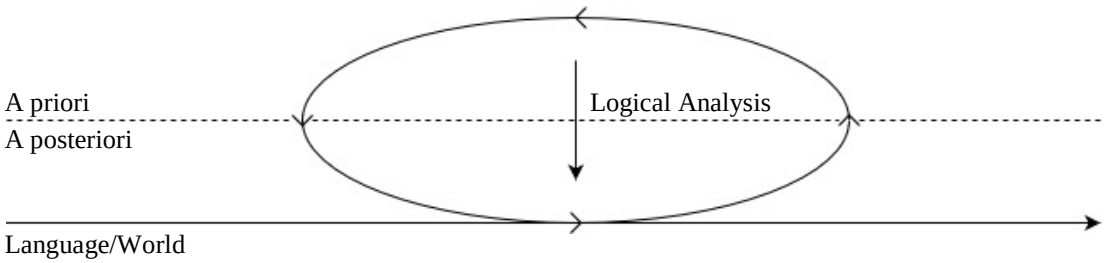
[25] T, 5.4541; 5.475; 5.555. To this extent, the meaning of names must also be partially dependent of the rules of logical syntax if to mean something (See VENTURINHA, p. 139).

[26] *Ibid*., 3.342; 3.3421.

[27] In *An Interpretation and Critique of Wittgenstein's Tractatus*.

[28] BOUVERESSE, pp. 45–47.

revealing the rules of language, logical analysis is always missing its train[29]. The core of this contradiction is in the hazy relation between *sense* and *meaning*, between the *rules* of logical syntax and the *picturing* of the world, and how both instances determine the propositions of language. This is the meeting point that forces one to admit in one way or another that sense and reference must influence each other; and this is something that Wittgenstein does not clarify, and perhaps even avoids when reducing temporality to a form inherent to a picture. For Wittgenstein, this gesture is also why eternity prevails over infinity. In his early ontology, and similarly to Aristoteles, time is implicitly considered as spatialised — namely as movement, and is recognisable only by the juxtaposition of moments in space. The culmination of this thought process is that to live *in agreement* with the world is to live in timelessness, in the *present*, like a projector mirroring the frame presently projected within itself in instants, excluding what has been and what is to come from its representation. Finally, the world of experience is a *changing* world, altering thereby the depiction of the world with it; however, the needed world for logical analysis is *static*, where one can be certain that the analysed propositions *still* follow the logical syntax that have been established in reference to those in the past. This requirement shows the inability of logical analysis to adapt to the changing of the world, and therefore, to the language depicting it. As the illustration below shows, the process of signification of language lies systematically ahead of language's self-inspection.



The impossibility of logical analysis firstly relies on its 'primitive philosophy of language' — that is, of the meaning of names being the objects they depict. However, it also relies on the inability of logical analysis to mould itself in accordance with the changing of language. In other words, if such an analysis were possible, one would have to imagine the ink on the paper depicting it, changing with each stroke of the pen from which it springs. In Wittgenstein's later philosophy, this is different. Not only do the meanings of signs come from

[29] In this sense (*Ibid.*) the Tractarian ontology implies the elimination of the temporal dimension of experience. Even though temporality is a form of the simple objects, the formalization of language excludes change from its results.

their usage in accordance with the rules of grammar, but these very rules are conceived as intrinsically dynamic, *i.e*. as changing. This is of course due to the indissoluble link between language and life. While his early texts emphasize that life is lived through the depiction of the world by language, his later texts analogously state that "to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life"[30], or, in a slightly more limited but similar fashion — due to language not being limited to oral communication —, that "the *speaking* of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life"[31]. Where the *Tractatus* struggled with the desire for a static world in order to accomplish its logical analysis, the later Wittgenstein embraces change as the essence of meaning; world, life, language, and meaning being inseparable from the syntonised dynamism that binds them: "The stream of life, or the stream of the world, flows on and our propositions are so to speak verified only at instants"[32], for "words have meaning only in the stream of life"[33]. The concept Wittgenstein developed to think about the shared stream of life and language and the diversity of rules forming and changing within this very movement, is that of 'language-games'. This concept was initially introduced to study cases where language use is much simpler than those where we "use the signs of our highly complicated everyday language", studying thereby "primitive forms of language", like those present in a child's early usage of words[34]. However, it ends up acquiring a much broader sense, to the point that it can be applied not only to the narrow sense of language as written and spoken, but also to all possible ways of communicating. In the previously cited §23 of *Philosophical Investigations*, there are several examples of possible language games such as "giving orders, and obeying them", "reporting an event", "play-acting", "translating" and so forth[35]. In *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein even speaks of "the human language-game"[36] as the highest instance of what we might call a language. The advantage of the concept of 'language-game' is that it emphasizes the intrinsically open and

[30] PI, §19.

[31] *Ibid*., §23.

[32] PR, pp. 81.

[33] RPP II, §687.

[34] BB, p. 17.

[35] PI, §23: "… how many kinds of sentence are there? Say assertion, question, and command? — There are *countless* kinds: countless different kinds of use of what we call "symbols", "words", "sentences". And this multiplicity is not something fixed, given once for all; but new types of language, new language-games, as we may say, come into existence, and other become obsolete and forgotten … Review the multiplicity of language-games …. Review the multiplicity of language-games in the following examples, and in others: […]"

[36] C, §544: "There, it [the statement] has no higher position than, simply, the human language-game. For there it has its restricted application.". This does of course not define in any way the limits of what may be a linguistic subject, but simply that the word 'human' serves as a demarcation for those which we consider as 'us', that is, as those sharing the same language as we do.

active qualities of language. In regard to the openness of language, and in the different contexts of linguistic praxis such as games like 'board-games, card-games, ball-games, athletic games, and so on'[37], we tend to think that there must be something common to all of them, but if we look closely, there are never any things that are identical between them, but only 'similarities' and 'affinities' that 'crop up and disappear'[38] as one makes comparisons. Equally, the diverse language-games can never be said to be identical, but work like 'a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing'[39] each other. These similarities are what Wittgenstein calls 'family resemblances'[40], expressing how different games of language form categories analogous to families, whose members, even if essentially different from each other, have affinities in regard to their build, eye-colour, gait, and temperament, like the fibres of a rope whose strength lies not on any single thread running through its length, but on the continuous overlapping of its constituent fibres. Since language-games are only recognised through the similarities shared by different applications of their signs, one could say that 'language-games' is a concept with 'blurred edges'[41] This means that the rules that define a type of game must to a certain extent be open: all games have aspects that are not bounded by rules (just like a game of tennis, which has no rules for how high the ball is thrown)[42]; and all rules can become subject to doubts and differing interpretations, like signposts that, ultimately, are followed in accordance with what their interpreters consider plausible[43]. These interpretations, however, reflect only the fact that one rule is substituted for another[44], as otherwise they would be rendered incomprehensible, meaning that one might say that we 'make up' and 'alter' the rules "as we go along"[45].

37 PI, §66.

38 *Ibid.*

39 *Ibid.*

40 *Ibid.*, §67.

41 *Ibid.*, §71.

42 *Ibid.*, §68.

43 *Ibid.*, §85: "A rule stands there like a signpost. — Does the signpost leave no doubt about the way I have to go? Does it show which direction I am to take when I have passed it, whether along the road or the footpath or cross-country? But where does it say which way I am to follow it; whether in the direction of its finger or (for example) in the opposite one? — And if there were not a single signpost, but a sequence of signposts or chalk marks on the ground — is there only one way of interpreting them? — So I can say that the signpost does after all leave room for doubt. Or rather, it sometimes leaves room for doubt, and sometimes not. And now this is no longer a philosophical proposition, but an empirical one."

44 *Ibid.*, §201.

45 *Ibid.*, §83.

What is it that makes of a rule a rule, and not simply some random usage of language? The answer is the regularity with which the rules are applied — as mentioned previously[46]. That one may conceive "a way of grasping a rule which is not an interpretation, but which, from case to case of application, is exhibited in what we call "following the rule" and "going against it""[47], reveals that, regardless of how one interprets a sign, it is always in regard to an 'established usage' or 'custom'[48]. The conception of language as fundamentally active and open is what explicates the statement that language is a form of life that follows the stream of the world, a flux that if conceived as a static whole can only be conceived insufficiently. As well as the resultant abandonment of logical analysis, this essential shift in Wittgenstein's theory of meaning led to two important consequences.

The first is that it no longer makes sense to speak of absolute laws of logical form, as the latter is always linked to and dependent on customs and practices. The sense of propositions is given in the capacity to understand them, and this implies understanding the rules by which they are applied within a 'form of life' — within what can be called a 'language community'[49]. This means that the understanding of propositions depends upon a shared set and applications of rules, which consequently implies a shared set of rule interpretations, and, thereby, a shared set of judgements. Logic is thereby unable to predict any form of application of language through definite laws. It can only describe that which is already being applied: describing propositions in reference to more or less temporary certainties, which themselves might become subject to change. In Wittgenstein's post-Tractarian philosophy, the relevance of logic is determined by the practice of language, not the contrary[50]. Wittgenstein's inspection of language progressively abandons the logical approach and favours a grammatically and perhaps even anthropologically oriented one; focusing thereby on behaviours, gestures and thoughts generally acknowledged as correlated to our use of language in given contexts, and that

[46] See pp. 56–57.

[47] PI, §201.

[48] *Ibid*., §198.

[49] C, §298: "'We are quite sure of it' does not mean just that every single person is certain of it, but that we belong to a community which is bound together by science and education."

[50] PI, §242: "It is not only agreement in definitions but also (odd as it may sound) agreement in judgements that is required for communication by means of language. This seems to abolish logic, but does not do so. — It is one thing to describe methods of measurement, and another to obtain and state results of measurement. But what we call "measuring" is in part determined by a certain constancy in results of measurement."; C, §156: "In order to make a mistake, a man must already judge in conformity with mankind."; *Ibid*., §56: "… everything descriptive of a language-game is part of logic."

Wittgenstein coins 'primitive'[51] due their profound roots in the 'human language-game'. The inseparable connection between reality and our linguistic representation of it is no longer depicted as logical, but natural. Through his comments on the certainties of 'the natural history of men' and on the 'facts' we never tend to question[52], Wittgenstein's goal is to clarify how contradictions in our language develop, so that he can thereby dissolve them together with their implied philosophical problems. In Hacker's words: "what had appeared to be the scaffolding *of* the world was actually the scaffolding *from which we describe the world*"[53].

Secondly, one's representations of reality are determined by rules constituted and developed within these very same representations, commonly shared through language. Even though language is immanent to reality through nature, Wittgenstein does not claim to unveil the natural history of men as it would only mean inventing a 'fictitious natural history for our purposes'[54], as in the attempt to describe logic any sort of description of the naturalness of language or of its link to reality would be merely another application of language itself[55]. The facts he wants to deal with are facts only because he, and we, as his readers, recognise them as such. He was well aware of how the size of his audience correlated to their ability to understand him. His way of conducting philosophy, of making statements concerning facts and contradictions, was only able to acquire sense within certain communities within a specific spectrum of language[56]. One's own representation of reality, and, therefore, one's expression of it, is constituted on commonly articulated elements of language. This is not entirely new for Wittgenstein. Already in the *Tractatus*, he spoke of the importance of having thoughts similar

[51] BB, p. 17: "The study of language games is the study of primitive forms of language or primitive languages. If we want to study the problem of truth and falsehood, of the agreement and disagreement of propositions with reality, of the nature of assertion, assumption, and question, we shall with great advantage look at primitive forms of language in which these forms of thinking appear without the confusing background of highly complicated processes of thought."

[52] PI, §415: "What we are supplying are really remarks on the natural history of human beings; not curiosities, however, but facts that no one has doubted, which have escaped notice only because they are always before our eyes."; *Ibid*., §25: "It is sometime said: animals do not talk because they lack the mental abilities. And this means: "They do not think, and that is why they do not talk." But — they simply do not talk. Or better: they do not use language — if we disregard the most primitive forms of language. — Giving orders, asking questions, telling stories, having a chat, are as much a part of our natural history as walking, eating, drinking, playing."

[53] HACKER, p. 1.

[54] PI, xii, §365.

[55] During the whole of his philosophy, Wittgenstein rejected all attempts to establish a metalanguage as absurd.

[56] CV, p. 12: "If I say that my book is meant for only a small circle of people (if that can be called a circle) I do not mean to say that this circle is in my view the élite of mankind but is the circle to which I turn (not because they are better or worse than the other but) because they form my cultural circle, as it were my fellow countrymen in contrast to the others who are *foreign* to me."

to his own, *i.e.* a similar intellectual background[57] in order to understand him; but the importance given at that time to the — illusory — ostensive conception of meaning, impeded him from formulating in greater detail the dimension of language implicit in his remark, even though it was already latent in his use of the notion of 'rule' present in his logical syntax. In the *Tractatus*, despite its philosophical method making the world of the willing subject eclipse otherness, the language depicting the world was already partially shared as its logical form was (partially) bound to a grammar established by convention, *i.e.* within a community. Paradoxically, what secured the sense of propositions was that the names denoting the hereafter rejected 'simple objects'; an operation that worked independently of any kind of convention, considering that the constituents of experience, inasmuch as phenomenal, refer directly to the willing subject, the 'I' representing the world. If the private denotation of simple objects is no longer considered as constituent to the sense of propositions, by means of signifying names, the whole of one's representation of experience — *i.e.* of reality — must then derive from rules of one's grammar and from what binds the 'I' to the 'Other'. Consequently, insofar as language is shared, our representation and description of experience are also shared, or are at least similar to those of others. Perhaps the clearest sign of this shift in thinking is revealed, in Wittgenstein's *Lecture on Ethics*[58], where he makes a clear statement valuing the description of experiences, starting from his personal ones, in order for his audience to recall "the same or similar experiences" so that they may have "a common ground for [their] investigation"[59].If one's representation of reality is established on common rules of language that surpass one's own relation to experience, does this not imply that the represented world is no longer 'my' world, but 'our' world? If so, does this not suggest that the 'I' can no longer represent the world according to its own will, to its attitude towards experience; thereby undermining the notion of 'willing subject' and, consequently of ethics as a whole? If there is no willing subject responsible for the representation of the world, but an abstract 'us' that surpasses it, how can one possibly think of any form of duty towards oneself to live happily? In fact, if one is not the cause of one's own representations of the world, one cannot be held responsible for living in agreement with it — and thereby live happily —, as in order to ensure a life in agreement with the world, one must be able to change one's representation of reality. From this, it is possible

[57] T, p. 9: "This book will perhaps only be understood by those who have themselves already thought the thoughts which are expressed in it — or similar thoughts."

[58] As suggested by Rush Rhees, LE, pp. 17–26.

[59] LE, p. 8.

to think that Wittgenstein is short-circuiting the only form of ethics promoted by his philosophy, namely the duty towards oneself to live happily.

The argument over the following chapters is that, despite the fact that the representation of the world derives from the practice of language by shared forms of life, Wittgenstein still sustains the thought of the metaphysical 'I' as the ethical subject[60]; and holds that the changes in his theory of meaning not only demystify all deterministic conceptions of the will, reaffirming life as intrinsically ethical even more firmly than before, but allows his philosophy to reach a deeper description of the intertwined relation between ethics, language, and life. However, there is difficulty in this proposition. The swift turn Wittgenstein's philosophy took progressively led to change in his approach to philosophical questions. As sense comes from the day-to-day use of language as the reference that clarifies its misuse, what Wittgenstein wants to do is to invite us back to 'the rough ground'[61] where seeing the original application of signs may help to explain how their interpretations can lead to contradictions within one's own use language, and, therein to philosophical problems when given aspects are neglected. This means that the most efficient way of dissolving these contradictions is through colloquial language, only referring to more unconventional — not necessarily less shared — philosophical terminology either to indicate how they are equivocal, or to use as stepping stones back to colloquial language — as Wittgenstein does with his own concepts. This does not mean that he abandoned his earlier — metaphysical views, or the notion of a philosophical — that is, willing — subject — and ethics overall. Rather, it means that if these views are to be expressed, their veracity must be revealed in everyday language. Whilst in his early writings Wittgenstein developed his thoughts starting from outside colloquial language, after the changes in his theory of meaning, he was led to conduct his investigations from within. From this perspective, the challenge of Wittgenstein's philosophy is to show *how* the unutterable is unutterably contained in what is being uttered only by means of that which is being uttered. This would justify the very few statements made on ethics in his second philosophy, and the belief that although the ethical dimension of his later works is not present in the foreground, it must be still be operating backstage; thereby paradoxically reinforcing its presence[62]. The following chapter will attempt

[60] As he once told Waismann: "At the end of my lecture on ethics, I spoke in the first person. I believe that is quite essential. Here nothing more can be established, I can only appear as a person speaking for myself" (LE, p.16).

[61] PI, §107.

[62] GB, pp. 116–117: "I now believe that it would be right to begin my book with remarks about metaphysics as a kind of magic. But in doing this I must not make a case for magic nor may I make fun of it. The depth of magic should be preserved. — Indeed, here the elimination of magic has itself the character of magic. For, back then,

to show how the willing subject prevails in Wittgenstein's later writings, thereby opening the path for a wider reflection on the impact of the notion of ethics for the whole of his philosophy.

when I began talking about the 'world' (and not about this tree or table), what else did I want but to keep something higher spellbound in my words?"

8. The Otherness of the Self

So how can the conception of a transcendental subject prevail after postulating that one's representation of reality is determined by alterity and by the linguistic communities that ground the rules of language? Does not such imagery derive from external representations, all kind of subjectivism being thereby systematically denied?

To defend the notion of philosophical subject as present in Wittgenstein's later thoughts, it is important to emphasize that the world of the *Tractatus* is a phenomenal world, and that *my* world, the world of the willing subject, is a linguistically constituted representation of immediate experience[1]. This leads back to the statement that rather than the 'I' being an object of the world, it *is* its world[2], and means that the linguistic agent — the transcendental 'I' — is not represented in language, as all representation is limited to the experience of that which is not oneself. Thoughts such as these remain in Wittgenstein's later writings: for example, if I say 'I am in pain', nothing in the statement indicates to me an object 'I' with which I identify myself[3]. The reason for this bizarre phenomenon is the strong adherence to the ostensive conception of meaning. We are so used to identifying signs with things, that even when expressing experiences that do not refer to any object of experience that we allude to them as if they do. This has a "misleading" and "adverse effect upon philosophy" due to the pictorial conception of the meaning of signs "being often incongruent with the facts which they are designed to explain"[4]. If one considers that experiences — the world — cause impressions, which are the representations that bring about the self-awareness of the philosophical 'I' and of the representation of the world being *my* world[5], and knowing that we nevertheless still refer to these impressions as if objects of the world[6] as we can't relate to them as we usually do with things we see, touch and interact with[7], we end up giving these terms the status of 'internal

1 See Ch. 2.

2 NB, 7.8.16; T, 5.63.

3 PI, §404–410. See also, PR, p. 94: "The experience of feeling pain is not that a person 'I' has something. I distinguish an intensity, a location, etc. in the pain, but not an owner."; BB, p.68: "In "I have pain", "I" is not a demonstrative pronoun."; RPP II, §317: ""It looks to me…, it looks to you…". In the first language-game a person does not occur as perceiving subject."

4 ENGEL (1975), p. 119.

5 See Ch. 4.

6 RPP I, §1092: "Certainly it's clear that the description of impressions has the form of the description of 'external' objects."

7 PI, §411.

objects', or 'private experience'. A misleading process of 'objectification' takes place[8] by applying the ostensive conception of meaning to what we qualify as 'sense data', which for Wittgenstein coincides with the notion of 'appearance' (e.g. the greyness of a coat, or the beauty of a picture). In combination with 'the idea of our senses *cheating* us'[9], we conclude that the objectified appearances are the only thing we know is real; that *my* certainty is isolated in *my* own world, namely in an untranslatable private language; and Wittgenstein has no hesitation in calling this "a degenerate construction of our grammar"[10].

However, his point is not to deny the transcendental subject — which he actually affirms by revealing how the 'I' (and its impressions) is not an object of the world. Rather, it is to unmask the senselessness of trying to describe it as if it were an object of the world when it is not. This senseless effort leads to the conclusion that there must be a 'mysterious something' that *is*, but that for some reason *is not* in the traditional sense. From here, despite there being originally no ontic distinction between experiences, the transcendental subject is led to represent the world as divided into common and private experiences, *i.e.* into a physical and a mental world: "Where our language suggests a body and there is none: there, we should like to say, is a *spirit*"[11]. This dichotomy has led to never-ending debate between realists, idealists, and solipsists, for whom the world is an epiphenomenon of the other, each trying to find a place for the mythical 'private language'[12] of mental experience in their respective systems. They appear incapable of understanding that the cause of this dichotomy is the way we use language, namely, in accordance with the ostensive conception of meaning, and how its use determines the means by which the transcendental subject represents experience overall. This can be shown in two

[8] LSD, p. 312; See also, PI, §276.

[9] LSD, p. 313.

[10] NFL, p. 283: "The 'private experience' is a degenerate construction of our grammar (comparable in sense to tautology and contradiction). And this grammatical monster now fools us; when we wish to do away with it, it seems as though we denied the existence of an experience, say, toothache."

[11] PI, §36. See also, BB, pp. 47–48: "At first sight it may appear (but why it should can only become clear later) that here we have two kinds of worlds, worlds built of different material; a mental world and a physical world. The mental world in fact is liable to be imagined as gaseous, or rather, aethereal. But let me remind you here of the queer role which the gaseous and the aethereal play in philosophy, –- when we perceive that a substantive is not used as what in general we should call the name of an object, and when therefore we can't help saying to ourselves that it is the name of an aetheral object … For in one aspect of the matter, personal experience, far from being the *product* of physical, chemical, physiological processes, seems to be the very *basis* of all that we say with any sense about such processes. Looking at it in this way we are inclined to use our idea of a building-material in yet another misleading way, and to say that the whole world, mental and physical, is made of one material only."

[12] PI, §259, §269, §275; WL32-35, §16.

steps, the first of which demystifies the existence of a 'private language'; and the second, which reveals how we represent experiences to ourselves in accordance with shared linguistic rules.

For Wittgenstein, the main trait of the treacherous notion of 'private language' is that its words "are to refer to what only the speaker can know — to his immediate private sensations. So another person cannot understand the language"[13]. If one learns to use language in accordance with specific circumstances and experiences, such as an utterance like "I am in pain!" instead of moaning whenever hurt[14], the defender of private language tries to 'interpose' it between the expression of sensation, which belongs to common language —, and the sensation itself[15]. However, how can speakers then learn this language and be sure of applying it correctly? Suppose someone were to keep a diary about the "recurrence of a certain sensation"[16], and for every time it was experienced they were to write the sign "S", committing to "memory the connection between the sign and the sensation"[17] by concentrating their attention. The problem that arises is that they would not have any 'criterion of correctness' to assure them they were not simply believing in the sensation "S"[18]. If they affirmed that "S" at least indicated they 'had something'; then one could point out that "had" and "something" belong to a common language and not to a private one[19]. In another context, perhaps they would have an imaginary dictionary that could be referred to if troubled about connecting the sensation to the correct sign of their private language, but then of course, there would be nothing to assure them of the correctness of their imaginary dictionary either. It would be like referring to an imagined train timetable after forgetting its departure time, or like considering "the image of the result of an imagined experiment as the result of an experiment"[20]. Indignant, one could state while striking his chest that only he can have THIS pain. But then again, "empathically enunciating the word "this"" does not define a private criterion of identity. It only affirms how the dissenter follows the rules subjacent to such a criterion — how he adheres to the games dependent of what generally is called *my* pains in common language [21]. Hence Hacker's remark

13 PI, §243.

14 BB, p. 67: "To say, "I have pain" is no more a statement *about* a particular person than moaning is."; PI, §244: ""So are you saying that the word 'pain' really means crying?" — On the contrary: the verbal expression of pain replaces crying, it does not describe it."

15 PI, §245.

16 *Ibid*., §258–271.

17 *Ibid*., §258.

18 *Ibid*., §260.

19 *Ibid*., §261.

20 *Ibid*., §265.

21 *Ibid*., §253.

that Wittgenstein's anthropological observations encourage one "to look upon expressions and reports of wants not as descriptions of an inner phenomenon, accessible only to the subject, but rather as acculturated extensions of conative behaviour"[22].

The "'inner' is indeed a delusion. The whole complex of ideas this word alludes is like a painted curtain drawn across the scene of the actual word use"[23]; "the inner is tied up with the outer not only empirically, but also logically"[24]. What we call material and mental experiences descend from the same empirical source, namely, the experiences of the transcendental subject. The fact that common and private language, *i.e.* the manner in which we represent these experiences, are logically connected, simply affirms that they do not belong to distinct categories; they follow the same rules being whatever we call and recognise as an 'inner process' so as not to be mere nonsense that "stands in need of outwards criteria"[25].

So, despite any empathy for a proponent of the private language hypothesis when stating they have something that others do not whenever perceiving an object or thinking about something, Wittgenstein affirms that he does understand what he is talking about[26], thanks to the way of speaking, gesturing, and referring to that which, ultimately, is the private language proponent's immediate experience of reality, and that is described through the metaphor of the 'visual room'[27]. A room that does not have 'a subject, nor therefore the I either'. As in the case of the solipsists, this therefore, renders it senseless to talk about *mine*, as opposed to what is *not mine*. What is important is that what one attempts to say when talking about the world being one's own can "deep down"[28] be grasped by others, and via common language — the only language there is. It is also important that since the transcendental subject represents immediate experience through common language, "the point here is not that our sense impressions can lie to us, but that we understand their language. (And this language, like any other, rests on convention)"[29]. Even if I were to think of my immediate experiences as things inside a box into which only I could see, the manner by which I would think of them would follow a language game that worked independently of what is in the box[30]. There is nothing between immediate

[22] HACKER, p.11.
[23] RPP II, p.84.
[24] *Ibid*., pp. 63–64.
[25] PI, §580.
[26] *Ibid*., §398.
[27] *Ibid*.
[28] *Ibid*.
[29] *Ibid*., §355. See also, *ibid*., §356, §486.
[30] *Ibid*., §293.

experience and the expression of it. Our representations coincide with the grammar of our language-games[31], *i.e.* with a language that is not one's private possession.

At this point, if it is not private language that forms a notion of the self, *i.e.* of one's individuality in contrast to that which is not; what does it? As previously discussed, whenever the transcendental subject makes of itself an object of thought, it systematically represents itself as a part of the world[32], which means the self must be formed according to the rules governing language communities. For instance, to suggest that the concept of two people having the same body is senseless, as it is not only a symptom of our bodies — whatever they might be — being a 'principle of individuation'[33], but it is also a 'grammatical statement'[34] that belongs to the set of rules that determine one's identity. Like any other symbol, those that define the self are also fixed by their regular application in language-games[35], overlapping and crisscrossing in accordance with whatever is a more or less common application of language.

Finally, one can conclude that despite the fact that we relate to reality through common language, the transcendental subject prevails as a privileged standpoint in language, lying in the world like an eye in its visual field — the slight detail being that the visual field itself belongs to no one. We will now move on to look at the implications of this for ethics.

[31] That it does not make sense to talk about facts beyond our representations shall be commented further in the next chapter.

[32] See Ch. 1, p. 10–11.

[33] PR, §53.

[34] BB, p.54.

[35] C, §568: "If one of my names were used only very rarely, then it might happen that I did not know it. It goes without saying that I know my name, only because, like anyone else, I use it over and over again."

9. Seeing-as

Knowledge is linguistic, but language is the constant flux of the stream of life and of the world. How then can there be any knowledge? If language is ever changing, verifiable only at instants, one should not speak of knowledge, but only of assertions. The notions of 'regularity'[1] and 'habit'[2] could serve as clues to help grasp Wittgenstein's thoughts on the matter. Indeed, if knowledge springs from language-games, the rules of which are more or less regular and are thereby consistent in regard to the forms of life playing them and their habits, there must nevertheless be a form of continuity within one's representation of reality, despite its mutability. Language is a river, but differently from Heraclitus' metaphor, Wittgenstein differentiates between 'solid'/'hardened', propositions and 'fluid' ones[3]. However, although the "waters on the river-bed and the shift of the bed itself"[4] are not alike, "there is not a sharp division of the one from the other"[5], and, with time, hard propositions (the more rooted practices of language) may become fluid, and those that are fluid propositions become hard[6]. It is therefore appropriate to speak of a hierarchy of beliefs[7], where those that are most cherished — those grounded by the most common of practices in our forms of life, serve as the founding stones of a 'mythology', the latter being a description of a 'world-picture'[8]. A world-picture is an 'inherited background' against which true and false are distinguished[9]. Sustained by the habits of one's form of life, it is the 'substratum' of one's 'enquiring and asserting'[10], which serves as the

1 See note 23, Ch. 7.

2 PI, §143; RPP I, §221; RPP II, §221, §424; LW I, §126.

3 C, §112: "And isn't that what Moore wants to say, when he says he know all these things? — But is his knowing it really what is in question, and not rather that some of these propositions must be solid for us?"; *ibid*., §96: "It might be imagined that some propositions, of the form of empirical propositions, were hardened and functioned as channels for such empirical propositions as were not hardened but fluid; and that this relation altered with time, in that fluid propositions hardened, and hard ones became fluid."

4 *Ibid*., §97.

5 *Ibid*.

6 *Ibid*., §300.

7 *Ibid*.: "Not all corrections of our views are on the same level."

8 *Ibid*., §97: "The mythology may change back into a state of flux, the river-bed of thoughts may shift. But I distinguish between the movement of the waters on the river-bed and the shift of the bed itself; though there is not a sharp division of the one from the other."; *ibid*., §95: "The propositions describing [a] world-picture might be part of a kind of mythology. And their role is like that of rules of a game; and the can be learned purely practically, without learning any explicit rules."

9 *Ibid*., §94.

10 *Ibid*., §162: "In general I take as true what is found in text-books, of geography for example. Why? I say: All these facts have been confirmed a hundred times over. But how do I know that? what is my evidence for it? I

foundation for the future development and reconfiguration of the language at hand[11], and thereby forms one's convictions, *i.e*. a system grounded on a structure of beliefs within which a given language operates and where propositions acquire sense[12]. The reason why knowledge is reduced to belief[13] is that there is no way for language to achieve a complete verification of itself, as even methods of verification are inherent to it, consequently meaning that we are always 'blindly'[14] following a set of rules. If one were to undertake the task of excavating the reasons for doing something by using justifications as a shovel, one would only reach the bedrock that leads one to say "this is simply what I do"[15]. It is in this sense that Engel writes that, for Wittgenstein, language manages to exercise a "tyrannical bewitching power over our minds" and that it "continue[s] to deceive us even when its deceptions are brought to light and exposed"[16]. As sense is granted by the application of language, at certain points we are simply acting in accordance with our form of life, incapable of seeing what could explain or justify it in our relation to reality[17]: "At the foundation of well-founded beliefs lies belief that is not founded"[18]. However, discrepancies in language are frequent, whether intentional or not; and a

have a world-picture. Is it true or false? Above all it is the substratum of all my enquiring and asserting. The propositions describing it are not all equally subject to testing."

[11] *Ibid*., §167: "It is clear that our empirical propositions do not all have the same status, since one can lay down such a proposition and turn it from an empirical proposition into a norm of description. Think of chemical investigations. Lavoisier makes experiments with substances in his laboratory and now he concludes that this and that takes place when there is burning. He does not say that it might happen otherwise another time. He has got hold of a definite world-picture — not of course one that he invented: he learned it as a child. I say world-picture and not hypothesis, because it is the matter-of-course foundation for his research and as such also goes unmentioned."

[12] *Ibid*., §93: "Everything that I have seen or heard gives me the conviction that no man has ever been far from the earth. Nothing in my picture of the world speaks in favour of the opposite."; *ibid*., §102: "… my convictions do form a system, a structure"; *ibid*., §105: "All testing, all confirmation and disconfirmation of a hypothesis takes place already within a system. And this system is not a more or less arbitrary and doubtful point of departure for all our arguments: no, it belongs to the essence of what we call an argument. The system is not so much the point of departure, as the element in which arguments have their life."; WVC, pp. 63–64: "Once I wrote [T, 2.1512], 'A proposition is laid against reality like a ruler…' I now prefer to say that a system of propositions is laid against reality like a ruler. What I mean by this is the following. If I lay a ruler against a spatial object, I lay all the graduating lines against it at the same time."

[13] C, §177: "What I know, I believe."

[14] PI, §219.

[15] *Ibid*., §217: "Once I have exhausted the justifications, I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: "This is simply what I do.""

[16] ENGEL (1975), p. 120

[17] C, §189: "At some point one has to pass from explanation to mere description."; *ibid*., §192: "To be sure there is justification; but justification come to an end."; *ibid*., §204: "Giving grounds, however, justifying the evidence, comes to an end; — but the end is not certain propositions' striking us immediately as true, i.e. it is not a kind of *seeing* on our part; it is our *acting*, which lies at the bottom of the language-game."

[18] *Ibid*., §253. This is the dead-end expressed b Wittgenstein when using adjectives such as the 'primitive', 'archaic', if not 'natural' to denote given regularities, or habits, in our use of language. As we already know

mutual understanding of things is far from being the only condition in which we find ourselves. The phenomenon of miscomprehension denounces situations in which linguistic agents conceive themselves and others as playing the same language game when they are not. Practices can never be intrinsically 'wrong', but only 'unfitting'. If there are situational divergences in rules, there must also be differences in the referential systems, and thereby in world-pictures. It is therefore not absurd to speak of 'language communities'[19], each of which represents reality from their own customs and practices. For every time these communities encounter each other, they judge each other's use of language as nonsense, or try to translate — in one way or another — the other's use of recognisable signs — that is, 'unaccustomed expressions' — into their own system[20].Whenever fundamentally different, the self-sufficient reasoning of each system is not enough to convince the opposite side, thereby requiring one to make use of other means, such as persuasion[21].

However, as linguistic subjects, we are capable of perceiving discrepancies in language, and of seeing different points of view and different rules that can be followed in given contexts. This is due to the identity of the subject, which is directly correlated to the latter's relation to exteriority, and that originates in the intersection of language-games. The self does not have an essence. On the contrary, it is intrinsically heterogeneous, formed by a multitude of layers with an empty core. From this perspective, there are remarkable similarities between Wittgenstein's 'self' and what Weininger calls 'character', which he defined as the concept of a "constant unified being" that is not an essence "enthroned behind the thoughts and feelings of the

(see Ch. 7) to try to explain what lays beyond this limit can only result in fiction; and perhaps powerful one's, but fictions nonetheless.

19 C, §298: "'We are quite sure of it' does not mean just that every single person is certain of it, but that we belong to a community which is bound together by science and education."

20 WL30-33, pp. 66–67: "He [Wittgenstein] … implied that where we say "This makes no sense" we always mean "This makes nonsense *in this particular game*"; and in answer to the question "Why do we call it 'nonsense'? What does it mean to call it so?" said that when we call a sentence "nonsense", it is "because of some similarity to sentences which have sense", and that "nonsense always arises from forming symbols analogous to certain uses, where they have no use" [in regard to a given form of life]."; RPP I, §177: "If I speak of the essential references of the utterance, that is because this pushes the inessential special expressions of our language into the background. The essential references are the ones that would lead us to translate an otherwise unaccustomed expression into the customary one."

21 C, §609: "Supposing we met people who did not regard that [propositions of physics] as a telling reason [for acting in a certain way]. Now, how do we imagine this? Instead of the physicist, they consult an oracle. (And for that we consider them primitive.) Is it wrong for them to consult an oracle and be guided by it? — If we call this "wrong" aren't we using our language-game as a base from which to *combat* theirs?"; *ibid*., §612: "I said I would 'combat' the other man, — but wouldn't I give him *reasons*? Certainly; but how far do they go? At the end of reasons comes *persuasion*. (Think what happens when missionaries convert natives.)"; LFW, p. 437: "You can distinguish cases in which you say 'The man is free' and 'The man is not free', 'The man is responsible' and 'The man is not responsible'. In this case, an argument is all right if it converts you."

individual, but *something that reveals itself in his every thought and every feeling*"[22], and that forms one's 'individuality'[23]. For Wittgenstein, these 'thoughts and feelings' are inherent to the language-games through which we learn to recognise ourselves as particular entities, made in accordance with the principles of individuation of our world-pictures. They are the veils that allow the transcendental subject to objectify itself as a part of its own representation of the world[24]:

> This is the state of my self-knowledge: When a certain number of veils is left upon me, I still see clearly, namely the veils. But if they are removed so that my gaze could penetrate closer to my self, my image begins to blur me.

If one considers that all propositions belong to a system, those that define one are thereby directly integrated in structures, each of which constitutes a world-picture that goes beyond one's self-knowledge. Insofar as the 'veils' left upon one are language-games referring to different world-pictures, through the constituent prisms of the self, the transcendental subject, is given the ability to see the world differently and to change the perspective of its own representations. The principles of individuation are as liquid as language itself. This capacity to see things differently can be denoted under the generic term of 'seeing-as', englobing experiences such as 'noticing an aspect'[25], the 'change of aspect'[26], the 'dawning of an aspect'[27], and, more widely, the language game of seeing something like *this* way, now *that* way[28]. The term is developed in Wittgenstein's writings mainly from visual experiences, where figures, images, objects from daily life etc., are seen differently, appear where they originally

[22] WEININGER, p. 72.

[23] *Ibid*., p. 134.

[24] PPO, p. 99.

[25] E.g. in PI, II, p. 203.

[26] E.g. in *Ibid*., p. 206.

[27] E.g. in *Ibid*., p. 212.

[28] E.g. in *Ibid*., p. 219. The phenomenon of seeing-as has been extensively treated by our author in the second part of his *Philosophical Investigations* and both volumes of his *Remarks on the Philosophy and Psychology* and *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology*, and plays a crucial part in our enquiry. The subject was not completely absent from his first philosophy (see T, 5.5423, and NB 9.11.14). It began to be further developed in *The Blue and Brown Books* (see BB, pp. 162–179).

went unnoticed, become part of a larger picture, and so forth[29]. To grasp its ethical implications there are several things that need to be commented on. First, it does not make sense to talk about an original perception, an original reference from which *seeing-as* springs; there is no 'true perceptive reality' lying in the background[30]. Secondly, *seeing-as* is not purely perceptive, it is a cognitive process correlated to perceptive experiences[31]. It is a 'fusion'[32] between perception and thought. The reason for this can easily be explained if one considers that language is what allows us to represent to ourselves immediate experience. Just as we learn to express and describe — and thereby relate to — pain by means of language, how we orient ourselves through other perceptions follows the same logic: we handle and relate to them in accordance to the sense given to them in our language-games[33]. This is due to *seeing-as* only happening whenever what is being perceived is simultaneously interpreted, the latter being a cognitive process[34]. Consequently, *seeing-as* follows the rules of language communities — of habits and

[29] His most famous examples were, among others, the three-dimensional rectangle  (PI, II, p. 203); the 'duck-rabbit'  (*Ibid*., p. 204); the 'picture-face'  (*Ibid*.); and the 'double cross'  (*Ibid*., p.218), all of which shared the same quality of being able to be interpreted in multiple ways.

[30] PI, II, pp. 203–204: ""Here perhaps one would like to respond: The description of immediate, visual experience by means of an interpretation is an indirect description. "I see the figure as a box" amounts: I have a particular visual experience which is empirically found to accompany interpreting the figure as a box, or looking at a box. But if It amounted to this, I ought to know it. I ought to be able to refer to the experience directly, and not only indirectly. (As I can speak of red without necessarily calling it the colour of blood)."; *Ibid*., p. 205: "It would have made as little sense for me to say "Now I see it as …" as to say at the sight of a knife and fork "Now I see this as a knife and fork". This utterance would not be understood. Any more than: "Now it is a fork for me" or "It can be a fork too"."; *Ibid*.: "I see two pictures, with the duck-rabbit surrounded by rabbits in one, by ducks in the other. I don't notice that they are the same. Does it follow from this that I see something different in the two cases? — It gives us a reason for using this expression here.". See also RPP I, §1101, §1102, §1070**.**

[31] PI, II, p. 207: "'Seeing as…' is not a part of perception. And therefore it is like seeing, and again not like seeing."

[32] *Ibid*., p. 208.

[33] *Ibid*.: "I look at an animal; someone asks me: "What do you see?" I answer: A rabbit." — I see a landscape; suddenly a rabbit runs past. I exclaim "A rabbit!" Both things, both the report and the exclamation, are expressions of perception and of visual experience. But the exclamation is so in a different sense from the report: it is forced from us. – It stands to the experience somewhat as a cry to pain. But since the exclamation is the description of a perception, one can also call it the expression of thought. — Someone who looks at an object need not think of it; but whoever has the visual experience expressed by the exclamation is also thinking of what he sees. And that's why the lighting up of an aspect seems half visual experience, half thought."; RPP II, §390: "It is seeing, insofar as…, It is seeing, only insofar as… (That seems to me to be the solution.)"

[34] PI, II, p. 203: "… we can also *see* the illustration now as one thing, now as another. — So we interpret it, and *see* it as we *interpret* it.; RPP I, §20: "The question whether what is involved is a seeing or an act of interpreting arises because an interpretation becomes an expression of experience. And the interpretation is not an indirect description; no, it is the primary expression of the experience."; See also, RPP I, §9: "— Now how remarkable it is, that we are able to use the words of the *interpretation* also to describe what is immediately perceived! …"

forms of life. This explains, why whenever one experiences seeing-as, one tends to go back to a privileged interpretation and state that, despite a change in the 'conception' of what is being perceived, it remains the same. This also explains how the experience might change one's understanding of a given thing[35], depending — obviously — on whether the adoption of an alternative interpretation is relevant for the form of life at hand. Such changes can carry with them profound consequences. They imply not only a change in one's relation to that which has changed[36], but also a change in one's relation to the surrounding context. If the sense of propositions is determined by the rules of a system, the way we represent our perceptions presupposes a system of reference, a world-picture, subjacent to our representations overall[37]. That said, the experience of seeing-as follows the same pattern, and thereby coincides with the functioning of language-games as constituent parts of our certainties, *i.e.*, of our beliefs. Different language communities *see* reality in diverse ways, and while what they may learn to see differently coincides with their fluid propositions, perhaps the forms of representation that are anchored in the core of their world-picture, in the bedrock of their language, may never become subject to change nor interpretation. When commenting on what Wittgenstein calls 'aspect-blindness' (the incapacity of conceiving a given aspect), Baker writes that certain ways of seeing reality can be "invisible to one *generation* or *culture*, visible and even salient for another", and that to make a certain conception of reality 'visible', can require "waging war against the habits of a lifetime, and probably against the spirit of the culture in which one lives"[38]. Therefore, someone we may judge as seeing things abnormally, according to our

[35] RPP I, §27**:** "The *somewhat queer* phenomenon of seeing this way or that surely makes its first appearance when someone recognizes that the optical picture in one sense remains the same, while something else, which one might call "conception", may change."; PI, II, p. 203: "I observe a face, and then suddenly notice its likeness to another. I *see* that it has not change; and yet I see it differently. I call this experience "noticing an aspect"."; LWPP I, §493: "In one case you say: "What I have in front of me is *this* [copy]. I can also describe it as a rabbit." — In another case: Before, I saw something else, but now I see a rabbit."

[36] PI, II, p. 207: "Couldn't someone describe an unfamiliar shape that appeared before him just as accurately as I, to whom it is familiar? And isn't that the answer? — Of course, generally it won't be so. And his description will run quite differently. (I say, for example, "The animal had long ears" — he: "There were two long appendages", and then he draws them.)"; *Ibid*., p.208: "I meet someone whom I have not seen for years; I see him clearly, but fail to recognize him. Suddenly I recognize him, I see his former face in the altered one. I believe that I would portray him differently if I could paint."; *Ibid*.: p.219: "One *kind* of aspect might be called 'organizational aspects'. When the aspect changes, parts of the picture belong together which before did not."

[37] RPP I, §1029: "If the seeing of an aspect corresponds to a thought, then it is only in a *world* of thoughts that it can be an aspect.", §1030: "If I am describing an aspect, the description presupposes concepts which do not belong to the description of the figure itself."; LWPP I, §516: "The colour in the visual impression correspond to the colour of the object (this blotting paper looks pink to me, and is pink) – the shape in the visual impression to the shape of the object (it looks rectangular to me, and is rectangular) – but what I perceive in the dawning of an aspect is not a property of the object, but an internal relation between it and other objects."; See also, PI, II, p. 212**.**

[38] BAKER, p. 285.

references, could thus simply be playing a different game to our own[39]. Finally, one needs to ask how is this all related to ethics?

To live happily means to live in agreement with the world. However, this statement was formulated by Wittgenstein during his early work, in which the world meant the totality of facts, the existing atomic-facts of reality. Given that he abandoned the early notion of 'simple objects', it should be emphasized that, here, 'reality' and 'world' do not differ terminologically — both denote on equal terms the contingent immediate experience represented by language. Hence, to live in agreement with the world means to represent experience in a manner that does not contradict one's conception of goodness. Of course, even the notions of 'good' and 'bad' are developed linguistically and applied in diverse ways, meaning that they may have plurality of connotations[40]. The distinction made in Wittgenstein's *Lecture on Ethics* between 'relative' and 'ethical' value[41] can perhaps be understood from there. If all judgements of relative value "can be shown to be mere statements of facts and can therefore be put in such a form that it loses all appearance of a judgement of value"[42], these facts are determined by what we consider to be verifiable empirical propositions of our language games, and by whether they come up to "a certain predetermined standard"[43]. A good pianist, for instance, plays with what is considered to be a higher degree of dexterity; the 'right' road is right insofar as it is verifiable relative to a certain goal (with the help of *e.g.* a map); and a good runner is judged to be so for running "a certain number of miles in a certain number of minutes"[44]. These values can change relative to the criteria of verification and the plurality of cases that set the standard. Ethical — or 'absolute' — values on the other hand, other than being used as imperatives[45], cannot be justified by

[39] RPP I, §982: Now if some man deviates radically from the norm in his description of flat figures or when he copies them, what difference does it make between him and normal humans that he uses different '*units*' in copying and describing? That is to say, how will such a one go on to differ from normal human in yet other things?"

[40] WL32-35, §29: "What is the reason for using the word "good"? Asking this is like asking why one calls a given proposition a solution to a problem. It can be the case that one trouble gives way to another trouble, and that the resolution of the second difficulty is only connected with the first. … In view of the way we have learned the word "good" it would be astonishing if it had a general meaning covering all of its applications …. It is used in different contexts because there is a transition between similar things called "good", a transition which continues, it may be, to things which bear no similarity to earlier members of the series."

[41] LE, p. 5.

[42] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

[45] *Ibid.*, p.5: "… suppose I had told one of you a preposterous lie and he came up to me and said "You're behaving like a beast" and then I were to say "I know I behave badly, but then I don't want to behave any better", could he then say "Ah, then that's all right"? Certainly not; he would say "Well, you *ought* to want to behave better." Here you have an absolute judgement of value …."

statements of facts, and can only be described through similes[46], just like the core beliefs of a world-picture that cannot be explained but only described.

From an anthropological perspective, the question of whether there is a common language game primitive enough to form a universal conception of good and bad could be an interesting one. Wittgenstein might give reasons to believe that is the case; whenever he refers to 'human language', 'human language-games', or uses adjectives such as 'primitive', 'archaic' or 'natural' for a specific game, he appeals to what he presupposes to be self-evident rules shared by himself and his readers; leading to the statement that our language use must be similar in a more profound sense. For instance, if we all learn to understand others' state of mind by assimilating 'sadness' and 'happiness' with their bodily expressions[47], or whenever someone cries out in pain — one of the most widely-shared expressions of all —, one's attitude towards that person would be 'an attitude towards a soul', and one would 'only reluctantly' assimilate them with an automaton[48]. In such a scenario, one could speak of a sort of primordial empathy; a primitive form of recognition of the suffering of the other, of what is bad for them, and, thereby of what would be good, namely the end of the cause of suffering. In contrast cases including smiling, laughing, that is, forms of expressing joy, could lead to opposite responses. But the matter is not entirely solved; for even concepts binding the judge with the judged through a common identity, such as 'human', 'living being', or perhaps even more complex ones that refer to ethnicities, nations, and so on, are determined by linguistic communities[49]. There are plenty of examples of disagreement in judgments on whether a form of suffering can be justified for a supposed 'greater good' or not; not to mention subjects where we do not even consider the matter at all, when later (or earlier) in our common history it might be otherwise. The point is that all judgements of value must go through language if they are to be expressed, and, therefore, are not exempt from the diversity of forms they might assume. As long as there is a plurality of linguistic systems, there is sense in talking about 'ethical systems', *i.e.* a plurality ethics[50], in accordance with which we make our value judgements. Is there a subjacent

[46] *Ibid*., p. 10.

[47] PI, II, p. 185**:** "The human body is the best picture of the human soul."

[48] *Ibid*.; *Ibid*., §420: "Seeing a living human being as an automaton is analogous to seeing one figure as a limiting case or variant of another; the cross-pieces of a window as a swastika, for example."

[49] To prove this point, one would not have to make mention of the multiples cases where a distinction between 'us' and 'them' are proven to be troublesome from an, just as fundamentally unfounded, ethical standpoint.

[50] LE, p. 24.; RPP I, §48: "… I am only saying if you believe that our concepts are the right ones, the ones suited to intelligent human beings; that anyone with different ones would not realize something that we realize, then imagine certain general facts of nature different from the way they are, and conceptual structures different from our own will appear *natural* to you."

'primary' ethics to all these systems? Perhaps. However, even if there is, any attempt to formulate it would only result in the description of a belief: just as in Wittgenstein's early philosophy, there is no correct ethical doctrine, and if an attempt to universalise one succeeded and was grasped and consequently systematically adopted by each and every linguistic subject, it would mean the complete eradication of alternative systems: "if a man could write a book on Ethics which really was a book on Ethics, this book would, with an explosion, destroy all the other books in the world"[51].

Despite this, the impossibility of formulating an irrefutable doctrine does not worry us. Considering, that — in Wittgenstein's terms — the ethical dimension of life springs from the transcendental subject, then it is that to which one should turn. To live in agreement with reality means to live in agreement with one's representation of it. However, as we have seen, the transcendental subject's self (that can also be called the empirical subject, due to experience being the condition of possibility of its representability), is shattered between a plurality of language-games, between different rules and ways of seeing the world, each of which form a 'veil'[52] through which the subject can differentiate between an inner and outer space. Knowing that all games return back to a referential system, one must consider the possibility of a plurality of systems that constitute the empirical subject, meaning that for each time the transcendental 'I' conceives itself as a subject of the world, the whole of its language, *i.e*. its world-picture, is systematically configured to make sense of the given conception[53]. It is however, somewhat worrisome that this reconfiguration does not affirm any sort of unity between the self and the world — on the contrary — it emphasizes their partition, and this is explainable for a simple reason. The self is constituted through commonly verifiable propositions; however, from the moment Wittgenstein refers to the 'veils' of the self as a plurality of language-games forming different concepts of 'us'[54], it means that each of them follow the rules and the judgements of value of distinct systems:

> I could almost see myself as an amoral nucleus to which the moral concepts of other people stick easily. So that, what I am saying is eo ipso never my own, since this nucleus (I picture it as a white dead bundle) cannot talk. Instead, printed sheets stick to it. These then talk; of course, not in their original state, but mixed up with other sheets & influenced by the

[51] LE, p. 7.

[52] PPO, p. 99.

[53] See note 35.

[54] Bearing in mind the above comment concerning empathy it might be interesting to add this citation: "To be deprived of the affection of others would be altogether impossible for me because in this sense I have far too little (or no) self." (PPO, p.113).

> position into which they are brought by the nucleus. —But even if this was to be my fate, I would not be relieved of responsibility & it would be sin or nonsense for example to lament this fate[55].

The 'nucleus' he mentions is the transcendental 'I', a nodal point that intertwines a series of games and systems, whose self — the empirical subject — is differentiated from the commonly shared concepts of 'us' by amalgamating them into one's personal identity and thereby forming a composite whole.

This said, it is worth commenting on how Williams' argument of a move in Wittgenstein's philosophy from the transcendental 'I' to a transcendental 'we'[56] does not take into consideration the late Wittgenstein's peripheral writings on ethics, nor for that matter, the ethical dimension of his late philosophy. For if the 'I', the transcendental subject, is substituted by a 'we', then language would be systematically in agreement with itself, assured in its solipsism. In such a scenario, there would be no place for internal contradictions, as everything would be internally justified by the 'we' that sustains it. No problems within the use of language due to its being sustained by a common transcendental 'we', implies no philosophical problems to dissolve, and, therefore, no philosophy. What actually changed was not that there was a 'move' from the transcendental 'I' to a transcendental 'we', but that a plurality of 'we' moved *into* the 'I'. That is, the world of the 'I' is not the *universe* of a 'we' but a *pluriverse*[57] of them, where each one is a facet, a 'printed sheet', of what Weininger would call the 'character' of the transcendental 'I'; *i.e.* of a potential manifestation of its self in a given context. Curiously enough, this means that when the subject perceives itself as a singular object of the world, *i.e.* as a self, it does so in accordance with a system that does not correspond to the world-picture serving to represent the supposed 'outer' world; for, if not, its identity would not be unique and, therefore, could not be considered as such. In other words, the games that represent one's self, and those that represent the exteriority correlated to it, do not spring from the same source, otherwise they would be undistinguishable, and the 'I' would simply melt into an 'us'. Therein, the identity of the transcendental 'I', the empirical subject, follows what can be called (in accordance with Marxist philosophy) a logic of *difference* and *equivalence*; where a

[55] *Ibid.*, pp. 117–119.

[56] WILLIAMS, p. 83.

[57] We are here closer to Carl Schmitt's usage of the term when determining the realm of the political (SCHMITT, p.53), rather than the one made by the anthropologic 'perspectivists' (notably Mignolo and Viveiros de Castro). These commit the fundamental mistake of trying to think of cosmologies surpassing their own, whilst the former, quite correctly, limits himself to affirming the unsurmountable state of the social as intrinsically heterogenous, and, consequently, contradictory.

particularity is only considered as such insofar as a difference, just as much as an 'us' is only 'us' in relation to a 'them', and that there is no place for 'I' in 'us'[58]. There are certainly notions that the empirical subject can be associated with, such as the one of 'person' (which Wittgenstein, not accidentally, considers to be a composite concept[59]), however, if I affirm my singularity insofar as a 'person', I can only do so relatively to that which is not. Likewise, expressions such as 'I am nobody', or 'I am just a normal person' abstractify that which makes the announcer of the statement a *unique* person even though they differentiate them from that which does not belong to the category of 'person'. The perilous result of this dissociation is that the judgements of value subjacent to the referring system of the self — to a lesser or greater degree — do not coincide with those subjacent to the referent system of represented exteriority, despite both being nurtured by the transcendental 'I'. A systematic contradiction within oneself is thereby created between what one *is* and what one *should be* in regard to the judgements of value correlated with the represented exteriority[60]. This means that as long as the transcendental 'I' sees itself as an object of the world, conceiving thereby its represented exteriority as that which is the case, one can say that it is living in disagreement with its world — consequently leading to unhappiness. To quote a remark made by Kierkegaard on Hegel, one can note that to the extent that the latter "characterizes man merely as the particular and regards this character as "a moral form of the evil" … so that the individual … is either sinning or subjected to temptation"[61], his ethical conception of the individual seems to coincide with the condition of Wittgenstein's empirical subject, who, for crystallizing into an entity whose system of reference, and therefore values, are necessarily different from its 'outer world', lives necessarily in sin and is experienced as such by the transcendental 'I'. Hence Wittgenstein's harshness when considering the self as the main impediment to living in agreement with the world[62]. A 'confession' has to be part of one's 'new life'[63], dismantling thereby the 'edifice' of one's

[58] Interestingly enough, Laclau and Mouffe actualised this terminology in their *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, a work whose arguments refer to — and are partially based upon — Wittgenstein's conception of language (this being even more true for Mouffe's own writings).

[59] PI, §404.

[60] PPO, p. 111: "Know thyself & you will see that you are in every way again and again a poor sinner."; p.113: "Perhaps I have a self only insofar as I feel actually reprobate. And when I feel reprobate, this is no expression (or just: hardly ever an expression?) of this feeling. I have often racked my brain over my not being better than Kraus & kindred spirits & painfully reproached myself with this. Yet what an untold amount of vanity there is in this thought."

[61] KIERKEGAARD, p. 108.

[62] See Ch. 5.

[63] CV, p. 16.

pride[64] as a first step towards recognising the disparity between the values of the system subjacent to the particularities of the self and the exteriority, the abstract 'them' it desires to be in agreement with[65].

Thus, if the concept of the mystical implies the affirmation of a given representation of the world within a 'total reality', where the limits of the former are set in contrast to contingency, a good attitude towards the world would be a symptom of there being no self, but a unity between life and its representation of experience; whilst a bad attitude would denounce the presence of a self whose discrepancy with its representation of experience makes it long for the indefinite, and for this very reason the difference, implied in contingency. With a bad attitude comes the wish to live happily, feasible through a 'life of knowledge'. Knowledge meanwhile can only be considered as such within systems of belief, from which learning and understanding certain usages of language are justified for offering a representation of experience that coincides with the form of life of a community. If one considers that the transcendental 'I' is constituted as a nodal point between these world-pictures, and that the pursuit of a life of knowledge only makes sense for as long as there is a self that is systematically living in disagreement with the world, then Wittgenstein's use of the term 'knowledge' must mean knowledge of the diverse usages of a sign; *i.e*. the mastery of a series of language-games applicable to a given context, each of which imply a certain attitude towards reality, determining its representation in definite ways. This means that if knowledge is the willing subject's way of reaching a happy life, the phenomena of seeing-as is its *modus operandi*, allowing the subject that is refuting a given representation of experience to work towards alternative ways of grasping it[66]. But why must change come from oneself? It is because the moment a self is already grounded as a part of reality — as an object of thought, doubting the representation of one's presupposed exteriority cannot dissolve the interior-exterior dichotomy — inexistent when living in agreement with the world — as the affirmation of a self is already implicit in the doubt itself. However, by emphasizing the arbitrariness of the possible representations of experience correlated to the system of beliefs that sustains one's own objectification, the whole

[64] *Ibid.*, p. 26.

[65] From the perspective of the willing subject, sustaining both these dimensions of language, we can trace the similarities between the described contradiction within life and Nietzsche's statement that "[e]very people has its own tartufferies, and call them its virtues. You do not know — you cannot know — what is best about yourself." (§249), for the empirical subject's contradictory nature impedes the formulation of a positive affirmation of a personal virtue without imposing the negative counterpart denouncing it as a vice. One's qualities are, regardless of good or bad, what makes the empirical subject unavoidably suffer ostracism.

[66] RPP II, §541: "Seeing aspects is built up on the basis of other games."

of the willing subject's depiction of reality becomes potentially dubious, and thereby susceptible to change. Like a figure that can be described as flat or three-dimensional, as a duck or a rabbit, and so on, experiences can also be seen in a plurality of ways, making it possible to affirm with Wittgenstein the 'incomprehensible' phenomena that through the brute practice of seeing things differently "*nothing*, and yet *everything*, has changed after all"[67]. Again, one is faced with the affirmation that ethics is transcendental, that one's attitude towards the world determines one's understanding of it, and that it only makes sense to speak of knowledge insofar as it serves the purpose of living a good life[68]:

> I want to say: it's not that on some points men know the truth with perfect certainty. No: perfect certainty is only a matter of their attitude.

Thus far it has been shown how the transcendental subject prevails in Wittgenstein's later writings, and that, even here, language and ethics remain intertwined. The following will now offer a brief exposition of how the notion of 'will' remains just as untouched in his later period; this will affirm once and for all that the ethical is not only continuously present in his thoughts, but is also the means and ends to which his philosophy strives.

[67] *Ibid.*, §473; §474.

[68] C, §404.

10. Will

> "*Seeing* an aspect is a voluntary act. We can tell someone: Now look at it like *this*. Try again to see the similarity. Listen to the theme *this way*, etc. But does that make seeing a voluntary act? Isn't it rather the way you look at something that causes this seeing?"[1]

What allows Wittgenstein to state that a given practice of seeing-as is voluntary? Why does he feel the need to draw a line between the *way* one sees, and seeing itself? To answer the first question is relatively simple: seeing an aspect is a voluntary act because it makes sense to speak of it as such, *i.e.* as 'subject to the will'[2]: "There is such an order as "Imagine *this*!"", and also, "Now see the figure like *this*", but not "Now see this leaf green!"[3]. Certainly, when someone masters seeing a figure "now *this* way, now *that* way", one could say it is done with 'facility'[4], and this makes it trivial to state that "the aspect is, at least to a certain degree subject to the will"[5]; and thus differently from how it could be the subject of, for example, 'seeing' for belonging to the domain of thought. Consequently, seeing-as is intrinsically linguistic, belonging to the domain of represented experience. Therefore, ''Seeing as…' is not part of a perception'[6], if one considers that the verb *to perceive* comes from the Latin *percipere* — that is, gather/take hold of/obtain something external to the subject of the verb. However, seeing-as acts not upon *that* which is perceived, but on its intellection — on the representation of reality: "Aspects are not imaginary or mere creatures of the mind; but unlike perceptual experiences, they are subject to the will"[7]. Thus, seeing-as operates freely within the limits of one's language, meaning that it must be subject to the will, just like depending on their will a prisoner can walk more or less freely within the confined space of their cell[8].

1 LWPP I, §451.

2 PI, II, p. 224.

3 *Ibid.*

4 PI, II, p. 219: "Only of someone *capable* of making certain applications of the figure with facility would one say that he saw it now *this* way, now *that* way. The substratum, of this experience is the mastery of a technique."

5 RPP I, §971.

6 PI, II, p.207.

7 BAKER, p.282.

8 LFW, p. 434: "In a prison you are normally locked in, said not to be free. I am in this room, free to go wherever I please."

Wittgenstein's *tour de force* is to show that the freedom that comes from the mastery of a game of seeing-as, is the expression of a will that transcends any deterministic conception of itself. By showing how the discourses that preach for and against the freedom of the will are epistemologically unfounded, both being subordinated to belief, he manages to dislocate the debate over their legitimacy to the sphere of seeing-as. This means that irrespective of whether the will is free or determined, it is something that, once the arbitrariness of each standpoint is revealed, can be decided freely. For aspects "are not subject to dispute: to rational support or to disconfirmation by facts"[9]. Such freedom of choice in regards to one's own beliefs consequently affirms the freedom of the will as transcending the debate that puts it into question. This process of dislocation is most clearly shown in Wittgenstein's rarely cited and sometimes underestimated[10], *Lectures on Freedom of the Will*, where he notes that to say that the will is determined is the same as saying that it follows one or more predetermined principles (*e.g.* natural laws), which integrates it as a reaction in a causal chain. However, the similes of 'natural laws' — that is, the "idea of laws written down already which we only guess at" — "only represents a certain way of looking at things, a certain way of acting, looking for regularities etc."[11] Natural laws are, just like in the *Tractatus*, propositions of language that are put to test against reality, and as they are frequently capable of making sense out of a represented experience, they acquire the status of unquestionable truths. From statements on how things have always been, we postulate how things will always be[12]. We do not predict the outcome of a phenomenon from material data, from objects of reality, but from our own referential system[13]. In addition, like any other system of beliefs, every time given natural laws are to be verified, they are done so through the criteria of verification formed by the system subjacent to the verified law[14]. Following the same logic, if a system is unable to explain a particular phenomenon through its laws and consequent list of causes[15], one would either have to "go on

9 BAKER, p.281.

10 As when defined by J-H. Glock as 'cursory' and 'uncompelling' in his *A Wittgenstein Dictionary*.

11 LFW, p. 431.

12 *Ibid*., p. 430: "The word 'law' suggests more than an observed regularity which we take it will go on. The usage of the word natural law connects, one might say, to a certain kind of fatalism. What will happen is laid down somewhere…if we got hold of the book in which the natural laws were really laid down."

13 *Ibid*., p.442: "The idea that you can connect predicting what a man will choose with materialism is rubbish. Prediction doesn't mean you will predict from *material* data."

14 Unless, of course, there is a change in regularity, encouraging a change in the laws; leading to the equivoque situation where a natural law supposed to determine the course of reality would be comparable to a rail 'which had changed its shape' or to a rail which 'we had not known the exact shape of' (LFW, p.429), making what we thought to be the final destination of the train another.

15 LFW, p.433.

looking for some [other] law", or consider the phenomenon as occurring somewhat freely due to its 'complexity', as many people would claim when witnessing, for example, a wobbling steering wheel[16]. Similarly, when it comes to life forms, we tend to say "there is a mechanism here, but a very much more complicated one"[17], as in the case of a piece of paper in a wind "blowing about anyhow"[18]. However, to say so only serves to hide the convenient self-given right to preserve a determinist concept of reality, even when the system that sustains it is incapable of explaining a given phenomenon, and, consequently of predicting its outcome. Finally, even if there were preferences in what we judge as resulting from one's will, there is "no reason why, even if there was a regularity in human decisions, I should not be free. There is nothing about regularity which makes anything free or not free"[19]. One might choose freely to act similarly repeatedly. The point is that the freedom of the will is not to be found in experience[20] but in the managing of one's conceptual framework, which is also why any case in which it would make sense to talk of a freedom of the will could be reduced to a compulsory action and vice-versa; both statements being sustained by a world-picture. To say that seeing-as is subject to the will, "does not mean that it is, as it were, a voluntary movement, as opposed to an involuntary one", for "the same movement of the arm which is now voluntary might also be involuntary"[21]; just like a prisoner who thinks he is walking freely in his cell when he might actually be being controlled by a crank[22], or like when discussing whether one is acting freely or not while acting in a certain way once a signal is given[23]. Ultimately, whether an act is wilful or not is not verifiable and, therefore it is a matter of seeing-as. This means that ultimately, the will is free to choose the preferred seeing of the aspect, and thereby transcends the dispute as self-legislating.

It only makes sense to speak of such a gesture within a game of seeing-as; and the relative freedom implicit in it comes only from the mastery of a technique that is based on the clarification of the arbitrariness of assumptions. Wittgenstein's refusal to take a dogmatic

16 *Ibid.*

17 *Ibid.*, p. 432.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 434.

19 *Ibid.*, p. 431.

20 NB, 4.11.16: "The act of the will is not an experience."

21 RPP II, §83.

22 LFW, p. 434.

23 PI, §627.

position on the matter[24] is coherent with his defence of a willing subject as it is the possibility of choice that affirms the freedom inherent to it. If he were to try to prove it, he would have to do so in accordance with verification criteria that are representable only in experience, therefore contradicting it. Just like the transcendental subject, which must be objectified into an empirical self in order to be conceived, the correlated will can only be spoken of as an idea of the world, as represented experience. In both cases, the transcendental status is lost for the sake of becoming an idea that necessarily short-circuits all attempts to grasp its source. As for the question of whether it is possible to find even a glimpse of the will in experience[25], the answer must be negative. Not because there is no will, but because like the seeing of an aspect, "images are subject to the will"[26], which is the same as saying that "imagination is subject to the will" – the latter not being 'a sentence of psychology'[27] precisely because, as already clarified in the *Notebooks*, the willing subject cannot be grasped as an object of the world. To understand this argument in the context of Wittgenstein's later writings one must remind oneself that the act of the will "is not the cause of the action but is the action itself", and that "one cannot will without acting"[28]. If one considers that the will acts upon one's representation of reality, this amounts to saying that "the will can't be a phenomenon, for whatever phenomenon you take is something that *simply happens*, not something we *do*"[29]. If will is an action that determines our representation of experience, the way one considers the will can only be a part of the language that the will itself determines[30]. This helps to elucidate the ambivalent proposition "If the will has to have an object in the world [*i.e. my* world], the object can be the intended action itself. And the will does have to have an object"[31] from the *Notebooks*. There is an 'If', given that the will prevails insofar as it is transcendental and independent of one's representation of the world,

[24] LFW, p.436: "All these arguments might look as if I wanted to argue for the freedom of the will or against it. But I don't want to."

[25] PI, §621: "But there is one thing we shouldn't overlook: when 'I raise my arm', my arm rises. And now a problem emerges: what is left over if I subtract the fact that my arm rises from the fact that I raise my arm? ((Are the kinaesthetic sensations my willing?))"

[26] RPP II, §63; PI, II, p.224: "Seeing an aspect and imagining are subject to the will."

[27] RPP I, §107.

[28] NB, 4.11.16.

[29] PG, §97. See also BB, pp.153 – 157.

[30] *Ibid*., §95: "Intention and intentionality. – "The thought that p is the case doesn't presuppose that it is the case; yet I can't think that something is red if the colour red does not exist." Here we mean the existence of a red sample *as part of our language*."; *Ibid*., §96: "It's beginning to look somehow as if intention could never be recognized as *intention* from the outside. But the point is that on has to read off from a thought that it is the thought that such and such is the case."

[31] NB, 4.11.16.

but it "does have to have an object" because otherwise we would be unable to speak of it[32]. This object can be called the object of the will, and is the thought that objectifies it as a part of the world: "we cannot imagine, *e.g.*, having carried out an act of will without having detected that we have carried it out"[33]. Surely, insofar as the will acts in accordance with that which is represented as good, or considering that the object of the will acquires its value from being a representation of reality that lead one to live in agreement with it, one can say that the object of the will could be called a 'wish'. One can only speak of will in relation to a wish — a represented state of affairs — that it tries, manages, or is in the process of fulfilling. Thus Wittgenstein's struggle to distinguish the will from wanting and wishing[34]; something that is necessary to make his readers realise that, whenever one speaks of will in relation to a wish (which is unavoidable), one is not talking about the will of the willing subject, but of the psychological (*i.e.* objectified) will represented by language: "It's only considering the linguistic manifestation of a wish that makes it appear that my wish prefigures the fulfilment [possibly accomplished by the act of will]. — Because it's the wish that just that were the case. — It is in language that wish and fulfilment meet"[35]. Likewise, when "forming an image of something [*e.g.* of the will through the representation of a wish]", which is "comparable to an activity. (Swimming)", we "are not by these pictures, saying "Look!", for the "coming and going of the pictures is not something that *happens* to us"[36], they are already there as a part of the linguistic repertoire we use to represent experience — what is conceived of as an 'experience' of the will, *e.g.* a 'voluntary movement', is "marked by the absence of surprise"[37]. The truth, however, is that the representation of a wish does not determine the will in any way: "When I raise my arm 'voluntarily', I don't make use of any means to bring the movement about. My wish is no such a means either"[38]. It is not as if we would have to "first become

[32] We shall talk more about the status of Wittgenstein's philosophical propositions in the following chapter.

[33] NB, 4.11.16.

[34] PI, §611: ""Willing – wanting – too is merely an experience," one would like to say (the 'will' too only 'idea'). It comes when it comes, and I cannot bring it about. Not bring it about? — Like *what*? What can I bring about, then? What am I comparing it with when I say this?"; §612: "I wouldn't say of the movement of my arm, for example, that it comes when it comes, and so on. And this is the domain in which it makes sense to say that something doesn't simply happens to us, but that we *do* it. "I don't need to wait for my arm to rise –- I can raise it." And here I am making a contrast between the movement of my arm and, say, the fact the violent thudding of my heart will subside."; §613: "… "Wanting" is not the name of an action, and so not of a voluntary one either."

[35] PG, §103.

[36] RPP II, §88.

[37] PI, §628.

[38] *Ibid.*, §614. Note the importance of the first-person pronoun and the inverted commas of the word 'voluntarily' so as to mark a distance from all attempts to reduce will to experience.

acquainted with the images" of what is the case and of those of how we want things to be "and only later learn to bend them to our will"[39]. For every time we identify the will as a "primary action, which then is the cause of the outward perceptible action"[40], it has already been objectified as a part of experience through its identification by means of a represented wish[41]; it is, so to say, a 'ghostly action'[42]. All voluntary action "excludes the wish" from the acting[43]. Moreover, when one represents the will as incapable of satisfying a wish, it is not because "one can't find any point of application for the will" — as if powerless in a given situation (unable to fulfil its role as a 'primary action'), but because the language-game represented as the circumstance of one's wish (which is imagined) systematically excludes the possibility of representing a will capable of realizing it[44]. Will is not a line that conducts a given state of affairs to one that is wished and which may fail. The will is action, and the strongest argument in favour of this statement is that it is senseless to want to will[45]:

> §618: One imagines the willing subject here as something without any mass (without any inertia), as a motor which has no inertia in itself to overcome. And so it is only mover, not moved. That is: one can say "I will, but my body does not obey me" — but not: "My will does not obey me." (Augustine) But in the sense in which I can't fail to will, I can't try to will either.
>
> §619: And one might say: "It is only inasmuch as I can never try to will that I can always will.

[39] RPP I, §900.

[40] *Ibid*.

[41] RPP II, §78: "To say that imaging is subject to the will can be misleading, for it makes it seem as if the will were a kind of motor and the images were connected with it, so that it could evoke them, put them into motion, and shut them off".

[42] This term is borrowed by Gómez-Alonso, p.96 - 97: "…, it is as if willing were an event without mass, or a metaphysical point of force such that it acquires mass, so becoming apprehensible only when, assimilated to an external phenomenon, loses its identity. … even if it exists, this 'ghostly' action presents itself as something that, while happening *in* one, always happens *to* one, as a passive 'internal' phenomenon to which the agent is related as a *monitoring* subject."

[43] PI, §616.

[44] *Ibid*., §617: "If we cross our fingers in a special way, we are sometime unable to move a particular finger when someone tells us to do so, if he only *points* to the finger — merely shows it to the eye. However, if he touches it, we *can* move it. One would like to describe this experience as follows: we are unable to *will* to move the finger. … Only when one feels the finger can the will know where it is to engage. — But this way of putting it is misleading. One would like to say: "How am I to know where I am to catch hold with the will, if the feeling does not indicate the place?" But then how do I know what point I am to direct the will when the feeling *is* there? It is experience that shows that in this case the finger is, as it were, paralysed until we feel a touch on it; it could not have been known a priori."

[45] PI.

Finally, if one becomes aware that one is constantly objectifying the will as a part of one's representation of the world, of language, through its inclusion in language-games based upon notions such as 'wanting' and 'wishing', and that it is senseless to speak of it as anything other than action, then everything must all be action[46], simply because the meaning of our representations of experience derive from their application in language, and this is determined by "the rest of our proceedings"[47] and games played within a system. At this point, considering that action determines even the language used to represent all of our experiences, (e.g. all of reality), the will, initially considered a part of our experiences of the world, metamorphoses into something which goes beyond it and becomes 'the real agent'[48]:

> *Doing* itself seems not to have any experiential volume. It seems like an extentionless point, the point of a needle. This point seems to be the real agent — and what happens in the realm of appearances merely consequences of this doing. "I *do*" seems to have a definite sense, independently of any experience.

The 'real agent' Wittgenstein refers to is nothing less than the willing subject, whose actions follow the stream of life[49], and whose language forms its world. This is a world that represents experience and changes in accordance to the willing subject's attitude towards it, justifying Wittgenstein's appreciation of Faust's line: "in the beginning there was the deed"[50]. The transcendental subject prevails in Wittgenstein's later philosophy, not only as his linguistic subject, but also as a willing subject. The following chapter will investigate the impact this may have on the notion of ethics and on Wittgenstein's writings as a whole.

[46] *Ibid*., §615: "Willing, if it is not to be a sort of wishing, must be the action itself. It mustn't stop anywhere short of the action." If it is the action, then it so in the ordinary sense of the word; so it is speaking, writing, walking, lifting a think, imagining something. But it is also striving, trying, making an effort — to speak, to write, to lift a thing, to imagine something, and so on."

[47] C, §229.

[48] PI, 620.

[49] See Ch. 7.

[50] C, §402: "… (… und schreib getrost "Im Anfang war die Tat.)"

11. Ethics and Philosophy

It is clear that, if one were to follow Wittgenstein's rules on limiting means of expression to colloquial language, nothing of what was said in the previous chapter could truly be said. By choosing not to do so, one is straightforwardly objectifying that which one cannot speak of, appealing thereby to a form of metalanguage of which Wittgenstein is ultimately forced to disapprove. This said, there is an ambiguity in his methodology that is worthy of attention. If one considers that the aim is to live in agreement with the world, this means that we want to live in agreement with the contingent reality. This means that we could be capable of accepting — *i.e.* of finding meaning in — a representation of reality that embraces its contingency and that embraces the 'alien will' that can be called 'the will of God'[1]. To live in agreement with the world is not only to represent the world as a contingent reality, but also, to conceive it as the necessary condition for the self-justified expression of one's own will, making the will of God and the will of the transcendental 'I' an indistinguishable whole. However, from the very beginning of Wittgenstein's writings it is implicit that the unity between the two godheads — the transcendental 'I' and God — is something to be achieved; that it is the 'purpose of life' to grasp its meaning, which is God and is problematic[2]. Obviously, it would not make sense for it to be any different, as to live happily is the ultimate goal, and that if one did live happily, one would be living in agreement with reality, meaning that there would be no problems to solve, and no reason to philosophize on the matter. Therefore, from the very first pen-stroke, Wittgenstein implicitly postulated that the actual condition presented to the reader is that there *is* a disagreement between the will of the transcendental 'I' and the will of God; that there *is* a purpose in life that has not yet been found, and that there is the world, the contingent reality, and *my* world, *my* representation of contingent experience: "The I occurs in philosophy through the fact that the "world is my world"". The singularity of the '*my*' implies a singularity of an '*I*' in contrast to that which is not '*I*' — experience. However, to say so of the willing subject is completely senseless, for the transcendental 'I' and experience are essentially one — there is no interior, and, consequently, no exterior. Lurking behind the statement that there are two wills, that we are searching for the meaning of life, of there being *my* world, *my* representation of experience in contrast to the contingent reality, is the empirical subject, the self-

[1] NB, 8.7.16.

[2] *Ibid*., 11.6.16.

objectification of the transcendental 'I' as a part of its own representation of the world; this being the very illness that is meant to be cured[3], the fly whose way needs to be shown out of the fly-bottle and out of its little world[4]. But how can one show the way out?

If one pictures the fly, the empirical subject — from the point of view of the *Tractatus*, the objective is to trace the limits of the expression of thought — the limits of the expression of the language of the empirical subject. One's system of reference becomes the representation of states of affairs, *i.e.* elementary propositions. Since sense is only possible here through empirical propositions, and since language, if it is to be considered as such, has to make sense; to say that one wants to trace the limits of the expression of thought can only mean that one wants to trace the limits of sense — the limits to the expression of empirical propositions. With the help of logical analysis, the early Wittgenstein thereby wanted to tint the glass of the fly-bottle, and make it visible by showing the *a priori* limits of language. However, as one climbs the ladder of Tractarian propositions, it has to be cast aside, and this means that once happiness is reached, philosophy is set aside.

As already established, Wittgenstein's therapeutic method changed with time. However, philosophy remained something to be practised when needed, whenever necessary for its subjects' well-being. This is why even in his later work, he stated that in philosophy that "the comparison of thinking to a process that goes on in secret is a misleading one"[5], as it makes the subject-world separation the unquestioned postulate of linguistic agents that are meant to discard it using the therapeutic method, the latter evidently only being relevant for those who are unhappy. Likewise, "the clarity of thoughts is not in & of itself the most important thing", but becomes "exceedingly important where lack of clarity could lead to self-deception"[6]. Self-deception is nothing other than the troublesome experience of living in a world that contradicts one's values, that stems from a mishmash of language-games that do not belong together in given ways, and that leads one to say that the 'complexity of philosophy' lies "not in its matter, but in our tangled understanding"[7]. In other words, philosophy can only operate by clarifying thoughts, however, it is only meaningful insofar as it is meant for those people who, within the contradiction between their values and the world as they see it, wander "aimlessly on the

[3] PI, §255: "The philosopher treats a question; like an illness."

[4] *Ibid.*, §309: "What is your aim in philosophy? – To show the fly the way out of the fly-bottle."

[5] RPP I, §580.

[6] PPO, p.299.

[7] PR, §2.

rubble" of their ruined lives in search of a warmth that is meant to be found within the wanderers themselves all along[8].

Following this line of thought, philosophy for philosophy's sake becomes uninteresting, its only meaningful quality being its therapeutic benefits for the distressed. This is to the extent that, when no one is in need of it, it should not be 'tormented' but rather, left in peace[9], and that, as long as it is being practised it must be so because there is a need for it. For to practise it, one must be already immerged in the problem of life, a problem which is "insoluble on the surface, [and] can only be solved in depth"[10], due to it being cultivated by habits hidden in the bedrock of our language. Consequently, it is important to state that if the disease is to be cured, it must "run its natural course" little by little[11]; (this being the reason behind why the comment "Take your time!" is how — empathic — philosophers salute each other[12]). Moreover, knowing that the problem of life lies in the unquestioned parts of our representation of reality, philosophy unavoidably becomes "a fight against the fascination which forms of expression exert upon us"[13], and a fight against the paralysis of the intellect caused by our incapacity to take the needed distance to challenge the cause for disunity within the willing subject. Therefore, insofar that philosophizing is only possible within a contradictory language sustained by its own fragmented beliefs, in order to restructure it "All that philosophy can do is to destroy Idols"[14]. This is the challenge of the art, for philosophers themselves depend upon language in order to inspect the grammar they 'distrust'[15]. Philosophical practice itself is impregnated by language habits, many of which are unproductive for the purpose, as we tend to forget that even though it is the conceptual that determines our relation to reality we usually subjugate it to a

[8] PPO, p.125: "It is true that one may be able to live also on the field of rubble from the houses in which one was once accustomed to live. But it is difficult. One had derived one's joy from the warmth & coziness of the rooms, after all, even if one didn't know it. But now, as one wanders aimlessly on the rubble, one knows it. One knows that only the mind can provide warmth now & that one is not at all accustomed to being warmed by the mind."

[9] PI, §133: "The real discovery is the one that enables me capable to break off philosophizing when I want to. — The one that gives philosophy peace, so that it is no longer tormented by questions which bring *itself* in question. — Instead, a method is now demonstrated by examples, and the series of examples can be broken off. — Problems are solved (difficulties eliminated), not a *single* problem."

[10] CV, p. 84.

[11] RPP II, §642: "In philosophizing we may not *terminate* a disease of thought. It must run its natural course, and *slow* cure is all important."

[12] *Ibid*., p. 91.

[13] BB, p. 27.

[14] PHI, p. 171**.** He goes on to clarify that "that means not making any new ones [Idols] say out of absence of idols". Doing the contrary would only lead to the already spoken tendency of trying to find a solution within the problem and not in its dissolution.

[15] NL, p. 106: "Distrust of grammar is the first requisite for philosophizing."

terminology of the physical. This a priori postulates the interior-exterior dichotomy that is meant to be overcome[16] and also blinds one to the fact that many concepts are there to accomplish the 'odd-jobs' caused by the equivocations of our expressions[17] — and that even those that serve as tools to examine language may need to be carefully examined. For "Nothing is more difficult than facing concepts *without prejudice.* (And that is the principal difficulty of philosophy)"[18]. At this point, it seems clear that the philosopher do not have any greater beliefs he can relate to and feel safe believing in, and this is exactly what occurs: "When you are philosophizing you descend into the old chaos [and] feel at home there"[19].

How could there be any advantage in descending into 'primeval chaos' for the sake of living happily? At first glance, such a positioning does not appear to be therapeutic at all. However, it changes in the light of what we have already seen concerning the activity of seeing-as. As Baker remarks, for Wittgenstein "Philosophical problems are traced to prejudices, and these are addressed by proposing other ways of seeing things"[20]. Indeed, after having abandoned logical analysis, language-games became the core of Wittgenstein's philosophical method, serving as "*objects of comparison* which, through similarities and dissimilarities are meant to throw light on features of our language"[21], "not as a preconception to which reality *must* correspond" but as "a sort of yardstick" that can help the philosopher avoid "unfairness or vacuity" in his assertions[22] or otherwise produce "the dogmatism into which philosophy can so easily degenerate"[23] through losing track of its purpose. Even though the philosopher establish a comparison when exclaiming 'Look at things like this!', "it doesn't ensure that people will look at things like that", and even if they do, his 'admonition' may have come "altogether too late"; or perhaps the applied method of comparison is not entirely fitting, proving that "the impulse towards such change in the way things are perceived must come from another

16 PR, §57: "The worst philosophical errors always arise when we try to apply our ordinary — physical — language in the area of the immediately given."; RPP I, §949: "Philosophical investigation: conceptual investigations. The essential thing about metaphysics: that the difference between factual and conceptual investigations is not clear to it. A metaphysical question is always in appearance a factual one, although the problem is a conceptual one."

17 BB, p. 44: "What causes most trouble in philosophy is that we are tempted to describe the use of important 'odd-job' words as though they were words with regular functions."

18 RPP II, §87.

19 CV, p. 74. See also, PPO, p. 117: "The best prepared these days for the study of philosophy are students of physics. Due to the evident lack of clarity in their science their understanding is more loose than that of the mathematicians who are stuck in their self-assured tradition."

20 BAKER, p. 290.

21 PI, §130.

22 *Ibid*., §131.

23 CV, p. 30.

direction"[24]. To avoid such discordance, philosophy has to make the effort to limit itself to colloquial language, and remove one's 'intellectual discomfort' by means of a "synopsis of *many* trivialities", of "things which we all know already"[25], avoiding thereby the danger of "giving a mythology of the symbolism, or of psychology: instead of simply saying what everyone knows and must admit"[26]. These trivialities, however, are only 'trivialities' insofar as they are generalized, for they happen to be vital in elucidating the certainties, the set of beliefs, and the system constituents of one's world-picture. For this same reason, even though "philosophical problems are not solved by experience" [27], things that we consider as facts of the world, *i.e*. as experience, are pointers towards our founding beliefs, just as "the realities that are discovered" by what we would consider scientific progress, might "lighten the philosopher's task"[28] for making other language uses imaginable. This task of language clarification is, for Wittgenstein, "something like putting in order our notions as to what can be said about the world", and is comparable to the "tidying up of a room where you have to move the same object several times before you can get it "really tidy"[29], or to reorganizing the books on a bookshelf, regrouping those that "seemed to belong together, and putting them on different shelves"[30]. These analogies of bookshelves, rooms, and houses (not to mention his concept of 'family resemblances') can, in a broader sense be likened to the notion of *oikos*, and even more so with that of '*my* world'. It all comes down to working on "one's own conception. On how one sees things" [31]. At this point, it becomes clear that philosophy should prioritize the 'cure' over the ambition of finding a truth, as the search for clarity is only justified by its need, expressed by not living in agreement with the world. Thus, what really matters is not the content, *i.e*. the truth, to which we end up adhering, but the therapeutic method[32]; this makes 'good philosophy'

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 70

[25] WL30-33, p. 114.

[26] PR, §24.

[27] WL32-35, §1: "Philosophical problems are not solved by experience, for what we talk about it philosophy are not facts but things for which facts are useful."

[28] LWPP I, §807.

[29] WL30-33, p.114. For the analogy of the room, see also RPP I, §295.

[30] BB, p.44 – 45.

[31] Not accidentally, Wittgenstein the philosopher was not much different from Wittgenstein the architect (See e.g. CV, p.24: "Work on philosophy — like work in architecture in many respects — is really more work on oneself. On one's own conception. On how one sees things. (and what one expects from them.").

[32] WL30-33, p.113: "I was a good deal surprised by some of the things he said about the difference between "philosophy" in the sense in which what he was doing might be called "philosophy" (he called this "modern philosophy"), and what has traditionally been called "philosophy". He said that what he was doing was a "new subject"; that a "new method" had been discovered … . As regard his own work, he said it did not matter whether his results were true or not: what mattered was that "a method had been found"."

a question of applying the method 'skilfully'[33] and indicates that it is always a situational practice that has to adapt to its circumstances: "There is not a single philosophical method, though there are indeed methods, different therapies, as it were"[34].

These skills are revealed in the capacity to set apart the different things 'that we all know' and to clarify which of these truths are compatible and which are not; something that presupposes firstly that the initial assortment is not good enough, and that secondly the philosopher is not 'aspect-blind'[35]. Otherwise, he would not even have the capacity of seeing things differently. Part of this ability to see things differently is the practice of looking at things from the "ethnological point of view" of language-games, and to position oneself "far outside, in order to see the things *more objectively*"[36]. This entail becoming more sensitive to the limits of what we consider as meaningful — as belonging to our language-games[37] —, and to what tends towards — or is seen as — plain nonsense, through not following any of our mastered rules. This supports Hacker's conclusion that "Wittgenstein's ethnological point of view is not a commitment to construing philosophy as a branch of anthropology", and that the 'ethnological facts' he discerns throughout his method are not 'anthropological propositions' but "norms of representation"[38]. However, treating these initially blurred distinctions from an ethnological perspective can become a challenge when language itself covers them with its own prejudices[39]. Hence the significant importance of creating 'fictitious concepts'[40]; these are a double-edged sword as they are able to crystallize beliefs inherent to the world of the empirical subject, and are also able to 'alleviate' mischiefs[41] of language when used correctly due to their capacity to signify and thereby emphasize, initially neglected aspects of one's language, enhancing understanding of the concepts that form it. Knowing this helps one understand not only the role of Wittgenstein's philosophical concepts within his own work, something the *Tractatus* was unable to do in regard to its philosophical propositions due to its lack of consideration for the

33 *Ibid*.

34 PI, §133d.

35 PI, §257.

36 CV, p.45.

37 RPP II, §720: "In philosophy it is significant that such-and-such a sentence makes no sense; but also that it sounds funny."

38 HACKER, p.16.

39 RPP I, §827 '"But how can the human spirit fly ahead of reality, and even think the unverifiable?" – Why should we not speak the unverifiable? For we ourselves made it unverifiable."

40 CV, p.84: "Nothing is more important thought than the construction of fictional concepts, which will teach us at last to understand our own."

41 *Ibid*, p. 63.

language-game of seeing-as, but it also helps one understand an important difference between his early and later writings. While he initially had the ambition to, through an 'unpoetic mentality', head "straight for what is concrete", and place things "right before our eyes, not covered by any veil"[42], later on he defended the idea that "philosophy ought really to be written only as one writes a poem"[43], and played on the equivoques of forms of expression to trace the limits of language-games from within their usage, consequently testing the limits of meaningfulness. Therefore, even if Wittgenstein's later approach differs methodologically from his earlier one; in principle, they are nonetheless similar in their ambition to trace the limits of expression of thought. There is, however, an important difference as the *Tractatus* wants to trace the limits of language as a whole but in Wittgenstein's later philosophy, the concern is to place the plurality of world-picture structuring reference systems in an order that clarifies which go hand-in-hand and which do not[44]. The success of the therapeutic method, the process of putting in order the bookshelf, of making the room really tidy, ultimately depends on the willingness of the transcendental 'I' to change its point of view, to question its beliefs and reorganise them as certainty is a matter of attitude, which directly refers to the will[45]. In this sense, for the later Wittgenstein, philosophical therapy must also come to an end, as the subject adopts a resolution for life, an ethical prescription that its actions — at this point in a teleological self-sufficient form — will follow. This thus leads one to conclude that while the *Tractatus* wants us to stop looking for answers in the exterior world and start looking into ourselves, the later Wittgenstein is in the middle of the process of doing so. To look into oneself is to look into the plurality of 'us' that compose one's identity, and to see clearly those that are contradictory and the values correlated to their systems of reference, thus getting rid of the 'blindness' caused by a bad attitude towards life[46]. The surpassing of the therapy, in the face of the components causing distress in one's world-picture, therefore entails starting to live a new life, starting to learn new language games[47], and forming a world-picture where one's ethical

[42] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 28.

[44] An elucidating passage of his diaries concerning the subject, dating from 8.2.37 (PPO, p.171), states that an 'ideal' is a "form of representation to which we are inclined", suggesting that one's language is composed by a plurality of forms of representation, of a number of systems constituting one's representation of the world. Something the early Wittgenstein neglected due to this belief that a complete analysis of language would ultimately neutralize these differences, making it unproductive to think a diversity of forms of representation.

[45] LWPP II, p.84: "If one doesn't want to SOLVE philosophical problems why doesn't one give up dealing with them. For solving them means changing one's point of view, the old way of thinking. And if you don't want that, then you should consider the problems unsolvable."

[46] CV, p.76: "Human beings can regard all the evil within them as blindness."

[47] PPO, p.169: "With a new life one learns new language games. Think more of death, for example — & it would be strange if through that you wouldn't get to know new conceptions, new tracts of language."

prescriptions and actions related to oneself are one and the same. Such a leap is not a philosophical leap (philosophy being only capable of deconstructing and rearranging language) but a leap of faith; given that what is at stake is the foundation of our beliefs (of those that so far caused the disjunction between oneself and the world), and that there is no system of reference capable of justifying its alteration. Such a leap implies complete adherence to a world-picture, to which one's actions fully coincide with one's ethical reward. This is due to the fact that the identity of the self springs from the very same referential system that serves to represent the world. In Cavell's words: "In Wittgenstein's view the gap between mind and the world is closed, or the distortion between them straightened, in the appreciation and acceptance of particular human forms of life, human "convention""[48]. At this point, there is no difference between the self and the world, and, for the same reason, there is no dichotomy between an interiority and an exteriority as the willing subject is living in agreement with the world.

To this extent, Wittgenstein's happy subject is comparable to Kierkegaard's Abraham. The latter, as a 'knight of faith', follows the 'movement' of renouncing everything, to find himself in his "eternal consciousness, in blissful agreement with [his] love for the Eternal Being", acquiring thereby 'everything' by renouncing everything[49]. If one compares what Kierkegaard calls the 'universal' — which, for him, is the ethical — to Wittgenstein's language communities, one could say that the happy subject refuses to live for the world of the empirical subject so as to live for the sake of their own actions, turning what was initially ethically grounded in a language community into the immutable prescriptions of a particularity that transcends the empirical to live in agreement with the world, making of life and the world one:

> Faith is precisely this paradox, that the individual as the particular is higher than the universal, is justified over against it, is not subordinate but superior — yet in such a way, be it observed, that it is the particular individual who, after he has been subordinated as the particular to the universal, now through the universal becomes the individual who as the particular is superior to the universal, for the fact that the individual as the particular stand in an absolute relation to the absolute.[50]

Such observations can obviously only be made from the outside, as for the transcendental subject standing in absolute relation to the absolute, they must necessarily lose sense in the passage to a life in faith. Regardless of this, the culmination of the success of the

[48] CAVELL, p.109.

[49] KIERKEGAARD, p. 97-98.

[50] *Ibid*., 110.

Wittgensteinian therapy is becoming a knight of faith, living life in its entirety for the ethical reward for actions, that is, for the sake of the actions themselves. Nevertheless, taking such a leap of faith is not easy; it requires a "purely human courage"[51]. This is a virtue that Wittgenstein esteems as it takes courage to surpass the state of contradiction between values in one's language and to rebel against one's instincts to "live within the herd"[52]. In a somewhat Nietzschean way, the use of the term 'herd' symbolizes the gesture of recognising the 'them', systematically correlated to that which I am (for being what I am not), not as a potential *us* to which I shall live up to and become an integrated part of, but as something to reject and keep a distance from, and for the sake of cherishing the values which are already constituents of my self-image and which trace the distinction between 'me' and 'them' in the first place[53]. Such a courageous approach implies the abandonment of a certain amount of beliefs, and for the same reason, the abandonment of parts of one's identity for the sake of correcting and strengthening other parts and for the sake of further assuming a system of beliefs at the expense of the others subjacent to the self whose values must be re-evaluated. This act of courage diminishes the contradiction in language, 'waxing' the world as a whole. It reflects that "the resolution to take such a step", of changing one's attitude, "is very difficult for us"[54], for unless we just want to play a "clever game", we deliberately choose to go towards the unknown, which while always having been implicit in parts of our language-games, has been neglected due to the appreciation of differing systems, and in need of clarification[55]. From an ethical standpoint, one may find such courage in, *e.g.* the difficulty to approach a person as a friend after having deliberately offended him[56], or when after regretting an action, taking all the necessary measures to remedy

[51] *Ibid.*, A purely human courage is required to renounce the whole of the temporal to gain the eternal … this is the courage of faith."

[52] PHI, p. 185.

[53] As BACKSTRÖM writes on the subject: "It ['the herd'] is not a sociological concept, but denotes an attitude which is just as widespread among social elites as among other people. And if I'm dominated by the 'herd-attitude' I have indeed, placed myself beyond the reach of philosophical clarification, since I indignantly reject any suggestion that I *need* to get clear about anything …" (p.11).

[54] CV, p.60: "If life becomes hard to bear we think of improvements. But the most important & effective improvement, in our own attitude, hardly occurs to us, & we can decide on this only with the utmost difficulty."

[55] *Ibid.*, p.16: "I believe that what is essential is for the activity of clarification to be carried out with COURAGE; without this it becomes a mere clever game."

[56] *Ibid.*, p.13: "No one likes having offended another person; that is why it does everyone good when the other person doesn't show that he has been offended. Nobody likes being confronted by a wounded spaniel. Remember that. It is much easier patiently — & tolerantly — to avoid the person that offended you than to approach him as a friend. You need courage too for that".

it[57]. The 'courage of faith' that Kierkegaard speaks of[58] is the one Wittgenstein mentions as a requirement if the human being is to "let their lives be guided by inspirations entirely" by divine influence "in all their actions". This is because due to being 'the highest life'[59], it can only mean that the will of God, expressed by the contingency of the world and regardless of what it may be, will always nourish the happy subject's belief that it must act as it acts, for, all outcomes necessarily lead to the unshakable conviction that it is the only right thing to do[60].

Even if this is the definitive answer to what it means to live a happy life, to make such a leap of faith is not an easy task, and should perhaps be seen merely as an aspirational ideal. One can ask oneself what there is to be said about all the lives that, through an act of courage, perhaps still do not reach the point of complete unity with their values and thereby with the world, but who nevertheless manage to change themselves for 'the better', *i.e.* sacrifice parts of their beliefs and values for others. The archetype of this ethico-epistemological movement is what Kierkegaard calls 'the tragic hero' – the Agamemnnons, Jephthas, and Brutuses of the world, who "at the decisive moment heroically overcome their pain" of losing their beloved ones for the necessary "outward sacrifice" of their noble cause[61]. These heroes give up "the certain for the still more certain"[62], just as those who are distressed and follow Wittgenstein's philosophical therapy have to give up their old beliefs for new ones; sacrifice parts of their identity in order to develop others, and progressively crystallize their world-picture into a coherent non-contradictory whole. This is the horizon one has to aim for if one is to live happily, and it can be fully experienced only through complete devotion to one's resolutions,

[57] PPO, p. 99 – 101: "I speak far too easily. — Through a question or an objection one can seduce me to produce a stream of words. While I talk I sometime see that I am on a ugly track: that I say more than I mean, talk to amuse the other, draw in irrelevancies in order to impressionate and so forth. I then strive to correct the conversation, to steer it back onto a more decent course. But only turn it a little and not enough out of fear — lack of courage — & retain a bad taste."

[58] KIERKEGAARD, p. 110.

[59] PPO, p. 203: "I believe that human beings can let their lives be guided by inspirations entirely in all their actions and I must now believe that this is the highest life. I know that I could live like that if I wanted to, if I had the courage for it. But I don't have it and must hope that this won't make me unhappy unto death, that is, eternally."

[60] Much remains to be said on how Wittgenstein conceives the relation between faith and religion. He does seem to follow Kierkegaard in this aspect; referring to faith as a passion and to religion as a system of references integrating faith as a fundamental part of one's own representation of the world but not being a proof of faith in itself. See CV, p.73: "It appears to me as though a religious belief could only be (something like) passionately committing oneself to a system of coordinates. Hence although its belief, it is really a way of living, or a way of judging life. Passionately taking up *this* interpretation. And so instructing in a religious belief would have to be portraying, describing that system of reference & at the same time appealing to the conscience."; and CV, p.64: "Wisdom is something cold, & to that extent foolish. (Faith, on the other hand, a passion.)"

[61] KIERKEGAARD, p.115.

[62] *Ibid.*, p. 118.

transcending the earthly interests of the empirical subject and thus becoming one with the world.

Finally, there are reasons to wonder where the 'full-time' philosopher belongs in all this. If one considers that "philosophical problems … are individual's *troubled states of mind* which have as their intentional *objects* particular conceptual confusions, tensions, paradoxes, or puzzles"[63], and that those who seek out philosophy only seek it when these objects become manifest; philosophers are neither knights of faith nor momentarily anguished souls looking for an answer. Philosophers must feel at home in chaos, and that is also where they belong; suggesting that it is not in their nature to adhere to any greater beliefs, to feel at home in a language community with its truths and customs. Nor do they find interest in abandoning their condition to live in accordance with the will of God, for in both cases they would have to give up their practice. In other words, they are alien, dwelling in the indefinite[64] and who refuse to adhere to a system of belief and "kneel and pray"; as to assume any definite conviction would only lead to their 'dissolution'[65]. The practice of philosophy presupposes the questioning of what faith stands for: the belief in unfounded beliefs[66]. Hence, philosophers prefer to turn their gaze towards 'the worldly things', unless, of course, the heavenly comes to them[67]. However, if they are not knights of faith, there is also reason to doubt whether they are tragic heroes. Tragedy begins where, instead of bending, one breaks[68], heroes are those who, from the broken bones of their bodies, makes a joint where there was none before[69], overcoming suffering for the belief in what the world is about to become. Philosophers, however, do *not* break but bend; and that is their skill. It makes them more about being a "great actor playing tragic roles"[70],

63 BAKER, p. 212.

64 MONK, p. 516: "[I] feel myself to be an alien in the world', he wrote in July. 'If you have no ties to either mankind or to God, then you *are* an alien."

65 CV, p.63: "I cannot kneel to pray because it's as though my knees were stiff. I am afraid of dissolution (of my own dissolution), should I become soft."

66 This may help explain why, despite of Wittgenstein being "obsessed by his sins" he was not 'forced into Christianity' as Kierkegaard's Anti-Climacus would expect (SCHÖNBAUMSFELD, p.146).

67 PPO, p. 197: "This striving for the absolute which makes all worldly happiness appear too petty, which turn our gaze upward & not level, toward the things, appear as something glorious, sublime to me; but I myself turn my gaze toward the worldly things; unless "God visits me" & that state comes over me in which this becomes impossible … . Why should I burn my writings today?! No way!"

68 CV, p.3.

69 PPO, p.127 – 129.

70 MONK, p. 507.

willingly incorporating tragedy as a part of their profession, like a bull that could find meaning in pretending to struggle for its life in a simulated bullfight[71].

The place Wittgenstein gives to philosophers is therefore ambiguous. The latter constantly play the role of the unhappy at the brink of despair, having to choose between self-righteousness and the path towards redemption, which is needed if to start anew. On the one side, they are not meant to find even the slightest form of happiness, for happiness is to act accordingly to one's ethical prescriptions; however, these can only acquire form on the basis of certainty within an ethical system. If philosopher-actors were to assume a form of certainty, opening the path towards happiness, they would play their role badly. However, if they incorporate their role entirely, one would have to ask to what extent they are playing their role and not actually living it. On the other hand, if they are not living their role and consequently not getting even close to Kierkegaard's tragic hero, they are acting, and acting itself, in one way or another, has to be justified by a system of beliefs, customs and certainties. This is something that seems to contradict what supposedly founds the philosophical method in the first place, namely the postulate that behind all well-founded beliefs lie unfounded beliefs; a necessary premise if the game of seeing-as is meant to be played. The only way out of this paradoxical situation seems to be the reminder that it is exactly for this reason that philosophers themselves acquire significance only within the therapeutic process, suggesting that if they themselves are not in need of clarification for life, then someone else might be in need of assistance, and, if not, there is no reason to continue practicing their role. Perhaps this is why Wittgenstein did not hold institutionalized philosophy in high esteem[72], persuading his most valued students not to follow such a path. He himself abandoned philosophy after being convinced that he had made his point in the *Tractatus*, only to return to it again once he had realised that his therapeutic method as developed could not possibly be put into practice.

Regardless, it is clear not only that philosophy is intrinsically ethical, as it springs from and acquires meaningfulness from an existential condition that belongs to the ethical dimension of life, but also that the notion of ethics allows one to bind Wittgenstein first and second philosophy together as two different moments of the same attempt to develop a new

[71] CV, p.49: "In a bullfight the bull is the hero of a tragedy. First driven mad by suffering, he dies a slow & terrible death."

[72] MONK, p. 506 – 507: "'What good does all my talent do me, if, at heart, I am unhappy? What help is it to me to solve philosophical problems, if I cannot settle the chief, most important thing?' And what real use were his lectures? 'My lectures are going well, they will never go better. But what effect do they leave behind? Am I helping anyone?'"

philosophical method, which, when correctly applied, can lead those who are astray towards the rightful path[73]; namely, that of dissolving the contradictions within oneself by aspiring towards a life where one's actions coincide with one's values; hence, living in agreement with one's own consciousness, and, consequently, with the will of God, and thereby the world. In other words, the sole purpose of philosophy is to show the path to a good life; a path that has to be determined and followed by oneself.

[73] Here we take the opposite stance of, for example, CHRISTENSEN (p. 7), who writes: "The ethical point of the *Tractatus* lies in the realization that philosophy can only show the reality of ethics, not contribute to it, and by insisting on a second, unwritten part of the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein marks his refusal to add such contributions."

Conclusion

This inquiry began with the intention of examining what Wittgenstein's motto of living a happy life might mean. This led to the realisation that living a happy life is to achieve the purpose of existence, which is to live in agreement with the world, — a world that is determined by an alien will that can be called God, and that coincides with the contingencies of reality, both independent of, and indifferent to earthly wishes and desires. These two refer to the alien will's counterpart, the equally independent willing subject which aspires to live happily. A happy life is a 'good life', and can only be achieved via the attitude through which the will of the subject penetrates the world. Consequently, the willing subject is an ethical subject. However, it is also transcendental, *i.e.* a condition of possibility of knowledge. If will is defined as action; there is no thought unless there is will. This led to an initial impasse in attempting to clarify Wittgenstein's notion of ethics as if the ethical subject is transcendental, it means that it cannot be truly verbalised, because encompassing it as an object of thought is not possible due to thought itself being determined by it. As the ethical subject is not allowed to be spoken of, neither is ethics to be found in the unprincipled world of contingency. Making the matter even more difficult was the realisation that Wittgenstein conceived the life of the willing subject and the world as one and the same, but still managed to find sense in stating that the two were independent of each other, and that the willing subject could live in agreement or disagreement with the world, despite it sounding contradictory.

A closer look at Wittgenstein's use of the notion of 'world' led to the conclusion that it is defined as the immediate — phenomenal — experience of the willing subject, as the very experience of living. This made it clear why life and the world are one. Nevertheless, the matter of how the willing subject could possibly live in agreement or disagreement with the world remained unresolved. The only way out of this conundrum was to postulate an internal division between the actual experience of living — necessarily coinciding with the world —, and how the respective life form — the willing subject — represents it to itself, indicating a form of self-awareness that is expressed through what Wittgenstein calls language. Clarifying Wittgenstein's picture theory of language and outlining the implications of his task of tracing the limits of thought led to the consideration of the truth behind the solipsists' disquietude. Namely, that, insofar as the meaning of thought originates in a referential relation to phenomenal experience, *my* world is the only world *I* am capable of representing. However, this cannot be said expecting it to make sense, for it would mean that we would be capable of thoughts that surpass their own boundaries. What is worrying is that we seem to be the prisoners

of our own representations. These representations derive from experiences that are forced upon us, and we must be in agreement with them if we are to be in agreement with the world and live good lives. Through this prism, little or no relevance seems to be given to the ethical dimension of experience; the willing subject appears to play the role of a passive observer with no other choice than to watch the spectacle of life pass by. This led to a further inspection of the way ethics could be considered in such conditions, and to the realisation that what Wittgenstein calls the 'mystical feeling' coincides with the 'ethical experience *par excellence*' of seeing the world from the point of view of eternity — *sub specie aeterni*. If one takes eternity to mean timelessness, to live a good life — to live in eternity — would mean to live in the present. Likewise, fear of death and of the passage of time is the best sign of a bad life. At this juncture, it seemed that perhaps suicide would be a suitable candidate for solving the problem of life, since as well as defying the greatest fear of all — death —, it would put an end to the absurd challenge of seeing the world as worth living in despite its misery. Wittgenstein dismisses this option due to the contradictory nature of suicide, expressed both on an epistemic and ontic level. Firstly, death is *not* an experience of life, so to wish for one's own death would be inconceivable. Secondly, since will is action, and action cannot be the active cause of its inactivity, the willing subject cannot will its own annihilation. Therefore, suicide is not voluntary, and, to this extent, it is not an action; rather, it is the sight of a life that is tired of struggling being quashed by its unbearable condition. The only way out of a vicious circle of unhappiness and of enduring what might become the most dreadful of worlds, is to look into oneself. This is due to will being not only action, but also being independent of the world. Ethical reward and punishment lies in how we judge our own actions, meaning that the 'good' life is the life of those who judge their actions as good; those not belonging to the world. Hence, to live a good life is to clarify one's own values to oneself, and to act accordingly.

What this means is rather obscure in Wittgenstein early writings. For if to seek for change in oneself is what one must do to live happily, it is an intrinsically ethical gesture that treats a realm of life that cannot be put into words. Value judgements do not belong to the world of facts. However, this does confirm that our author, far from condemning ethics and the metaphysical altogether as illusory, conceives it as something that cannot be put into words. What he does denounce however, are the metaphysicians who try to objectify their subject matter and who stubbornly formulate scientific discourses from their failed attempts. This can only result in nonsensical propositions, given that their 'object of inquiry' has no factual reference in the world. This all leads to the conclusion that Wittgenstein is a proponent of negative metaphysics, which makes it suddenly clear why he never wrote the second and most

important part of his *Tractatus* — despite the fact that the point of the book is ethical. The Tractarian philosopher wants to trace the limits of the world, and silence whoever mischievously attempts to speak of something that should be passed over in silence. The philosopher's therapeutic contribution to ethics is therefore to warn those in search of a happy life not to look for answers in the world of facts, but in that which is independent of it, the will of the transcendental subject. Insofar as the ethical reward for one's actions lies in the actions themselves, the reward of the good life, happiness, lies in one's devotion to actions judged as ethically good; making happiness reachable only through the very act of living up to its demands.

It is disappointing that Wittgenstein failed in his initial project of tracing the limits of the world. This is something he later realised himself, and largely blamed on what he called the 'primitive philosophy of language', which defines the meaning of a sign as the object it denotes. This imagery is as influential as it is noxious, and he himself became a victim of it. This led to an investigation into the core developments through his thinking, and how through an anthropological approach, one's representation of reality is no longer built on a logical scaffolding but is determined by the rules that govern language-games — that is, by the set of customs and practices shared by one's linguistic communities. Language is a form of life. However, the moment one's representation of the world is determined by an 'us' that surpasses oneself, it is unclear how the linguistic subject can be held accountable for living a good or a bad life or to what extent one is responsible for one's representation of the world and, hence one's attitude towards it. In an attempt to answer this question, it was necessary to retrace the notion of ethics in Wittgenstein's later philosophy. This was a challenge in itself as in his quest to find a philosophical method that would work from within colloquial language, Wittgenstein mostly avoided using metaphysical concepts, which strengthened the widespread belief that he abandoned the realm of the mystical for a more 'down-to-earth' philosophy. Subsequent chapters then aimed to clarify how, despite avoiding metaphysical terminology, ethics continued to be a key part of Wittgenstein's later writings as well.

The starting point was to examine something Wittgenstein's early philosophy did not allow one to do, namely, how the willing subject objectifies itself as part of the world — that is, how the empirical subject is constituted. The first step was to take a closer look at how the dogmatic ruling of the ostensive conception of meaning leads our linguistic practices to veil the fact that the first-person pronoun 'I' is not a demonstrative pronoun the speaker may identify with. In other words, even though the 'I' is not an identifiable object of the world, it is nevertheless treated as such — all of its predicates deriving from grammatical rules originally

applied to facts of the world. What this means is that even the way we see ourselves is determined by the aforementioned language communities to which we belong, and this implies that there is no 'private language', no 'inner world' of consciousness with which we are in an immediate relation in contrast to the exterior world of common language. From this point, it seemed clear that the empirical subject is constituted by the exteriority it falsely perceives as belonging to a different epistemic category than itself, when both instances belong to the same language of that which cannot be encompassed by its own representation of reality: the transcendental 'I'. This still only showed how the transcendental 'I' objectified itself as a part of the world through a language which no one possesses, and not how the notion of 'self' could make its appearance in a world constituted within the dominion of shared linguistic practices. In other words, how can the idea of singularity originate within conformity?

The answer came through the generic concept of 'seeing-as'. This concept refers to Wittgenstein's numerous inquiries on how the represented facts of reality — including self-image — may change in accordance to how we interact with them and relate to their surroundings — and vice-versa. This capacity to oscillate, momentarily change, and follow different — if not contradictory — rules in similar circumstances, demonstrates the equivocal nature of the willing subject, which ultimately, traverses a multitude of systems of beliefs and 'world-pictures', not only changing its representation of reality in accordance to a given context, but also to what its more 'solid' or 'fluid' beliefs and more or less established practices are. The language of the willing subject is, to this extent, not a universe but a pluriverse; and it is from this collectively constituted pluriverse that the empirical subject springs as a multitude of 'veils' covering the 'amoral', 'white dead bundle' serving as its nucleus. Given that whatever may be the identity of the self — that which makes it singular — must always derive from practices that follow outward criteria, this means also that it follows a logic of difference and equivalence, where it affirms itself as an 'us' in regard to a categorically different exteriority. What this means is that the identity of the self is always circumstantial and is determined by a system of references unlike those that form the 'outer' world of the empirical subject. The resulting tension is an ethical one because as there are internal differences between the systems of references forming the willing subject's language, there must also be fundamental differences between their respective ethical systems — thus creating a contradiction within the willing subject's value judgements. It is this that leads to the correlation between the experiences of seeing oneself as a part of the world and simultaneously in disagreement with it; *i.e.* being unhappy in one's uniqueness. From this point, one can understand how the self-awareness of the transcendental subject is expressed in its conception of itself as an empirical

entity, as a part of its own language — that is, of its representation of experience. However, it was still necessary to clarify in what way the 'philosophical self' could still be considered a willing subject, and therefore an ethical one. The last step to take was to show how in Wittgenstein's later period the will perseveres as the determining instance of one's representational relation to the world, transcending language itself. The relative freedom inherent to the game of 'seeing-as', combined with its ability to change one's representation of reality through regular application, emphasizes the unfounded bedrock of beliefs that sustain language. When Wittgenstein argues in favour of the hypothesis that freedom of will and its deterministic counterpart hold equal epistemic value, he is couching the debate in the sense of seeing-as. If one takes this into account, one is free to pick sides if one uses the techniques that reveal the arbitrariness of both assumptions. However, this freedom of the intellect, surpasses the very debate that questions it, and cannot therefore be spoken of as to do so would turn it into an object of psychology — that is, of experience, and would associate it with the idea of what one wanted/wished or still wants/wishes for. These ideas articulate themselves with whatever we may recognise as a 'wilful action' in our conception of reality. The will is — voluntary — action (the opposite being conceived as an event), something the conceptual network of language does not embody *per se*, and that is only expressed in language insofar as it coincides with its application; with it belonging to a willing — active — subject through which it acquires meaningfulness. As discussed before, if thinking is above all, the *act* of thinking, it means that action systematically evades its objectivation by thought. The will is transcendental, just as much as the transcendental 'I' — the 'real agent' of the world — is ethical.

After exposing the way the central concepts inherent to Wittgenstein's notion of ethics were preserved throughout the development of his philosophy, the study went on to form conclusions about how the subject matter articulates itself with Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy, and thus with his philosophical project as a whole. Philosophy operates within the very language that it attempts to treat, and in Wittgenstein's early writings this is self-evident due to his picture-theory of language, which — from the start — differentiates between the world as representation and that which is the case, *i.e*. reality. This is why the *Tractatus* may only serve those who are unhappy, as those who manage to climb the ladder of its propositions and happen to turn around and look back at where they came from will see only nonsense. The Tractarian distinction between language and the world makes no sense for those who live in agreement with the latter. In Wittgenstein's later writings, this is manifest in the method adopted. Not only does he believe in the importance of practising philosophy from *within*

colloquial language, the same contradictory language governed by old prejudices that must be brought to light, but he also employs an ethnological method that consists of similes, analogies, and different thought experiments, that can be used if to think of alternative ways of seeing different aspects of one's world-picture and eventually changing them. Wittgenstein does not hesitate to emphasize the importance of these techniques, which are rooted in the practices denoted by the notion of 'seeing-as'. This notion indicates not only how philosophy is a voluntary practice (and, hence, an ethical one), but that its field of action is found in the same crossroads of reference systems in which the empirical subject dwells. It means that philosophy can, even here, find its application only in the dissymmetrical relation between the inner and outer world represented by the language of the willing subject.

From thereon, given that in both scenarios of Wittgenstein's early and later thinking, philosophy operates within the language of the unhappy life, the only purpose it can have if it is to be ethically justified and not judged as an ultimately bad and miserable practice, must be therapeutic. In other words: philosophy is meaningful only to the extent that it may contribute to the willing subject's struggle to live a good life. Where the early Wittgenstein wants to trace the limits of the world for the willing subject to search for the purpose of life elsewhere, the later Wittgenstein wants to put in order the plurality of worlds constituting his — by then — complexified empirical subject, and to encourage it to live in accordance with a non-contradictory set of values. In both cases, the goal is the same: to encourage adopting a resolution for one's life, and to find justification in the willing subject's actions. Of course, even this process of finding oneself must be realised willingly if it is to acquire any ethical significance. This is why, throughout the whole of Wittgenstein's philosophical therapy, the last word is always given to the interlocutor. In the *Tractatus*, this is revealed due to the fact that the philosopher limits himself to showing where not to look for answers. In Wittgenstein's later writings, his use of the game of seeing-as for dissolving philosophical problems follow the same principle, his interlocutor being "free to reject any suggestions made"[1] when an aspect is proposed as seen differently. In other words, living in agreement with one's actions, and consequently in agreement with life, requires that, at any given moment full responsibility is assumed towards oneself. Hence, the process of reorganising one's language is something that requires courage, and can only be achieved by degrees. It means questioning one's certainties, stepping back from the customs and practices that summarise one's comprehension of reality, and willingly walking towards the unknown or the unpredictable. Many of the resulting

[1] BAKER, p. 213.

outcomes could potentially lead to unwanted consequences. The culmination of such courage is the leap of faith achieved by those who show absolute commitment to what is ultimately an unfounded belief. To live in agreement with the world is to live in agreement with one's representation of it, which means to devotedly follow a system of beliefs and the ethical system subjacent to it, and to act in accordance with its value judgements regardless of factual consequences and assuming all responsibility for whatever the outcomes may be. In this sense, happiness *does* come with a price. However, it is a price which is paid through one's will to feel it, and which is rewarded in the form of the sublime state of the one who's consciousness and world are one. Faith, certainty, and ethics are one and the same and harmoniously interrelated in the present, thereby leading to the eternal experience of living life as a continuous act for the sake of the actions themselves.

One can conclude that throughout Wittgenstein's philosophy, ethics is the purpose as well as the means of fulfilling it. The willing subject — the 'bearer of ethics' — is not only the philosopher's linguistic agent, omnipresent in his writings, but also the *a priori* condition of his philosophical method. Firstly, this is because with no ethical dimension to life, it would be senseless to speak of language or of the philosophy operating within it. Secondly, this is because the dynamics of Wittgenstein's method is entirely dependent upon the attitude adopted towards the representation of experience, as ultimately, even certainty depends on how one relates to aspects perceived in the world. This determines whether there are any philosophical problems to solve as otherwise the very problem solving becomes meaningless. Finally, when there is a philosophical problem to be solved, the approach to it depends entirely upon the presupposition of freedom of will, and this is secured through the notion of the transcendental 'I', the willing subject. If this is not the case, even the conceptual game of 'seeing-as' — which lies at the very heart of philosophical practice —, would follow the mythical natural laws of reality, fatalistically turning our asymmetrical relationship with the world into something beyond our grasp. Philosophy, at this point, would just be another untamed fact of reality, with no greater value than any other arbitrary event in life. Nevertheless, there is no doubt about whether ethics was or continued to be transcendental throughout Wittgenstein's writings, or about whether the point of his philosophy was ethical throughout. This seems to surely imply an element of dogmatism, particularly if one considers that there is an unquestioned — and also very specific — metaphysical background underpinning the whole of his philosophy. Despite the above, even though Wittgenstein could be criticised for not living up to his own thinking, for having neglected the fact that 'under all well-founded beliefs lie unfounded beliefs', and for finally adhering to an unquestioned belief himself; even though the ethical dimension of his thinking

and justification for his philosophical enterprise could itself be called a ‘language-game’ as arbitrary as any other — serving his own purposes in the wider dominion of ethical relativism, one comes to the realisation that any such criticism is also founded on a number of beliefs just as arbitrary as that being criticised. One can perceive that all these stances are nothing more than alternative ways of seeing the subject or different ways of playing the game. Thus, one can conclude that one should choose to follow the rules that best suit one’s own values, enabling one to develop one’s knowledge and live accordingly. Thus, once again, the freedom of will is reaffirmed, and — as Wittgenstein believed — ethics truly is transcendental.

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