

Chapter 6

More Making Sense of Nonsense: From Logical Form to Forms of Life*

Daniel D. Hutto

When I was in Norway during the year 1913–1914 I had some thought of my own, or so at least it seems to me now. I mean I have the impression that at the time I brought to life new movements in thinking (but perhaps I am mistaken). Whereas now I seem just to apply old ones.¹

Introduction

A familiar way to read the Wittgenstein corpus is to see it as split into two periods during which two radically different accounts of the nature of language are advanced. Such great emphasis is often placed on this shift that it is common to speak of ‘two Wittgensteins’, the early and the late. On this reading, Wittgenstein’s later writings are best understood as a reaction to, even a straightforward rejection of, his early work, which culminated in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*.² Crudely, he is alleged to have radically revised his understanding of how language operates by abandoning the ‘picture theory of meaning’ and its attendant metaphysics and semantics and advancing, in its place, the idea that ‘meaning is use’. Amongst other things, this reading often inspires the thought that his philosophy underwent an important shift from realism to anti-realism, when his views changed. For convenience, I will class such readings of this sort as ‘doctrinal’ interpretations, since they promote the idea that in order to understand Wittgenstein’s philosophy one must primarily focus on his theories about language.

This standard form of interpretation has recently been challenged by those who seek to demonstrate that it cannot be easily made to fit with Wittgenstein’s claim that he was not engaged in any form of philosophical theorizing at all. For example, in a series of important papers, James Conant objects that the doctrinal interpretation cannot accommodate the remark that philosophy, ‘...is not a body of doctrine’.³ On such grounds, both he and Cora Diamond argue convincingly that any simple doctrinal interpretation fails, ‘...to take seriously what Wittgenstein says about philosophy itself’.⁴ Furthermore, these detractors emphasize that such claims were made during both periods. But if there are no theories or doctrines advanced,

even in the *Tractatus*, then familiar talk of the ‘picture theory of meaning’ and the ‘doctrine of showing’ is wrongheaded. For the fact is that it is not possible to make sense of such labels unless it is also accepted that the book contains, ‘...numerous doctrines which Wittgenstein holds cannot be put into words’.⁵ Diamond regards such acceptance as a ‘chickening out’ response brought on by a failure of nerve, poor interpretation or both.

Instead, they bid us to focus on Wittgenstein’s self-avowed method of clarification by which sense and nonsense are to be distinguished. They ask us to take heed of his warning against what would otherwise be a natural misreading. He explicitly says:

Philosophy aims at the logical clarification of thought.
Philosophy is not a body of doctrine but an activity.
A philosophical work consists essentially of elucidations. (TLP 4.112)⁶

In line with this, we are urged to adopt a very austere reading of the *Tractatus* that sees it in terms of a therapeutic project, with the purpose of ‘working on the reader’. Wittgenstein’s aim remained constant during his early and late periods. It was always, ‘...to take the reader from a piece of disguised nonsense to a piece of undisguised nonsense’.⁷ Read in this light one can, ‘...insist upon a greater continuity in his work than most previous commentators have allowed’.⁸ Yet, neither Conant nor Diamond deny that there is ‘...an equally significant discontinuity in the form of the investigation through which this aim is prosecuted’.⁹

There is much to recommend this reading – both as a corrective and especially as a means of getting us to focus on otherwise neglected issues in Wittgenstein studies such as the style of his authorship.¹⁰ Moreover, it makes the study of his early writings as important as his later ones if we seek to understand properly his views on the nature and end of philosophy. However, in its extreme form, the therapeutic interpretation is implausible and threatens to obscure some important aspects of the development of Wittgenstein’s thought. In this respect, used as the sole means of reading Wittgenstein, it can be as distorting as the more popular doctrinal interpretation.

As I have said, Diamond holds that to adopt this reading properly we must ‘resolutely’ give up the idea that Wittgenstein ever attempted to advocate any doctrines (cf. TLP 4.112). She recommends that to the extent that any of the remarks in the *Tractatus* appear to gesture towards something metaphysically external to language they should be read in an ironic sense.¹¹ In her view, ‘...the notion of something true to reality but not sayably true is to be used only with the awareness that it itself belongs to what has to be thrown away’.¹² However, coming to terms with the nature of Wittgenstein’s message in the *Tractatus* is tricky. In my view we must distinguish the claim that the *Tractatus* is advancing some kind of ‘theory’ from the claim that it makes genuine assumptions about the nature of language, in a way that Diamond’s reading holds it does not. Put simply, I shall argue that we ought to adopt an anti-metaphysical reading of the work, while firmly retaining the view that it does make assumptions about the nature of language that it ought not. This is necessary if we want to accept that the book has an internal

tension and I will be arguing that it is only by abandoning the ironic reading and doing so that it is possible to make best interpretative sense of it.

Let us begin by focusing on what is right about the therapeutic reading, by considering the nature of Wittgenstein's clarificatory project and the extent to which he was successful in prosecuting it.

Philosophical Nonsense

To many, the *Tractatus* appears to be a strange, escalating series of philosophical pronouncements. As Brockhaus suggests, it is usual for it to be viewed as an undefended presentation of semi-independent metaphysical theses. He writes:

Compressed, presented *ex cathedra* without argument and in a curious vatic voice, it offers an accelerating series of remarks on the world, logic, and the essence of language, suddenly and quite mysteriously blossoming into cryptic claims about the will, ethics, 'God' and 'The Mystical'.¹³

Yet I claim that rather than embodying a set of dogmatically advanced statements, its remarks are meant to provide a kind of philosophical therapy. To this extent I agree with Conant and Diamond, but I do not accept that these remarks are advanced in an ironic spirit or with the intent that they should be 'thrown away'. They are supposed to get us to see what ought to be obvious to us all. To use the language of the later writings, they are supposed to be mere reminders of what we ought already to know.¹⁴ They are supposed to be redescriptions that make evident what should be obvious to anyone not led astray by philosophical theorizing. They offer no new information; rather they are, '...an attempt to draw our attention to something that lies before our eyes'.¹⁵

Wittgenstein's early treatment of logic provides the best and clearest example of how philosophy can clarify matters and expose philosophical nonsense, without advancing any kind of theory. To fully appreciate this it is useful to consider the context in which this approach developed. He writes:

All philosophy is a 'critique of language'....It was Russell who performed the service of showing that the apparent logical form of a proposition need not be its real one. (TLP 4.0031)

In praising Russell's good work, Wittgenstein is, of course, applauding the kind of analysis that lies at the heart of the theory of descriptions. On that approach, troublesome definite descriptions – such as those that seemingly pick out non-existent entities or impossible objects – are logically analysed to reveal that they are in fact non-referring. Such items generated terrible problems for the metaphysics of Platonic Atomism, which all too easily became committed to the existence (or more precisely subsistence) of impossible objects simply by mentioning them in coherent propositions. For example, it seems that we need to posit the existence of round-squares in order to account for the fact that we can

sensibly claim that ‘The round-square cannot be’. Famously, in Russell’s later writings such propositions were analysed as asserting something quite different. Informally, the content of (1) could be represented by (1’).

(1) ‘The round-square cannot be’

(1’) ‘There is no such unique entity x which has the properties of being both round and square’.¹⁶

In performing this kind of logical analysis Russell was able to explain the meaningfulness of propositions like (1) without having to make ontological space for impossible objects. The apparent name ‘round-square’ was thus treated as an incomplete, non-referring symbol. On its own it does not name anything. However, when we understand its use properly we can see what is being asserted by the entire proposition. By considering cases such as these we can see why Russell drew a distinction between what we seemingly say (grammar) and what we really assert (logic). We can see then a definite evolution in Russell’s views on these matters from his Platonic Atomist days, when he held that terms were the building blocks of reality. During that period he held that we were directly acquainted with the constituent terms of any given proposition and that language was a transparent medium (a clear window, as it were) through which we ‘perceived’ this intellectual reality.

Despite these developments in his understanding of language, Russell continued to postulate the existence of logical forms, which he thought were needed in order to account for the relations between objects and, indeed, our capacity to make judgements about those relations. Thus he maintained that the propositions of logic had a kind of Platonic status, as independent forms that could be described separately from their contents. According to Russell’s logical atomism, we must treat only the fully analysed entities and the logical components of genuine statements as having real, metaphysical status. In his abandoned 1913 manuscript, *Theory of Knowledge*, he had begun to develop the view that we must be acquainted with logical forms, such as aRb , in making various kinds of judgements. It was his view that discovering and charting these possible forms of judgement was a positive and important task for philosophy.

The novelty and ingenuity of Wittgenstein’s early philosophy was to take this account a step further and to challenge what we might call, following Peterson, the naive representationalist view of logic. Indeed, that there are no logical objects is his self-avowed fundamental thought (*Grundgedanke*).¹⁷ Thus, his analysis of the so-called propositions of logic reveals them to be, strictly speaking, without sense. If we crudely characterize Russell as a Platonist, then by contrast, we can regard Wittgenstein as adopting a more Aristotelian line.¹⁸ For him, logical form is immanent in the structure of our ordinary statements, it is not something ‘extra’ that needs to be added or otherwise attached. To use an ordinary analogy, it is akin to the way in which ingredients are blended together to make a cake. One does not add the eggs, flour, sugar and so on and then add in ‘the mixing’.

In the prelude to his attack on logical objects Wittgenstein introduced the idea of formal concepts, which are to be contrasted with proper concepts. He writes:

When something falls under a formal concept as one of its objects this cannot be expressed by means of proposition. (TLP 4.126)

The thought is that the nature of a formal concept can only be shown in the way that it is *employed*. It cannot be said (which, if we take his other remarks about saying seriously, would involve picturing a possible state of affairs). Hence, he writes: 'Thus the variable name 'x' is the proper sign for the pseudo-concept object' (TLP 4.1272).

What Wittgenstein is telling us is that there is no 'thing' for which the apparent name 'object' (or variable, x) is a proxy. There is no super-object that answers to the name x. In this way, our understanding of the general term 'object' can only be shown in the use we make of the logical variable when it is employed in relation to genuine objects that can be substituted for it. The components of the so-called propositions of logic are to be regarded as purely formal in this sense. Logical 'names' have no corresponding objects and logical 'propositions' picture no states of affairs. Hence his fundamental thought amounts to the claim that the seeming propositions of logic are, in fact, non-representational.¹⁹

This is all quite familiar, but what matters to our discussion is the way in which Wittgenstein attempts to free our thinking on these matters. He does not simply advance an argument or premises, nor does he put forward a theory of logic. Rather, in large part, he presents us with an alternative notation that is designed to show us that certain kinds of logical symbolism can obscure the fact that logic has a purely formal character. For example, by using symbols for logical constants, Russellian notation can mislead one into endorsing a mythological ontology, especially if one has other explanatory commitments.

The truth tables are meant to break the spell cast by Russell's symbolism. For instance, 'if p then q' can be represented by using the truth table as a structurally adequate formulation in which the logical constant for the conditional does not appear at all. Consequently, when presented with truth tables, we are forced to focus on the *use* of logical symbols. This alone should cure us from mistakenly thinking of them in terms of their capacity to represent. We are told: '...in fact all the propositions of logic say the same thing, to wit nothing' (TLP 5.43).

By approaching the problem in this way, Wittgenstein holds out the possibility of a cure for the practice of mythologizing logical objects. At the very least, he removes at least one major temptation for thinking that there must be logical objects represented by the logical constants.²⁰ In playing this role the truth tables provide paradigm examples of a formal, perspicuous elucidation. They tell us nothing new; they merely, and quite literally, re-present that which already lies open to view. They are well-formed elucidations that say nothing. Yet, they get us to see things differently by showing us other possibilities. They make evident something that we should be prepared to recognise but would, otherwise be unable to see.

Further support for this reading is provided by Peter Hylton who provides a careful analysis of the potentially confusing passages of the TLP 5.2s, and 5.25 in particular, in which Wittgenstein warns us not to confuse operations and functions. To make sense of this otherwise strange contrast, Hylton convincingly argues that it was drawn in order to distinguish Wittgenstein's views on the nature of truth functions and operations from those of Russell, and only incidentally those of Frege.²¹ This is because, specifically in line with his views on the independent status of logical forms, Russell held that propositional functions were used to generate more complex representations from simple elements. This is not surprising if we take the view that logic is representational. For example, on such an approach, '...the propositional function X is wise...share[s] a structure with the proposition that Socrates is wise: the propositional function is not a mere mapping of objects onto propositions'.²² This, of course, was anathema to Wittgenstein and it is precisely what his n-operator for truth functions is designed to avoid, by demonstrating that logical operations are purely formal. It is introduced, in part, to show how complex propositions can be formed from elementary propositions without introducing or requiring any extra or more complex representational resources. Thus it is not surprising that, immediately following his remarks on logical operations, he writes: 'At this point it becomes manifest that there are no 'logical objects' (in Frege's and Russell's sense)' (TLP 5.4).

But, if the logical sections of the *Tractatus* provide the best examples of clarification at work how do they compare with the other sections of the book? Consider what is heralded in its opening line and early remarks:

The world is the totality of facts, not of things. (TLP 1.1)

What is the case – a fact – is the existence of states of affairs.

A state of affairs (a state of things) is a combination of objects (things).

It is essential to things that they should be possible constituents of states of affairs. (TLP 2–2.011)

In order to understand the character of these remarks, it is important to consider the context from which they emerge. If Hylton is correct in supposing that it was with Russell in mind that Wittgenstein presented his account of the n-operator, then it is also likely that these early remarks are meant as a critique of Russell's ontology. In his *Lectures on Logical Atomism*, Russell claimed that we could, '...get down in theory, if not in practice, to ultimate simples'.²³ These 'simples' were regarded as the basic constituents of the world – its logical atoms. Moreover, they were the only objects that could be given true names. Of course, Russell realized that this was neither a satisfactory nor complete inventory of the furniture of the world. He recognized that, '...the only other sort of object you come across in the world is what we call facts'.²⁴ Yet he qualified this by saying that facts, '...are not properly entities at all in the same sense in which their constituents are. That is shown by the fact that you cannot name them'.²⁵ Nevertheless, according to Russell, the upshot is that our basic ontology must be one of objects and facts.

Against this background, the *Tractatus* appears to challenge Russell's claim by suggesting that it does not follow that objects comprise an independent ontological

category, even if we accept that facts are composed of objects. For we are quickly told that it would be impossible to imagine any ‘thing’ outside some possible situation (that is, outside a given factual context). Consequently, objects are not independent of facts, but nor are facts independent of objects. Objects are always in one situation or another and, in being so, they constitute facts – which are nothing other than the way various things stand in relation to one another.

Although the *Tractatus* is undoubtedly critical of Russell’s views in this respect, there are two importantly different ways of thinking about the nature of this criticism. On the one hand, Wittgenstein might be seen as offering a straight theoretical or metaphysical adjustment to Russell’s position in the hope of simply ‘building a better mousetrap’. Thus he may be thought to be attempting to improve on the theories that Russell and Frege had already established. Read in this way, the opening remarks, and those that constitute the so-called picture theory, are primarily correctives offered with the same philosophical spirit and end in mind.

More radically, these remarks can be taken as a wholesale rejection of the entire project of philosophical theorizing. That is, Wittgenstein can be seen as rejecting Russell’s approach to, and vision of, philosophy. On an anti-theoretical reading, although the same criticisms are being made, they are not advanced as part of a developing theory with its own set of new and improved posits. Instead of replacing Russell’s ‘things and facts’ with his ‘facts’, Wittgenstein could have been trying to discourage this entire style of approach. If he was doing this, then he was both trying to get us to see things correctly and critically responding to Russell’s type of metaphysical posturing. Marie McGinn gives an excellent account of the status of these remarks, in defending the idea that there is an elucidatory core of the work, which is not composed of mere attempted statements of fact.²⁶ She writes:

The principal application he makes of the concrete image of a world of facts which consists of objects in combination with one another is to use it as a means to make clear the distinction between content (objects), structure (the arrangement of objects in determinate relationships to one another in facts) and form (the possibility of objects entering into these determinate relationships).²⁷

Although Wittgenstein necessarily uses language to clarify these points, his sentences, ‘...are not putting forward a theory of the proposition or a speculative account of the relationship between language and the world’.²⁸ Read in this light, even TLP 1.1 sets its face against philosophical theorizing as such.

In line with his understanding of logic, this would also account for Wittgenstein’s silence on the question of how things must be combined in states of affairs and what kind of things there are. As Lynette Reid writes:

One of the anti-metaphysical strands of the *Tractatus* is that logic cannot judge in advance what the internal articulation of fully analyzed propositions will be: contrary to Frege and Russell, who think it essential to the nature of representation that a proposition segment into subject and predicate of some sort, the *Tractatus* denies that there is any point in discussing in advance whether elementary propositions will consist of names and concept-expressions, or n-termed relation-expressions, or anything else.²⁹

This would explain why Wittgenstein provided no examples of ‘objects’ or ‘elementary propositions’. Although this has long puzzled commentators who adopt a theoretical reading, in accepting that his purpose was not the scientific one of providing a metaphysical inventory of reality or of articulating the true logical structure of the world, it becomes clear why he did not provide any such examples.³⁰

The Revocation

There is an apparent tension in the *Tractatus*, which is notoriously identified by Wittgenstein at its very close. He writes:

My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognises them as nonsensical, when he has used them – as steps – to climb up beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it). (TLP 6.54)

On the doctrinal reading these remarks suggest that, as a work of philosophy, the *Tractatus* attempts to say what cannot be said. It appears to be a series of intelligible propositions that, unlike genuine propositions, employ pseudo-concepts, such as object, fact and so on.³¹ Yet being so, by its own account, it must be condemned as nonsense. For the book itself tells us that all propositions serve to picture facts and must have the potential to be true or false, depending on whether or not things happen to be as they say. This condition must hold in order for a proposition to have a sense. As this is the general form of propositions, then no proposition can say anything necessarily true. Yet, if we understand (and accept) what its propositions seemingly say – especially those concerning the way in which propositions picture reality – then we will realize that the entire book is an attempt to say what cannot be said. Its propositions are improper if we regard them as unargued theoretical pronouncements. They are, strictly speaking, nonsensical because we cannot imagine a possible (Tractarian) world in which they do not hold true. They seemingly tell us things like: the substance of the world resides in simple, indestructible objects; these objects combine to create states of affairs; the states of affairs that actually hold are the facts of the world and so on. Put directly, if we treat such ‘propositions’ as meaningful then we must at the same time reject them as meaningless.

However, armed with the idea that the apparent philosophical statements are supposed to be merely clarifactory elucidations, things look different. Despite their outward form, those elucidations are merely pointers designed to remind us of what we ought already to know. In this respect, Wittgenstein specifically contrasts them with the kind of factual statements that are meant to typify the corpus of the natural sciences. As he sees it, it is the business of science to tell us exactly which states of affairs contingently obtain in the world. In this respect, reality is its exclusive concern. Consequently:

The totality of true propositions is the whole of natural science (or the whole corpus of the natural sciences). (TLP 4.11)

But, in what might otherwise appear to be an attitude of deference to science on matters of importance, Wittgenstein denies that we ought to be interested in reality *per se*. It is possibility, not reality that is his concern. Logic alone, which says nothing, defines the limits of possibility and also the limits of thought. Indeed, even as late as 1930, we find him endorsing this view. He writes:

It is all one to me whether or not the typical western scientist understands or appreciates my work, since he will not in any case understand the spirit in which I write. Our civilisation is characterised by the word 'progress'. Progress is its form rather than making progress being one of its features. Typically it constructs. It is occupied with building an ever more complicated structure. I am not interested in constructing a building, so much as having a perspicuous view of the foundations of possible buildings. So I am not aiming at the same target as the scientists and my way of thinking is different from theirs.³²

The contrast between logic and science and their respective spheres helps illuminate the difference between philosophical elucidations and ordinary propositions. Yet, most of his elucidations are ill-formed given that they should, like logic, say nothing. It repays us to attend to the remark that proceeds the revocation, where he says:

The correct method in philosophy would really be the following: to say nothing except what can be said, i.e. the propositions of natural science – i.e. something that has nothing to do with philosophy.... (TLP 6.53)

Yet, even if we adopt this anti-metaphysical elucidatory reading, the paradox remains. Whereas it can be shown that there are no genuine propositions of logic, the elucidations concerning the essential nature of propositions, thought and language are meant to be necessarily true, yet contentful observations. If Wittgenstein's elucidations concerning sense and content hold fast, then no contentful proposition could serve as a philosophical elucidation. To serve such a purpose they would need to say the unsayable. Consequently, on either reading, what is written in the *Tractatus* is in violation of its own account of sense.

In this light, it may appear to be a virtue of the purely therapeutic reading that it resolves this internal paradox. Both Conant and Diamond challenge the idea that Wittgenstein seriously wished us to recognize something which is 'nonsensical but significant', even in his early period.³³ For them, from beginning to end, Wittgenstein regarded all nonsense as 'garden-variety' gibberish.³⁴ Thus they maintain not only that Wittgenstein's aim to do away with philosophical nonsense remained constant throughout his philosophical career, but, more strongly, that his understanding of nonsense remained constant as well.

On their approach, we have the means to make sense of Wittgenstein's plea that we 'must throw away the ladder' without committing ourselves to the idea that the work culminated in an irreconcilable contradiction. We are asked to focus on the

fact that he self-consciously employs a 'strictly incorrect' method for therapeutic purposes.³⁵ The recognition of the paradox is yet another means of getting his readers to see the impossibility of traditional philosophy. First, it lets them imagine they can find sense in its pseudo-propositions and then it pulls away the rug by showing that endorsing such a view leads to no good end. To effect the cure properly requires giving the patient enough rope.³⁶ On this view, the self-destructive character of the *Tractatus* is intended as part of the therapy. Thus, Diamond sees the key to unlocking Wittgenstein's remarks of TLP 6.54 in the sentence, '...anyone who understands me eventually recognises them as nonsensical'. She makes great play of the fact that he writes about understanding *him* as opposed to the understanding the propositions of the *Tractatus* itself.³⁷ Furthermore, she claims that the remarks in the preface and in the last section act as part of the book's frame: they provide instructions for reading the rest. Those at the beginning tell us that the project is to set a limit to what can be said wholly from inside the bounds of sensible language. Similarly, the closing remarks are a final reminder of this message – for those who might be tempted, despite his rare asides, to misunderstand his true project and purpose.

But this reading is only superior if we think it best to resolve the tension. I am not convinced that it is. There are good reasons to think that the *Tractatus* is best seen as an imperfect attempt to offer elucidations precisely because some of them are both ill-formed and infected with faulty assumptions about the nature of language and the limits of sense. The major assumption that needs to be rejected is that all propositions serve to represent facts and that all sensible language shares this uniform function. Indeed, this view underpins the bulk of the book and infects the remarks in sections other than those concerning logic, such that they are failed attempts at clarification.

Indeed, the scene for the revocation only makes sense if we understand it against the backdrop of Wittgenstein's uniform and restrictive vision of the function of propositions, for it was this that gave definition to his early accounts of sense and nonsense. There is no such tension in the later writings because his views about sense became more liberal as they developed. On the standard account, he went on to reject the family of views associated with logical atomism, including the ideas that propositions have a general form and that they are determinately, and independently, true or false. Instead of these views, he came to favour the idea that to understand the functions of language we must look to its contexts of use. Indeed, it is only by recognizing this that we can gain insight into the important similarities and differences that exist between his early and mature philosophy.

On this important point I agree with doctrinalists. For it would be difficult to deny that his views on the nature of sense did so evolve. How else can we interpret what he tells us in the preface to the *Investigations* when he remarks that, '...since beginning to occupy myself with philosophy again, sixteen years ago, I have been forced to recognize grave mistakes in what I wrote in that first book'?³⁸ If the book was not trying to 'say' anything at all then what mistakes could be present in what he had *written* in it?³⁹ Moreover, there has been important scholarship that appears to successfully identify the cause of this shift in his views. For example, Jacqueline traces the main catalyst for this to Wittgenstein's inability to deal adequately with

the colour incompatibility problem, which Ramsey brought to his attention.⁴⁰ My point is that if we were to adopt an overly strong therapeutic reading we would be unable to make sense of this transitional phase for, on such a reading, there should be no such transition.⁴¹

Furthermore, accepting that such a change took place has other potential explanatory virtues. For example, it may help to explain the dramatic changes in Wittgenstein's writing style. From what we know of him, such changes would not be philosophically trivial. As McDonough notes, 'Wittgenstein regarded himself as an artist as well as a philosopher. [He] was obsessed with stylistic questions, as well as questions about the origin of his own style'.⁴² Thus the fact that in the *Tractatus* his remarks have the outward form of tightly compressed propositions in a numbered sequence is hardly surprising if he took seriously the idea that this was the only true form for the expression of thoughts. Nevertheless, given his therapeutic aim, he was self-conscious that his style was 'strictly' incorrect. In his later work, as his view of thought and language became more open, his style, too, became more natural and free. We find therein a host of aphorisms and comparisons in the form of ordinary sentences, questions, paragraphs and short passages. Numbered propositions have disappeared.⁴³

Given this, we should read his remark at TLP 6.54 not as a note of guidance, but as a recognition of a genuine tension. For, although he had a firm view about how philosophical problems had to be solved, the fact was that the *Tractatus* failed to provide the basis for completely satisfactory solutions. That Wittgenstein recognized his method to be 'strictly incorrect' also fits well with the fact that he expresses himself by asking his readers to understand him or his intention, rather than what is written in the book. In accepting that the work was meant to be therapeutic, we need not hold that he made no erroneous assumptions or that he was successful in prosecuting his intended end. Although he wished the *Tractatus* to be a work of clarification, in large part, it failed this purpose. This is important, for if we view the revocation as highlighting a tension that is genuinely present in his work we can regard it as the seed for the future development and refinement of his philosophical views and style.⁴⁴

In this light, even though there is something right about the therapeutic reading it should not be fully endorsed. Rather, what is required is a reading according to which it is possible to acknowledge the continuity of Wittgenstein's clarificatory aim and method, while at the same time allowing that his thought developed and matured. I believe that such a reading is available to us if we focus on his replacement of logical form with forms of life as the governors of sense.

From Logical Form to Forms of Life

In my view, the ways in which Wittgenstein thought philosophy, logic and ethics and aesthetics 'say nothing' were importantly different. We have already considered the cases of logic and philosophy but, before considering ethics and aesthetics, it is important to mark the changes in his views concerning sense and nonsense. The crucial change was the replacement of logical form as the

transcendent basis of language by forms of life. Famously, in the *Investigations*, in contrast to the idea that all propositions have a common essence underpinned by their logical form, we are told that, ‘...to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life’.⁴⁵ Elsewhere we are instructed that ‘Here the term “language-game” is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of a language is part of an activity, or a form of life’.⁴⁶

My claim, in this section, is that, despite some important differences, forms of life play essentially the same role in the later writings that logical form played in the *Tractatus*. Crucially, both govern ‘the bounds of sense’ and must remain outside the scope of the explicable, strictly sayable or articulable. Neither logic nor grammar can make any pronouncements, as they are the transcendental limits to sense. For this reason, these limits cannot be stated or positively charted. Evidence of this similarity of role is found in what Wittgenstein says about these two notions.⁴⁷ For example, consider his ill-labelled ‘doctrine of showing’, as it makes an early appearance in the TLP 4s. We are told that:

Propositions can represent the whole of reality, but they cannot represent what they must have in common with reality in order to be able to represent it – logical form.
What expresses itself in language we cannot express by means of language.
What can be shown cannot be said. (TLP 4.12–4.1211)

By insisting that what can be shown cannot be said, Wittgenstein was preparing us for the idea that we cannot say anything about the logical form of propositions. Yet, as we can see by Russell’s remarks, the standard opinion was that nothing in principle should prevent this. All that is required is the construction of an appropriate meta-language. Hence, Russell writes:

In my introduction to the *Tractatus*, I suggested that, although in any given language there are things, which that language cannot express, it is yet always possible to construct a language of a higher order in which these things can be said.⁴⁸

As we have already seen, the Russell–Wittgenstein debate about saying and showing is not an idle one: it is yet another expression of their different attitudes concerning the status of logical propositions. For Wittgenstein, logic had no objects and no content, it could not inform us about the nature of the world. The apparent statement ‘P iff Q’ is not a claim about how things stand; rather, it specifies how two facts must be related or structured.⁴⁹ But to accept this is to put to the sword the very idea that there could be any higher-order language that could express that which is unsayable. In suggesting otherwise Russell failed to fully grasp the radical character of the Tractarian position and its view of logic. Nevertheless, some remarks in the *Tractatus* concerning the transcendental priority of logic appear to go against this reading. Thus, we are told: ‘Logic is not a body of doctrine, but a mirror image of the world. Logic is transcendental’ (TLP 6.13). However, although Wittgenstein regarded logic as transcendental, he did not see it in the Russellian sense of being separate but rather in the sense that it was the limit of sensible language; the stopping point. Consider that he also says:

Logic is prior to every experience – that something is so. It is prior to the question ‘How?’, not prior to the question ‘What?’ (TLP 5.552)

This is a reminder that although logic is transcendental, in that it constitutes the limits of what is possible, thinkable and sayable, it says nothing about the nature of what is found in the world. Logic is at one and the same time built into the nature of things and the nature of language; it is their common link. Exactly how things can be arranged, in fact, is determined by the nature of the things themselves. This is their logic. Therefore it could not be something additional.

Wittgenstein is certainly not saying that the scaffolding of the world is separable from it or that we can describe it independently. Hence, ‘Logic pervades the world: the limits of the world are also its limits’ (TLP 5.61). Logic cannot exist independently, for it has a merely structural character. It follows from this that there could be no distinct ‘science of logic’, as logic is not something that can be articulated. Nor could it be a source of explanatory laws of inference, for we are told that:

Our fundamental principle is that whenever a question can be decided by logic at all it must be possible to decide it without more ado. (TLP 5.551)

Logic must look after itself. (TLP 5.473)

We must accept this if we are to avoid an infinite regress. For, if the propositions of logic did say something about the world then they too would have to be underwritten by some kind of superior logic. If the propositions of such a superior logic were to say something then they would also need to be underwritten by a yet more superior logic, and so on. In this way, if logic underwrites all saying it must not say anything itself. For this reason we are told that: ‘Clearly the laws of logic cannot in their turn be subject to the laws of logic’ (TLP 6.123).

For our immediate purposes, what is interesting about these remarks concerning logical form is the parallel that can be found between them and those that he makes about language games, grammar and forms of life. As with logic, we are advised to ‘[l]ook on the language game as the *primary* thing’.⁵⁰ We are also told: ‘What has to be accepted, the given, is – so one could say – forms of life.’⁵¹

Furthermore, we find a parallel to the idea that logic cannot provide explanations of inference echoed in his later treatment of rule-following. There he bids us to consider the positive role that ostensive teaching plays in enabling us to set standards in order to avoid an infinite regress. To make this case fully would require a great deal more space, but a few suggestive comparisons should suffice to make the initial point. Consider that, at base, rule-followers do not rest their interpretations on other interpretations. For this reason, learning how to use concepts does not require any knowledge in the initial stages. Instead, it presupposes that there are certain capacities and abilities that are common to both the teacher and student and that the latter is willing to blindly obey authority. We are told that:

Following a rule is analogous to obeying an order. We are trained to do so; we react to an order in a particular way....⁵²

Crucially, the regress is blocked because learning to follow a rule does not presuppose the kind of intellectual capacities that such training is meant to engender. The novice becomes an autonomous speaker by learning a skilled technique within a social medium. Furthermore, the problem of multiple interpretations is also tamed for, in the process of such training, a shared sense of the *obvious* is developed, which is based on, but not confined to, our common natural reactions.⁵³ Given this, we develop a communal second nature via training, as Aristotle once proposed.⁵⁴ It is this social stage-setting that makes meaning and rule-following possible. If we fail to understand this then we will be plagued by unworkable and misleading philosophical pictures that fail to satisfy.⁵⁵ Hence, just as there can be no laws of logic that can explain or externally justify our inferences, so there can be no rules of language use that can provide explanations or justifications of our linguistic practices. Wittgenstein anticipates our tendency to go wrong just here when he writes:

Our mistake is to look for an explanation where we ought to look at what happens as a 'proto-phenomenon'. That is, where we ought to have said: *this language-game is played*.⁵⁶

In this light, we may wonder what has really changed. It appears that the real difference between the early and late periods is that instead of objects fixing logical possibilities, and in turn determining what can be sensibly said, in the later writings it is grammar that performs this function. Thus:

Grammar tells us what kind of object anything is.

Essence is expressed by grammar.⁵⁷

There are still more similarities. For just as there was no way of charting the limits of logic independently, there is no point in trying to understand forms of life, language games or grammar from on high. There is no getting behind, beneath or above grammar for the philosophical purpose of providing some kind of overview. Instead, we are reminded that:

The limit of language is shown by its being impossible to describe a fact which corresponds to (is the translation of) a sentence without simply repeating the sentence (This has to do with the Kantian solution to the problem of philosophy).⁵⁸

Even more importantly, these similarities are not accidental. They can be explained if we consider that in both periods he was steadfastly engaged in grammatical investigations, always with the aim of clarifying and getting a clear view.⁵⁹ His aim was ever to prevent the bewitchment of our intelligence by language.⁶⁰ Nor is this surprising if the 'fundamental thought' of the *Tractatus* was still driving the later Wittgenstein. Considered thus, the move from logical form to

forms of life was a natural, almost irresistible consequence of his growing interest in the distorting effects not just of logical constants, but also of other forms of symbols, such as ordinary words and names. We can regard the approach in the later writings as a wider application of the proper method for treating philosophical problems, as exemplified by the elucidations concerning logical symbolism. Read in this way, the development of this early approach paved the way for the kind of case by case analyses that populate the later writings.

In abandoning the idea that propositions have a general form, it also becomes necessary to abandon the monolithic conception of logical form that supposedly underpinned them. For example, something dramatic happens to the early account when we remove the view that propositions are essentially representative – that is, a certain picture of logic loses its place as the ground for sense. Hence, unsurprisingly, in the *Investigations* he writes:

But what becomes of logic now? Its rigour seems to be giving way here. – But in that case doesn't logic altogether disappear?...The philosophy of logic speaks of sentences and words in exactly the sense we speak of them in ordinary life when we say e.g. 'Here is a Chinese sentence', or 'No, that only looks like writing; it is actually just an ornament' and so on. We are talking about the spatial and temporal phenomenon of language, not about some non-spatial, non-temporal phantasm.⁶¹

With logic no longer playing a foundational role we need to look elsewhere to find the crucial link between language and the world, and what governs sense. That is precisely why forms of life come to replace logical form as the ground for connecting language and the world. Moreover, once freed of his one-dimensional vision of the function of language, Wittgenstein was forced to give careful attention to the operation of other forms of language as well. Although these are important changes, they are often misrepresented in such a way as to cause us to overlook the continuity in his overall method. We still find him trying to overcome the traps set by the misleading character of symbols by focusing on the use of language. Consider his early remarks in the *Philosophical Investigations* in which he famously writes:

It will prove useful in philosophy to say to ourselves: naming something is like attaching a label to a thing.⁶²

His treatment of names echoes his treatment of the logical constants. For, just as logical symbols mesmerize us, so can ordinary names. He wants to make us aware of how much we presuppose when we employ the picture that language is a system of signs that stand for, or represent, objects. He reminds us that:

Naming is so far not a move in the language-game – any more than putting a piece in its place on the board is a move in chess. We may say: *nothing* has so far been done, when a thing has been named.⁶³

We are urged to think of words not as mere labels but akin to the handles and knobs in locomotives. These all have many different jobs that must be understood in relation to one another.

Furthermore, attention to the early work sheds light on his use of alternative language games as a philosophical tool.⁶⁴ In such cases, we are asked to imagine situations in which ‘others’ use concepts differently than we do for the express purpose of getting a clear view of the grammar of our own language.⁶⁵ Consider, for example, why he introduces us to the possibility of other language games that might surround the concept pain, as in the extreme case described in *Zettel*⁶⁶ where he conjures up a tribe which employ two different concepts of pain: ‘...one is applied where there is visible damage and is linked with tending, pity and so on. The other is used for stomach-ache for example, and is tied up with mockery of anyone who complains’.⁶⁷ Accordingly, unless members of this tribe can locate some kind of outer bodily damage they will not regard the person as experiencing what-we-would-call-‘pain’. Their notion of what counts as pain cuts much more finely than would ours. Or, as Wittgenstein puts it, they, ‘...have concepts which cut across ours’.⁶⁸ I claim that at least one crucial aim of these exercises in imagination is to get us to realize that ‘We are not analysing a phenomena (e.g. thought) but a concept (e.g. that of thinking), therefore the use of the word’.⁶⁹ For example, this helps to break us of our natural temptation, if we hold that language serves to name objects, to try to observe the processes that go on when we are thinking. That is, we try to observe some *thing* that the word *thinking* names. Thus, he notes:

In order to get clear about the meaning of the word ‘think’ we watch ourselves while we think; what we observe will be what the word means. – But this concept is not used like that.⁷⁰

He tells us: ‘What we deny is that the picture of the inner process gives us the correct idea of the use of the word “to remember”’.⁷¹ But in denying that there is some *process* or *thing* that the term ‘thinking’ designates, Wittgenstein is emphasizing what should be of interest to us when we wish to investigate the nature of our psychology. He writes:

[W]e forget that what should interest us is the question: how do we *compare* these experiences; what criterion of identity *do we fix* for their occurrence?⁷²

We are reminded that ‘We learn the word “think” *under particular circumstances*’⁷³ and also that ‘The surroundings give it its importance’.⁷⁴ It is precisely for this reason that our use of language is not *arbitrary*, relative or merely conventional. This is why ‘One cannot guess how a word functions. One has to *look at* its use and learn from that’ and why he urges us to, ‘Let the use of words teach you their meaning!’⁷⁵ This use of language games is reminiscent of his use of truth tables in the *Tractatus*. In this light the later writings are natural evolutions from his early work.

This is not to deny that there are important differences in the early and late periods. Indeed, these also need to be emphasized. But this is only possible by

giving detailed attention to the effects of the move from logical form to forms of life.

Usefully, in considering to what extent Wittgenstein ought to be thought of as a transcendental philosopher, Meredith Williams compares and contrasts his philosophical approach with that of Kant. The similarities are clear. Both are concerned with issues concerning the bounds of sense such that it makes it look as if Wittgenstein's grammar could be a substitute for Kantian *synthetic a priori* categories. But the key difference between them is that, even in his early philosophy, logical form, which says nothing, could not be equated with Kantian categories, if these are regarded as defining a positive limit to the bounds of sense.

Even more so, the later Wittgenstein had an obviously fluid vision of what drives conceptual change and what underlies the boundaries of sense. Accordingly, in his famous discussion of the concept of 'game', we are told that, '...the extension of the concept is not closed by a frontier....For how is the concept of a game bounded?...Can you give the boundary?'.⁷⁶ Thus:

We do not know the boundaries because none have been drawn. To repeat, we can draw a boundary for a special purpose. Does it take that to make the concept usable? Not at all.⁷⁷

Concepts get their lives from our practices, not vice versa. This is why it is mistaken to treat 'communities' or 'grammar' as fixed. Since these practices develop and evolve, there can be no transcendental setting of limits to sense in advance or once and for all. It is for this reason that philosophers cannot theorize from the general to the particular, but must instead merely describe and be vigilant of transgressions of sense. In this he, '...inverts the Kantian order of priority'.⁷⁸

Bearing these points in mind, we are now better armed to consider the nature of his remarks on ethics at the end of the *Tractatus*.

Remarks on Value

We can throw light on Wittgenstein's early remarks concerning ethics, aesthetics and religion by focusing on his changed views about the nature of sense. This is vital, since these remarks are regularly identified as being the very heart of the work.⁷⁹ As with logic, we are told that these domains are both transcendental and nonsensical. But, as Peterson notes, they are non-representational in a different way than logical 'statements'. He rightly insists that they involve 'what lies outside of language' whereas logic concerns what is internal to it (given the Tractarian view).⁸⁰

In advancing her strong therapeutic reading, Diamond claims that Wittgenstein's understanding of nonsense in both periods is uniform, and effectively equates to the 'technical' sense of nonsense, found in the *Tractatus*. Therefore given that his remarks on ethics are designated as nonsensical they must be treated just as any other kind of nonsense. But, as we noted earlier, for Diamond there is only one kind of nonsense.

One paradox that emerges in advancing this view is that in order to take seriously Wittgenstein's early views on nonsense it seems we must also take seriously his remarks on propositions serving as pictures of facts. But this would require us to read those sections of the *Tractatus* non-ironically, against the counsel of the therapeutic reading. Even more seriously, the strong therapeutic reading makes it difficult to see why he places such importance on the final sections of the work if they are simply nonsensical remarks to be overcome and thrown away. Diamond, to her credit, attempts to circumvent this problem by distinguishing the attractiveness of speaking ethical nonsense as opposed to speaking other forms of nonsense. She treats, '...cases of understanding a person as saying in his heart something that makes no sense, [as] something which we have the imaginative resources to grasp as attractive where that imaginative capacity is tied to our own capacities as moral agents'.⁸¹ She writes:

...if we read the *Tractatus* right, the upshot of the book will be different in regard to the two sorts of utterers of nonsense. The attractiveness of philosophical sentences will disappear through the kind of self-understanding that the book aims to lead to in philosophers; the attractiveness of ethical sentences will not. But if we understand ourselves, ourselves the utterers of ethical nonsense, we shall not come out with ethical sentences under the illusion that we are talking sense.⁸²

But if all speaking nonsense is really on a par – that is, it is all like saying 'piggly-wiggly' – then how can uttering one bit of nonsense be more attractive than uttering another?

Diamond is right in that to think that Wittgenstein was suggesting that there could not be ethical 'doctrines' or 'propositions'. However, what we should not lose sight of is that her reading also rules out a more sophisticated understanding of the ethical remarks – one which makes sense of Wittgenstein's evolving conception of language. For example, the fact that he regarded ethical remarks as strictly nonsensical but nonetheless important is best seen as a vital insight into the essence and function of ethical language, albeit a negative one. That is, Wittgenstein realized that they, too, are non-representational in that they do not serve to represent facts.⁸³ Yet, he saw that the silence of ethics was pregnant in a way in which the silence of logic was not. That is, he struggled to maintain that ethics had a profound status, despite being nonsensical in Tractarian terms. His emphasis was on its profundity. This was tied to the fact that ethics is nonsensical only to the extent that he recognized that it did not involve factual statements. The problem was that, given his uniform account of sense and nonsense, he did not have the resources in his early philosophy to properly develop his positive view of ethics. This was a source of genuine tension for him. Yet, as Wittgenstein's views on the essence of language evolved this and other important arenas of discourse no longer had to be regarded as nonsensical merely because they lay outside the bounds of the factual. He came to recognize that boundaries may be drawn for, '...various kinds of reason'.⁸⁴ Once freed of the Tractarian vision of the function of language, the later Wittgenstein was better able to explicate his views concerning the nature of nonsense itself. On this reading he was aware from the outset, even if only

negatively, that ethical talk is not a form of 'factual discourse'. This fits well with his more mature position concerning language games that relate to particular domains and the attention he demands that we give to the context of our activities. If we focus on the changes in his account of sense as he moved from logical forms to forms of life, we can see how he advanced from a mere recognition that ethical language was non-representational and began to focus more positively on the contexts in which such remarks occur.

However, seeing these developments in his thought is ruled out by a reading that doesn't allow us to take his views on the general form of propositions seriously. When we consider the links *and* breaks between the early and later writings, it becomes clear that it is a mistake to think that all that is regarded as nonsensical in the *Tractatus* can be treated alike.⁸⁶ As Reid puts it, in this light we can see, '...a strong warning from the perspective of his later thought that the frame of the *Tractatus* is not the expression of a clear grasp on the part of the author of the *Tractatus* of what it is to label some use of language "nonsense"...'.⁸⁵ Moreover, the very fact that Wittgenstein was prepared to allow for the existence of profound forms of nonsense in his early work, despite being unable to incorporate this idea seamlessly into his thinking, is vital to an understanding of the man, what he found important and how his thinking progressed.

Notes

* I would like to thank Jo Wolff for allowing me to reuse and expand upon material from my section of the paper, 'Making Sense of Nonsense: Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein', written jointly with John Lippitt, and published in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, **XCVIII** (3).

1 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, ed. G.H. von Wright and H. Nyman, trans. P. Winch (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980), p. 20e.

2 An example of this kind of view is inherent in Marie McGinn's claim that these works are '...both clearly by the same author, but one whose *conception of his philosophical task* undergoes a profound change' (Marie McGinn, *Wittgenstein and the Philosophical Investigations*, London: Routledge, 1997, p. 2, emphasis mine). Or similarly, according to Hacker, '...what is much more important is that the *Investigations* as a whole stands opposed to the philosophical *spirit* of the *Tractatus*' (P.M.S. Hacker, *Wittgenstein's Place in Twentieth-Century Analytic Philosophy*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1996, p. 98, emphasis mine).

3 James Conant, 'Must We Show What We Cannot Say?', in R. Fleming and M. Payne (eds), *The Senses of Stanley Cavell*, Bucknell Review (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1989), pp. 248, 266.

4 Cora Diamond, *The Realistic Spirit: Wittgenstein, Philosophy and the Mind* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), p. 18.

5 *Ibid.*, pp. 181–82; cf. also p. 194. For this reason she is openly hostile to standard readings because, '...the attempt to take the *Tractatus* as metaphysical in a straightforward sense (as in Norman Malcolm's *Nothing is Hidden: Wittgenstein's Criticism of his Early Thought*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1986) yields plain nonsense or plain self-contradictions' (Diamond, *The Realistic Spirit*, *op. cit.*, n. 4, p. 19).

6 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness (London: Routledge, 1922). Referred to throughout text as TLP.

7 James Conant, 'Putting Two and Two Together: Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein and the Point of View for Their Work as Authors', in T. Tessin and M. von der Ruhr (eds), *Philosophy and the Grammar of Religious Belief*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), p. 250. Cf. also Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, ed. R. Rhees and G.E.M. Anscombe, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, 2nd edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958), §§ 119, 464.

8 Conant, 'Must We Show What We Cannot Say?', *op. cit.*, n. 3, p. 246.

9 Conant, 'Putting Two and Two Together', *op. cit.*, n. 7, p. 249. *Prima facie* support is lent to Conant by Wittgenstein's remark that 'There is not a philosophical method, though there are indeed methods, like different therapies' (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, n. 7, § 133).

10 Conant, 'Putting Two and Two Together', *op. cit.*, n. 7, pp. 269–71.

11 See Diamond, *The Realistic Spirit*, *op. cit.*, n. 4, p. 19, p. 201.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 182.

13 Richard R. Brockhaus, *Pulling up the Ladder: The Metaphysical Roots of Wittgenstein's Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (La Salle: Open Court, 1991), p. 1–2

14 Cf. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, n. 7, §§ 127, 89 and 90.

15 Marie McGinn, 'Between Metaphysics and Nonsense: Elucidation in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*', *Philosophical Quarterly*, **49**, 1999, p. 501.

16 Cf. Bertrand Russell, 'On Denoting', reprinted in R.C. Marsh (ed.), *Logic and Knowledge*, London: Unwin, 1956, p. 54.

17 Cf. Donald Peterson, *Wittgenstein's Early Philosophy: Three Sides of the Mirror* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), p. 48; Brian McGuinness, 'The Grundgedanke of the *Tractatus*', in *Understanding Wittgenstein*, Royal Institute of Philosophy Lectures, 1972/73, vol. 7 (London: Macmillan, 1976), pp. 49–50; Henry Finch, *Wittgenstein: The Later Philosophy: An Exposition of the 'Philosophical Investigations'* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1977), p. 5.

18 Pears tells us that Wittgenstein's 'picture theory' gave him '...a platform to criticise Russell's Platonic Theory of logic. The platform is Aristotelian in this sense: it brings down sentential forms from Russell's transcendent world and treats them as immanent in this world': David Pears, *The False Prison: A Study of the Development of Wittgenstein's Philosophy*, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 29.

19 Cf. Peterson, *Wittgenstein's Early Philosophy*, *op. cit.*, n. 17, p. 47.

20 Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 36, 40; also Pears, *The False Prison*, *op. cit.*, n. 18, p. 29.

21 Cf. Peter Hylton, 'Functions, Operations and Sense in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*', in W. Tait (ed.), *Early Analytic Philosophy* (Chicago: Open Court, 1997), p. 97.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 96.

23 Bertrand Russell, 'The Philosophy of Logical Atomism', reprinted in R.C. Marsh (ed.), *Logic and Knowledge* (London: Unwin, 1956), p. 270.

24 *Ibid.*

25 *Ibid.*

26 McGinn, 'Between Metaphysics and Nonsense', *op. cit.*, n. 15, p. 497.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 500.

28 *Ibid.*, p. 148. One important difference between McGinn's reading and mine, is that she adopts the traditional reading of Wittgenstein's views on analysis and elementary propositions, whereas I do not. See McGinn, 'Between Metaphysics and Nonsense', *op. cit.*,

n. 15, p. 498. Cf. Lynette Reid, 'Wittgenstein's Ladder: The *Tractatus* and Nonsense', *Philosophical Investigations*, 21 (2), pp. 109–12.

29 Reid, 'Wittgenstein's Ladder', *op. cit.*, n. 28, p. 122.

30 Reid gives a useful account of Wittgenstein's views on issues concerning the end and nature of philosophical analysis that she contrasts with what he had written in the *Notebooks* (Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Notebooks, 1914–1916*, ed. G.H. von Wright and G.E.M. Anscombe, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, Basil Blackwell: Oxford, 1969). See Reid, 'Wittgenstein's Ladder', *op. cit.*, n. 28, pp. 110–11. For example, whereas some examples of elementary propositions are attempted in the *Notebooks*, there are none in the *Tractatus*. She is right that one cannot simply move from what was written in the *Notebooks* to illuminate the *Tractatus*.

31 Cf. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, n. 7, § 134.

32 Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, *op. cit.*, n. 1, p. 7e.

33 Conant, 'Must We Show What We Cannot Say?', *op. cit.*, n. 3, p. 244. Conant stands opposed to those who maintain that '...for the *Tractatus* the propositions of ethics and religion – as well as either all or only the most important propositions of the *Tractatus* itself – are both nonsensical and deeply significant': *ibid.*, p. 247. See also Conant, 'Putting Two and Two Together', *op. cit.*, n. 7, p. 252.

34 Conant remarks on the impossibility of there being different types of nonsense (cf. Conant, 'Must We Show What We Cannot Say?', *op. cit.*, n. 3, pp. 252, 253, 261). Diamond, for her part, says '...for Wittgenstein there is no kind of nonsense which is nonsense on account of what the terms composing it mean – there is as it were no positive nonsense' (Diamond, *The Realistic Spirit*, *op. cit.*, n. 4, pp. 106, 112). She goes on: 'I should claim that [this] view of nonsense...was consistently held to by Wittgenstein throughout his writings, from the period before the *Tractatus* was written and onwards' (*ibid.*, p. 107).

35 Cora Diamond, 'Ethics, Imagination and the Method of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*', in R. Heinrich and H. Vetter (eds), *Bilder der Philosophie, Wiener Reihe 5* (Vienna: Oldenbourg, 1991), p. 65.

36 Koethe notes, 'On [Diamond's] account, the *Tractatus* does *not* attempt to articulate a metaphysical and semantic theory of the nature of language...Wittgenstein's aim is to subject the notions figuring in that ostensible articulation – states of affairs, objects, logical form, and so on – to "a destabilization from the inside" in a effort to demonstrate their literal incoherence': John Koethe, *The Continuity of Wittgenstein's Thought* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 37.

37 Diamond, 'Ethics, Imagination and the Method', *op. cit.*, n. 35, pp. 57, 55.

38 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, n. 7, p. viii.

39 *Ibid.*, §§ 89, 92, 96, 98, 105, 107–8, 114–15.

40 Dale Jacquette, 'Wittgenstein and the Colour Incompatibility Problem', *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 7 (3), p. 353.

41 This period is of great interest precisely because, as Finch notes, 'Judging from the posthumously published *Philosophical Remarks* and *Philosophical Grammar*, Wittgenstein moved with almost agonizing slowness to the new position that language makes sense only as it is altogether intertwined with different kinds of activities' (Finch, *Wittgenstein: The Later Philosophy*, *op. cit.*, n. 17, p. 4).

42 Richard McDonough, 'A Note on Frege's and Russell's Influence on Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*', *Russell*, 3 (14), 1994, p. 42. Cf. also McGinn, 'Between Metaphysics and Nonsense', *op. cit.*, n. 15, pp. 2, 4, 9–10.

43 Mayer convincingly argues against the view that the numbering was meant to be in the style of a musical score or an intuitive rhythm. Indeed, she employs evidence from the *Prototractatus* to reveal that the sub-propositions of the *Tractatus* are for the most part, just as Wittgenstein claimed, meant as elaborations or comments upon earlier remarks. Thus, she likens the work to ‘an architectonic construction’ and claims that its numbering system ‘...reflects primarily a method of construction’ (Verena Mayer, ‘The Numbering System in the *Tractatus*’, *Ratio*, 6 (2), 1993, p. 112). This is at least consistent with the idea that these ‘statements’ were meant as elucidations.

44 Cf. Daniel Hutto, ‘Was the Later Wittgenstein a Transcendental Idealist?’, in P. Coates and D. Hutto (eds), *Current Issues in Idealism* (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1996), p. 147.

45 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, n. 7, § 19.

46 *Ibid.*, § 23.

47 Cf. Koethe, *The Continuity of Wittgenstein’s Thought*, *op. cit.*, n. 36, p. 2.

48 Bertrand Russell, *My Philosophical Development* (London: Routledge, 1959), p. 114.

49 Anscombe attempts to illustrate this point when she writes ‘I once bought toffees with the names of the flavours “treacle”, “Devon cream” and so on printed on the papers and was momentarily startled to find one labelled “fruit or nut”. It cannot be “fruit or nut”, I said. It’s fruit or it’s nut. Any attempt to say what the truth-functional constants like “or” mean must fail: we can only shew it’ (G.E.M. Anscombe, *An Introduction to Wittgenstein’s Tractatus* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1959), p. 164).

50 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, n. 7, § 656.

51 *Ibid.*, p. 226.

52 *Ibid.*, § 206.

53 Meredith Williams, *Wittgenstein’s Meaning and Mind* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 222, 180.

54 *Ibid.*, p. 210.

55 Williams notes that by stressing the social character of meaning and the importance of training, Wittgenstein produces ‘...a dynamic rather than a static account of the rule-governed practice’ (*ibid.*, p. 168).

56 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, n. 7, § 654. Cf. also *idem*, *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology*, Vol. I, ed. G.H. von Wright and H. Nyman, trans. C.G. Luckhardt and M.A.E. Aue (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982), § 873.

57 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, n. 7, §§ 373, 371.

58 Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, *op. cit.*, n. 1, p. 10e.

59 TLP 4.0031; *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, n. 7, § 122. Cf. also Koethe, *The Continuity of Wittgenstein’s Thought*, *op. cit.*, n. 36, p. 60.

60 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, n. 7, § 109.

61 *Ibid.*, § 108.

62 *Ibid.*, § 15.

63 *Ibid.*, § 49.

64 In 1948 Wittgenstein writes, ‘...Nothing is more important for teaching us to understand the concepts we have than constructing fictitious ones’ (Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, *op. cit.*, n. 1, p. 74e).

65 Wittgenstein reminds us that, ‘The language games are rather set up as objects of comparison which are meant to throw light on the facts of our language by way not only of similarities, but also of dissimilarities’ (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, n. 7, § 130; cf. also § 122).

66 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, 2nd edn, ed. G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967), § 380.

- 67 Ibid.
- 68 Ibid., § 379. For a fuller discussion of this case and the use of these imaginary language games see Hutto, 'Was the Later Wittgenstein a Transcendental Idealist?', *op. cit.*, n. 44, pp. 128–29.
- 69 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, n. 7, § 383. This way of understanding his later approach makes sense of his wholesale rejection of the view of psychological language as representational which sponsors a mistaken picture of the reified mind. For a fuller discussion of this see Hutto, 'Was the Later Wittgenstein a Transcendental Idealist?', *op. cit.*, n. 44, pp. 467–68, 474–77; also Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, n. 7, §§ 194, 196.
- 70 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, n. 7, § 316.
- 71 Ibid., § 305.
- 72 Ibid., § 322.
- 73 Wittgenstein, *Last Writings*, *op. cit.*, n. 56, § 41.
- 74 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, n. 7, § 583.
- 75 Ibid., § 340; Wittgenstein, *Last Writings*, *op. cit.*, n. 56, § 856. Or, as he famously writes: 'To repeat: don't think, but look...' (*Philosophical Investigations*, § 66).
- 76 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, n. 7, § 68.
- 77 Ibid., § 69; cf. §§ 79–80.
- 78 Williams, *Wittgenstein's Meaning and Mind*, *op. cit.*, n. 53, pp. 76, 177.
- 79 He writes in his undated letter to von Ficker, '...the point of the book is ethical. I once wanted to give a few words in the foreword which now actually are not in it, which, however, I'll write to you now because they might be a key to you: I wanted to write that 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.' Taken from C.G. Luckhardt (ed.), *Wittgenstein: Sources and Perspectives* (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1996), pp. 94–95.
- 80 He claims that Wittgenstein's preface to the *Tractatus* misleads on the issue of nonsense by suggesting a fourfold schema, when it should describe a sixfold one. Cf. Peterson, *Wittgenstein's Early Philosophy*, *op. cit.*, n. 17, p. 7, and especially p. 8. Another good account of the various senses of nonsense in the *Tractatus* can be found in Cyril Barrett, *Wittgenstein on Ethics and Religious Belief* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), esp. pp. 24–25.
- 81 Diamond, 'Ethics, Imagination and the Method', *op. cit.*, n. 35, p. 84; cf. also p. 80.
- 82 Ibid., p. 74.
- 83 If they could, ethical statements could not be absolute. Cf. Ludwig Wittgenstein, 'A Lecture on Ethics', reprinted in *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Philosophical Occasions 1912–1951*, ed. J. Klagge and A. Nordmann (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993), p. 39.
- 84 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, n. 7, §§ 499–500. On the basis of these remarks I would endorse Reid's claim that in the later writings, '...what it is to exclude something as nonsense can vary': Reid, 'Wittgenstein's Ladder', *op. cit.*, n. 28, p. 146.
- 85 Reid, 'Wittgenstein's Ladder', *op. cit.*, n. 28, p. 146.
- 86 As Koethe writes, '...we should expect this attitude towards [the domains regarded as nonsensical] to persist beyond the *Tractatus*. If on the other hand, their construal as nonsensical in the *Tractatus* is an artefact or consequence of the picture theory, then we should expect such concepts and discourse to survive the abandonment of that theory and to occur in his later writings in ordinary, unconceptualised forms' (Koethe *The Continuity of Wittgenstein's Thought*, *op. cit.*, n. 36, p. 39). Despite our different characterizations of the so-called 'picture theory', I think, as does Koethe, that it is the second scenario which is realized.