# WITTGENSTEIN NATURALIZING LANGUAGE:
# FROM SUBLIMATION OF LOGIC IN THE *TRACTATUS*
# TO ITS CONTEXTUALIZATION IN THE *INVESTIGATIONS*

ÜMİT ÖMÜR SALAR

BOĞAZİÇİ UNIVERSITY

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Ümit Ömür SALAR

Boğaziçi University

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# DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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ABSTRACT

Wittgenstein Naturalizing Language: From Sublimation of Logic in the *Tractatus* to Its Contextualization in the *Investigations*

Wittgenstein develops his new philosophy in contrast to the *Tractatus*. With his guidance, we do this about 'logic' here: logic (i.e. essence) of language, and science of logic, i.e. philosophy (Chapter 1). We see the essence of Wittgenstein's new view is *contextualization*: language does not possess any 'formal unity' but is a 'family' of phenomena (Chapter 2). The presumption that logic only deals with thought is dropped; *activity* is now part of logic. Similarly, philosophy moves from 'logical *analysis*' to examination of *particular instances*: "everything descriptive of a language-game is part of logic." (*On Certainty*, §56; Chapter 3). Since philosophy itself employs language, it must itself belong to a context. This is achieved through philosophical problems (Chapter 4). We demonstrate Wittgenstein's refutation of the Tractarian conception, and his solution of the Problem of Logic in Chapter 5: existence of concepts and language depends on, among other things, complete *agreement in judgements* (paradigmatic instances). In Chapter 6, we formulate the Methodological Impasse which the *Tractatus* fails to overcome: since we examine the nature of language by using language, what we say applies to itself, creating inconsistency. Wittgenstein now thinks any employment of language must *do* something if it is to have sense. His philosophizing has the *function* of solving philosophical problems. We too need such a function for this thesis to make sense: hence our application to the 'Resolute Reading' (Chapter 7). We *prove its falsity*, call for *complete agreement* in this judgment, and *put an end* to that reading.

# ÖZET

## Wittgenstein Dili Doğallaştırıyor: *Tractatus*'ta Mantığın Yüceltilmesinden *Soruşturmalar*'da Bağlamsallaştırılmasına

Wittgenstein yeni felsefesini, *Tractatus*'taki eski görüşlerine karşıt olarak geliştirir. Bunu biz bu tezde, iki anlamı olan 'mantık' ile ilgili olarak kendisinin rehberliğinde yapıyoruz: dilin mantığı (yani dilin özü) ve mantık bilimi, yani felsefe (Bölüm 1). Wittgenstein'ın yeni mantık görüşünün özünün *bağlamsallaştırma* olduğunu görüyoruz: dil herhangi bir 'biçimsel birliğe' sahip değildir, ancak bir fenomenler 'ailesidir' (Bölüm 2). Mantığın yalnızca düşünceyle ilgilendiği varsayımı terk edilir; *etkinlik* artık mantığın bir parçasıdır. Benzer şekilde, felsefe de 'mantıksal *analiz*'den *tekil örnekler*in incelenmesine geçer: "bir dil-oyununu betimleyen her şey mantığın parçasıdır." (*Kesinlik Üzerine*, §56; Bölüm 3). Ancak felsefenin kendisi de dili kullandığından bir bağlama ait olmalıdır. Bu da felsefi problemler aracılığıyla sağlanır (Bölüm 4). Wittgenstein'ın Tractarian mantıksal belirlenim anlayışını çürütmesini ve Mantık Problemi'ne getirdiği çözümü 5. Bölüm'de gösteriyoruz: kavramların ve dolayısıyla dilin varlığı, diğer şeylerin yanı sıra, bazı durumlara ilişkin *yargılarda tam bir mutabakata* bağlıdır (paradigmatik örnekler). Bölüm 6'da Metodolojik Çıkmaz'ı formüle ediyoruz: dilin doğasını aynı dili kullanarak incelediğimiz için, söylediklerimiz kendi kendine uygulanır ve bu da tutarsızlık doğurur (kuvvetle muhtemel). *Tractatus* bu çıkmazın üstesinden gelememenin bir örneğidir. Wittgenstein'ın yeni görüşüne göre, herhangi bir dil kullanımının anlamlı olması için bir bağlamda bir şey *yapması* gerekir. Wittgenstein felsefe yapışına felsefi problemleri çözme *işlevi* yükler. Bu tezin anlamlı olması için bizim de böyle bir işleve ihtiyacımız var: Wittgenstein'ın görüşlerini *Tractatus*'un 'Kararlı

Okuması’ diye adlandırılan yaklaşıma uygulamamızın nedeni budur (Bölüm 7). Amacımız bu okumanın *yanlışlığını kanıtlamak*, bu yargıda *tam bir mutabakat* çağrısında bulunmak ve bu okumaya *bir son vermek*tir.

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It is not easy to end a major phase: one needs a new beginning. In this context of my life, I must also acknowledge Dina's significance.

*To those before me who were courageous enough to strive for honesty, above all Nietzsche and Wittgenstein whom I regard as my two teachers, and to those who are destined to fight the same war after me.*

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# PREFACE

This is an MA thesis, *and* one in philosophy. Then how come I speak *as if* I am the master of the subject-matter, making all sorts of bold claims? Surely an MA student of philosophy cannot reasonably be *that* and do *this*! — If the reader has any such presumptions, say a 'Wittgensteinian expert', then no doubt I will look like a crazy person. (Some may also think I am arrogant.) So the right thing to do is to read this work without such presumptions. That is, please *simply look and see* whether it has any sense and depth. Although terribly deficient in its specific form and construction, I sincerely believe that a number of important points about Wittgenstein's philosophy and the essence of language are established *with certainty* here, in a way that is no less certain than the certainty we find in mathematics. So unless I am deeply deluded, we are able to, and therefore must, establish complete agreement among ourselves on these points. But whether I am (deluded) — that has to be judged by others, the reader.

This work is the result of many years of close study of Wittgenstein's writings. But what proved to be most difficult was putting it together as a unified whole. Yet I believe I have managed to do this in the end: this thesis as a whole *makes sense*. This was a necessity because otherwise what I say, i.e. the thesis itself, would be nonsensical. And of course, for it to have sense, I had to *do* more than earning the right to graduate.

# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

In his Preface to the *Philosophical Investigations* (*PI*), Wittgenstein says that with the help of Frank Ramsey's criticism he "could not but recognize grave mistakes in what [he] set out in that first book", i.e. the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (*TLP*). For that reason, he says, his new philosophical views "could be seen in the right light only by contrast with and against the background of [his] older way of thinking" (*PI*, Preface)[1]. Therefore, following Wittgenstein's lead, we will compare the *PI* with the *TLP* in order to understand Wittgenstein's new views[2]. Furthermore, when we follow the name "Ramsey" which is only mentioned once elsewhere in the book, we see that we should pursue this comparison through the concept of 'logic':

> F. P. Ramsey once emphasized in conversation with me that logic was a 'normative science'. I do not know exactly what idea he had in mind, but it was doubtless closely related to one that dawned on me only later: namely, that in philosophy we often *compare* the use of words with games, calculi with fixed rules, but cannot say that someone who is using language *must* be playing such a game. (§81[3])

Consequently, *we know for certain* that we need to compare the *PI* view of *logic* to the Tractarian conception in order to understand Wittgenstein's later philosophy in the *PI* (at least as he himself sees things). So that is what we will do in the present thesis. And we will do it through Wittgenstein's own remarks and guidance[4]. Given

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[1] We see at this first step that Wittgenstein is thereby *contextualizing* the book as a whole, indeed his entire new philosophy. As we will see, contextualization is the most essential notion of his later view.
[2] And thereby, *we* will be contextualizing Wittgenstein's new philosophy.
[3] References are to the *PI* unless otherwise made explicit. For example, "§7" would refer to the *PI*, whereas "*TLP* §7" to the *TLP*. On the other hand, "*PPF*" refers to what was formerly known as Section II of the *PI*; in the edition we are employing here, it is named as: '*Philosophy of Psychology — A Fragment*'.
[4] We are not going to be merely describing Wittgenstein's view, but also at the same time making *sense* of it, i.e. explaining its logic. This also means that we are going to be *adopting* what we make sense of at each step, not only the *forms* of expression Wittgenstein uses: the very conceptions and acknowledged facts themselves. We will be "marshalling recollections for a particular purpose" (§127).

the guidance we find in this section, we will have to understand, among other things, the conception of language as 'a calculus with fixed rules' to which, Wittgenstein clearly implies here, the author of the *TLP* was committed.

### 1.1 Two senses of "logic": 'Logic of language' and 'science of logic'

There are two senses of "logic" as Wittgenstein uses that word throughout his life: 'logic of language' and 'science of logic'. 'Logic of language' is the same thing as the 'nature of language' (§§38, 65-7, 92-3, 107-8). It signifies what is essential in language, without which language would not exist. There are various expressions Wittgenstein uses to talk about it, in particular 'grammar of language' and 'rules of language'[5]. It is what we learn when we learn language; alternatively, what we already know solely by virtue of knowing language. It is what we already agree in when we share a common language. But of course, these are only preliminary characterizations. We will gradually better understand what Wittgenstein means by 'logic of language' (its 'essence' or its 'grammar', etc.) only as our discussion proceeds. (For no general description suffices to specify meaning by itself. The context has to be specified, which will be gradually done as the discussion proceeds.)

The other sense of "logic" is the 'science of logic' which investigates the logic of language. In this sense, logic is philosophy — as we already see in the remark quoted above from §81: Wittgenstein uses "philosophy" and "logic" interchangeably. There, Wittgenstein speaks of what we do 'in philosophy' when remarking on logic (what logic is), and afterwards (in the same section) of what we are talking about 'in logic'. It is clear that here Wittgenstein regards logic and

[5] Even then Wittgenstein makes a distinction between what is essential and what is inessential in grammar (§354) and rules (§564). Concerning grammar, we have the distinction between 'criteria' and 'symptoms' (§354), also the one between 'surface grammar' and 'depth grammar' (§664). It is of course only what is essential that is of concern to us in logic.

philosophy as the same thing, i.e. speaks of the same thing both as logic and as philosophy[6]. Furthermore, he does not make any distinction between the two anywhere else. On the contrary, throughout all periods of his writing he speaks of the two as the same thing[7]. Therefore, Wittgenstein regards logic and philosophy as the same thing; thus his remarks about logic are equally about philosophy (and vice-versa).

Consequently, in *both* early and late Wittgenstein, philosophy investigates the nature of language. Now, of course, the reader has every right to ask: what does *this* mean? What do we mean when we say that philosophy investigates the nature of language? For although there is no doubt we understand what these words normally mean (in some sense), we do not yet know *what that sentence means*. Of course, we do not mean, for example, any kind of 'scientific', that is, empirical study of language. And we do not mean any particular language, such as Turkish or English, but the human language itself. (The words are different in different languages; but the concepts are the same. And surely, there are even differences in *some* concepts across languages; but that is beside the point.) But we do not yet know what exactly is meant by *that* sentence. (We may say: at this stage, we only *roughly* know it.) And this is perfectly natural — for, as we will see in the next sections, we have to specify a *context* for it if it is to have sense, which is what we will be *gradually* doing. (There is no sharp boundary between no-context and context, and thus no-sense and sense. But still there are of course obvious cases of context and sense, i.e. when there

[6] He speaks of 'philosophy of logic' in §108, boxed remark. Similarly, he refers to the logic of language also as 'grammar'. Should we say, however, he is using these words loosely? No. (See his remark about 'shades of meaning' in §254.) For it is not as if the words themselves carry some meaning with them, in themselves. Rather, *we* use them to talk about things; *which* words we choose should not matter unless for a specific concern or purpose. Wittgenstein might even be intentionally using various words to speak of the same thing on various occasions. See his remark in §594. We are doing the same thing here. See footnote 9 below.

[7] See, for example, *The Tractatus*, *The Blue and Brown Books* and *On Certainty*.

is a particular use, and also those of no-context and no-sense, i.e. when there is complete lack of use.) For the same reason, we can only provide preliminary descriptions (explanations) at this point. As we proceed, we will be able to make better sense of the notion that philosophy investigates the nature of language: we will be contextualizing this notion and thereby making 'more' sense of it. For now, however, let us make this one point clear in order to prevent a potential misunderstanding. When we say we are concerned with the nature of language in logic, it is not as if we are excluding the nature of other phenomena from the domain of our investigations. We do not mean we are focusing 'only' on one particular phenomenon in philosophy; so it would not be correct to say that we are doing 'philosophy of language' as it is ordinarily understood today (i.e. of the same kind as, e.g., 'philosophy of mind'). We mean philosophy as such investigates language, and this includes (is already an) investigation of the nature of 'other' phenomena as well. That is, *philosophical* investigation of *any* phenomenon is *already* an investigation of language, i.e. a conceptual one. So, for example, it would be correct to say that in Wittgenstein's view, however odd this may sound, 'metaphysics'[8] is possible only through logical investigation (§370). We examine, say, the nature of imagination through the concept 'imagination'. All the same, this conceptual (i.e. logical) investigation is at the same 'metaphysical' (in the sense and to the extent that any work in the 'philosophy of mind' is metaphysical). What is in question here is non-empirical, non-scientific study of any phenomenon; and the Wittgensteinian

[8] This may sound odd because Wittgenstein is known to repudiate 'metaphysics'. But it is clear that Wittgenstein himself regards his logical (grammatical) investigations as being 'metaphysical' in nature to the extent that this only means investigation of the essence of phenomena: "*Essence* is expressed in grammar." (§371); "Grammar tells what kind of object anything is." (§373). The tendency to object to this is due to the implications which the word "metaphysics" carries from *other* contexts. But that fails to understand the actual context in which it is being used at present, thus what is meant here. See footnote 9 below.

notion that philosophy investigates the nature of language essentially means that any such study is a study of language. Notice that the impression that this notion implies exclusion of 'other' phenomena is due to a particular picture about language and the world: the concept is one thing, the phenomenon is another. But as we will later see, the relation between language and the world is much deeper than that. In short, then, 'philosophy investigates the nature of language' means that, in some sense, philosophy thereby also investigates the nature of phenomena other than language (see §2.3.1 and §3.3.2.3 below.) And this is true for both works of Wittgenstein (see §3.3.2.2).

## 1.2 Apparent continuity, fundamental difference

We have here, then, what appears to be a point of *continuity* in Wittgenstein's view (from the *TLP* to the *PI*): namely, logic (philosophy) investigates the 'essence' of language (*PI* §92). Therefore, we should understand whether there really is such an important continuity — given the context we specified at the outset; namely, that of the *contrast* between the two works *on logic* (see above). We observed (through Preface and §81) that Wittgenstein himself emphasizes this contrast. But now there seems to be a continuity where we should see the contrast. So let us take a closer look at what Wittgenstein himself says in the *PI*.

The context to which Wittgenstein's remarks in the *PI* on logic and philosophy belong is set by §89: "With these considerations we find ourselves facing the problem: In what way is logic something sublime?" Starting from this section (§89), Wittgenstein begins to talk about philosophy, logic, philosophical method, and

so on. Such 'meta-philosophical'[9] remarks (as we might call them) occupy the whole of the text until §133 where Wittgenstein says "a method is now [in the *PI*] demonstrated by examples". Wittgenstein uses the expression 'our investigation' in each of the sections 89-92, while gradually drawing a boundary between 'us' and 'them'. Given that in these sections he is primarily talking about his former view (see §2.1 below), this basically means: Wittgenstein in the *PI* as opposed to the author of the *TLP*. The investigation in question in both works is logical (i.e. philosophical) investigation: to *this* extent, therefore, there is 'continuity' between the two works of Wittgenstein. What, however, is the subject-matter of such an investigation? (This is the same question as: what does logic investigate?) The answer, in both works, is: language. Therefore, to *this* extent, too, there is 'continuity'. Thus, for example, Wittgenstein's remark in the *TLP* that "[a]ll philosophy is a 'critique of language'" (§4.0031), if we strip off its particular Tractarian determinations, would be in line with Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy in the *PI*. So it seems there is continuity between the two works, and in relation to the very notion (logic) which we identified above as the main point of contrast between them, which we can express with the following sentence: "philosophy investigates the nature of language".

But this works only if we presuppose that, that sentence already has sense independently of the context in which it is used. So if we say on the basis of that

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[9] The reader should not be troubled *at all* by our use of such expressions which may appear to be 'counter-intuitive' or obviously incorrect (in some sense) given the implications they carry. In the present example, one may be inclined to protest by saying: "But there cannot be anything like 'meta-philosophy' in the case of Wittgenstein!" This potential objection is misguided because *nothing* more than 'remarks about philosophy' is meant by the expression "meta-philosophical remarks" *here*, that is in this *context of use*. See footnote 36 in §2.1.1.1.2 below. See §121:

> One might think: if philosophy speaks of the use of the word "philosophy", there must be a second-order philosophy. But that's not the way it is; it is, rather, like the case of orthography, which deals with the word "orthography" among others without then being second-order.

The contrary way of thinking which underlies the objection just identified presumes that the word "meta-philosophy" has *some* meaning over and above the contexts in which it is or may be used. Obviously, this violates contextualization of meaning and sense, which as we will see is essential to Wittgenstein's new philosophy.

sentence that there is continuity between the two works of Wittgenstein, we are presupposing that we already know what the sentence means (that it already means something), and that it means the same thing when used in relation to the two works (hence the implication of continuity). But this is a wrong presupposition; yet it is very useful to us because, by means of it, we are able to identify a wrong picture about the sense of a sentence, and present the right way to conceive it. This will enable us to identify an important notion of Wittgenstein's later philosophy: namely, contextualization of sense (see the next section). For what that sentence *means* in relation to the two works are quite different from each other; so much so that one might even question whether we can speak of a continuity (commonality, sameness) with any substance at all here. Indeed, right after the remark we just quoted from the *TLP* (i.e. "[a]ll philosophy is a 'critique of language'"), Wittgenstein goes on to say (in the same section; i.e. §4.0031, which is the immediate *context* of the remark): "It was Russell who performed the service of showing that the apparent logical form of a proposition need not be its real one". This implies (logically, i.e. means) that 'critique of language', as the author of the *TLP* understands it, is intimately connected with the supposition that the 'logic of language' (whose *hiddenness* Wittgenstein emphasizes in the preceding two sections which set the context to which this remark belongs: i.e. §4.002 and §4.003) is not apparent, but *hidden*. That is to say, 'critique of language' means (essentially) passing from what is apparent — i.e. the 'clothing' of everyday language — to what is hidden — i.e. the 'body', 'the logic of language' (§4.002). Wittgenstein himself in the *PI* confirms this consideration *against* the suggestion of a continuity in his two works based on the point that both have language as the subject matter of the science of logic (philosophy). First, he too observes the appearance of commonality in §92 of the *PI*

when he affirms that "we, in our investigations, are trying to understand the essence of language". But Wittgenstein at the same time notes that *this* does *not* indicate any commonality between 'us' and 'them': "For although we, in our investigations, are trying to understand the essence of language – its function, its structure – yet *this* is not what [they have] in view" (§92). And immediately afterwards he points out (as the reason for this) the essential difference in our respective (i.e. between our and their) conceptions of 'essence' and of the way it is investigated: "For [they see] the essence of things not as something that already lies open to view, and that becomes *surveyable* through a process of ordering, but as something that lies *beneath* the surface. Something that lies within, which we perceive when we see *right into* the thing, and which an analysis is supposed to unearth." (§92). Thus we see that the appearance of continuity in fact masks a fundamental difference: the *TLP* conceives essence as 'something *hidden*' beneath the visible phenomena (of everyday language) — which can only be uncovered through an 'analysis', whereas the *PI* conceives it as 'something that is already open to view' — which can be seen through an examination of visible phenomena. The conception of essence as something hidden, as we will discuss in Chapter 2, is essentially connected to the conception of essence as 'common element': the prevalent notion that the essence of *any* phenomenon (including language) is some (*one single*) common element present in *all* its instances, which makes them into *its* instances. And the rejection of *this* notion will be the fundamental point of Wittgenstein's divergence from the *TLP*.

So although it would be *correct to say* that philosophy in both early and later works of Wittgenstein investigates the nature of language, is a 'critique of language', this does *not* indicate any continuity. For *saying that means altogether different things* in relation to the two works (see Chapters 2 and 3 below). So although it is

correct to use the expression "investigates the nature of language" for both works, *these* words do not *mean* the same in the two *contexts*. (This, as we will shortly explain further, is Wittgenstein's contextualization of sense.) That is to say, what *that* means in relation to the *TLP* is wholly different from what it means in relation to the *PI* — given the essential difference between their respective conceptions of *essence*, which will be discussed in Chapter 2 below. We will see that the *TLP* conceives the 'nature of language' (its essence, its logic) in a wholly different way than the *PI*. And, with this fundamental difference in conceiving the *essence* of language, we will also have two fundamentally different (indeed opposite) conceptions of *investigation* of this essence (Chapter 3). Then we will properly understand that the sentence "philosophy investigates the essence of language" *means very different things* in the two cases — although it is part of a correct description of each. For now, the following general description should suffice: for the *TLP*, it means that we 'unearth hidden essence through analysis' (ignoring the visible phenomena); for the *PI*, it means that we directly examine ('look and see') how words and sentences function in the visible phenomena of everyday language (§92). This general description will make better sense only as we provide its *context* in what follows. (And this last remark will be better understood with our description in the next section.) We can give a general description of that context as follows. The *TLP* adopts the conception of essence according to which the essence of a phenomenon is a *hidden* common element shared by all its instances, therefore something general (even universal). With the rejection of this conception, the *PI* now sees essence as having to do with the particular case and therefore something open to view. We may call this *contextualization of essence*. As we will see in Chapter 2, this is Wittgenstein's *contextualization of logic* in the case of language: 'logic of

language' means logic-s of particular language-games, but not one single thing. Contextualization of sense, which we have actually been discussing in the present section and will make explicit in the following, is part of contextualization of logic. As we will see throughout this thesis, contextualization is the most essential aspect of Wittgenstein's new view in the *PI*. It will also apply to philosophizing itself (Chapter 4), thus also to the present work itself (Chapter 7).

### 1.3 Introducing contextualization: Contextualization of sense

Thus, by way of this *application* to the *particular* case at hand, we are also able to begin to understand the notion 'contextualization of sense' which is an essential component of Wittgenstein's new view of language: a sentence has *no* sense *by itself*, has sense only in its *use in a context*. The sentence "Philosophy investigates the nature of language" *as such* (by itself) does not mean anything specific. It is too general to have a 'proper' sense: it may mean many things (or nothing at all)[10]. If we fail to appreciate the contextual nature of meaning and sense, contra later Wittgenstein, we will likely make the mistake of thinking that there is *continuity* between the two works of Wittgenstein on the basis of the fact that it would be correct to say *that* in relation to both works[11]. Rather, we need to acknowledge that what the sentence means is essentially a matter of the context in which it is used.

Let us describe what we have done so far. We explained Wittgenstein's 'contextualization of sense' by means of an actual example, a particular case. We

[10] This is also the reason why it is both correct and incorrect to demand a proper explanation of the notions 'logic of language' and 'science of logic' when they are first introduced, as well as the notion that philosophy investigates the nature of language. It is correct because as they stand, they lack proper sense, given lack of context, thus demand explanation. It is also incorrect because proper explanation of what they mean requires context, which renders unhelpful any general description (which however is likely what one demands when one demands explanation as these notions are first introduced). See §1.1 above.

[11] Kuusela (2014), for example, makes precisely this mistake. He is nonetheless on the right track because he acknowledges that Wittgenstein in the *PI* is executing *logical* investigation.

gave the general description with reference to this example: “a sentence has no sense by itself, it has sense only in a use in context”. We exhibited the application of this general description by means of a particular example: and *this* is how we used that sentence with a *sense*. The example we focused on was what the preceding discussion led us to; in fact it was a difficulty we had to overcome. We observed that there seems to be a *continuity* between the *TLP* and the *PI* because it is correct to describe both views by saying: “Philosophy (logic) investigates the nature of language”. The appearance of this continuity presented *a difficulty for us* because we had said (proved) at the outset that in order to understand the *PI*, we must focus on how it *contrasts* with the *TLP* in regard to logic. But then when we set out to do this, we stumbled upon what appeared to be the opposite of what we had expected to find: namely, continuity between the two works on logic (instead of a contrast). Thankfully, however, this was an *apparent* continuity hiding a fundamental *difference*. The appearance was due to the use of the *same* sentence in relation to both, due to describing both views with the same words. What was wrongly (and perhaps implicitly) presumed was that the sentence *already meant something*, had some sense by itself prior to its use in the particular case. (This prevalent presumption is important, and will be further discussed below.) And what was thus overlooked was the fact that what the sentence *meant* in each case was totally *different*: when it is *used in the context of* the *TLP* (i.e. in relation to the *TLP*), it means one thing; and it means something quite different when it is used in relation to the *PI*. We further identified what underlay this: namely, the fundamental difference in the two conceptions of essence (‘nature of language’).

Through *this* example, we explained Wittgenstein’s ‘contextualization of sense’ by means of *this* description: “a sentence has no sense by itself, it has sense

only in a use in context". And *this*, i.e. what we just did, is an instance of 'application to a particular case': without this application, the expression 'contextualization of sense' would not have a proper meaning — and the general explanation[12] given would not be able to do it either (which is very much like a definition a philosopher may give of a term he uses). For this sentence itself would be in need of explanation, as we observed through the example we discussed (contextualization). One could ask: What do you mean by 'a sentence has sense only in a context of use'? And we would answer: *This* is what we mean: (followed by the description of a particular example). And *this* is exactly what we did above with the example of the sentence "Philosophy investigates the nature of language". But in this way we did not only explain *Wittgenstein's* contextualization of sense: we also showed the *contextual nature of sense*, which Wittgenstein very well understood. So our investigation not only explains Wittgenstein's view of language: it also (at the same time) tells us something about the nature of language. (That is why we will be understanding Wittgenstein's views *and* adopting them in this thesis.)

## 1.4 Important point of contrast between the *TLP* and the *PI*: Contextualization of sense

Contextualization of sense is an essential notion in Wittgenstein's later view of logic. And *nothing* like it is found in the *TLP*: that is to say, contextualization of sense is an important point of *contrast* between the two works. In order to better understand this,

[12] The difference between a general explanation and an explanation by means of examples is essential to Wittgenstein's view. (See our discussion below of 'grammatical propositions' in §1.4.1.1.) Wittgenstein refers to the former as a 'primitive' explanation (§339), and says that through the latter *what we know is completely expressed* (see, e.g., §75) which is also what we find in the case of teaching (see, e.g., §208). Hence the essential logical significance for Wittgenstein of the concept and process of teaching-learning (see, e.g., §§77, 179, 244, 361): for what we are investigating in logic is that which we already know — and since 'nothing is hidden', we will see it in the teaching of language, of concepts (cf. §384).

we will make use of examples; in particular two examples from contemporary Wittgenstein scholarship: namely, Conant and Hacker. We will discuss Hacker who rightly notes the absence of contextualization in the *TLP* but fails to properly acknowledge its presence in the *PI*, and Conant who rightly notes its presence in the *PI* but wrongly attributes it to the *TLP*. But before doing that, let us ourselves compare the two works of Wittgenstein in regard to contextualization of sense by means of a particular example.

We said above that in both works, philosophy investigates the essence of language; that is, it is true to say *this* in relation to both works. Then we observed it meant different things in the two contexts, so did not imply any continuity. We pointed out the fundamental difference in their respective conceptions of essence as being the reason for this. Below in Chapter 2, we will describe these two conceptions in detail. But now let us use *this* context in order to determine our example — namely, the Tractarian proposition (i.e. sentence) which purportedly captures the *sole fundamental essence of language*: "The general form of a proposition is: This is how things stand." (*TLP* §4.5). This was supposed to capture the essence (conceived as a hidden common element; see §2.1 below) of not only our language, but "*any* sign-language *whatsoever*", i.e. every possible language (§4.5)[13]. So it makes perfect sense to discuss this proposition for understanding the contrast between the two works in relation to contextualization of sense: for 1) obviously the author of the *TLP* cannot be farther away from contextualization in his treatment of this sentence, 2) this example nicely fits the context set by the preceding (especially the discussion of 'philosophy investigates the essence of language'), 3) Wittgenstein himself explicitly

[13] It goes even further than that: that sentence is (somehow) supposed to capture the *essence of the world* as a whole at the same time — by capturing the essence of language, because they (supposedly) share a common essence, i.e. 'logical form' (see §2.4 and §3.3.2.1 below).

discusses this sentence in the *PI* (as we will shortly see), and finally 4) we will make further use of (i.e. further discuss) this proposition of the *TLP* as we proceed (on multiple occasions).

We already observed how the *TLP* treats this sentence: it is supposed to describe the essence of language. This clearly has *no* contextual element in it, for there is no consideration whatsoever of any context of use for the sentence. And that is exactly the point of what Wittgenstein later says about it:

> Let's examine the sentence "This is how things are". — How can I say that this is the general form of propositions? — It is first and foremost *itself* a sentence, an English sentence, for it has a subject and a predicate. But how is this sentence applied — that is, in our everyday language? For I got it from *there*, and nowhere else. (§134)

Then Wittgenstein considers possible *uses* for this sentence, which naturally involves specification of a *context*. We thus clearly see that the *TLP* and the *PI* fundamentally differ in their treatment of a particular sentence. (We will further discuss how the two works conceive the sense of a sentence later.) The author of the *TLP presumes* that he already means something by and understands that sentence — for he does not consider *at all* what it *may mean*. He says of the sentence that it is 'the general form of propositions'. And now Wittgenstein asks, as we should before saying something like that: *what does it even mean*? (We will repeatedly ask this question throughout the thesis.) How can we answer this question? The author of the *TLP* did not consider this question at all; but we do now. We can *only* examine what the sentence means by looking at *where it belongs*, where 'we got it from': and that is 'our everyday language'. Consequently, the question of what the sentence means boils down to the following question: "But how is this sentence applied — that is, in our everyday language?" (§134). Hence contextualization of sense.

Let us make a final observation through this notion (contextualization of sense), an observation about philosophy and philosophers in general. It makes perfect sense to raise the question "*What does this mean*?" where "this" refers to a given sentence (or any expression, a word, a sign, etc.) — before saying (or attempting to say) something by means of it (or about it). For of course if we want to use it, we better make sure that it *makes sense* (means something). It is a remarkable fact that, *yet*, philosophers quite often do not raise *that* question at all, the question of what the words they want to use mean (not to mention whether they mean anything). But Wittgenstein is essentially basically doing just *this* throughout his investigations in the *PI* (§353, §395). This will be the most fundamental concern in our philosophizing as well.

### 1.4.1 Hacker on sense

In Hacker's view, the 'rules of logical syntax'[14] in the *TLP* determine what makes sense and what does not: "These rules determine the combinatorial possibilities of symbols, thus delimiting the bounds of sense" (2009[15], p. 41). And this is true: they are rules for "the logical construction of a proposition" (§102). The 'rules of grammar' in the *PI*, which are "heirs to the 'rules of logical syntax'" (p. 45), have the same role:

> Grammar, as Wittgenstein understood the term, is the account book of language…Its rules determine the limits of sense. By carefully scrutinizing usage from case to case, the philosopher may determine at what point he has drawn an overdraft on Reason, failed to conform with the rules for the use of an expression, and so, in subtle and not readily identifiable ways, transgressed the bounds of sense. (p. 59)

[14] At this point, obviously we cannot give a proper treatment of rules, which we will discuss below. For the purpose of the current discussion, such a treatment is not needed. All that matters here is the notion that rules determine sense, whether a sentence has sense. See Chapter 2 and Chapter 5 for further discussion of rules.

[15] Baker and Hacker (2009). I refer to this work as 'Hacker (2009)' throughout the text.

Hacker's formulation of the role of the rules of logical syntax somewhat differs from his formulation of the role of the rules of grammar. Although they both determine the bounds of sense, the former do this by determining "the combinatorial possibilities of symbols" (p. 41), and the latter by determining "the use of words", "what it makes sense to say in language" (p. 57). This difference in formulation is in line with Hacker's recognition of the fact that Wittgenstein's conception of language evolved from that of a calculus to that of a game (and accordingly his conception of the rules of language) with his increasing awareness of the embedded-ness of language ('speech') within human activities:

> He [Wittgenstein] thus shifted his attention from *forms* of expressions and their patterns of relationships to *uses* of expressions in human practices; from discourse viewed as patterned arrays of symbols to speech viewed as integrated in human life, interwoven with a multitude of acts, activities, reactions and responses. (2009, p. 45, emphasis original)

Viewed against *this* background — i.e. the background of Hacker's acknowledgement of the shift in Wittgenstein's attention from *forms* of expression to *uses* of expression — the difference between Hacker's respective formulations of the sense-determining roles of the rules of logical syntax and the rules of grammar — i.e. between rules for "the combinatorial possibilities of symbols" and rules for "the use of words", respectively — strongly implies that 'the *use* of words', in Hacker's conception, is not merely a matter of *combination* of 'symbols' (words). However, despite this implication, Hacker apparently conceives it otherwise, which renders his account somewhat inconsistent. That is, similar to the rules of logical syntax, the rules of grammar (in Hacker's view) determine what *combinations of words* are allowed (make sense) and what combinations are not (do not make sense): "These [grammatical propositions] are exclusionary *rules* – and what they exclude is a meaningless *form of words*" (2012, p. 16; second emphasis added). This implies that

on Hacker's account of the *PI* view of sense, it is combinations of words (i.e. sentences) that have sense, *not* their use. But this is false. The question of sense can be meaningfully raised only in relation to a use (employment, utterance) of the sentence, not the sentence itself (conceived merely as a combination of words) — given contextualization of sense. That is why, for example, to a person who says "I know how the colour green looks to *me*" Wittgenstein responds by saying: "surely that makes sense! — Certainly; what use of the sentence are you thinking of?" (*PI* §278). This means that what we are talking about is *not* merely whether the sentence is, e.g., an English sentence consisting of words of English language syntactically (and even semantically) well-arranged (cf. §§134, 348, 516). He says: "I am told: 'You understand this expression, don't you? Well then — I am using it with the meaning you're familiar with.'" (*PI* §117). To this he responds by saying that one must consider the ('special') circumstances in which the sentence ("This is here") is 'actually used', for "[t]here it does make sense" (*PI* §117). And on this point (from forms to uses in relation to sense) Wittgenstein makes a *radical* break with the *TLP*. Furthermore, Wittgenstein does just this examination of use throughout the *PI* in relation to his earlier view in the *TLP* (e.g. §§47, 59, 134, 480-1; see the preceding section and, e.g., §2.4.1 below). Consequently, in Wittgenstein's new view, contra Hacker and the *TLP*, it is not the sentence *itself* (conceived as a combination of words) that has sense, but rather its use. (Or, alternatively: the sentence has sense only in use.) Therefore, in the *PI* view, contra Hacker, the question of whether a sentence has sense (and what sense it has) cannot be answered merely by inspecting the sentence alone, that is, its constituent words and the way they are combined in the sentence — neither by recalling 'grammatical propositions/rules' in order to determine whether the words are rightly combined in the sentence (which is Hacker's

view, as we will discuss below). We must instead directly reflect on the *use* itself, the application, of the sentence (§520). And this — contextualization —involves specifying a *use* in a determinate (i.e. particular) *context*: "Ask yourself: On what occasion, for what purpose, do we say this? What kinds of action accompany these words? (Think of a greeting.) In what kinds of setting will they be used; and what for?" (§489). Thus, to his interlocutor who protests saying "Right; but there is a Something there all the same, which accompanies my cry of pain! And it is on account of this that I utter it. And this Something is what is important — and frightful." Wittgenstein responds by asking: "Only to whom are we telling this? And on what occasion?" (§296).

Hacker's real mistake is to think that in the *PI* the 'sense-bearer' is a *form* of words (i.e. a sentence conceived as a mere combination of words), not the *use* of a form of words. On Hacker's account, as observed, grammatical rules (or 'grammatical propositions', which express grammatical rules) exclude "a meaningless form of words" (2012, p. 16). Thanks to this, we supposedly do not need to investigate the use of the form of words in a context in order to see whether it has sense (and what sense it has): we recall grammatical propositions and evaluate whether the sentence (form of words) has sense on the basis of whether it accords with these 'rules'. However, this is false: not only grammatical rules (propositions) do not eliminate the demand for use in a context — but, as we will now see, they themselves are equally in need of use in a context.

1.4.1.1 Grammatical rules and grammatical propositions: Extent of contextualization

On Hacker's account, 'grammar' consists of rules which determine what combinations of words make sense and what do not. But *what* are these rules[16]? Hacker says that they are what 'grammatical propositions' express (2009, pp. 46-7). Grammatical propositions are 'rule-formulations', formulations of the rules of grammar. That is, they are "expressions of rules for the use of words" (2012, p. 10). The rules of grammar are *instruments*:

> A lever is a lever only in use – disconnected it is merely a rod (PI §6(d)). Similarly, one might say, something is a rule only dynamically, only in so far as it is *used* in a certain way, viz. in normative activities...There are, in a sense, no idle rules, i.e. rules which have (or could have) no role in guiding action, in justification or explanation, in teaching and correcting, evaluating and criticizing. (2009, p. 52)

So on Hacker's account of late Wittgenstein's view of rules, what makes something a rule is its *being used as* a rule. This is in line with Hacker's acknowledgement of the shift in Wittgenstein's "attention from *forms* of expressions and their patterns of relationships to *uses* of expressions in human practices" (p. 45). Recall that despite this acknowledgement, which strongly suggests contextualization, Hacker does not affirm that in Wittgenstein's view it is *not* forms of words that have sense but their uses — which, to repeat, is not merely a matter of *combination* of words. Nevertheless, the 'sense-bearer' in Wittgenstein's late view is not a *sentence*, its *use*. Now, in the same way, it is not *forms of words* but *their uses* that determine whether anything is a grammatical proposition (see the next paragraph). And Hacker too should endorse this. For just as what makes something a rule (on Hacker's account) is its being used as a rule (see the quote above), by the same token, what makes

[16] Again, at this point we cannot properly discuss Wittgenstein's understanding of 'rules of language'. We will do it later. Here what matters is contextualization (of sense), more specifically how Hacker fails to properly acknowledge it. And for this purpose, it suffices to give general descriptions of rules through Hacker's remarks which is what we are currently doing in the text.

something an *expression of a rule*, i.e. a grammatical proposition, is its *being used as* an expression — explanation[17] — of it. But this, we will now see, leads to a refutation of Hacker's account.

Something's being a grammatical proposition consists in its being *used* as an *explanation* of the *meaning* of a word. Thus it is not the *sentence itself* that is grammatical, but *its use* — just as it is not the sentence itself that has sense but its use. (Or we may say: the sentence is grammatical only because and to the extent that it is used to explain meaning. Just as we may say: the sentence has sense in its use.) This means that it is misleading to speak of 'grammatical propositions' as if they are a special class of sentences, as if certain sentences in our language by themselves are grammatical in nature prior to use. Wittgenstein says: "Someone who remonstrates with me that one sometimes does say 'But I must know if I am in pain!', 'Only you can know what you feel', and similar things [Wittgenstein's primary examples of grammatical propositions], should consider the *occasion and purpose of these phrases*. 'War is war' is not an example of the law of identity, either." (*PPF* §311; emphasis added). Here we have *contextualization of grammatical propositions*. What is 'the occasion and purpose' of these sentences? It is precisely their use (in certain contexts) as an *explanation of the meaning* of the words involved, for example the meaning — the use — of the word "pain". And the relevant grammatical proposition (say "I must know if I am in pain") says (in this use) that "it makes sense to say about other people that they doubt whether I am in pain; but not to say it about

[17] As we will see, it would be more correct to say that grammatical propositions *explain* (instead of: *express*) meaning (rule). See the next footnote. This is connected with the fact that Hacker fails to recognize Wittgenstein's new conception of rules (on which rules consist in application; see Chapter 5). And, like everything else, explanations belong to particular contexts (§§29, 87, 217).

myself" (*PI* §246)[18]. It basically gives expression to the fact that "[t]hat expression of doubt has no place in the language-game" with the word "pain" (§288). What is important to recognize here is that this is not something the proposition *itself* does; rather *we* do it (i.e. explaining the meaning) by means of the proposition, by using it in a certain context. That is to say, it is not that the sentence itself *is* grammatical — rather *we use it as* a grammatical sentence. Concerning the proposition "Only you can know if you had that intention", Wittgenstein says: "One might tell someone this when explaining the meaning of the word 'intention' to him. For then it means: *that* is how we use it. (And here 'know' means that the expression of uncertainty is senseless.)" (§247). That is, the proposition has this use in which it explains how we use a word; and outside this use, it is nonsense (§246). Consequently, Wittgenstein's contextual requirement for sense[19] equally applies here as well. In other words, the demand for use — i.e. contextualization — applies to what are called "grammatical propositions" themselves just as it applies to 'other' propositions (sentences). Therefore, for example, a proposition and its negation can *both* 'be' grammatical. Wittgenstein himself illustrates this point with an example. §339 begins with the remark: "Thinking is not an incorporeal process which lends life and sense to speaking..." Then Wittgenstein reflects:

> But in what way "not an incorporeal process"? Am I acquainted with incorporeal processes, then, only thinking is not one of them? No; in my predicament, I helped myself to the expression "an incorporeal process" as I was trying to explain the meaning of the word "thinking" in a primitive way. (§339)

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[18] See *OC* (§58) on what a grammatical proposition 'properly' means: "If 'I know etc.' is conceived as a grammatical proposition, of course the 'I' cannot be important. And it properly means 'There is no such thing as a doubt in this case' or 'The expression "I do not know" makes no sense in this case'. And of course it follows from this that 'I *know*' makes no sense either.".

Note that this last sentence does not mean that the grammatical proposition "I know..." makes no sense. It does: for it has a use. And its sense is precisely what Wittgenstein here says it 'properly means'.

[19] When we use such expressions, it might create the impression that we are talking about a philosophical 'doctrine' of some sort. That is not what we mean. Instead of "Wittgenstein's contextual requirement for sense" we could use: "the contextual nature of sense".

Wittgenstein is saying here that the opening remark ("Thinking is not an incorporeal process…") was grammatical: for *Wittgenstein used it in order to explain the meaning* of the word "thinking"[20]. He continues: "One could, however, say 'Thinking is an incorporeal process' if one were using this to distinguish the grammar of the word 'think' from that of, say, the word 'eat'. Only that makes the difference between the meanings look *too slight*. (It is like saying: numerals are actual, and numbers are non-actual objects.)" (§339). Notice now that this time Wittgenstein is talking about the *negation* of the first remark: i.e. "Thinking is an incorporeal process". He observes that this proposition (too) *can be used* to explain the meaning of the word "think". What is essential, however, is this: the sentence can explain the meaning only in a certain context, for example one in which it is used "to distinguish the grammar of the word 'think' from that of, say, the word 'eat'". Its negation, "Thinking is *not* an incorporeal process", can be used in a similar manner (i.e. to explain the meaning, the use) — as Wittgenstein himself does in §339, given the *context* in which Wittgenstein targets a particular philosophical conception of

[20] Note that Wittgenstein here (in §339) describes this kind of explanation (i.e. by means of grammatical propositions) as 'primitive'. (Similarly in §295 he describes a grammatical proposition as a "pictorial representation of our grammar".) This roughly corresponds to the 'general explanation' which Wittgenstein mentions, e.g., in §71: "Here giving examples is not an *indirect* way of explaining – in default of a better one. For any general explanation may be misunderstood too. *This*, after all, is how we play the game" with the word. By contrast, non-primitive, non-general, explanation is therefore explanation by means of examples. This is also what we find in the teaching of meaning (§208). For Wittgenstein the teaching-learning of meaning is of utmost importance as regards logic. Furthermore, in the teaching, all that one knows is directly and fully communicated (§§208-10, 361-2). In other words, one's concept is "completely expressed in the explanations [one] could give" through examples (§75). In our examination of the use of a word (i.e. in our logical investigation), this (i.e. non-primitive explanation of meaning; i.e. explanation by means of examples) is what we must focus on, for, as Wittgenstein goes on to say in the next section (§340): "One cannot guess how a word functions. One has to *look* at its use and learn from that."

This point about primitive/non-primitive explanation is intimately connected with Wittgenstein's new conception of rules on which rules consist in application. So if 'grammatical rules' means rules governing the use of words, then no grammatical sentence alone will do the work: although it can be the 'expression of a rule', the rule of which it is an expression itself consists in application, which we can only examine by looking at particular cases.

thinking (where a 'metaphysical use' of these words is made). Hacker, recall, says in a footnote:

> It is, however, noteworthy that Wittgenstein became increasingly sensitive to the contextualization of questions concerning meaning and understanding, and hence too those concerning sense and nonsense. *A sentence may accord with the rules of grammar and yet its utterance may still be nonsense if the context is inappropriate.* But this too does not imply the repudiation of any of the insights we have elaborated above. (2012, p. 13; emphasis added)

This indicates that as Hacker sees things, the sense of a sentence is essentially a matter of its accordance with 'the rules of grammar', which after all "determine the limits of sense" (Hacker, 2009, p. 59). Yet Hacker apparently cannot ignore the strong presence of contextualization in Wittgenstein's writing, so feels the need to take it into account in a footnote. But Hacker's acknowledgement of Wittgenstein's contextualization of sense is *too* weak. It is as if context is an additional constraint on sense which is primarily a matter of something else (accordance with 'grammatical rules'): only sometimes, whether the sentence has sense (and what sense it has) may be influenced by the context. In some cases, accordance with the 'rules of grammar' will not suffice for determining sense (although mostly it does): the context of its 'utterance' may be 'inappropriate'. (The fact that Hacker speaks about 'utterance' of the sentence when discussing the question of sense indicates that he conceives 'use of the sentence' in a particular way.) But this is far from the truth: the sense of the sentence is *essentially* connected to its *use* in a particular *context*. And Wittgenstein's increased sensitivity to contextualization does amount to a repudiation of the notion that 'grammatical propositions' (or what they express) determine whether a sentence has sense — if only because the question of *grammaticality is itself contextualized*. More specifically, since whether a proposition is grammatical is itself a matter of context (i.e. depends upon its use in a certain context), contextualization is prior (logically prior, if you will) to any determination of sense by means of grammatical

propositions. On Hacker's account, recall, grammatical propositions draw the 'bounds of sense' by distinguishing which sentences (combinations of words) make sense and which others do not. But it is not only that this is incorrect because the question of sense is contextualized in the *PI*: we see that the question of grammaticality (of a proposition) is only a special form of the question of sense, and thus itself contextualized.

#### 1.4.1.2 Extrapolation: Preliminary explanation of 'contextualization of logic' and 'description of language-games'

The fact that grammatical sentences are used to explain the meaning is important. As we will see, for Wittgenstein language now has no single essence; so its logic has to do with particular language-games, and is thus diverse (Chapter 2). And the science of logic does the work of describing language-games (Chapter 3). Wittgenstein expresses this by saying: "everything descriptive of a language-game is part of logic" (*OC*, §56). The logical significance of 'grammatical sentences' is due to the fact that they help explain or exhibit what is *part* of language-games. In the case of "pain", for example, a sentence of the form "Only you know whether you are in pain" basically gives expression to the fact that "[t]hat expression of doubt has no place in the language-game" with the word "pain" (§288). So the logical character of this grammatical sentence consists in its descriptive relation to the language-game. But like *any* particular sentence (any general description, etc.), a grammatical proposition necessarily gives expression to *this* or *that* aspect of the language-game — not to the whole (of course). Still, it is not the grammatical proposition *itself* that is essential,

rather the thing which it gives expression to[21] (which comes out in the way it is *used* in a particular context[22]) — i.e. a particular fact about the language-game. But what resides in the language-game (the rule governing the use) *already* exists in the *practice* of applying the words. The essential thing, that is, is prior to 'grammatical propositions'.

Notice that the fact about the language-game with the word "pain" which we just pointed out is a fact *of utmost certainty* about our language itself. For if someone were to say something like "I don't know if what I have is a pain or something else", assuming that this person is not joking (or not a mad person, and so on), "we would think…that he does not know what the English word 'pain' means" (§288). What is in question here — i.e. the exclusion of (first-person) doubt from the language-game — is a fact of utmost certainty precisely because it belongs to the very *ground of sense* which has to be in place if our words are to make sense (see Chapter 5). It has to do with the very *meaning* (use) of words: it is what a child learns when he learns the meaning of a word (and language as a whole), hence the essential logical significance of *teaching* in Wittgenstein's later view. And *this* is the kind of thing

[21] This is the reason why I said above, contra Hacker, it would be more correct to say that grammatical sentences *explain*, instead of express, *rules* (see footnote 17). For, as we will see in Chapter 5, rules *already* consist in the *practice* of language — prior to its expression (explanation, description) in any employment of words such as grammatical propositions.

[22] Depending on the context and use, what a grammatical proposition gives expression to, the part which its use explains (describes) about language-games, may be quite superficial, as we have seen above in the case of "Thinking is [or is not] an incorporeal process" (see §1.4.1.1). But as we just noted in the text, even when it is *not* that superficial, the essential thing is not the grammatical sentence *itself* but *that* which it explains: i.e. (what is part of) the language-game, to which we also refer as 'the rule', which consists in the practice of language (which is already there prior to grammatical uses of sentences). The language-game is *already there*; and any explanation or description of it comes only afterwards.

One essential thing to emphasize here is the fact that any explanation or description thereof must itself belong to a particular context. We called this 'contextualization of grammatical propositions', and noted that it is only a part of contextualization of sense. But the same consideration applies everywhere: in particular, the kind of examination and description Wittgenstein is doing in his logical investigations must *itself* belong to a particular context. As we will see in Chapter 4, Wittgenstein achieves this '*contextualization of philosophizing*' through philosophical problems.

Wittgenstein is talking about when he says such things as "Philosophy only states what everyone concedes to it" (§599):

> What we are supplying are really remarks on the natural history of human beings; not curiosities, however, but facts that no one has doubted, which have escaped notice only because they are always before our eyes. (§415)

This helps explain the preliminary characterization we gave above (§1.1) of what we call the 'logic of language': that which we *already know and agree in* solely by virtue of the fact that we know and agree in language. The example we just discussed ("pain") illustrates this notion of 'what we already know and agree in' (where there can be *no* disagreement, since disagreement implies lack of common language). (This will be discussed in Chapter 5.) And it also explains the essence of later Wittgenstein's conception of the logic of language (which we will discuss in Chapter 2): namely, '*contextualization of logic*' (of which 'contextualization of sense' is a part, which we have been discussing in the present chapter). 'Logic' means logic of a particular language-game. The *TLP* conception, by contrast, is the exact opposite of this. It presumes the existence of *something* (common to all instances of language) as *the* essence (logic) of language: "The general form of a proposition is: This is how things stand" (*TLP* §4.5).

### 1.4.2 Conant on sense: Misreading of the *TLP*

Conant (1998) observes the extent and significance of contextualization of sense by rightly noting that for (late) Wittgenstein '"for a large class' of occasions of speaking there isn't anything which can properly count as asking the question 'What do the words [which have been spoken] mean?' apart from a simultaneous consideration of questions such as 'When was it said?', 'Where?', 'By whom?', 'To whom?', etc." (p. 239). This is certainly true (as we saw above). But he also says something very close

to this as regards the *TLP*, and this is certainly false[23]. It is not only false, however: as we are demonstrating here in this thesis, contextualization is perhaps the most essential notion describing the contrast between Wittgenstein's new view and the old conception in the *TLP*, i.e. the essence of Wittgenstein's departure from the *TLP*. Conant finds implication of such a contextualization of sense in §3.326 of the *TLP*, where Wittgenstein says: "In order to recognize a symbol by its sign we must observe how it is used with a sense." Conant reads this remark as saying: "We must ask ourselves on what occasion we would utter this sentence and what, in that context of use, we would then be meaning by it." (p.238). But this is a *blatant* misreading of the remark, for the simple reason that what is in question is a *word*, *not* a sentence. That is, the sign whose use with a sense Wittgenstein here (i.e. in *TLP* §3.326) says we must observe is not a sentence, but a word. This is made crystal clear by the *context* of this remark (§§3.323, 3.325, 3.327). Considering §3.323 should suffice here: "In everyday language it very frequently happens that the same word has different modes of signification—and so belongs to different symbols...Thus the word 'is' figures as the copula, as a sign for identity, and as an

[23] With the misconception that the *TLP* treats the question of sense contextually, Conant (naturally) denies that the rules of logical syntax have the sense-determining role which according to Hacker's account they have. This too is mistaken. Here I will only point out that Conant's objection to Hacker's account of the rules of logical syntax in the *TLP* seems to involve a confusion of these two questions: namely, the question of what *constitutes* the sense of a sentence, and the question of what *determines* whether the sentence has sense. As Hacker (2003) points out, from the fact that Hacker says that the rules of logical syntax determine what combinations of words make sense Conant infers (falsely) that Hacker is attributing to the *TLP* a 'meaning-body' conception of sense, which "conceives of the meanings of words as akin to invisible entities existing behind words, that may mesh together or (as Conant puts it) 'clash with one another' and 'fail to fit together so as to make sense'" (Hacker, 2003, p. 7). Thus Conant mistakenly attributes to Hacker the view that nonsensical combinations of words still constitute a kind of sense, only a degenerate kind. But this objection pertains to the question of what *constitutes* the sense of a sentence, whereas Hacker's account is rather an account of what *determines* whether a sentence has sense. That is, Conant reads Hacker as saying something about the former although he is in fact saying something about the latter; and this indicates a failure to properly distinguish the two. But Hacker is right that rules of logical syntax are formal rules for construction of propositions. And 'illogical construction' does not produce 'nonsensical sense', so to say, contra Conant. It simply fails to produce sense. Conant's problem is at bottom due to his 'resolute' commitment to not attributing to the *TLP* any philosophical view of the nature of language. We will discuss his 'resolute reading' in detail in Chapter 7 below.

expression for existence…" Here Wittgenstein is basically saying that we must observe how the *word* is used *within the context of a proposition* with a sense. This has *nothing* to do with the question of the *sense of a sentence*. (For simply we assume that we have a proposition with a sense at hand; that is our very departure point. For example, 'Ümit is Ömür': "is" as the sign for identity (see the name of the author of the present work); 'Ümit is hopeful': "is" as the copula. Notice that "is" is the example Wittgenstein gives in §3.323, which is quoted right above.) Conant (1998), nonetheless, misreads this remark as saying that we must observe *how the sentence is used* with a sense, and thereby reads into it the implication that we must consider "the context of significant use"[24] as regards the question of the sense of a sentence (p. 238), although *nothing* is being said here as regards the question of sense (whether a sentence makes sense). (This misreading will be recalled in Chapter 7.) And the sentence "Ümit is Ömür" is *nonsensical* unless used in a particular context (say, to inform a person who did not know this fact and so imagined two people were being mentioned): *this* is what the author of the *TLP* would do if he indeed did endorse contextualization in the way Conant imagines. On the other hand, Conant's conclusion — namely, contextualization of the question of sense in the *TLP* — is also independently falsified. Let us consider an example of a proposition which Wittgenstein regards in the *TLP* as having sense: "two objects have all their properties in common" (*TLP* §5.5302). Wittgenstein says of this proposition: "Even if this proposition is never correct, it still has *sense*." (*TLP* §5.5302). Now, this does not look like a case where Wittgenstein considers "on what occasion we would utter

[24] The translation Conant uses here (p. 238; likely his translation) is incorrect, *and misleading*. The expression (in §3.326) is "sinnvollen Gebrauch", and the translation in question is "the context of significant use". We can use literal translation: sense-ful use. "Significant use" too would be alright. But "the context" is *too* much. — Then why use this word "context" in this translation when it is *obviously not there*? And why do this when the context within which this takes place (*TLP* §3.326) is a discussion of the contextualization of sense in the *TLP*? —

this sentence and what, in that context of use, we would then be meaning by it", which on Conant (1998)'s account Wittgenstein (thinks in the *TLP* we) should be doing when reflecting on whether a proposition makes sense (p. 238). Wittgenstein here does not *at all* consider any use or any context for a use of this proposition, although he is quite confidently saying that it has sense. Let us suppose (as we should, according to Conant's account), nonetheless, that Wittgenstein *did* consider this proposition contextually when he says that it has sense (i.e. specified a context and a use for it in order to determine whether it has sense, what sense it has), but only he does not make this explicit in the text. But then what about the other half of Wittgenstein's remark: namely, that this proposition is 'never correct' (*TLP* §5.5302)? We can indeed easily imagine a *use* for this proposition; but we can also easily imagine one in which it is true. (For example: "There is not a single difference between *this* pair of shoes and *that* pair. But of course you can buy whichever you prefer.") Given that it would be absurd to suppose that Wittgenstein only failed to imagine such a use for the proposition (one in which it is correct), therefore, it is clear that Wittgenstein does not here consider the question of the sense of the sentence contextually. And this means that he does not demand contextual consideration as regards the question of the sense of a sentence. Consequently, Wittgenstein's conception of sense in the *TLP* has *no* contextual element in it (of the kind which we find in the *PI*, which Conant falsely attributes to the *TLP*). More generally, there is absolutely *no* element of contextualization in the *TLP* conception of logic. Quite the contrary, the *TLP* is absolutely *universalistic* in its conception of sense, language and logic. It makes all sorts of 'metaphysical uses' of words and sentences, whereas Wittgenstein now 'brings them back to everyday use': i.e. contextualizes language (§116). Naturally, he applies contextualization to various

Tractarian (employment of) words and sentences (e.g. §§39ff, 96-7), most importantly the purported 'general propositional form': "This is how things are" (*PI* §114, §134). (See §1.4 above, and Chapter 2 below.) For, indeed, contextualization constitutes the *fundamental point of contrast* between the two works (as we will see in the next chapter).

#### 1.4.2.1 A preliminary yet decisive observation

How is it even *possible* that Conant attributes contextualization of sense to the *TLP* — given that its author goes so far as to say: "The general form of a proposition is: This is how things stand." (*TLP* §4.5; see §1.4 above)? What sort of *context* (and use) does, and even can, he provide for this sentence in the book — given the fact that he regards this as capturing *the* essence of language as a whole? Conant, as we will discuss in detail in Chapter 7, endorses a particular reading of the *TLP*, the so-called 'resolute reading', according to which the author of the *TLP* does not actually formulate any 'doctrines' about the essence of language through the propositions of the book (such as the one just quoted from §4.5) — despite the fact that he certainly *talks* throughout the book *as if* he does (such as when he formulates the 'general propositional form' as the essence of "*any* sign-language *whatsoever*" in §4.5). It is because of his commitment to this curious reading that Conant manages to find contextualization of sense in the *TLP* despite the fact that it is most certainly not there (see §7.6.3 below). For it would simply be absurd for anyone to both 1) contextualize sense, and at the same time 2) put forward the sentence "This is how things stand" as being the 'general form of propositions' qua the essence of language. In order to be able to do the latter, one must completely ignore the former, i.e. context and use. Surely, the author of the *TLP* does this: he neither considers *any*

use for this sentence in a context — in order to examine its sense, which he would have to do had he contextualized sense; nor considers any uses of other sentences in different contexts in order to examine their sense — which again he would have to do had he contextualized sense, because he is saying something about the nature of those sentences. Indeed, the very fact that the author of the *TLP* even *attempts* to say something about *all* sentences by means of *a* sentence for which he does not specify any use in context — this fact suffices to show that he is not only not contextualizing sense (and logic), but he conceives sense (and logic) in a way that is the exact *opposite* of contextualization. The situation with Conant's attribution of contextualization to the *TLP* becomes even more curious if we consider the fact that Wittgenstein *himself* in the *PI* is explicit about this in his remarks on the view he held in the *TLP*. In the essential §65, for example, where he "come[s] up against the great question that lies behind all these [preceding] considerations", Wittgenstein speaks of the "the *general form of the proposition* and of language" (qua the essence of language) *as* "the very part of the investigation that once gave [him] the most headache". Later, Wittgenstein directly *quotes* the relevant proposition from the *TLP* (§4.5; quoted above) and says of it: "That is the kind of proposition one repeats to oneself countless times. One thinks that one is tracing nature over and over again, and one is merely tracing round the frame through which we look at it." (§114). And then in §134, he returns to it again:

> Let's examine the sentence "This is how things are". — How can I say that this is the general form of propositions? — It is first and foremost *itself* a sentence, an English sentence, for it has a subject and a predicate. But how is this sentence applied — that is, in our everyday language? For I got it from *there*, and nowhere else.

*This* is what one does who is committed to contextualization (see §1.4 above). And only someone whose view has *no* proper contextual element in it (of the kind we are

concerned with here, which we described above) *can* say that the sentence "This is how things are" is the 'general form of propositions'. Consequently, these remarks *leave no doubt* that the author of the *TLP* meant to capture (and indeed took himself to have captured) the essence of language by means of the proposition: "The general form of a proposition is: This is how things stand." (§4.5). (Unless, of course, Wittgenstein is lying in the *PI*, or suffered a dramatic loss of memory about his past, or something *like that*.) And this by itself proves the falsity of Conant's reading (see Chapter 7). However, as we will see in our discussion of Conant and Diamond (2004)'s 'resolute reading' below (see §7.5 and §7.6), these authors go so far as to claim that the *method* of the Tractarian logical inquiry ('clarification/elucidation') is to examine *possible uses* for any given proposition in order to get clear about its *sense* (including whether it has sense), in the case of philosophical propositions often leading to the acknowledgement of nonsensicality (supposedly). So, quite remarkably, on their reading the *TLP* is *not at all* universalistic in its nature — quite the contrary, it is based on *particular* cases. Thus their conception of the *TLP* has a strong element of *contextualization*: examination of possible uses in the particular case (of a proposition) as regards *sense*. But we will see that this cannot be far from *the* truth.

### 1.4.3 The *PI* view of what sense is

Conant (1998) says that in late Wittgenstein's view "what your words say depends upon what they are *doing* – how they are at work – in a context of use" (p. 242). That is correct. But it concerns the question of what *determines* the sense of a sentence. Notice that Conant is not here saying that what your words say *is* what they are doing in a context of use. That would be an account of what *constitutes* the sense of a

sentence. Accordingly, Conant notes that the demand for context is in place because of *indeterminacy of sense*: for a sentence on its own does not have a determinate sense, and may mean various things (or does not mean anything) depending on the context of its use. When we specify a determinate (appropriate) context for its use, the sentence is given a determinate sense. So far we are dealing with the question of what determines sense, not what constitutes sense. Let us therefore ask: given an appropriate context of use, what *is* the sense of a sentence? Conant does not address this question. And although he does not make it explicit, he apparently *assumes* (the way he talks suggests) an answer to it: namely, that the sense of a sentence is a *thought*. When we assign a determinate sense to a sentence by specifying a context of use, what we do is to specify a determinate thought which the sentence in that context of use expresses (pp. 242-4). The context of use is necessary for the determination (determinateness) of sense, for "the context [always] makes a contribution to what I express" by a sentence (p. 242). For a sentence "may, on one occasion of speaking or another, say any of the indefinitely many distinct things – it may express indefinitely many distinct *thoughts*" (p. 243, my emphasis). Obviously, Conant here takes 'what the sentence says' (i.e. its sense) to be the same thing as 'the thought the sentence expresses': that is, in his conception, the sense of a sentence is a thought. And the "indeterminacy of what thought the sentence" expresses can only be eliminated by "a consideration of the context of significant use" (p. 244). Once the context is specified, the sentence is conferred upon a determinate thought, which is its sense. So "the role of a sentence in our language...is to provide a linguistic instrument which is usable in many different circumstances to express any of many distinct thoughts" (p. 242). Conant, recall (see the beginning of the present paragraph), says that "what your words say depends upon what they are *doing* – how

they are at work – in a context of use" (p. 242). But what the sentence says is not what it does; rather, it is a thought[25]. Now, this is *not* Wittgenstein's answer to the question of what the sense of a sentence *is* in the *PI*. On the contrary, this is precisely what Wittgenstein rejects: "we [must] make a radical break with the idea that language always functions in one way, always serves the same purpose: to convey thoughts – which may be about houses, pains, good and evil, or whatever" (§304; see also: §501). Instead, Wittgenstein thinks that the sense of a sentence *is* its use. Thus the sense of a sentence is not simply *determined by what it does* in a context: the sense of the sentence *is what it does* in its context of use. It is not merely that, "as Wittgenstein keeps saying, in the circumstances in which it is 'actually used'...the sentence has sense" (Conant, 1998, p. 241). Its use in these circumstances *is* its sense: "Every sign *by itself* seems dead. *What* gives it life? – In use it *lives*. Is it there that it has living breath within it? – Or is the *use* its breath?" (*PI* §432). Wittgenstein gives expression to this view of sense as follows: "Regard the sentence as an instrument, and its sense as its employment" (§421). To be fair, Conant very much understands (later) Wittgenstein's contextualization of sense, indeed nearly fully, except the rejection of the notion that the sense of the sentence is a thought:

> In each case, the context makes a contribution to what thought it is that I express by these words. Wittgenstein thinks that it is a misunderstanding of how language works to think, as philosophers are prone to think, that the role of a sentence in our language is to be that which on its own bat allows for the expression of a determinate thought – a determinacy which is achieved simply as a function of (1) the meanings of the individual words of which the sentence is composed and (2) the rules of the language. The role of a sentence rather is to provide a linguistic instrument which is usable in many different

[25] Are we not over-interpreting Conant's use of "thought" here, given the fact that we ordinarily speak of the sense of the sentence as the 'thought' — i.e. that it does not mean anything more than its sense? Yes and no. There is indeed such a danger of which we should be aware in our investigations. But in the context of the present discussion and the issue of the sense of a sentence, one of the fundamental misconceptions is the notion that the sense of a sentence is a thought. Given this context, our remarks against Conant's use of "thought" are valid. Interestingly, the fact that we ordinarily speak of the sense of a sentence *as* a 'thought' (where 'thought' merely means 'sense'), this form of expression Wittgenstein thinks is what misleads philosophers to think that the sense is a thought.

> circumstances to express any of many distinct thoughts. (Conant, 1998, p. 242)

But that fails to capture the entirety of Wittgenstein's new view of sense: "Then what thought is expressed, for example, by the sentence 'It's raining'?" (*PI*, §501). For it fails to get rid of talk of 'thought' in relation to the question of the sense of a sentence. (This is the *TLP* view of sense, as we will see when we discuss the Tractarian 'picture theory of sense'. See especially Chapter 7.) Yet thanks to this, we are able to clarify and emphasize one aspect of contextualization whose importance we may be inclined to overlook: namely, the notion of *doing*, i.e. *purpose and function* of use in context — in addition to specification of circumstances. We will gradually come to acknowledge the full extent of contextualization as we proceed (*this* aspect will be discussed and applied in Chapters 4, 6 and 7).

#### 1.4.3.1 Extrapolating from contextualization: Language is essentially an activity

As we will see in the next chapter, the *TLP* sees language as an essentially *mental* phenomenon, whereas the *PI* sees *activity* to be its essence. One important component of this shift in conception concerns the sense of a sentence: since language is essentially an activity (or 'form of life'; §241), employment of words has to be a *form of doing* if it is to make sense (in the *PI*). That is why we said 'contextualization of sense' also involves the concepts of purpose and function: the use of language in a particular context does not simply mean utterance of words in specific circumstances — there has to be a *purpose* which the employment of words (does not have to be an utterance, of course) *serves*, and thus a *function* through this service.

> Ask yourself: On what occasion, for what purpose, do we say this?
> What kinds of action accompany these words? (Think of a greeting.)
> In what kinds of setting will they be used; and what for? (§489)

Therefore, contextualization is essentially connected with activity: when we describe a use of language in a context (a 'particular language-game'), we are also describing activities within which employment of words is embedded. But, of course, it is not as if these activities come only after the essential functioning of language which is already there: it is not as if there *is* language *logically prior* to all these activities, and only we bring it to these activities in order to do things. The author of the *TLP* made just this mistake of thinking that the *activities* surrounding the employment of words in our everyday lives are *external* to the essence of language, to its logic (see §2.2 below):

> Everyday language is a part of the human organism and is no less complicated than it.
>
> It is not humanly possible to gather immediately from it what the logic of language is.
>
> Language disguises thought. So much so, that from the outward form of the clothing it is impossible to infer the form of the thought beneath it, because the outward form of the clothing is not designed to reveal the form of the body, but for entirely different purposes. (*TLP* §4.002)

Wittgenstein's essential point in the *PI* is the exact opposite of this: he now thinks that these activities belong to the logic of language — for example, what is *done* by means of a sentence belongs to its *sense*. (So it is not as if the sentence *already* has some sense (contra the *TLP*), prior to use in context (activity), and we use this already existing sense to do things.) This is one most important point of contrast between the two works: thinking vs. activity in regard to the logic of language. In the section where Wittgenstein first introduces the notion 'language-games', he says this: "I shall also call the whole, consisting of language and the activities into which it is woven, a 'language-game'." (§7). Then in §23, he explains the *point* of this expression:

> The word "language-*game*" is used here to emphasize the fact that the *speaking* of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life.

> Consider the variety of language-games in the following examples, and in others:
> …
> — It is interesting to compare the diversity of the tools of language and of the ways they are used, the diversity of kinds of word and sentence, with what logicians have said about the structure of language. (This includes the author of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*.)

This obsession with *unity* in logic — in *BB* (pp. 17-9), Wittgenstein calls this "our craving for generality" and "the contemptuous attitude towards the particular case", "contempt for what seems the less general case in logic" — prevents the logician to see the great *diversity* in language, which one has to acknowledge whenever one considers activities as being essential to language. And one has to acknowledge activities as belonging to the logic of language once one recognizes the contextual nature of sense: for one thus sees that the sense of words consists in what is being done with their employment in a certain context. The more we move from the general to the particular case, the more we make reference to activities. Consider the sentence "I am here" for example. If one ignores contextualization altogether and merely presumes that this sentence *already* has sense prior to possible uses in particular contexts, one may, for example, say things like this: "Intuitively, [that sentence] is deeply, and in some sense universally, true. One need only understand the meaning of [it] to know that it cannot be uttered falsely." (Kaplan, 1979, p. 82). Compare this to the following description of a *particular case* in which the sentence is *used*: my friend is looking for me in the cafe (in which I am sitting), looking around to find me, and I raise my hand and utter the sentence (shout) "I am here". So description of a particular 'language-game' in which the sentence is used (contextualization) makes reference to a particular *context of life* in which we are *doing* things, whereas the general approach (such as we saw in Kaplan) is cut off from activity altogether. This is essential to Wittgenstein's new philosophy: we have

to look at the particular case, and therefore at the activities which constitute the context of the employment of language. It is only in *this* way that we can investigate the nature of language. But to be *able* to do this, i.e. to regard the particular case (and the resulting diversity) as belonging to logic, we will first have to reject the conception of essence which underlies the Tractarian universalistic view: namely, the prevalent notion that the essence of a phenomenon is a *common element* shared by all its instances (see §2.1 below). (This dominant misconception of essence will be discussed on multiple occasions throughout the thesis.) On the other hand, examination of the particular case is achieved through a *description of a particular language-game*[26] — such as the one I just described above with the sentence "I am here". (Compare understanding this description with actually witnessing what happens in the cafe.) This not only makes reference to activities (as we just observed): it (the description of a particular case) also employs many words of our language, hence the fact that the *whole* of language has to be presupposed in giving a description (or an explanation) is clearly visible here (§120). (See §199: "To understand a sentence means to understand a language.") For otherwise the description would not make sense; that is, that simply means (it must be presupposed) the words of the description are used with sense, i.e. in accordance with their 'everyday' or 'actual' use (§116, §134). And so we must be careful with

[26] Like everything else, this — "language-game" — too has no single meaning but a 'family of meanings', i.e. has different uses. Here it is being used in the sense of a *particular case* which we describe where we examine a use of words. But there is, for example, another sense of this expression in which we speak (e.g.) of the language-game with the word "pain" which is what Wittgenstein refers to as the grammar (logic, actual use) of, or the technique of applying, the word. This latter sense is closer to a *concept*. It is what we describe in logic (see Chapter 3). (Though our description of it is by means of describing language-games in the first sense.) It is what is in question, for example, when Wittgenstein says: "Even in the *assumption*…[w]ith the words 'Assuming I believe…' you are presupposing the whole grammar of the word 'to believe', the ordinary use, which you have mastered" (*PPF* §106).

Nonetheless, we may also say that there is no clear (strict) boundary between these two senses of 'language-game'.

our use of words in philosophizing: for (1) unless they make sense in our use, we are not even saying anything (so cannot even be wrong, let alone investigate the essence of things), and (2) since words themselves do not make sense *just like that*[27], we must look at how they are applied "in our everyday language" — for we got them "from *there*, and nowhere else" (§134). Thus we have: "Even in the *assumption*…[w]ith the words 'Assuming I believe…' you are presupposing the whole grammar of the word 'to believe', the ordinary use, which you have mastered" (*PPF* §106). For, as we will see, the words themselves do not have any ('absolute') meaning *outside* particular language-games (see §§2.3, 2.4.1, 3.3.1 below; and we *do not know* anything more than the actual use we make of them in our everyday language (see §5.5ff, §6.2). All this will essentially come down to properly acknowledging the fact that we ourselves are, in philosophy, using the same actual language which we use in our everyday lives — and in the *same* way as it is used ordinarily (see Chapter 6 below; see §120, cf. §108, boxed remark). The author of the *TLP*, however, fails to properly acknowledge this fact (see §6.1.1 below), like many other philosophers (see, e.g., our discussion of Kripke in §6.2 below)[28]. One fundamental reason why he does this (ignorance of actual use of words in particular language-games) is his commitment to the conception of essence qua *common element* (which is quite prevalent in philosophy and indeed everywhere[29]). Rejection

[27] That is, words in (or by) themselves (signs such as a written or spoken sentence) do not have any meaning — given contextualization of sense: they have sense only in their use. This means (among other things): the sense of a sentence is not merely a matter of sentence-construction (contra the *TLP*).
[28] But, of course, he truly understands the difficulty he finds himself in with this failure and attempts to make sense of this failure. (See Chapter 7.) By contrast, Kripke does not even understand the difficulty, and thus thinks he can sidestep it with a little 'logical trick', so to speak.
[29] We may even say that this is one of the deepest inclinations of human thinking: because it has its deep roots in our language. Consider §115 of the *PI* in this connection: "A *picture* held us captive. And we couldn't get outside it, for it lay in our language, and language seemed only to repeat it to us inexorably."

(Nietzsche comes very close to Wittgenstein as regards the relation between language (grammar) and the world.)

of this conception allows us to directly examine particular cases. And when we do this, we see that activity is essential to sense and logic: in particular, *any* employment of language (utterance of a sentence or a whole intellectual discipline such as philosophy) must be a form of *doing* if it is to make sense.

1.4.3.2 What it means to do something through words in philosophizing (and what we know)

Now, at this point one may naturally ask: what does it mean to speak of *doing* something by means of words in the context of *philosophizing*? This is a very important question, and its proper answer will be given gradually. We will see that our employment of language in philosophy must be a version of doing — for otherwise our words would not make sense, and so we would not be able to do or say anything by means of them. The solution of this problem (which we will begin to execute starting from Chapter 4) will be through *contextualization of philosophizing* itself. We will explicitly formulate it as a philosophical problem in Chapter 6: namely, the 'methodological impasse'. The application of this impasse to the present thesis will require it to have a function, which we will provide in Chapter 7 by contextualizing it through an application to a particular case (the so-called 'resolute reading' of the *TLP*). Now, however, let us return to the question we just asked: what does it mean to speak of *doing* something by means of words in the context of *philosophizing*? The answer to this is *not one single thing*. That is, 'doing something through employment of words in philosophizing' means different things. For example, it means that we *resolve philosophical problems* (Chapter 4). (This may also be a work on the 'foundations' of a particular science such as mathematics, as we will see.) But it also means the kind of doing we executed in §§1.1-1.2 above,

which we described in §1.3. Similarly, Wittgenstein is *doing something* with his words throughout the *PI* (in both senses, and in other senses). Let us therefore see an actual instance (of the second kind of doing):

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

In the particular case which Wittgenstein described (in §143) and is discussing here, we are teaching a pupil "to write down series of signs [numbers] according to a certain formation rule" (§143), say '+2'. Wittgenstein observes through this case: we give examples and then let the pupil continue the series of examples (application of the rule) — "but then the *possibility of communication* will depend on his going on to write it down by himself" (§143). It is in *this* context, then, Wittgenstein notes "the pupil's ability to learn *may* come to an end here" and asks: "What do I mean when I say [that]…what am I doing with that remark?" (§144). He then explains what he is doing: anticipating that *the reader* will be strongly inclined to think about matters in a certain way, accepting certain things as given without ever bringing to mind (especially such things as are 'always before one's eyes' which *for this very reason* one is 'unable to notice'; §129), Wittgenstein is attempting to have the reader to 'look at things' *differently*. But this is not some personal, some random or arbitrary choice on Wittgenstein's part; quite the contrary, the *greater* thing that he is doing by *doing this* is to enable us to see 'the real foundations of our inquiry' (§129), things "it would never be possible [for us] to debate" (§128):

> The aspects of things that are most important for us are hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity. (One is unable to notice something — because it is always before one's eyes.) The real foundations of their inquiry do not strike people at all. Unless *that* fact has at some time struck them. — And this means: we fail to be struck by what, once seen, is most striking and most powerful. (§129)

Hence it is no surprise that Wittgenstein returns to this point again: "What we are supplying are really remarks on the natural history of human beings; not curiosities, however, but facts that no one has doubted, which have escaped notice only because they are always before our eyes." (§415). What, however, is *an actual example* of such a fact? We already identified (implied) one: namely, the one through mathematics. And it is this: *agreement among human beings in application and practice is necessary for the possibility of communication through language* (§§240-2). (This will be part of Wittgenstein's solution of what we call the 'problem of logic' in Chapter 5 below.) In the case of mathematics, which of course is part of our language, we are *inclined to think* that the nature of mathematical truth or reality is in a very deep sense *transcendental*, something remarkable. We see this sublimated picture of mathematics[30] in various forms, for example: in the form of rigid determination of steps by mathematical rules (formulas) into *infinity*, and also in the form of the concept of 'mathematical certainty'. We are *inclined to think* that this certainty is nothing like any other certainty; it is certainty in the most *absolute* sense. (Wittgenstein will be correcting such misconceptions, which is itself a form of doing: see §3.3.2.4 below.) When Wittgenstein turns to himself in the middle of his investigations and asks 'what do I mean by this, what am I doing with this remark' (§144), he wants to remind the reader of these two important facts: 1) at each step when he says something, he is *doing* something by saying it (contextualization

[30] This sublimation of mathematics, which we find in the *TLP*, will be discussed in connection with the Tractarian sublimation of logic and logical determination of application below in §2.5. and §5.2ff.

coupled with extreme self-awareness); 2) the reader himself has very strong inclinations of thought which he will have to battle and overcome through *seeing what Wittgenstein is doing* in his investigations (i.e. understanding what Wittgenstein is saying). The inclination to think of mathematics in the way described is one such inclination:

> What we are 'tempted to say' in such a case is, of course, not philosophy; but it is its raw material. So, for example, what a mathematician is inclined to say about the objectivity and reality of mathematical facts is not a philosophy of mathematics, but something for philosophical *treatment*. (§254)

However, we do this investigation by making a strict distinction between things that we *know* for certain and everything else[31], e.g. things that are "only hypotheses, models to explain, to sum up" what we know (§156): "Now, ask yourself: what do you *know* about these things?" (§158). Our concern is only with *what we already know*: "We want to *understand* something that is already in plain view" (§89). What we know we *already* agree in, for we agree in *language* — this is not a matter of opinions (§241) or interpretations (§198), nor one that has anything to do with hypotheses or explanations: "In philosophy no inferences are drawn. 'But it must be like this!' is not a philosophical proposition. Philosophy only states what everyone concedes to it." (§599)[32]. In the case of "pain", for example, the strong inclination to say something like "*This* is the important thing" (as one focuses one's attention to the

[31] And we will see that we only know the everyday language-games with our words. See Chapter 5.

> Our mistake is to look for an explanation where we ought to regard the facts as 'proto-phenomena'. That is, where we ought to say: *this is the language-game that is being played*. (§654)
>
> The point is not to explain a language-game by means of our experiences, but to take account of a language-game. (§655)
>
> What is the *purpose* of telling someone that previously I had such-and-such a wish? — Regard the language-game as the *primary thing*. And regard the feelings, and so forth, as a way of looking at, interpreting, the language-game! (§656)

[32] As already emphasized, 'what everyone concedes to philosophy' is the *shared ground of sense* upon which we must operate in order *to be able* to make sense *at all* — including the possibility of disagreeing about anything (having differing opinions on or interpretations of anything). For there to be room for meaningful disagreement, a good deal about (making) sense has to be presupposed, which means the *whole* of language: "To understand a sentence means to understand a language" (§199).

present feeling, 'pointing to it inwardly', so to say) will be "something for philosophical treatment" (§254). When one says something like that, one is presuming that we can have a conception of, or can refer to, *pain* in a way that *transcends* the actual use of the word "pain" altogether, as if the *essential thing* is not seen in the language-game with this word, but is captured only by (conceived only as) a THIS. (This notion will be central to our work. We will prove that such a mere THIS cannot have *any* place in language, i.e. cannot have any sense — 'cannot' in the sense of logical impossibility.) The fact that the word "this" too must belong to a particular language-game if it is to have sense is — of course — ignored: an *absolute* sense for the word is presumed. Once this misconception is 'treated', and once we go back to *what we know for certain* (regarding the word "pain"), we only see the ordinary language-game in which, for example, first-person expression of doubt is excluded (as nonsensical; see §1.4.1.2 above). What has to be accepted is the fact that it does *not* make sense to speak of being in doubt whether one himself is in pain: for, after all, '*this* is how the word is used' (§§68, 71, 180, 654-6). Similarly, in the case of mathematics (see §2.5 and §3.4 below), "[w]hat has to be accepted, the given" (*PPF* §345) is *only* the fact *that* mathematicians do not disagree (*PPF* §343), e.g., "over the correct result of a calculation" (*PPF* §341), or "over the question of whether or not a rule has been followed" (*PI* §240). *These* are the kinds of facts which it is not possible to doubt, for they are among the things that make it possible for us to communicate through language (§143, §242). As such they are essential to language: they belong to its logic (see Chapter 5). *Anything* beyond this is inessential (and often, in philosophy, nonsensical): e.g. "*This* is the important thing!" (§298) attending to the present feeling; "But surely another person can't have THIS pain!" (§253); or "(God knows it.) Mathematics is indeed of the highest certainty — though

we possess only a crude likeness of it." (*PPF* §342), "But mathematical truth is independent of whether human beings know it or not!" (*PPF* §348). *These*, as they stand, do not yet make any *sense*: they have *nothing* to do with logic, except perhaps serving as 'the raw material for philosophical treatment' (§254). *What makes sense* is part of logic — in one sense, however: not *saying it* (a sentence that makes sense), of course, but *the fact that it makes sense to say* it (in such-and-such circumstances). (Recall our observation through the sentence "I am here". See §395.)

Consider in this context what the author of the *TLP* did when he said: "The general form of a proposition is: This is how things stand." (§4.5). This is in essence a summary of the account of sense and propositions he develops throughout the book, which we will call the 'picture theory of sense' (see, e.g., §§7.3-7.4 below). Briefly put, the essence of language is to depict reality (picture facts). A sentence has sense only by being a picture of a fact (or 'state of affairs'). This is the purported essence of propositions (i.e. sentences). But is *this* something young Wittgenstein *knows*? Recall the distinction we made in the previous paragraph between what we know (for certain) and what is beyond what we know (hypotheses, inferences, explanations, etc.). Wittgenstein says in the *PI*:

> "But *this* is how it is — — —", I say to myself over and over again. I feel as though, if only I could fix my gaze *absolutely sharply* on this fact and get it into focus, I could not but grasp the essence of the matter. (§113)
> *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (4.5): "The general form of propositions is: This is how things are." —— That is the kind of proposition one repeats to oneself countless times. One thinks that one is tracing nature over and over again, and one is merely tracing round the frame through which we look at it. (§114)

The thing the author of the *TLP* said was of course *not* something he *knew* (although he was under the illusion that he did): it was in fact a 'requirement' (§107), a 'preconception' (§108). The author of the *TLP*, obsessed with *unity* being a logician (§23, see §1.4.3.1 above), 'looked' at the diverse phenomena of everyday language

but said: “They *must* have something in common, or they would not be called ‘[language]’” (§66). Later in his *Zettel*, Wittgenstein describes what he had done in the *TLP* with the following words:

> We now have a theory, a ‘dynamic theory’ of propositions; of language, but it does not present itself to us as a theory. For it is the characteristic thing about such a theory that it looks at a special clearly intuitive case and says: ‘That shews how things are in every case; this case is the exemplar of all cases.’ ‘— Of course! It has to be like that,’ we say, and are satisfied. We have arrived at a form of expression that strikes us as obvious. But it is as if we had now seen something lying beneath the surface. (*Zettel*, §444)

So *that* (a proposition being essentially a picture of facts) was not something the author of the *TLP knew* (or saw): it was in fact an irresponsible generalization (as Wittgenstein himself describes in this passage). But he ignored what is *visible* in everyday phenomena of language — great diversity in use, much more than picturing facts; see §23 — by *explaining them away* with the conception of essence as something *hidden* beneath the surface (see §2.1 below). Wittgenstein later acknowledges this deeply problematic move in the *PI*: “For the crystalline purity of logic was, of course, not something I had *discovered*: it was a requirement.” (§107); “We see that what we call ‘proposition’, ‘language’, has not the *formal unity that I imagined*, but is a family of structures more or less akin to one another.” (§108; emphasis added). And that is why he, having had the experience first hand, now wants to be (and wants us to be) extremely cautious in approaching matters in philosophy:

> For we can avoid unfairness or vacuity in our assertions only by presenting the model as what it is, as an object of comparison — as a sort of yardstick; not as a preconception to which reality *must* correspond. (The dogmatism into which we fall so easily in doing philosophy.) (§131)

This illustrates how we proceed in logic: we must strictly stick to *what we know* (for certain) alone. We must not have any preconceived ideas prior to our examination of actual language (‘*look and see*’, “don’t think, but look!”; §66). And we must also not

make any presumptions about the sense of our words which we use in philosophizing — for *that* is what often leads to the dogmatism associated with preconceptions in philosophy (a nice example of which is clearly seen in the case of Kripke which we discuss in §6.2 below).

# CHAPTER 2

# LOGIC OF LANGUAGE:

# FROM SUBLIMATION TO CONTEXTUALIZATION

In this chapter, we will discuss the contrast between Wittgenstein's early and late conceptions of the logic of language. For this purpose, we begin by identifying and describing the *TLP* conception through Wittgenstein's own remarks about it in the *PI*. We already began to do this in Chapter 1, especially in our discussion of contextualization of sense which is part of contextualization of logic. In that discussion, we pointed out one fundamental difference between the *TLP* and the *PI* views of logic: the former conceived '*essence*' as *something hidden* beneath the surface, the latter as something present and *visible* at the 'surface'. Now we will see *exactly what* is in question here.

## 2.1 'Crystalline purity' of logic: the *TLP* view

At the beginning of §97 of the *PI*, Wittgenstein says: "Thinking is surrounded by a nimbus. – Its essence, logic[33], presents an order":

> [N]amely, the a priori order of the world; that is, the order of *possibilities*, which the world and thinking must have in common. But this order, it seems, must be *utterly simple*. It is *prior* to all experience, must run through all experience; no empirical cloudiness or uncertainty may attach to it. —— It must rather be of the purest crystal. (*PI* §97)

[33] Here what is in question is logic qua the logic of language, not logic qua the science or study of the logic of language. In the text, I often do not make explicit which sense of logic is in question, since it is obvious from the context. Furthermore, logic in one sense mirrors logic in the other. For example, logic qua science "shouldn't concern itself whether things actually happen in this or in that way" (*PI* §89); and logic qua the subject matter of this science "is *prior* to all experience, must run through all experience; no empirical cloudiness or uncertainty may attach to it" (§97).

And since the two are 'internally connected' (as we might say), we will often be talking also about the other when we talk about one. That is why much in this chapter on the logic of language will relate to the science of logic (as well).

Having remarked of the a priori order which logic (on this conception) 'presents' that it must be of 'the purest crystal', Wittgenstein goes on to say: "But this crystal does not appear as an abstraction, but as something concrete, indeed, as the most concrete, as it were the *hardest* thing there is (*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* 5.5563)." So here Wittgenstein explicitly situates the 'crystalline' conception of logic in the *TLP*. The view of logic Wittgenstein describes here is therefore to be found in the *TLP*. Following passages from the *TLP* illustrate this view:

> In logic nothing is accidental: if a thing *can* occur in a state of affairs, the possibility of the state of affairs must be written into the thing itself. (§2.012)
> Nothing in the province of logic can be merely possible. Logic deals with every possibility and all possibilities are its facts. (§2.0121)
> To give the essence of a proposition means to give the essence of all description, and thus the essence of the world. (§5.4711)
> Logic is *prior* to every experience—that something is *so*. (§5.552)
> It is possible to imagine a world in which the axiom of reducibility is not valid. It is clear, however, that logic has nothing to do with the question whether our world really is like that or not. (§6.1233)
> [L]ogic 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 signs speaks for itself. (§6.124)
> The exploration of logic means the exploration of *everything that is subject to law*. And outside logic everything is accidental. (§6.3)

Wittgenstein later says of this conception of logic: "The more closely we examine actual language, the greater becomes the conflict between it and our requirement. (For the crystalline purity of logic was, of course, not something I had *discovered*: it was a requirement.)" (*PI* §107). Wittgenstein's use of the first person pronoun[34] here is significant: the conception of 'crystalline purity' of logic was, as we observed above, what he had maintained in the *TLP*. Similarly, in the next section we have use

[34] Assuming, of course, that here Wittgenstein is not referring to some other person who — for some reason — declared the word "I" as his (or "my"? —) 'preferred pronoun'. This, of course, is an exaggeration: of course, nothing like this is the case (and it is absurd for us to even say that).

I only wanted to say: *much* has to be presupposed for any use of words to make sense — much has to be agreed upon in the application and practice of language for *the possibility of communication*, since it is necessary for the very *existence* of language (as we will see). This means: without much agreement in the application of words, we lose the very means by which we are *able to make sense* of things. See Chapter 5. If we lose the paradigmatic instances (*and* non-instances) of any given concept, for example, we will lose the concept altogether.

of the first person pronoun: "We see that what we call 'proposition', 'language', has not the formal unity that I imagined, but is a family of structures more or less akin to one another." (§108). The 'formal unity' Wittgenstein here says *he* 'imagined' is the 'general propositional form' which lies at the heart of the conception of language he formulated in the *TLP* (see, e.g., *TLP* §§5.47-5.472): "The general form of a proposition is: This is how things stand." (§4.5). But if language has not the formal unity Wittgenstein 'imagined', Wittgenstein continues, "what becomes of logic now...in that case doesn't logic altogether disappear", for its "rigour seems to be giving way here" (§108)? He then adds: "The *preconception* of crystalline purity can only be removed by turning our whole inquiry around" (§108). This basically means: we must do away with the *TLP*'s ('crystalline') conception of logic, which will be described shortly. Consequently, in the *PI* Wittgenstein identifies as his target the *TLP* view of logic according to which logic is something that is of the 'purest crystal'. (This is a fact of absolute certainty, i.e. a fact about which there cannot be disagreement[35].) And, as we will see in what follows, Wittgenstein proposes a new view of logic in the *PI* by contrast to this Tractarian 'crystalline' conception.

2.1.1 'Crystalline purity', 'the ideal' and ordinary language: "Essence is hidden"

2.1.1.1 Wittgenstein means the same thing by 'crystalline purity' and 'the ideal': namely, an ideal language

2.1.1.1.1 "When we believe that we have to find that order, the ideal, in our actual language", Wittgenstein says, "we become dissatisfied with what are ordinarily

[35] Someone may of course disagree with us regarding that fact. But the point is: anyone who understands the meanings of the words involved (i.e. anyone who understands the things Wittgenstein is saying which we demonstrated) will agree. This means: he who disagrees displays a failure of understanding. (Cf. 'Criterion of understanding'.) And so: when we speak of im-possibility of disagreement we are talking about logic, not psychology. Psychologically, disagreement is of course possible (and always).

called ‘sentences’, ‘words’, ‘signs’”, and thus “rack our brains over the nature of the *real* sign” — that is, “[t]he sentence and the word that logic deals with”, and which, therefore, “are supposed to be something pure and clear-cut” (*PI* §105). What does Wittgenstein here mean by ‘the ideal’ (which he apparently takes to be the same thing as ‘that order’)? For an answer, it is helpful to notice the similarity between this remark (from §105) and the following remark from §107: “The more closely we examine actual language, the greater it becomes the conflict between it and our requirement. (For the crystalline purity of logic was, of course, not something that I had *discovered*: it was a requirement.)” The fact that these two sections are separated by only one section — in which Wittgenstein again remarks on the ordinary vs. in-ordinary contrast: “Here it is difficult to keep our heads above water, as it were, to see that we must stick to matters of everyday thought...”; §106 — strongly indicates that the same contrast is in question in both. That is to say, the contrast between ‘the ideal’ and actual language (in §105) coincides with the one between ‘the crystalline purity of logic’ and actual language (in §107). Therefore, Wittgenstein apparently uses ‘the ideal’ and ‘the crystalline purity’ interchangeably. That this is so can also be seen by asking the question: what is ‘that order’, which Wittgenstein here (in §105) apparently takes to be the same thing as ‘the ideal’? The first mention of the ‘order’ is in §97, as well as that of the notion of ‘crystalline purity’. There Wittgenstein says that logic “presents an order: namely, the a priori order of the world”, which “is *prior* to all experience, must run through all experience; no empirical cloudiness or uncertainty may attach to it. — It must rather be of the purest crystal” (§97). Here we see the close connection between the notions of the ‘order’ and ‘crystalline purity’: for Wittgenstein says *of* ‘the order which logic presents’ that *it* must be “of the purest crystal”. In the next section (§98), on the other hand, we

have the first mention of the 'ideal' (excepting the mention of 'ideal language' in §81, to which we will turn later): "every sentence in our language 'is in order as it is'", which means that "we are not *striving after* an ideal, as if our ordinary vague sentences had not yet got a quite unexceptional sense, and a perfect language still had to be constructed by us" (§98). It is clear from this that what Wittgenstein means by 'ideal' is 'perfect language'. That is to say, what is in question is an ideal language (i.e. a 'logically perfect' language). Here (in §98) we also have the remark that "where there is sense, there must be perfect order". This 'order' is just the one which Wittgenstein says in the previous section (§97) logic 'presents', and of which he (also) says (there) that it must be "of the purest crystal". That is, it is the 'perfect order' of logic. Indeed, when Wittgenstein says in §98 that "every sentence in our language 'is in order as it is'" he is alluding directly to the *TLP*; and specifically to the following remark: "In fact, all the propositions of our everyday language, just as they stand, are in perfect logical order" (*TLP* §5.5563). In short, consequently, Wittgenstein uses the following terms interchangeably: 'the ideal', 'perfect language', 'perfect order', 'crystalline purity'. In particular, he means the same thing by 'the ideal' and 'crystalline purity': namely, *ideal language*.

2.1.1.1.2 I identified (and have so far been characterizing) the *TLP* view of logic by means of the notion of 'crystalline purity', which I said was the central notion of that view. We are now (after the previous section) in a position to see that equally useful (for our purposes) would be the notion of 'ideal language'. The problem with this notion, however, is that it has a history[36]. That is to say, by itself, it does not uniquely

[36] Given the potential implications due to the historical baggage of such terms, each is prone to cause misunderstandings. But the reader should bear this in mind, if he is to avoid such misunderstandings. Throughout the text, the reader should also keep in mind that all such implications are *intentionally*

signify Wittgenstein's view in the *TLP* since it (also) signifies other views. One such view, for instance, is Russell's[37]. And there is an essential difference between Russell's view and (early) Wittgenstein's: to wit, the former conceives ideal language as something to be *constructed* whereas the latter as already present in ordinary language (see the next section; see *TLP* §5.5563, cf. §5.555; see *PI* §98, cf. §81)[38]. This is a problem because it may invite misunderstandings about *Wittgenstein*'s notion of an 'ideal language'. And, indeed, Wittgenstein's use of the expression 'ideal language' seems to have done just this. I have in mind Hacker's reading of §81, where the author describes 'ideal language' as a language "which either does not exist at all or exists only in the form of conceptual notations", a language "that none of us speaks...a vacuum..." (2005-II[39], p. 180). Hacker obviously takes 'ideal language' (as Wittgenstein uses it in §81) to be something that does *not* exist, is not present in ordinary language; something that 'still has to be constructed by us' (cf. §98). And this, as noted, is Russell's view. Nevertheless, Wittgenstein

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ignored by the author. For the use of these words in the *context* of the present text is clear, i.e. the *sense* in which they are used, meant and thus to be understood, i.e. *what they actually mean* in this context of use, is clear and therefore renders those implications simply irrelevant. This is intentional because to understand what is said (words and sentences) always is to understand it in the *context* in which it is used. In order to understand this work as well as Wittgenstein's philosophy, the reader should always be sensitive to context of use. And it would not be appropriate at all in the context of our *need* for *this* sensitivity to context if we were to avoid using such terms which carry potential implications from elsewhere, i.e. from irrelevant contexts. Other examples of such words we use include: "logic", "essence", "naturalization", "meta-philosophical", "metaphysical". See footnote 9 above (in §1.2).

[37] See, for example, his 'The Philosophy of Logical Atomism'.

[38] The fact that Russell conceives ideal language *qua* the subject matter of logic as something to be *constructed* shows that he fails to properly acknowledge the very nature of our investigations in logic (the very nature of its subject matter): "And anyway, is it really possible that in logic I should have to deal with forms that I can invent? What I have to deal with must be that which makes it possible for me to invent them." (*TLP* §5.555). (Cf. §5.452.)

[39] Baker and Hacker (2005, I&II). Since I am concerned only with Hacker's reading, and given Backer's later repudiation of (important aspects of) his earlier reading with Hacker, I refer to this work as 'Hacker (2005-I/II)' in the text. '2005-I' refers to Part I of the work ('Essays'), '2005-II' refers to Part II ('Exegesis §§1-184'), which are separately published.

(when he uses that notion in relation to *his* early view of logic) does not mean this by 'ideal language' (see *PI* §98)[40].

2.1.2 Ideal language and ordinary language: "*Essence is hidden*"

2.1.2.1 An ideal language does not have to be something which is *not* present in ordinary language. In other words, an ideal language is not (necessarily) something that has to be constructed over and above ordinary language. This basically means that ordinary language may be (conceived to be) an ideal language. And precisely this — i.e. that ordinary language is an ideal language — is early Wittgenstein's view (cf. *TLP* §5.5563). In fact, on the Tractarian account, *any* (possible) language is an ideal language (cf. *TLP* §§4.1213, 4.5, 6.124). In any event, it is clear from what Wittgenstein says in the *PI* that the author of the *TLP* did not conceive ideal language as something which ordinary language lacks. When he says, for example,

[40] Hacker's misreading of §81 is not limited to this. More importantly, he fails to appreciate the essential transformation in Wittgenstein's conception of logic: namely, now *activity* belongs to logic. Hacker thus mistakenly talks about logic as if it is all about thinking, reasoning, arguments, etc. (apparently thinking that Wittgenstein is talking about *formal logic* when he uses the word "logic"): "So what is logic? W. does not say here (but see Exg. §108). It is not the depth grammar of natural languages; nor is it the surface grammar of non-natural (so-called ideal) languages. It is a form for presenting arguments, and a formal standard for judging their validity. It is *partly constitutive* of what we call 'thinking' and 'reasoning'." (2005-II, p. 180). And similarly §108:

> If we turn the examination around thus, we can locate the crystalline clarity of logic in its proper place. W. does not elaborate, but perhaps what he meant was as follows. The rigour of logic has a quite different role from that which it seemed to possess. It is not a mirror-image of 'the a priori order of the world', but a feature of a mode of representation. The rigour of logical inference, for example, determines what we *call* 'thinking'; by reference to it, we fix what *counts as* valid reasoning. We use it as our canon for the evaluation of arguments. (2005-II, p. 242)
>
> What happens to logic? Does not admission of the family character of propositions compromise its rigour?..Logic cannot lose its rigour, and we cannot bargain its rigour out of it (PI §108). We cannot plead for the relaxation of the law of excluded middle, or make arrangements to lift the law of non-contradiction, for the laws of logic define what is to be counted as a logically valid argument. Logic is a form for the presentation of, and a canon of correctness for, arguments...Logic is not what we see beneath the surface of language when we try to penetrate it (PI §90); it is the grid through which we look at arguments when we wish to measure their cogency or to display, with a formal perspicuity, their logical structure. (2005-I, p. 268)

It is interesting to compare what Hacker says here as regards the so-called 'laws of logic', e.g., the law of excluded middle, and what Wittgenstein says about them (e.g., *PI* §216, §352). He imagines that by 'logic' Wittgenstein means formal logic, which is not true.

that “we are not *striving after* an ideal...as if a perfect language still had to be constructed by us” (*PI* §98), Wittgenstein is saying that we are already ‘in’ the ideal, that we already have a ‘perfect language’ — i.e. that ordinary language is an ideal language (see above §2.1.1.1). This is also confirmed by the following remark: “The ideal, as we conceive of it, is unshakable. You can’t step outside it. You must always turn back. There is no outside; outside you cannot breathe...” (§103). On the other hand, as we have seen (see §2.1 above), it is clear that Wittgenstein uses the expression ‘the ideal’ when talking about (describing) the *TLP* view (see, e.g., *PI* §98, §103). And, given that in the *TLP* ‘the ideal’ is not something ordinary language lacks, but rather, although hidden, present in ordinary language (*TLP* §5.5561), consequently, the author of the *TLP* did not conceive ‘ideal language’ as something which ordinary language *lacks*.

2.1.2.2 That ordinary language is an ideal language (on the *TLP* account) might be thought to conflict the following: Wittgenstein says that with our demand for the ideal, “we become dissatisfied with” ordinary language, and thus “rack our brains over the nature of the *real* sign” — that is, “[t]he sentence and the word that logic deals with”, and which, therefore, “are supposed to be something pure and clear-cut” (*PI*, §105). For this seems to imply that the ordinary is one thing, the real (i.e. the ideal) is another, and thus that ideal language is something that is *not* present in ordinary language. But this is not true. These two points — namely, that ordinary language is an ideal language, and that our demand for an ideal language (apparently) lures us away from ordinary language — are perfectly consistent; they are *made* perfectly consistent, simply by means of the supposition that ideal language is *hidden* beneath the surface of ordinary language. The ‘real sign’, which is ‘pure

and clear-cut' (*PI* §105), lies *within* ordinary forms of language (*PI* §92). So our demand for the ideal lures us away only from the *surface* of ordinary language. Thus we may say: our demand for an ideal language lures us *into* — not away from — ordinary language. And this corresponds to Wittgenstein's remark (in the *PI*), to which we will turn shortly, that the *TLP* sees the 'essence' (of things) "as something that lies *beneath* the surface. Something that lies within, which we perceive when we see *right into* the thing, and which an analysis is supposed to unearth." (§92). Thus ideal language lies hidden beneath the surface of ordinary language; and analysis unearths (that is, discovers) it. But we are only dismissive of the surface — not the *essence* — of ordinary language. And the latter — i.e. hidden essence of ordinary language — just *is* ideal language.

2.1.3 Consequently, in short, ideal language lies hidden beneath the surface of ordinary language. 'Logic of language' in the *TLP*, therefore, does not signify anything visible in ordinary uses of language with which we are all familiar in our everyday lives. The language in question is of course the same ordinary language; but the aspects which we are all familiar with in our everyday lives belong only to the surface, not to the essence. Ideal language is its hidden essence; it is the '*real* sign' (§105). But why does one conceive 'logic of language' in *this* way — i.e. as something 'real' hidden beneath the surface of actual language? Above all, it is because the author of the *TLP* is committed to the following (extremely dominant) picture of 'essence': the essence of any phenomenon is *one single element common to all its instances*, and they are *its* instances by virtue of (possessing) this common element. *This* is the ultimate source of the *TLP* conception of the logic of language: there must be *something* common to all instances and phenomena of language which

is its essence, without which they would not be instances and phenomena of language. This is the conception of essence that lies behind the Tractarian 'formal unity' and 'general propositional form': language being the 'totality of propositions' (*TLP* §4.001), there must be a *general (logical) form* shared by every (possible) proposition (§§4.5, 5.47-1; *PI* §65). And although nothing like this is present in everyday language, the author of the *TLP* sees this as a mere surface phenomenon: for in its essence — i.e. in ideal language which is the real logical realm — that universal form is present.

### 2.2 The *TLP* view: Sublimation of logic

Another reason why the *TLP* conceives 'logic of language' in the way described (i.e. as ideal language hidden beneath everyday phenomena of language), which is connected with the first reason just explained, is its 'sublimation of the logic of our language', as Wittgenstein later calls it (§38, §94): "The tendency to assume a pure intermediary between the propositional *sign* and the facts." (§94). This notion of a 'pure intermediary' has two components: 'intermediary' and 'purity' (both of which we touched upon above but will now further explain). The notion of an intermediary is due to the notion of hidden essence just described, essence as the common element shared by all instances of the phenomenon in question. Ordinary signs and their everyday uses — which are 'already open to view' (§92) — are presumed to not contain or display the essence (because it displays great diversity and the essence has to possess a unity, supposedly), so it (the essence) must be *somewhere* else, so to speak. This medium where ideal language (qua the hidden essence of language) resides in; that is, the intermediary in question (in §94); is the *faculty of thinking*

(understanding: §102, mind[41]: §188, §196). That is why in the next section we read (continuing to describe the old view): "Thinking must be something unique." (§95). Similarly, we have in §97: "Thinking is surrounded by a nimbus. — Its essence, logic, presents an order: namely, the a priori order of the world; that is, the order of *possibilities*, which the world and thinking must have in common." In this section, where he makes explicit reference to the *TLP*, we see that Wittgenstein is speaking of 'logic' as the 'essence of thinking'. Given that 'logic' signifies the essence of language, this means the author of the *TLP equates* thinking and language, speaks of them as if they are the *same thing*[42]. This appears to be an odd thing to say, for sure. But we can see how the author can think along these lines when we consider the idea of an intermediary which is our current focus. The logic of language resides not in

[41] 'Mind' translates the German word "Seele", i.e. 'soul'. There are other similar cases such as "Wesen" which is translated as 'essence' and 'nature'. This might appear to be significant but it absolutely is not — *logically*. For as regards *sense*, it is not "[a]s if we were talking about shades of meaning, and all that were in question were to find the words to hit on the correct nuance" (§254). The significance of a particular form of words (among other possible ones) is only psychological: for example, we may choose to adopt one way of speaking because it prevents certain misunderstandings. (Only psychological simply because it is not essential to the sense we make, since we can make the same sense with other possible forms.) 'Form' is not a technical term here: it merely means words, signs, sentences, etc.. It contrasts with the *use* of signs, which is what bears sense. (No words or sentences have any sense 'in themselves' prior to their possible uses.)

On the other hand, the psychological significance of a particular word or expression is relevant to our logical investigations in certain contexts:

> And that is in question in philosophy only where we have to give a psychologically accurate account of the temptation to use a particular mode of expression. What we are 'tempted' to say' in such a case is, of course, not philosophy; but it is its raw material. So, for example, what a mathematician is inclined to say about the objectivity and reality of mathematical facts is not a philosophy of mathematics, but something for philosophical *treatment*. (§254)

Such inclinations to say certain things, to use 'a particular mode of expression', are psychological in nature, obviously. But our *treatment* of them in philosophy is logical: for we are therein doing a *conceptual* investigation.

[42] Indeed, Wittgenstein evaluates his former conception in the *TLP* by saying: '"Language (or thinking) is something unique' — this proves to be a superstition (not a mistake!)" (§111). This is another way of saying that the crystalline purity of logic was a 'requirement' (§107), a 'preconception' (§108). The crucial thing in the present context is, however, the equation: language = thinking. And in fact, these are hints Wittgenstein is giving: we should ask ourselves, as we are currently doing, why he is doing this ("language (or thinking)"), and what he is doing. "Mr. Wittgenstein, is it language or thinking? Which one are you talking about?" Or: "Mr. Wittgenstein, why are you speaking as if language and thinking are the same thing?" — The answer to such questions will be: he formerly did conceive the two to be the same thing, but now departs from that preconception. One of the most essential points of contrast between the two works is indeed about: thinking vs. activity (as regards logic, i.e. the essence of language). And *this* is precisely what he is doing: through having us ask such questions, he is emphasizing and bringing to focus *that* as an essential point of contrast.

visible phenomena of everyday language, but in the faculty of thinking which is the intermediary between signs and facts (functionings of words and sentences, their uses). So when the author of the *TLP* equates language with thinking, he is talking about ideal language (not the everyday language of the surface, but the essence). Thus the essential notion here — regarding the Tractarian treatment of language and thinking as the same thing — is just *this*: language is essentially a *mental* phenomenon[43]. Hence it is no surprise that Wittgenstein speaks of 'logic' (in the sense of the logic of language) as the 'essence of thinking' in §97 where he is describing his earlier conception in the *TLP*. The author of the *TLP* gives expression to this conception as follows:

> Everyday language is a part of the human organism and is no less complicated than it.
> It is not humanly possible to gather immediately from it what the logic of language is.
>
> Language disguises thought. So much so, that from the outward form of the clothing it is impossible to infer the form of the thought beneath it, because the outward form of the clothing is not designed to reveal the form of the body, but for entirely different purposes. (*TLP* §4.002)

Above, we observed (in §1.4.3.1) that the *TLP* excludes activity from the essence of language. We now see that in the *TLP* conception, the logic of language has only to do with *thinking*, the mental faculty. But the fact that this is coupled with the exclusion of activity from logic reveals a presumption: namely, that of a strict separation of the mind from activity, a dichotomy between thinking and doing. Mind is conceived as something that is only externally related to action (not essentially connected to it) and the essence of language as having to do with only the former. *This* is one of the most important points of contrast between the two works of Wittgenstein. As we pointed out in §1.4.3.1, activity belongs to the logic of language

[43] We will further discuss this notion and its logical consequences below, in particular, the notion of a private language and private ostensive definition. See especially §2.4.2 and §5.5.

in his new view. (Wittgenstein's *logical* refutation of the Tractarian conception of language (as essentially mental) and *proof* that language is essentially an activity will be given in Chapter 5, see §5.4ff.)

In short: what is essential in language takes place in the faculty of thinking, not in the surface of everyday language (i.e. visible signs and their uses). *This* is the first aspect of the notion of a 'pure *intermediary*'. The other is the notion of *purity* (which we actually partly described in the previous section). Visible phenomena of language are full of *imperfections*: there is great diversity (contra 'formal unity') and vagueness (contra 'purity'). There are many "ordinary vague sentences" (§97). But "[t]he sentence and the word that logic deals with are supposed to be something pure and clear-cut" (§105). In ideal language, which is the essence ("the nature of the *real* sign", §105), nothing is vague, however: for "where there is sense, there must be perfect order. —— So there must be perfect order even in the vaguest sentence." (§98). Put otherwise, although there is 'perfect logical order' in all the sentences of our ordinary language in the *TLP* view (*TLP* §5.5563), this order is not apparent but hidden (see §2.1.1.1.1 above). The *TLP* expresses this by saying that "the apparent logical form of a proposition need not be its real one" (§4.0031). In this view, every sentence (proposition) "has one and only one complete analysis" which is (or displays[44]) its 'real logical form' (*TLP* §3.25; see also: §§3.2, 3.201, 4.002; *PI* §91).

> The sense of a sentence — one would like to say — may, of course, leave this or that open, but the sentence must nevertheless have a determinate sense. An indeterminate sense — that would really not be a sense *at all*. — This is similar to: a boundary which is not sharply defined is not really a boundary at all. (§99)

So although the surface of everyday language does not show any perfect logical order free of any vagueness and imperfection, *crystalline purity of logic* (which is the

[44] As we will see later, 'logical form' is not something that we express by means of propositions: propositions cannot represent it, the reasoning goes, since it is what makes representation possible.

essence of language) resides in the pure intermediary — the super-faculty[45] of thinking. The ordinary sentence (visible sign) may be vague and imperfect, one thinks, apparently lacking a determinate sense: but this is merely a *surface* phenomenon. In *thinking*, the faculty, we have the essential thing: proposition, thought — and there we *already* have the determinate sense. (When the author of the *TLP* says that a sentence has one and only one analysis, he has this idea in mind.) Here we see *sublimation of sense*: it cannot be vague at all, it must be *exact* in an absolute sense, and already there somewhere, albeit hidden (§95; cf. §88). The sense of the sentence, having to do with the faculty of thinking, is thus prior to all context and use, thus to activities (see §1.4.2 above): "Every proposition must *already* have a sense" (*TLP* §4.064, emphasis original; see also §§3.4, 5.473-3)[46]. And this sense has to be a determinate one although the ordinary sentence may not present it (for otherwise it would not be sense; §99): "A proposition may well be an incomplete picture of a certain situation, but it is always a complete picture of *something*." (§5.156). (The Tractarian sublimation of sense will be recalled in §2.4 below.)

[45] See §§95-97, 110. By 'super-faculty' I mean a faculty which is not like any ordinary, natural one. We noted that in the *TLP* picture, the mind is conceived in strict opposition to activity. But the Tractarian sublimation of logic (which in this case is sublimation of the word "mind" or "thinking") goes much further: the Mind is conceived also in strict opposition to the empirical (actual) world *as a whole*, to what actually is the case. (See footnote 55 below in §2.3.) Here the mind (thinking, language), there the world: they as it were stand face to face. The *TLP* gives expression to this by saying that logic is 'transcendental', "a mirror-image of the world" (§6.13). One of the key components of this conception is the requirement that logic has nothing to do with the actual world, cannot in any way 'depend on' what actually is the case (§6.1233). For logic deals only with necessities, whereas *that* is merely accidental (§6.37ff). And this will be another essential point of contrast between the two works: for in the *PI* we come to acknowledge the existence of a 'transcendental' (this time in the Kantian sense) relation between language and the actual world. See §2.3 and §5.5 below.

On the other hand, thinking in the *TLP* picture is a *super*-faculty because it has mysterious powers, e.g. giving sense to the sentence through remarkable mental acts of meaning something and understanding (which will be discussed later).

[46] In an odd sense, the super-faculty of thinking already contains 'every possible sense' (cf. §4.5). "A proposition can determine only one place in logical space: nevertheless the whole of logical space must already be given by it." (§3.42). See Chapter 7.

The determination of sense is executed by the sublime *rules* of language through which *Mind* operates: the 'rules of logical syntax', as we observed above in §1.4.1, are rules for sentence-*construction* which determine which *combinations of words* (more properly: 'symbols' in the Tractarian terminology) make sense. The 'rules of logical syntax' therefore *already* determine (prior to all use and context) 'every possible proposition', i.e. every possible sense. *Wherever there is sense*, these fixed rigid rules of the 'calculus' of language must be in operation (§81, §98):

> "Still, it isn't a game at all, if there is some vagueness *in the rules*." (§100)
> We want to say that there can't be any vagueness in logic. The idea now absorbs us that the ideal '*must*' occur in reality. At the same time, one doesn't as yet see *how* it occurs there, and doesn't understand the nature of this "must". We think the ideal must be in reality; for we think we already see it there. (§101)
> The strict and clear rules for the logical construction of a proposition appear to us as something in the background — hidden in the medium of understanding. I already see them (even though through a medium), for I do understand the sign, I mean something by it. (§102)

We thus see the *sublimation of the rules* of language: in the pure intermediary — i.e. the faculty of thinking, to which Wittgenstein refers in this remark from §102 as 'the medium of understanding' — we have the 'strict and clear rules'. These are obviously not local rules governing any region or use of language; on the contrary, they are absolutely universalistic: they are the 'fixed rules of a calculus' which is in operation *everywhere* where there is sense — for, qua the rules for sentence-*construction*, they are formal rules which produce sense (§81). We do not *see* anything like that, however, i.e. the same set of rules (of a calculus) operating in visible, diverse phenomena of everyday language; but that is not essential. The calculus hidden beneath the surface is what is essential in language (ideal language). That is why Wittgenstein describes the *TLP* view with the expression 'logic for a vacuum' in §81: what is essential is not the surface language, but its hidden essence

in the 'medium of understanding', i.e. ideal language residing in the 'pure intermediary'.

> …the sentence has sense only as a member of a system of language; as one expression within a calculus. Now, *we are tempted to imagine this calculus, as it were, as a permanent background to every sentence which we say*, and to think that, although the sentence as written on a piece of paper or spoken stands isolated, *in the mental act of thinking the calculus is there—all in a lump*. The mental act seems to perform in a miraculous way what could not be performed by any act of manipulating symbols…the whole calculus must be present at the same time… (*BB*, p. 42; emphases added)

This calculus is constituted by the 'rules of logical syntax'. Although we *cannot explain* what these rules are (e.g. cannot give any actual example), nor even what kind of thing they are, we think we know them[47] — since we presume: "I already see them (even though through a medium [i.e. understanding, the faculty of thinking]), for I do understand the sign, I mean something by it" (§102). These sublime rules are *already* there in the faculty of thinking; and when there is *sense*, we see (in our minds) their operation — via the *remarkable mental acts* of meaning something and understanding, i.e. acts of thinking. (The Tractarian sublimation of rules will be recalled in §2.5 below.)

We said that in the *TLP* the 'logic of language' was imagined to be an (the) ideal language which is the hidden essence beneath the surface of everyday language. We identified a particular conception of essence as the main source of this view: the dominant notion that the essence of a phenomenon is a common element shared by all its instances. So language has to possess formal unity, there has to be a general form of propositions despite the fact that everyday language presents *nothing*

[47] The notion of something we know but cannot explain will be important throughout what follows.

Although the 'rules of logical syntax' are nothing like any rules with which we are ordinarily familiar (actual instances of rules, what we ordinarily call 'a rule'), *and* although we cannot explain them, cannot give any *examples* (instances) of such rules, we think we know the 'rules of logical syntax', we presume we know what we mean by that expression. For we think we 'already see them' since (and when) we understand a sentence. But this, as we will below, is mere imagination (a 'requirement', §107; a 'preconception', §108).

of this sort: but that was only the surface, we said to ourselves, and the essence was ideal language in which we managed to find 'perfect logical order'. We then identified the other (and more peculiar) source or component of the Tractarian crystalline conception of logic: the notion of a 'pure intermediary', i.e. sublimation of logic. And we are trying to understand this notion at present: we identified sublimation of sense and sublimation of rules, and pointed out the faculty of thinking as the medium of this intermediary. Although language functions in all sorts of ways in our everyday lives, apparently contradicting the *TLP*'s '*preconception* of crystalline purity of logic' (§§107-8), its essential structure and operations belong to (take place in) the faculty of thinking, not our everyday practice of language — according to the *TLP* (§4.002). Wittgenstein, recall, defines (i.e. describes) 'sublimation of logic' as the postulation of this faculty as the *pure intermediary* between visible signs and facts (§94), beyond words and their uses which 'already lie open to view' (§92). In order to better understand this 'sublimation of logic', let us now take a look at the other context where Wittgenstein speaks of it:

> [S]trange to say, the word "this" has been called the *real* name; so that anything else we call a name was one only in an inexact, approximate sense.
>
> This odd conception springs from a tendency to sublimate the logic of our language — as one might put it. The proper answer to it is: we call *very different* things "names"; the word "name" serves to characterize many different, variously related, kinds of use of a word — but the kind of use that the word "this" has is not among them. (§38)

Here Wittgenstein is referring to Russell when he says that the word "this" was regarded as 'the *real* name'[48]. Once again, the contrast we identified and have been emphasizing is in question: *real* as opposed to *ordinary* (see §2.1 above). In our everyday lives, we use the word "name" in various ways, we know what it means, and so on. In short, we very well know different kinds of names and what a name is.

[48] See, for example, his 'The Philosophy of Logical Atomism'.

But someone like Russell (as well as the author of the *TLP*) tells us that these things we ordinarily 'call' names are only the surface, so in fact *not* real names. They are not *genuine* names, not really names although they appear to be — 'strictly speaking', of course (as we like to say in philosophy). The *real* name is something else: "*this*"[49]. (We will discuss the essential role of the notion of a mere THIS in the Tractarian picture of language: namely, *Something* we know but cannot talk about, cannot explain; the ineffable 'it'. See §§2.4-2.5 below.) Squeezing the 'real' out of the ordinary — *this* is what it is to *sublimate* the logic of language: ordinary uses of the word "name" do not give us the essential thing (similarly for other words of particular concern to us in logic such as "language", "rule", "logic", "meaning", "sentence", "word", "understanding", "meaning something", "thinking", etc.). One thus dismisses ordinary uses of the word "name" (actual instances of names) in logic altogether, for example, saying that they (instances) are either not really names, or if they are, they are *inexact* (cf. §88) — they are names only with reference to the 'real name', only to the extent that they *approximate* to it (cf. §81). So one squeezes 'the real' out of the ordinary, and thinks that the logic of language is the former, has nothing to do with the latter. And whatever sense and significance the ordinary has, it has that only by way of *approximating to the real* (or the ideal which in this context comes to the same thing). (This does not necessarily mean that the ordinary *lacks* the real; it only means, in the case of the *TLP*, that the real is hidden. See the discussion in §2.1 of whether ideal language is something present in ordinary language.) Ordinary names by themselves cannot be relevant in logic since they are diverse (contra essence qua common element), inexact and impure (contra purity or

[49] But people like Russell (and the author of the *TLP*) have a *reason* for postulating such a weird thing: certain lines of reasoning, certain considerations lead them to it, as we will discuss in §2.4 below.

sublimation). We are rather interested in the *essence* of names, what a name essentially is: we want "to fathom *the* relation between name and what is named" (§38). Once again, we have the conception of essence qua universal common element. But we do not see *one single thing* in what we ordinarily call "names", that is in the everyday uses of this word. So what we are looking for must be *somewhere else*. It is, once again, found in the pure intermediary of the faculty of thinking: and this is the conception of 'naming' as 'some remarkable mental act' (§38). Similarly, the *TLP* conceives meaning something (and understanding) to be some 'remarkable mental act' which gives sense to the sentence — as it were, "a hocus-pocus that can be performed only by the mind" (*PI* §454): "The mental act seems to perform in a miraculous way what could not be performed by any act of manipulating symbols" (*BB*, p. 42). Now, we can better understand Wittgenstein's remark in §81, which had served as the point of our departure in this thesis:

> F. P. Ramsey once emphasized in conversation with me that logic was a 'normative science'. I do not know exactly what idea he had in mind, but it was doubtless closely related to one that dawned on me only later: namely, that in philosophy we often *compare* the use of words with games, calculi with fixed rules, but cannot say that someone who is using language *must* be playing such a game. —— But if someone says that our languages only *approximate* to such calculi, he is standing on the very brink of a misunderstanding. For then it may look as if what we were talking about in logic were an *ideal* language. As if our logic were, so to speak, a logic for a vacuum. — Whereas logic does not treat of language — or of thought — in the sense in which a natural science treats of a natural phenomenon, and the most that can be said is that we *construct* ideal languages. But here the word "ideal" is liable to mislead, for it sounds as if these languages were better, more perfect, than our everyday language; and as if it took a logician to show people at last what a proper sentence looks like.
>
> All this, however, can appear in the right light only when one has attained greater clarity about the concepts of understanding, meaning something, and thinking. For it will then also become clear what may mislead us (and did mislead me) into thinking that if anyone utters a sentence and *means* or *understands* it, he is thereby operating a calculus according to definite rules.

We can now see what did mislead Wittgenstein (in the *TLP*) into thinking of language as a calculus with fixed rules: the sense of a sentence (something sublime) resides in the *remarkable mental acts* of meaning something[50] and understanding[51], not in the dead signs, nor in the actual application. (This is needed because the sense of a sentence is a queer thing — which is what young Wittgenstein was trying to make sense of when he imagines language as a calculus with fixed rules: it is a 'shadow of the fact' which the sentence depicts, '*must be*' identical to the fact in an odd sense. This, and the problem it purportedly presents, will be discussed in §2.4 below.) And in these remarkable mental acts executed by the super-faculty of *thinking*, the crystalline rules of the calculus of language — 'rules of logical syntax' — are in operation: they produce and *give sense* to the sentence through those remarkable mental acts. Thinking (or language) — which "must be something unique" — through its act of *meaning* "that such-and-such is the case", does "not stop anywhere short of the fact", but means: "*such-and-such — is — thus-and-so*" (§95). So young Wittgenstein imagined that when we understand or mean something by a sentence, something *remarkable* takes place: our mind '*sees*' something which is not there in what is visible in signs and their uses. As Wittgenstein later says: "The

[50] Wittgenstein refers to this in the *OC* (§393) as: "The old misunderstanding about the concept 'to mean'." The 'old misunderstanding' is the one found in the *TLP*, as we are describing in the text. Wittgenstein himself *is saying in* §81 that a fundamental misunderstanding about the concepts of meaning something and understanding underlay his former conception of language and logic (in both senses) in the *TLP*. We are showing in the text that the misunderstanding in question was to think of them as 'remarkable mental acts' which give sense to the sentence.

Now, compare the preceding to how Conant (1998) (mis)reads this same remark from the *OC* (p. 231): "The old misunderstanding about the concept 'mean' that Wittgenstein alludes to here is one that he thinks Frege had already uncovered and an indebtedness to this lesson of Frege's already played a central role in his own early work." He goes on (p. 231ff) to describe contextualization of sense and mistakenly attributes it to the *TLP*, as we have seen in §1.4.2 above. So Conant thinks (see p. 239ff) that the 'old misunderstanding' about the concept 'to mean something' *was* indeed the one we identified here (as remarkable mental act), but that (mis)conception was *not endorsed*, but rather *targeted* in the *TLP*. The author of the *TLP* supposedly does this by contextualizing sense — *that*, however, cannot be far from *the* truth.

[51] See *TLP* §3.11: "We use the perceptible sign of a proposition (spoken or written, etc.) as a projection of a possible situation. The method of projection is to think of the sense of the proposition."

mental act seems to perform in a miraculous way what could not be performed by any act of manipulating symbols" (*BB* p. 48). And so all this is due to sublimation of sense: the crystal clear shadow-fact cannot possibly reside in the use of signs (which is visible); the remarkable thing a proposition achieves cannot be among those 'humble' things (which are open to view). It can only be the work of a super-faculty and its remarkable mental acts of meaning something and understanding.

We can also understand Wittgenstein's contrast here between a 'normative science' and a natural science. A natural science explains the workings of observable phenomena by reference to underlying hidden 'laws' governing them. These 'laws' are what we are supposed to see in 'ideal conditions' (in a 'vacuum', for example). Similarly, if we conceive what philosophy does in examining the nature of language on this model (of natural sciences), then we get the kind of Tractarian logic which we have been describing: the visible phenomena are ignored as being the surface, what is essential (ideal language) is presumed to be hidden 'laws' beneath that surface. Though we do not directly see these 'laws' (essential workings of language) in the actual use of words (i.e. in everyday language), these are supposed to come out (through analysis[52]) in 'ideal conditions' (in the medium of understanding which is a super-natural mental faculty). That is why Wittgenstein in §81 describes the idea that ideal language is what logic is concerned with by saying: "As if our logic were, so to speak, a logic for a vacuum." Right after this, he says that "logic does not treat of language — or of thought — in the sense in which a natural science treats of a natural phenomenon" (§81). In the *TLP* conception, as we saw above (in the present and previous sections; §§2.1-2.2) and will further see (§2.4), logical analysis of propositions unearths hidden 'laws' governing the workings of language (i.e.

[52] How the Tractarian analysis proceeds is described in §2.4 below.

thinking) — similar to the way natural sciences examine phenomena. ("Such-and-such *must* be going on, so that we observe this-and-that happen.") Wittgenstein later describes this as follows: "Philosophers constantly see the method of science before their eyes, and are irresistibly tempted to ask and answer questions in the way science does. This tendency is the real source of metaphysics, and leads the philosopher into complete darkness." (*BB* p. 18).

In summary, in our reading of §81 with which we began (see the very first paragraph of the thesis), we identified two things: 1) what misled Wittgenstein into thinking that where there is sense (where one *understands* or *means something* by a sentence) a calculus with fixed rules must be in operation (namely, the conception of understanding and meaning something as remarkable mental acts which give sense to the sentence, itself due to sublimation of sense), 2) the contrast between the science of logic (a 'normative science') and natural science. Below in §2.5.1, we will also identify the other important thing involved in young Wittgenstein's conception of language as 'a calculus with fixed rules': namely, the model of mathematics. Through the discussion of rules in mathematics, we will also better understand the conception of meaning something and understanding as remarkable mental acts, including (and especially) what is wrong with it. (We will deal with the sublimation of sense in particular: namely, the presumption of absolute sense over and above actual use in context.)

### 2.2.1 Tractarian picture of language and the world

Tractarian sublimation of the logic of language postulated a 'super-order between super-concepts' (in the presumed medium of the super-faculty of thinking, the pure intermediary) — by sublimating the use of such expressions that are of particular

interest to us in logic as "language", "thinking", etc. (§97). Thus 'language' was sublimated into ideal language, 'name' into real name, 'sentence' (or its sense) into a shadow of fact, 'thinking' into a super-natural kind of faculty, 'rule' into crystalline rules of a calculus, and so on.

> *Thought, language, now appear to us as the unique correlate, picture, of the world*. These concepts: proposition, language, thought, world, stand in line one behind the other, each equivalent to each. (But what are these words to be used for now? The language-game in which they are to be applied is missing.) (§96; emphasis added)

Thus the Tractarian sublimation of logic presents a particular picture of language and the world: language (or thinking) is a *remarkable* phenomenon unlike other 'natural' phenomena of our world[53]. The author of the *TLP* thinks that it has an 'incomparable essence' (§97). He imagines that "[t]hinking must be something unique" (§95), "is surrounded by a nimbus" (§97); that "[l]anguage (or thinking) is something unique" (§110)[54]. This faculty is no ordinary phenomenon of our world[55]: that is why we spoke of it as a '*super*-faculty' (cf. sublimation of the faculty of thinking, of the use of the word "thinking"). Logic qua the essence of this super-faculty (§97), this "all-embracing logic…mirrors the world" (*TLP* §5.511). Thus language (or thinking) in its essence, i.e. logic, transcends not only the everyday practice (conventions, etc.) of language, but the actual world *as a whole*[56]: "It is *prior* to all experience, must run through all experience; no empirical cloudiness or uncertainty may attach to it." (§97; see §2.4 below). (Part of this transcendence concerns sense: the sense of the

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[53] This picture will be described further in §2.4 below.
[54] But now Wittgenstein observes that "this proves to be a superstition (not a mistake!)" (§110). A mistake is something made *in* the process of an investigation, not prior to it. What precedes the investigation may be, among other things: a preconception, requirement, prejudice, or superstition.
[55] This is also why this faculty of thinking as the author of the *TLP* conceives it is not at all *psychological* in nature, but purely logical. So to conceive language as something that is essentially mental is not to place it into the domain of psychology, despite the contrary impression which is indeed natural. The author himself actually anticipates this risk of confusing the psychological for the logical (§4.1121). See our discussion below in §7.6.
[56] See footnote 45 in §2.2 above, and §5.5 below on the connection between the actual world and logic.

sentence is completely independent of uses (contexts, customs) *and* of what actually is the case as a whole.) It presents "the a priori order of the world; that is, the order of *possibilities*, which the world and thinking must have in common" (§97). It is "a mirror-image of the world": "Logic is transcendental" (*TLP* §6.13). We have *L*anguage on the one hand, and the *W*orld on the other: and they face each other. This Tractarian picture of language and the world is (so far) built in two steps: first, a strict separation between language (or mind) and the world is presumed; then language is sublimated into "some non-spatial, atemporal non-entity" (§108, boxed remark)[57]. (The next move in building this picture will concern the relation between language and the world, which we will describe in §2.4 below.)

## 2.3 'Turning our whole inquiry around': From sublimation to contextualization of logic

Wittgenstein says in §38 (quoted above) that the 'proper answer' to the sublimation of logic is this: "we call *very different* things 'names'; the word 'name' serves to characterize many different, variously related, kinds of use of a word — but the kind of use that the word 'this' has is not among them". This means that we need to de-sublimate the logic of language "by turning our whole inquiry around" (§108): that is, we will focus directly on the *ordinary uses* of the words. And when we do it, we will see that 'the ideal' (e.g. the '*real* name') turns into a nothing: "The more closely we examine actual language, the greater becomes the conflict between it and our

[57] This is (part of) how in the Tractarian picture, the *essence* of language corresponds to the essence of the world — and how, therefore, *investigation* of this essence in philosophy is also an investigation of the essence of the world. See our preliminary characterization of the notion 'philosophy investigates the nature of language' in §1.1 above. We will revisit this point in Chapter 3 below; see §3.3.2.1. The main point will be: although a strict dichotomy between language and the world is presumed, at the same time the idea of a common "logical form, i.e. the form of reality" (*TLP* §2.18), is postulated for the possibility of a descriptive relation between the two. Language has to be able to depict the world; for that is supposed to be its fundamental essence (or function). And this is possible, in this picture, only through their possessing a common 'logical form'.

requirement…The conflict becomes intolerable; the requirement is now in danger of becoming vacuous" (§107). Wittgenstein now acknowledges that the presumed domain of the faculty of thinking where the logic of language (the ideal) supposedly resides, the notion of a pure intermediary, the whole conception of crystalline purity, *was* mere imagination, a mere requirement: "For the crystalline purity of logic was, of course, not something I had *discovered*: it was a requirement." (§107). It was a *preconception* imposed upon language, not anything that language was *seen* to posses: "We see that what we call 'proposition', 'language', has not the formal unity that I imagined, but is a family of structures more or less akin to one another." (§108). But this (language qua family of structures) is not just another preconception we have in our heads *prior* to our actual investigation. Rather, we see this through examination of everyday language, that is, the *actual use* of the words "sentence", "language", "thinking" ("name", etc.) — i.e. through contextualization.

> We are under the illusion that what is peculiar, profound and essential to us in our investigation resides in its trying to grasp the incomparable essence of language. That is, the order existing between the concepts of proposition, word, inference, truth, experience, and so forth. This order is a *super*-order between — so to speak — *super*-concepts. Whereas, in fact, if the words "language", "experience", "world" have a use, it must be as humble a one as that of the words "table", "lamp", "door". (§97)

Squeezing 'super-order between super-concepts' out of our everyday language and its concepts was the sublimation of logic; and now Wittgenstein reverses this: he *contextualizes* logic and language. (The first step of contextualization of logic, as we saw above in Chapter 1, was contextualization of sense: a sentence has sense only in a context of use.) The words 'used' in the way described above (in the description of the Tractarian view) are devoid of sense because they lack application, i.e. use in particular language-games. What is presumed is *absolute sense* for these words transcending the ordinary language-games with, the actual use of, them ('super-

concepts'). But this is mere presumption: *no* absolute sense for *any* expression exists[58]. We now examine 'what we ordinarily call' names, sentences, language, etc. — that is, how these words are *actually used* in their *context of everyday language*. And this essentially involves examination of *particular language-games* in which these words are used. For outside application in such games, they mean *nothing*:

> But what are the simple constituent parts of which reality is composed? — What are the simple constituent parts of a chair? — The pieces of wood from which it is assembled? Or the molecules, or the atoms? — "Simple" means: not composite. And here the point is: in what sense 'composite'? It makes no sense at all to speak absolutely of the 'simple parts of a chair'. (§47)

Therefore, contextualization of logic at this stage[59] starts with contextualization of the words that are of particular concern to us in logic which the *TLP* had sublimated. This simply means examination of the actual use of *those* words in our everyday language: we will 'look and see' how they function in particular language-games. (In doing this, we will also be deconstructing the Tractarian picture of language and the world, so to say, as well as examining the nature of language.) However, above we spoke of the words such as "language", "name", "thinking", etc., but not of the word "simple" (or "composite"). So why are we discussing the use of *this* word now? Because, first, it is also part of the Tractarian picture of language and the world (as we will see shortly in §2.4). Second, and more importantly in the present context, Wittgenstein's remark on that word in §47 (just quoted) helps us understand what we

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[58] At one point in the *PI*, Wittgenstein's interlocutor vehemently protests against this by saying: "But isn't at least the same *the same*?" (§215). Wittgenstein characterizes this by saying:

> For identity we seem to have an infallible paradigm: namely, in the identity of a thing with itself. I feel like saying: "Here at any rate there can't be different interpretations. If someone sees a thing, he sees identity too." (§215)

What he goes on to say regarding what is supposed in the old way of thinking to be the basis of logic (and metaphysics), namely the 'law of identity', illustrates how radically different our new way of thinking is:

> "A thing is identical with itself." — There is no finer example of a useless sentence, which nevertheless is connected with a certain play of the imagination. It is as if in our imagination we put a thing into its own shape and saw that it fitted. (§216)

[59] I am saying this because it actually already began with the contextualization of sense in Chapter 1. And I go on to say that 'contextualization *starts* with these words' because it is not restricted to them.

mean by ‘contextualization’: it is a *particular example* in relation to which we are now examining (and applying) the expression ‘contextualization of logic’ — as the reversal of the Tractarian ‘sublimation of logic’ (which was based upon the presumption of *absolute sense*). (Just as we explained ‘contextualization of sense’ by means of an application to a particular example in §§1.2-1.3 above.) Wittgenstein is here applying contextualization to the word “simple”. And we are explaining what we mean by ‘contextualization of logic’ by means of this application. The context of this application is the presumption of *absolute sense* for this word, which we are familiar with in philosophy (contemporary ontology, for example): as if “simple” already means *something* over and above its various possible uses in particular language-games[60]. That is a ‘*metaphysical* use’ of the word; but it must be brought to its ‘*everyday* use’ if its employment is to have sense (§116): “For [we] got it from *there*, and nowhere else” (§134). This is required by the fact[61] that we are (must be) using the same everyday language in philosophizing — and we are using it as it is used ordinarily (§120). For *that* — the ordinary use — is all we *know* for certain; anything beyond is not something we *already* know[62]. Consequently, we do (since we must) contextualize logic: “What *we* do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use.” (§116).

[60] One imagines it means: ‘that which cannot be destroyed’. But what if it is now asked: What does *this* mean? For it does not mean, of course, that ‘cannot’ means lack of necessary power on *our* part. It is supposed to mean: ‘logically cannot’. But what does *this* mean? We do not quite know. Or rather: we know but cannot put into words. We perhaps imagine that we see what we mean, say, in the case of colors, such as when we say: ‘red-ness can’t be destroyed’ (§57). The presumption of context-transcending absolute sense for words will be one central point of focus throughout what follows.
[61] This is a *very* important fact, as we will see on multiple occasions in what follows. See the next two footnotes.
[62] See our remarks on the distinction between what we know and what is beyond in §1.4.3.2 above. See also §§5.5-5.6, 6.2, and 7.2 below.

### 2.3.1 Contextualization: 'Logic of language' means logic-s of particular language-games

Through contextualization, Wittgenstein reverses the Tractarian sublimated picture of language: "We're talking about the spatial and temporal phenomenon of language, not about some non-spatial, atemporal non-entity." (§108, boxed remark). When the author of the *TLP* uses these words ("language", "thinking", etc.), he imagines himself to be making sense, to be talking about (conceiving) something: but this is an illusion (see §2.4.1 below). These are words of our everyday language, as such, they belong to a context where they have a particular use. Outside this use, they lack meaning altogether[63]. That is to say, it is *not* as if the author of the *TLP* is talking about something (for example and most importantly, *language*) but making mistakes in understanding *its* nature. Wittgenstein's judgment is far radical than that: given how far removed from our actual use of language the Tractarian picture is, what it is a picture of, something mysterious, is altogether unlike visible phenomena of our everyday language; the words it employs are[64] *literally nonsense* — i.e. giving expression to something that is a *mere picture*[65]. (Simply because "[t]he language-game in which they are to be applied is missing" (§96).) As such, it does become questionable whether *that* which he is talking about (whatever it is and if there is such a thing) is even *our* language (i.e. what we ordinarily call 'language'):

> But isn't it our *meaning* it that gives sense to the sentence? (And here, of course, belongs the fact that one cannot mean a senseless sequence of words.) And meaning something lies within the domain of the mind. But it is also something private! It is the intangible Something; comparable only to consciousness itself.

[63] This is very closely connected with the following essential point which will be further discussed later: namely, the question of what we know when we know what something is, e.g. time, i.e. when we possess the concept of something — which is essential to understanding the relation between language (concepts) and the world (phenomena). See §3.3.2.3 and §§5.5-5.6.

[64] Just as the words we employed in describing it here would *be*, had we not added such expressions as 'He thinks, presumes, imagines' and 'purportedly, supposedly'.

[65] A picture is of the same kind as a sign (word, sentence, expression, interpretation, etc.): i.e. something that has *no* sense in itself, but *can* have sense in a particular use.

> How *could* one find this ludicrous? After all, it is, as it were, a dream of our language. (§358)

It is no coincidence that Wittgenstein is talking here about the Tractarian conception of meaning something as a remarkable mental act that gives sense to the sentence (see §2.2 above). Through his sublimation of the words he was concerned with, the author of the *TLP* unknowingly created a fictional world of images:, he thought he was capturing the essence — but, remarkably, he was, as it were, a prisoner in a world of images:

> When we believe that we have to find that order, the ideal, in our actual language, we become dissatisfied with what are ordinarily called "sentences", "words", "signs".
>
> The sentence and the word that logic deals with are supposed to be something pure and clear-cut. And now we rack our brains over the nature of the *real* sign. — Is it perhaps the *idea* of the sign? Or the idea at the present moment? (§105)
>
> *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (4.5): "The general form of propositions is: This is how things are." —— That is the kind of proposition one repeats to oneself countless times. One thinks that one is tracing nature over and over again, and one is merely tracing round the frame through which we look at it. (§114)

On the basis of this example (the *TLP* picture), let us make sure that we understand *this* right: when we say that words (and sentences) have no meaning (or sense) *outside* language-games, we are simply saying that they (the words) have no meaning outside *language* per se. For what we call "language" is nothing other than the diverse, complicated network (or totality) of particular language-games: that is, language is not *one single thing* (possessing 'formal unity'), but 'a family of structures' (§108). Thus 'logic of language' means 'logic-s of particular language-games'. This is *contextualization of logic*: "everything descriptive [constitutive] of a language-game is part of logic" (*OC* §56).

Notice that this is made possible by rejecting the conception of essence we identified above which lies at the foundation of the *TLP* view (see §2.1): the essence of a phenomenon is a common element present in all its instances:

> "…You talk about all sorts of language-games, but have nowhere said what is essential to a language-game, and so to language: what is common to all these activities, and makes them into language or parts of language. So you let yourself off the very part of the investigation that once gave you the most headache, the part about the *general form of the proposition* and of language."
>
> And this is true. — Instead of pointing out something common to all that we call language, I'm saying that these phenomena have no one thing in common in virtue of which we use the same word for all — but there are many different kinds of *affinity* between them. And on account of this affinity, or these affinities, we call them all "languages". I'll try to explain this. (§65)

Wittgenstein goes on to explain what he means in the next section (§66), and then introduces the notion of 'family-resemblance':

> I can think of no better expression to characterize these similarities than "family resemblances"; for the various resemblances between members of a family…overlap and criss-cross in the same way. — And I shall say: 'games' form a family. (§67).

Thus we see that *diversity* as opposed to *unity* is one essential component of the contrast between the *TLP* and the *PI* conceptions of logic, which is the direct result of the rejection of the conception of essence as hidden common element. With contextualization, we are thereby introducing diversity in *logic* (§23).

This is essentially a move from the general to the particular case in philosophy: the 'essence of language' does not mean *one single thing* universally shared by all instances of language ('general propositional form'), i.e. something absolutely general in nature. Rather, it will mean something that is more specific or particular in nature: for *this* very reason, of course, it will be *diverse*. This is one essential point of contrast between the two views of logic: the *TLP* crystalline purity

was absolutely general and possessed a formal unity, the *PI* now regards logic as having to do with the *particular case*, thus greatly diverse:

> But how many kinds of sentence are there? Say assertion, question and command? — There are *countless* kinds; countless different kinds of use of all the things we call "signs", "words", "sentences". And this diversity is not something fixed, given once for all; but new types of language, new language-games, as we may say, come into existence, and others become obsolete and get forgotten. (We can get a *rough picture* of this from the changes in mathematics.)
>
> The word "language-*game*" is used here to emphasize the fact that the *speaking* of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life.
>
> Consider the variety of language-games in the following examples, and in others:
>
> …
>
> — It is interesting to compare the diversity of the tools of language and of the ways they are used, the diversity of kinds of word and sentence, with what logicians have said about the structure of language. (This includes the author of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*.) (§23)

Wittgenstein in the *BB* refers to logicians' obsession with *unity* as our 'craving for generality': i.e. "the contemptuous attitude towards the particular case" in logic, in philosophy (p. 18). He says there:

> The idea that in order to get clear about the meaning of a general term one had to find the common element in all its applications has shackled philosophical investigation; for it has not only led to no result, but also *made the philosopher dismiss as irrelevant the concrete cases, which alone could have helped him to understand the usage of the general term*. When Socrates asks the question, "what is knowledge?" he does not even regard it as a *preliminary* answer to enumerate cases of knowledge. (pp. 19-20; first emphasis added)

Thus with the rejection of essence as common element, *particular cases* now have logical significance. So if we want to understand what a name is, e.g., we will have to examine the actual use of the word, that is, particular instances of names, i.e. various examples of it. The same applies to sentences, rules, and language, as well as to any other phenomenon. We cannot, consequently, investigate the nature of language without examining actual instances and phenomena of language: i.e. particular language-games. Wittgenstein applies this *contextualization* to *all* the

words whose logic (i.e. actual use, grammar) he is investigating — especially those words which the *TLP* had sublimated. This means, among other things, we will examine concepts through particular instances, and we will *thereby* be examining the nature of *phenomena* as well: for, as we just noted, the nature of phenomena is now directly visible in particular cases. (But this, of course, is not an empirical investigation.) We can thus begin to see how, in Wittgenstein's later work, philosophy can investigate the nature of phenomena by examining the nature of language. (See §3.3.2.3 below.)

Let me finally emphasize one thing about contextualization. It is not as if we now simply reject essence as one single thing and hold that it is many 'things'. For example, "name" means, say, three things instead of one. This way of speaking is still committed to the conception of essence as common element and is therefore too general in nature. We make a distinction, say, between proper names, nouns like "table", and "names of certain actions and properties" (*PI* §1). And let us assume this is a comprehensive classification (assume that all names belong to either one of the three). Contextualization does not merely mean: "name" has three meanings: *this*, *that*, and *the other*. If we think in this way, we are simply applying the conception of essence as common element at another, slightly less general level. Let us consider the word "mind" (which we discuss in §3.3.2.3 below). There are concepts less general in nature that may be said to belong to the concept of mind, such as 'understanding' and 'feeling'. To say that mind has no single essence ("mind" does not mean one single thing) is not to say that mind consists of many things each having a single essence, such as understanding, feeling, hoping, etc.. What we call 'understanding', for example, is itself greatly diverse. But it is not as if there is a number of sub-phenomena and sub-concepts which themselves possess a common

element and together make up the more general concept 'understanding'. In this way, through contextualization, we go right down to the *particular instances*. And, difficult as it may be to comprehend, we *never* see such a common element shared by all instances of *any* class of cases ('class' defined by a *concept*, or something of this sort that has generality by nature) however much more *specific* it may be compared to, say, that of 'understanding'. The illusion of sameness and unity (presumption of and search for a common element) at the level of, say, "mind" or "language" is exactly the same as the one at the level of, say, "Now I understand" ('understanding' in the sense of something that takes place at a certain moment as opposed to, say, understanding the rules of a game) and "people's names"[66]. For the illusion is due to the use of the *same expression* in each case (although the latter pair is much more *particular* in nature compared to the former) — which *is* an illusion in both cases simply because the *only thing that is common (same) in all instances is the use of the (same) word.* (This may therefore be said to 'unify' them in some sense. See our discussion of the nature of a concept in §§5.5-5.6.). This simply means: contextualization of logic reaches all the way down to the particular cases[67]. (Thus contextualization of logic is always tied to contextualization of sense. See §§1.2-1.3 above.) Compare *this* contextualization of 'understanding' (which we just illustrated)

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[66] This helps understand why and how Wittgenstein in the above passage (§23) says that there are '*countless* kinds' words (signs, sentences). We do not object to this by saying: Is language then an infinite phenomenon? (But how so? Even the universe, as far as we can see, is not infinite!) No: Wittgenstein's point is that with different concepts (which are of course finite in nature but also dynamic and changing) we may categorize the uses of language in all sorts of ways (and *we* may *use* language in all sorts of ways).

[67] Consider in this context: "Am I not getting closer and closer to saying that in the end logic cannot be described? You must look at the practice of language, then you will see it." (*OC*, §501). See also the following remark:

> One cannot guess how a word functions. One has to *look* at its application and learn from that.
>
> But the difficulty is to remove the prejudice which stands in the way of doing so. It is not a *stupid* prejudice. (*PI* §340)

This 'prejudice' is closely related to the difficulty of getting rid of the conception of essence as common element *altogether*.

to the way the author of the *TLP* conceives it: "To understand a proposition means to know what is the case if it is true" (§4.024).

## 2.4 Tractarian picture: Language depicts the world, and its 'logic' is a *mysterious* entity

Recall our discussion of names and the purported '*real* name': namely, the word "this" (§2.2; *PI* §38). Wittgenstein examines the *reason* why one adopts 'this odd conception' (§38) and "want[s] to make precisely this word into a name, when it obviously is *not* a name", identifying the following as the essential notion underlying: "*a name ought really to signify a simple*" (§39). He describes the reasoning behind this notion as follows:

> "What the names in language signify must be indestructible; for it must be possible to describe the state of affairs in which everything destructible is destroyed. And this description will contain words; and what corresponds to these cannot in that case be destroyed, for otherwise the words would have no meaning." (§55)

This description gives us a particular picture of language and the world, especially concerning the relation between the two, which we began to describe in §2.2 above. Language and the world are separately conceived (strict dichotomy presumed). The essential workings of language are thought to be *completely independent* of what actually is the case: first because it is a supernatural phenomenon (its essence, logic, deals only with what is absolutely a priori; cf. sublimation); and second, because it essentially *depicts* the world. Whatever the case is, in the world, language must be able to depict it. This means its words must be (analyzed into) 'names' (in the sense of '*real* name' which signify absolute simples, which are objects that cannot be destroyed, or to use the correct ontological terminology, have no 'proper parts') because there is a 'possible world' (since we can imagine, 'think', it) in which there

are only absolute simples (where 'everything destructible destroyed'). Language has to be able to depict this world too (since that is its essence, or its essential function[68]): so although the everyday language contains words that are not *names* (in the strict sense), when these are analyzed, the essential hidden workings of language ('ideal language', see above) will be seen to be through only names which signify absolute simples[69]. In this way, language will be able to describe *that* possible world too[70].

Wittgenstein locates this picture in the very first section of the *PI* through Augustine's description of the process of a child's learning language: "These words, it seems to me, give us a particular picture of the essence of human language. It is this: the words in language name objects — sentences are combinations of such names." (§1). He later locates this same picture in what Socrates says in the *Theaetetus*:

> What lies behind the idea that names really signify simples? —
>
> Socrates says in the *Theaetetus*: "If I am not mistaken, I have heard some people say this: there is no explanation of the *primary elements* — so to speak — out of which we and everything else are composed; for everything

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[68] I am saying this because the essence of language, its logic, is something ineffable, something we cannot express or talk about by means of language. That is why there is a tension, on the part of the author of the *TLP*, in saying both 1) that we cannot speak about the logic of language *at all* (so must 'pass over in silence'), *and* 2) that the essence of a proposition and of language is to depict the world, which is expressed in the proposition: "The general form of a proposition is: This is how things stand" (§4.5). We may account for this apparent inconsistency by saying that the essential *function* of language is to depict the world.

[69] Indeed, there is already another reason for this requirement (*sublimation of sense*; see §2.2 above): "The requirement that simple signs be possible is the requirement that sense be determinate." (§3.23). 'Simple signs' means *names* (in the sense of 'real name'): i.e. names of absolute simples. Given sublimation of sense (see above §2.2), the sentence must have an *exact* sense (in the absolute sense of 'exact'), otherwise it would not have *any* sense. (Or: a determinate sense, in the absolute sense of 'determinate'.) This means that in the *complete analysis* of the sentence (§3.201), we must find nothing but *names*, which are immediate representatives of *objects* (absolute simples) (§3.22): "The configuration of objects in a situation corresponds to the configuration of simple signs in the propositional sign." (§3.21).

On the other hand, recall our discussion above in §2.2 of §81. Philosophy, if conceived on the model of natural sciences, looks for hidden workings of language (in 'ideal conditions') beneath the surface of everyday language. Our present discussion in the text illustrates this conception as it was present in the *TLP*.

[70] Indeed, language *already* does it: since we ourselves are now describing that possibility through language! We are thinking (of) 'a possible situation': a possibility of thinking is also at the same time a possibility of the world.

> that exists in and of itself can be *signified* only by names; no other determination is possible, either that it *is* or that it *is not* . . . But what exists in and of itself has to be . . . named without any other determination…But just as what is composed of the primary elements is itself an interwoven structure, so the correspondingly interwoven names become explanatory language; for the essence of the latter is the interweaving of names."
>
> Both Russell's 'individuals' and my 'objects' (*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*) were likewise such primary elements. (§46)

This picture[71] of language and the world is what lies behind the Tractarian crystalline conception. (So although we are discussing the particular form it takes in the *TLP*, what essentially is in question is widely present in philosophy as indicated.) When we said that in this conception thinking and the world share the a priori logical *order of possibilities* (§97), what was in question is at once possibilities of the world and possibilities of thinking — indeed, these are the *same* thing. Thus the sense of a sentence precedes not only use and context, but also what actually is the case *as a whole*: for it is the picture of a *possible* situation or fact (cf. the Tractarian 'picture theory of sense'; see §§7.3-7.4 below). This is because a problem arises due to the picture of language in question (and this picture was an answer to the question of the essence of language, i.e. the problem of the logic of language): since language essentially depicts the world, *how* does a sentence do this? The (rough) answer will be: a sentence depicts a possible situation, state of affairs in the world; its sense is a picture of this situation. Wittgenstein calls this, the sense, in the *BB* "a shadow of the fact; as it were, the next thing to the fact" (p. 36). In that context in the *BB*, Wittgenstein is dealing with his earlier view in the *TLP*, making explicit reference to it (p. 31ff). The problem that arises (for the logician) is: How can one *think* what is

[71] And perhaps the fact that we find the *very same picture* in both Socrates and the author of the *TLP* helps us understand the sense of Wittgenstein's opening quote from Nestroy, the famous epigraph: "*The trouble about progress is that it always looks much greater than it really is*." The author of the *TLP* thought to have solved all problems of philosophy by showing how they arose due to 'a misunderstanding of the logic of our language' (*TLP* Preface); but his way of conceiving language through which he attempted to do this was in fact committed to the same picture of language which was widely present, even in Socrates.

*not* the case? (*PI* §95; *BB* p. 30)[72]. Wittgenstein says that this is just another way of expressing the following: "When we say, *mean*, that such-and-such is the case, then, with what we mean, we do not stop anywhere short of the fact, but mean: *such-and-such — is — thus-and-so*." (§95). (Cf. The idea of the 'shadow of a fact'; *sublimation* of sense, see §2.2 above.) That is, when we 'think' something (when we understand the sense of a sentence, i.e. picture a state of affairs), what we think is essentially no different than a fact[73]. The Tractarian solution to this 'paradox' is by way of saying:

> It is obvious that an imagined world, however different it may be from the real one, must have *something*—a form—in common with it. (§2.022)
> Objects are just what constitute this unalterable form. (§2.023)
> Objects are what is unalterable and subsistent; their configuration is what is changing and unstable. (§2.0271)
> The configuration of objects produces states of affairs. (§2.0272)

So thinking what *is not* the case (a possible situation, a non-existent fact, so to say; §3.02) is simply putting objects in a possible configuration, which is no different than thinking what *is* the case because this too is simply putting objects in a possible configuration: "A picture represents a possible situation in logical space" (§2.202). The sentence describes a possible state of affairs (a configuration of objects;

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[72] The problem of the logic of language reduces to this problem because of the picture of language just described. Language essentially depicts the world; but this depiction must also be independent from the world, of what actually is the case, because language must be able to depict *any possible* world — including the one in which 'everything destructible is destroyed'. "Nothing in the province of logic can be merely possible. Logic deals with every possibility and all possibilities are its facts." (*TLP* §2.0121)

The problem is therefore about the connection between thinking (language) and the world. The Tractarian solution will be shortly given in the text.

[73] We can see how the author of the *TLP* takes himself to conceive this in the following intuitive act of imagination:

> The essence of a propositional sign is very clearly seen if we imagine one composed of spatial objects (such as tables, chairs, and books) instead of written signs.
> Then the spatial arrangement of these things will express the sense of the proposition. (§3.1431)

So in one sense, a proposition and a fact are the same (kind of) thing. The proposition has a sense (THIS in understanding or meaning something by a sentence), which is also the sense of the fact (THIS in seeing a spatial configuration of objects). Or alternatively: What we *see* in the proposition (when we understand or mean it) is the same thing we see in the fact. Hence the conception of sense as "a shadow of the fact; as it were, the next thing to the fact" (*BB* p. 36).

§2.0272, §3.21), and we compare this to reality in order to see whether what is described is not only possible but also actual, i.e. an existing state of affairs in the world: “The agreement or disagreement of its sense with reality constitutes its truth or falsity” (§2.222). And: “The totality of existing states of affairs is the world” (§2.04). But of course this (the world, what actually exists in it) does not at all concern logic, but only the natural science. For “[l]ogic deals with every possibility and all possibilities are its facts.” (*TLP* §2.0121). So then the problem identified above (How can one *think* what is *not* the case?) now reduces to the problem: How can one think *anything* — what is or what is not the case? In other words: how can a sentence depict a fact or state of affairs (existing or non-existing)? The answer to this is (as we will further explain shortly): by means of a common ‘logical/pictorial form’ (§2.15ff). Language and the world, in general, share a ‘logical form’ which makes it possible for language to depict the world; in particular, a proposition can depict a fact only by sharing a ‘logical form’ with it (the fact it depicts): “Pictorial form is the possibility that things are related to one another in the same way as the elements of the picture” (§2.151); “*That* is how a picture is attached to reality; it reaches right out to it” (§2.1511).

In ideal language, which is the language we arrive at (ideally) through analysis of the propositions (see above §§2.1-2), which is therefore the ‘end goal of our investigations’, ‘a state of complete exactness’ (§91; see below §2.5.2 and §3.3.1), we have ‘elementary propositions’ (and the propositions we “can construct out of them”; *TLP* §4.51): “It is obvious that the analysis of propositions must bring us to elementary propositions which consist of names in immediate combination.” (§4.221). (The reasoning behind this is explained above in the present section.) “An elementary proposition consists of names. It is a nexus, a concatenation, of names.”

(§4.22). And ‘names’, of course, name ‘objects’ which are ‘simples’ (§2.2) — absolute simples — that is, the ‘primary elements’ which cannot be destroyed (*PI* §46), i.e. which has no ‘parts’. (Or perhaps, to follow the jargon of contemporary ontology, we should say — ‘*more correctly*’: which has no ‘proper parts’…) And “sentences are combinations of such names” (*PI* §1). Of course, strictly speaking, only ‘elementary sentences’ are combinations of such names. But then ‘other’ sentences are ‘constructed out of’ these sentences through ‘truth-operations’ (*TLP* §5.234, §5.3): “A proposition is a truth-function of elementary propositions.” (§5). Thus in a sense all propositions ‘supervene’ on ‘elementary propositions’: “If all true elementary propositions are given, the result is a complete description of the world.” (§4.26). So in one sense when propositions are ‘completely analysed’, we arrive at nothing but “a nexus, a concatenation, of names”, which is ‘elementary propositions’ (§4.22). But then, where exactly is the ‘logic of language’ — that sublime entity, the ideal, the perfect logical order, the ‘great mirror’? Well, we are supposed to find ‘it’ *as a whole* in any one of ‘elementary propositions’ *already*:

> An elementary proposition really contains all logical operations in itself…One could say that the sole logical constant was what *all* propositions, by their very nature, had in common with one another.
>
> But that is the general propositional form. (§5.47)

Wherever there is sense, the ideal (which is the logic of language) is *already* present (as a crystalline unified whole). So it must be present in *any* elementary proposition. But we said that “elementary propositions…consist of names in immediate combination” (§4.221), that “[a]n elementary proposition consists of names”, that it “is a nexus, a concatenation, of names” (§4.22). So *where* exactly is ‘logic of language’? Thus the ‘logic of language’ turns into a *mysterious* entity: we know ‘it’, the ideal; we ‘already see it’ (*PI* §101ff) — but we cannot express ‘it’, or say anything about ‘it’ (see: *TLP* §6.124). We know that ‘it’ is *Something*; whatever ‘it’

is, we cannot *say*. The fundamental *source* of this result, however, is what Wittgenstein refers to as "[m]y fundamental idea" (§4.0312): namely, the notion that the 'logic of facts' is not something that can be represented (expressed) in language. A proposition depicts a fact by being a picture of it; for this logical depiction to be possible, the proposition and the fact must share a 'logical form'. The proposition manages to depict the fact by virtue of this common logical form. However, and this is the crucial point, the proposition cannot depict this logical form, for it is what makes depiction possible. This is impossible, the reasoning goes, because depiction of something is possible only from a point *outside* the thing depicted; and so we must be outside the logical form to be able to depict it; but this cannot be done, because without the logical form, depiction is not possible (§§2.17-4). Therefore, the logic of language (and the world), its (their) essence, cannot be expressed by means of propositions and language: "Logic is transcendental" (§6.13).

Yet we can, apparently, say at least *one* thing about the logic of language[74]: "The general form of a proposition is: This is how things stand." (§4.5). What does *this* tell us? It basically says that the sole fundamental essence of language is to *picture* the world ('facts', 'states of affairs'). This is the Tractarian picture of language and the world which we identified above, which Wittgenstein locates in Socrates, Augustine, Russell and the author of the *TLP*. The world is *already there* (in some sense), language comes only afterwards and depicts it. So the essence of language is all about depicting the world: that is what is expressed in the Tractarian 'general propositional form' — "This is how things are". And *this* is the picture governing the *TLP* conception of logic. But part of this picture which is peculiarly Tractarian is the notion that besides *that* ('general form' of propositions), we *cannot*

[74] And indeed only and at most one thing, because "whatever we can say *in advance* about the form of all propositions, we must be able to say *all at once*"; (T*LP* §5.47).

*say anything* about the logic of language ('logical form') by means of language (as explained in the preceding paragraph). Hence the idea of an *ineffable* 'it': "What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence" (*TLP* §7)[75]. (This will be further discussed in Chapter 7.)

### 2.4.1 Applying contextualization to crystalline purity: This is merely a picture, not something we are able to make sense of

Let us now seriously ask *what we mean* (and whether we mean anything at all) when we attempt to use *these* words which the author of the *TLP* uses and which we have been using to describe the Tractarian picture: "name", "object", "simple" (etc.). We said, for example: names signify objects, and objects are simple. All of these words are sublimated. We do not mean *what we ordinarily call* 'names', 'objects', 'simple'. That is, we are not making *everyday use* of these words. We are making a 'metaphysical use' (*PI* §116). We do not know any examples of *simples* (in this presumed absolute sense), but still we talk about them. Similarly, we talk about

[75] We will discuss this notion below in §7.6. The resolute reading makes the objection against the idea of 'ineffable things' (attributing it to the *TLP*) on the basis of the consideration that Wittgenstein judges his propositions to be nonsensical at the end of the book (§6.54): for how can he deliver anything through nonsense? This objection is expressed, in particular, against postulation of a special kind of nonsense through which 'ineffable insights' are conveyed. And indeed it is true: that such specific, countable 'ineffable-s' are not part of the Tractarian picture, which its author expresses by saying, e.g.: "Logical forms are *without* numbers" (§4.128), "there are no numbers in logic" (§5.453), "[i]n logic there can be no distinction between the general and the specific" (§5.454). But this is not a rejection of the idea of an ineffable 'it': on the contrary, it is a *particular conception* of the ineffable. It is strictly in line with the notion that logical form cannot be expressed by means of propositions: indeed, according to the author, this is necessary because otherwise the ineffable nature of the thing in question would be in question. This conception is the consequence of the author's *thorough* application of his 'fundamental idea' that "there can be no representatives of the *logic* of facts" (§4.0312). We see this application throughout the book: on many occasions (in relation to many different things) the author says that 'we can actually do without…' ('it must go without saying…') since the thing we are concerned with is *always* visible (i.e. already present) in the propositions themselves. He says: "The precedent to which we are constantly inclined to appeal must reside in the symbol itself." (§5.525). He even applies this idea to 'logical propositions': "we can actually do without logical propositions; for in a suitable notation we can in fact recognize the formal properties of propositions by mere inspection of the propositions themselves." (§6.112). That is exactly the sense of his remarks such as: "there cannot be surprises in logic" (§6.1251), "[l]ogic must look after itself" (§5.473).

*names* which supposedly name these simples although we do not have any examples of these either (except perhaps Russell's *real* name, "this", §38; see the discussion above). Neither do we have any example of 'elementary propositions' which consist of such names, which the author of the *TLP* himself explicitly acknowledges (cf. §5.55), but still we presume we *know* them:

> Clearly we have some concept of elementary propositions quite apart from their particular logical forms. (§5.555)
> 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. (§5.5562)
> The *application* of logic decides what elementary propositions there are.
> What belongs to its application, logic cannot anticipate. (§5.557)
> If I cannot say a priori what elementary propositions there are, then the attempt to do so must lead to obvious nonsense. (§5.5571)

But the view Wittgenstein develops of propositions and language in the *TLP* is altogether based (comes to be based at the end of analysis) on elementary propositions, and now we are told by him that although we know a priori *that* they exist (or rather: *must* exist), we do *not* know 'what elementary propositions there are' (cannot know a priori)[76].

This obviously is based upon presumption of an *absolute* sense for these words: 'absolute' in the sense that we do not have to specify (explain, etc.) what we mean since we *already mean something* — and although we do not mean what we ordinarily mean with these words, and although we cannot explain what it is that we

[76] It is perhaps an important fact that right after this remark Wittgenstein goes on to say: "*The limits of my language* are the limits of my world." (§5.6). Notice that all the remarks we quoted in the text on elementary propositions are *comments* on §5.55 which begins with: "We now have to answer a priori the question about the possible forms of elementary propositions". In those remarks Wittgenstein acknowledges a *limitation* as regards a priori knowledge of elementary propositions. Then in §5.6, he speaks of 'the limits of my [his?] language', on which he further comments in §5.62 where he acknowledges "how much truth there is in solipsism": "The world is *my* world: this is manifest in the fact that the limits of *language* (of that language which alone I understand) mean the limits of *my* world." This is acknowledgement of the fact that his picture collapses language into a *private language*, as we will see in the next section.

mean by them, cannot give any examples[77], we presume what we mean is the *real* sense of them. But the fact that we ourselves are using the same ordinary language of our everyday lives, *this* striking fact — whose essential logical significance we will examine much more closely in what follows — inevitably leads Wittgenstein to acknowledge:

> When I talk about language (word, sentence, etc.), I must speak the language of every day. So is this language too coarse, too material, for what we want to say? *Well then, how is another one to be constructed*? — And how extraordinary that we should be able to do anything at all with the one we have!
>
> In giving explanations, I already have to use language full-blown (not some sort of preparatory, provisional one); this is enough to show that I can come up only with externalities about language.
>
> Yes, but then how can these observations satisfy us? — Well, your very questions were framed in this language; they had to be expressed in this language, if there was anything to ask! (§120)

So we have to, before anything else, consider how the words which we are using as we philosophize are 'actually used' "in the language in which [they are] at home" (§116), "that is, in our everyday language" — "[f]or we got [them] from *there*, and nowhere else" (§134). This means that we have to *contextualize* our words, naturally starting from the words that are of particular significance in logic which we have

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[77] Giving examples is essential to Wittgenstein's new view, for what we know when we know what something is is *completely* expressed in the examples we can give in order to explain what we know (see §§69, 71, 75, 208-10, 362). Application of a word can only be seen by describing particular cases. Hence the essential logical significance of the notion of teaching in Wittgenstein's later philosophy. "One cannot guess how a word functions. One has to *look* at its application and learn from that." (§340)

Compare this, on the other hand, to the way the author of the *TLP* saw and did things. He could not give any examples of elementary (or atomic) propositions but still presumed he (everybody) *knew* them. Later, Wittgenstein speaks about this in his Lectures (1932-5):

> Russell and I both expected to find the first elements, or "individuals", and thus the possible atomic propositions, by logical analysis. Russell thought that subject-predicate propositions, and 2-term relations, for example, would be the result of a final analysis. This exhibits a wrong idea of logical analysis: logical analysis is taken as being like chemical analysis. And we were at fault for giving no examples of atomic propositions or of individuals. We both in different ways pushed the question of examples aside. We should not have said "We can't give them because analysis has not gone far enough, but we'll get there in time". Atomic propositions are not the result of an analysis which has yet to be made. We can talk of atomic propositions if we mean those which on their face do not contain "and", "or" etc., or those which in accordance with methods of analysis laid down do not contain these. There are no hidden atomic propositions. (p. 11)

been using to describe the Tractarian picture. The author of the *TLP* imagined an absolute sense of "simple", for example, when he said that 'objects are simple'. But this word, like everything else, has sense only 'in a particular language-game': for it may mean *very different things* when it is used in different contexts — and it does *not* mean *anything* outside a particular language-game: "It *makes no sense at all to speak absolutely of* the 'simple parts of a chair'." (§47; emphasis added). We *know* what the word "simple" means in *this* or *that* use (descriptions of particular cases, language-games). The contextual nature of the logic of language necessitates this. We have to describe *examples*. 'Contextualization of logic', as we indicated above in §2.3, does not simply mean acknowledgement of various meanings a word (expression) such as "language" do and may have. It also tells us that the thing we know (when we know what language is, for example), whatever 'it' is, consists in the *particular instances* to which the word is applied (instances of the *concept*). Or, more correctly, what is know is *not* a *Something*[78]. (We will see this in Chapter 5 in the form of the notion that what we know — the rule, the concept — *consists in*

[78] That is: it is not as if there is some *thing* that we call "logic" but only we contextualize 'it'. ('Logic-s of language-games' does not mean: various 'it'-s.) The point is the exact opposite: there is no such thing. But then the question arises: what sort of things belong to the logic of language? We say that logic means the logic of a particular language-game; but we do not want to say, of course, that the logic of the word "chair" is equally important in regard to the logic of language as that of the word "rule" or "name".

There are indeed certain words that are of particular interest to us in logic. But it is also not as if we *isolate* these words and only study their uses (i.e. logic-s), excluding the uses of such 'humble' words as "chair". Rather, we study the logic of the word "rule", for example, by studying the use of the word "chair". This is what Wittgenstein does, for example, when he observes that the vagueness in the application of the concept of a chair (existence of cases where the application is not clear) is not a problem for the existence of the rule(s) governing its application (§80).

Furthermore, we will see that the logic of language will also involve (essential connection to) certain 'extremely general facts of nature' (see, e.g., §142, boxed remark). This means: contextualization of logic which starts with contextualization of sense reaches all the way up to the most general context of human life and language: i.e. our actual natural world. The context of my use of these words, for example, involves (e.g.) the purpose for which these words are employed and the function of their employment for this purpose — but it also involves, e.g., the fact that I learned (know) language. The context of this fact in turn is the fact that human language *exists*. And so on. The immediate context of this footnote, for example, is the particular region of the text to which it is attached — but, odd as this may sound, it also involves (however indirectly) 'certain extremely general facts of nature'. (Similarly: the meaning of the word "chair" is essentially connected with the fact that in our world on this planet there is gravity.)

application to particular cases. Alternatively: the essence of the thing consists in particular instances.)

2.4.2 Tractarian picture: Why language collapses into a private language

It is a very important fact that one *presumes sense* (and indeed an absolute one) — *despite* being *unable to point to any actual example* of these things, for example an absolute simple or an elementary proposition, despite not being able to give any model, describe any case to which the word (expression, sentence) is to be applied. (This is similar to the case of the sense of a sentence, which we discussed above in §§1.2-1.3 where we explained 'contextualization of sense'. One presumes an absolute sense for the sentence, i.e. a sense over and above its use in a particular context which it *already* has.) This is commitment to the notion that one can know *Something* but cannot explain it at all, cannot describe it, cannot express it or put it into words, cannot say it, cannot say anything about it. One finds this, for example, when one imagines 'primary elements which can only be named': you perhaps *see* such an element (in your mind through a priori reflection), so you 'know' it, but *all* you can do is to 'name' it — that is, perhaps attach a sign to it, or write down the sign somewhere, or make a noise, or utter a word. Or, better — and all of the former come down to this: you utter the word "THIS". (So it is not fully incomprehensible that Russell says the only '*real*' name is the word "this". See §38 and our discussion of it above.) We are of course not saying that someone actually does this (although of course some even do actually do). We are saying: when one takes himself to conceive something in *that* way (to know something without being able to possibly give *any* example of it) — the most radical example of which is the Tractarian 'logic of language' or 'logical form', the ineffable 'it' — one is actually conceiving 'it' as a

*Something* "about which nothing could be said" (§304), as a mere THIS (at best). When we speak of a mere THIS, what we mean is that one takes himself to *already see* 'it' through his *mind*'s eye, so to say (one sees the Tractarian ideal whenever one understands a sentence, for example): but that is it. The author of the *TLP* is aware of this; that is why in the end he says that we 'must pass over in silence' (§7). Let us make no mistake where this is (obviously) leading: namely, private ostensive explanation (definition) and private language. The author of the *TLP* seems to be aware of this too (which actually is the logical consequence of his picture of language): for he begins to talk about "that language which alone [he] understands[s]" towards the end of the book (§5.62). We are now speaking specifically about the *TLP*, its notions; but the conception that is in focus here (which presumes intelligibility of the notion of a *Something*) is quite widely present in many other places, as we will gradually see. And this is *not* a surprise: on the contrary, it is something we should *expect* because, as we observed above, the picture of language and the world that is governing the *TLP* conception is not peculiar to it but rather quite prevalent in philosophy in general. (*That* picture is what leads to *this* notion.) In terms of particular philosophers, Wittgenstein locates it in Augustine (§1, §89), in Socrates and Russell as well as the *TLP* (§46). In terms of particular domains of philosophical issues, he locates it in both mathematics and in psychology. ('It' means both the picture and the notion.) We will discuss the examples of mathematical rules (e.g. '+2' or '$2x - 1$') and sensation language (e.g. 'pain').

The presumption that *I* (i.e. anybody) can know something yet cannot explain it logically entails the notion of a private language: that is, a language which *only I* myself can understand, whose words "are to refer to what only the speaker can know" (§243). Now, notice that I expressed the said presumption by means of the

word “I” this time, and previously the word “one” (‘something one can know but…’) — and not the word “*we*”. That, of course, was intentional: because what is in question is precisely that which (supposedly) *an individual person* (I or anyone) *knows* but cannot explain *to others*. If we say, for example, that *we* all know what pain is from our own individual case (or, for example, that *we* know what time is but cannot explain it to others, unlike Augustine who expresses it with “I”; §89[79]), this implies that we are talking about the *same thing*, that is, what we each know from our *own* cases is the *same thing* (or we each know the *same thing* when we know what time is, although we cannot explain ‘it’). But if I indeed *mean* that I know *it* from my own case *only* (whatever it is), and another knows from his own case, and so on, then I *must* also say — because this is a *logical consequence* of what I said (“I know it only from my own case”) — that *I do not know whether what I know is the same as what anyone else knows*. What *I* know — *this*, I cannot explain to *others*. But what *others* know — whatever ‘it’ is, they cannot explain to *me*. When Augustine says he knows what time is but cannot explain ‘it’ to others (§89), he should be aware of the fact that since he should (as indeed he implicitly does) say the same thing of other people as well — of course, the inability to explain what he knows which he is talking about has *nothing* to do with *him*[80], and so it is not as if any other person could do what he could not — this logically entails the conclusion (i.e. means) that he knows what he knows *only* from his own case: that he *does not really know what others know*, or more precisely, does not know whether what he

[79] Augustine says in *Confessions* XI. 14 (quoted in *PI* §89) that he knows well what time is when nobody asks him, but is baffled when he tries to explain it upon being asked.
[80] It is not that, for example, he gets excited when others ask him to explain something he knows — perhaps due to a traumatic school experience with a rough teacher. (Even though this may very well be the case, as well. But that is besides the point.) And it is not as if his capability with words is not advanced.

knows is the same as what others know[81]. The notion of something I know but cannot explain to others is therefore exactly the same as the notion of something which 'I know only from my own case', which is something *private* to me (logically) — unless, of course, I am prepared to say I do *not* know it. For the essence of both is the notion of *Something* (which I know merely as a THIS). So that which I know but cannot explain to others, I *do not and cannot know* whether 'it' — THIS — is *the same as* what anyone else knows: for if I cannot explain mine to others, then they cannot explain theirs to me either. Therefore, I do not know what they know, and they do not know what I know. Consequently, the notion of something which we know but cannot explain logically entails a private object and a private language.

But, recall, this Tractarian picture — which, when its logical consequences are followed, collapses language into a private language — is not something peculiar to the *TLP*. As we observed, the same picture is present in the description Socrates gives of the nature of language (§46), and also in Augustine's description of the process of a child's learning language (§1). *Hence* it is no surprise that Augustine talks about *what time is* in exactly this way: he says he 'no longer knows' when he is asked to explain what he knows when he knows what time is (§89). But he does not, of course, mean that somehow he stops knowing it when asked to explain — nor, of course, that he never knew, so it was an illusion for him to have thought he knew what time is. Of course not, and precisely *this* is the remarkable thing he wants to point out: despite *not being able to explain at all*, he still *knows* 'it'! How can we *express* such a thing, if at all, if anyone asks us — or more correctly, *if we ask*

[81] But of course *he* probably does not want to say this, which is not important — since we are following where the *logic*, i.e. sense, of *that* way of speaking, or thinking, is leading us to. He presumes, very likely, that we all know what time is, and we all know the same thing, whatever it is; but the queer thing — which is what he wants to point out — is that 'it' is *ineffable*. But ineffability logically implies *privacy*, which is what we are demonstrating.

*ourselves* what it is that we know? The most we can say: THIS. And *this* is exactly the notion which is the essence of the idea of a private language (§253, §257). Namely: the idea of a 'private ostensive definition'. One takes himself to know the essence of a phenomenon, for example when one knows what time (or a game, or pain) is, as a mere THIS: as "a *Something* about which nothing can be said" (§304). One knows ('*sees*') *something* but cannot put it into words. This may be the Tractarian 'objects', that is the 'primary elements' Socrates talks about. It may be the Tractarian 'elementary propositions' which the author of the *TLP* says he knows but cannot give any example of. It may be the Tractarian 'ideal' (§100ff), the 'strict and clear rules for the logical construction of a proposition' (§102). They all come down to the same notion: *the essential thing is unexpressed*. Since we are talking about things that *seem* peculiarly intricate in nature (such as the Tractarian logic, mind, or such a queer thing as time, §196; see §106 and §436), this may create the false impression that what is essentially in question here has to do specifically with those things. Quite the contrary: the same exact notion which we see by means of them is equally present in other, seemingly 'humble' cases as well. When I "explain what a game is" (to a person), for example, I give "examples" and intend "them to be taken in a particular way": and "he is supposed to see in those examples that common feature which I — for some reason — [am] unable to formulate" (§71). (Thus we see that the conception of essence as common element is what underlies all this!) When we know what something is, according to this conception, what we know (the essence of that thing, phenomenon) is *not* completely expressed by means of examples (which we describe in order to explain what we know). By describing examples (particular cases), we are displaying the *application* of the relevant word, its ordinary use in every language-games; but in this conception, we are not thereby

displaying *the essential thing*. So we come to see what is in question in this conception: the essence of the thing or the phenomenon is something over and above the *use* of the relevant word in language. Thus examination of particular (concrete) cases is thus dismissed altogether: the essence is not (cannot be) seen in them. Essence of the phenomenon is one thing, use of the word is quite another: this is what lies behind the notion of something we know but cannot explain. (For example: the rule and what pain is are one thing, application of the rule and use of the word "pain" are another. Another example: what time is and what length is are one thing, how we measure, i.e. determine or judge, them — i.e. how we use the word "time" and "length" — is quite another.) But it is a presumption: a preconception about the essence of things[82]. And at the same time it is also one about language, which is presupposed in the *TLP* picture: namely, the intelligibility of the notion of a mere THIS, that such a thing makes *sense*, that it may serve as a *criterion of identity* (§251ff). ("'This body has extension.' To these words we could respond by saying: 'Nonsense!' — but are inclined to reply 'Of course!' — Why?"; §252.)

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[82] In our discussion of the *TLP*, this picture of language — in which the meaning of a word (the essence of the phenomenon this word is the name of) is not directly expressed but indirectly conveyed by means of explanations and examples — is expressed in relation to the sublime entities (logical form, rules, etc.), simply because these are what the author of the *TLP* talked about. But since the same picture is widely present outside the *TLP*, we naturally see the same kind of result, only in other cases expressed in relation to more 'ordinary' examples. For example:

> What is it like to talk silently to oneself; what goes on there? — How am I to explain it? Well, only in the way in which you can teach some-one the meaning of the expression "to talk silently to oneself". And we *do* learn the meaning of that as children. — Only no one is going to say that the person who teaches it to us tells us 'what goes on here'. (§361)
>
> Rather, it seems to us as though, in this case, the instructor *conveyed* the meaning to the pupil — without telling him directly; but in the end, the pupil is brought to the point of giving himself the correct ostensive definition. And this is where our illusion lies. (§362)

The final remark that *this is where our illusion lies* should be taken seriously and properly understood, for it is of utmost significance. One may be inclined to think that when we speak of the notion of something we know but cannot speak about, what we are talking about is something peculiar to the *TLP*. This is certainly not true. One of Wittgenstein's main aims is to show that the *same picture* of language and of the world is implicitly governing the thinking of philosophers *in general*, indeed anybody who philosophizes about anything — just because it is a picture that is deeply embedded in our language. See §115: "A *picture* held us captive. And we couldn't get outside it, for it lay in our language, and language seemed only to repeat it to us inexorably." See also: §§352, 422-6. This also explains the sense of Wittgenstein's epigraph. See footnote 71.

> One ought to ask, not what images are or what goes on when one imagines something, but how the word "imagination" is used. But that does not mean that I want to talk only about words. For the question of what imagination essentially is, is as much about the word "imagination" as my question. And I am only saying that this question is not to be clarified — neither for the person who does the imagining, nor for anyone else — by pointing; nor yet by a description of some process. The first question also asks for the clarification of a word; but it makes us expect a wrong kind of answer. (§370)

## 2.5 Logic, mathematics, and rules: Something we know but cannot explain

What is in question in the rule-following discussion is precisely this notion of something which we know but cannot explain. We give examples in the teaching of the rule of the series, the formula (say '$2x - 1$'), we want to teach, explain, communicate the rule to the pupil. But we imagine the rule — which we take ourselves to *see through* the examples but which, we think, is not *itself* completely expressed in them — to be something that *strictly determines* what is to be done, the application at any given step. Yet simply because we do *not* want to say that the rule itself is *completely expressed* in the examples we give, we will get in trouble. Let me explain. In the teaching, we have to give a *finite* number of examples; but we think that the rule extends into *infinity* — it strictly determines the steps in advance and into infinity. (So the rule is something over and above its application.) But since the examples are finite, it is always possible for the other person (to whom we give the examples in teaching or explaining) to continue the series of examples (from where we left) *differently*. For example, if I give the examples of "+2" until 100 (this number is arbitrary, it may be as small or as large as one wishes), the pupil may continue "104, 108, …" instead of the *correct* one which is the one I meant: "102, 104, …". *This* possibility is due to, reveals, the fact that *nothing* in the finite number of examples *themselves* (which I do and can give) determines what is to be done beyond their limit. And this accords with what we already said: the *rule itself* is not

*completely* expressed in these examples. But just because of this we are now stuck: for we now have to say that *the rule itself is something we know but cannot explain to others*! The use of the expression "explain to others" here raises an objection: for we want to say that although we cannot 'directly tell' the rule itself by means of examples, still we can surely '*convey*' it (§362). Of course, after all we ourselves learned the rules unproblematically. So we must be able to *communicate* the rule by means of examples, albeit *indirectly*. We imagine something like this:

> "But do you really explain to the other person what you yourself understand? Don't you leave it to him to *guess* the essential thing? You give him examples — but he has to guess their drift, to guess your intention." (§210)

It is as if "he is supposed to see in those examples that common feature which I — for some reason — was unable to formulate" (§71). (Here, as in the case of Augustine in §89, Wittgenstein's employment of 'for some reason'[83] means: we do not know anything more, that *Something* which we take ourselves to know or see does not exist.) And "it seems to us as though, in this case, the instructor *conveyed* the meaning to the pupil — without telling him directly; but in the end, the pupil is brought to the point of giving himself the correct ostensive definition." (§362). (Wittgenstein adds: "And this is where our illusion lies.") In the end, we somehow manage to convey the rule to the pupil 'without directly telling' in the examples. This is what we presume[84]. Another form of the same presumption is this: although we say that we ourselves know but cannot *directly* explain the rule itself to others,

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[83] In §89 — which begins with the question "In what way is logic something sublime?" — Wittgenstein says the following of Augustine's remarks on time: "Something that one knows when nobody asks one, but no longer knows when one is asked to explain it, is something that has to be *called to mind*. (And it is obviously something which, for some reason, it is difficult to call to mind.)" Wittgenstein is being humorous here, saying: if you *do* know it but cannot explain now, you must be failing to *recall* it. That sometimes happens in our everyday lives. But in this case 'for some reason' says: you cannot recall it because there is *nothing* to recall — you *do not know* 'it'! See our discussion of §89 in Chapter 3 below (§3.3).

[84] The question will then arise: what is the *criterion* for judging that the pupil has *understood*, grasped, the rule? The answer is: his application. But his application by itself is finite too. See the next footnote.

we do not want to deny that (we know that) individually we all grasp the *same* rule. That is, we presume that we share the same knowledge of the same rule. We do not say, for example: "Obviously we all agree in application; but perhaps each of us knows *something different* as *the rule*". But *this* is exactly the decisive point. Although Wittgenstein largely formulates the argument by means of the case where the pupil does not agree with us in application (continues the examples differently), as in our example above, the fundamental problem in *this* way of thinking about the rule, in *that* conception of rules, is most strikingly seen in the *normal* case where we all agree in the application (of the rule). For if we say that *we ourselves know but cannot explain* the rule itself, the 'essential thing' (§210), by means of examples *to others*, we *must* also say — because *this* is the *logical* consequence of the former — that we *do not really know* whether others know the *same thing* as we know[85]. Thus the *logic* of this way of thinking about the rules leads us to the following situation:

> Wouldn't it be possible for us, however, to calculate as we actually do (all agreeing, and so on), and still at every step to have a feeling of being guided by the rules as by a spell, astonished perhaps at the fact that we agreed? (Perhaps giving thanks to the Deity for this agreement.) (§234)

That is to say, *if* we conceive the rules in the way described above, *then* indeed it would be a quite *astonishing* fact that *still*, we somehow agree in the application. For — in *that* conception — so far as *I* am concerned, i.e. *any individual* is concerned, I know the rule and so I apply it in *this* way: but it is (should be) utterly *mysterious* to me that others too apply 'it' in the same way. For after all I only know *mine*; what *theirs* is, I do not know. So I should be 'astonished at the fact' that others agree with

[85] And this is true despite the fact that we all obviously agree in application. For we also had said that the rule itself is not completely expressed in the application to the particular examples. As finite beings, our application is necessarily always finite. And if we know the rule as something over and above the finite set of examples we give in the teaching (or explanation), then we can never know whether the other person grasps the same rule: because the criterion for our judgment of the rule the other grasps is nothing but the application he displays, but we must also say that the rule he grasps may be different than ours, because what he grasps (given the conception of rule we presumed) is something over and above his application.

me in application. And since this is true for each person, we should all be 'astonished perhaps at the fact that we agree' (§234). Astonishment is a psychological concept, one might say. That is true. But the point is: the fact that *somehow* we all agree in application is (should be, would have been) an *astonishing fact*. That is to say: *this does not make sense* — unless, of course, one regards it as 'making sense' where we have an utterly mysterious case of complete lack of understanding of 'how we are able to follow a rule' (§217). And that is precisely the reason why Wittgenstein in the passage quoted above adds the remark in parenthesis: "Perhaps giving thanks to the Deity for this agreement." (§234). This reference to a Deity is a response to the persisting *need* to make sense of the situation: "But couldn't we imagine God's suddenly giving a parrot reason, and its now saying things to itself? — But here it is important that, in order to arrive at this idea, I had to recourse to the notion of a deity." (§346)[86]. So what I referred to as 'the logic of that way of thinking' above, we now see, is no logic; it collapses. It is in fact, as we may say, a 'logic fail': for it leads us to a case where we can no longer *make sense* of things (properly). And *what* makes it so, the reason why *that* does not make sense, is nothing other than the *logic of our concept of a rule*. — *This* is exactly what Wittgenstein points out in the section that comes right after (and directly comments on) §234, which we quoted above, where we saw the case of astonishment due to agreement: "From this you can see how much there is to the physiognomy [i.e. logic] of what we call 'following a rule' in everyday life." (§235). This (almost) has the form of a *reductio*: we follow the logical consequences of that way of conceiving the rules (cf. *sublimation of rules*,

[86] Of course, the same exact issue is in question in this last example. Thus we read in the following section: "If I know it only from my own case, then I know only what *I* call that, not what anyone else does." (§347). By following this point of contact, we will see how the discussion of rule-following and the discussion of private language are essentially connected, that is Wittgenstein's treatment of mathematics and of psychology.

see §2.2 above), and thus derive nonsensicality from it (or at least lack of proper sense; not a contradiction, yet)[87]. We are, as it were, saying: a rule cannot be *that* kind of thing, so it must be *this* kind of thing (where "this" refers to the *opposite* of the former). That is: the rule cannot be something I know but cannot explain, since it cannot be something I know only from my own case (THIS), 'privately' (§202). Therefore, the rule should be something 'public' which I can *completely* explain by means of examples, i.e. something which consists in application (§201; see §5.5 below).

Now, this is examination of the use of the word "rule" — but also at the same time the use of the word "same": "The use of the word 'rule' and the use of the word 'same' are interwoven" (§225). In this way, we can see how the issue is ultimately about our conception of *essence*: particular instances of X (any phenomenon) do not have 'any *one* thing in common' (except that they *are* instances of *X*), i.e. the *same* object-like entity present in them which is their (its) *essence*. If we call *what is essential in the use of the word* "X" 'the rule' (which is what we mean by 'the *logic* of the word or concept'), i.e. that without which what we have would *not* be an instance of X (i.e. what is essential to its existence or identity, what constitutes 'its' *sameness*, so to speak), then the rule (the concept 'X') is *completely* expressed in the *particular examples* we can describe (such as when, e.g., we teach the use of the word "X" to a child), i.e. by describing concrete instances (*and* non-instances, see §5.5 below) of the thing — in exactly the same way the *essence* of X (too?[88]) is

[87] Wittgenstein, however, does go further than what we have explained so far: he *logically proves* the falsity of that conception of rules (see Chapter 5).
[88] The point, i.e. sense, of the question mark is this: if we say 'too', this implies that the *use of the word* (what is essential in use, the rule) is one thing, and the *essence of the thing* (what is essential in its instances) is another — but *this* (very strong intuitive way of conceiving things) is exactly what we are gradually undermining. See §374, quoted at the end of the next section. See §108 (boxed remark): "The question 'What is a word really?' is analogous to 'What is a piece in chess?'"

*thereby* completely expressed. We would perhaps also add (to the description of particular cases) something like: "This *and similar things*…" (§69). This is indeed what we are doing in philosophy when we examine the use of a word (at the same time the essence of a thing): we describe particular *language-games* as instances (or non-instances, or perhaps even neither) of the expression whose logic we are examining (*concrete cases*)[89]; this is what it is to examine the 'everyday use' (§116), essence, of language (also at the same time the essence of phenomena; see §3.3.2.3 below)[90]. (Much of the discussion in this section will be presupposed in Chapter 5 without being repeated. So it is advised that the reader re-read this section right before reading that chapter.)

> *Essence* is expressed in grammar. (§371)
> Grammar tells what kind of object anything is. (Theology as grammar.) (§373)

### 2.5.1 Sublimated mathematics: Model for the Tractarian conception of logic

In the *TLP* conception, logic and mathematics have a peculiar connection: "Mathematics is a logical method" (§6.2), "The logic of the world, which is shown in tautologies by the propositions of logic[91], is shown in equations by mathematics."

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[89] Consider the difference between actually witnessing a situation, a case, an event, such as use of a sentence in a particular context, and reading a word-description of it (the *same* case). For example (discussed in §1.4.3.1 above): my friend is looking for me in a cafe (where I am waiting for him), looking around to find me, and I raise my hand and utter the sentence "I am here". *This*, what I just gave, is a description of the case by means of words. Now, consider *exactly the same case* — but this time 'from within' the case (reality), as it were: say, you are sitting in the cafe and witnessing this. Consider what is going on when you are able to *understand the reality* in the two cases: in the former (word description of the case), you 'make sense' of it from within language; in the latter — well, are you *not* all the same making the sense from within language in this case as well? (So we may say there is *some* truth in the thinking of the author of the *Tractatus*: when he says, something like, a proposition and a fact share the same sense.)

And consider also the following remark: "If I were to talk to myself out loud in a language not understood by those present, my thoughts would be hidden from them." (*PPF* §317)

[90] We should remember: *Nothing is hidden*. See §435.

[91] Propositions of logic are part of the *TLP* conception, an accompaniment of the 'picture theory of sense'. We said that sentences have sense only by being pictures of reality. But *some* sentences are *not* such pictures, most importantly propositions of logic and mathematics. They are tautologies (or

(§6.22), "Mathematics is a method of logic" (§6.234). Tractarian sublimation of logic is therefore essentially connected to the model of mathematics. The author of the *TLP* imagines logic to present a super-natural kind of (perfect logical) order, of the kind which we supposedly find in mathematics. Since mathematics belongs to logic, he thinks that the kind of crystalline purity which (he presumes) we see in mathematics is the crystalline purity of logic. So the model of mathematics gives him the *impression* of knowing what he is talking about when he talks about such a crystalline purity as the essence of language. The fact that no such thing appears to be present in everyday language is then explained away by means of the notion of hidden essence: although ordinary language does not exhibit this purity which is of the same kind as that of mathematics, this is only a surface phenomenon behind which we have the crystalline purity in *ideal language* which is the hidden essence of ordinary language (see §2.1 above). So, literally, as we might say, the author of the *TLP* thinks that wherever there is sense, i.e. in *every meaningful use of language*, the kind of crystalline purity we see (he thinks) in mathematics is present (albeit in the background). The example of mathematics is therefore of utmost importance for understanding the *TLP* view of language. It partly explains, above all, what Wittgenstein means when he says in §81: "in philosophy we often *compare* the use of words with games, calculi with fixed rules, but cannot say that someone who is using language *must* be playing such a game." He says this in order to explain the idea "that dawned on [him] only later" via Ramsey's remark (in conversation with

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contradictions). They *do not say* anything, i.e. do not picture a state of affairs (hence their truth or falsity has *nothing* to do with what actually is the case), but they *show* the 'logic of the world' (*whatever* 'it' is). His 'fundamental idea' that "there can be no representatives of the *logic* of facts" (§4.0312; which leads to the idea of the ineffable) is present here. But of course it is *not* as if there are specific ineffable things (countable, e.g. this and that and the other). What we *see* in the propositions of logic and mathematics, the *logical form* of the world (and language), is rather 'without number' (§4.128): "there are no numbers in logic" (§5.453), "there can be no distinction between the general and the specific" in it (§5.454).

him) that "logic [is] a 'normative science'" (§81). This, recall, was our point of departure in this thesis (see Chapter 1): so understanding this remark provides the (one important) key to understanding the contrast between the *TLP* and the *PI*[92]. The notion Wittgenstein formerly held which he is rejecting here is this: we imagine language to be a calculus with fixed rules (as already noted). Now we can better understand this remark in the context of our consideration of mathematics and logic in the *TLP*: we *compare* language to mathematics in philosophy, i.e. science of logic. Mathematics is the calculus with fixed rules with which the comparison is made: that is, it provides the *model* for our (young Wittgenstein's) conception of the logic of language. Crystalline purity of logic is what we see in mathematics, and the logic of language is the kind of thing we see in mathematics. (See the next section.)

But as we just saw in the preceding section (and will further see in Chapter 5), the real problem is not that we do *not* see in actual language that sublime thing which we *do* see in mathematics (which could be explained away by saying that the essence is hidden): rather, what we think we see in mathematics is *not* actually something present in mathematics (at least visibly). We just demonstrated (and will further explain) this through the example of a mathematical rule: it is a *mere presumption* that there is crystalline purity, a sublime logical order, *in the case of mathematics*. The sublimated rules of mathematics are thus seen to be based on the notion that we can know something which cannot explain or express at all (except perhaps THIS, *the essential thing is unexpressed*). That is, we can know something as a mere THIS: we cannot say what it is that we know, but still we know — for we *see* 'it' in our minds, but cannot see when we directly examine (*look at*) the particular case, the concrete example. This is what we have shown so far. In order to

[92] See our discussion of §81 in §2.2 above, where we discussed the contrast between logic and natural science, and the conception of meaning something and understanding as remarkable mental acts.

be able to use mathematics as the example of crystalline rules (or sublime order of logic), we must presume that a mathematical rule is something that is *not* completely expressed in the examples, something that does *not* consist in application but *transcends* it, consequently 'something we know but cannot explain' — because that kind of crystalline purity (which we preconceived mathematics to have) is *not* present (seen) in what is *visible* in the case of a mathematical rule (as we saw above in our example of '+2'), i.e. whatever that is which we directly see in the *examples* where its *application* is exhibited does not contain (display) crystalline purity. The author of the *TLP*, however, did *not* closely examine any *actual instances* of mathematical rules (i.e. actual cases of following rules in mathematics), but merely *presumed* that the kind of perfect logical order he imagined to be present in the essence of language (ideal language) *was already* present in mathematics. With this presumption, confident that he knows *what* he is talking about (that he is talking about something he *already* knows), he went on to attribute it to the hidden essence of language. We may express his reasoning as follows: "Well, I already know the crystalline purity of logic from mathematics: there is no vagueness, no imperfection there, but only strict sublime rules of a calculus, rigid logical necessity; and logic has to be *this* kind of thing, so despite the messy world of everyday language, the crystalline purity of logic I see in mathematics must be present in the hidden logic of language (as well)." Wittgenstein now *closely examines* (in the *PI*) an *actual* example of following a rule in mathematics through the case of teaching a rule to a pupil. He thereby shows that what he formerly imagined to be present in mathematics (crystalline purity of logic, perfect logical order, a calculus with sublime rules) was *not* something that he actually *saw* there. Through this examination, we were also able to identify the presumed conception of rules: a rule

(or essence of the thing) is something which is over and above its application (use of the word), not completely expressed in the examples where its application is exhibited (explained), therefore something we know but cannot explain (directly and completely express) yet can only (somehow) indirectly convey. We also identified the logical consequence of this conception: the notion of a private ostensive definition, thus a private language, i.e. the notion of *Something* we know as a mere THIS, something essentially ineffable. (In Chapter 5, we will go further and *logically refute* this notion, and with it the whole Tractarian sublimation of mathematics and logic. See §5.3ff.) At this point, we can finally also understand that all this (mainly) springs from *one single* source: namely, the notion that the *essence* of something is a *Something* that is common to (*same* in) all 'its' instances, which make them into *its* instances. Above in §2.3, recall, in characterizing contextualization we noted that *no* absolute sense for *any* expression exists. Then in §2.3.1, we observed that contextualization of logic goes all the way down to the *particular case*. This was a deconstruction, so to speak, i.e. destruction, of the notion of essence as common element (*Something*) — *also* at the same time of the notion of an absolute sense, i.e. sense over and above particular cases (see §2.4.2 above). And now, indeed, it appears that *these* two things are the *same* thing: the sense of "X" is THIS, and the essence of X is THIS (see §2.5 above). (For instance: sense of the word "pain" and of the formula "2$x$ – 1" on the one hand, *what* pain is and the *rule* of the series 2$x$ – 1 (1, 3, 5…) on the other.) Thus we have Wittgenstein's interlocutor protesting: "But isn't at least the same *the same*?" (§215). Wittgenstein explains the reasoning involved:

> For identity we seem to have an infallible paradigm: namely, in the identity of a thing with itself. I feel like saying: "Here at any rate there can't be different interpretations. If someone sees a thing, he sees identity too." (§215)

For we seemed to be saying that there is no *identity* shared by different instances of a phenomenon, no *sameness* present in its examples, when we said that essence is not a common *Something*: for we said that this reaches all the way down to the particular case. This appeared to destroy everything *general*, perhaps even all concepts altogether[93]: for the concept was supposed to identify and categorize things that were of the 'same nature' or 'same kind'. It is as if we rejected any and all *sameness* between *two* distinct things: as if we said we can never find *anything* common in *this* (a particular case) and *that* (another particular case). (One wrongly thinks as if subsuming them under a concept, applying the same word to them, is *not enough* for their being of the *same kind*. There must be something else — an object-like *Something*.) So the *last* step which this path appeared (to the interlocutor) to force us to take is: denial of the notion that 'A thing is identical with itself' (the so-called 'law of identity', §216) which was supposed to be the fundamental essence (foundation) of our entire system of logic and metaphysics[94]. As if the destruction of sameness began with the absolutely universal (Tractarian general propositional form), destroying everything in the middle — as if we are denying the sameness in the identity of a class (kind) of things, identity of a thing with another — and moved all

[93] This was of course a misunderstanding: one gets such impression precisely because of his commitment to the conception of essence we are attacking. The fact that one feels as if we are attacking essence altogether when one sees us attack that particular conception proves that he is presupposing that conception as the essence (possibly without even acknowledging it).

[94] It is therefore as if, the interlocutor feels, we were losing ourselves.

So are we denying that objects exist? Of course not. But we are denying that 'primary elements' (*objects* in the metaphysical, i.e. absolute, sense) exist, or more correctly that this expression has any sense. Ultimately, this is denial of absolute sense even in the case of the word "same" — and even in the case of *THIS*, for actually the two — in their absolute sense — are the *same thing*. (As a word play, we may perhaps say the former is same ("same"), the latter is thing (THIS): same thing.)

The conception of essence as common element can therefore also be expressed as: the absolute sense of "same". Absolute sense of "same" in the case of *one* thing appears as: THIS. ('A thing is identical with itself' means: THIS is THIS.) Absolute sense of "same" in the case of *two* things, i.e. the conception of essence as common element, appears as: THIS. ('*This* is identical with *that*' means: there is THIS in both *this* and *that*.) We all know, for example, what *length* is, or what "length" means. Consider *what* it is that we know when we know this (if it is something over and above all measurement of length, which is part of the use of the word "length").

the way down to the absolutely particular: THIS — as if we are denying the sameness "in the identity of a thing with itself" (§215). And *this* much is true: we have been denying *one single thing* all along, and it is the conception of essence as common element, which comes to the same thing as the notion of THIS. We showed that there is *no* difference whatever between the absolute general and the absolute particular: whether we are speaking of the essence of language and the world as a whole (as the author of the *TLP* does) or whether we are talking about the object in front of us ("by staring at an object in front of [us] and repeating…the word 'this', innumerable times"; §38), or even 'inwardly pointing' to a present sensation — "it always comes to the same thing" (cf. §594). Our description above was an *application* of a particular picture which is what we wanted to *thereby* destroy:

> The great difficulty here is not to present the matter as if there were something one *couldn't* do. As if there really were an object, from which I extract a description, which I am not in a position to show anyone. —— And the best that I can propose is that we yield to the temptation to use this picture, but then investigate what the *application* of the picture[95] looks like. (§374)

### 2.5.2 Mathematics was young Wittgenstein's '*ideal*': Correcting the misunderstanding

Mathematics *was* 'the ideal' the author of the *TLP* had in mind: he thought we saw the 'perfect logical order' in mathematics, and so he thought we *must* also see it in everyday language. We showed above (§2.1) that 'the ideal' and 'perfect logical

[95] " What gives the impression that we want to deny anything?" (§305). It is this: "The impression that we wanted to deny something arises from our setting our face against the picture of an 'inner process'" (§305). But do not get this wrong: the picture that is in question is in operation in *all* cases, including the 'outer' cases as well. It is not about a misunderstanding of a particular kind of (psychological) phenomena — what is in question is a misunderstanding about the very concept of *understanding* itself. Understanding as a 'mental process' (remarkable mental act), coupled with the presumption of a strict opposition between mind and behavior (activity), logically leads to the notion of a private ostensive explanation and private language: THIS. This is the same whether we are talking about pains or chairs. (See *BB* p. 26.)

order' are the same thing: crystalline purity of logic, i.e. ideal language. But now when we speak of mathematics as 'the *ideal*' *of* the author of the *TLP*, we mean something different (although very closely related). In the first sense, mathematics exhibits the ideal which is the perfect order of logic, the logic of language. In the latter sense, however, *the author sees mathematics as his ideal* for logic, the science of logic. In other words, young Wittgenstein idealizes mathematics and takes this ideal as his model for philosophy. And *this* will allow us to understand the following remark from the *PI*: "we misunderstand the role played by the ideal in our language" (§100). What is puzzling about this remark is that it obviously implies that there *is* a 'role played by the ideal in our language'. But 'the ideal' in the first sense was simply something imagined, something that did not exist, something we cannot even make sense of. The author of the *TLP* imagined that ideal, and presumed that it *must* be present in language. 'The ideal' in this sense therefore does *not* have any role or place in language ('it' *cannot*, simply because there is no such thing). But now in §100 Wittgenstein is speaking of 'the ideal' as something that *does* have a 'role in our language': he says that we *misunderstand* this role. The explanation of this difficult situation is as follows. Wittgenstein in the *TLP* took the case of mathematics as his ideal for philosophy, the science of logic. But then he *misunderstood* this role, and falsely presumed to see *something* in mathematics ('the ideal' in the first sense) which he then falsely *projected* into language, the logic of language. Mathematics was, however, his ideal for the *science of logic*, not the logic of language which is the *subject matter* of this science. What, however, was ideal in mathematics? For we now see that the impression that there is *obviously* some kind of supernatural reality in mathematics (some 'super logical order of purest crystal', §97) was merely a false presumption (a 'superstition', §110). So in fact if there were something ideal in

mathematics, it would have to do with something other than the sublime nature of mathematical reality or truth (for simply there is no such thing). It had to do with the fact that there was no room for *disagreements*, that behind this complete agreement there was complete *exactness*, complete *certainty*. So what was ideal about mathematics is not something we see in its *subject-matter* (whatever it is), the mathematical truth or reality. Rather, it has to do with *the way mathematics is practiced*. Wittgenstein's (former) 'misunderstanding of the role of the ideal in our language' which he mentions in §100 is therefore this: confusing what we see in the way mathematics is practiced (especially complete agreement, exactness and certainty) for some presumed supernatural kind of underlying reality.

Similarly, the role the ideal of mathematics plays in our investigations — and it does play such a role, as we will see (in §3.4 below) — is not something about *our subject-matter*: it concerns *the way we practice philosophy*. And now we come to see something important and potentially surprising: in *this* regard, we may say, there is *continuity* between the two works. That is to say, Wittgenstein still adopts this conception of philosophy in the *PI*: we are still striving for exactness, certainty, complete agreement in philosophy. This directly derives from the very nature of our subject matter, the logic of language: because what we are concerned with is something which we all already know and agree in solely by virtue of the fact that we all know and agree in language. *This* is what "logic of language" means, although we do not yet *understand* what it is that we already know. We know, however, that we must be able to have certainty and establish complete agreement in philosophy. And now the question is: *how* can we achieve this? Wittgenstein's answer lies in what we already *see* in the way mathematics is practiced, which indeed belongs to its *essence*: "The concept of a surveyable representation is of fundamental significance

for us. It characterizes the way we represent things, how we look at matters." (§122). We have: "Let the use of words teach you their meaning. (Similarly, one can often say in mathematics: let the proof teach you *what* was being proved.)" (*PPF* §303). That is to say, the way we execute our investigations has to be only by means of presenting descriptions that are surveyable, "only by presenting the model as what it is, as an object of comparison — as a sort of yardstick; not as a preconception to which reality *must* correspond" (§131)[96]. If we say anything, that is, then we must say it in a way that makes it clear what we want to say. But then how *can* we say anything in this way? What does it mean to say something in a way that makes what is being said perfectly clear? The answer to this is: contextualization. Unless we fully contextualize the words we use, we do not (yet) mean something clear. Or rather: to the extent that we contextualize our words, their sense becomes clear(er). In the end, when there is a *use* for our words (which is necessarily a matter of a particular context), their sense is *perfectly clear*: for, after all, the use of the words *is* their sense. As we will see below (Chapters 5 and 6), what is perfectly clear, absolutely certain and is not open to disagreement, is application in the language-game, which constitutes the very ground of sense we must share in order to communicate at all: i.e. the *already existing technique* of applying the words (§§150, 198-9, 262), the 'grammar' (§257, *PPF* §106), the 'everyday use'. We are able to 'render surveyable' *what we already know* (and nothing more) only in *this* way (see §1.4.3.2 above).

We can see what this means if we consider a *particular example*[97]: say, the sentence "I am here" (discussed above in §1.4.3.1). *What* does this sentence mean?

[96] Notice that the underlying notion is that if *I* do really *understand* something, which I want to express by means of a sentence or a description (multiple sentences), then I can express it in a way that others can survey and understand it too. This is obviously the exact opposite of the Tractarian conception of understanding (THIS) which we have been discussing.
[97] As always, we must do this if we are to make sure that we make sense, and what sense we make — given contextualization.

Some philosophers say of this sentence that it has a quite peculiar logical significance. Consider Kaplan (1979, p. 82), for example: "Intuitively, ['I am here now'] is deeply, and in some sense universally, true. One need only understand the meaning of [it] to know that it cannot be uttered falsely." So obviously, as Kaplan himself observes too, we must know what the sentence means, i.e. *understand* it, if we are to say anything about it, for example that "it cannot be uttered falsely". Therefore, let us ask: *what* does it mean? (We will consider "I am here" instead of "I am here now", for the sake of continuity with our previous discussion, and of simplicity. The word "now", of course, does not change anything as regards the essential point we are making.) *We* do not know, seriously, what the sentence means *outside* its use in a particular context[98]. And the sentence does not at all seem to mean *one single thing* in different contexts of use. But we know *how* one takes himself to know what it means, the *absolute sense* it has over and above its possible uses in particular language-games which is what purportedly makes it 'deeply, universally true'. One imagines the space his body occupies — which the word "here" denotes, i.e. the place to which we think we can refer as THIS — as

[98] But perhaps we should express our judgment about the sense of a sentence by saying: *This* is the kind of thing *we* call "sense", *this* is what *we* call "understanding what a sentence means". This is different from saying, e.g.: Kaplan presumes he understands that sentence, that there is an absolute sense which he grasps independently of all possible uses in different contexts; but he does not understand anything, there is no such sense. This latter way of speaking is not incorrect, but cannot do much against people (and there are many such people) who will insist that they do certainly know exactly what the sentence means (its absolute context-transcending sense). The former way of speaking — which has the form of making a *stipulation* — does something in this regard: we are telling others that *our* standards for sense are *like this* (more strict), this is how *we* approach matters (but *you* may do however you please). This draws a boundary between 'us' and 'them', which is something we certainly need. And we certainly need this because we want to make *actual progress* in philosophy by *practicing* it in a *certain* way. That is the sense of Wittgenstein's remarks about 'what *we* do (in philosophy)', e.g.: "What *we* do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use" (§116). As we explain on multiple occasions in this thesis, we are aiming at 'complete clarity' and 'complete agreement': but of course *not* in any dogmatic way; quite the contrary, we (attempt to) do this by means of the concept of 'surveyable representation' (§122) — as in mathematics. This is why Wittgenstein speaks of things which no one does or can doubt (§§128-9, 415, 599). This is also the reason why *we* (Wittgenstein scholars) *should seek complete agreement* among ourselves when we are trying to understand Wittgenstein's views. See §7.2 below.

something like a socket into which his body fits — which the word "I" denotes, i.e. the physical object to which we think we can refer as (yet another) THIS. So it is really no different than saying something like: each thing occupies its place. *This* is *here*, *that* is *there*: these all come to the same "play of the imagination": "It is as if in our imagination we put a thing into its own shape and saw that it fitted" (§216). (This is what we do, Wittgenstein says, when we take ourselves to understand the sentence: "A thing is identical with itself" (§§215-6).) Compare this purported absolute sense (which is merely presumed without being explained at all) with the sense the same sentence would have in a *particular case*: my friend is looking for me in the cafe (in which I am sitting), looking around to find me, and I raise my hand and utter the sentence "I am here". (And if he only hears but cannot see me, and thus says "Where?" — to this I do not respond (except perhaps as a *joke*): "I already told you *where*!") Here the sense of the sentence is perfectly clear (whatever it is[99]), for its use is perfectly clear. But the kind of 'sense' Kaplan imagines (presumes we all grasp but cannot explain) — this is far from clear. (At least, it is *not at all clear* according to how *we* conceive what 'clarity' means, and the kind of clarity we aim at in our investigations.)

[99] The reason why I say this, that is the sense of this expression, is to resist the temptation to ask: "But *what* is that sense which is perfectly clear?" As if there is some *other* sentence, or sentence-like *Something* that is the sense of the sentence — whereas in fact the sense is *not* something (THIS) the sentence *has*, it is something that our use of it *makes*, so to speak. And that is perfectly clear in (and only in) the particular case.

See §421: "Regard the sentence as an instrument, and its sense as its employment." See also §432: "Every sign *by itself* seems dead. *What* gives it life? — In use it *lives.* Is it there that it has living breath within it? — Or is the *use* its breath?"

# CHAPTER 3

# SCIENCE OF LOGIC:

# LOGICAL METHOD BASED ON CONTEXTUALIZATION

## 3.1 The old approach

In the *TLP* view, the conception of essence as common element leads to the notion that essence is hidden beneath the surface (as we saw in the previous chapter), which in turn leads to the notion that the science of logic uncovers the hidden essence through logical analysis (§92). (We already partly described this process of logical analysis in the previous chapter.) But *how* does logic unearth the hidden essence of language by means of analysis (cf. *PI* §§91-2)? More precisely, how do *logicians* do the supposed analysis in question? The answer is: by '*thinking*'. Wittgenstein describes this 'thinking' as follows: "And now we rack our brains over the nature of the *real* sign. – Is it perhaps the *idea* of the sign? Or the idea at the present moment?" (*PI* §105). The latter part of this remark expresses Wittgenstein's negative attitude towards that sort of 'thinking'; that is, the way through which philosophers supposedly discover and unearth the hidden essence of language: to wit, they *think* ('say the words to themselves'; cf. §413), and "try to grasp the *essence* of the thing" (§116). Apparently recalling his personal experience (cf. §§107-8), Wittgenstein nicely expresses this as follows: '"But *this* is how it is — — —', I say to myself over and over again. I feel as though, if only I could fix my gaze *absolutely sharply* on this fact and get it into focus, I could not but grasp the essence of the matter." (§113). What Wittgenstein describes here is just that 'seeing right into the thing' which we find in Wittgenstein's most central remark on 'essence' and its hiddenness (see §2.1 above): 'they' see the essence of things "as something that lies *beneath* the surface.

Something that lies within, which we perceive when we see *right into* the thing, and which an analysis is supposed to unearth." (§92). This, of course, is quite different from seeing in the ordinary sense. You see something when it is visible: you simply look. But if it is hidden you cannot simply 'look and see' — you must think (cf. §66). By thinking, your *mind* as it were penetrates into the heart of the thing, 'seeing right into' it. As regards language, we see whatever we see when we look at actual use; but the *TLP* must do something else because the essential thing is not among what we see when we look. We saw above (in §2.2) that the *TLP* conceives meaning something and understanding as remarkable mental acts. For example, when we grasp the rule of a series of numbers in mathematics, what we grasp is achieved through a remarkable act of thinking: our mind sees right into the examples, actually sees what is not itself directly and completely expressed there. So the super-faculty of thinking manages to see what is actually not there — at least as open to view. This is the kind of thing the thinking of a logician is supposed to be doing when he tries to grasp the essence of the thing: for example, "when a philosopher tries to fathom *the* relation between name and what is named by staring at an object in front of him and repeating a name, or even the word 'this', innumerable times" (§38). In this way, one hopes to grasp the essential thing. As we noted above (see §§2.2, 2.4 and 2.5), one takes himself to conceive the essence (which is 'of the purest crystal') as something over and above, or something beneath the use of words with which we are all familiar — which, one thinks, we most clearly see in the case of a mathematical rule. The rule is something deeper than the application, thus something mysterious. We cannot really see it in the application, but we nonetheless presume that we somehow see it — in our minds, as it were, when we 'see right into the thing'. Wittgenstein is now very suspicious of this mysterious approach:

> If I am inclined to suppose that a mouse comes into being by spontaneous generation out of grey rags and dust, it's a good idea to examine those rags very closely to see how a mouse could have hidden in them, how it could have got there, and so on. But if I am convinced that a mouse cannot come into being from these things, then this investigation will perhaps be superfluous.
>
> But what it is in philosophy that resists such an examination of details, we have yet to come to understand. (§52)

It is above all what Wittgenstein calls the "contemptuous attitude towards the particular case" in philosophy, which is the direct result of the conception of essence as common element (*BB*, p. 18). One imagines the essential thing to be something over and above what is visible in particular cases: for example, the rules of a series in mathematics is not visible in application, but something mysterious which our minds somehow grasp, which reaches into infinity — *Something* we know but cannot explain: THIS (see 2.5 above). (Description of the Tractarian science of logic will be continued below in §3.3.)

### 3.2 The new approach

Wittgenstein now (in the *PI*) thinks this way of approaching matters (in philosophy) makes us go astray (as it did make the author of the *TLP*):

> *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (4.5): "The general form of propositions is: This is how things are." —— That is the kind of proposition one repeats to oneself countless times. One thinks that one is tracing nature over and over again, and one is merely tracing round the frame through which we look at it. (*PI* §114)

This way of approaching matters in logic is what paves the way to 'metaphysical uses' of words instead of, and away from, their 'everyday uses' (§116). Perhaps most importantly, it leaves much room for 'dogmatism' in philosophy, in the form of *preconceptions* 'to which (we unknowingly demand) reality *must* correspond' (§131). When we directly look at how the words function, however, i.e. if we examine everyday use of language, then we will see what we already know: and

there can be no room for speculations, preconceptions, etc.. Indeed, there can be no disagreements about what we see there (see §2.5.2 above). (This also includes specification of lack clarity in vision, say vagueness in the boundary of a concept. Therefore, although there can be disagreement over the question of whether *this* or *that* should be called 'X' where application is not determined, the fact that application is not determined here is itself a clear vision, something about which there cannot be disagreement.) If we can manage to really look at the application of words directly, and let the use teach us the meaning, then we will be able to express nothing more than what we already know. And if we can also manage to express this in a surveyable manner so that others can look at it (§122), then we will be able to establish complete agreement. That is the importance of bringing words to their everyday use (§116): by describing particular cases, concrete examples, we will be able to make clear sense and attain complete clarity.

Accordingly, the method of this approach is the '*look and see*' kind of examination of language-games, i.e. the use, application of words. Wittgenstein nicely puts the contrast between the two approaches: "don't think, but look!" (§66). For what we are concerned with in logic is contextual in nature (the logic of language, see the previous chapter), and therefore its nature can only be seen in *particular* cases which is therefore what we must directly examine in our logical investigations (given that it "already lies open to view"; §92). So *contextualization* underlies this new approach and method in logic too: "One cannot guess how a word functions. One has to *look* at its application and learn from that." (§340). (But, as we will see in Chapter 4, contextualization goes even deeper than that.) Consequently, the new logic examines *uses of words* in the particular language-games of our actual language. And its task is to merely *describe* language-games (§§109, 654-6).

Wittgenstein's new conception of the science of logic is therefore nicely expressed by the following remark from the *OC*: "everything descriptive of a language-game is part of logic" (§56).

## 3.3 "In what way is logic something sublime?"

3.3.1 At the beginning of the essential §89, Wittgenstein says: "With these considerations we find ourselves facing the problem: In what way is logic something sublime?" Then in the following sections, as we discussed above in Chapter 2, he begins to draw a boundary between 'us' and 'them': basically, between the *TLP* and the *PI*. That is, in these sections he is distinguishing his new conception by contrast to the old one he formerly held. We already discussed what this (contrast) consisted in in the case of the logic of language (Chapter 2). We will now focus on the other aspect of the contrast described in those same sections: namely, the one concerning the science of logic. And here too, we initially have an appearance of continuity between the two works (see Chapter 1 above). For Wittgenstein does *not* explicitly reject the *whole* of following description he gives of the *TLP* conception of the science of logic:

> For logic seemed to have a peculiar depth a — universal significance. Logic lay, it seemed, at the foundation of all the sciences. — For logical investigation explores the essence of all things. It seeks to see to the foundation of things, and shouldn't concern itself whether things actually happen in this or that way. —— It arises neither from an interest in the facts of nature, nor from a need to grasp causal connections, but from an urge to understand the foundations, or essence, of everything empirical. Not, however, as if to this end we had to hunt out new facts; it is, rather, essential to our investigation that we do not seek to learn anything *new* by it. We want to *understand* something that is already in plain view. For *this* is what we seem in some sense not to understand. (§89)

He gives this description in response to the question he raises at the beginning of the section: "In what way is logic something sublime?" He continues to describe this

conception in the following sections. Having observed in the next section that "our investigation is directed…towards the '*possibilities*' of phenomena" which means that "we call to mind the *kinds of statement* that we make about phenomena", he says: "Our inquiry is therefore a grammatical one" (§90). He adds that "this may be called 'analysing' our forms of expression" since it involves "clearing misunderstandings away" sometimes "by substituting one form of expression for another" (§90). And it is only at *this* point that he begins to draw the true boundary between the old and the new views:

> But now it may come to look as if there were something like a final analysis of our linguistic expressions, and so a single completely analysed form of every expression. That is, as if our usual forms of expression were, essentially, still unanalysed; as if there were something hidden in them that had to be brought to light. As if, when this is done, the expression is completely clarified and our task accomplished.
>
> It may also be put like this: we eliminate misunderstandings by making our expressions more exact; but now it may look as if we were aiming at a particular state, a state of complete exactness, and as if this were the real goal of our investigation. (§91)

Here Wittgenstein identifies what is fundamentally wrong in the *TLP* view, which therefore will be the main point of contrast between it and the *PI* view. In our discussion above of the contrast between the two conceptions of the logic of language, we saw that ordinary language in the *TLP* view was a mere surface: it is the domain of what are here called 'our usual forms of expression' which are 'essentially unanalyzed', possessing "something hidden in them that had to be brought to light" through analysis. This 'something hidden' beneath the surface of everyday language was the 'real logical form' which belonged to the sublimated domain of the super-faculty of thinking, the 'pure intermediary'. In this pure intermediary, we found the 'crystalline purity of logic': 'perfect logical order' of the 'ideal language' — despite the messy world at the surface of everyday language. Here we found "the state of complete exactness" which was "the real goal of our

investigations" (§91). And *this* — Wittgenstein now identifies as the fundamental point of divergence between the two conceptions of the science of logic. His description of what we do in logic which starts in §89 reaches the following moment where he summarizes the description and points out this point of contrast: "It may also be put like this: we eliminate misunderstandings by making our expressions more exact; but now it may look as if we were aiming at a particular state, a state of complete exactness, and as if this were the real goal of our investigation." (§91). This means that Wittgenstein agrees with the following part of the description: "we eliminate misunderstandings by making our expressions more exact". This first part of the description differs from the latter part in two regards: 1) our demand for exactness serves a particular *purpose*, namely that of eliminating misunderstandings (that is the 'real goal of our investigations', which will defined by reference to philosophical problems and their solutions, as we will see in the next chapter); 2) what we seek is not 'a state of complete exactness' ("as if there were something like a final analysis of our linguistic expressions, and so a single completely analysed form of every expression"; §91) — for there is no such thing, i.e. "[n]o single ideal exactness" (§88) — rather, completeness of exactness is itself defined by reference to our *purpose* (of eliminating misunderstandings). The fact that Wittgenstein's opening remark in §89 ("With these considerations we find ourselves facing the problem: In what way is logic something sublime?") comes *right after* §88 makes perfect sense because there Wittgenstein is talking about *exactness* in a way that directly connected to our discussion so far:

> "Inexact" is really a reproach, and "exact" is praise. And that is to say that what is inexact attains its goal less perfectly than does what is more exact. So it all depends on what we call "the goal". Is it inexact when I don't give our distance from the sun to the nearest metre, or tell a joiner the width of a table to the nearest thousandth of a millimetre?

> No single ideal of exactness has been envisaged; we do not know what we are to make of this idea — unless you yourself stipulate what is to be so called. But you'll find it difficult to make such a stipulation — one that satisfies you. (§88)

This makes perfect sense because it helps us understand how exactly Wittgenstein departs from the Tractarian sublime conception. The author of the *TLP* imagined that there was a state of complete exactness, one single ideal exactness in ideal language which is the hidden essence of everyday language (see Chapter 2). Thus the science of logic aims to uncover this hidden essence through analysis, and reach that state of ideal exactness (see §2.4 above). This is similar to the way "a natural science treats of a natural phenomenon", "[a]s if our logic were, so to speak, a logic for a vacuum" (§81): hidden laws are presumed beneath visible phenomena, which are what we are supposed to see in 'ideal conditions', and a natural science explains what is visible by reference to these hidden laws (see §2.2 above). The essential point is: the domain of ideal exactness (ideal language) is *already there* (in the medium of the super-faculty of thinking, the 'pure intermediary'), and it is the 'final analysis/state' the Tractarian logic aims at (§91). That is essential because there is absolutely *no* consideration of *context* within which this logical investigation towards exactness is executed, including the *purpose* for which exactness is sought. And this is exactly the point at which Wittgenstein later departs from the *TLP*: although we too seek exactness in logic (see §3.4 below), this belongs to a context, is done for a particular purpose. For only in *this* way could 'exactness' have *any meaning*, since there is "[n]o single ideal of exactness", "we do not know what we are to make of this idea" (§88). Otherwise, there would not be a *purpose* for which 'exactness' is sought, therefore neither a *function* thereof: "But has this exactness still got a function here: isn't it running idle?" (§88). And this means that 'exact' *no longer means anything*: "It makes no sense at all to speak absolutely of '[exactness]'", that is, "*outside* a

particular [language] game" (§47). Consequently, Wittgenstein contextualizes the demand for exactness in logic. The Tractarian mistake was to think "as if we were aiming at a particular state, a state of complete exactness, and as if this were the real goal of our investigation", which Wittgenstein now corrects by saying "we eliminate misunderstandings by making our expressions more exact" (§91): our purpose is to eliminate misunderstandings, and the exactness we seek only makes sense with reference to this purpose. (And misunderstandings belong to certain contexts. Cf. §87) As we will see in Chapter 4, the purpose for which we seek exactness in our description of language-games in logic is to resolve philosophical problems (§109).

### 3.3.2 Science of logic: 'Exploring the essence of things' and 'the foundation of the sciences'

But notice that prior to identifying *this* essential point of contrast (which we just explained in the previous section), Wittgenstein describes the conception of logic as 'something sublime' without explicitly rejecting anything in the description — *and* at certain points talking in a manner that clearly suggests he is describing his current view (in regard to those specific points, of course). Only afterwards he begins to describe the point at which he is now diverging from the old view, as we pointed just pointed out: namely, the notion that in logic we uncover through analysis the hidden real logical order which is a 'state of complete exactness'[100]. Now, of course it would be absurd to say that Wittgenstein *therefore* endorses the description he gives prior to this point, specifically the part about logic 'exploring the essence of all things' and

[100] This conception of the science of logic, as observed, is the direct counterpart of the Tractarian conception of the logic of language. These two cannot be conceived separately. That is why we always have to go back and forth between them. We had to talk a lot about the science of logic aspect in Chapter 2 where we discussed the logic of language, as we now also have to talk about the logic of language aspect in the present chapter.

'lying at the foundation of all the sciences' (§89). Especially this part because, as we will see in the following sections, that is another essential point of contrast where Wittgenstein departs from his old view in the *TLP*. But the fact that he is not outright rejecting the entire description he gives of the sublime conception of logic suggests that his new view may accord with parts of that description. And this is true: there is some truth not only to logic 'exploring the essence of things', but also its relation to 'the foundation of the sciences'. Yet *this* fact does not imply any genuine continuity (but only appears to) because, again, *these words mean entirely different things in the two cases* (i.e. the *TLP* and the *PI*). We will see why and how this is so as we now describe the two conceptions.

#### 3.3.2.1 *TLP* logic: Exploring the essence of *all* things

The *TLP* conceived the science of logic to be 'something sublime' in the following way: it postulated a super-faculty of thinking within which the 'super-order between the super-concepts' existed, which was the logic of language. This 'incomparable essence of language' was "the a priori order of the world; that is, the order of *possibilities*, which the world and thinking must have in common", which is what logic is concerned with (§97). Recall that in both works of Wittgenstein, philosophy (science of logic) investigates the nature of language (Chapter 1). Now we are able to see how *this*, in the *TLP* view, is also an investigation of the essence of phenomena, of the world. In the Tractarian picture of language and the world, language (thinking) and the world stand face to face, as it were: language is a remarkable, unique phenomenon of the world, unlike other ordinary, 'natural' phenomena (see §2.2 and §2.4 above). Thus this picture sublimates the use of the words "language" and "world". These sublimated 'entities' share a common 'logical form' (*TLP* §2.18,

§4.121), which is the 'a priori order of the world' shared by thinking and the world (*PI* §97). Logic, qua the essence of thinking (i.e. language), presents this 'super-order' which is "*prior* to all experience, must run through all experience" (§97). And the science of logic, i.e. philosophy, deals with this order:

> For logic seemed to have a peculiar depth — a universal significance. Logic lay, it seemed, at the foundation of all the sciences. — For logical investigation explores the essence of all things. It seeks to see to the foundation of things, and shouldn't concern itself whether things actually happen in this or that way. —— It arises neither from an interest in the facts of nature, nor from a need to grasp causal connections, but from an urge to understand the foundations, or essence, of everything empirical. (§89)

So in *this* way, philosophical investigation of the nature of language is also at the same time an investigation of the essence of the world. Hence it becomes less difficult to comprehend that the author of the *TLP* considers the 'general propositional form' to be the essence not only of language, but also of the world: language and the world share *one single* essence, which is the 'a priori logical order of possibilities'. All the possibilities of the world are also at the same time all the possibilities of thinking: "A thought contains the possibility of the situation of which it is the thought. What is thinkable is possible too." (§3.03). (See §2.022: "It is obvious that an imagined world, however different it may be from the real one, must have *something*—a form—in common with it.") A thought (which is "a proposition with a sense"; §4) is "a picture of reality" (§4.01), "[a] logical picture of facts"[101]

[101] This way of putting it implies the possibility of pictures that are not logical pictures. But this is not the case: "Every picture is *at the same time* a logical one. (On the other hand, not every picture is, for example, a spatial one.)" (§2.182). Wittgenstein's way of using words in the *TLP* may sometimes be confusing. Consider for example: "A thought is a proposition with a sense" (§4). This, again, implies as if there can be a proposition without a sense, which is not true (§§5.473-3): "Every proposition must *already* has a sense" (§4.064). So is a thought then the same as a proposition? It does seem to be so, yet we have: "In a proposition a thought find an expression that can be perceived by the senses." (§3.1). But we thought that *this* was not the proposition itself; that is, that the propositional sign was "the perceptible sign of a proposition (spoken or written, etc.)" (§3.11). So the sentence in the ordinary sense (consisting of perceptible signs, i.e. words) is the propositional sign; but the deeper thing which is (or is essentially connected with) *sense* is the proposition or the thought. (Even still we have: "And a proposition is a propositional sign in its projective relation to the world." (§3.12). He

(§3). But for this fact-depicting by a thought or proposition to be possible, the thought (proposition) and the fact it depicts must share a 'common logical form':

> What any picture, of whatever form, must have in common with reality, in order to be able to depict it— correctly or incorrectly—in any way at all, is logical form, i.e. the form of reality. (§2.18)
> 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. In order to be able to represent logical form, we should have to be able to station ourselves with propositions somewhere outside logic, that is to say outside the world. (§4.12)

And since "[t]he totality of propositions is language" (§4.001), the same exact consideration applies to language and the world considered as a whole: they must have the same logical form, which is the fundamental essence of both. So they must share this essence without which it would not be possible for language to depict the world — but that is its *sole* essential function. (And this is the point Wittgenstein makes when he says: "The general form of a proposition is: This is how things stand." (§4.5). This 'general propositional form' is at once "the essence of a proposition" (§5.471), therefore of language ("*any* sign-language *whatsoever*"; §4.5), and "the essence of the world" (§5.4711).) What language (thinking) and the world share, as noted, is the 'a priori logical order of possibilities' (*PI* §97). And it is in this way that the science of logic "explores the essence of all things…the foundations, or

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sometimes speaks of 'proposition' and 'propositional sign' as if they are the same thing: e.g., §§3.14-1.) However, he also says: "A propositional sign is a fact." (§3.14). This is confusing because it implies a propositional sign is something that has *sense* (which conflicts with what we thought it was based on his descriptions just given) — given that "[o]nly facts can express a sense, a set of names [i.e. words] cannot" (§3.142). — However, despite this confusing way of defining and using these essential terms, we are able to understand what is basically in question here: what is perceived through the senses is the visible thing, the surface; what lies behind it is what is essential. Analysis uncovers the hidden thing in the sentence (which is the proposition, thought, sense, etc.); and that alone is what matters for logic. Anything besides, such as 'arbitrary determination of meaning' regarding the visible signs (say a constituent word of a sentence), is merely *psychological*, does not belong to the logical domain *at all* (see §§3.32ff, 3.315, 5.473, 6.124). We will see that failure to acknowledge *this* fact about the *TLP* underlies the fundamental misunderstanding in Conant and Diamond (2004)'s 'resolute reading' which we will discuss at length in Chapter 7.

essence, of everything empirical" (§89)[102]. *What*, however, is this essence — that sublime order or 'logical form'? The most one can do, apparently, is to give the 'general propositional form'. But that is it: *we cannot say anything about 'it'*. This directly results from the purported fact that propositions cannot depict logical form (*TLP* §4.12). We think (say) whatever we can think (say): but even in the (impossible) ideal scenario in which we think *all* the possibilities (of thinking, and the world) — in the way only a God, for example, can look at 'them' all at once, have *all* possibilities together before his mind — we would not be able to reach 'it' in a certain sense. (This should not mislead, because whenever there is sense, that is when there is one single sentence with a sense which we understand, we already have ('see') that sublime order and logical form — i.e. the entire 'logic of language' as a unified crystalline whole, whatever 'it' is. See §3.42 and §5.47.) What we call 'all the possibilities' means nothing other than 'all possible propositions' (i.e. 'every possible sense'); and even if we were given *all possible propositions at once*, the 'logical form' would not be expressed — that is, we would not be able to *say* 'it' (or say anything *about* 'it'), express 'it' in words, even if we were somehow able to *say* (whatever we can through) *all possible propositions* (at once). The kind of thing we are concerned with in the science of logic according to the *TLP* is so *elusive* — and *necessarily* so. But this has quite serious implications for philosophy.

Tractarian philosophy is therefore *negative* in its nature: its ultimate, inevitable end is the *end* of philosophy. First, it lured us away from actual language.

[102] This once again shows how absolutely universalistic his conception of things was. The logic of language was *one single thing*, and the science of logic does *one single thing* in order to capture it. The work has to be done 'all at once' (*TLP* §5.47), such is the nature of logic. As we will see below (Chapter 4), with this attempt, the author seeks to solve all philosophical problems 'once and for all' and 'independently of any future experience'. For after all, the essence of language which is the essence of the world is one single thing which has to be captured in one single move. And since philosophical problems arise because of *a* 'misunderstanding of *the* logic of language', with this one move *all* will be resolved at once. But then there will be nothing left to be done: and this is exactly the main point of the book (as we will discuss in detail in Chapter 7).

Then it lured us into the mysterious domain of the pure intermediary: the super-faculty of thinking. There we sought the state of complete exactness we were looking for. We found ourselves in ideal language, which was the 'logic for a vacuum' (*PI* §81). However, the thing we were after, perfect logical order, the crystalline purity of logic, proved to be *elusive*: through analysis, we arrived at 'elementary propositions', i.e. combinations of 'names' representing 'objects' ('in a determinate way'). But the 'logic' of these propositions (and the corresponding 'states of affairs' which they depict) was not something *we* could capture by means of language (*TLP* §6.124): it *expresses itself in the propositions* (with which *we* could only express pictures of facts).

> The fact that the elements of a picture are related to one another in a determinate way represents that things are related to one another in the same way.
>
> Let us call this connexion of its elements the structure of the picture, and let us call the possibility of this structure the pictorial form of the picture. (§2.15)

So 'pictorial (i.e. logical) form of the proposition' is the possibility of the 'determinate way' in which 'elements of the proposition' (corresponding to the 'objects/things in the world') are 'related to one another' (i.e. the 'structure of the proposition'). But the proposition itself cannot depict this form (§2.172):

> 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.
>
> In order to be able to represent logical form, we should have to be able to station ourselves with propositions somewhere outside logic, that is to say outside the world. (§4.12)
>
> Propositions cannot represent logical form: it is mirrored in them.
> What finds its reflection in language, language cannot represent.
> What expresses *itself* in language, *we* cannot express by means of language.
> Propositions *show* the logical form of reality. They display it. (§4.121)

This leaves (will leave) *nothing*, at the end, for philosophy to do: as we will discuss in Chapter 7, philosophy has to come to an end. The result will be: "What we cannot

speak about we must pass over in silence" (*TLP* §7). In summary, we sought after the ideal, and found ourselves in a vacuum — unsurprisingly, indeed, since the ideal was nothing but a 'logic for a vacuum' (§81).

> — We have got on to slippery ice where there is no friction, and so, in a certain sense, the conditions are ideal; but also, just because of that, we are unable to walk. We want to walk: so we need *friction*. Back to the rough ground! (§107)

But "we" here refers to Wittgenstein (and his people, whoever they are), not to the author of the *TLP*. The latter (i.e. early Wittgenstein) did *not* want to walk: he wanted to stop. And he indeed did (stop doing philosophy after having finished the book and terminated philosophy as a whole). He did 'throw away the ladder' after having climbed it (*TLP* §6.54). The ladder was his own use of language in the book, which he had to destroy as a consequence of his ambitious effort. But this too was part of the project: he gave *all possible answers to all possible questions* in philosophy — in an absolute manner transcending the bounds of time. Past, present and future: these were simply irrelevant, as with everything else that has to do with this world, the actual world which is the only world we know in our lives. Hence the mystical spirit and end of the book.

#### 3.3.2.2. *TLP* logic: Foundation of *all* the sciences

Science is nothing but a mere pictorial representation of the world in this conception. Only natural scientific propositions make sense, and they do so only by being pictures of facts. This is the presumed essence of language, or propositions in the *TLP* view: a proposition is a picture of facts (main point of the 'general propositional form'), and language is the totality of propositions. Consequently, the author of the *TLP* thus limits *both* what can be meaningfully said in language (i.e. by means of propositions) *and* "the much disputed sphere of natural science" (§4.113). He does

both by means of his 'picture theory of sense' which finds its ultimate expression in the 'general propositional form': "This is how things stand" (§4.5). "Propositions represent the existence and non-existence of states of affairs" (§4.1): *This* is how they (can) have *sense* — hence the limit of what can be said in language. On the other hand, natural scientific propositions are just such pictures of facts. So any proposition that is not a picture of facts is not part of natural science: hence the limit to its sphere. Furthermore, an essential part of the Tractarian picture theory of sense (or another essential Tractarian notion which belongs together with it) is the notion that the 'logic of facts' is not something that can be represented (expressed) in language: a proposition depicts a fact by being a picture of it; for this logical depiction to be possible, the proposition and the fact must share a 'logical form' (as explained in the previous chapter). The proposition manages to depict the fact by virtue of this common logical pictorial form. However, and this is the crucial point at present, the proposition cannot depict this logical form, for it is what makes depiction possible. This is impossible, the reasoning goes, because depiction of something is possible only from a point *outside* the thing depicted; and so we must be outside the logical form to be able to depict it; but this cannot be done, because without the logical form, depiction is not possible (since the common logical form is what allows a thing to be a picture of another). Therefore, the logic of language and the world, its essence, cannot be expressed by means of propositions: "Logic is transcendental"[103] (§6.13). This limits what can be said in language to propositions

[103] This is also true for nearly everything else, for example, ethics: "Ethics is transcendental" (§6.421). The point is: much lies beyond the domain of what we can represent or express by means of sentences. This does *not* mean, of course, there is *nothing* beyond this domain (which is the domain of the natural sciences); it only means that whatever lies beyond we cannot *talk about* by using language. Indeed, the fact that in the Preface Wittgenstein downplays the significance of what he achieves through the book (solving all problems of philosophy definitively, once and for all, which does not intuitively seem to be a minor achievement at all), couple with the superficial status he attributes to the natural sciences in the book, implies that what lies beyond is in fact what is most important. This

of natural science, but at the same time limits propositions of natural science to mere pictures of states of affairs. In this way, *nearly everything* is left out from the sphere of natural science, the sole foundation of which is given in the 'general propositional form' (the details of which are later given, e.g., in terms of truth conditions, elementary propositions, truth functions, etc.). This is how the science of logic 'lies at the foundation of all the sciences' in the *TLP* view (*PI* §89), and "sets limits to the much disputed sphere of natural science" (*TLP* §4.113). But thereby, the Tractarian logic also renders natural sciences all too superficial: "The whole modern conception of the world is founded on the illusion that the so-called laws of nature are the explanations of natural phenomena." (§6.371). The presumed 'laws' are *mere descriptions* (propositional pictures) of natural phenomena; they do not explain *anything*, let alone everything, they simply take note of *what happens and is the case*. But "all that happens and is the case is accidental" (§6.41). A single occurrence of a purely random event which as we say happens 'by chance' is in *this* regard *exactly* the same as what appears to be a 'universal' law of nature: for *what* the natural science describes is the *mere occurrence* of these accidental happenings —

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is quite clear already in the case of logic: it cannot be expressed in propositions, it is something 'higher' like ethics (§6.42), something 'transcendental' (§6.13). See §6.41:

> The sense of the world must lie outside the world. In the world everything is as it is, and everything happens as it does happen: *in* it no value exists—and if it did exist, it would have no value.
>
> If there is any value that does have value, it must lie outside the whole sphere of what happens and is the case. For all that happens and is the case is accidental.
>
> What makes it non-accidental cannot lie *within* the world, since if it did it would itself be accidental.
>
> It must lie outside the world.

This is confirmed by what Wittgenstein himself says about his work:

> [T]he point of the book is ethical... My work consists of two parts: the one presented here plus all that I have *not* written. And it is precisely this second part that is the important one. My book draws limits to the sphere of the ethical from the inside as it were, and I am convinced that this is the ONLY *rigorous* way of drawing those limits. (1919 letter to Ludwig von Ficker)

The letter in question can be found in (with slight differences of translation): L. Wittgenstein, "Letters to Ludwig von Ficker," in C. G. Luckhardt, ed., *Wittgenstein: Sources and Perspectives* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), p. 95.

however general they may be. Some natural scientific *propositions* are true and have "accidental general validity", to be sure: but *this* can "only be the result of fortunate accident" (§6.1232). It *does not tell us anything about the world* (except mere occurrences): "To be general means no more than to be accidentally valid for all things" (§6.1231). Thus science *merely takes note of what is the case*, but does not explain the world: "The sense of the world must lie outside the world" (§6.41). This accidental or arbitrary nature of the natural sciences — of what they tell us about the world, to be more precise — contrasts with logical necessity which is the "only necessity that exists" (§6.37): "Exploration of logic means the exploration of *everything that is subject to law*. And outside logic everything is accidental." (§6.3). We should understand what this really means: "One might say, using Hertz's terminology, that only connexions that are *subject to law* are *thinkable.*" (§6.361). So *what the natural science does is not making sense of the world*. When we discover certain 'laws of nature' through science, it is not that we *understand* anything: we simply take note — "Such and such is the case", which is mere accident (however general it may be), and as such does not tell us anything (other than itself, i.e. what is merely the case). "The procedure of induction" (§6.363), for example, which is not even something science tells us about but something which it employs in the process of coming up with or arriving at scientific propositions, "has no logical justification but only a psychological one", for it is "clear that there are no grounds for believing that the simplest eventuality will in fact be realized" (§6.3631). So, for example, "we do not *know* whether [the sun] will rise [tomorrow]", which is only an 'hypothesis' (§363311). (This is sublimation of the word "to know". See *PI* §481.) To put it otherwise: "There is no compulsion making one thing happen because another has happened. The only necessity that exists is *logical* necessity." (§6.37). (This is

sublimation of the word "necessity". See *PI* §372, see also: §497. Cf. §520.) The *only* thing that is *not* accidental in natural science, however, is *not* something expressed in its propositions, is *not* about *what* it tells us.

> Laws like the principle of sufficient reason, etc., are about the net and not about what the net describes. (§6.35)
> If there were a law of causality, it might be put in the following way: There are laws of nature.
> But of course that cannot be said: it makes itself manifest. (§6.36)
> *What can be described can happen too: and what the law of causality is meant to exclude cannot even be described*. (§6.362; emphasis added)
> The law of causality is not a law but the form of a law. (§6.32)
> All such propositions, including the principle of sufficient reason, the laws of continuity in nature and of least effort in nature, etc. etc.—*all these are a priori insights about the forms in which the propositions of science can be cast*. (§6.34; emphasis added)
> Similarly the possibility of describing the world by means of Newtonian mechanics tells us nothing about the world: but what does tell us something about it is the precise *way* in which it is possible to describe it by these means. (§6.342)

So *what is not merely accidental in science* is *not* found in its *propositions*; instead, it concerns the *logical form(s)* within which those propositions are cast. And so: "Here, as always, what is certain a priori proves to be something purely logical." (§6.3211). *This*, roughly, is how the *TLP* gives 'foundations' to all the sciences. But with this same move, it also reduces them to something quite superficial and remarkably insignificant. (This helps explain why Wittgenstein himself regarded what he had *not* written in the book as the important thing. See footnote 103 in this section above.)

#### 3.3.2.3 *PI* logic: Essence of things (phenomena)

How, by contrast, does Wittgenstein in the *PI* conceive the science of logic in relation to the notion of its being the foundation of all the sciences and of the empirical world as a whole? We will start with the latter in this section (essence of phenomena), and discuss the former (foundation of sciences) in the next section.

First of all, there is no such thing as *the* essence of the world (or *the* essence of language, which was the same thing as the former according to the *TLP*): for, recall, we rejected the conception of essence as universal common element. What, then, is the relation between the essence of language and the essence of the world? We noted above that the former is contextualized, which is made possible by the rejection of *that* conception of essence: such that it signifies the logic-s of particular language-games. Similarly, if the 'essence of the world' means anything, it should mean something that is diverse: namely, the nature-s of particular phenomena of our world. Then our question will be: what is the relation between the nature of particular phenomena of language and the nature of particular phenomena of the world? We noted above (Chapter 1) that the notion that philosophy investigates the nature of language does not mean that it excludes the nature of other phenomena from its domain of study. Now, therefore, we will try to understand how it is that the investigation of language is also at the same time an investigation of the nature of phenomena in the *PI* (which undertook this work in the case of the *TLP* in the preceding). How is it that when we examine particular language-games, we are thereby examining the nature of phenomena? The answer in general terms is this: our 'cognitive relation', so to say, to the nature of phenomena is by means of the concepts of our language. So a conceptual investigation is also an investigation of the phenomenon in question whose concept is what is being studied. When we investigate the logic of the *concept* 'mind' (or 'thinking'), for example, we are *thereby* investigating the nature of the *phenomenon* we call "the mind". But just as there is no one single thing we call "the world", there is no one single thing we call "the mind" (or "the soul"). Contextualization applies at *this* level as well. That is to say, we will see that the use of this word is complicated; the word, as Wittgenstein

says, has a 'family of meanings', i.e. diverse logic-s related to each other in various ways. There is, for example, such a thing as understanding, but also such a thing as feeling, both of which belong to the concept of mind (*Seele*). We have the term 'mental process' (*seelischen Vorgang*), for instance: but it is a mistake, according to Wittgenstein, to apply this term to the two cases — just because it is prone to confusions (§154). (Not because it is absolutely wrong to say of understanding that it is a 'mental process'. This would be a possible use for example when we want to explain the meaning of "understanding" in a context where we want to emphasize its difference from, say, the 'grammar' of the word "eating". See §339.) Wittgenstein says:

> Just for once, don't think of understanding as a 'mental process' at all! — For *that* is the way of talking which confuses you…
>
> In the sense in which there are processes (including mental processes) which are characteristic of understanding, understanding is not a mental process.
>
> (A pain's increasing or decreasing, listening to a tune or a sentence — mental processes.) (§154)

The possibility of speaking of both understanding and feeling as mental processes, which is the same thing as both being the business of the mind, creates the appearance of unity (sameness), but there are essential differences between the two. And Wittgenstein's point is that if we want to understand the nature of understanding (e.g) we must take account of these differences. Even then, however, there is not *one single thing* we call "understanding" ("to understand"). This word itself has a 'family of meanings': i.e. it is applied in various ways in different language-games. There is a sense of understanding for example when we say of someone that he understands, say, the word "chair". But there is another sense of understanding ("But there is also *this* use of the word…"): when we say "Now I understand!" (§151). The former kind is not "something that occurs in a moment" whereas the latter is: such as when a

teacher of mathematics writes down a series of numbers, and the pupil tries to understand 'the rule' of the series and utters the words "Now I understand!" when he does (§151). The use of the same word creates the appearance of unity, as if in both cases we are speaking of the same thing, but when we look closer we see that this is not so: "One needs to call to mind the differences between language-games" (§290). But is *this* the end? No. I mean: when we examine the *particular cases* of understanding (in the sense of "Now I understand"), we will still see *differences* but *no unity*. "But does this mean that the word ["understand"] really has no meaning, since the meaning seems to dissolve into nothing when we follow it through?" (§163).

> In [the case described] the meaning of the word ["understanding"] stood out clearly. But we told ourselves that this was only a quite special case of [understanding]: [understanding] in quite special clothing, which had to be stripped from it if we wanted to see the essence of [understanding]. So we stripped off those particular coverings; but then [understanding] itself disappeared. In order to find the real artichoke, we divested it of its leaves. For (162) was, to be sure, a special case of [understanding]; what is essential to [understanding], however, was not hidden here beneath the exterior, but this 'exterior' was one case out of the family of cases of [understanding]. (§164)

Notice that all this is essentially a matter of *how we conceive the essence* of a phenomenon: we must reject the dominant conception of essence according to which the essence of a phenomenon is a common element shared by all its instances by virtue of which they are *its* instances. Therefore, we must instead examine particular instances of the given phenomenon when we want to understand its nature. But *how* do we do this? We *describe examples* — i.e. particular cases of the said phenomenon (say, understanding), that is language-games where the relevant word ("understand") is applied. This is both an investigation of the *nature* of understanding (a 'mental'

phenomenon) *and* an examination of the *concept* of understanding[104]. So it is in *this* way, then, that Wittgenstein thinks an investigation of the nature of language (which is what philosophy does) is also an investigation of the nature of phenomena:

> One ought to ask, not what images are or what goes on when one imagines something, but how the word "imagination" is used. But that does not mean that I want to talk only about words. For the question of what imagination essentially is, is as much about the word "imagination" as my question. And I am only saying that this question is not to be clarified — neither for the person who does the imagining, nor for anyone else — by pointing; nor yet by a description of some process. The first question also asks for the clarification of a word; but it makes us expect a wrong kind of answer. (§370)
> *Essence* is expressed in grammar. (§371)
> Grammar tells what kind of object anything is. (Theology as grammar.) (§373)

What is in question here is this: how can we examine the nature of any phenomenon in a non-scientific, non-empirical way? That is, how can we execute philosophical (logical, metaphysical, etc.) investigation of the essence of things? Wittgenstein's point is simply that this is possible only through an examination of *concepts*, i.e. of the use of the words of our language (which is what 'logic/essence of language' signifies). Would *this*, however, be in accordance with the description Wittgenstein gives of the notion that 'logic is something sublime': "logical investigation explores the essence of all things" (§89)? The answer is: yes and no. In other words, it does not matter whether or not we use this description, provided that we *already know what we would mean by it* if we were to use it. And if we choose to not use it, then *nothing* changes: except that we are now using this sentence in a *different sense*. So the more correct answer to the question of whether we should say of the conception given above (which is the *PI* conception) that in it, "logical investigation explores the essence of all things" is this: it depends on what we *mean* by this sentence. So suppose that *we say so*. And compare what the sentence means *in this use* (i.e. in the

[104] We will return to this important point in §5.5ff below.

context of the *PI* view of logic) with what it means in the context of the *TLP* view described above. As in the case of the sentence "Philosophy investigates the nature of language" (discussed in Chapter 1), this sentence *means quite different thing*s in the two contexts, hence *contextualization of sense*. But now let us consider *this* fact too. Wittgenstein continues the description of logic as something sublime by saying, right after the sentence we have been discussing: "It seeks to see to the foundation of things, and shouldn't concern itself whether things actually happen in this or that way." (§89). Does this apply to the *PI* view of logic as we described it above? The answer is, again: yes and no. Yes, simply because we are not doing any *empirical* study (§89), which is what Wittgenstein means, e.g., when he says: "It was correct that our considerations must not be scientific ones." (§109). The answer is no, if what is in question is something like a Tractarian sublimation where logic is presumed to be absolutely independent of the actual world, of 'what is the case' (see Chapter 2 above). On the contrary, the logic of language in Wittgenstein's new view is seen to depend on the actual world in various ways, as we will discuss in Chapter 5 below: most importantly, the existence of human agreement in 'customs' and application of words on the one hand (§198, §201); and on the other, 'certain very general facts of nature' (§142, boxed remark; *PPF* §§365-6). So in *one* sense, i.e. in *this* sense, logic may be said to "concern itself whether things actually happen in this or that way" (§89). But, as said, in the other sense in which this implies any *empirical* investigation, we cannot say it of logic.

3.3.2.4. *PI* logic: Foundation of *particular* sciences

Now, what about the notion that logic 'lies at the foundation of all sciences' which, recall, is part of the conception of logic as something sublime? We described how

this was so in the case of the *TLP* above. And we will now try to understand this in relation to the *PI* view. In the sense in which this notion is conceived in the *TLP*, it is of course not at all part of Wittgenstein's new conception in the *PI* — though, as we will see shortly, there is a sense in which logic may correctly be said to 'lies at the foundation of a science'. Above all, *if* there is such a thing as the 'foundation' of the sciences, it is *not* one single thing: i.e. the sciences have no *single* foundation (if they have any foundation at all). As always, this is the rejection of the universalistic conception of logic (essence) in the *TLP*. But Wittgenstein speaks of the 'foundation of mathematics' at the very end of *PI* (the second part of the book to which we refer here as the '*PPF*') in a way that implies that his philosophical investigations can be considered as an investigation of the foundation of 1) mathematics and 2) psychology:

> An investigation entirely analogous to our investigation of psychology is possible also for mathematics. It is just as little a *mathematical* investigation as ours is a psychological one. It will *not* contain calculations, so it is not, for example, formal logic. It might deserve the name of an investigation of the 'foundations of mathematics'. (*PPF* §372)

*Throughout* both the *PI* and the *PPF* (which together constitute the book called *The Philosophical Investigations*), Wittgenstein is concerned with an investigation of psychology and mathematics, and often observes the similarity between the two cases. So the quoted text clearly implies that he thinks his investigations "might deserve the name of an investigation of the 'foundations of mathematics'" — *and* of the foundations of psychology (*PPF* §372). How is *this* to be understood?

Let us attack this question by asking *why* Wittgenstein is specifically concerned with these two sciences, and not, say, physics. The answer lies in the fact that in these two cases there is what we may call a 'problem of foundations' due to

the existence of '*conceptual confusions*' surrounding them, hence a *need for philosophical investigation* of their 'foundations':

> The confusion and barrenness of psychology is not to be explained by its being a "young science"; its state is not comparable with that of physics, for instance, in its beginnings. (Rather, with that of certain branches of mathematics. Set theory.) For in psychology, there are experimental methods *and conceptual confusion*. (As in the other case, conceptual confusion and methods of proof.)
>
> The existence of the experimental method makes us think that we have the means of getting rid of the problems which trouble us; but problem and method pass one another by. (*PPF* §371)

That is to say, there are *philosophical problems* concerning the sciences of mathematics and psychology which *cannot* be investigated through *empirical* means and methods, and therefore there is a *need for philosophical investigation* — and that is why the science of logic in the *PI* conception may be said to be concerned with the foundation of these sciences[105]. The crucial thing is: there has to be a *need* for a philosophical (i.e. logical) investigation of the foundation of a *particular* science (not all the sciences, contra the *TLP*). The existence of this need is indicated by the existence of *conceptual* confusions, hence of philosophical problems (issues, difficulties). If there are conceptual difficulties in the case of *any* particular science, be it psychology or physics, then philosophy has *work to do*: and it is only in *this* way that philosophizing has a *function*, and therefore a *sense* — that is, when there are "confusions which…arise when language is, as it were, idling, not when it is doing its work" (§132). As we saw in the previous chapters, all this is based on the conception of the essence of language Wittgenstein develops in the *PI* which we have been (and will be) describing in the present thesis. We observed that language

[105] Wittgenstein sees deep similarity between the conceptual issues, i.e. philosophical problems, in the two sciences. Indeed, as we will see, and as we have already implied above, one (perhaps the) fundamental source of conceptual confusion in both mathematics and psychology is the same: namely, the notion of *Something* we know but cannot explain, THIS. In Chapter 5, we will logically prove the falsity of this notion.

is essentially an activity, which means (among other things) that *any* employment of language — be it a use of an individual sentence, or a whole discipline such as philosophy — has to be a form of *doing*, if it is to have sense. Expressed in other terms, use of words has to be *contextualized*: it must belong to particular circumstances where it has a *function* (in relation to a particular purpose). This applies to philosophizing as well, i.e. to the science of logic. The *need* that arises in a particular science for an examination of its 'foundations' due to the existence of conceptual issues which cannot be empirically settled is what allows philosophy to have a purpose and a function. These are *philosophical* problems. As we will see in the next chapter, we need philosophical problems for contextualizing our philosophizing: we need a purpose and a function for it. This basically means there has to be a need for philosophy, so that it can do something — without which it would be 'idle' (language would be idling in our use of words in philosophizing), thus lack sense.

### 3.4 Surveyable representation and the model of mathematics: Complete agreement is the form of our practice of philosophy

The example of mathematics is important for our conception of the science of logic — and in both works of Wittgenstein. For there is complete agreement and 'absolute' certainty in mathematics, very much like the kind of thing the author of the *TLP* was aiming at in logic: sublime logical order and necessity and complete ideal exactness. Crystalline purity of logic was supposed to be something we see in mathematics, also in the hidden essence of language. Similarly for rules: the sublime rules of the kind we see in mathematics were thought to be the fixed rules of the calculus of language. We observed that Wittgenstein later comes to see these notions as empty, i.e. devoid

of sense. But this, of course, is not another instance of the dogmatism of projecting a preconception into reality: unlike in the *TLP*, Wittgenstein is developing his new conception of these things in the *PI* by close examination of particular cases (actual instances). We see nothing extraordinary, nothing remarkable is going on in mathematics: the author of the *TLP* had just sublimated the logic of mathematics. But still, much in Wittgenstein's later conception is, in a certain way, connected with mathematics (see §2.5.2 above): we are still seeking exactness, complete agreement and certainty in philosophy (see §3.3.1 above). This, as we observed (§1.4.1.2), directly derives from the nature of our subject matter.

Let us pose the question: what do complete agreement in and certainty of mathematics depend on? We would like to say: on its sublime nature, the sublimity of the realm of mathematical truth. (Perhaps one is inclined to say: first complete agreement depends on certainty; then certainty depends on some sublime reality.) But when we look closely at actual instances where we are supposed to see this sublime logical order, as in the case of the kind of very simple mathematical examples Wittgenstein examines in the rule-following sections, we do not see this, but something else. We do not see any kind of thing that underlies the complete agreement in and certainty of mathematics. The kind of thing we imagined was something that transcended all human life (customs; which is the context of mathematics and language) and the actual world as a whole (the facts of nature; which is the context of human life). It was a domain which only a God could truly see and whose nature only a God could fully comprehend: it was such a remarkable, super-natural realm of reality. But *we* — human beings we are, humble and limited by nature — see this in the form of 'absolute certainty' in mathematics, although we do not fully understand the nature of the underlying super-reality. However,

Wittgenstein shows, in the rule-following discussion, that we do not really understand the nature of this presumed sublime certainty either, what 'it' is, i.e. that we do *not* really *know* such a thing, that we are only *imagining* 'it'[106]. Instead, the existence of complete agreement (for example, "over the result of a calculation") — which we imagined to depend on something sublime — was *itself* part of the *essence* of mathematics, for without it "our concept of 'mathematical certainty' would not exist" (*PPF* §341). Yet:

> Even then it might still be said: "While we can never *know* what the result of a calculation is, for all that, it always has a quite definite result. (God knows it.) Mathematics is indeed of the highest certainty — though we possess only a crude likeness of it." (*PPF* §342)

One is having difficulty in acknowledging *this* fact, which is *all that we know for certain* and which therefore should therefore constitute our description of the language-game in logic, namely the fact that complete agreement is itself part of the logic of mathematics, *because* one is on the one hand sublimating the logic of mathematics (i.e. imagining a supernatural realm of reality), and on the other, looking for *explanations* (a widespread mistake and a strong tendency in philosophy):

> But am I really trying to say that the certainty of mathematics is based on the reliability of ink and paper? *No*. (That would be a vicious circle.) —— I have not said *why* mathematicians do not quarrel, but only *that* they do not. (*PPF* §343)

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[106] This is sublimation of the concept 'mathematical certainty' (presumption of an *absolute* sense for the expression). One imagines that this certainty is a very special, *unique* kind of certainty (unlike any other, except perhaps the logical one — though, in fact, the *TLP* sees the two as the same, or more correctly, sees the former, mathematical certainty, as a version of the latter, logical certainty). For example, it implies 'absolute necessity' (which is itself sublimation of the concept 'necessity'), and is completely independent of the actual world as a whole — not to mention human life and customs in this natural world. On the other hand, other kinds of certainties are seen as impure, imperfect, less real. Later Wittgenstein, however, through close examination of particular examples from mathematics comes to see this as an illusion: "I can be as *certain* of someone else's feelings as of any fact. But this does not make the sentences 'He is very depressed', '25 × 25 = 625', and 'I am 60 years old' into similar instruments. A natural explanation is that the certainty is of a different *kind*. — This seems to point to a psychological difference. But the difference is a logical one." (*PPF* §330); "Am I less certain that this man is in pain than that 2 × 2 = 4? — Is the first case therefore one of mathematical certainty? —— 'Mathematical certainty' is not a psychological concept. The kind of certainty is the kind of language-game." (*PPF* §332).

All we have to take note of as part of the description is the fact *that* mathematicians do not disagree ('quarrel'). (Cf. §§654-6.) And now if we further ask *why* they do not, that looks for an explanation that goes beyond the realm of *what we already know* (see §1.4.3.2 above). Because, for all we know (for certain), they *simply do not disagree* — for justifications and explanations "must come to an end somewhere" (*PI* §1): "Once I have exhausted the justifications, I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: 'This is simply what I do.'" (§217). (And needless to say, we have no interest in the causes.) Hence the following crucial remark Wittgenstein makes in exactly *this* context, at exactly *this* point: "What has to be accepted, the given, is — one might say — *forms of life*." That is to say, 'giving grounds' comes to an end somewhere: "But the end is not an ungrounded presupposition: it is an ungrounded way of acting." (*OC* §110). And the *form* of this particular realm of human life which is mathematics is *complete agreement*: *this* is what we must accept in the end as the 'given'. When one thinks about this, perhaps one will be inclined to ask a question such as: "So you are saying that human agreement decides what is true and what is false?" (§241). It is as if, for example, we may (might) completely agree upon some crazy thing one day (say tomorrow we agree on "2 × 2 = 5"), and then that thing will (would) be 'true'. Thus one is inclined to say: "Even though everybody believed that 2 × 2 were 5, it would still be 4" (*PPF* §348). But of course one is making the mistake of *presuming the existence of our entire mathematics* when one attempts to 'imagine' that: one imagines that *everything else is already in place*, already *exists as what it is*, but *only this one thing* is different. One falsely thinks that this would be to imagine a case 'where everybody believed that 2 × 2 were 5'; 'falsely 'because it is *not* that easy to imagine a case — in a way, of course, that we can make *sense*. (If I say "Imagine I can fly…", you may

of course imagine *something*. But so far as *making sense* of a case is concerned, I have *not* said anything, and you have *not* imagined anything. Perhaps you imagined a picture of me in the sky, similar to a picture on a wall: surely, but *that* is not relevant.) In order to possibly understand the *sense* of the sentence "Even though everybody believed that 2 × 2 were 5 it would still be 4" — if there is such a thing (sense) — we have to ask: "what would it be like for everybody to believe that?" (*PPF* §348).

> — Well, I could imagine, for instance, that people had a different calculus, or a technique which we wouldn't call "calculating". But would it be *wrong*? (Is a coronation *wrong*? To beings different from ourselves it might look extremely odd.) (*PPF* §348)
> Of course, in one sense, mathematics is a body of knowledge, but still it is also an *activity*. And 'false moves 'can exist only as the exception. For if what we now call by that name became the rule, the game in which they were false moves would have been abrogated. (*PPF* §349)

We said that complete agreement is the form of the practice of mathematics, that it belonged to the logic of mathematics, since without complete agreement mathematics qua an *activity* would cease to exist: the language-game of mathematics itself "would have been abrogated" (*PPF* §349). We observed the tendency to think that this means as if "human agreement decides what is true and what is false", and corrected the misconception underlying that tendency: "What is true or false is what human beings *say*; and it is in their *language* that human beings agree. This is agreement not in opinions, but rather in form of life" (§242). Thus agreement among human beings is part of the logic of mathematics, which is a particular form of life: it "belongs to the scaffolding from which our language operates (for example, yields descriptions)" (§240). But this agreement in mathematics is not, as it were, some *brute* fact standing on its own (whatever that might mean — but does *not* mean some underlying transcendental reality): it makes perfect sense when we consider it in relation to the notion of 'surveyable representation', which is another essential

feature of mathematics. It is essential to mathematics that the 'statements' (proofs, calculations, etc.) are *surveyable*. Otherwise, the existence of complete agreement would be a kind of *mystery*. (We showed this in §2.5 above.) Consequently, the concepts of 'complete agreement' and 'surveyable representation' belong together. In this regard, mathematics *may* be said to be a model for Wittgenstein's philosophy in the *PI*. He wants to establish complete agreement through the concept of surveyable representation.

But how is this possible? It is only possible if we properly contextualize our philosophizing (see Chapter 4 below). For we are using language in doing philosophy. And as such, our employment of words is subject to the 'conditions of sense' just like any other. That is, our words must belong to a context where it serves a purpose and has a function. Our philosophizing must be a version of doing: otherwise, it will be idle and lack sense. In particular, the notions which we used above (complete clarity or exactness, complete agreement and surveyable representation) in describing the *PI* conception of the science of logic are to be understood contextually. Philosophy examines and describes language-games, and does that in a particular way which is defined by the concepts of surveyable representation and complete agreement. However, for *this* to make sense, we have to specify a *purpose*: only in relation to a particular purpose will it make sense to aim at complete clarity and complete agreement. With this purpose, we will be able to contextualize our way of practicing philosophy. And that is the function of philosophical problems.

# CHAPTER 4

# PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS:

# CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE SCIENCE OF LOGIC

## 4.1 Contextualization of logical investigation itself

Logic now describes the *use* of words and sentences in the *contexts* where they belong, i.e. particular language-games. The subject-matter of the science of logic, to recall, is the essence of language, its logic; and we see with Wittgenstein in the *PI* that the 'logic of language' is something present and directly visible in our everyday language-games, since what we call "language" is nothing other than the complicated family of language-games in our everyday lives. We expressed this by saying: 'Logic of language' means logic-s of particular language games (see contextualization of logic, Chapter 2). Consequently: "everything descriptive of a language-game is part of logic" (*OC*, §56; Chapter 3). But since logical investigation *itself* involves employment of language (whose nature it is investigating and describing), *it too must belong to a particular context itself*. For the description of language-games that is the task of the science of logic is, of course, not some aimless dictionary-like cataloging of the whole of language. (Yet even a dictionary has a use, a function in human life!) That is, it is not as if there is something out there (a language-game) which we depict (picture) from an external point of view. No: whatever we do, we can only do it within language, i.e. by means of the same language which we are investigating. But *any* employment of language must belong to a *context* and have a *use* there if it is to make sense, which basically means that language is contextual in nature. We saw this in the case of individual sentences in Chapter 1: that was 'contextualization of sense'. But contextualization equally applies in more 'general' cases as well: for

example, a work in philosophy such as this thesis (Chapter 7) and even philosophy as a whole[107] (as we are explaining in the present chapter). Just as a sentence has to belong to a particular context and have a use there if it is to make sense, our logical investigations — our philosophizing itself — will have to be contextualized as well. Otherwise, in our employment of words, language would be 'idling, not doing work' (§38, §132): that is to say, philosophy would be devoid of *sense*, therefore 'itself brought in question' (§133). (This is because, as noted, in philosophizing we ourselves are using our actual language which is contextual in nature.) And *that* is the role and function of philosophical problems in Wittgenstein's new philosophy:

> All *explanation*[108] must disappear, and description alone must take its place. And this description gets its light — that is to say, its purpose — from the philosophical problems. (§109)

Contextualization involves not only the specification of circumstances, but also the *use* of words (see §1.4.3 above). And since *use* is essentially connected with *purpose*, the purpose for which language is employed in any given context is part of contextualization. (To use language in a context is to employ words for a particular purpose.) 'Use', of course, does not mean mere utterance of words. Quite the contrary, in Wittgenstein's new view, it always serves a purpose: and it is only in *this* way — that is, by helping attain that purpose — that an employment of language has a *function*. The *TLP* had regarded the essence of language to be (merely) picturing facts; but now we see that even when language is *doing* this picturing of facts, this is only because it is *used* in this way, i.e. as a pictorial word-description of facts. But

[107] Indeed, it applies to the whole of language: its context is our human life and the 'broader' context to which this life itself belongs — i.e. our actual, natural world which we inhabit. See §5.6 below.
[108] As Wittgenstein emphasizes (§290): "One must call to mind the differences between language-games." That is to say: the word "explanation" is here used in a particular sense — in the sense in which a natural science, for example, explains apparent phenomena by reference to underlying hidden workings (§81). Wittgenstein is saying: *this* is *not* what the science of logic does. But it is a completely different sense when, for example, we speak about explaining what we know by means of examples, which *is* (part of) what we do in philosophy.

this use of language as a picture of facts, like *any* other use, must itself belong to a context where it serves a purpose: it must have a function, otherwise it would be 'running idle', that is lacking sense (§88).

> What we call "*descriptions*" are instruments for particular uses. Think of a machine-drawing, a cross-section, an elevation with measurements, which an engineer has before him. Thinking of a description as a word-picture of the facts has something misleading about it: one tends to think only of such pictures as hang on our walls, which seem simply to depict how a thing looks, what it is like. (These pictures are, as it were, idle.) (§291)

So any description must belong to a context where it has a use for a purpose, thus having a function: we *achieve* something (if we are successful of course) by using the description in the way we do in that context. The essential point is this: what *makes* something a description, for example a description of a language-game or a picture of a fact, is *its being used as* a description (or a picture). A description is 'an instrument for particular uses' (§291). Unless it is used in a certain way in a particular context, *nothing* is a picture or description of *anything*. Merely decorative pictures 'as hang on our walls' (§291), however, are *merely decorative*: that is their only use as a picture. (And even *they* have a use, nonetheless.) But when we say, for example, with the author of the *TLP* that the sentence is a picture of facts (essentially), what is in question is surely no such decorative use[109]. Therefore, if any

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[109] I mean: what is *meant* (intended) is no such decorative use. However, many of the things philosophers say end up being nothing more than such idle pictures (at best) — precisely because they are *not* contextualized (not given any proper sense, i.e. use). Consider:

> "I know . . . only from my *own* case" — what kind of proposition is this meant to be? An empirical one? No. — A grammatical one?
>
> So this is what I imagine: everyone says of himself that he knows what pain is only from his own pain. — Not that people really say that, or are even prepared to say it. But *if* everybody said it —— it might be a kind of exclamation. And even if it gives no information, still, it is a picture; and why should we not want to call such a picture before our mind? Imagine an allegorical painting instead of the words.
>
> Indeed, when we look into ourselves as we do philosophy, we often get to see just such a picture. Virtually a pictorial representation of our grammar. Not facts; but, as it were, illustrated turns of speech. (§295)

We explained what grammatical propositions *mean* (in particular, *this* example Wittgenstein talks about here) in §§1.4.1-2 above. Such a proposition in fact says something about the use of words — but has the form of an empirical proposition, i.e. appears to be saying something about the world,

sentence is a picture of facts, it must be *only* by virtue of its *being used as* such a picture[110].

Now, I am saying all these only because I want to *emphasize* one thing about our description of language-games in logic (*this* is the purpose of my words): it is not as if language-games are already *there* waiting to be, as it were, *photographed* by us. Language-games, it is true, are already there in a certain sense — in the sense of already existing customs or techniques, established usages of words which are normative in nature, i.e. governed by rules (see Chapter 5). But there is no such thing as 'merely pictorial description' of them (which would imply a point outside language). Rather, description of language-games *itself* takes place in a particular context where it is executed with a particular purpose and thus serves a function: i.e. itself belongs to a particular language-game. (For it is executed through use of language.) And in the context of our philosophizing, that is of the *PI*, the context within which the description takes place (which includes the purpose for which it

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phenomena. One mistakenly takes himself to be expressing some important fact (of great generality) about the nature of phenomena, whereas in fact one is merely making a 'pictorial representation' of the *use* of relevant words ('our grammar'), confusing what has to do with the *forms* of expression for their use (and thereby for the nature of phenomena):

> One predicates of the thing what lies in the mode of representation. We take the possibility of comparison, which impresses us, as the perception of a highly general state of affairs. (§104).
> One thinks that one is tracing nature over and over again, and one is merely tracing round the frame through which we look at it. (§114)

Consider also the following in this connection:

> "This body has extension." To these words we could respond by saying: "Nonsense!" — but are inclined to reply "Of course!" — Why? (§252)

A grammatical sentence is a form of words, just like any other sentence. It is intuitively compelling because its source is actually a fact about (an aspect of) the language-game. But it is for this reason also quite dangerous because given its empirical form, it misleads people to think in the way explained above. By itself, i.e. apart from its actual *use* in a certain context where the part in the language-game it is supposed to tell us something about will become apparent, the grammatical sentence does not mean anything, does not say anything about the language-game — let alone the nature of phenomena.

[110] If a friend tells me what happened yesterday, describing the facts with words, his sentences can be said to be such pictures. (Perhaps he wants my advice about what he should do in his present situation.) But the *very same words* could belong to a different context (say a court case), for example, where they would have a *different use*: for although in both cases the sentences are pictures of facts (in a certain sense), they have a different use because the *purpose* for which they are used as pictures is different. Purpose is part of use, therefore part of *sense*.

> Another use of the same words may be in a fiction, for example.

does) is determined by *philosophical problems*. However specific our description may be, *we* would not be making proper *sense* by means of the words (of the description) — *without a purpose*. (The words themselves do not *have* sense, *we make* sense by employing them, in doing something by means of them.) For otherwise our employment of words would not have a *function* — but it must have a function if it is to make sense. That is why philosophical problems have an *essential* role in our philosophizing: their function is to enable us properly contextualize our logical investigations (without which there is no proper sense).

As said, we are 'aiming at *complete* clarity' (§133), and this requires rigorous standards as regards sense (making sense). (See the example we discussed in the final paragraph of §2.5.2 above.) For this purpose, we are employing the concept of a 'surveyable representation': what we need is "*an overview* of the use of our words" (§122). However, given the "enormous variety of all the everyday language-games" (*PPF* §335), we are (should be) aware that it "would be difficult to describe [them] even in rough outline" (§156). Thus the only possible way to 'find our way about' (cf. §123) in our use of language in philosophy is by means of *strict contextualization* in each particular case, at each individual step of our investigation. We will thereby be able to present (both to ourselves and to others) *descriptions* that are *surveyable*: for only in a particular use in a particular context does a sentence have a perfectly *clear sense*. *What* we are saying, the *context* in which (the 'object of comparison' in relation to which) we are saying it, and *why* we are saying it: these must all be clear if our words are to have a clear sense — for only then will they have a clear *use*. For this purpose, the purpose for which we use language in philosophy must be specified. The purpose we need in philosophy is indicated by the existence of a *difficulty* in 'finding our way about', and that is the philosophical

problem (§123). After all, it would not make sense to *begin* philosophizing in the first place unless there is a *need* for it. With the philosophical problem, we now have the context and the purpose we need: our aiming at '*complete* clarity' will now 'simply mean' that "the philosophical problems should *completely* disappear" (§133).

4.2 Exactness, surveyable representation and complete agreement in philosophy: "For the clarity we are aiming at is indeed *complete* clarity."

If we are seeking *exactness* (or 'complete clarity') in our investigations, which we indeed do, there must be a *purpose* for which exactness is sought: for there is no such thing as 'complete exactness', as the author of the *TLP* imagined, that altogether transcends context (see §3.3.1 and §3.4 above). There is no 'absolute sense' of "exact", no "single ideal of exactness" (§88). Sublimation of exactness, indeed sublimation of any word (as we discussed in Chapter 2), turns it (or what it signifies) into a non-entity. For "exact" means all sorts of different (but related) things depending on the *context* — which also includes the *purpose* for which exactness is needed and sought. We observed (in §3.31) that the author of the *TLP* imagines 'a state of complete exactness' as the 'real goal of our investigations' in logic (§91). We now see that this, in the context of the *TLP*, fails to make sense (lacking function), for the expression 'complete exactness' makes sense only in a context partly constituted by purpose. Therefore, although we too seek complete exactness, we now do it by specifying the context and the purpose of our investigations. Our description of language-games through logical investigation "gets its light — that is to say, its purpose — from the philosophical problems" (§109): "The work of the philosopher consists in marshalling recollections for a particular purpose." (§127).

> We want to establish an order in our knowledge of the use of language: an order for a particular purpose, one out of many possible orders, not *the* order. For this purpose we shall again and again *emphasize* distinctions which our ordinary forms of language easily make us overlook. This may make it appear as if we saw it as our task to reform language.
>
> Such a reform for particular practical purposes, an improvement in our terminology designed to prevent misunderstandings in practice, may well be possible. But these are not the cases we are dealing with. The confusions which occupy us arise when language is, as it were, idling, not when it is doing work. (§132)

When language is doing its work, there is no *need* for philosophy: only when its function is problematic, where language tends to run idle, there is a role to be played by philosophy. Our purpose is to solve philosophical problems: "For philosophical problems arise when language *goes on holiday*." (§38). So that in *this* way, it will have a function. Where there is *conceptual* confusion or difficulty, philosophy is needed for the purpose of overcoming it by 'rendering surveyable' the conceptual situation: "This entanglement in our rules [i.e. concepts] is what we want to understand: that is, to survey." (§125). But we want to do this in a way that leaves *no possibility of disagreement*: "If someone were to advance *theses* in philosophy, it would never be possible to debate them, because everyone would agree to them." (§128). This is due to the nature of our subject-matter itself (i.e. what we already know and agree in by knowing and agreeing in language, i.e. the essence of language). For this reason, we are seeking *exactness* in our logical investigations: for if we are *successful* in our task of describing language-games, i.e. perspicuous in our re-presentation of what we already know in logic, then we will be able to establish complete agreement. But of course this 'ideal' of exactness is defined by our *purpose*: "For the clarity that we are aiming at is indeed *complete* clarity. But this simply means that the philosophical problems should *completely* disappear." (§133). Our purpose is to resolve philosophical problems — but also, to do this in a way that

is completely clear to everybody who uses the same language, who therefore will completely agree with us.

*How*, however, can we attain this exactness, that is, complete clarity and establish complete agreement in philosophy (in addition to specifying our purpose)? Of course, we do not simply give descriptions and dogmatically expect everyone to agree. Quite the contrary, we want to strongly guard ourselves against "[t]he dogmatism into which we fall so easily in doing philosophy": namely, the dogmatism of presenting things "as a preconception to which reality *must* correspond" (§131). We are doing this "by presenting the model as what it is, as an object of comparison — as a sort of yardstick" (§131). This is why we are so strict on contextualization: unless we provide concrete cases, examples, of what we say (a sentence, a word, any expression, any notion), unless we properly specify the particular language-game within which the words we employ are to be placed, we cannot "avoid unfairness or vacuity in our assertions" (§131). That is why "the language-games stand there as *objects of comparison* which, through similarities and dissimilarities, are meant to throw light on features of our language" (§130). This is the point of the concept of a 'surveyable representation' which "is of fundamental significance for us": "It characterizes the way we represent things, how we look at matters. (Is this a 'Weltanschauung'?)" (§122). And no: this is not a 'Weltanschauung' because we are not presuming anything about reality. (Or even if it is, it derives from the very *logic* of our *practice* of philosophy.) Rather, we are embracing a particular *form* of re-presentation, which concerns *how* our logical investigation through use of words is to be carried out. Since all of us who use the same language already know the 'logic of language' (whatever it is) — that is, already know and agree in certain things that derive from this knowledge of and

agreement in language alone[111] — and since we are investigating this logic alone in which we already agree, consequently, if in philosophy we can manage to be rigorous and successful in our re-presentation (description) of what we already know, then we will be able to establish complete agreement. Thus *complete agreement*, which is the logical consequence of the nature of our subject-matter, is the *form of our practice* of philosophy — just as it is the form of the practice of mathematics (see §2.5.2 and §3.4 above). And it is *for this purpose* that we embrace the concept of 'surveyable representation': and that is where its 'fundamental significance for us' lies (§122). Just as proofs in mathematics are presented in a way that everybody (who is capable of playing the relevant game) can survey them (such as in calculations), which is the real 'foundation' of certainty and complete agreement in mathematics (if there is any), descriptions of language-games in logic are presented in a way that everybody who use the same language (i.e. who know the meanings of the words involved) can survey, i.e. understand, them. For if we *really* understand and mean something by the words which we use in philosophizing, then we must be able to explain this *sense* to others, i.e. to employ words in such a way that others too will be *able* to understand it: *this* is exactly what we are aiming to achieve by means of surveyable representations[112]. To the extent that *we* are successful in attaining our goal of rendering surveyable the use of the words involved in a particular philosophical problem[113], that is to say to the extent that we ourselves achieve complete clarity in the way we represent things (give descriptions), *anyone else* will

[111] This, of course, does not mean that we *say* that we agree, nor that we agree in *what we say*.
[112] An objection to this reasoning is only possible if one presumes that we can understand — or know — something but still be unable to explain it to others, i.e. directly and completely express what we understand by means of language. We showed above, in §2.4.2ff, that this is a very fishy notion, i.e. an idea which we cannot make proper sense of. But we will go further and *logically refute* this notion in Chapter 5, i.e. *prove that it is nonsensical and contradictory.*
[113] This includes conceptual confusions related to sciences, especially mathematics and psychology. See §3.3.2.4 above.

be able to survey our descriptions and assertions. We will then be able to *establish complete agreement — if* the person is in turn successful in *his* task as a reader, i.e. rigorously trying to understand what is being said, thinking about it for a time without making things easy for himself (by jumping to conclusions on the basis of his impressions), and also turning to *his own* conceptions with a critical eye when what is said conflicts with them. This is what Wittgenstein is trying to achieve in his philosophizing: it characterizes the way he practices philosophy (in his later years). (This is also what we are trying to achieve in this work, but admittedly and obviously we are often falling short of it. Yet there are also many occasions at which I believe this is achieved by the present thesis, especially the application in Chapter 7.)

The description just given, as we said above (§2.5.2, §3.4), reminds us of the way mathematics is practiced: for there, 'proof' is essentially connected with surveyability. Wittgenstein's 'proofs'[114] in philosophy are similar to it (in just *this* regard): "If someone were to advance *theses* in philosophy, it would never be possible to debate them, because everyone would agree to them." (§128). This leaves open whether he considers himself to be 'advancing theses' — but that should not be important. For what do we even *mean* by "thesis"? That is to say, we may or may not *call* what Wittgenstein is doing in the *PI* 'advancing theses' — provided that we know *what* he is doing and *what* he is saying, this will not matter because the decision will be an arbitrary one. If we *choose* to call it 'advancing thesis', we will be using the expression in *one* sense; and if we choose not to do that, then the

[114] This is potentially misleading, but we know what we do and what we do not mean by that expression. Of course, we do not mean anything like 'logic-mathematical' (cf. §125) proof such as given in formal logic (cf. *PPF* §372). What we mean should be quite clear — given all the things we have been repeatedly saying so far. And if anyone nevertheless somehow manages to misunderstand our use of the word "proof" in this context, just because of the similarity of *forms* of expression, that would be unfortunate. (However, it is also a fact that in the present context we are making an analogy with mathematics. Nevertheless, given *these* remarks and precautions, that misunderstanding would certainly be an *obvious* mistake.)

expression will have *another* sense[115]. For as we repeatedly emphasized, what any expression means is seen in (since it consists in) its application to particular examples. In any event, what essentially matters (in the present context) is the real *point* Wittgenstein is making through that remark (§128): he is giving expression to the fact that in his philosophizing, he aims to state *only* those things which we *all* already know and agree in by virtue of knowing and agreeing in language about which (therefore) there cannot be any disagreement (see §1.4.3.1 above). Hence we see him say: "Philosophy only states what everyone concedes to it" (§599). This leaves *no* doubt that *he* sees what he is doing in the way we just described (cf. §129, §415). Recall that we characterized *this* way of practicing philosophy as taking mathematics as a *model* (§2.5.2, §3.4). This may raise suspicion (understandably); but all we meant was that there is a genuine similarity between the two in regard to the concepts of 'complete agreement', 'exactness', 'certainty', and 'surveyable representation'. Of course, we did not mean anything like 'formal logic' (see §125, *PPF* §372) or the kind of Tractarian sublime logical order (see §2.5 above). Quite the contrary: we also applied *this* way of doing philosophy (described Wittgenstein's application thereof) *to* mathematics itself, to the sublimation of mathematics which we find in the *TLP* (but which is quite prevalent in general as a confused way of looking at the nature of mathematics). The part in mathematics which Wittgenstein may be said to employ as a model for his philosophy (as we noted in §2.5.2), i.e. what we may regard as 'ideal' in it, has only to do with *the way mathematics is practiced* (such as complete agreement and surveyability) — *not* the nature of the mathematical reality (whatever it is) that supposedly *underlies* it (such as the Tractarian sublime logical order in, or visible through, the super-faculty of thinking).

[115] There may of course be a separate question about whether what he is doing would *rightly* be called 'advancing theses'. But this is not our concern in the present context.

In any case, it is *certain* that Wittgenstein applies the concepts in question to his philosophizing: that is, those concepts (such as complete agreement and surveyable representation) — which are part of the *logic* of mathematics — belong to *the way he practices philosophy*. In his Lectures on the Foundations of Mathematics, he says (at the end of his first lecture):

> The investigation is to draw your attention to facts you know quite as well as I, but which you have forgotten, or at least which are not immediately in your field of vision. They will all be quite trivial facts. I won't say anything which anyone can dispute. Or if anyone does dispute it, I will let that point drop and pass on to say something else. (Lecture I, p. 22)

But *how* is he able to do this — i.e. talk about the nature of mathematics *without* doing mathematics and do this in such a way that he will ensure complete agreement by stating facts no one can dispute? The answer is: (1) because he knows "our everyday language" and "only deal[s] with puzzles which arise from the words of our ordinary everyday language" (Lecture I, p. 14), and (2) because he presents what we all *already know* in a *surveyable* form.

Let us present a brief summary of the main point of what we have said so far in this chapter, which will also provide the transition to the next sections. Description of language-games must itself belong to a particular context — and this is achieved by means of philosophical problems. Thanks to them, we know *where* to look in language. We also know where to direct ourselves and how to proceed because our *purpose* is to identify the *source* of philosophical problems and *solve* them. Understanding how they emerge, thereby identifying where our lack of understanding concerning language lies, and addressing this deficiency constitute the way we proceed in philosophizing. In this way, philosophical problems allow us to carry out our logical investigations meaningfully (and in a surveyable, perfectly clear manner) by placing them in a specific context. Through contextualization of

philosophizing, the sense of our words will be determined; and thus complete clarity and agreement will be possible. In the context of the present thesis, of the preceding discussion more specifically, we will first *compare* the two works in relation to philosophical problems in this section, as a natural continuation of what we have been doing so far. So we will be applying that comparison to philosophical problems (next section). Then, in the following chapters, we will undertake the reverse task and apply the notion of philosophical problems to the contrast: that is, *problematize the contrast* between the two works, formulate that comparison *as* philosophical problems. We will thus contextualize our discussion above, and through this contextualization, move on to contextualizing the present work as a whole in the final chapter.

### 4.3 Philosophical problems: Comparing the two conceptions

Comparing the role and significance of philosophical problems in the two works reveals two important aspects. First, in accordance with their respective attitudes in philosophy and towards the nature of language (strictly universalistic as opposed to being based on the particular case; see Chapter 2 above), the *TLP* attempts to deal with *all* philosophical problems *at once* whereas Wittgenstein now examines them *one by one* by focusing on the relevant details in the contexts where they belong. The author of the *TLP* imagines that all philosophical problems are solved when *the* fundamental problem is solved: namely, the problem of the essence of language. He takes himself to solve it by formulating the 'general propositional form': "This is how things are" (*TLP* §4.5). The other side of this coin concerns the *source* of philosophical problems. In the *TLP*, the source of all philosophical problems is *one* and exactly the same: namely, misunderstanding of *the* logic of language (*TLP*

Preface, §4.003). The author tells us that all problems arise due to this fundamental misunderstanding, which itself indicates *the* problem: thus when it is solved, all problems are *thereby* solved. (We will discuss this point further in Chapter 7.) In the *PI*, by contrast, each problem has its own source in its context; that is, the source of philosophical problems is various misunderstanding-s of the logic-s of language. So source and solution of problems mirror each other: one single universal source, single solution once and for all in the *TLP*; multiple local sources, distinct treatment of each particular case in its context in the *PI*. That is why Wittgenstein says at then end of §133 of the *PI*, which is the last section of his 'meta-philosophical' remarks occupying the whole of §§88-133, right before turning to his treatment of the Tractarian 'general propositional form' in §134 ("This is how things are"): "Problems are solved (difficulties eliminated), not a *single* problem." (§133). That 'single' problem was of course the problem of the essence of language, which Wittgenstein already explicitly acknowledged earlier as "the great question that lies behind all these considerations", which "once gave [him] the most headache", that is the one "about the *general form of the proposition* and of language" (§65).

The second important aspect of the contrast, intimately connected with the first, is this. In Wittgenstein's later thinking, philosophical problems *enable* us *to do* philosophy and in a way that makes sense (i.e. does something; see §4.1 above). (We will revisit this point below in Chapter 6.) So philosophical problems serve Wittgenstein's *positive* attitude towards philosophy in the *PI*; but they had the exact opposite role in the *TLP*. For once they were solved (all at once), the need for philosophy and thus philosophy itself would come to an end. Indeed, the author of the *TLP* did just that: he thought he had solved all problems, and so stopped doing philosophy (see *TLP* Preface, §4.003, and §6.54). In the *PI*, however, they help us

contextualize philosophizing itself, by providing a purpose and thus a *function* to us. They thus enable our words to make sense: in this way, philosophy is not 'itself brought in question' (§133). That is, philosophical problems enable us to philosophize: their role is positive. Hence the positive character of Wittgenstein's philosophy: he wants to 'walk' (§107), i.e. do philosophy (§133). There can be no doubt about the positive character of Wittgenstein's later philosophy: "The real discovery is the one that enables me to break off philosophizing when I want to. — The one that gives philosophy peace, so that it is no longer tormented by questions which bring *itself* in question." (§133). Let us use this example also as an application of the (Wittgensteinian) notion we have been emphasizing: there are certain things (facts) which we know *for certain* about which there *can* be no disagreement, because they (these facts) derive solely from the fact that we know language. *Anyone* who understands language, i.e. knows the meanings of the words of Wittgenstein's remark in §133 which we just quoted, will (should) understand *this*: (Wittgenstein is saying) he wants to *stop* doing philosophy *when* he comes up against 'questions which bring *philosophy itself in question*'[116]. And this means: he *wants* to philosophize, but only in such a way that his philosophizing is not 'itself in question'. This much — *no one can possibly dispute*: i.e. disagreement logically implies lack of understanding or misunderstanding what Wittgenstein is saying here. Let us next ask: what does Wittgenstein mean by 'philosophizing in question'? What is it for Wittgenstein to philosophize in a way that is *not* 'in question'? We have been describing his new view in this thesis, so at least we must be able to give a *definitive* answer to *this* question: Why and when would *anything* — as an employment of language — be 'in question'? The answer is clear: *if it does not make sense*. But

[116] This, of course, is *not* the question: "What is philosophy?"

then: why and when — according to Wittgenstein — would any employment of language *lack sense*? The answer is clear: *if it does not have a use*. And when language is 'doing work', i.e. functioning, there is no problem about sense; and thus the employment of words is *not* 'in question' in such cases (§132). But "when language is, as it were, idling", i.e. not serving any function, the employment of words lacks sense, and thus is 'in question' (§132). No wonder, then, Wittgenstein's philosophy targets precisely those 'confusions which arise when language is idling' (§132) — and *these* are the philosophical problems which "should completely disappear" (§133): "For philosophical problems arise when language *goes on holiday*" (§38). This consideration makes it *certain* that Wittgenstein's later philosophy is *essentially positive* in its spirit.

Having thus compared how the two works conceive and treat philosophical problems, we will now proceed to our task in the *reverse* direction: namely, to formulate the contrast between their respective conceptions of logic discussed above *as* philosophical problems. (And this will be the turning point of the thesis.) We will reformulate and examine the Logic of Language topic we discussed (Chapter 2) as the Problem of Logic (Chapter 5), and the Science of Logic topic we discussed (Chapter 3) as the Methodological Impasse (Chapter 6). At the end, we will problematize the present thesis itself, and thus contextualize it by means of an application to a particular case (Chapter 7). In that way, hopefully, this work will manage to serve a function (i.e. *do* something), thus make sense.

# CHAPTER 5

# PROBLEM OF LOGIC:

# NATURALIZING LANGUAGE THROUGH CONTEXTUALIZATION

## 5.1 Presenting the problem: Logic of language 'seems to disappear'

Wittgenstein problematizes his rejection and replacement of the Tractarian conception of the logic of language. Since the *TLP* is his departure point, by looking at it through the notions of his later view, Wittgenstein derives contradictions, hence a philosophical problem (cf. §125). For instance, we are unable to say anything about the logic of language in language (i.e. by means of sentences) in the Tractarian conception: the sentence depicts a fact, but cannot depict the 'logical form' which it shares with the fact it depicts, which makes that depiction possible (*TLP* §§4.12-4.121). But if we cannot say anything about 'it', what do we even mean by the 'logic of language'? It "is now in danger of becoming vacuous", which is the problem (*PI* §107). The author of the *TLP* himself actually acknowledges this: "What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence" (*TLP* §7). The 'logic of language' in his account turns out to be something which *we* cannot express; but in it, "the nature of the absolutely necessary signs speaks for itself" (§6.124). This signifies the end of the science of logic, but not the logic of language itself (see the next chapters). Interestingly the essential reason underlying this is what young Wittgenstein refers to in the book as 'my fundamental idea': "that there can be no representatives of the *logic* of facts" (§4.0312). He states the true consequences of this way of thinking only at the *end* by observing the impossibility of philosophy (§6.53) and acknowledging the nonsensicality of his propositions (§6.54). Thus he destroys the science of logic (see the next chapter), yet does not go so far as to destroy the 'logic

of language' itself, which of course would be absurd to do. But *now* the result that 'logic' is something mysterious — which we somehow 'know' but cannot say anything about — is unacceptable: it presents a problem for Wittgenstein in the *PI*. For in our new conception, as emphasized, we must be able to explain what we know if we know anything, what we understand and mean if we understand and mean anything (§§65, 72, 89, 208-9, 360). Expressed in other terms, examination of actual instances of language shows "a family of structures" related in various ways instead of a "formal unity" (§108). With this, however, logic (the ineffable 'it') seems to "lose its rigour", and therefore to "altogether disappear", which is our problem (§108). But it is a problem against the background of the Tractarian conception of logic, that is in the *context* of Wittgenstein's departure from the *TLP*. (This context, however, is not merely a *personal* one, given the place and significance of Wittgenstein in the context of the history of philosophy.) So the problem will be solved by removing that conception *and* by developing another one in its place: "The *preconception* of crystalline purity can only be removed by turning our whole inquiry around. (One might say: the inquiry must be turned around, but on the pivot of our real need.)" (§108). 'Turning our whole inquiry around' means focusing directly on and examining actual language. 'Our real need' is to develop a proper conception of the 'logic of language' through such examination in place of the crystalline purity.

That is, the logic of language "is now in danger of becoming vacuous" (§107). But what leads to this is the Tractarian crystalline conception; therefore, the solution is to de-sublimate, i.e. *naturalize*, logic. Wittgenstein achieves this by *contextualizing* logic. But of course this solution, like the problem itself, belongs to the context of Wittgenstein's departure from the *TLP*. So the formulation of the

problem will make reference to the Tractarian crystalline conception of logic (beginning with the presentation of the problem by showing how this conception leads to a contradiction); and its solution will proceed by means of identifying the fundamental notion in the *TLP* conception which is the real source of the contradiction, then proving the falsity of this notion, and finally indicating the right way to conceive the subject matter by contrast to it.

5.1.1 What the problem is all about: Logical as opposed to the psychological/causal

Ultimately, this is an investigation of the expression 'logic of language': given that it is not what the author of the *TLP* imagined, now we need to understand what it is, how we should conceive it, i.e. make sense of this expression. We are basically trying to *understand what is logical in language*. As early as §140, Wittgenstein indicates this need and this task: "For we might also be inclined to express ourselves like this: we're at most under a psychological, not a logical, compulsion. And now, indeed, it looks as if we knew of two kinds of case." This comes after the observation that a picture (of any kind, say a sign, or a portrait, or a mental image) may "suggest a certain use to us" but it is always "possible for [us] to use it differently" (§139). Failing to acknowledge this possibility is the mistake Wittgenstein expresses as follows: "I thought the picture forced a particular use on me" (§140). Of this he asks: "Is there a picture, or something like a picture, that forces a particular application on us; so that my mistake amounted to a confusion?" (§140). The first remark quoted comments on this, and it says: the most a picture can do in terms of *determining the use* would be 'psychological compulsion' but not 'logical determination'. This already gives us the hint of what will be essential to his presentation and treatment of the problem of logic: what is logical *cannot* be *this* sort of thing. The domain of

pictures (and picture-like things, signs, interpretations, or THIS) cannot constitute the logical element in language. We will see what that means in what follows (see §5.4 below). But let us observe how Wittgenstein returns to *this* same exact point about the distinction between what is logical and what is not — in his *solution* of the problem of logic:

> "All the steps are really already taken" means: I no longer have any choice. The rule, once stamped with a particular meaning, traces the lines along which it is to be followed through the whole of space. —— But if something of this sort really were the case, how would it help me?
>
> No; my description made sense only if it was to be understood symbolically. — I should say: *This is how it strikes me.* (§219)
>
> But what is the purpose of that symbolical sentence? It was supposed to highlight a difference between causal and logical dependence. (§220)

So Wittgenstein speaks of 'psychological vs. logical compulsion' in §140, and says that 'indeed it looks as if we know' what this distinction amounts to. This remark indicates what we will fundamentally need to understand in the sections to follow. In §108, recall, he had already observed that 'logic itself seems to disappear' (against the background of the *TLP*), and indicated how this had to be dealt with: " — The *preconception* of crystalline purity can only be removed by turning our whole inquiry around. (One might say: the inquiry must be turned around, but on the pivot of our real need." (§108). This means: we will directly focus on everyday language, but we will execute this examination of the actual use of words with the fundamental *purpose* of understanding what is logical in our actual language, i.e. what the 'logic of language' consists in, what sort of thing it is, that is, what we mean by "logic" — in the context of our departure from the *TLP*. *This* is 'our real need': we must make sense of 'logic of language', i.e. what is logical as opposed to what is not in the use

of language, i.e. what is psychological or causal. We will be concerned with logical determination of application of words. This is the essence of the problem of logic[117].

## 5.2 Rules in mathematics: Why we focus on the example of mathematics

In his presentation and treatment of the problem of logic, Wittgenstein focuses on the example of mathematics. The reason for this is, as we already explained in §2.5.1 above, the fact that mathematics has a peculiar significance in the *TLP* conception of logic: in it, the author imagines, we (are supposed to) see the crystalline purity of logic itself. Mathematics too is part of logic, and that is why it has this purity (*TLP* §6.2). So although we do not see anything like the perfect logical order of this purest crystal in our everyday language, which of course the author of the *TLP* himself is well aware of, this will not be a devastating problem. For we will explain this away simply by saying this is only a surface phenomenon. But what allows young Wittgenstein to be able to do this, i.e. to be able to presume that there is nonetheless *something* to place into language (albeit hidden beneath its surface), that is the crystalline purity of logic, is nothing other than *this* fact: he imagines that this *something* is already present in the case of mathematics, that we *already see it* in mathematics. (Otherwise, of course it would be altogether implausible to do that: the author would lack any *model* for what he imagined; thus it would be too much even for him to then still imagine it and attribute it to the hidden depths of language.) This is (part of) why Wittgenstein in the *PI* focuses on a mathematical example: determination of steps (series of numbers) by means of a rule (a formula). We are told there is *something remarkable* which we should see paradigmatically in

[117] Proof that there is such a philosophical problem which Wittgenstein takes himself to have solved: "Language is a labyrinth of paths. You approach from *one* side and know your way about; you approach the same place from another side and no longer know your way about." (§203). See §123: "A philosophical problem has the form: 'I don't know my way about.'"

mathematics; and that is precisely what we do: we now *look more closely* in order to see what exactly it is that we are supposed to see there (§52), i.e. "look at what really happens *in detail*, as it were from the close up" (§51).

The particular form in which this remarkable logical order (presumed to be seen in mathematics) is expressed is *rules*. The *TLP*, recall, imagined language to be 'a calculus with fixed rules' (§81), rules of 'logical syntax', which are "the strict and clear rules for the logical construction of propositions" (§102). The author of the *TLP* had the model of mathematics in mind when he imagined this: sublime crystalline rules governing application. So we need to understand what rules in mathematics look like: for the rules of language qua fixed rigid rules of a calculus are supposed to be of the same kind as the sublime rules in mathematics. Thus Wittgenstein's treatment of the crystalline purity of logic through the example of mathematics against the *TLP* will mainly be cast in terms of rules. But the focus on rules is already essential in its own regard: for as we said, we are investigating the essence (logic) of language in philosophy; and one main way of characterizing this (essence) is in terms of rules (see Chapter 1). That is, investigation of the logic of language is investigation of what a rule governing the use of words (signs) *essentially* is. Therefore, problematizing 'logic of language' by means of the concept of a rule makes perfect sense: we will understand what is logical in language by examining use of words with this concept at hand. This makes better sense if we recall the essential issue in our focus (see §5.1.1): namely, *logical determination* of application (of signs such as a mathematical formula). This is determination *by rules* of the *correct* step to take in the use of words, how a sign should be applied in particular cases. So employing the concept 'rule' is essential to our formulation and treatment

of the problem of logic. (This concept is essential to what we call the 'logic of language'.)

On the other hand, mathematics is also important in the following regard. There is *conceptual confusion* in mathematics, hence a *need* for a philosophical investigation of its 'foundations'. As we observed in Chapter 3, in our new conception of the science of logic, logical investigation of the foundation of sciences is not a universal task: philosophy does not give any foundations to the sciences as a whole. But it does work on the foundation of a particular science when there is a *need* for such a philosophical work, as in the cases of mathematics and psychology. This need is indicated by the existence of conceptual confusions, which Wittgenstein formulates in terms of philosophical problems. And Wittgenstein's focus on mathematics in the context of the problem of logic is (also) because of this need: one fundamental source of the conceptual confusion in mathematics concerns what we (in particular mathematicians) are inclined to say about the nature or reality of mathematics (mathematical truth, certainty, etc.). What we are inclined to say about mathematics, the picture of mathematics we have in our heads, is just the Tractarian sublimated conception: mathematics is a remarkable, super-natural kind of realm that transcends everything about human language and life, indeed the actual world as a whole. (This, recall, was also the essence of the crystalline purity of logic in the *TLP*. Indeed, what was unique and remarkable in mathematics was nothing other than this crystalline purity, according to its author. See the preceding paragraph. See §2.5.1 above.) So the example of mathematics not only enables us to examine whether there is anything like crystalline purity of logic in a particular case (its presumed paradigm instance) — the fact that we *see* nothing like it in mathematics further presents a *decisive* refutation. It also allows us to identify and attack the underlying

misconception which is the fundamental source of the conceptual confusion in mathematics (which, recall, presented the need for philosophical work on its 'foundations') — and *this* will present the *logical* refutation. In this way, we will also see that the same source of conceptual confusion is present in psychology (i.e. in the use of psychological words). Namely: the notion of a *Something* we know about which nothing can be said — THIS — which, as we saw above, lies at the center of the *TLP* picture of language: the ineffable 'it'. (See Chapter 7 for further detailed discussion.)

5.3 Logical determination: *Decisive* refutation of the *TLP*'s crystalline conception

The more specific form the problem of logic takes is, as said, determination of the *right* step to take — in the use of language, in the application of its rules. For what we call the 'logic of language' is that which determines (logically) what *must* be done (said) at any particular point. This is *logical determination* of use of words — determination by rules — as opposed to psychological (§140) or causal determination (§220). In our treatment of the problem, the task is to show why and how the Tractarian conception of logical determination fails, and to develop a correct understanding of such determination. This is the task Wittgenstein undertakes in what is commonly referred to as the 'rule following' discussion. When we examine the actual uses of signs (words and sentences) with the concept 'rule' at hand (§82), we do not see that sublime logical determination by a mysterious super-faculty of thinking as the *TLP* imagined (see Chapter 2 above). But this alone does *not* constitute a *decisive* refutation of that crystalline conception (given the notion of hidden essence). (It only presents the problem, hence the need to refute and replace that conception.) The *real* issue for the *TLP* is that there is not anything like that

*anywhere at all*. So showing that we cannot make sense of this sublime conception even in what is supposed to be its *paradigmatic* instance would present a *decisive* refutation. (See below §5.4 on the essential logical significance of the existence of paradigmatic instances.) And that is precisely why Wittgenstein discusses the arithmetic example because it is supposed to be the most rigid case of such sublime determination: by showing how it fails even *there*, Wittgenstein is able to decisively refute that conception. (Indeed, we already indicated it above in §§2.4.1-2.5. But here we will also provide the *logical* refutation of the Tractarian conception.)

The problem, therefore, is that of making a proper distinction between psychological/causal determination and logical determination, i.e. to make sense of that distinction. The Tractarian sublimation fails to do that simply because we *cannot make sense of* the super-conception of logical determination it adopts. But, then, what exactly do we need for such a distinction? By examining the mathematical example (of a formula determining the steps), we will (also) be able to understand the real logical ground of logical determination, what exactly it actually consists in (as well as refuting the Tractarian conception).

### 5.4 Resolution of the problem: *Custom*, the language-game, provides what we need — i.e. a logical criterion of correctness

Logical determination means determination of steps by *rules*. And there being rules simply means there being such a thing as right and such a thing as wrong. So for there to be logical determination there must be a distinction between what is correct and what is incorrect in the use of words. This is what we need (minimally) for making sense of 'logical' in language (in opposition to 'non-logical'). What we need is therefore a *criterion of correctness*. We cannot arrive at this *logical* criterion from

the perspective of an individual person considered in isolation (i.e. of the mind alone) from which the most one *can* get: "*This is how it strikes me*" (§219). This constitutes a *logical* refutation of the Tractarian conception of logic, for it conceived language as essentially *mental* (see Chapter 2), hence *private* (logically) to each person (see §2.4.2). The perspective of an isolated mind is exactly the same as the perspective of the notion of *Something* one knows or understands but cannot explain or say anything about, the ineffable 'it' — that is: *private language*[118].

From this perspective, we cannot get past *interpretations* (which belong to the faculty of thinking, i.e. mind), from which one gets 'psychological compulsion'

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[118] This is also the perspective of a *picture* 'or something like a picture' (§§139-140; see §5.1.1 above): THIS. A picture is an object-like entity: "picture" is not a technical term (whatever that means). That is: the word "picture" is *not* used here outside its ordinary sense. (That would mean to use it without sense in the context of our philosophizing.) A picture may be in the mind (a picture of an imagined apple) or outside (a picture of an apple on the wall, for example). A sign is *something like a picture*: for example, "X". This sign may be attached to a box, for example, perhaps in order to signify: "Do not open!" Words and sentences are signs, just as letters (such as "X") are signs. We can write the sentence "Do not open!" on a box, for example. A sentence by itself, qua a sign, is something like a picture. Interpretations too are signs: a sentence (or a number of sentences) may be an interpretation. There may be an interpretation of a sentence — in the form of another sentence or sentences. Everything that has to do with signs (words, sentences, interpretations) belong together with pictures: they are pictures or picture-like things. (Or alternatively: pictures are signs or sign-like entities.) One important regard in which signs and pictures are essentially similar is this: by themselves, they lack sense. They have sense only in application. Considered alone, a sign or a picture "can be anything, or nothing" (§6).

That, however, also applies to *any* 'thing': considered by itself, something we can point to, an object-like entity, may be "anything, or nothing". Point to a particular chair, for instance, and point to a particular building: the thing you point to is *not anything* by itself (see §583). Of course, you are pointing to a chair and a building: but what makes *that* to which you point a chair or a building is its *context* (which is extremely general and comprehensive). (We may say: nothing in the demarcated region of space-time — THIS — makes it a chair or a building. Compare this to scientific terms and 'entities' such as atoms.) For example, *that same thing* which is *now* a building *would not be* a building even if it (somehow) existed in exactly the same way (shape, physical constitution, etc.) *if its context were different*: for example, if there were no people on earth (had never been), then that thing would not be a building. (Of course, it is absurd to imagine a 'building' existing in such a world. But that is not relevant.) Similarly for a chair: if there was no such thing as gravity in our world, *we* would not be (very likely) beings that stand, therefore neither would there be such a thing as sitting, consequently no such thing as a chair. And imagine that in that world somehow the *objects* which we call "chairs" existed in the same way they exist now. (Perhaps floating in the air, however.) *They* would not be chairs; and there would not be chairs anywhere else. Because: the concept 'chair' would not exist. — This exemplifies "the correspondence between concepts and very general facts of nature" (*PPF* §365).

And this too is true: we cannot teach a child the meaning of the word "chair" if that child has not been exposed to all the activities and things in our normal human form of life (i.e. the very life with which we are all familiar in our everyday lives) — even if somehow you had put all the existing chairs in the whole world in one giant place, and had the child look at and see them all at once (somehow, with the help of God, say) while saying: "These are *chairs*."

at most (§140, §220). We must therefore make reference to *application* (§201) and *practice* (§202), for "[i]nterpretations by themselves do not determine meaning" (§198). We thus see that language as a whole "rests on convention" (§355), which is precisely what provides the *logical* criterion of correctness for the use of words: "a person goes by a signpost only in so far as there is an established usage, a custom" (§198). Expressed in terms of language-games, the 'established usage, custom' means already existing 'normal language-games' (§142) of our everyday language with a particular 'logic' (§345) or 'grammar' (§182, §199), i.e. 'the ordinary use' (*PPF* §106). In the ordinary language-game with the word "pain", for example, "it makes sense to say about other people to say that they doubt whether I am in pain; but not to say it about myself" (§246). *This* is "the grammar of the word 'pain'" (§257): "That expression of doubt has no place in the language-game" (§288). The language-game is, as we already hinted at in Chapter 2, what constitutes the 'logic of language'. Therefore, *the language-game itself is precisely what is not an interpretation*. It is logically *prior* to *all* interpretation, for without it there would *not* be anything an interpretation could be an interpretation *of*. (An interpretation cannot just be an interpretation of another interpretation, logically speaking. After all, the word "interpretation" must itself have a meaning, i.e. something which is not a mere interpretation.) More generally, in the same way, all *signs* (pictures, words, sentences) are secondary — what is logically primary is *application*. For sense and meaning only exist in application (cf. contextualization); and hence the *logical* relevance and significance of what is *not* a *mere-sign* (what is more than a mere *form* of expression such as "X" or "X-a-Y") is *necessarily* tied to application. For example, if the sign "X" is supposed to be the '*expression of* a rule', this is only because the rule *already exists* outside the realm of signs *in practice* — in exactly the

same sense in which we may have a game where a rule is never explicitly expressed or explained by means of signs. It "is employed neither in the teaching nor in the game itself; nor is it set down in a list of rules":

> One learns the game by watching how others play it. But we say that it is played according to such-and-such rules because an observer can read these rules off from *the way the game is played* — like a *natural law governing the play*. (§54; emphasis added)

Here the expression "the way the game is played" translates "der Praxis des Spiels" (cf. §197), which literally means: *the practice of the game*. Similarly, Wittgenstein also speaks of 'the practice of language' ("der Praxis der Sprache"; §§7, 21, 51; cf. §§31, 53-4). No doubt, this expression does and should immediately bring to mind Wittgenstein's notion of 'natural history' (of human beings) and 'form of life'. When we are investigating what a rule of language essentially is, i.e. what is logical in the use of words, we are talking about the *practice* of language, not about signs, words, pictures, and the like. And what we call the 'practice of language' is essentially connected with our form of life which is seen in (as) our natural history in this actual world we inhabit. The *logic* of language resides in the practice of language — 'like a natural law governing the play'. The form of our natural history as human beings, i.e. our form of life, is visible in the actual, existing practice of language. The *rules* that govern this practice are themselves *embedded* in it: i.e. the existing *technique* of applying the words which is constitutive of this practice (belongs to its essence, to its existence and identity). The practice of language is the existing language-games of our actual language. And their *logic* resides in the existence of a 'custom, established usage' (§198): the logic of language consists in our form of life (§241).

What is logical in language is therefore to be seen in the practice of language: the *already existing* language-games of our ordinary language into which certain 'rules' governing the use of words are built which determine what is right and what

is wrong, i.e. logically determine application. (These 'rules' need not be explicitly formulated, listed, explained, etc.. For they consist, thus *already* exist, in practice. Even when a rule has an explicit explanation or representation in *signs*, the rule itself consists in *application*. For simply 'rule' is *not the same as* 'expression of a rule'. See §§31, 53-4, 82-8. See also: *OC* §47, §95.) Wittgenstein refers to this as the 'grammar' or 'logic' of language — of words and sentences (§§199, 257, 345, 353). And *it* is what we know when we know language (which alone is what we are examining in logic): namely, the 'technique' of applying the words of our language (§§150, 199, 205, 262; *PPF*§106). This is not everywhere 'knowing for certain', though—for "[i]t is only in normal cases that the use of a word is clearly laid out in advance for us; we know, are in no doubt, what we have to say in this or that case" (§142). But that is not a problem for our logic: once we drop the Tractarian preconception, it is sufficient that we have a non-psychological, non-causal, *logical criterion that determines application*, i.e. what is right and what is wrong in the use of words in a number of cases (though not all). So logical determination does not exclude the existence of vague cases where application is not clear or determined, i.e. vagueness of the boundary of the concept (see, e.g., §80). The reason for this is the essential significance of the concept of *purpose*. The purpose of a concept is part of its logic; this is seen in the fact that without its purpose, the concept itself would cease to exist. The purpose of the concept is part of its very existence — i.e. its very *identity*: without *that* purpose, whatever would be existing would not be *that* concept (similarly, whatever would exist would not be an instance of that concept; §§142, 345, 385). (Wittgenstein also speaks of 'the purpose of the word'. See §6.) The vagueness in the boundary of the concept is *not* a problem to the extent that it does not affect its *function*, i.e. its being *used* for a purpose in its *actual* context: "The

signpost is in order — if, under normal circumstances, it fulfils its purpose." (§87). The concepts in question are of course the concepts of our actual language. Therefore, the context of language is the actual context of our concepts: namely, *our everyday lives in this actual world*. So the concept must fulfill its purpose and function in this context. For the very *essence* of the concept is its function. Unless it executes its function for its purpose, it ceases to exist. And if something does not affect the functioning of the concept, it is not significant in relation to (is not part of) its logic. This is precisely the reason why the existence of vague cases is *not* a problem for the logic of the concept: the concept *does* its work where it is *needed* ('the normal circumstances' of our everyday lives and the normal cases which are what we mostly deal with in that context). That is to say: *if* vague cases do not hinder the functioning of the concept. But there may conceivably be scenarios where they *do*. And so we are able to see that, *that* — i.e. the fact that what is essential to the concept *is* its purpose and function — is also precisely the reason why:

> …if things were quite different from what they actually are —— if there were, for instance, no characteristic expression of pain, of fear, of joy; if rule became exception, and exception rule; or if both became phenomena of roughly equal frequency —— our normal language-games would thereby lose their point. — The procedure of putting a lump of cheese on a balance and fixing the price by the turn of the scale would lose its point if it frequently happened that such lumps suddenly grew or shrank with no obvious cause. This remark will become clearer when we discuss such things as the relation of expression to feeling, and similar topics. (§142)

Thus certain general regularities of our actual world and our form of life are *essential* to language: that is, they belong to the *logic of language* — precisely because the concepts of our language would 'lose their point/purpose' in a world that is radically different from ours (in certain regards), which essentially means that they would not be able to *function* in such a world. So whatever is necessary for the functioning of concepts is part of their logic (since function itself belongs to the essence of the

concept). For example, if there were no 'natural expressions of sensation' (§256), of pain (e.g.), if *this* regularity of our actual world concerning the relation between the behavior and the feeling did not exist, then our very *concept* ('pain') would cease to exist: "the normal language-game with the expression of a sensation" would be 'abrogated' (§288). *This empirical fact*, consequently, belongs to the very *logic* of our sensation language. Thus, contra the *TLP* conception, logic is *essentially* connected with 'what actually is the case' — although of course it has itself *nothing* to do with any empirical investigation of 'what actually is the case'. We may even say: this is a *transcendental* 'discovery' through logical investigation, in the Kantian sense which is the *exact opposite* of the sense in which the author of the *TLP* says 'logic is transcendental' (TLP §6.13). For in the Kantian sense 'transcendentality' signifies a *connection* with the actual world, whereas in the Tractarian sense it signifies *complete lack* of such connection. Westphal (2005), as well as Conant (1991), is prone to just this confusion of the two senses of "transcendental" in the case of the *TLP*. That is, Westphal fails to acknowledge or understand the Tractarian sense of transcendentality when he says: "There is already a transcendental element in the *Tractatus* (§§5.641, 6.13, 6.361, 6.421) – much more so than these few sections suggest." (p. 309). But he is exactly on point when he identifies the Kantian transcendental reasoning in the *PI*, as we have just demonstrated here. In our example (the concept 'pain'), we saw this 'transcendental' connection between the logic of language and the actual world in the case of psychology. Given the essential similarity Wittgenstein sees between the cases of psychology and mathematics (being the two sciences where there are conceptual confusions, hence need for philosophical investigation of the 'foundations'), we would expect to see this essential ('transcendental') observation also in the case of mathematics. And we

indeed see that Wittgenstein is making the *exact same point* also in relation to mathematics:

> Of course, in one sense, mathematics is a body of knowledge, but still it is also an *activity*. And 'false moves' can exist only as the exception. For if what we now call by that name became the rule, the game in which they were false moves would have been abrogated. (*PPF* §349).

This is an observation about a regularity within the *practice of mathematics*, in particular about *complete agreement* among mathematicians (*PPF* §347). It says that complete agreement — in practice — is part of the *logic* of mathematics:

> Mathematicians don't in general quarrel over the result of a calculation. (This is an important fact.) — Were it otherwise: if, for instance, one mathematician was convinced that a figure had altered unperceived, or that his or someone else's memory had been deceptive, and so on — then our concept of 'mathematical certainty' would not exist. (*PPF* §341).

What we observed through the example of psychology (the natural regularity between the behavior and the feeling/sensation belonging to the logic of the relevant concepts) would definitely seem to 'abolish logic', according to the author of the *TLP*, because it is making reference to 'what actually is the case' which is merely 'arbitrary', thus making logic depend on something arbitrary which it cannot do because logic is supposed to be 'absolutely necessary'. But interestingly, the example of mathematics is taking a further, even more radical step towards this apparently dreadful direction of presumed arbitrariness signifying the total destruction of logic: for what we see through mathematics is that the logic of language depends on agreement *among human beings*, which seems to be more 'arbitrary' compared to the *natural* regularity in behavior and feeling:

> Disputes do not break out (among mathematicians, say) over the question of whether or not a rule has been followed. People don't come to blows over it, for example. This belongs to the scaffolding from which our language operates (for example, yields descriptions). (§240)
> "So you are saying that human agreement decides what is true and what is false?" — What is true or false is what human beings *say*; and it is in their

> *language* that human beings agree. This is agreement not in opinions, but rather in form of life. (§241)

## 5.5 Existence of concepts and language: Necessity of agreement in judgements and existence of paradigmatic instances

We observed that the existence of vague cases in the application of the concept is not a problem (for logical determination of application) to the extent that this does not prevent the concept from functioning and 'fulfilling' its purpose 'under normal circumstances' (§87) of our lives (which is the actual *context* of the concept). However, *for the very same reason*, there *must* be cases where application is *not* vague but strictly *determined*: for without such cases, the concept could not possibly function, do any work — it would disappear. Thus there have to be things (cases, examples) that are obvious instances of the concept (say 'chair'), i.e. objects that are certainly chairs (where application is determined). And *also* cases that are obviously *non*-instances of the concept, i.e. things that are certainly not chairs: here too application is determined. So logical determination involves both *inclusion* and *exclusion* of cases in application. Put in terms of rules, existence of logical determination consists in the existence of a class of cases that *clearly* 'follow the rule' and the existence of another class of cases that *clearly* 'go against the rule' (§201). If there is no certain *direction* to which 'the rule' points, so to speak, it becomes dubious (to say the least) whether there is *any* rule at all. So if the application is not *at all* clear (*anywhere*), not determined 'in advance', it is not as if we would nonetheless have a rule but not know how to apply it. Rather, existence of the rule *already* means a determinate (way of) application. (This is another way of saying: the rule itself consists in application.) This, once again, is fundamentally due to the fact that the function of the concept is part of its logic: without *at least a*

*number of cases* where application is strictly determined ('certain'), the concept loses its function altogether — namely, the function of *identifying* and categorizing particular *cases*. (One must resist the strong urge to look for a 'common element' in the particular cases which the concept subsumes under). But in that case the concept *itself* would cease to exist. To think that there *may* conceivably be a concept which has *no* function (because its application is never determined) would be the same as thinking that there may be a tool which has no function, is *never* used for any purpose. Most certainly, *this* would not be a tool — and *that* would not be a concept. And, of course, this is no surprise: for we already saw that the *rule* governing the use of the word (i.e. the concept) consists in its *application to particular cases*.

That is to say, it is logically necessary that we have *certainty in application to a number of cases*, i.e. that there be *paradigmatic instances* of the given concept. For, as noted, what we know when we know language is how to use its concepts in relation to particular cases, to use its words in particular language-games. Thus the concept must *as a matter of certainty* include some cases as its instances *and exclude* some cases as its non-instances. Otherwise, *the concept itself would not exist*. So to the extent that a concept loses this *power* of making a *distinction* between particular cases, it ceases to exist. This is an *extremely* important point. Existence of language means existence of concepts. Existence of concepts logically necessitates certainty in application to a number of cases, i.e. existence of paradigmatic instances. (Consider in this connection Wittgenstein's earlier remarks in §50 and §55 on the notion of a paradigm without which the word would lose its meaning.) This means that the very existence of language logically requires that there be *complete agreement in judgments* in a number of cases:

> It is not only agreement in definitions, but also (odd as it might sound) agreement in judgments that is required for communication by means of

> language. This seems to abolish logic, but does not do so. — It is one thing to describe methods of measurement, and another to obtain and state results of measurement. But what we call 'measuring' is in part determined by a certain constancy in results of measurement. (§242)

## 5.6 Understanding the logic of language and what we know: Naturalization and bringing language back home

As we see here (in §242), we have yet another existential threat to the logic of language as a whole (hence the problem of logic). And here too the underlying reason is the Tractarian sublimation of logic. One of its fundamental preconceptions is that logic has *nothing whatever* to do with the actual world, with what actually is the case (*TLP* §6.1233): "The exploration of logic means the exploration of *everything that is subject to law.* And outside logic everything is accidental." (*TLP* §6.3). But we now see that this is mere imagination. We see through close examination of our actual use of words that all sorts of 'empirical facts' are essential to language, for they are *necessary for its existence*. (And whatever is necessary for the existence of language is part of logic simply because 'logic of language' means 'essence of language', i.e. what is essential to language. See Chapter 1 above.) Without human agreement in practice (customs, techniques) and application (uses, judgements), *language would not exist* — since its *concepts* would not exist. Thus human agreement is part of the logic of language. On the other hand, we have what Wittgenstein calls "extremely general facts of nature" (§142, boxed remark), "certain very general facts of nature" (*PPF* §§365-6). In a world where things behaved in radically different ways than ours, Wittgenstein says (as we noted), our 'concepts' or 'normal language-games' would thereby lose their 'point' or 'purpose' (§142, §345). He expresses this 'transcendental' fact (in the Kantian sense) that language is *essentially* connected with the actual world *as* "the correspondence between concepts

and very general facts of nature" (*PPF* §365). Such facts too belong to logic because without them language would not exist (cf. §415). The *TLP* would find this connection between logic and the actual world unacceptable — for logic was supposed to be something 'absolutely *a priori*' (see *PPF* §366)! (Whatever that might mean.) Logic was thus sublimated in the *TLP* (into a nothing); therefore, our task is to naturalize it, bring it back home to its original body. Wittgenstein is thus *naturalizing* language which the *TLP* sublimated: "We're talking about the spatial and temporal phenomenon of language, not about some non-spatial, atemporal non-entity." (§108, boxed remark). The author of the *TLP*, as many before and after him did, felt the urge to 'attempt' to — since he wrongly imagined he was *able*, and as a logician even *supposed*, to — transcend our human existence as a whole (altogether), and tried to 'view' things from the perspective of a god. (See §352, §426.) He imagined 'logic of language' to be independent of the *use* of language, since it was supposed to be that which *already exists* which makes this use possible. To think otherwise, in this conception, would be similar to saying that 'the methods of measurement' with which measurement is made depend on 'the results of measurement' (§242, *PPF* §338). Surely this cannot be true, the reasoning goes, for we must have the methods *prior* to making any measurement! However, this way of thinking fails to acknowledge the fact that "what we call 'measuring' is in part determined by a certain constancy in results of measurement" (§242). If objects in our world "suddenly grew or shrank with no obvious cause", 'measuring weight' (or 'measuring length') — which is part of the *concept* of length[119] — would not exist,

[119] See *PPF* §338: "What 'determining the length' means is not learned by learning what *length* and *determining* are; rather, the meaning of the word 'length' is learnt by learning, among other things, what it is to determine length." Recall the essential *logical* significance of the concepts of teaching (and learning): for *there*, everything we know is *completely* expressed by means of the examples we give.

i.e. make sense, "would lose its point" (§142). And it is not as if we would have a *concept* of length (e.g.) in such a world, that is we would know *what length is* but simply not be able to *measure* 'it'. (That would be analogous to a rule which we do not know how to apply *at all*.) On the contrary, an essential part of the concept of length (what is necessary for its very existence) is the *existence* of a 'method of determining length': "What 'determining the length' means is not learned by learning what *length* and *determining* are; rather, the meaning of the word 'length' is learnt by learning, among other things, what it is to determine length." (*PPF* §338). In the kind of odd world described above, 'determining length', therefore also 'length', would not have sense, simply because *we* would not be able to determine length! To think otherwise is to presume that one *already knows what length is* (similarly what time is; §89, §363) over and above all measurements of (means, methods of determining, judging) length. (What is it? THIS. The same applies to Augustine's take on what time is, as we discussed above (see §2.4). See §89. Also to the rules in mathematics, as we discussed in §2.5.) Similarly, (other) concepts of our language would not *exist* if we were unable altogether to *apply* them in the language-games where they actually belong, employ them in our judgements about particular cases. (The example of length is an example of *this*: we spoke of 'measuring length', but that is the same as 'judging the length of a particular object'[120].) The opposite

[120] *This* is an application of the *concept* of length, although it might not appear so. We should not forget that the concept is essentially connected to practice and activity — such that the means, methods and procedures of measuring length, e.g., belong to the functioning, thus the logic (essence) of the concept of length. Indeed, Wittgenstein is aiming to make precisely *this* point:

> "But when I imagine something, something *goes on*, doesn't it?" Well, something goes on — and then I make a noise. What for? Presumably in order to communicate what went on. — But how, in general, does one communicate something? When does one say that something is being communicated? — What is the language-game of communicating something?
>
> I'd like to say: you regard it much too much as a matter of course that one can communicate anything to anyone. That is to say, we are so much accustomed to communicating in speech, in conversation, that it looks to us as if the whole point of communicating lay in this: that someone else grasps the sense of my words — which is

way of thinking is to presume *absolute* concepts that somehow transcend our human language, a 'super-order between super-concept' (§97; *PPF* §366). But that is mere imagination devoid of sense and significance: "How *could* one find this ludicrous? After all, it is, as it were, a dream of our language." (§358). As a matter of fact, however, language is *our* language; and *logic* is *our* logic—i.e. the logic of *human* language, not of some mysterious transcendental non-entity called *Language*. We are biological creatures, a particular kind of being in the natural world. And it is in the context of *our* (form of) life on earth which we inhabit that we have this language — *that* is where our language belongs and lives.

5.7 The picture of language that lies behind all this: THIS (and 'its' *logical* refutation)

Let us take a closer look at our concept of length. Anyone who thinks that we have this concept, i.e. know what length is, altogether independently of all measurement of length is presuming that we already know *Something* as 'length': namely, THIS (§251). (The same is the case also for time and pain. See §§89, 304, 363.) Here again, we have the same exact notion as in the case of rules: the rule is something that is *over and above application* to particular examples, in particular cases. The mathematical formula supposedly reaches into infinity and is not completely expressed in the examples which we give in order to explain the rule. It is as if we *see Something* in those examples — though by thinking, not by looking — but

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something mental — that he, as it were, takes it into his own mind. If he then does something further with it as well, that is no part of the immediate purpose of language.

One would like to say "It is through my communicating it that he comes to *know* that I am in pain; it produces this mental phenomenon; everything else is immaterial to the communicating". As for what this remarkable phenomenon of knowledge is — that can be taken care of later. Mental processes just are strange. (It is as if one said, "The clock shows us the time. *What* time is, is not yet settled. And as regards the point of telling the time — that doesn't come in here.") (§363)

cannot directly express 'it', which is *the rule*. As if we express through examples *less* than we ourselves know, *the essential thing remains unexpressed*. This thing is, therefore, something we grasp in our minds but cannot explain to others: it is a THIS. So the notion of THIS, as we showed in §§2.4-2.5 above, is the foundation of the whole of Tractarian crystalline purity. After all, 'the ideal' which is the Tractarian logic of language, the ineffable 'it'[121], is nothing but such a THIS. Therefore, a proof of the falsity of this notion constitutes a *logical* refutation of the *TLP* conception. In fact, we already gave Wittgenstein's proof above (in §5.4), but let us restate it in terms specifically of the notion of THIS.

For *any* sign (any picture, etc.) to *possibly* have sense, there must be such a thing as right and such a thing as wrong in its use. And this means there has to be criterion of correctness for (judging) its use. What *can* possibly be such a criterion of correctness in the case of a mere THIS — the ineffable 'it'? The *only* possible criterion of correctness can be found in the individual mind considered in isolation — this is the perspective of the "philosophical self" of the *TLP* which is "the metaphysical subject, the limit of the world" (§5.641). The notion of a mere THIS is essentially tied to this perspective: for 'it' is *Something* that is logically *private* to an individual person, i.e. to a mind. From the perspective of the notion of THIS, 'my' body, the computer in front of 'me', and other 'people' are all *essentially* the same — such as when one says that they are all "only logical constructions out of sense-data" (§366). (See Wittgenstein's remarks on the 'visual room' in §398ff.) This is also the reason why what is in question here is *not at all* the inner/outer distinction as we ordinarily understand it. For when one takes himself to conceive something as a mere THIS, it makes *no* difference whether we are talking about pains, a picture in

[121] We will discuss this Tractarian notion in Chapter 7.

the mind, an object ‘outside’ (such as a ‘primary element’), the length of an object, the rule of a mathematical series, the Tractarian crystalline purity — *or* any picture or sign, e.g., the word “this” (or “THIS”). For example, it does not matter whether one says that the colors are ‘located in the mind’ or in the objects outside: what matters is whether one says one conceives ‘it’ as a THIS. (I may as it were ‘inwardly point’ to my present ‘color-impression’ of redness, say, or may point to the color of an object outside: there is no difference.) If one takes himself to conceive ‘it’ as a THIS, one is taking THIS as a *criterion of identity* (§253; cf. §38, §380). For of course one is not merely uttering the word “this” (inwardly or outwardly) when one does this: one takes himself to be conceiving *Something* through it. But how can *that* — i.e. THIS — serve as a criterion of identity? This is the same question as: what criterion of correctness is available for the use of ‘THIS’? *All* that is available is what the individual person ‘sees’ in his mind (at *any* particular moment). (“Yes, I see ‘it’: THIS.”) Therefore, the *only* possible criterion of correctness is the *judgment* of the said individual. But *this* is exactly what is question: we are talking about the correctness of the individual’s use of the sign (‘THIS’). (‘His use of the sign’ (say he writes down “THIS” when he sees ‘it’) and ‘his judgment’ (perhaps: “THIS is ‘it’ again!”) are the same thing. And keep in mind that time, memory, etc., are altogether irrelevant to the argument: we are talking about any given time. On the other hand, from this perspective even *time itself disappears*: it is a ‘constant present’. But of course, one who inclined to say something like this must also notice that neither the word “constant” nor the word “present” would then make any *sense*, because they conceptually imply time.) Consequently, the only logically available criterion of correctness is *psychological*, not logical. But correctness — *this* is right and *that* is wrong — is essentially logical in nature: if there is only a psychological criterion of

correctness, what we have is at best 'psychological compulsion' (§140), not 'logical determination' (§220). And *this* means nothing but: "whatever is going to seem correct to me is correct" — and "that only means that here we can't talk about 'correct'" (§258). "Are the rules of the private language *impressions* of rules?", asks Wittgenstein (§259); and the answer is: of course yes, and of course no. (Yes: (1) because they are at most *impressions* of rules. And no: (2) because *they* — precisely because of (1) — are not *rules*.) Or more directly: "The balance on which impressions are weighted is not the impression of a balance" (§259). The conclusion is that the notion of a mere THIS *can make no sense* and is contradictory. Hence the above argument *logically refutes* it. But what is it that was essential to this notion? Conception of *sense* (meaning something, understanding, grasping a rule, knowing something, etc.) — *i.e*. conception of *language* — as something *essentially mental*. This, recall, was the Tractarian conception: the logic of language has *only* to do with thinking. (Indeed, crystalline logic was the essence of the super-faculty of thinking. See §97.) This is why the argument above is a logical refutation of the *TLP* view of the logic of language, and *thereby a logical proof of the notion that language is essentially an activity*:

> That's why 'following a rule' is a practice. And to *think* one is following a rule is not to follow a rule. And that's why it's not possible to follow a rule 'privately'; otherwise, thinking one was following a rule would be the same thing as following it. (§202)

This is *at once* 1) refutation of the *TLP* conception (proves its falsity), *and* 2) solution of the problem of logic (demonstrates the correct conception by contrast to it). It is also a logical refutation of the conception of essence as common element (because this conception collapses into the notion of a THIS).

# CHAPTER 6

# METHODOLOGICAL IMPASSE: FULL EXTENT OF CONTEXTUALIZATION — POSSIBILITY OF GENUINE PRACTICE OF PHILOSOPHY

## 6.1 Formulation of the problem

The Tractarian urge to transcend our human existence and language altogether overlooks one fundamental basic fact that is 'always before our eyes': the trivial fact that *we ourselves do and must use language in philosophy* in order to examine the nature of language, to think (agree, disagree) about anything *at all*. It is apparently easy to dismiss this fact for many (e.g. Kripke, 1982); but in fact its logical significance is hard to properly appreciate. What we say as we philosophize about the nature of language also applies to what we say itself, since we are using the same language whose nature we are investigating in logic. Therefore, the self-applying nature of our investigations must be taken into account from the very outset of and throughout our investigations. (We have been trying to do this since the beginning, but especially starting from Chapter 4 with the introduction of philosophical problems.) For otherwise it will very likely render our philosophizing itself problematic (logically inconsistent). This difficulty is the *methodological impasse*, which we can in fact also express by simply saying: *we must make sure that our words in philosophizing make sense*[122]. The impasse is essentially a matter of

[122] That is to say, it is not as if the real issue is just about securing self-consistency by accounting for the consequences of what we say applying to itself. That of course is essential: but the real issue comes from the nature of language. That is, we are using words and saying what we are saying in order to investigate the logic of language — what actually *genuinely* applies to our employment of words is the nature of language itself (whatever it is). So conceivably we can provide an account that somehow secures self-consistency but fails to help understand the nature of language correctly. In this case, application of our account to the sentences through which we formulate that account may be unproblematic — but that is not the real essential issue: our account is still false, or our employment

properly acknowledging the fact that we too use language as we philosophize. And we cannot simply presume an *outside* view of language as we investigate its nature (see the next section for a detailed discussion of this point through an example). (For example, as we noted in Chapter 3, when we describe language-games in logic, we cannot be 'merely picturing' them, whatever that might mean: for we do this by using the same language. That is why we needed philosophical problems. See Chapter 4.)

The *TLP* remarkably fails to overcome the methodological impasse (see §6.1.1 below): its author tells us at the end that his propositions are nonsensical (*TLP* §6.54). Yet, as we will see in Chapter 7, this is the result of what he himself says through those propositions! This surely is blatantly inconsistent. The author of the *TLP* leaves us with a contradiction: we follow his words in the book and we end up destroying those words themselves. We end up saying: they are nonsensical (§6.54). Hence the end of philosophy (§6.53, §7). This is obviously a contradiction. Now, since we are primarily trying to understand the *PI*, not the *TLP* as such, this contradiction is our point of departure — but not in a way that seeks to make 'sense' of it *from within* the *TLP* itself (which, however, we will also attempt to do in Chapter 7 in a different context). Rather, we will make sense of it within the context and framework of the *PI* — we will treat it as presenting a *philosophical problem*: "The civic status of a contradiction, or its status in civic life — that is the philosophical problem." (§125). And the methodological impasse is this problem: given the fact that the context of the *PI* is the *TLP* (see our departure point in Chapter 1), Wittgenstein has to do deal with the contradiction that the *TLP* left us with — just

of words is still nonsensical because of the application of the nature of language to it. And of course this is what we are actually concerned with. (Yet it is also true that there is no way of stepping outside our genuine convictions about the nature of language in order to evaluate this issue.)

as he had to to deal with the problem of logic which actually underlies the Tractarian methodological impasse. The *TLP* rendered the 'logic of language' as an ineffable 'it', and so Wittgenstein had to deal with it (Chapter 5).

We will therefore look at the *TLP* in order to understand the nature of this impasse, why and how it arises, and what we can and should do in order to overcome it. (The more specific details will be discussed in the next chapter.) The first thing we notice is the fact that the author of the *TLP* acknowledges his own use of language *only at the very end* — by applying what he says to the words he uses in order to say it, and acknowledging the resulting nonsensicality of his words (§§6.53-7). Had he done this at the beginning instead, after all, he could not even *start*: he would have to "pass over in silence" (*TLP* §7; see §6.2 below). This observation gives us the hint towards the way to overcome the impasse: what we need is proper appreciation of our own use of language throughout our investigations — *starting from the very beginning* (see §6.3 below).

### 6.1.1 Tractarian failure: Inconsistency and impossibility of proper philosophy

The *TLP* fails on that front, leaving its attempt devoid of genuine self-consistency: it does not properly acknowledge the fact that it is using the same language whose essence it is saying things about. This leads the book into inconsistency: at the *end* (*TLP* §6.54) its author declares the propositions of the book nonsensical, although at the same time he expects us to see why and how they are nonsensical (and the philosophical point of the book in general) by means of nothing other than those propositions themselves. It is obvious that such an acknowledgement of nonsensicality of its propositions *at the beginning* rather than at the end would be devastating for the book and the author. This shows that the author of the *TLP* fails

to properly appreciate the fact that he himself is using the same language as he philosophizes about the nature of language. What the book says applies to itself, hence renders itself nonsensical: that is why and how the *TLP* fails to overcome the methodological impasse. But, interestingly, this apparently unfortunate, self-devastating result is also a *happy* result for the author of the *TLP*: because he thinks to have resolved the impasse (with it the whole of philosophy) by showing that it is *necessarily insurmountable*. (See Chapter 7.)

## 6.2 What must (and what must not) be done: Proper acknowledgement of our own use of language in logic (and what we know)

In order to comprehend the difficulty of properly taking into account our own language use in philosophy and the logical significance of this difficulty, we will now discuss an example of misguided underestimation thereof; namely, Kripke (1982). Kripke[123] proposes a curious reading of the *PI*, according to which "the fundamental problem" of the book, presented in the rule-following sections which we discussed in Chapter 5, is a 'skeptical paradox' about *meaning* (p. 78), which the author professes to be "inclined to regard...as the most radical and original skeptical problem that philosophy has seen to date" (p. 60)[124]. Kripke argues that Wittgenstein (even though, he himself "perhaps *cagily*, might well disapprove of the

[123] Unfortunately, I had to adopt a slightly ironic manner of exposition in this section because of the nature of Kripke's treatment of Wittgenstein's views. The reader should keep this in mind. And because our language itself provides us such means of expression and sense (with a minor touch of humor), we are allowed to make use of them in philosophizing, I assume.

[124] Interestingly, what he refers to as the 'fundamental problem' of the book comes close to the problem of logic we discussed in the previous chapter. And indeed, it is the fundamental problem of the book, perhaps even philosophy as a whole. For it is the very problem of *sense*, i.e. logic. Yet Kripke's understanding of the problem is deeply wrong, as we will see. We will emphasize: let alone Wittgenstein, how can anyone seriously even *attempt* to doubt sense and meaning as a whole? But that is what Kripke is apparently seriously claiming (on behalf of Wittgenstein). Yet he gets much of the material (argument) right — though he fails to see the true sense and point of Wittgenstein's argument. He fails to understand what Wittgenstein *means* in his treatment of the problem.

straightforward formulation given [t]here"; p. 70; emphasis added) concedes the skeptical denial "that there is no *fact* as to whether" anyone means anything by anything — but does *not* accept its purported conclusion, "the incredible and self-defeating" conclusion that "all language is meaningless" (p. 71)[125]. The way Wittgenstein saves meaningfulness of utterances attributing meaning, Kripke continues, is through his general view of language (in the *PI*) that the question of the meaning of any form of expression has to be approached by asking — not what *facts* have to obtain such that it be *true* when used, contra the *TLP*, but instead — what conditions must be in place for its proper use; that is, "the conditions when a move (a form of linguistic expression) is to be [appropriately, legitimately] made in the 'language-game'" (p. 74) — *and* the role in our lives of so using it (pp. 71 – 5). There is a difficulty here for Wittgenstein, Kripke notes, since apparently these ordinary expressions themselves often seem to imply the existence of corresponding *facts*. Wittgenstein at this point allegedly makes the same kind of move philosophers often make ("a Berkeleyan claim") when their philosophies appear to contradict 'common sense' ('ordinary beliefs'): i.e. to claim that the conflict is only apparent, and is due to "a philosophical misconstrual" of ordinary expressions (p. 65), which are '*perfectly alright, properly understood*' (p. 70; emphasis added). Let us try to understand this curious situation. Wittgenstein affirms the skeptical thesis (which means for Kripke: accepting there are no corresponding facts). Then, in order to avoid the thus-looming contradiction with common sense, Wittgenstein claims that

[125] But these two things are of course totally different: a fact as to whether a sentence means anything and a fact which the sentence has to picture if it is to mean anything. Only if one presumes a particular conception of sense in which a sentence has sense only by virtue of being a picture of facts (as the author of the *TLP* does), one takes the non-existence of a fact corresponding to the sentence to be the *same thing as*, to mean, the sentence lacking sense. Indeed, the very fact that Kripke manages to see any kind of skepticism about sense *as such* in the remarks where Wittgenstein is disputing *that* conception of sense signifies — logically — a commitment to just that picture which is being targeted.

ordinary expressions do not in fact mean what they seem to mean (existence of corresponding facts). Having quoted §194 where Wittgenstein talks about our vulnerability to misinterpret "the way we talk" and then draw "the oddest conclusions", Kripke says: "Maybe so. Personally I can only report that, in spite of Wittgenstein's assurances, the 'primitive' interpretation often sounds rather good to me..." (p. 66). At this point the situation begins to look like this: Kripke champions ordinary forms of language against Wittgenstein who — his repeated pronouncements to just the contrary notwithstanding — is conflicting them — though surely he himself claims otherwise, presumably for the sake of consistency — in order (perhaps) to make room for the solution he is getting prepared to give (in Kripke's reading) to the skeptical problem that he himself invented (in Kripke's reading). Yet, viewed from another point, the situation *is* the following. Kripke is making a *bold* claim (too bold perhaps) by attributing to Wittgenstein the skeptical view in question. But meanwhile it seems very likely (in fact, I would say, *certain*) that Wittgenstein would not welcome this (which Kripke acknowledges twice; p. 69 & pp. 70-1). And so in order to as it were pacify this apparent tension, he is trying to account for Wittgenstein's likely repudiation by suggesting that Wittgenstein is merely being on his guards against stating "the outcomes of his conclusions in the form of definite theses" — being *cagey*, as we might say — since otherwise "it would have been very difficult to avoid formulating his doctrines in a form that consists in apparent skeptical denials of our ordinary assertions" (p. 69). Kripke is suggesting, in effect, that although it does appear that Wittgenstein would counter the skeptical view Kripke attributes to him, he does not really — to borrow a manner of expression from Kripke — "as we might say *sotto voce*" *reject the skeptical view* (p. 64). That is, what Kripke says amounts to this: Wittgenstein's would-be repudiation

is '*perfectly alright, properly understood*' (borrowing yet another expression from him).

It is supposed to be due to Wittgenstein's general philosophical attitude towards ordinary conceptions (being so-called a 'common-sense' philosopher), which Kripke seems to think finds a candid expression in Wittgenstein's remark in §599 that "[p]hilosophy only states what everyone concedes to it", and which would be damaged if Wittgenstein were to affirm the skeptical thesis as formulated (p. 63, p. 69). But this is a *gross* misreading of the remark. As we emphasized on multiple occasions, what everyone concedes to philosophy is rooted solely in the fact that they speak (i.e. know, share the same) *language*. And their conceding it stems directly from this fact, and this fact alone. Wittgenstein's remark in §241 nicely captures this point: "...it is in their *language* that human beings agree. This is agreement not in opinions, but rather in form of life.". And we should ask: what exactly are talking about? That is, what exactly is it in what is 'ordinary' that Wittgenstein is supposed to embrace? The expressions Kripke uses are these: 'common-sense', 'ordinary conception' (p. 63), 'ordinary assertion' (p. 69), 'ordinary belief' (p. 70). It is far from clear how we are supposed to understand these. In any case, there is no reason to suppose Wittgenstein assigns any privileged status to any of these, whatever they might mean (cf. §402; §349 & §449). The reason why Kripke sees any kind of 'defense of common sense' in Wittgenstein's writings is the fact that he fails to acknowledge the distinction between sense and things like pictures, interpretations, even *forms* of expression. (See our discussion of this distinction in Chapter 5.) Wittgenstein speaks of "the picture of our ordinary way of speaking", for example (§402). But he is not at all concerned with disputing such pictures embedded in our

forms of language — provided that they have their *application*, i.e. have sense, in the particular cases where they ordinarily belong:

> *Certainly* all these things happen in you. — And now just let me understand the expression we use. — The picture is there. And I am not disputing its validity in particular cases. — Only let me now understand its application. (§423)
> The picture is there; and I do not dispute its *correctness*. But *what* is its application? (§424)

Therefore, when Wittgenstein attacks a certain picture in the context of a philosophical discussion, Kripke falsely thinks that he attacks 'ordinary belief', 'common sense'. And since Wittgenstein does not want to be doing *that* (being a 'common sense philosopher'!), Kripke continues imagining, he employs 'logical tricks' (§412), so to say, by offering 'interpretations' of ordinary expressions as he pleases!

In truth, there are forms of expression, and their *uses* in certain circumstances for certain purposes. Kripke should be seeing some kind of belief – assertion embedded in either the forms or their uses (cf. §402). (There are of course *pictures* embedded in our forms of expression, as noted. But assertion-belief is something else.) This shows, and is made possible by, his failure to understand what Wittgenstein means by the 'use' of a form of expression. Consider, for example:

> If...we do not state our conclusions in the form of broad philosophical theses, it is easier to avoid the danger of a denial of any ordinary belief, even if our imaginary interlocutor (e.g. §189; see also §195) accuses us of doing so. Whenever our opponent insists on the perfect propriety of an ordinary form of expression (e.g. that 'the steps are determined by the formula', 'the future application is already present'), we can insist that if these expressions are properly understood, we agree. (p. 70)

These are, of course, *forms* of expressions with ordinary uses. But *they* are not the uses! And Wittgenstein is inviting us precisely to understand on what occasion and with what purpose they are used: for only in this way can we understand what they mean (since they do not mean anything outside use in context). In the footnote to the

first sentence of the passage just quoted, having quoted the interlocutor's question opening §189 "But are the steps then *not* determined by the algebraic formula?", Kripke says: "In spite of Wittgenstein's interpretation within his own philosophy of the ordinary phrase 'the steps are determined by the formula', the impression persists that the interlocutor's characterization of his view is really correct..." (p. 70; footnote 58). What does the expression "Wittgenstein's interpretation within his own philosophy of the ordinary phrase 'the steps are determined by the formula'" mean? There is *no* interpretation whatever in what Wittgenstein says. He only identifies the form of expression we use (which troubles one who is philosophizing), and describes its ordinary uses. To the question in §189, Wittgenstein responds: "The question contains a mistake. We use the expression 'The steps are determined by the formula…'. *How* is the expression used?" He then describes various ordinary uses. What has *this* (kind of) investigation to do with an interpretation? But not only an *interpretation*, for Kripke — one *within* Wittgenstein's *own* philosophy! In spite of this "interpretation", we are told, "the impression persists that the interlocutor's characterization of his view is really correct" (p. 70, footnote 58). This seems to mean that the interlocutor is not satisfied with what Wittgenstein says. And this is true. (Recall Kripke's 'personal report' on the 'primitive' interpretation on page 66.) But precisely *that* is what Wittgenstein is dealing with: the strong *urge* to misunderstand our forms of expression — *especially* when we are doing *philosophy* (see §§11, 93, 94, 97, 100, 109, 122, 170-8, 191, 192, 194). The interlocutor's insistence, e.g. in §195, that there is *more* to the form of expression used — to its use? — consists merely of a repetition of the sentence combined with something like "but in a unique (strange, mysterious) way", which, it is important to notice, is *not* a *use* of the form of expression in question. Underlying the interlocutor's scruple is the

fundamental misunderstanding that *forms of expression themselves* (somehow) *have* (some) *meaning over and above their ordinary uses*. It is the same whether what we are talking about is words (see: §§5, 96, 117, 120; e.g.: §47, "composite"; §88, "exact") or sentences (§§117, 134, 138, 195, 216, 278, 296, 349-52, 412, 423-6, 513 – 7, 654-6). Let us further observe that Wittgenstein identifies forms of expression themselves as being primarily responsible for philosophers' misunderstandings (e.g., §§93, 94, 194).

Kripke continues: "The danger comes when we try to give a precise formulation of exactly what it is that we *are* denying – *what* 'erroneous interpretation' our opponent is placing on ordinary means of expression." (p. 70). Indeed we have real difficulty *if* we try to do it, but not for the reason Kripke imagines. For this has *nothing* to do with *us — for our opponent herself cannot formulate exactly* what *it is that she* is *affirming* (§§191, 192, 195 – 7). And we are *not* denying anything (cf. §305: "What gives the impression that we want to deny anything?"). What is important to understand here is that the problem is not about *this* or *that* interpretation; rather, it is with *any* interpretation. For what we are trying to understand is the *use*, the language-game — and *that* is precisely *what is not an interpretation*. (See Chapter 5.) (See: §198 & §201. Cf. §§654-6; especially §656: "Regard the language-game as the *primary thing*. And regard the feelings, and so forth, as a way of looking at, interpreting, the language-game!"; §489: "Ask yourself: On what occasion, for what purpose, do we say this? What kinds of action accompany these words? (Think of a greeting.) In what kinds of setting will they be used; and what for?"; also: §§513-7.) Kripke thus altogether misses Wittgenstein's point about the 'use' of a form of expression. And this is because he is in the grip of just the kind of thinking Wittgenstein is fighting against. For he still thinks, like

Wittgenstein's interlocutor, *over and above* their uses in certain circumstances for certain purposes, our forms of expression somehow have *meaning*, i.e. an absolute meaning transcending everyday use of language. The inclination to conceive meaning in *this* way is very strong (e.g., §§1, 5, 10, 117).

All the same, Kripke attributes to Wittgenstein the skeptical view, and then asks: "But if this is conceded to the skeptic, is this not the end of the matter? What *can* be said on behalf of our ordinary attributions of meaningful language to ourselves and to others? Has not the incredible and self-defeating conclusion, that all language is meaningless, already been drawn?" (p. 71). He then says: "In reply we must say something about the change in Wittgenstein's philosophy of language from the *Tractatus* to the *Investigations*." (p. 71). Having briefly described Wittgenstein's views in each, Kripke adds: "Wittgenstein's alternative picture of language is already clearly suggested in the very first section of *Philosophical Investigations*." (p. 75). This is rather curious because the very fact — yes, it is a fact — that in §1 Wittgenstein already makes clear his general view of language and meaning suffices to render utterly misguided and implausible any attempt to attribute *to* Wittgenstein a thesis like Kripke's skeptic's. It is, I believe, a dangerous mistake to try to understand Wittgenstein using only the resources of traditional philosophy, to approach him as one approaches other philosophers, and a sure means of having at hand nothing but confusions. In regard of being subject to the conditions of meaningful use of language Wittgenstein identifies (specifies, describes) in the *PI*, *no* sentence therein differs in the slightest from any other — including statements of views attacked as well as *everything Wittgenstein says for himself* (that is the essence of contextualization and acknowledgement of the true significance of the methodological impasse). And it is *important* to note that this is just the same

regardless of *where* in the book Wittgenstein says what he says (unlike the *TLP*) — whether in the first page, for example, or in the last (see §§120, 130 – 2). It might be put like this: "What we do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use" — and as we do this we do *not* make any use of the former kind (§116). (This, as noted, is what Wittgenstein needs in order to overcome the methodological impasse.)

Consider, by contrast, what Kripke says:

> And, surely, if I use language at all, I cannot doubt coherently that 'plus', as I now use it, denotes plus! Perhaps I cannot (at least at this stage) doubt this about my *present* usage. But I can doubt that my *past* usage of 'plus' denoted plus. The previous remarks – about a frenzy and LSD – should make this quite clear...But before we pull the rug out from under our own feet, we begin by speaking as if the notion that at present we mean a certain function by 'plus' is unquestioned and unquestionable. Only *past* usages are to be questioned. Otherwise, we will be unable to *formulate* our problem. (pp. 13-4)

Why does not this point merely show that there is and can be *no* such (genuine) problem at all? More importantly, let us ask: how *can* one who affirms this point even *intend* to raise the doubt in question (about the past) — given that, and one oneself acknowledges this, "*ultimately*, if the skeptic is right, the concepts of meaning and of intending one function rather than another *will* make *no* sense" including the *present* usage (p. 13; *all* emphases add*ed*)? Kripke says that he puts the problem in this way — that is, by "taking somewhat greater care [than Wittgenstein] to make explicit a distinction...between questions about present and past usage" — "so as to avoid confusing questions about whether the discussion is taking place 'both inside and outside language' in some illegitimate sense" (p. 12). Then it must be quite easy to avoid such questions! It is obvious that we can doubt (think, discuss, etc.) anything only in language. (At least, we can *talk* about anything—including the 'doubt' in question — *only* in language.) That is, we must be using language to be

able to even raise a doubt about anything in the first place. So we assume that we can use language meaningfully—at least at present. (This much Kripke acknowledges.) Then we doubt our past usages, with the awareness — at the *same* time — that if we are right then our *present* use too will be — is? was? — equally meaningless. How exactly is this supposed to help avoid the 'confusing questions' in question? To be able to doubt in the first place, as we already noted, we must be using meaningful language. So then, at least at the beginning of — during? — our *argumentation*, we use language meaningfully. *But we must somehow arrive at the point where even our present usage will be meaningless*. So *how* exactly is this supposed to go? Does our use of language *stop* being meaningful at some point, say when we come to state the conclusion of our argument? Or *was* our *then*-present usage — which we *then* assumed – or thought we assumed (or? — ) – to be meaningful, as we had to — not meaningful in the first place? But then how *could* we raise the doubt at all? Kripke apparently thinks it quite easy "to avoid confusing questions about whether the discussion is taking place 'both inside and outside language' in some illegitimate sense": we only have to begin doubting the past alone, which ensures we *are inside language now*, and so are safe from any *future* damage. And, as it happens, we happen to have to 'pull the rug out from under our own feet': for, it turns out, "there is no fact as to whether [we] mean" anything (p. 71). Then what happens? Let us ask, using Kripke's words:

> But...is this not the end of the matter? What *can* be said on behalf of our ordinary attributions of meaningful language to ourselves and to others? Has not the incredible and self-defeating conclusion, that all language is meaningless, already been drawn? (p. 71)

Well, that too is quite simple: in reply we only have to "*say something* about the change in Wittgenstein's philosophy of language from the *Tractatus* to the

*Investigations*" — for Wittgenstein (thankfully) proposes an account of meaning that saves our *ordinary* attributions of meaning (p. 71; emphasis added).

The fundamental thing to observe at this point is the fact that *we ourselves are using the very same* — ordinary — *language in just the same way it is used ordinarily*, which Wittgenstein is *perfectly* aware of (§120; cf. §§81, 108 [boxed remark], 130). That is why Wittgenstein would repudiate the skeptical 'thesis', which has *nothing* to do with what Kripke suggests (see above). And that is why one cannot easily avoid 'confusing questions' about being 'both inside and outside language' at the same time. Our investigation is of *highest* 'generality' (in a certain sense) as regards language and meaning (this may appear to contradict *contextualization*, but it does not); and, therefore, what we ourselves say in the process has to be equally subject to its 'conclusions'. (And yet that only means: we too are using language, so we must use it meaningfully!) This is where Wittgenstein greatly differs from the philosophical tradition. (It is also part of the reason why Wittgenstein may appear "cagey" to some.) And this is why it is a *dangerous* mistake to approach him in the familiar way one approaches other philosophers. (Kripke makes this mistake; and the result is obvious, as we have just seen.)

### 6.3 Getting ready to overcome the methodological impasse

In order to achieve self-consistency in logic, and indeed *make sense* in philosophy, we must properly appreciate the fact that we ourselves are using language — that is, take into proper consideration our own use of language in philosophizing. Properly appreciating the fact that we ourselves are using the same language requires first of all that we recognize that we (in logic) must use language 'full-blown' (§120). The author of the *TLP* first examines the essence of language, and only after that, judges

what can and cannot be said in language, thus the status of his propositions and of philosophy in general (*TLP* §§6.53-4). This mirrors the fact that the author properly acknowledges his own use of language (and thus the nonsensicality of his propositions) only at the very end of the book (*TLP* §6.54). By contrast, Wittgenstein in the *PI* takes as his very departure point a proper appreciation of his own use of language — *starting from the very beginning*. And this contains the essence of his solution of the methodological impasse. (Consider the very first section of the *PI*: "But what is the meaning of the word 'five'? — No such thing was in question here, only how the word 'five' is used.") This attention to the very words we use in logic is what we must do — first and foremost — in order to properly appreciate the fact that we ourselves are using language (and 'full-blown'), to overcome the methodological impasse. But the strong tendency to overlook *this* striking fact has to be overcome first. For that purpose, we need to recognize that we easily and often unknowingly make unacknowledged presumptions about the very *sense* of the things we say in philosophy. In this regard, Wittgenstein is extremely rigorous. (See the note above on this exact point: §1.4.) And he thinks that unless we begin to acknowledge such presumptions of ours and work to overcome them, in our philosophical investigations we will inevitably find ourselves in *complete darkness*.

### 6.4 Wittgenstein's final criterion for overcoming the impasse: Our philosophizing must *do* something

That is why in the *PI*, he carefully proceeds with this awareness *from the very outset*, always keeping in mind and properly appreciating the fact that he himself is using language in order to investigate its nature. He achieves this through *contextualization* (at multiple stages). Above all, Wittgenstein asks and examines how a given word or

sentence we want to use in philosophy is *actually used* in our everyday language — for we "got it from *there*, and nowhere else" (§134). This is examination of use of language in particular language-games: starting from contextualization of sense (Chapter 1), generalizing to contextualization of logic (Chapter 2). As we observed above, this is in fact the *method* Wittgenstein applies and demonstrates in the *PI* ('a method…by examples', §133) — his new method in logic based on contextualization of logic (Chapter 3). We further noted that by means of philosophical problems, Wittgenstein contextualizes his own examination and description of language in logic — that is, his own employment of language as he philosophizes (Chapter 4). This was necessary because logical investigation (description of language-games) itself involves use of language, and as such must be contextualized if it is to make sense (like *any* employment of language). This requires specification of a context within which philosophizing is executed, the *purpose* of this execution and thus its *function*. Philosophical problems serve just this purpose of enabling us to contextualize our philosophizing itself: *our own use of language in logic must have a function if it is to have sense*. Conceptual difficulties (confusions, misunderstandings) are indicated by the existence of philosophical problems: hence the need for philosophizing, hence a work for philosophy to do, hence the possibility of philosophizing in a way that makes sense. Otherwise, without such a need and such a function, in our philosophizing language would be 'idling', thus lacking sense. But then philosophy itself would be 'brought in question' (§133). Through the methodological impasse, we are problematizing our philosophizing itself: and through contextualization of our philosophizing, we are overcoming the methodological impasse. Thus we can also see that actually *we ourselves in this thesis* started doing this overcoming, this contextualization of our philosophizing in

Chapter 4. (The contextualization of our discussion, i.e. of this thesis itself, will be completed in Chapter 7 by means of an application to a particular instance where this work will, hopefully, have a function.) What makes it possible for us to contextualize our philosophizing is this philosophical problem, i.e. the methodological impasse.

The fundamental notion here is this: language is *idling* unless it has a *function* (§§38, 88, 96, 132, 414) — i.e. its employment does not constitute *sense* unless it amounts to a *doing*. So any employment of language must be a version of doing — belong to a particular context and have some function there — if it is to have sense, to be a meaningful use of language. *This*, however, equally applies to *our own use* of language in philosophy. For we are saying something about the nature of language which therefore also concerns our own use in saying it. So now: what does Wittgenstein *do* by means of the words he employs as he philosophizes? It is this: resolve philosophical problems (§§116, 118-9, 123, 125, 127, 132-3). (See Chapter 4 above.) This is Wittgenstein's *purpose* in philosophy (§§123, 127, 132, 309), which, coupled with the notion of a *function*, is an essential part of the contextualization of his philosophizing (§109). (We also see that we have actually been working on overcoming the methodological impasse starting from Chapter 4.)

### 6.5 Significance and status of philosophy: 'Is this *all*?'

Merely resolving philosophical problems might appear to be something *negative* in nature. It is as if our philosophizing manages to have a function by merely battling idleness in language use, i.e. cases where function is lacking. In one sense, this is true. For there is indeed no *need* — therefore no *work* to do — for philosophy in cases where 'language is doing its work' (§132). But to think that the task of philosophy is insignificant (negative, superficial, etc.) *because* philosophy has work

to do only when language is not doing work ('idling'), is incorrect. The reason is that the cases where language is 'idling' (resulting in philosophical problems; §38) indicate a *failure of understanding* — a *conceptual confusion* or difficulty. And such confusions or misunderstandings about concepts ('workings of our language'; §109) are *significant*: "They are deep disquietudes; they are as deeply rooted in us as the forms of our language, and their significance is as great as the importance of our language." (§111).

> Where does this investigation get its importance from, given that it seems only to destroy everything interesting: that is, all that is great and important? (As it were, all the buildings, leaving behind only bits of stone and rubble.) But what we are destroying are only houses of cards, and we are clearing up the ground of language on which they stood. (§118)

It is true that with this new philosophy, specifically with this rigorous attitude towards our own use of language in philosophizing, much of what we have all along believed to be great in philosophy *will* be destroyed. But this is actually a *good* thing: for it was an *illusion* to have thought that those things *were* great. The underlying reason for this illusion was extreme *lack* of attention to *our own use of words* in philosophizing. So now when we begin to seriously raise questions about the very *sense* of the words which we are using in order to philosophize, that is to start 'clearing up the ground of language' on which philosophy stands, we end up having to acknowledge that what once was 'great and important' turns out to be 'only houses of cards' (however unfortunate that may be).

> What *we* do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use. (§116)

The word "we" indicates parting of the ways, a break from the tradition. This is how Wittgenstein's epigraph (from Nestroy) should be understood: "The trouble about progress is that it always looks much greater than it really is." This seems to be merely depicting a fact; but if we recall the essence of Wittgenstein's new

conception of sense and language, we see that this quote should be more than "such pictures as hang on our walls, which seem simply to depict how a thing looks, what it is like": "These pictures are, as it were, idle" (§291). The epigraph is not an idle picture: it not only correctly describes a fact in words — it also signifies the destruction of this fact, rendering itself incorrect (as it were), because what is about to take place *now* is something *quite different*. Wittgenstein believes that with this new philosophy he has made *great* progress — so the sense of the epigraph is thus seen to include 'until now' when it is analyzed, as we may say with the jargon of the *TLP*. (Consider, for example, the very important *conception of essence* which we identified above as the most fundamental misconception behind the *TLP* view, which has been quite *dominant* throughout the history of philosophy: the essence of a thing, a phenomenon, is the *common element* shared by all its instances which *make* them into *its* instances. This is logically refuted in Wittgenstein's treatment of the problem of logic, or rule-following, and *therefore* has to be left behind. Hence progress.)

The philosophical work we do in dealing with philosophical problems is not something insignificant because in this way we are correcting *deep* misunderstandings and misconceptions governing our thinking. These are *conceptual* difficulties, true: but concepts are what allow us to *make sense of the world*. For, as we noted in §1.1 and discussed in §3.3.2.3 above, logical investigation (of concepts) is also an investigation of the nature of phenomena. Thus the work Wittgenstein does by means of philosophical problems is essentially a work in making sense of things. So in the end, Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy really comes down to the description Sellars (1962) gives (who in this very description makes reference to Wittgenstein's later philosophy):

> The aim of philosophy, abstractly formulated, is to understand how things in the broadest possible sense of the term hang together in the broadest possible

> sense of the term. Under 'things in the broadest possible sense' I include such radically different items as not only 'cabbages and kings', but numbers and duties, possibilities and finger snaps, aesthetic experience and death. To achieve success in philosophy would be, to use a contemporary turn of phrase, to 'know one's way around' with respect to all these things, not in that unreflective way in which the centipede of the story knew its way around before it faced the question, 'how do I walk?', but in that reflective way which means that no intellectual holds are barred. (p. 35)

But in order to be able to make sense of things, we have to make sure that we make sense in our use of words in philosophy. (Interestingly, just when we do this, we are able to make sense of the world.) And that is what we are trying to achieve by means of the methodological impasse (and more generally contextualization). In the next chapter, we will contextualize this thesis itself by applying it to a particular case and thus giving it a function. In this way, we will ensure (hopefully) that this work *does* something, hence makes sense: *this* is how we will be able to overcome the impasse.

# CHAPTER 7

# APPLICATION:

# TAKING OURSELVES INTO CONSIDERATION — CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE PRESENT THESIS

In Chapters 1-6, we looked at the *TLP* through the *PI* so as to understand the latter in contrast to the former, which is what Wittgenstein himself told us to do in his Preface to the *PI*. Of course, we also often went to the relevant passages in the *TLP* by following Wittgenstein's own guidance. We thus identified the Tractarian view of language and described it in detail. We also showed how Wittgenstein in the *PI* departed from, and dealt with, it. Consequently, there can be *no doubt* about the existence of *that* view of language in the *TLP* — also including the fact that the author of the *TLP* did indeed *endorse* it, which is a fact of absolute certainty[126], given Wittgenstein's certain explicit remarks in the *PI* (see our discussion in, e.g., §§1.4.2.1, 2.1-2.2 above). I am making and emphasizing this last point because there is a curious reading of the *TLP* (which seems to be embraced by many Wittgenstein scholars at present) according to which the description of the *TLP* view we gave in this thesis is *fundamentally* wrong: namely, the so called 'resolute reading'. So we *need* to understand this situation. (Recall the importance of the need, purpose and function for philosophizing.) We looked at the *TLP* through the eyes of later Wittgenstein, as it were, and thus demonstrated the view Wittgenstein formerly held in that book. And, given that the resolute reading which we will describe shortly

[126] The reader might think that since in the preceding we strictly opposed the presumption of absolute sense for words, in particular an *absolute* certainty as in the case of the Tractarian conception of logic and mathematics, this use of "absolute certainty" is problematic and indicates inconsistency. But this is not so: in this context of use, it only serves to emphasize that *there can be no disagreement* about the fact in question, i.e. it is such an obvious fact, as we have demonstrated (proved).

conflicts with the view we presented here, our discussion above already amounts to a *refutation* of that reading. But perhaps it can be said[127] that this is only an *external* treatment of the resolute reading of the *TLP*, so to say, and that a proper treatment would require a direct investigation of this view by focusing solely on the *TLP* (instead of approaching it via the *PI*). Although this is not true, given the fact that the preceding, on the basis of his own explicit remarks in the *PI*, leaves no doubt about the view Wittgenstein did endorse in the *TLP* (unless of course he, for example, suffered a memory loss), we will engage in that kind of direct investigation in what follows. In this way, we aim to prove the falsity of the resolute reading *with absolute certainty* (in the sense that there is no interpretation involved but only what has to do with the meaning of words), thus the necessity of establishing *complete agreement* on this judgment. Unless we miserably fail in our task, this will entail something important regarding the current practice of philosophy in Wittgenstein scholarship: namely, the fact that *we should put an end to that reading*.

The point of departure for the resolute reading is an absolutely correct one, which we pointed out above as a fundamental problem with the *TLP* conception. Namely: how is it possible that the author of the *TLP* says that his propositions are nonsensical, but also at the same time hold that through these nonsensical propositions he is somehow able to formulate or capture the logic of language? How can he speak of the logic of language as *Something* about which nothing can be said and yet at the same time say all sorts of things about 'it'? Can he be so naive to fail to see this blatant contradiction, or to ignore how serious it is? This is the main motivation behind the resolute reading, and it is perfectly valid. But we must also acknowledge *this* fact: if we *know* that the author of the *TLP* does both say his

[127] Conant and Diamond (2004), whose paper we will be closely investigating in what follows, do indeed say something of this sort (see p. 86).

propositions are nonsensical and at the same take himself to have formulated through these nonsensical propositions a particular philosophical view ('theory', 'doctrine') of anything, of the essence of language (sense, propositions) in particular, then the valid point behind the resolute reading loses *all* its force. The question the resolute reader raises, which is of the form "How can he…?", will then no longer be a *rhetorical* question, which it was because the point of asking it was to point out the obvious answer: "Of course, he *cannot*…" The question will then invite a genuine attempt at understanding how the author of the *TLP* might have taken himself to formulate philosophical views through those nonsensical propositions, how he might have thought of the resulting apparently-blatant inconsistency. But this investigation is only secondary; for we first have to *independently* settle the question of whether young Wittgenstein indeed *did* put forward philosophical 'theories' in the book. Although the preceding already *did* this, we will still do more in the following. For we need to settle this question *definitively* — even for a proponent of the resolute reading: the comparative work we have done in this thesis on Wittgenstein's views in the two works *requires* so. Since we are not only describing but also adopting Wittgenstein's philosophy in the *PI*, "the clarity we are aiming at is indeed *complete* clarity": "But this simply means that [this question we identified] should *completely* disappear"[128] (§133). We want to present a *surveyable representation* of what we *know*, certain facts regarding which there can be no disagreement, which will settle this question: thus we hope to be able to establish *complete agreement*. As emphasized, *this* is 'the way we look at things'; and *this* is the *form of our practice* of

[128] This, however, does *not* mean that we must simply get rid of it, or give some answer to it without proof, and so on. *If* there are no facts which we *know for certain* (can *see clearly*), then this will be the resolution of the question: unless we are satisfied with leaving unfinished the work we set out to do. ("We do not yet know the answer, but perhaps we will come to see it with further work.") However, thankfully the relevant facts happen to be there, thus the answer crystal clear.

philosophy. What we will provide are *not* interpretations — rather, facts (hopefully) that derive solely from the very meanings of the words involved. And in *this* way, that is through this *application to the particular case* of the resolute reading, we will hopefully make sense of Wittgenstein's new view which is what we are trying to understand primarily. This application, however, is not something additional or unnecessary (or arbitrary). Quite the contrary, it is essential (logically) to our work: for, recall, one essential notion regarding logic in Wittgenstein's new view is 'application to a particular case'. As we demonstrated in Chapter 5 (i.e. as Wittgenstein demonstrates in his discussion of 'rule-following', as it is commonly referred to), *what we know* when we know something (what it is) — when we grasp a concept or a rule, when we understand what an expression means — consists in application to particular instances, i.e. the use of the relevant expression in particular cases (language-games). Just as a concept consists in its function of identifying and categorizing cases, our understanding of Wittgenstein's view which we have been developing in the present thesis must itself be brought to apply to a particular case. For it will have *sense* (i.e. reality) only to the extent that it can be (and is) brought to apply to particular cases: it must have the *function of doing something* in concrete examples. Just like a tool, consequently, the present thesis must *work*. What makes something a tool is the work it does; similarly, our philosophizing must *do* some work if it is to have a genuine *reality*, that is to say, if our employment of words in philosophizing is to make sense. For this purpose, the present thesis must be *contextualized*.

## 7.1 What *we* need: The present thesis must itself have a *function*

To ask the fundamental question again: what are we *doing* by means of the present work in philosophy? For the considerations above (in the preceding chapters) equally apply to our own use of language here. The thesis already belongs to some context and does something (hopefully); but it is not enough: we must be more specific. We must further specify a context and a use, i.e. *purpose* and *function* for it. The context is the contemporary Wittgenstein scholarship (and widespread disagreements there), more specifically the so-called 'resolute reading'. And the intended function of this thesis[129] is to put an *end* to that reading — or at any rate a particular version of it, namely the one formulated by Conant and Diamond (2004) — by *proving* its falsity. With this application, we will primarily (be attempting to) secure self-consistency and sense (for our words), and thus ourselves overcome the philosophical problem we called 'methodological impasse' (see the previous chapter). At the same time, we will also be *applying* certain fundamental notions of Wittgenstein's later philosophy which we discussed above to a *particular case* (see especially Chapter 5 above).

## 7.2 Setting up the context of the application: Complete agreement and contemporary Wittgenstein scholarship

Recall that Wittgenstein only states (or aspires to state only) what we already know by knowing language, i.e. describe our everyday language-games with words (see Chapter 3 above). And since the language-game is precisely what is not an interpretation, but constitutes the shared ground of sense, it is logically prior to

[129] This will also serve the broader purpose of working towards establishing complete agreement among ourselves in our philosophical work on Wittgenstein's views, which will in turn serve the purpose of establishing a genuine practice of philosophy — of the kind which later Wittgenstein embraced which we have been describing and adopting in this thesis. For we want to do philosophy — but we only want to do it in a way that makes sense, i.e. does not 'bring philosophy itself in question' (§133). See our discussion in §4.3 above.

disagreement: it is what makes disagreement possible (Chapter 5). Not agreeing in the language-game — which alone is what Wittgenstein describes — means not agreeing in language. It is therefore not at all an exaggeration to say that he thinks *everybody who understands what he says will necessarily and completely agree with what he says*. It is therefore *no* surprise that he says: "If someone were to advance *theses* in philosophy, it would never be possible to debate them, because everyone would agree to them." (§128). Equally, §122: "The concept of a surveyable representation is of fundamental significance for us. It characterizes the way we represent things, how we look at matters." Finally, §133: "For the clarity that we are aiming at is indeed *complete* clarity." — To which, he adds: "But this simply means that the philosophical problems should *completely* disappear." This is because of our *purpose* in philosophizing (§132) — i.e. solve philosophical problems — by reference and in relation to which alone it makes sense to speak of '*complete* clarity'. Whether clarity is 'complete' is a matter of *context*: clarity is 'complete' to the extent that it serves to achieve the *purpose* for which it is sought, which is its *function*. See §§ 38, 47, 88. (Thus this exemplifies contextualization and the role of philosophical problems. See Chapters 4 and 6 above.) And we *are* seeking complete clarity: not with everything, of course, but certainly with those things that are essential to achieving our *purpose*.

### 7.2.1 Agreement in language

This is what Wittgenstein wants to (and thinks we should) achieve in logic: "Philosophy only states what everyone concedes to it" (§599). What 'everyone concedes to philosophy' is only what proceeds from the fact that we all speak — know — the same language (i.e. from this fact alone). In other words, philosophy is

concerned only with that in which all who agree in language thereby agree — that is, solely by virtue of the fact that they agree in their language. This is no surprise at all: for 'logic of language', which is our subject matter, signifies precisely *that* (see Chapter 1). (We may express this also by saying: what we know when we know language, by virtue of knowing language alone, what our knowledge of language consists in.) This agreement — agreement in language — is surely not agreement in what people *say*, but rather (more essentially) in what people *do*, in their activity, or form of life (§241; see §§23, 198, 202). Therefore, what people who speak the same language thereby agree in ('accept') is their form of life (PPF §345; cf. §128) — *and* whatever is necessary for the existence of this activity (§§142, 240, 288). For what is necessary for the existence of language is part of its essence, i.e. the logic of language. Consider, for example, Wittgenstein's remarks on the logic of mathematics (cf. PPF §330-3, 340ff): "Of course, in one sense, mathematics is a body of knowledge, but still it is also an activity. And 'false moves' can exist only as the exception. For if what we now call by that name became the rule, the game in which they were false moves would have been abrogated." (PPF §349). (Thus we may say: what is necessary for something's existence is part of its identity. See §568.) Another way of expressing this point is this: philosophy (logic) is concerned only with those things that are necessary for the existence of language — for the possibility of communication through language (§§240-2). What sorts of things, however, are (to be regarded) as necessary for the existence of language? The answer is: all sorts of things. For the 'set' of necessary 'conditions' of language involve, at the one extreme, what Wittgenstein refers to as the 'extremely/very general facts of nature' (§142, PPF §§365-6), and at the other extreme, 'agreement in judgments' (§242). (See §5.4 and §5.5 above.) In particular, and this is of peculiar significance for us in

the present context, agreement in the language-games with our words — i.e. the actual use of (the existing technique of applying) the words of our everyday language — is essential.

### 7.2.2 Complete agreement in philosophy

The notion of agreement, as we have seen on multiple occasions so far, is essential to Wittgenstein's whole philosophy — to his view of the essence (i.e. logic) of language and, in particular, his conception of philosophy. More specifically, as we just emphasized, agreement among human beings (in their behavior and judgments, in particular) is necessary for the possibility of communication by means of language. Accordingly, "[p]hilosophy only states what everyone concedes to it" (§599). (Notice that the actual fact that there is a great deal of disagreement and diversity in today's (and yesterday's) philosophy — that is, in what writers say philosophically — this fact is apparently the exact opposite of Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy.) But here, to repeat, Wittgenstein does not mean that people say that they agree — nor that they agree in what they say. (Therefore, it indicates a fundamental misunderstanding if one is inclined to see in that remark any implication of 'relativism', as it is 'understood' in today's philosophy.) This agreement, as noted, has essentially to do with the fact that we all speak the same language, and must use it in order to be able to communicate and understand each other in the first place (at least, in order to say and write anything). More specifically, Wittgenstein thinks that logic deals with only those things that make it possible to communicate through language — only with what "is required for communication by means of language" (§242). And this partly has to do with certain facts about us human beings, about our lives. In particular, agreement among human

beings (in certain things) is necessary for communication: it "belongs to the scaffolding from which our language operates" (§240).

Obviously, we must share a language in order to communicate at all. And since our knowledge of language consists in our possession of the *concepts* of our language, knowing the *uses* of the expressions we use (i.e. understanding, being able to apply, them) is necessary for the very possibility of communication (cf. §143). (See Chapter 5. See also our discussion of Kripke in Chapter 6.) Wittgenstein expresses this as follows: "It is not only agreement in definitions, but also (odd as it may sound) agreement in judgements that is required for communication by means of language." (§242). We should be clear about the logical significance of what Wittgenstein expresses in this remark: what we know — i.e. our knowledge of language, our grasp of the concepts of our language — consists just in our ability to *apply* the concepts to *particular cases*, to employ the concepts in our *judgments* about particular instances. Wittgenstein says in §480: "If someone now asks, 'But how can previous experience be a reason for the supposition that such-and-such will occur later on?', the answer is: What general concept have we of reasons for this kind of supposition?" He continues in §481:

> If anyone said that information about the past couldn't convince him that something would happen in the future, I wouldn't understand him. One might ask him: What do you expect to be told, then? What sort of information do you call a reason for believing this? What do you call "convincing"? In what kind of way do you expect to be convinced? — If *these* are not reasons, then what are reasons? —If you say that these are not reasons, then you must surely be able to state what must be the case for us to be warranted in saying that there are reasons for our supposition.

Wittgenstein is here talking about '*paradigmatic instances*' of reasons, and saying of them: if *they* are not reasons, then *nothing* is (a reason) — more correctly, we do not know what "reason" means. Even more correctly: the word "reason" loses all its meaning, has 'nothing left to say' (see §82). (We demonstrated the essential

significance of the existence of paradigmatic instances in Chapter 5: without them, the *concept itself* ceases to exist.) Wittgenstein is here making reference to the strength of paradigms: being able to recognize *these* as reasons is a *criterion for understanding* the word "reason". (Thus Wittgenstein says of his interlocutor in §481 that he "wouldn't understand him".) Therefore, if the person does not agree with us (on *these* being reasons), then this indicates that he does not understand this word. (For we do not know anything more than what we can explain (express, exhibit, etc.) by means of particular cases to which we apply our concepts — by means of particular language-games in which we use our words. See §§69, 71, 75, 89, 142, 208-9. Cf. §385. See Chapter 5.) Similarly, being able to recognize the uses Wittgenstein describes in §189 of the expression in question (*as* uses), we said (in Chapter 6), is a criterion for understanding the expression in question: *that* is what our understanding of the expression consists in, for the *sense* of the expression is nothing other its *use*. That is why Kripke's seeing 'interpretation' in Wittgenstein's description of these uses indicates that he does not know the meaning of the expression. (Of course, he does know; the reason for this illusion is psychological. It has to do with Kripke's preconceptions we identified.) On this point, the description of possible uses in particular language-games, all who speak the same language (understand the expressions involved) must agree (completely). Following Wittgenstein, we can (could) say: if *these* are interpretations, then what is *not* an interpretation? (That is, if these are interpretations, then everything — therefore, nothing — is.) Or, alternatively: if the expression does not mean *this* or *that*, then *what* does it mean? (That is, if it does not mean *this* or *that*, then it does not mean anything. Cf. §82.) In logic, however, it is precisely (and only) with what is not an interpretation that we are concerned. And the language-game is precisely what is not

an interpretation (cf. §656). (Wittgenstein, recall, says in *OC* §56: "everything descriptive of a language-game is part of logic".) This is just the grammar (i.e. ordinary use) of our words, the 'established usage', the 'technique of applying the words' (§§125, 150, 198-9, 232, 257-62; *PPF* §106). (See Wittgenstein's solution to the problem of logic and rules above in §5.3.) However, our examination of the grammar of language, its logic, is itself done by means of language. It is not something like picturing something that is already there (from outside it). No: in philosophy, we are describing language-games with a particular *purpose*, namely, that of resolving philosophical problems, i.e. conceptual issues (Chapter 4). This specifies the context within which description of language-games takes place (i.e. contextualizes logical investigation itself). And given that our description is *essentially* of the form of a 'surveyable representation'[130], we must be able to establish complete agreement in all the things we say. We must be able to achieve '*complete* clarity' and manage to have the particular philosophical problem we deal with '*completely* disappear' (§133). This is also what *we* are trying to achieve in the present context: we are dealing with the methodological impasse, and attempting to overcome it by contextualizing our investigations in this thesis via application to a particular case. This is at the same time a demonstration of how *Wittgenstein* deals with this philosophical problem, takes himself to have resolved it. With this

[130] This means that throughout our investigations we are actually *applying the concept* of 'surveyable representation' to the particular cases we deal with. This may be difficult to understand, because when we speak of 'application of a concept' one primarily imagines a case where these words are actually *explicitly* used. And indeed often the application of a concept is of this kind. But it does not have to be. When Wittgenstein says that the concept of 'surveyable representation' is of 'fundamental significance to us', characterizes 'how we represent things', the form of our presentation of things (§122), he is of course not saying that at each step we are explicitly using the expression "surveyable representation": rather, we are practicing philosophy through words in accordance with this concept, in the way that this concept requires. And precisely *this* is what it is to *apply the concept to our investigations*. The concept is a tool, an instrument: it allows us to do something, or to do something in a particular way. And our doing something in *that* particular way signifies the *application* of the concept.

application (to a particular case), *we* will overcome the methodological impasse by providing a function for, and thus contextualizing, the thesis. With this contextualization, we will also be *applying Wittgenstein's solution* of the methodological impasse: and with this example (in which application of Wittgenstein's philosophy is executed and thus exhibited), we are able to *properly* explain Wittgenstein's views.

Wittgenstein's philosophy, therefore, demands that we *seek complete agreement* in our philosophizing. In any event, Wittgenstein in the *PI* is concerned only with that in which we do and must agree since we are using (the same) language. This means, in particular, that in our investigations in which we are trying to understand Wittgenstein's ideas and, by their means, the essence of language, we too should seek complete agreement. For it belongs to the very *logic* of what we are doing (in our philosophical work on Wittgenstein) that we are concerned with truth, that is, with what Wittgenstein himself *in fact* says. This thus provides another essential principle for the present work: to wit, keeping in mind the fact that we are concerned with truth, I will refrain from such expressions as "I think" or "in my reading-interpretation" and formulate my claims by explicit reference to the *fact* of the matter. In other words, in the discussion that follows (and precedes), what I say (often) explicitly involves a claim to what Wittgenstein *in fact* says. Indeed, on many occasions, I further claim *certainty* about Wittgenstein's ideas. Although this may sound potentially dogmatic, I will assume that this is perfectly justified to the extent that I provide grounds for my claims by making explicit reference to particular passages from Wittgenstein's writings. The reader will thus be in a position to evaluate my claims by himself looking at the passages themselves — i.e. to '*survey*' them. And I do invite the reader to do this: I would really like to know when I make

a mistake (if I make a mistake) since I am trying to understand Wittgenstein — or so it seems to me, if you prefer. I further believe that such claims about what Wittgenstein certainly thinks (in relation to this or that) not only do not lead to dogmatism; but, on the contrary, they (may) in fact help prevent much dogmatism in philosophy (provided that we strive for honesty in our search for truth). The reason is that loose employment (employability) of expressions of the form "in my reading/interpretation", it seems to me, is just what leaves much room for dogmatism in the first place, for, as indicated in our discussion of Kripke's example above, that approach in philosophy — i.e. that which tolerates significant lack of agreement by permitting 'in my interpretation'-talk — allows preconceptions to sneak in (unnoticed by us who philosophize).

That we should seek complete agreement in our investigations into Wittgenstein's philosophy is also demanded by the following fundamental notion which is essential to Wittgenstein's view: namely, *publicity of sense*. For Wittgenstein, it belongs to the concept of language that what we call the sense of a sentence must (logically) be something graspable by different people. (This, we might say, is the 'conclusion' of the private language 'argument'. It is also one essential point of the discussion of rule following. See our discussion above of the problem of logic in Chapter 5.) One significant corollary of this notion is the requirement that if someone (anyone) understands something, then he — independently of who he is, of course — must be able to communicate it to other people, to express it completely by giving explanations (see, e.g., §75, §209; cf. §504). (This has been discussed on multiple occasions.) More specifically, at least in

certain regions of language[131], that is, in certain kinds of uses of language, if there is sense, i.e. something to be understood, then we who want to understand it must be able ('in principle', to be more philosophical) to establish complete agreement over the question of sense. Wittgenstein's use of language in the *PI* is certainly one such region — given his aim in (and conception of) philosophy (described above), and his rigor in his philosophizing (enlightened sensitivity to his own use of language; see, e.g., §§143-5). (Cf. contextualization and the concept of 'surveyable representation'.) Therefore, we the readers of the *PI* — and also of the *TLP* through it — should seek complete agreement among ourselves over the question of what Wittgenstein means (defends, rejects, etc.), in regard to both particular instances in the book and the book as a whole.

### 7.2.3 Specifying the context and posing the question

But then, *how* exactly are we supposed to make sense of the unfortunate fact that there is *persistent widespread disagreement* among Wittgensteinian scholars — even over the *most fundamental notions* of his philosophy? *This* fact tells us something *very* significant which we must understand; for either *we* (students of Wittgenstein's philosophy) remarkably fail in *our* task, or *Wittgenstein* fails in *his* task altogether. So we must *do something* about *that* fact, in relation to which a particular reading of Wittgenstein's philosophy deserves peculiar attention: namely, the so-called

[131] I am saying this because (possibly) we can speak of cases such as poetry where we would say both 1) there is sense, and 2) *complete* agreement does not have to be possible (even in principle). We may say that this is a different sense of the word "sense".

But even in things like poetry, there has to be at least a general agreement about the general sense (theme, etc.) of a given work (the use of words involved, what the author means). So although it would likely be against the *logic* of poetry if we were to *always* seek complete agreement (which no doubt we could sometimes do), this should not give the impression that nothing near complete lack of agreement would be (logically) tolerable. Quite the contrary: without a *general* agreement about sense, it tends to become dubious whether there is sense at all.

(What there has to be is the *possibility* of such an agreement. We should keep in mind the distinction between what is logical and what is psychological.)

'Resolute Reading'. For there is now a *great divide* among Wittgenstein scholars with the development of this reading: we now have two 'schools' with deeply different 'interpretations'. Given the other reasons explained above which are internal, so to speak, to the present thesis (see the opening part of this chapter), consequently, we have more than enough reason to *closely examine* the resolute reading *in order to see what exactly is going on* in the relevant context of contemporary Wittgenstein scholarship[132].

My 'claim' will be this: there are certain textual facts in the *TLP* which certainly refute this reading, i.e. suffice to prove the falsity of it. That is, all of us who use the same language (understand the words involved) must (be able to) establish complete agreement over these facts and therefore the falsity of that reading — or at the very least, Conant and Diamond (2004)'s version of it.

## 7.3 Proof: Simple but definitive refutation of the Resolute Reading

The main motivation behind the resolute way of reading has to do with the fact that the author of the *TLP* acknowledges his propositions as nonsensical (§6.54[133]). Given this, the resoluter reasons, how could its author take himself to be able to formulate a philosophical view? That would render the book plainly inconsistent (see, e.g., Conant and Diamond, 2004, p. 53). Thus the essential feature of the resolute reading

[132] The reading in question is primarily one of the *TLP*. This may seem to mean that the relevant disagreement is not significant as regards Wittgenstein's later philosophy. But this is not true, simply because Wittgenstein develops his new philosophy in contrast to his old views in the *TLP*. As we noted, he tells us that we should study his later writings accordingly, which was our very point of departure. (See Chapter 1.) This means, consequently, that disagreement concerning fundamental notions of the *TLP* as exemplified by the resolute reading is equally significant even when one's primary concern is to understand Wittgenstein's later philosophy.

On the other hand, by 'the relevant context of Wittgenstein scholarship' I do not mean the familiar debates in the current literature between the so-called 'standard reading' of the *TLP* and the resolute reading. That expression refers basically to certain questions about fundamental aspects of the view Wittgenstein held in the *TLP* and the method he practiced in it, the most important of which we will shortly see in the next section. And I have *no* interest in engaging in 'scholarly debates' between different 'readings' currently in existence.

[133] In this section, references are to the *TLP* unless otherwise specified.

will be the denial of the notion that the author of the *TLP* puts forward philosophical views ('theories') of the nature of phenomena, in particular 'doctrines' about the essence of language (the most central being what we will call the 'picture theory of sense'; see §7.3.1 below). But at this point, one naturally observes: although obviously the author himself says that his propositions are nonsensical (§6.54), he himself is *apparently* formulating certain philosophical views ('theories') in those propositions themselves. So how *can* we deny that the author does this — given that we *see* in those propositions what are obviously formulations of philosophical views? As we will see (in §7.5), the resolute reading *explains away* this appearance by saying that these — the explicit philosophical views apparently formulated in the propositions of the *TLP* — are *not* genuinely *meant* by the author, that they are rather put there as 'mock doctrines' to be dissolved (shown to be nonsensical) from within. So, we are told, the views we see in the propositions of the *TLP* are *not* actually endorsed, but *targeted* by its author (although he *appears* to be endorsing them in the propositions). For, after all, how *can* the author take himself to be putting forward any philosophical 'doctrines' — given his most powerful remark at the end of the book that his propositions are *nonsensical*?

Yet some even claim — the resoluter protests with astonishment — that the author acknowledges his propositions as nonsensical (§6.54) because they turn out to be so on the very *account of sense* developed in *those* propositions themselves! Conant and Diamond (2004) point this out as the "most fundamental problem with the standard approach" (p. 49). So, independently of the details of the reading, denial of *that* claim should be essential to any 'resolute reading'[134] (at least as understood

[134] Conant (2006) points it out as "[t]he primary characteristic that marks out a reading of the *Tractatus* as 'resolute'" (pp. 173-4). So, apparently, we are justified in our judgment that it is an

by these writers): that is, if we can *prove* the *truth* of that claim, then this will logically entail (amount to a proof of) the *falsity* of the resolute reading. (If that is in fact *true*, then we *must completely agree in this judgment* about its falsity, and put an end to it, that is the resolute reading.) Indeed, later in their paper the authors explicitly say: "it is *central in all resolute readings* that nonsensical sentences are not rendered nonsensical by violating of conditions for meaningfulness" (p. 62; emphasis added). Therefore, if we can show that Wittgenstein says in §6.54 that the propositions of the *TLP* are nonsensical *because* they fail to satisfy the condition 'a sentence has sense *only* by virtue of being a *picture* of reality (facts, states of affairs)', then this will constitute a refutation of the resolute reading *per se* — since it will prove the falsity of that element which Conant and Diamond (2004) here say "is central in all resolute readings" (p. 62). (We are here trying to specify the minimal 'resolute' commitment that a reading *must* have, a paradigmatic resolute element so to say, if it is to be possibly regarded as a 'resolute reading' of the *TLP* — so that disproving that commitment will amount a refutation of the resolute reading as such.)

Let us recall the claim in question: the reason why the author of the *TLP* says at the end of the book that the propositions of the book are *nonsensical* (§6.54) is the very *account of sense he develops through those propositions* themselves. And, thankfully, we do *know* that *this is in fact the case*. For, luckily, we do have one particular textual *evidence* that leaves *no* possibility of doubt — no (legitimate) room for (genuine, significant, non-empty) disagreement, which means that we are – or at least, should be – able to *put an end* to the resolute reading — to the extent, of course, that a resolute reading is not possible if *that* is in fact a fact. Now, we know

essential feature of any resolute reading — so that the relevant proof will constitute a refutation of the resolute reading *as a whole*, not any particular version of it.

Below, we will continue this search for an essential feature of the resolute reading as such.

that the ground of the author's acknowledgement of his propositions as nonsensical (§6.54) is the very account of sense developed in the book (i.e. 'picture theory' of propositions and language) thanks to the fact that Wittgenstein equates 'what can be said' with 'propositions of natural science' in §6.53 (where he is talking about the *impossibility* of a 'strictly *correct method* in philosophy'). And now: why does *this* fact — one can and should see for himself that it is a fact — entail (prove) *that*? Because: (1) 'what can be said' is the same thing as 'what makes sense', and (2) it is precisely the Tractarian account of sense that gives the result that only natural-scientific propositions (pictures of facts) have sense — that is, the account of sense which the author (apparently) develops in the propositions of the book. (Indeed, the author confirms this in those very sections in which he develops *that* account of sense where he expresses (almost) the same point he makes in §6.53: "The totality of true propositions is the whole of natural science (or the whole corpus of natural sciences)." (§4.11). This section, i.e. §4.11, comments on §4.1 where we have: "Propositions represent the existence and non-existence of states of affairs". This description is part of the picture 'theory' of sense, which we will discuss shortly.) The author of the *TLP*, therefore, makes it *certain* in §6.53 that he acknowledges his propositions as nonsensical (§6.54) *because* they are so according to the criterion of sense provided by the account of language developed in the propositions of the book (i.e. picture 'theory'). This judgment is *certain*, and therefore we must establish complete agreement in it *because* it is based *solely* on the very *meanings* of our words. That is to say, anybody who *knows language* — knows what those words mean — will *thereby understand* that the fact that the author of the *TLP* equates 'what can be said' with 'propositions of natural science' in §6.53 (and thus indicates the impossibility of 'correct' philosophy) *means* that the reason why he goes on to

remark in the next proposition (§6.54) that the propositions of the book are themselves nonsensical is the fact that they are *not* 'propositions of natural science', i.e. *pictures* of facts.

### 7.3.1 A step back: *What* is a resolute reading?

Conant and Diamond (2004), who are the two major figures in the origination and development of the resolute reading, observe that the term "resolute reading" does not signify *one* strictly determinate way of reading the *TLP*: "To be a resolute reader is to be committed at most to a certain programmatic conception of the lines along which those details are to be worked out, but it does not deliver a general recipe for reading the book" (p. 47). They then give us "two interrelated general features that suffice to make a reading 'resolute'":

> The first is that it does not take those propositions of the *Tractatus* about which Wittgenstein said, at §6.54, that they are to be recognized as 'nonsensical' to convey ineffable insights. The second feature is a rejection of the idea that what such recognition requires on the part of a reader of the *Tractatus* is the application of a theory of meaning that has been advanced in the body of the work – a theory that specifies the conditions under which a sentence makes sense and the conditions under which it does not. (p. 47)

So these are the two features of the resolute reading, then: first, the propositions of the *TLP* do *not* convey any 'ineffable' insights; second, the reason why the propositions turn out to be nonsensical is *not* the account of sense the author formulates in those propositions themselves (i.e. picture theory). Notice that the first feature apparently conflicts with what we showed above (in previous chapters) to be one essential Tractarian notion: that the logic of language is *Something* about which we cannot say anything in language. But since nothing can be said about 'it', perhaps it would not be correct to characterize this notion as necessarily having to do with 'covering ineffable insights'. Let us therefore leave this first feature aside. The

second resolute feature concerns the rejection of (what we have been calling) the picture 'theory' of sense — but in the preceding section we *proved* the falsity of this resolute feature by showing that the reason why the author of the *TLP* says in §6.54 that his propositions are nonsensical is because they turn out to be so according to *that* 'theory' of sense: they are nonsensical because they are not natural-scientific propositions, i.e. they do not depict 'states of affairs'. The fundamental basis of this proof, recall, was the *fact* that in §6.53 — *right before* saying in §6.54 that his propositions are nonsensical — Wittgenstein *equates* 'what can be said' with 'the propositions of natural science'. (This section, §6.53, will be *very* important later in our discussion, because of the central role it plays — interestingly — in Conant and Diamond's resolute reading. Then we will *see perfectly clearly* what is a fact and what is an interpretation in relation to a given text, i.e. as regards a particular employment of words in a certain context.)

Conant and Diamond (2004) move on to describing various notions that "a resolute reading is committed to rejecting", and finally identify what is most essentially 'irresolute' in all of them:

> All such accounts will qualify equally as instances of an irresolute reading, if they are committed to ascribing to the *Tractatus* a theory which its author must endorse and rely upon (if he is to be able to prosecute his program of philosophical critique) and yet which he must also regard as nonsense (if he thinks through the commitments of his own theory). (p. 48)

Thus we appear to be able to identify something *essential* to the resolute reading — at least according to these authors: namely, rejecting the ascription to the *TLP* such a 'theory' of sense which (1) supposedly allows its author to 'prosecute his program of philosophical critique' but which (2) in the end also destroys the propositions within which the author develops that 'theory'. Above, we proved (2). But what about (1)? What is the 'philosophical critique' in question? It is young Wittgenstein's critique

of *other* philosophers, philosophical propositions in general (as well as his propositions in the book). (The details of Conant and Diamond (2004)'s account of the Tractarian 'program of philosophical critique' will be discussed later.) Let us therefore turn to the *basis* of this critique: Conant and Diamond (2004) say that it is not any 'theory' of sense. So if we can *prove* (also) that the same 'theory' of sense underlies this critique too, then we will thereby (further) establish the *truth* of *that* notion (i.e. that the author of the *TLP* formulates, endorses and applies a 'theory' of sense) the rejection of which is *essential* to the resolute reading, which we just identified in the passage quoted above from Conant and Diamond (2004, p. 48). And, therefore, we will thereby have established the falsity of the resolute reading. (The reason should be quite obvious: proof of the truth of that the denial of which is essential to the resolute reading will be proof of the falsity of the reading itself.)

### 7.4 Further, *independent* decisive proof

Wittgenstein says in the Preface (of the *TLP*) that the book "deals with the problems of philosophy, and shows...that the reason why these problems are posed is that the logic of our language is misunderstood". (This is what Conant and Diamond (2004, p. 48) refers to as 'his program of philosophical critique'.) Where in the book are we supposed to find what this claim amounts to and the grounds for it? The answer is: wherever they *in fact are*. Thus we arrive at §4.003:

> Most of the propositions and questions to be found in philosophical works are not false but nonsensical. Consequently we cannot give any answer to questions of this kind, but can only point out that they are nonsensical. Most of the propositions and questions of philosophers arise from our failure to understand the logic of our language.

(The reason why the remark in the Preface *in fact* leads us to this section should be obvious: for what we find here in §4.003 is that *same exact* remark.) *How* are we to

*understand* this remark? Of course, by looking at, above all, the *context* to which it belongs, i.e. (essentially) the fourth main proposition of the book ("A thought is a proposition with a sense"; §4) and the propositions that follow which explicate (comment on) that proposition up until the next main proposition. The last second main (i.e. 4.a, etc.) proposition in this region is §4.5, which formulates just the 'general form of a proposition', which is supposed to capture the essence of propositions (§5.471), of "any sign-language whatsoever" (§4.5): "This is how things stand". To give *this* as the general form of propositions, to use Wittgenstein's words, is 'at bottom' "the same as giving the explanation: a proposition is what can be true or false" (*PI* §136). And *that* is precisely the account of proposition and sense developed in *this* region of the book currently in focus. To illustrate (and most importantly):

> A thought is a proposition with a sense. (§4)
> A proposition is a picture of reality. (§4.01)
> A proposition must restrict reality to two alternatives: yes or no...A proposition is a description of a state of affairs. (§4.023)
> To understand a proposition means to know what is the case if it is true. (§4.024)
> A proposition states something only in so far as it is a picture. (§4.03)
> Reality is compared with propositions. (§4.05)
> A proposition can be true or false only in virtue of being a picture of reality. (§4.06)
> Propositions represent the existence and non-existence of states of affairs. (§4.1)

This, therefore, must be the ground for Wittgenstein's claim (in the Preface and in §4.003) that philosophical questions and propositions arise because of a 'misunderstanding of the logic of language', and are nonsensical. And clearly, therefore, the reason why they are nonsensical is the fact that they do not represent (describe, picture) any reality (fact, state of affairs). For *sense*, according to the account Wittgenstein develops in *this* region of the book, is essentially a matter of *picturing reality* (describing a state of affairs, etc.). This shows, consequently, the

ground of Wittgenstein's charge against philosophers in the Preface is the view ('theory') of propositions and sense he develops in the book. Thus the basis of 'his program of philosophical critique' *is* a particular account of sense — *contra* the resolute reading, at least as it is formulated by Conant and Diamond (2004). (This too is a judgment with absolute certainty calling for complete agreement because, again, it is solely based on the meanings of the words involved. Thus disagreement with respect to it indicates a *lack of understanding* of those words, in particular as used by the author of the *TLP* in the relevant context which we just discussed. That is to say, anyone who understands the words which combine to form those propositions of the *TLP* which we are discussing in the present context will thereby understand what its author is saying in the propositions in question, which we just demonstrated. If one is having scruples regarding the strength of *this* claim, however, I do strongly suggest that he *himself surveys* the 'surveyable representation' given above. As a guidance, let us identify explicit and sequential steps to follow, all of which have been already given above. (1) Wittgenstein's remark in Preface. (2) The same remark in §4.003. (3) The *context* of this remark in §4.003: §§4-4.5, where we have the formulation of a particular account of sense, propositions and language, as indicated above. (3.1) Wittgenstein's footnote to the very first proposition of the book: "The propositions *n*.1, *n*.2, *n*.3, etc. are *comments on* proposition no. *n*; the propositions *n.m*1, *n.m2*, etc. are *comments on* proposition no. *n.m*; and so on." (§1; emphases on the expression "comments on" added).)

This, therefore, gives us a further consideration. Wittgenstein judges *these* two things as *nonsensical*: first, in the Preface and §4.003, the problems and propositions of philosophy (other philosophers), and second, in §6.54, the propositions of the *TLP* themselves (himself). Therefore, *if* we can show

Wittgenstein's ground in *one* case, then it will also apply to the other[135]. And we *did* show what Wittgenstein's ground is in *each* case, *and independently of the other*. For this reason, the preceding 'argument' is *indeed* quite strong.

Let us summarize what we have so far done in this application in general terms. We identified a particular notion regarding the *TLP*, rejection of which is essential to the resolute reading. We then *looked closely* at the original text, and made a few basic observations about *certain textual facts* about which there is no room for disagreement, i.e. which are *certainly true*. Since these simple undeniable facts prove the truth of the notion in question, we conclude that the resolute reading is certainly false, thus *has to* come to an end. (This last claim, we may say, embodies a 'logically necessary truth': namely, if a reading is false, then it must be ended — given the context. The context is defined by the fact that we are trying to understand *what the author himself is in fact saying* when we are reading the book or putting forward a 'reading' of it. This basically means: if we are searching for truth, then we must drop what we know to be a falsity. — That is a *logical* necessity.)

But we are not going to stop here: in order to leave no room for the possibility of doubt and disagreement, we will focus on the other possible grounds for the resolute reading. Recall that the main one was Wittgenstein's remark in §6.54 that his propositions in the book are nonsensical. However, in those propositions themselves he develops (apparently) certain philosophical views ('theories') of the essence of language. How can he do this by means of nonsensical propositions? This consideration, as we saw above, leads the resolute reading to reject the very notion that Wittgenstein develops any genuine philosophical 'doctrines' in the book,

[135] It would simply be absurd to suppose that Wittgenstein appeals to two distinct grounds in the two cases — unless, of course, we are somehow told some convincing story that renders meaningful this apparent absurdity.

including and most importantly the picture 'theory' of sense and propositions. We proved the falsity of this rejection. However, let us ask: what other grounds does the resolute reading have other than that consideration? We will attack this question next. And when we do this, we will show the other component of the Tractarian 'theory' of the essence of language (other than the 'picture theory' of sense): namely, the notion that the 'logic of language' ('logical form') *cannot* be expressed by means of propositions, hence the idea of the ineffable 'it'. Our description of the *TLP* view will be *completed* once we explain this second component.

## 7.5 Presumed 'radically anti-doctrinal character' of the *TLP*: Circularity in Conant and Diamond (2004)'s reasoning

Conant and Diamond (2004) speak of the 'radically anti-doctrinal character' of the *TLP* (p. 85). And proper acknowledgement thereof is supposed to be peculiarly 'resolute'. This, again, is ultimately based on the fundamental consideration that underlies the resolute reading (identified above): namely, the fact that its author tells us at the end (§6.54) that *his propositions are nonsensical*. (Below, we will discuss the *specific* basis they provide for this 'radically anti-doctrinal character'.) If we take *this* pronouncement seriously ('resolutely'), the resoluter reasons (and reasonably indeed), then how can we attribute any philosophical 'doctrines' or 'theories' to the *TLP*? This is in fact a very important question. For it is quite puzzling to think that young Wittgenstein both (1) formulates certain 'theories' about the essence of language (thinking, the world, etc., about *anything* indeed) in the propositions of the book, and *at the same time* (2) says that these same propositions are nonsensical. But then the resolute reading, as we observed in §7.3, must somehow make sense of the *fact* that in those propositions the author at least does *seem* to be developing such

'theories': most importantly, the 'general propositional form' ("This is how things stand"; §4.5) which is supposed to capture (constitute) the fundamental essence of language (and even of the world as a whole), and its counterpart 'picture theory of sense'[136]. The resolute reading attempts to explain this by making a distinction between the 'body' and the 'frame' of the text:

> We have, in our writings, stressed the importance of our being able, as readers, to distinguish certain remarks (such as the Preface and the concluding sections) that serve to 'frame' the work as a whole (and hence the activity of clarification practiced by the author in the work) from the remarks in the 'body' of the work that serve to exemplify that activity (and hence furnish the reader with a ladder that she is meant to climb and, eventually, throw away). (Conant and Diamond, 2004, p. 68)

So what *appears* to be philosophical 'doctrines' or 'theories' in the *TLP*, in the 'body' of its text, are in fact *not* genuine views Wittgenstein develops and endorses: they are not *meant* as genuine 'theories'. Those "apparently metaphysical sentences" within which philosophical 'theories' seem to be formulated are used "only ironically", waiting to be eventually "canceled", to be "disposed of by the sentences which frame the book, in the Preface and the final remarks"[137] (p. 82). In the 'frame' of the text, "Wittgenstein provides us with instructions for how to read what we find in the *body* of the text" (Conant, 1991, p. 159). What we find in the 'body' is of course philosophical 'theories' which are in fact not endorsed, but 'exploded from within' through the 'activity of elucidation/clarification' (p. 159):

> To read the work correctly we need to hold on to something and throw something away. What we hold on to is the frame of the text—the text's instructions for how to read it and when to throw it away. What we "eventually" throw away is the body of the text—its mock doctrine. (pp. 159-60)

[136] In fact, as we previously noted, we may even say that these two are essentially the same, or the two sides of the same coin.

[137] But, of course, the resolute reader makes frequent use of certain passages from within what was said to be the 'body' of the text, as we will see. These are peculiar passages, they say, as we should treat them as something more than mere nonsense. That is essential to the resolute reading: resolutely seeing the propositions of the book as simply nonsensical. (But not all: there are those peculiar propositions within the text.)

So what appears to be philosophical 'theories' the author of the *TLP* explicitly develops in the propositions of the book, the resolute reading holds, are in fact 'mock doctrines'. Regarding the question why then the author formulates 'mock doctrines' (posing to endorse them) although he does not actually endorse them, the resolute answer is: he explodes them from within, does the work of 'clarification/elucidation' on them.

However, there is a difficulty to deal with for this way of seeing the *TLP*: namely, the fact that Wittgenstein in his later writings explicitly says (and on multiple occasions) that in the *TLP* he *did* endorse certain metaphysical views or philosophical 'theories' (about the nature of language, in particular). The explanation that Conant and Diamond (2004) give in order to overcome this difficulty is the following. Those *explicit* (directly visible) 'theories', which Wittgenstein *apparently* endorses in the 'body' of the text, are *not* the ones that he *does in fact* endorse. So they hold that "what he later regards and criticizes as the central philosophical doctrines of the *Tractatus*" are not those apparent 'doctrines':

> …if one fails to appreciate the extent to which (what he later regards and criticizes as) the central philosophical doctrines of the *Tractatus* were of such a sort that they were able to appear to its author, at the time of writing, not to be 'philosophical doctrines' at all: they were able to appear utterly innocuous and altogether innocent of metaphysical commitment. If we fail to appreciate this about the *Tractatus* – if we fail to understand *the radically anti-doctrinal character of the author's undertaking in that book* – and look instead for explicit doctrines of the sort we would look for in other books, then most of what we will readily identify as its central doctrines are ones that serve as the central targets of the early (as well as the later) work; and they will turn out to be couched in the very propositions that are earmarked as the ones we must overcome if we are to understand the author of the work. (Conant and Diamond, 2004, p. 85; emphasis added)

It is quite remarkable that these authors think that what Wittgenstein later criticizes as the 'doctrines' held in the *TLP* are *not* those that are explicitly formulated in the propositions of the book. For it is quite obvious that the most fundamental 'doctrine'

of the whole of the *TLP* is the 'general propositional form' — which is quite *explicitly formulated* and quite *explicitly meant* to capture the fundamental essence of language. (We proved this above in §1.4.2.1.) But we will leave this aside for now, because our primary concern in the present context is with the presumed 'radically anti-doctrinal character' of the *TLP*, which is essential to the resolute reading, or at least Conant and Diamond (2004)'s version of it. We will therefore ask: *where exactly* is the justification for this presumed 'radically anti-doctrinal character' of the book?

### 7.5.1 Proof: Circularity in purported justification for 'the radically anti-doctrinal character' of the *TLP* (§4.112)

Conant and Diamond (2004) explain it (and give reference) in the very first sentence of their paper as follows:

> Wittgenstein gives voice to an aspiration that is central to his later philosophy, well before he becomes later Wittgenstein, when he writes in §4.112 of the *Tractatus* that philosophy is not a matter of putting forward a doctrine or a theory, but consists rather in the practice of an activity – an activity he goes on to characterize as one of elucidation or clarification – an activity which he says does not result in *philosophische Sätze*, in propositions of philosophy, but rather in *das Klarwerden von Sätzen*, in our attaining clarity in our relation to the sentences of our language that we call upon to express our thoughts. (p. 46)

So what they refer to as "the radically anti-doctrinal character" of the *TLP* (Conant and Diamond, 2004, p. 85) is supposed to be found in what Wittgenstein says in §4.112. Let us therefore "look at what really happens [there] *in detail*, as it were from close up" (*PI* §51):

> Philosophy aims at logical clarification of thoughts.
> Philosophy is not a body of doctrine but an activity.
> A philosophical work consists essentially of elucidations.
> Philosophy does not result in 'philosophical propositions', but rather in the clarification of propositions.

> Without philosophy thoughts are, as it were, cloudy and indistinct: its task is to make them clear and give them sharp boundaries. (*TLP* §4.112)

But *this* much is certain: that remark *by itself* does and can provide *no* support whatever for the supposition of an 'anti-doctrinal character' (in the sense, of course, this expression is used by the authors, which is explained in the following sentence). That is, by itself it says *nothing whatever* about whether Wittgenstein *in fact* formulates genuine philosophical views in his propositions, i.e. whether he *intends* (endorses) those *apparent* philosophical 'doctrines' (which he explicitly develops in the 'body' of the book). To think otherwise, as Conant and Diamond (2004, p. 83ff) apparently do, is to reason in a *circle*. (Here is the proof.) For *if* Wittgenstein *did* really *endorse* those apparent 'doctrines', he must *not* have *conceived* them *as* doctrines (given his remark in §4.112). Therefore, to assume that he conceived *them as* doctrines is to assume that he did *not* endorse them. But *that* is precisely what is in question: namely, whether he *in fact* endorsed them. And it is perfectly conceivable and possible that Wittgenstein *endorsed* those apparent 'doctrines' — but only *not as doctrines*.

### 7.5.2 Proof from *Zettel*: Wittgenstein *did endorse* those 'doctrines' but only *not as* doctrines

Indeed, thankfully, it is certain that Wittgenstein in the *TLP* did *not* conceive them *as* doctrines or theories, as clearly shown by the following passage from Wittgenstein's *Zettel*, which Conant and Diamond (2004, p. 84ff) themselves quote — quite oddly — in (purported) support of their view:

> We now have a theory, a 'dynamic theory' of propositions; of language, but it does not present itself to us as a theory. For it is the characteristic thing about such a theory that it looks at a special clearly intuitive case and says: 'That shews how things are in every case; this case is the exemplar of all cases.' — 'Of course! It has to be like that,' we say, and are satisfied. We have arrived

> at a form of expression that strikes us as obvious. But it is as if we had now seen something lying beneath the surface. (*Zettel*, §444)

This shows that Wittgenstein did *not* conceive as 'doctrines' (or 'theories') those philosophical views which are developed in the propositions of the *TLP*. But it also indicates that Wittgenstein *did endorse* those views. For if he had not, that is, if he had intended them as 'mock doctrines', as the resoluter suggests, then he would not later, in the passage quoted from the *Zettel*, admit that what he had *was* in fact a *theory*. (This 'dynamic theory' of propositions and language is of course the general propositional form and the picture theory of sense.)

### 7.5.3 The *Context* of §4.112: From purported justification to a devastating end

Where, then, is the justification for the ('resolute') supposition of the 'anti-doctrinal character' of the *TLP*? For as we just saw, Wittgenstein's remark in §4.112 that philosophy "aims at the logical clarification of thoughts" and is "not a body of doctrine" by itself does not provide any. Now, this section (i.e. §4.112) not only does not provide any justification for the presumed 'radically anti-doctrinal character': in fact, odd as this may sound, it *by itself falsifies* this resolute presumption. Here is the proof: this section is a comment on §4.11, which in turn comments on §4.1. (See Wittgenstein's footnote to §1.) In §4.1, Wittgenstein says: "Propositions represent the existence and non-existence of states of affairs"; and in §4.11: "The totality of true propositions is the whole of natural science". The former expresses just the account ('theory', 'doctrine') of sense and propositions Wittgenstein develops in this region of the book, which gives precisely the result Wittgenstein describes in §4.11 (as well as in §6.53, as we saw above). Now, §4.112 — in which we have Wittgenstein's remark about logical clarification and doctrines — comments precisely (and immediately) on these two sections (i.e. on §4.11, and therefore, on

§4.1). (Below we will also see Wittgenstein's comment in §4.1121 on §4.112 and its essential significance.) This deprives the resolute reader absolutely of the very tool to which he all too easily appeals when someone points out something in the book that apparently falsifies his view: he proceeds by regarding as not nonsensical only those propositions of the book to which he refers in order to 'justify' his view (see, for example, Conant, 2002, footnote 135). But we now forced him — logically, if you will — to a devastating dead-end: either he must recognize the proposition he makes use of (§4.112) as nonsensical, or else he must recognize the proposition(s) *on* which the former is a *comment* as not nonsensical (§4.1, §4.11). And either of these two options falsifies his ground(s)[138].

## 7.6 Resolute confusion 'about' §6.53 and the method of the *TLP*: Confusing the psychological for the logical — the very *risk* its author anticipates from his *method* in his 'philosophy of logic' (§4.1121)

### 7.6.1 Preliminaries on §6.53

Recall that our original proof was based on §6.53 of the *TLP*: in particular, the fact that the author *there* equates 'what can be said' with 'propositions of natural science'. We said that this proved the falsity of the resolute reading because it makes clear the ground of the author's pronouncement in the next section (in §6.54) that his propositions are nonsensical: namely, the account of sense and propositions ('picture

[138] But what if he responds by saying that §4.111 is not nonsensical but only §4.1 and §4.11 — on which it comments — are? Well, that would be his problem. The resoluter makes things easy for himself by ignoring the context of the passages to which he refers in order to justify his claims, of which the case we just discussed is an instance. Another (albeit related) resolute way of making things too easy for oneself is resolutely ignoring the related passages *elsewhere* that contradict his reading of the original passage to which he refers for his purposes. An instance of this in the present connection is §6.13: "Logic is not a body of doctrine [which the resoluter likes], but a mirror-image of the world [which the resoluter does not like]. Logic is transcendental." The resolute reader may (and does) refer to the first half of the sentence on the basis of the presumed 'radically anti-doctrinal character' of the book, via §4.112, but ignores the other half.

theory') on which *only* natural scientific propositions have sense because they are 'pictures of facts/states of affairs' — i.e. the very account the author develops in the propositions of the book (which he says are nonsensical, nonetheless). This section (§6.53) is therefore of *utmost* significance — and also *especially* for the resolute reading, which is a very important fact, because it belongs to what they call the 'frame' of the text. As we saw, the frame is essential, cannot be dismissed as being 'simply nonsensical'[139]: quite the contrary, in this reading, it gives us instructions about the method of the book and how to read it, how to understand what is being done and (why) in the 'body' of the text. Thus §6.53 is essential to the resolute reading. But then we now have a quite curious situation because *this same section*, as we demonstrated above, *falsifies* the resolute reading *with absolute certainty*. Consequently, this paradox must be resolved: either *we* are extremely confused in our considerations ('proofs' we have been calling them), or *they* are extremely confused in their 'reading' — *of* §6.53. So we must, once again, closely examine what exactly is going on here, and how the resolute reading deals with §6.53.

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[139] By this I do not of course mean that they dismiss the propositions of the 'body' out of hand. Rather: they say that we *eventually* will have to dismiss them as nonsensical. The process of coming to acknowledge the nonsensicality of the propositions is the Tractarian 'activity of clarification/elucidation' (as they understand these things) which is the method of the book. The 'frame' in their reading tells us about how to understand what is being done in the 'body', the method employed and the aim of this undertaking. So in a certain sense, the 'body' is important too. Although this is true, it is also certainly true that it is *too much* for the authors to say:

> …we cannot get a handle on what a remark such as §6.54 says apart from a detailed understanding of much that happens along the way in the book (such as an understanding of what the book seeks to show us along the way about nonsense and the exemplifications of the practice of elucidation it thereby affords). We must interpret a remark such as §6.54 in the light of what we find in the body of the book; and vice versa. These two forms of understanding must come with each other or not at all. (Conant and Diamond, 2004, p. 68).

It makes sense to say that, since in this reading the 'body' is where the *application* takes place of the method of 'elucidation' formulated in the 'frame', a proper understanding of the 'frame' will partly consists in understanding what is being *done* in the 'body' — *not* what is being *said*, because *nothing*, in this reading, is being said *there*. However, it is incorrect for the authors to say that "[t]hese two forms of understanding must come with each other or not at all": for the 'frame' in their reading is logically primary, essential, since without 'it' *everything in the book would be nonsensical through and through*. What makes the 'body' that is simply nonsensical have *any significance* is not the sense the propositions in it express (for there is no such thing): rather, it is only the *activity* (of 'elucidation') that is being done through them. But this activity has *any* significance *only* because it is an application of what is given in the 'frame'.

In this way, we will also better understand how they conceive the *method* of the *TLP*. They spoke about the 'radically anti-doctrinal character' of the *TLP*, recall, basing this on §4.112 where Wittgenstein says that philosophy is 'not a body of doctrine' but an 'activity of clarification'. And so, we proved (in §7.5 above) that this remark in §4.112 does *not* provide any grounds for such 'radically anti-doctrinal character' (and *also* that its context, the proposition on which it *comments*, once again gives us the 'picture theory of sense', thus falsifies the resolute reading). But we have not yet discussed the other notion we find in §4.112: namely, 'activity of logical clarification'. And this notion is essential to Conant and Diamond (2004)'s reading of the *TLP* (in particular its method). They describe *at length* what they take to be the Tractarian 'activity of elucidation/clarification', and *then* come to say the following: "In case it is not apparent, it should be noted that our discussion so far has been guided in part by a reading of *Tractatus* §6.53." (p. 76). (So §6.53 is *that* important to their reading.) They base their understanding of the method of the *TLP* ('logical clarification') on this section. Let us therefore take a *close look* at §6.53 and their reading of it, which will also help us understand how the resolute readers conceive the activity of 'logical clarification'[140] (which is the method of the *TLP*) to which we will be able to turn after getting clear about the point of §6.53.

### 7.6.2 The 'only strictly correct' method in philosophy: §6.53

Just to be *clear*, let me quote the relevant section *in full*:

> The correct method in philosophy would really be the following: to say nothing except *what can be said—i.e. propositions of natural science—i.e. something that has nothing to do with philosophy*—and then, whenever someone else wanted to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate to him that he had failed to give a meaning to certain signs in his propositions. Although it would not be satisfying to the other person—he would not have

[140] See §7.6.3 on what 'logical clarification' or 'elucidation' consists in, which is the 'clarification of propositions' Wittgenstein mentions in the *TLP* §4.112 (quoted above in §7.5.1).

> the feeling that we were teaching him philosophy—*this* method would be the only strictly correct one. (§6.53; my emphases, except for the one on the word "this")

Quite clearly, as we emphasized above, Wittgenstein is here saying that *only* the 'propositions of natural science' make *sense*. So how *can* the resolute reading possibly accommodate *this* fact? We were told, by that reading, that Wittgenstein does *not* genuinely endorse any philosophical account of sense — but what would indicate commitment to a *particular* account of sense more than *that* fact? Conant and Diamond (2004) must, therefore, have (apparently) failed to notice the expression 'what can be said—i.e. propositions of natural science' which I italicized right above in my *full* quote of §6.53. But it seems that this should not be possible, since the authors discuss that section at some length (more than two pages). So perhaps, one might reasonably suspect, it is not that they did not notice it (that expression); but they should have dealt with it somehow — for example, by giving (and of course defending, hopefully) a particular reading of that section (§6.53). Now, hard as some might find believing, the authors do indeed offer a reading of §6.53, but they — quite remarkably — not only do not deal with the expression in question: they do not even *mention* it. Furthermore, they do not even *quote* the section in the body of their text; only in a footnote do they quote the first half of it (see footnote 63, pp. 94-5) — yet, oddly enough (indeed more than enough, i.e. too oddly), *omit* the expression in question[141].

In their 'reading' of §6.53, Conant and Diamond (2004) commit the simple mistake of (misunderstanding what Wittgenstein is saying there by) thinking that he is talking about the method he has been following (or striving to follow, or even

[141] And now: what significance does *this* fact have? — —

(I am assuming, obviously, that in a piece of philosophical writing, we have the right to ask the reader a question — just as the reader has every right to ask the author questions. I would like, that is, the reader to ask himself *that* question.)

looking up to) in the book[142]. But it is certain that Wittgenstein is talking about a method that is not only not the one embraced by the *TLP*, but one that is *fundamentally different* from its method[143]. For what distinguishes them is *employment of nonsense*; and Wittgenstein acknowledges his method as *not* being correct ('strictly') precisely because it employs nonsense. Conant and Diamond (2004) remarkably fail to see this, and confusedly (and confusingly) take this passage to describe the method of the *TLP*. The confusion is indeed of a (quite) considerable degree, because what is *characteristic* (definitive) of this 'strictly correct method' is precisely its *not* employing nonsense, whereas the essential feature of Conant and Diamond (2004)'s method of 'clarification' — which is supposed to be the method of the *TLP* which the author (supposedly) describes in §6.53 — is *exactly the opposite*, i.e. employment of nonsense. For, after all, that is the story they tell us about what the author of the *TLP* is trying to do through those nonsensical

[142] However, they also say in footnote 65 (p. 95): "We do not hereby mean to claim that the *Tractatus* itself adheres to (what §6.53 calls) 'the only strictly correct method' in philosophy. For further discussion, see Conant 2002, note 131." Conant (2002, footnote 131, p. 456):

> 'The only strictly correct method' of philosophy described in §6.53 is quite different from the one actually practiced in the *Tractatus.* The practitioner of the strictly correct method eschews nonsense, confining himself to displaying what can be said and to pointing out where the other has failed to give a meaning to one of his signs; whereas the elucidatory method of the *Tractatus* involves the production of vast quantities of nonsense. The former method depends on the elucidator always being able to speak second; the latter attempts to achieve the aims of the former but in a situation in which the interlocutor is not present. The actual method of the *Tractatus* is thus a literary surrogate for the strictly correct method—one in which the text invites the reader alternately to adopt the roles played by each of the parties to the dialogue in the strictly correct method.

The fact that they also say *this* — in a footnote — is quite puzzling: for they are in the *body* of their texts obviously reading §6.53 otherwise — that is, in a way that sees *close* connections with the method described there and the method actually practiced in the book.

[143] The odd thing is: even if Wittgenstein (somehow) *had* described the method of the *TLP* in §6.53, which of course is not even *possible* as we show in the text, this would not change anything because, as we will see, the method described in §6.53 is *not a philosophical method at all*. So the author would then be saying: I have not only not followed a strictly *correct* philosophical method in the book, I have not followed *any* philosophical method at all (let alone a correct one). — But young Wittgenstein of course thinks he has indeed followed a *philosophical* method (though not strictly correct, because such a method is not possible at all).

propositions of his book. (This confusion about §6.53[144] is not peculiar to the article in question; it is present throughout at least Conant's resolute reading. See, e.g., Conant, 2002, pp. 413, 423, 452 [footnote 112], 456 [footnote 131].)

What is *even* more remarkable is the fact that this 'only strictly correct method in philosophy' is *not a philosophical method at all*, which actually is the whole point of Wittgenstein's remark in §6.53: there is *no* possible ('strictly correct') method in philosophy (hence the *end* of philosophy, as we will further explain below). The reason why it is *not* a method in philosophy *at all* is simple: because what it does is "to say nothing except what can be said, i.e. propositions of natural science—i.e. something that has nothing to do with philosophy…" (§6.53). But what about the rest of Wittgenstein's description of this pseudo-method in logic? Let us see: "…and then, whenever someone else wanted to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate to him that he had failed to give a meaning to certain signs in his propositions" (§6.53). So perhaps *this* part has something to do with philosophy (so that the method he describes *can* be considered a method that is really philosophical)? No: this way of 'demonstrating to someone that he had failed to give a meaning to certain signs in his propositions' is *not at all logical*, according to the author of the *TLP*, but *merely psychological* (as we will show below). But Conant and Diamond (2004) think that this describes the Tractarian method of 'logical clarification', thus makes precisely the mistake of confusing the psychological for the logical which Wittgenstein explicitly warns against in §4.1121 which directly comments on §4.112 where we have the remark about 'logical clarification' — the

[144] It is, on the other hand, quite remarkable that the resolute reader also attempts to acknowledge that although the author of the *TLP aims* to practice this 'strictly correct method' mentioned in §6.53, he *fails* to do this properly. They apparently think they can explain away the essential difference (just noted in the text) between this 'strictly correct method' (employ only sense) and the one actually practiced (employ nonsense), according to their reading.

very remark Conant and Diamond (2004) base their reading upon (together with §6.53). We will explain all this in detail below: we will prove that and why this *is* a confusion (of the psychological for the logical according to the author of the *TLP*), show what exactly is logical according to the author of the *TLP*. But let us first complete our reading of §6.53 and observe its implications (which will also tie our discussion in the present chapter to the preceding chapters).

#### 7.6.2.1 Methodological impasse and the end of philosophy

The whole point of §6.53 is that there can be *no* correct method in philosophy. What does this mean? This means that philosophy has to come to an *end*. Now, it should not be overlooked that, as we already noted, Wittgenstein here acknowledges his employment of *nonsense* as a *defect* in his method. For this, we now see, is not something peculiar to *his* method, but to *any* possible method. For the 'only correct method' (Wittgenstein says in §6.53) "has nothing to do with philosophy" — i.e. with logic, since it is purely psychological[145] — and is therefore *no* method at all. Why is this the case? Because the 'only strictly correct method' has to employ propositions that have sense ("what can be said"), but only the propositions of natural science have sense, i.e. "something that has nothing to do with philosophy" (§6.53). (Recall: Wittgenstein equates 'what can be said' with 'propositions of natural science'.) And it is exactly *this* that brings forth the whole point of §6.53: namely, *there can be no correct method in philosophy*. This methodological conclusion is essential to understanding the point of §6.54 (where the author says that his propositions are nonsensical and must be thrown away), and indeed, to understanding the *TLP* as a whole, that is, to understanding its author: for its author

[145] Any particular person failing to attach a meaning to his signs and showing this to the person: these are *merely* psychological, according to the author, have *nothing* to do with logic, as we will see below.

*wants* to put an end to philosophy (cf. Preface). Impossibility of a correct method which the author professes in §6.53 is therefore in fact a *happy* result for him. Hence we have his remark in §6.54 that if we understand *him*, we will recognize his propositions as nonsensical and *throw them away*. Now, the essential point here is that this recognition brought about (hopefully) by the book does not only concern the book itself. On the contrary, it concerns *all* philosophy. The author, to repeat, wants to put an end to philosophy. He tells us — in the Preface — that he believes himself (in or by means of the book) "to have found, on all essential points, the final solutions of the problems" of philosophy — and 'unassailably' and 'definitively', indeed. This means that he believes himself to have put an end to philosophy. Therefore, 'throwing away the ladder' which the author points out at the end of the book (§6.54) essentially means throwing away philosophy — altogether. That we should also throw away the book itself, which is what the author says in §6.54, is only a part of that great throwing-away. This is continuation of the point of §6.53 which we have been discussing: that is, the unsparing methodological conclusion which signifies the inevitable end — impossibility — of philosophy.

#### 7.6.2.2 Tractarian 'resolution': Necessary insurmountability of the methodological impasse

What this means is that the author of the *TLP* takes himself to have shown that the methodological impasse is *necessarily insurmountable* (see Chapter 6). The author in §6.53 does not merely acknowledge *his* employment of nonsense as a defect in *his* method. He acknowledges employment of nonsense as a *necessary* defect in any possible method in philosophy, for (he professes there) the only possible method free from defect ('the only correct method') is *no* (philosophical) method *at all*. We can

thus see that the author not only does not regard this (methodological failure) as a *shortcoming* of his work: he considers as its main *achievement* its (purportedly) showing that the methodological impasse is necessarily insurmountable. (Though the author nonetheless considers this achievement quite small: "it [the book] shows how little is achieved when these problems are solved" (Preface).)

### 7.6.3 'Logical clarification' as the method of the *TLP*: Sublimation of logic and 'das Klarwerden von Sätzen'

Although this seems to be an unfortunate result for the science of logic, what leads to it (in the *TLP*) is in fact nothing other than its special status, its *sublimity*, to use Wittgenstein's term in the *PI* (§89), which is essentially connected with sublimation of the logic of language and sense (§38, §94; see Chapter 2). To see this, let us begin by considering young Wittgenstein's *criterion* for the incorrectness of a method in logic: it is employment of nonsense (§6.53). Wittgenstein acknowledges his method as incorrect because he says nonsensical things. Accordingly, and more importantly, he thinks that *any possible method* is (bound to be) incorrect because it *necessarily* employs nonsense. Let us therefore pose the question: *why* does a method in philosophy necessarily employ nonsense? This takes us to the subject matter of philosophy (of logic). Its subject matter is the 'logic of language'. But what is it about the logic of language that makes it the case that a logician must say only nonsensical things when he attempts to investigate it, i.e. the logic of language? The Tractarian answer to this question is that *we cannot say anything about the logic of language by means of language* (§6.124). Now, this answer depends on various Tractarian notions, in particular and especially, the 'sublimation' of logic and sense, on the one hand, and the picture-theory of propositions, on the other. The former (i.e.

Tractarian sublimation) begins with a strict distinction between the logical and psychological domains. And while everything in the logical domain is of 'purest crystal' (the Tractarian rigid logical space of possible propositions, facts; see *PI* §97), every imperfection (mistake, vagueness, nonsensicality) is merely psychological (*PI* §§98-103). Of particular interest to us in the present context is the following consequence this (sublimation of logic and sense) has: nonsensicality has nothing to do with propositions themselves (since every possible proposition *already* has a sense; *TLP* §4.064), but only with *our view of* propositions. In this view, it simply makes *no* sense to speak of the 'nonsensicality of a proposition'. And the only possible way to employ the notion of nonsensicality *in relation to a proposition* — not the 'propositional sign' which is what can be perceived by the senses, but the proposition *itself* which already has sense — is by means of a case of *illusion of nonsense*: for, since the proposition *already* has sense, the only room for nonsensicality lies *in our minds*, our view of *that* proposition. (Although, of course, 'we' as situated in *that* perspective would likely not be 'aware' of the 'presence' of the proposition.) *We* — speaking at present from a god's point of view, so to say — see the proposition with a sense in 'logical space', on the one hand, and the deluded view in the psychological sphere, on the other (of someone situated in the human perspective). That is the whole point of Wittgenstein's (misleading; see below) remark in §5.4733 of the *TLP*: "Frege says that any legitimately constructed proposition must have a sense. And I say that any possible proposition is legitimately constructed, and, if *it* has no sense, that can only be because we have failed to give a meaning to some of its constituents." (emphasis on the word "it" added). This 'arbitrary determination' of meaning is merely psychological and has nothing to do with the proposition, with its sense — with 'the symbol in itself' (*TLP* §5.473). The

proposition with a sense is already there (in the rigid logical space; *TLP* §§3.4-3.42, 4.064); our assigning meaning to signs can only serve to, as it were, lock our minds onto propositions. But the essential point is this: even when it is successful (that is, where there is a sense which we grasp), *this* has nothing to do with logic. That the propositions *themselves* are *already there* and crystal clear — this is what matters for logic. (And that is the whole point of Wittgenstein's remark in §5.47 of the *TLP*: "Logic must look after itself...In a certain sense, we cannot make mistakes in logic.") And it is precisely this which Wittgenstein is trying to emphasize when he suggests the following as a translation of the expression "das Klarwerden von Sätzen" (instead of 'the clarification of propositions', of which he disapproves) which belongs to §4.112 where the author is talking about method in philosophy ('elucidation', 'logical clarification'; quoted above in §7.5.1): "the propositions *now have become clear* that they ARE clear" (quoted in Conant, 2002, pp. 416-7). Conant (2002) is certainly right that this makes it *certain* that it is not the case that "elucidation renders what is logically cloudy and indistinct precise and sharp" (p. 416). But he is certainly wrong to say this:

> …the transition from unclarity to clarity (i.e., the kind of Klarwerden) that is at issue here is not one that is effected through a transformation in the logical character of *the propositions* of ordinary language, but rather through a transformation in the view that *we* command of their logical character. What is cloudy and indistinct—and is rendered transparent with the assistance of a logical syntax—is our view of the logical structure that is present in the proposition all along. (417)

Although the first claim here is true, the second is certainly false. Although it is true that since *propositions themselves* are already clear, "clarification *of propositions*" can only mean clarification of *our view* of propositions, *that* is merely psychological clarification, and cannot be *logical* clarification (what Wittgenstein means by 'das Klarwerden von Sätzen', by 'logical clarification' — which recall is another

expression which Wittgenstein uses in his description — in §4.112). For the very same reason — that is, since *propositions themselves are already clear* — 'das Klarwerden von Sätzen' (in the *logical* sense) can only mean the clarification that *propositions themselves are already clear*. And *this* is exactly the point of Wittgenstein's suggestion of that expression *instead of* 'clarification of proposition' (from §4.112): "the propositions now have become clear that they ARE clear" (see above). Wittgenstein's concern in this suggestion is essentially about the sublimation of logic and sense: he wants to make sure that everything in logic is *already* perfect (crystalline, rigid, rigorous, etc.) sublimating the logical by strictly separating it from the psychological and placing every (possible) imperfection in the latter. (§5.473: "Logic must look after itself...In a certain sense, we cannot make mistakes in logic." §5.4731: "Self-evidence, which Russell talked about so much, can become dispensable in logic, only because language itself prevents every logical mistake.—What makes logic a priori is the *impossibility* of illogical thought.") We see *exactly the same concern* expressed in the section (§4.1121) in which Wittgenstein *comments on* the section currently in focus (§4.112):

> Does not my study of sign-language correspond to the study of thought-processes, which philosophers used to consider so essential to the philosophy of logic? Only in most cases they got entangled in unessential psychological investigations, and with my method too there is an analogous risk. (§4.1121)

It would therefore be just to 'get entangled in unessential psychological investigations' (according to the author of the *TLP*) if we (failing to acknowledge the sublime, transcendent nature of logic) think that 'logical clarification' ('das Klarwerden von Sätzen': 'clarification of propositions') has *anything* to do with clarification of *our view of* propositions — that is with 'unessential psychological investigations' which involve examination of determination of meaning (which is arbitrary), and a peculiarly instructive instance of which is the method Wittgenstein

describes in §6.53 to which he refers (there) as 'the would-be only correct method in philosophy'. (See our discussion above. We will return to that section, §6.53, below.) The resolute reader is in just *this* confusion, which leads to a very fundamental misunderstanding of the whole sense (point) and the method of the book: the resolute reader imagines what *cannot* possibly be a method *in logic* according to the author of the *TLP* as the method *he himself* employs (is at least striving to employ) in the *TLP*! But this is not at all to say that it is *unbelievable*; on the contrary, however fundamental, Wittgenstein actually *anticipates* just this mistake in his comment (§4.1121; quoted above) on the section in which he talks about method in logic, philosophy being an 'activity' of 'elucidation', aiming at 'logical clarification of thoughts', of 'propositions', etc. (§4.112). (I should nonetheless lay down the qualification 'not unbelievable to Wittgenstein', since — to be honest — that cannot be said, in my opinion, to not be a very big mistake (let alone be foreseeable). Wittgenstein's anticipation, I submit, may — in any event, the realization of that anticipation most certainly does (as in Conant's case) — have something to do with the misleading inaccuracy (occurs twice) in the way Wittgenstein expresses his point in the crucial §§5.473-3:

> The proposition is nonsensical because we have failed to make an arbitrary determination, and not because the symbol, in itself, would be illegitimate. (§5.473)
> And I say that any possible proposition is legitimately constructed, and, if it has no sense, that can only be because we have failed to give a meaning to some of its constituents. (§5.4733)

This is inaccurate because, since in the Tractarian view 'a proposition already has sense' — given sublimation of logic — it makes no sense to speak *of* a proposition being nonsensical. Indeed, this is exactly the point Wittgenstein is guarding in these sections. Yet the way he speaks makes reference to the 'nonsensicality of a proposition': e.g., "The proposition is nonsensical because...") Wittgenstein

expresses his anticipation, his worry, by pointing out that there is an 'analogous risk' with his 'method' in the 'philosophy of logic': to wit, of mistaking 'unessential psychological investigations' (of 'thought-processes') for *logical* clarification. As much as it is an expression of Wittgenstein's thought *about* his reader, this is also — and essentially, and by being an expression of such a thought — something Wittgenstein is saying *to* his reader. That is to say, Wittgenstein is here (in his comment in §4.1121) warning the reader about how he should (not) read (conceive) the logical clarification that (perhaps more strictly, which) is in question in §4.112 where Wittgenstein is talking about method in logic. More specifically, he is saying that the reader may potentially confuse the psychological for the logical in relation to 'elucidation', 'clarification' — in relation to the method of the Tractarian logical inquiry, that is — and therefore must not make this mistake: say, by keeping in mind that the author sees the possibility of such a mistake — or, to be precise, by noticing the *fact* that *that* possibility is *in fact* a *mistake*. The resoluter makes this fatal mistake.

Now, this is equally a warning (also) about how the reader should read the concluding (last three) sections of the book (albeit indirectly), for in those crucial sections the author is specifically talking about both of these methods (logical clarification and psychological clarification), and in such a (comparative) way that a closer look at those sections is of much help in regard to understanding the method and sense of the book as a whole, which we partly took above. The following discussion of the concluding sections of the *TLP* will explicate the preceding considerations, especially those pertaining to 'logical clarification' via §§4.112-2, 5.473-3, and be in turn explicated by them.

7.6.3.1 Explication: Im-possibility of philosophy, the logical and the psychological

In §6.53, the author identifies the method of *psychological* clarification involving examination of determination of *meaning* of signs (as regards particular persons' particular uses of signs) as the *only possible* 'correct method in logic'. The criterion for correctness here is employment of sense (and not nonsense). But 'what can be said' in language (i.e. what makes sense) — 'i.e. propositions of natural science' — 'has nothing to do with philosophy' (§6.53). Therefore, the employment of sense (by this purported 'logical' method) does *not* belong to logic. This, consequently, cannot be said to be a method in logic *at all*. We cannot do proper philosophy by saying things that make sense (since only natural scientific propositions are such things, but *they* 'have nothing to do with philosophy'). Bur what about nonsense? Can we employ nonsense according to the author of the *TLP* as a means of doing philosophy — as the resolute readers suggest? As we saw above, nonsensicality has nothing to do with logic and sense, that is, with propositions themselves. Therefore, if our sentence is nonsensical, we must have 'failed to give a meaning' to a sign in it (§5.4733). Consequently, the most we can do about such a sentence — more correctly, about someone who is attempting to use such a sentence, e.g. a metaphysician — is "to demonstrate to him that he had failed to give a meaning to certain signs in his propositions" (§6.53). But this too 'has nothing to do with philosophy', with logic: for it is something purely *psychological* — according to the author of the *TLP* (cf. §§4.112-1; see above). That, of course, is also the reason why (the author says) this "would not be satisfying to the other person—he would not have the feeling that we were teaching him philosophy" (§6.53). Yet, the author concludes, "this method would be the only strictly correct one" (§6.53). That is, he is saying: there is no possible correct method in philosophy (hence its end). Now,

where does this leave us in relation to the method of the *TLP*, which surely the author regards as (somehow) logical (albeit incorrect)? The answer is just what Wittgenstein's suggestion instead of 'clarification of propositions' is intended to bring out (§4.112; see above). Since propositions themselves are *already* clear, and since any unclarity, thus any clarification of such, is merely psychological (*contra* the resolute reading), the most *we* can do which would not be psychological and might deserve the name of 'logical clarification' ('elucidation'; §4.112) is this: "the propositions now have become clear that they ARE clear" (Wittgenstein's suggestion, quoted in Conant, 2002, 416-7). And if one understands this — which is (purportedly) logical — one recognizes that — and this, one's recognition, is psychological — there is nothing (else) we can (and need to) do in and about logic: for it 'must look after itself' (§5.473). This essentially negative consequence about philosophy — i.e. impossibility, hence the end, of philosophy, which is not only a *result* of the author's inquiries, but also his *aim* — is essential to the sense of the book as a whole. Hence the author goes on to emphasize just this to the reader in the next section.

The author tells us in §6.54 that his propositions 'serve as elucidations' in this way: "anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical". The author is careful here, of course, to speak of understanding *him* instead of his propositions, for, simply, *they* are nonsensical. And — according to the author — he (like anyone else) *must* employ nonsense, for the method which employs only sense turns out to be merely psychological, therefore no method (in logic) at all (§6.53). Consequently, he has to (somehow) accomplish 'elucidation' ('logical clarification') by employing nonsense, i.e. to achieve the following on purely logical grounds: "the propositions now have become clear that they ARE clear". And indeed, although he

also acknowledges his method as incorrect (§6.53), the author takes himself to (somehow) have actually accomplished this task in his book (see his Preface). Given this contention, and his closely related aim of putting an end to philosophy by solving philosophical problems *once and for all*, the author tells us that if we understand him, we will 'eventually recognize his propositions as nonsensical' and 'throw them away'. (Consider in this connection the notion that 'the point of the book is ethical'.) Our recognition is of course a psychological matter. (So too, presumably, our 'understanding him'. But this might be an ethical matter, as well.) But *that* is (supposed to be) only the psychological significance of the purported *logical point* of the book — assuming, of course, that the point (the 'elucidation') is (somehow) made by means of nonsense purely logically. For (we assume with the author) the 'propositions' of the book are nonsensical, and all possible propositions themselves are already clear (absolutely independently of us). The latter, as we noted, is (the point of) Wittgenstein explanation of 'clarification of propositions' ('elucidation') in §4.112, which is the method of the *TLP* (see Wittgenstein's suggested translation above). *That*, therefore, must be the whole of the Tractarian 'elucidation': we cannot possibly go anywhere beyond (in logic). Now, we can formulate what is most important at this point by posing the following question: what exactly is supposed to be logical in this 'elucidation'? Surely, possible propositions *themselves* are logical (in some sense); they belong to (and even constitute) the rigid logical space. (Not 'what they say', however. What is logical in them concerns their 'logical form', their 'structure'.) However, it would be incorrect to say that the logical is (or is nothing more than) 'what can be said'. Quite the contrary, it — what can be said — "has nothing to do with philosophy" (§6.53). Indeed, the 'logic of language' — according to the author of the *TLP* — is precisely *what lies beyond*

*what can be said*, for simply it is what makes saying anything (sense) *possible*. What, then, is 'it' — that is, the 'logic of language'? We do not know — or rather we know well but *cannot say anything about* 'it'. So we somehow know 'it', know that 'it' is *Something* — and that is all: we cannot say anything about 'it'. That is why Wittgenstein does not stop after his remark in §6.54 — that his propositions are to be recognized as nonsensical and thus thrown away — but goes on to write down the following, which is the last proposition of the book: "What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence." (§7)[146].

[146] Let me finally make the following interesting observation. The author of the *TLP*, having written his book, does *in-deed* 'pass over in silence', throw away the ladder altogether (§6.54), since he does *stop doing philosophy*. In this regard, interestingly, the author of the *TLP* can be seen to *succeed* in overcoming the methodological impasse — according to the criterion provided by the *PI*. For he (thus) achieves self-*consistency* in *deed*. (But, of course, we may also say he fails: simply because he writes a book of philosophy.) Consider by contrast the situation with the resoluter who is eager to emphasize (through §6.54) that the *only* criterion of understanding the book (more correctly, its author) is the recognition of the nonsensicality of the propositions of the book, and the resulting act of throwing away the ladder. One would therefore not be completely unjustified, it does seem, if one concludes that the resoluter *fails* to understand the author of the book *according to his own reading*, since he does not actually throw away the ladder altogether. (Perhaps even: the resoluter *necessarily* fails to understand the author of the book according to his own reading. A *logically impossible reading* — so to say.)

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