BETWEEN METAPHYSICS AND NONSENSE: ELUCIDATION IN WITTGENSTEIN'S *TRACTATUS*

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I

It is a tribute to the fruitful ambiguity of *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* that there are currently at least two deeply opposed ways of reading it.[1] On one reading, it is a work of metaphysics, which puts forward substantive claims about the nature of a language-independent reality. On this view, it provides a speculative account of what the relation between language and this independent reality must be in order for language to represent the world. I shall call this the *metaphysical* reading. The list of those who subscribe to this interpretation of the work includes most of its foremost interpreters: Ramsey, Russell, Black, Anscombe, Malcolm, Pears and Hacker.[2] On the other reading, far from being a work of metaphysics, *TLP* represents the 'unfolding of a therapeutic strategy'.[3] This begins with the temptation to make metaphysical pronouncements from a philosophical perspective and ends with the realization that these pronouncements are nonsensical: the so-called philosophical perspective is an illusion. The upshot of this journey is

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[1] Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (hereafter *TLP*), tr. D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971).

[2] See F. Ramsey, 'Critical Notice of L. Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*', in *Foundations of Mathematics* (London: Routledge, 1931), pp. 270–86; B. Russell, Preface to Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), pp. ix–xxii; M. Black, *A Companion to Wittgenstein's Tractatus* (Cornell UP, 1964); G.E.M. Anscombe, *An Introduction to Wittgenstein's Tractatus* (London: Hutchinson, 1971); N. Malcolm, *Nothing is Hidden: Wittgenstein's Criticism of his Early Thought* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986); D. Pears, *The False Prison: a Study in the Development of Wittgenstein's Philosophy*, Vol. 1 (Oxford UP, 1987); P.M.S. Hacker, *Insight and Illusion: Themes in the Philosophy of Wittgenstein* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), and *Wittgenstein's Place in Twentieth-Century Analytic Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).

[3] J. Conant, 'Must We Show What We Cannot Say?', in R. Flemming and M. Payne (eds), *The Senses of Stanley Cavell* (Bucknell UP, 1989), pp. 242–83, at p. 262.

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that we are no longer tempted to ask or answer philosophical questions, but willingly confine ourselves to the realm of what can be said, the propositions of natural science. I shall call this the *therapeutic* reading. Its principal advocates are Cora Diamond, James Conant, Tom Ricketts and Warren Goldfarb.[4] The metaphysical reading is the traditional one, but even those who embrace it recognize that it renders *TLP* a problematic work. For there is an obvious tension in the idea that Wittgenstein is putting forward metaphysical doctrines whilst also claiming that philosophical propositions are 'nonsensical', and insisting that anyone who understands him will recognize that the propositions of *TLP* fall into this class.[5] The distinction between saying and showing cannot, it is acknowledged, fully discharge this tension.[6] The idea that the metaphysical truths about reality that *TLP* attempts to communicate are truths that cannot be said, but make themselves manifest, requires us to accept that Wittgenstein's propositions are indeed nonsense, but a special, illuminating sort of nonsense.[7] The fact that the idea of illuminating nonsense is an unpalatable one does not, it is suggested, mean that Wittgenstein was not attracted by it. On the contrary, it is argued that it is only by assuming that *TLP* accepts that there are ineffable truths about reality which are mirrored in language that we can begin to understand the following two features of the work: first, its repeated insistence on the distinction between what can be said and what can only be shown; and second, its clear suggestion that it is intended to convey lasting insights – enabling us to 'see the world aright' (*TLP* 6.54) – even while it requires us to throw away the nonsensical propositions that enabled us to grasp them. According to the

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[4] See C. Diamond, 'Ethics, Imagination and the Method of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*', in R. Heinrich and H. Vetter (eds), *Bilder der Philosophie*, Wiener Reihe, 5 (1991), pp. 55–90, and 'Throwing Away the Ladder: How to Read the *Tractatus*', in *The Realistic Spirit* (MIT Press, 1995), pp. 179–204; Conant, *op. cit.*, also 'The Search for Logically Alien Thought: Descartes, Kant, Frege and the *Tractatus*', *Philosophical Topics*, 20 (1991), pp. 115–80, 'Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein and Nonsense', in T. Cohen *et al.* (eds), *Pursuits of Reason* (Lubbock: Texas Tech Press, 1993), pp. 195–224, and 'The Method of the *Tractatus*', in E.H. Reck (ed.), *From Frege to Wittgenstein: Perspectives on Early Analytical Philosophy* (Oxford UP, forthcoming); T. Ricketts, 'Pictures, Logic, and the Limits of Sense in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*', in H. Sluga and D. Stern (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein* (Cambridge UP, 1996), pp. 59–99; W. Goldfarb, 'Metaphysics and Nonsense: on Cora Diamond's *The Realistic Spirit*', *Journal of Philosophical Research*, 22 (1997), pp. 57–73.

[5] For example, in his Preface to *TLP*, Russell writes (p. xxi): '[According to Wittgenstein] everything ... which is involved in the very idea of the expressiveness of language must remain incapable of being expressed in language, and is, therefore, inexpressible in a perfectly precise sense. This inexpressible contains ... the whole of logic and philosophy.... What causes hesitation [here] is the fact that, after all, Mr Wittgenstein manages to say a good deal about what cannot be said.'

[6] Thus Russell further comments (*ibid.*): '[Wittgenstein's] defence would be that what he calls the mystical can be shown, although it cannot be said. It may be that this defence is adequate, but, for my part, I confess that it leaves me with a certain sense of discomfort.'

[7] For a long discussion of 'illuminating nonsense' see Conant, 'Must We Show'.

metaphysical reading, the most important of these insights is that the logic of our language is grounded in the intrinsic features of an independent reality; it is these features which cannot be described, but which our language shows.[8] Thus the metaphysical-sounding assertions with which the work opens are, by its own lights, incoherent. Yet we must use them as a means to grasp the essential and ineffable nature of reality that is necessarily reflected in any language in which thoughts are expressed.

The therapeutic reading, by contrast, entirely rejects the idea that there are any ineffable truths lying behind Wittgenstein's nonsensical remarks. Diamond calls it 'chickening out' to hold that Wittgenstein believes there is something called 'the logical form of reality' which shows itself but which cannot be expressed in propositions. The view which she defends, and which she characterizes as 'not chickening out', attempts to take *TLP* 6.54 at its word. Thus, at the end of *TLP* 'we are left using ordinary sentences, and we shall genuinely have got past the attempt to represent to ourselves something in reality, the possibility of what a sentence says being so, as not sayable but shown by the sentence. We shall genuinely have thrown the ladder away' (Diamond, *The Realistic Spirit* p. 184). The aim of *TLP* is not to get us to recognize something that is unsayably true of reality, but rather to cure us of any attempt to represent to ourselves something about reality that cannot be said. On this reading, the idea of an objective realm of necessity underlying our capacity to make sense, which cannot be described in language but which language necessarily mirrors, is Wittgenstein's principal target. The beginning of the work gives full rein to this desire to ground the logic of our language in the essential features of reality. Thus the opening remarks are no more than a full-throated expression of the sort of thing that someone in the grip of the illusion that there is such a thing as a philosophical perspective on the relation between language and the world is inclined to say.[9] The idea is that the reader begins by supposing that these remarks express a coherent doctrine about how language hooks on to the world, but is then brought by stages to the realization that they are 'real nonsense,

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[8] The following examples make the point: 'language enjoys certain options on the surface, but deeper down it is founded on the intrinsic nature of objects, which is not our creation but is set over against us in mysterious independence' (Pears p. 8); 'what makes sense in language and thought is dependent on and derived from the nature of objects' (Malcolm p. 14); 'the propositions of language must reflect the nature of things, and ... the logico-metaphysical nature of things is objective and language-independent' (Hacker, 'Wittgenstein's Place' p. 80).

[9] Thus Ricketts (p. 88) states that *TLP* 'opens with a refinement of Russell's metaphysics of facts'. This claim is unconvincing to the extent that the details of the opening picture are quite unlike the traditional metaphysics of a philosopher like Russell (with its ontology of particulars, properties, relations and facts). The main elements of the picture are, rather, ones that reflect the distinctive themes of *TLP* itself, in particular the relation between what is essential (form) and what is accidental (the arrangement of objects in states of affairs). This is clearly an anticipation of the distinction between saying and showing.

plain nonsense, which we are not in the end to think of as corresponding to an ineffable truth' (Diamond p. 181).[10]

The first stage of this journey effects a transition from a metaphysical to a formal approach, by focusing on two main insights concerning the character of language. On the one hand, we are led to recognize that we cannot grasp what it is that we are talking about independently of the logical features of the expressions we use to talk about it: logic is essentially internal to the logical character of the expressions occurring in propositions. On the other hand, we are brought to see that a proposition's sense is independent of its truth-value, and that the possibility of being true or false is internal to the nature of propositions. At this stage our earlier talk of the world, facts, objects, and so on, is shown to be empty, and we now abandon it: we cannot approach the ontological constitution of the world in the way this talk assumes. However, the journey cannot stop here, for the remarks that have enabled us to abandon our earlier metaphysical nonsense are themselves ones that appear to make assertions about the logic of our language. They therefore assume the possibility of a philosophical perspective external to ordinary language. Thus there must be a further stage in our journey, in which these nonsensical propositions are also thrown away without remainder. What we need is a proposition which makes no use of the problematic formal concepts of this second stage, which belongs entirely within a legitimate symbolism and which yet succeeds in conveying the essential or internal features of all propositions. This proposition will succeed in achieving the aim that Wittgenstein sets for himself in *TLP* 4.114: '[philosophy] must set limits to what cannot be thought by working outwards through what can be thought'. This proposition, the whole sense of the work, takes the form of a variable which presents the general form of a proposition. It is expressed at *TLP* 6 as follows:

6.   The general form of a truth-function is $[\bar{p}, \bar{\xi}, N(\bar{\xi})]$.
         This is the general form of a proposition.

6.001. What this says is just that every proposition is a result of successive applications to elementary propositions of the operation $N(\bar{\xi})$.

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[10] Ricketts (p. 94) describes this journey as follows: '[*TLP*] imagines an attempt to think through at the most general level what a conception of sentences as logically interconnected representations of reality requires. At its opening, it presents what appears to be an alternative theory to Russell's flawed one. We see through this appearance, when we realize that on the theory's own apparent telling, there can be no such theory. When we throw away the ladder, we give up the attempts to state what this conception of representation and truth demands of language and the world, give up trying to operate at an illusory level of generality, without however rejecting the conception of truth as agreement with reality. Rather, we understand what this conception comes to, when we appreciate how what can be said can be said clearly, when we appreciate the standard of clarity set by the general form of sentences.'

The importance of the general form of a proposition for the therapeutic reading is described by Cora Diamond ('Ethics, Imagination' p. 58) thus:

> There are two central results of [the first] part of *Tractatus*: (1) an account of logic as internal to what propositions are, and (2) an account of the comparability of propositions with reality, their being true or false, also as internal to what they are. Wittgenstein argues that these internal features of all propositions may be presented by a variable: that is, he thinks that there is a way of specifying a variable whose values will be all propositions; what this variable represents then is the general form of a proposition. The importance of this variable is very clear if you go back to the frame of the book, and the statement that the aim of the book is to set the limits of the expression of thoughts. That is what Wittgenstein takes himself to have done by giving a variable whose values are all propositions, by giving, that is, a description of all propositional signs of any language whatever.

Thus the importance of the variable is that, without going outside the limits set by the logic of our language, it provides a description of all propositional signs belonging to any language whatever. All propositions are values of this variable, and any propositional sign that has the general form of a proposition can be used to express a sense. If a propositional sign lacks sense, then that can only be because we have failed to give one or more of its constituents a meaning (*TLP* 5.4733). The sentences of *TLP* have the general form of a proposition, but in so far as they employ pseudo-concepts – world, fact, object, concept, etc. – as if they were genuine concepts, they contain constituents which lack sense. They therefore fail to express thoughts. Thus at the end of *TLP* we are left with the realization that all along we have, at best, been under the illusion of understanding these remarks; we now see that the sentence-forms that make up the work do not belong to the category of intelligible propositions, but are one and all plain nonsense. We are cured of our desire 'to station ourselves with propositions somewhere outside logic' (4.12), and content to confine ourselves to using ordinary sentences in the expression of what can be said. We are not left with anything after we have thrown away the ladder, but have simply got past the temptation to talk philosophical – either metaphysical or formal – nonsense.

II

These two readings of *TLP* serve to throw each other's strengths and weaknesses into sharp relief. Thus the principal attractions of the therapeutic over the metaphysical reading are as follows: it allows us to do away with the problematic idea of ineffable truths about reality conveyed through

nonsense-sentences; it takes seriously Wittgenstein's claim that his proposi-
tions are 'nonsensical' and are to be 'thrown away'; and it enables us to see
how Wittgenstein's insights about the status of logic and the nature of the
proposition have a profound impact on his conception of the aims and
methods of philosophy. On the other hand, it is one of the paradoxical
features of the therapeutic reading that it regards the remarks of *TLP* as
communicating nothing (because saying nothing), but as nevertheless bring-
ing about the reader's realization that nothing is being communicated. The
work is at the same time held to provide the insights necessary for its own
self-destruction and to provide no genuine insight that is not ultimately
obliterated in the final act of self-annihilation. But if the ladder by which we
climb from unself-conscious nonsense to self-conscious sense turns out to be
an illusion, how have we got anywhere by climbing it?[11] The great ad-
vantage of the metaphysical reading is not only that it allows that there is
something behind Wittgenstein's remarks, which we carry away with us
(albeit inexpressibly) at the end of the work, but that it also provides a clear
diagnosis of why Wittgenstein believes that what lies behind his remarks
cannot be said. In making the primary focus of the work the saying/showing
distinction rather than the sense/nonsense distinction, the metaphysical
reading provides a more stable, less paradoxical, interpretation and does
better justice to what appears to be the dominant theme of the book.[12]

In these circumstances, coming down firmly in favour of one approach
rather than the other seems foolhardy: neither of them provides a fully
satisfactory resting place. A more judicious response is to look for a third
interpretation, one which combines the advantages of both and has the
disadvantages of neither. It is an easy matter to see what such an interpreta-
tion would have to achieve: we simply have to list the strengths of each ap-
proach and look for an interpretation that incorporates them all. What we
want, therefore, is an interpretation which avoids the suggestion that there
are ineffable truths about reality, but which allows that there is something

[11] For a discussion of the paradoxical nature of the therapeutic reading see Conant, 'Must
We Show'. This point is a major focus for discussion in Lynette Reid's critique of the
Diamond and Conant interpretation, in 'Wittgenstein's Ladder: the *Tractatus* and Nonsense',
Philosophical Investigations, 21 (1998), pp. 97–151.
[12] Thus in a letter to Russell dated 19 August 1919, Wittgenstein writes 'Now I'm afraid
you haven't really got hold of my main contention, to which the whole business of logical
prop[osition]s is only a corollary. The main point is the theory of what can be expressed
by prop[osition]s – i.e. by language – (and, which comes to the same, what can be *thought*) and
what cannot be expressed by prop[osition]s, but only shown; which, I believe, is the
cardinal problem of philosophy': Wittgenstein, *Cambridge Letters*, ed. B.F. McGuinness and
G.H. von Wright (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), p. 124. The interpretation I give below follows the
metaphysical interpretation in making the saying/showing distinction the main point of
the work.

behind Wittgenstein's remarks; which permits these remarks to fall away completely, but which allows that the remarks accomplish something important; which avoids committing Wittgenstein to any metaphysical doctrines, but which does not fall into the paradox of self-destruction.

What I want to do in the remainder of this paper is to develop an understanding of Wittgenstein's idea that his remarks 'serve as elucidations' (*TLP* 6.54). This, I believe, goes some way towards achieving a synthesis of the two opposed approaches. I shall call this possible third reading the *elucidatory*, or *clarificatory*, interpretation. One distinctive feature of this third approach is that it makes a division within the major strands of *TLP*. On the one hand, there are those strands which, as I shall show, fit a concept of elucidation. It is these strands, I want to argue, that represent Wittgenstein's real insights into the nature of language; although they undergo development, they are central to the whole of Wittgenstein's philosophy, early and late. On the other hand, there are those strands that depend upon unwarranted presuppositions and misconceptions, and which have their root in a primitive idea of language that governs Wittgenstein's thought at the time. These misconceptions are grounded, at least in part, in the idea, first, that sense must be determinate, and second, that the logical form of the sentences of our language can be fully displayed by means of distinct variables in a logically perspicuous symbolism.[13] It is these ideas that are gradually thrown off as Wittgenstein becomes more and more open to what is revealed by the 'spatial and temporal phenomenon of language' (*PI* §108).

Given that the third approach focuses on the idea of elucidation, it might be expected that the division of Wittgenstein's remarks into legitimate (i.e., elucidatory) and illegitimate (i.e. expressive of certain preconceptions about the essence of language) will follow the boundary that the therapeutic reading draws between the metaphysical-sounding *TLP* 1s and 2s and the more formal remarks that occur from 3 onwards. For it might seem that we could hope to treat the latter as purely elucidatory and transitional in so far as we can see them as drawing our attention to features of our language which are completely captured, without loss, by a logically perspicuous

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[13] By 1929, Wittgenstein has clearly begun to see the inadequacy of the second idea. He recognizes that the different parts of speech are shown only by an expression together with its use: 'If someone confronts us with the fact that language can express everything by nouns, adjectives and verbs, we can only say that then it is at any rate necessary to distinguish between entirely different kinds of noun, etc., since different grammatical rules hold for them.... The part of speech is only determined by *all* the grammatical rules which hold for a word, and seen from this point of view our language contains countless different parts of speech': *Philosophical Remarks*, ed. R. Rhees (Oxford: Blackwell, 1975), §92. The abandonment of a commitment to definiteness of sense is also one of the principal contrasts between the early and the late philosophy and represents one of the central themes of *Philosophical Investigations*, ed. G.E.M. Anscombe and R. Rhees (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958, hereafter *PI*).

symbolism.[14] This would, in fact, bring the third reading very close to the therapeutic approach, and it is not at all what I have in mind.

Perhaps at this stage the best way to introduce the division is by enumeration. On the one hand, the remarks in which Wittgenstein articulates his idea of philosophy, makes use of the comparison between pictures and propositions, develops the distinction between saying and showing, or explores the role of logic, are ones which exemplify the idea of philosophy as 'essentially ... elucidations' (*TLP* 4.112). (I would also include in the elucidatory core of the work Wittgenstein's remarks on '*A* believes that *p*', on solipsism and on ethics. However, I shall not discuss these remarks in this paper.) On the other hand, those remarks that either express or depend upon Wittgenstein's commitment to determinacy of sense, to a logically perspicuous symbolism, to simple symbols, to the logical independence of elementary propositions, or to the idea that all logical truths are tautologies, are all illegitimate, not because they are nonsense, but because they are expressive of certain theoretical preconceptions and are therefore not properly elucidatory. The metaphysical and therapeutic approaches to *TLP* offer us the unappealing alternative between reading Wittgenstein's remarks as nonsense that conveys ineffable truths about the world and as nonsense that conveys nothing whatsoever. Diamond's rejection of the metaphysical reading can therefore be seen as sharing with it the general assumption that, if Wittgenstein's remarks convey anything, it must be ineffable truths about the nature of reality. The elucidatory reading is intended to enable us to find a way between these two alternatives, one which allows the remarks to achieve something, while stopping short of holding that they convey ineffable truths about reality. In the same way, if the remarks that form the work's elucidatory core are to be thrown away, then it is vital that we interpret them in a way which shows that they are not putting forward a theory of the proposition or a speculative account of the relationship between language and the world. It seems entirely reasonable to take the concept of elucidation to be one that Wittgenstein intends to oppose to the concepts of explanation and theory construction.[15] His use of this concept in 4.112

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[14] Max Black puts forward this interpretation of the formal remarks, but, unlike the therapeutic interpretation, his interpretation combines it with a metaphysical reading of the opening sections.

[15] Although Wittgenstein uses the word 'theory' in both letters and *Notebooks*, there are remarks in the latter which suggest he is fully aware that an explanatory theory is not what he needs. Thus: 'Logic takes care of itself; all we have to do is to *look* and see how it does it': Wittgenstein, *Notebooks 1914–1916*, ed. G.H. von Wright and G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1961, hereafter *NB*), p. 11e (my italics); 'My difficulty is only an – enormous – difficulty of expression' (p. 40e); 'We must *recognize how* language takes care of itself' (p. 43e, first italics mine); 'All theories that say: "This is how it must be, otherwise we could not philosophize" ... must of course disappear' (p. 44e).

and 6.54 clearly suggests that, if we understand him, we shall not have taken his remarks as putting forward any doctrines that explain how our language works, or that justify its being the way it is. I want to show that we can avoid this by reading his elucidatory remarks as ones that are used, as he puts it later, with the sole purpose of clarifying, 'for a particular purpose' (*PI* §127), something that 'lies open to view' (*PI* §126). The question that then arises is *how* we are to read *TLP* in this way, that is, as setting out merely to 'establish an order in our knowledge of the use of language: an order with a particular end in view; one out of many possible orders; not *the* order' (*PI* §132). How can we construe the remarks that make up the work in a way that allows us to see them as bringing us to 'recognize *how* language takes care of itself' (*NB* p. 43e)?

III

Clearly the greatest challenge to this task is provided by the opening sections of the work. Here Wittgenstein appears to make a series of metaphysical-sounding claims about the ontological constitution of the world, and to provide an explanatory account of what the relationship of picturing consists in. However, Cora Diamond is surely right in thinking that the remarks that frame these sections – in particular, the Preface and 6.54 – force us to question this straightforward reading of them. Although the apparently dogmatic style of *TLP* is initially such a contrast with the exploratory, questioning style of *PI*, Diamond shows how the former is nevertheless equally successful in putting itself in question and forcing the reader to think about how the work is to be read. It is, of course, a striking feature of these opening remarks that everything they appear to say about the constitution of the world is merely a reflection of what later emerges as a result of the investigation of the essence of language (cf. Black p. 27). The world that Wittgenstein's remarks appear to describe is, in fact, no more than a material picture of our language.[16] A remark from *NB* (p. 52e) makes it reasonable to think that this is actually how Wittgenstein himself saw it: 'It is clear that it comes to the same thing to ask what a sentence is, and to ask what a fact is – or a complex'.

However, to see why we should not take these opening remarks as a series of problematic metaphysical assertions, whose status is later to be put in

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[16] Interpreting the opening remarks this way clearly invites a comparison between the opening of *TLP* and the opening sections of *PI*, where the shopkeeper is made physically to enact the processes we normally think of as occurring in the mind. There is the same sense in both cases that Wittgenstein believes we can see something we are inclined to misunderstand more clearly when we are presented with a material counterpart of our language.

doubt, we need to look at what Wittgenstein actually does with the sort of mythological description he presents. The principal application he makes of the concrete image of a world of facts which consist 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). By this means, we not only begin to see in a new way the distinction between what is articulate or complex and what is non-articulate or simple, but, even more important, we begin to see more clearly the nature of the contrast between what is the case (the possible, the accidental) and what is essential. If we approach the latter distinction – i.e., the distinction between the essential and the accidental – directly through language, then the superficial similarity between sentences – e.g., between those that express the propositions of logic and those that express contingent propositions – prevents us from perceiving the profound differences that it is Wittgenstein's ultimate aim to reveal. What we can see much more clearly in the concrete myth of the world as the totality of facts which Wittgenstein presents to us is that the essential is not just another fact about the world, or another property of an object – a particularly intransigent sort of fact or property – but represents the limit of possibility.

On this reading, the important lesson of these opening remarks is not that they are an attempt to provide some sort of metaphysical insight into the ultimate constituents of reality. Rather the reader has begun to get a feel for the distinctions that can be made between content (what is simple or non-articulate), structure (the arrangement or connection of what is simple in something complex or articulate) and form (the limit of possible arrangements of content in structures). For the purpose of these distinctions, the idea of absolute simplicity is unimportant. Wittgenstein's insistence on the absolute simplicity of objects, like his insistence on the independence of atomic facts, belongs ultimately with his conception of analysis and his commitment to the definiteness of sense, that is, with strands which I want to exclude from the elucidatory core of the work.

This reading is made more convincing if we go on to look at what Wittgenstein now does with the distinctions his opening remarks are intended to make clear. For he immediately goes on to use these distinctions in remarks which illuminate, or provide a way of seeing, the manner in which a picture represents or models what it pictures. Thus Wittgenstein uses the distinction between structure, form and content to bring distinct aspects of pictures into clearer focus. We can think of the content of a picture, its simple parts, as those elements (parts) of the picture which represent particular things or objects (*TLP* 2.131). What makes the picture into a picture is that these

pictorial elements bear particular determinate relations to one another in the picture (2.14). Thus we see that, as well as having elements that stand for particular things, a picture is also articulate: it has a determinate structure in which these elements are placed in a determinate relation to one another (2.141). This is not to be understood as the beginning of a theory of picturing, but merely as an attempt to draw our attention to something that lies before our eyes, namely, that a picture has structure and content: it represents the way particular things are related to one another by relating pictorial elements that represent those particular things (2.15). This does not amount to any sort of discovery or explanation, but is merely giving us a clarified view of pictures through drawing our attention to their different aspects.

The third element in the three-way distinction between structure, form and content is now introduced as follows. If the structure of a picture is the connection between its elements that makes it into the particular determinate picture that it is, then its form must be something to do with the possibility of this structure (2.033). However, the possibilities of structure we are interested in here are not the possibilities of structure that the picture's elements have *qua* objects, but the possibilities of structure that they have *qua* representatives of particular things. It is representational possibilities, i.e., possibilities that picture possible arrangements of things, on which we need to focus. Wittgenstein introduces the term 'pictorial form' in order to bring out the way in which the form of a picture, *qua* picture, is the possibilities for connecting the picture's elements in structures that represent possible arrangements of the things the elements stand for: 'Pictorial form is the possibility that things are related to one another in the same way as the elements of the picture' (2.151). We see now that a picture depicts the particular possible state of affairs it does by instantiating one particular way of connecting its elements in structures. These structures represent possible arrangements of the things for which the elements stand. This in turn allows us to see that a picture, *qua* picture, must have something – an implicit horizon of possibilities for combining its elements, i.e., a form – in common with what it depicts (2.161).

Wittgenstein now goes on to draw our attention to the way in which this aspect of a picture, its pictorial form, cannot be the subject of depiction. A picture depicts a particular possible state of affairs in virtue of the way its pictorial elements are combined in a determinate structure. We can see plainly that the picture's depiction of this possible state of affairs is completely independent of whether the state of affairs exists or not: 'A picture represents its subject from a position outside it' (2.173). We thus become aware that a picture 'represents its subject correctly or incorrectly' (2.173),

depending on whether or not things are arranged in the way that it depicts. Pictorial form, however, is what a picture has in common with what it depicts; it is that in virtue of which the articulation of the picture's elements into a determinate structure constitutes a representation of a possible state of affairs; it is everything that is essential to the picture's depicting what it does (2.17). We can now see clearly that these two aspects of a picture, what it depicts correctly or incorrectly and what is essential to it *qua* picture of a possible state of affairs, are inimical to each other. If we could depict what is essential to a picture, what it has in common with what it depicts, then this would have to be something that it depicts either correctly or incorrectly, and which it and what it depicts could therefore lack. Thus 'A picture cannot ... place itself outside its representational form' (2.174), for whatever a picture represents from a position outside is something that can be the case or not the case, and which the picture could therefore represent as being otherwise. This is not a theory of representation, but a form of critical activity in which we are brought to focus on the phenomenon of pictures and to discern their intrinsic complexity more perspicuously. The aspects of the picture that Wittgenstein's remarks reveal to us are clearly not, strictly speaking, *parts* of the picture. Nor are they elements in a hidden or invisible mechanism, or process of production, by means of which a picture comes to represent a possible state of affairs. The distinctions he makes do not, in this sense, inform us of any *facts* concerning pictures, or require us to *examine* pictures more closely. The distinctions prompt us, rather, to see a certain order in what lies on the surface and open to view. The effect of the remarks is not that we now know something about pictures which we did not know before and which Wittgenstein has dug out by empirical enquiry, but that we look at pictures with a new clarity of vision. The value of the distinctions depends entirely upon their ability to induce this sense of clarified vision in us. Without this change of perception, the distinctions connect with nothing whatsoever. It is in just this sense that Wittgenstein's remarks are to be understood as elucidatory: their utility and significance are exhausted by their power to get the reader to see something familiar and everyday in a new light. Once the change in the reader's perception of pictures has been brought about, the remarks drop away, for they have no factual or descriptive content to sustain them. The result, therefore, is not any sort of discovery or addition to our knowledge; it does not enable us to do anything we could not do before; it is, in a certain sense, completely idle. We only begin to see the point of this change in our vision when Wittgenstein extends the activity of elucidation to a region in which the clarity of vision we achieve has a purpose, namely to overcome the confusions which lie at the root of philosophical puzzlement.

The idea that Wittgenstein's remarks are working to get the reader to look at things in a new way is, of course, a familiar aspect of his later philosophical method. The therapeutic interpretation rejects the traditional view that the early work did not share this renunciation of philosophical doctrine. Rather, *TLP* is seen as taking the reader on a journey from philosophical illusion to the self-conscious employment of ordinary language in non-philosophical speech. The elucidatory interpretation shares the therapeutic interpretation's emphasis on the idea that Wittgenstein's remarks are intended to work on the reader, but it rejects the latter's paradoxical characterization of this process. Instead of seeing these remarks (problematically) as directed at revealing their own nonsensical status, the remarks are taken to be aimed at bringing a certain order in the reader's perception of pictures and, ultimately, of language. As we shall see, the point of this order, and the only test of it, is that it enables the philosophical problems to disappear.

IV

The further process of elucidation begins when Wittgenstein draws our attention to the analogy between pictures and propositions, that is, to the way in which propositions and pictures can be seen as sharing a common essence. The analogy is brought out by means of remarks which, like the remarks about pictorial form, pick out aspects of pictures which have the effect of creating a certain order in how we see them, an order which brings out their affinity with propositions:

1. A picture depicts reality by representing a state of affairs that may either exist or not (*TLP* 2.201)
2. A picture presents this possible state of affairs in logical space (if a picture shows us how things are, then it also shows us how things are not) (2.202)
3. A picture contains the possibility of the situation it represents (2.203)
4. A picture agrees with reality or fails to agree with it (2.21)
5. What a picture represents it represents independently of its truth or falsity, by means of its pictorial form (2.22)
6. The possible state of affairs that a picture represents is the sense of the picture (2.221)
7. The agreement or disagreement of its sense with reality constitutes its truth or falsity (2.222)

8. In order to tell whether a picture is true or false, we must compare it with reality (2.223)

9. We cannot tell from the picture alone whether it is true or false (2.224).

Looking at them in this way, we are struck by the similarities between propositions and pictures, similarities which do not depend upon any hypothesis about the way pictures or propositions work, but simply upon our noticing, or focusing on, features that are familiar and available to mere reflection. Wittgenstein's next move is to exploit this newly evoked sense of similarity in getting us to see how the distinction between form, structure and content, which he has already used to change how we see pictures, applies to propositions. The comparison between pictures and propositions enables us to focus on aspects of the latter which we do not immediately see, or on which we have no clear reflective grip. The importance of this comparison is not that it results in a correct theory of the proposition, but that it is part of an activity of reflecting on the phenomena of language. The aim of this activity of reflection is to enable us to see the phenomena of language in a new way, a way in which it no longer gives rise to philosophical problems; in which, for example, philosophical puzzlements concerning the status of logic, the relation between language and the world, or the relation between thought (the mind) and language, '*completely* disappear' (*PI* §133).

On this interpretation, Wittgenstein's remark that 'a logical picture of facts is a thought' (*TLP* 3) is not to be construed as introducing a doctrine – the picture theory of the proposition – but as getting us to look at things in a certain way. This is done not for its own sake, but with a particular end in view. Looking at thoughts, or ultimately at propositions, as logical pictures, allows us to see that propositions too can be seen as containing elements which are placed in a determinate relation to one another, and as thereby representing a possible state of affairs (*TLP* 3.14). A proposition, like a picture, contains the possibility of the situation it represents, so 'what is thinkable is possible too' (3.02). This does not have the status of either a discovery or the conclusion of an argument. It is a form of reflective recognition in which we come to see that the distinction between what is possible and what is essential in language mirrors the distinction between what can be pictured and pictorial form (2.181). Logic, everything essential to language, represents the limit of what can be thought, in the way pictorial form represents the limit of what can be pictured (3.031). Thus we come to see clearly something which we did not see clearly at the outset: there are no propositions that are true *a priori* (3.04). This does not emerge as the result of a theory of the proposition, but through our recognition that whatever is essential to a proposition's representing is not something that can be

represented in a proposition. This is not something we can see straight off, because the propositions of logic look like any other propositions. It is only through our clarified view of pictures, and the comparison between pictures and propositions, that we begin to see that this superficial similarity covers over a profound difference: logic belongs to the limit of what can be said in language, and not to what is expressible within it (4.12, 4.121).

V

It is essential to the idea that Wittgenstein's remarks serve as elucidations that the position we have now reached does not amount to any sort of discovery or substantial claim, but represents our coming to see a certain order in the phenomena of language. Again the importance of our seeing this particular order is not that it enables us to do something that we could not do before, or that it provides us with a correct account of the facts. Rather it is the beginning of our discerning a pattern in language, of our making certain connections, in a way which dispels our sense of a need for philosophical explanation. Up to this point the ideas of a logically perspicuous symbolism, determinacy of sense and logically simple symbols have played virtually no role in Wittgenstein's remarks. I suggested earlier that these elements do not fit the idea of elucidation which I have been developing, but are expressive of a set of theoretical preconceptions that have come to govern Wittgenstein's thought. These preconceptions now begin to make themselves felt in Wittgenstein's development of the idea that logical form is expressed by a variable, an idea which culminates in the general form of a proposition. Clearly for Cora Diamond this strand represents the central core of the work.[17] I see it, by contrast, as tangential to the elucidatory activity which makes up the real heart of the book and constitutes its philosophical achievement.

Wittgenstein's insistence that 'the propositions of our everyday language, just as they stand, are in perfect logical order' (*TLP* 5.5563), and that 'what signs fail to express, their application shows' (3.262), makes it clear that a logically perspicuous language does not achieve anything that is not already revealed by ordinary language taken together with its application. Wittgenstein's use of the idea of a logically perspicuous symbolism could be rendered compatible with the overall aim of elucidating the phenomena of

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[17] It is an unsatisfactory feature of the therapeutic interpretation that it is led to locate the main sense of *TLP* in the part of the work of which Wittgenstein is later most critical. Yet it is clearly the intention of this interpretation to bring Wittgenstein's early philosophy closer to the later.

language, if it were employed, in the way I have suggested pictures are em-
ployed, as an object of comparison.[18] In this way, the machinery of ele-
mentary propositions and truth-functions could have been used as the idea
of a language more primitive than ours.[19] In which, therefore, we can see
the following much more clearly. First, the relationship between the pro-
positions of logic and the logical properties of genuine propositions. Second,
the differences to which Wittgenstein wants to draw our attention: the differ-
ences between logical connectives and genuine functions; formal concepts
and genuine concepts; logical propositions and genuine propositions. How-
ever, Wittgenstein claims that the propositions of our everyday language can
be *analysed* in a way which shows them all to be truth-functions of logically
independent elementary propositions which consist of absolutely simple
names. It is this which is problematic. It is not only that it proves completely
untenable, but that it constitutes a substantial claim which, unlike the
remarks we have been looking at, cannot be construed as an attempt merely
to get the reader to look at what lies on the surface in a particular way.[20]
Moreover, it commits Wittgenstein to holding – against his own injunction
that 'there can *never* be surprises in logic' (6.1251) – that there is something to
be *discovered* through the process of analysis.[21] It is this idea of a connection
between our everyday language and a logically perspicuous symbolism that

[18] This is, of course, how Wittgenstein later recommends we view the language-games he
makes up: 'Our clear and simple language-games are not preparatory studies for a future
regularization of language – as it were first approximations, ignoring friction and air-
resistance. 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 dissimilar-
ities' (*PI* §130). He tellingly goes on (§131): 'For we can avoid ineptness or emptiness in our
assertions only by presenting the model as what it is, as an object of comparison ... not as a
preconceived idea to which reality *must* correspond. (The dogmatism into which we fall so
easily in doing philosophy.)'

[19] There is evidence that this is how Wittgenstein came to view his early logical atomism:
'The concept of meaning I adopted in my philosophical discussions originates in a primitive
philosophy of language': *Philosophical Grammar*, ed. R. Rhees (Oxford: Blackwell, 1974), §19.

[20] Wittgenstein clearly struggles with this worry in *NB*. Thus he asks '*Is it*, A PRIORI, *clear
that in analysing we must arrive at simple components – is this, e.g., involved in the concept of analysis* ... ?'
(p. 62e); 'When I say, "The book is lying on the table", does this really have a completely
clear sense?' (p. 67e). It is, in the end, only the presupposition that sense must be de-
terminate that leads him to hold that there must be a complete analysis of each proposition
into its simple components. Wittgenstein softens the apparent clash with *TLP* 6.1251 by
insisting (5.5562) that 'if we know on purely logical grounds that there must be elementary
propositions, then everyone who understands propositions in their unanalysed form must
know it'.

[21] In Waismann's record of Wittgenstein's discussions with the Vienna Circle, it is just
these elements of *TLP* that Wittgenstein identifies as 'dogmatic'. He observes 'I wrote in a
manuscript of my book (this is not printed in *Tractatus*), The answers to philosophical questions
must never be surprising. In philosophy you cannot discover anything. I myself, however, had
not clearly enough understood this and offended against it': F. Waismann, *Ludwig Wittgenstein
and the Vienna Circle*, ed. B.F. McGuinness (Oxford: Blackwell, 1979), p. 183.

is the principal source of error in *TLP*.[22] It may also blind us to the fact that there is an elucidation of our everyday language that can be followed through quite independently of it, and which represents the elucidatory core of the work.[23]

VI

I suggested earlier that the point of the process by which Wittgenstein gets us first of all to see pictures in a particular way, and then to see a similarity between pictorial form and logic, is that it dispels philosophical puzzlement concerning the status of logic, the relation between language and the world and the relation between thought and language. I shall consider only the first two of these problems here.[24] Thus in the case of logic a whole pattern or order is made apparent to us, in which the question of the justification or foundation for logic evaporates.[25] It is not that he puts forward a theory of logic, but that we are able both to recognize the order he invites us to see in

[22] The idea of the general form of a proposition is one such error, the idea that the logic of our language is completely capturable by tautologies is another.

[23] Although this core elucidatory activity can be made independent of the idea that logical form is expressed by variables, the same is not true the other way round. It is a further weakness of the therapeutic reading that our understanding of the variable which constitutes the general form of a proposition is completely dependent on the elucidations leading up to it, yet the reading treats these elucidations as plain nonsense.

[24] I focus on these two problems here, partly because of limitations of space, and partly because they are the ones Cora Diamond focuses on. However, the problem of the relation between thought (mind) and language, which Wittgenstein discusses *passim* in the 3s and 4s, at 5.54–5.5422, and in the 5.6s, represents the third major strand of the elucidatory core of the work. What Wittgenstein does in these remarks is in some ways analogous to what I shall argue he does with the problem of the relation between language and reality. That is, he gets the reader to see that, at a certain level, there is no gap between language and the world or between thought (the mind) and language. Neither the mind nor reality contribute anything to the sense of the sentences of our language from a position outside it. (The world does of course determine the truth or falsity of propositions from a position outside them.) Rather the world and thought are each of them mirrored in language. Looked at in this way, *TLP* shares the anti-psychologism of the later philosophy.

[25] It is true of course that Wittgenstein uses the concept of a tautology in his remarks on the status of logic. However, the notion does no vital work. The real work is done by the idea that the propositions of logic articulate the logical properties of propositions. Wittgenstein quickly comes to see that the notion of a tautology is irrelevant here. Thus in Moore's lectures (1930–3), Moore notes that, in response to the question 'How can $(x)fx$ possibly entail fa, if $(x)fx$ is not a logical product?', Wittgenstein said 'that the answer to this question is that where $(x)fx$ is not a logical product, the proposition "$(x)fx$ entails fa" [is] taken as a primary proposition': Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Occasions*, ed. J. Klagge and A. Nordmann (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993), p. 90. Similarly, in Waismann's record of the conversations with the Vienna Circle (p. 91), Wittgenstein observes 'Tautology is indeed quite irrelevant. It is only in a particular notation that an inference comes out as a tautology. Only the rules of syntax are essential and they have always been applied, a long time before anybody knew what a tautology was.'

the phenomena, and to see that it is an order which brings out the unique status of logic and shows that the whole idea of justifying it is unintelligible.

Thus we are brought to see that logic pervades language, and that the pseudo-propositions of logic simply articulate the logical structure that already exists in the logical or inferential connections between the genuine propositions of our language (*TLP* 6.121). The propositions of logic are not genuine propositions, and bear no representational relation to the world (4.462); rather they articulate something of which we already have a practical grasp through the mastery of the logical connections between propositions, which is vital to our understanding of their sense. By the same stroke, we see that the validity of the propositions of logic is completely separate from general or universal truth (6.1231). We see that the formulation of the propositions of logic is secondary to, and dependent on, our grasp of the application of logic in patterns of inference. The application of logic develops at exactly the same time as a language in which we express thoughts or describe possible states of affairs (5.514); and in understanding language we already grasp all that the propositions of logic articulate. In this sense, there is no gap between logic and its application: 'logic has to be in contact with its application. Therefore logic and its application must not overlap' (5.557). Gradually all the elements of the picture on which logic looks as if it stands in need of a justification – the idea, for example, that it constitutes a body of doctrine, or expresses maximally general truths – are displaced. We see that logic is prior to truth, 'prior to every experience – that something *is so*' (5.552). It is what is essential to the sense of the sentences of our language, and is therefore what must be grasped before the question of truth or falsity can arise. The order that Wittgenstein brings to our perception of our language is one on which we see that the status of logic is such that the question of its ground or justification does not arise: it is in this way that logic takes care of itself (5.473).[26]

This transformation of our vision of the order in our language goes along with a change in how we see the work of the logician. It is not merely that the task of the logician is no longer conceived as one of justifying logic. Given that 'if we know the logical syntax of any sign-language, then we have already been given all the propositions of logic' (*TLP* 6.124), it becomes clear that nothing vital is achieved by a systematic formulation of the propositions of logic. Moreover, the hierarchical system of presentation put forward by Frege and Russell is seen to be spurious, for we now see that logic does not consist of a system of truths that are gradually constructed from a primitive

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[26] Given this emphasis on the priority of the practical application of logic, it is clear how the central insights of *TLP* allow for the later recognition that the logic of our language is such that it cannot be articulated in precise rules.

base. The idea of self-evidence, on which both Frege and Russell are forced to rely, is thereby seen to be completely dispensable (5.4731). The whole of logic is co-eval with the phenomenon of language and every proposition of logic – every articulation of logical structure – has exactly the same status (6.127). The logician is merely postulating a notation in which inferential relations between propositions, which everyone who understands language already grasps, are put perspicuously on display (6.1223). Proof in such a system is not a matter of establishing a truth, but of showing, in a complex case, that a proposition belongs to the class of logical propositions (6.1262). The system itself is empty; it bears no representational relation to the world. What gives it significance is its relation to the prior practice of application which is exhibited in the inferential transitions that are made between the propositions of ordinary language (6.124).

<div align="center">VII</div>

The process of elucidation, by which Wittgenstein dissolves our sense of an obligation to provide a philosophical foundation for logic, also dispels our sense of a need to establish that our forms of description succeed in representing the world as it really is. Our sense of the latter arises in a picture of the world conceived independently of our ways of describing it, as something for which our methods of description may be correct or incorrect. Seeing what is wrong with this is again a matter of perceiving a certain order in the phenomena of language. This order makes clear not only that the ideas of *correct* and *incorrect* cannot be applied in this way, but also that at a certain level the gap between language and the world, which the question presupposes, disappears. We can best approach these points through Wittgenstein's remarks on scientific laws.[27]

Wittgenstein uses a number of examples and comparisons in an attempt to bring out both the similarities and differences between natural or scientific laws, the laws of mechanics, say, and the laws of logic. The aim is to get us to see scientific laws as synthetic *a priori* constructions – a form of '*a priori* insight' (6.34) – whose significance depends upon their application, that is, upon their being used as a means for constructing the propositions of

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[27] Wittgenstein separates off the 'so-called law of induction' (*TLP* 6.31) from scientific laws proper. Induction does not constitute a limit of description, but is a procedure which 'consists in accepting as true the *simplest* law that can be reconciled with our experiences' (6.363). This procedure 'has no logical justification but only a psychological one' (6.3631). This contrasts, say, with the law of causality, for 'what the law of causality is meant to exclude cannot even be described' (6.362). (I would like to thank Tom Baldwin for helping to make this point clear to me.)

science. The laws of mechanics, seen in this way, do not express necessary truths about the world, but are akin to synthetic principles which guide our construction of descriptions of the world, and regulate the transition between one form of description and another. It is not the system of laws itself that is important, but the precise way in which it enables us to construct true descriptions of the world.

On this view of matters, our accepting a particular law or set of laws is comparable to our adopting a procedure for generating descriptions of the world, which can then be tested for truth. Clearly the question of truth, correctness or incorrectness, does not apply to the procedure itself, but only to the descriptions it generates. However, there is no way of proving either *a priori* or *a posteriori* that our procedures will always lead to true descriptions. The limit of description set by scientific laws, and thus their necessity, is a function of their role as principles which determine the form in which the propositions of science can be cast. To the extent that there is nothing that guarantees that these laws will continue to generate true descriptions, or that these are the only laws that could be used to generate such descriptions, nothing essential to a particular method of scientific description can be read off language and on to the world. We may be 'told something about the world by the fact that it can be described more simply with one system of mechanics than with another' (6.342),[28] but anything essential to our scientific description of the world belongs exclusively to the laws which govern this description: 'Laws like the principle of sufficient reason, etc., are about the net and not about what the net describes' (6.35). What we need to see now is that this gap between laws and their application, between language and the world, does not exist in the case of the laws of logic.[29]

From the very first introduction of the distinction between form, structure and content in the opening pages of *TLP*, Wittgenstein has been working to get us to see the essential, not as a distinct set of properties or facts, but as the limit of what is possible, of what can be described in language. He attempts to get us to see the necessity intrinsic to scientific laws in this light, or under this aspect. This way of looking at the essential is one that brings out its connection with the accidental or contingent. The essential is in touch with the accidental: it is what is revealed by the limits of description of possible states of affairs. Thus it is not the scientific law itself that says something about the world. However, it shows something about the world that we are able to construct true descriptions of the world by means of this

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[28] It is clearly an important part of this way of looking at scientific laws that such laws (unlike generalizations) cannot be refuted by facts. Laws are in competition with one another. What makes one preferable to another will be, e.g., its simplicity, its comprehensiveness, etc.

[29] This view of scientific laws is clearly influenced by Hertz. The application Wittgenstein makes of this view to the laws of logic is, however, completely original.

law, rather than by means of some other principle. What we need to see now is that the connection between a law and its application is quite different in the cases of scientific laws and the laws of logic. For in the case of the former, the law exists, or is formulated, prior to its application, and its application depends upon the world's conspiring to make it applicable. In the latter case, the application comes into existence at the same time as the law and is, in an important sense, prior to it.

Scientific laws are principles which are formulated and used to construct descriptions of the world: 'Mechanics determines one form of description of the world by saying that all propositions used in the description of the world must be obtained in a given way from a given set of propositions' (*TLP* 6.341). In the case of logical laws, however, we do not formulate them in order to apply them: their application is prior in so far as it comes into existence along with a language in which we describe possible states of affairs; once we have elementary propositions that describe possible states of affairs we already have 'all logical operations' (5.47). The laws of logic are merely an articulation of what their application already makes clear. In this case, therefore, the question whether the world will conspire to make these laws usable does not arise: to think of the world at all is already to think according to the laws of logic. Thus 'logic is not a field in which *we* express what we wish with the help of signs, but rather one in which the nature of the absolutely necessary sign speaks for itself' (6.124). This is not to ground logic in something absolute outside language, but merely to recognize the absolute status that logic has for language. This effective closing of the gap between logic and its application is, however, at the same time a closing of the gap between language and the world: there is no conceiving of the world as something to which the logic of our language might or might not apply. It follows that at this level the move between what is essential to language and what is essential to the world, which is shown by the limits of what can be said, is purely a grammatical one. The idea that 'logic pervades the world: the limits of the world are also its limits' is not, therefore, a metaphysical claim about the necessary correlation between two systems – the world on one side and language on the other – but part of the order we now perceive in the phenomena of language.[30] It is not a proof that language necessarily fits the world, but a form of recognition that there is no gap to be bridged: the world is mirrored in language; logical form is the form of reality (2.18).

[30] On this interpretation, Wittgenstein's idea of an internal relation is neither more nor less metaphysically loaded than his later idea of a grammatical connection. Thus when he says in *NB* (p. 4e) 'If sign and thing signified were *not* identical in respect of their total logical content then there would have to be something still more fundamental than logic', this identity is to be understood as follows: what it amounts to is that '"*p*" is true, says nothing else but *p*' (p. 9e).

VIII

It is now time to reconsider the desiderata which I set for the elucidatory reading of *TLP*. The interpretation I have developed can claim to meet all of them. First of all, by separating out what I have been calling the elucidatory core of the work from the speculative claims that arise from Wittgenstein's idea of analysis, it avoids committing him either to any metaphysical doctrine or to any sort of philosophical theory. However, it still allows that something important is achieved by Wittgenstein's remarks: they bring an order to our perception of the phenomena of language which dispels the philosophical problems concerning the justification of logic and the relation between language and the world. Yet at the same time it allows these remarks to fall away completely once their aim has been achieved. The purpose of the remarks has not been to alert us to facts or inform us of truths. Their significance is exhausted in the change of perception they bring about and the consequent disappearance of the problems that prompted them. In opening up a space between metaphysical speculation and gibberish, in which the activity of elucidation takes place, the interpretation makes room for the possibility that Wittgenstein's remarks can bring about a change completely distinct from the acquisition of new information. It is a conception of philosophy which fits not only Wittgenstein's remarks at *TLP* 4.112, but also the later idea that philosophy is a form of grammatical enquiry, that is, 'an investigation [which] sheds light on our problem by clearing misunderstandings away' (*PI* §90).[31] It seems, moreover, that Cora Diamond's more dramatic, and also more problematic, version of therapy relies on our perceiving the order which Wittgenstein's remarks uncover. Thus both her crucial distinction between sense and nonsense and her understanding of the general form of a proposition depend upon our accepting that logic is internal to language and that propositions are essentially bipolar. Yet she has no satisfactory understanding of either the status of these claims or the process by which we are brought to accept them.[32]

[31] On this interpretation, *TLP* is not a prolegomenon to the philosophical work of clarification, which is ultimately carried out through the provision of a logically perspicuous symbolism. Rather the work itself provides the essential clarification by which philosophical confusion is removed. If we understand Wittgenstein's elucidations, 'then [we] will see the world aright' (*TLP* 6.54).
[32] These remarks are based on the two papers on *TLP* which Diamond has published, and which represent only an initial exploration of a possible interpretation of the text rather than a completely worked out statement of her views.

Finally, although the current interpretation is in many ways closer to Cora Diamond's therapeutic reading than it is to the metaphysical reading, there is one respect in which it might be seen to preserve something metaphysical. This is the suggestion that at a certain level the move from what is essential to language to what is essential to the world is merely a grammatical one. Nothing I have said warrants the ascription to Wittgenstein of the doctrine that there are ineffable truths. It is an essential part of the pattern he discerns that what is essential to language is disconnected from the concepts of truth or falsity and agreement or disagreement with reality. However, it remains true that Wittgenstein does not conceive of the investigation of the logic of our language as the investigation of 'mere language'. This would require a gap between logic and its application.[33] At this level the idea of language on the one hand and the world on the other disappears. In *TLP*, Wittgenstein's perception of the logical texture of our language is obscured by his conception of a logically perspicuous symbolism. However, as his idea of the logic of our language develops into the concept of grammar, the potential for language to reveal 'what kind of object anything is' becomes increasingly significant philosophically. It is by means of the investigation of grammar that we achieve an understanding of the form of the phenomena that our language describes. Looked at in this way, the whole of Wittgenstein's later philosophy can be seen to have its roots in *Tractatus*.[34]

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