Resolution's Realism

Wittgenstein and Kierkegaard on the Remembrance of Meaning

by

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Abstract

The 'resolute' reading of Ludwig Wittgenstein's work is often taken to involve a kind of anti-realism about what the philosopher calls 'logic,' or 'grammar' – the order of meaning that structures our understanding of the world and which is expressed in our uses of language. Conversely, I argue that the resolute interpretation permits us to find, in both Wittgenstein's early and later work, a compelling new account of realism about this structure of significance. This realism comes into view if we take to heart his claim that philosophy is a practice of remembering the meaning/logic of our words and if we construe his concept of remembrance as a matter of what Søren Kierkegaard calls 'repetition.' Once regarded in this light, three often underemphasized features of the Wittgensteinian picture come to the fore.

The first feature is the method of 'indirect communication.' Like Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein felt that he could only remind us of what we had forgotten if he employed an unconventional philosophical method. Where traditional philosophers offer linear arguments for explicitly stated conclusions, Wittgenstein, like Kierkegaard, heightens our awareness of certain tensions in our life with language, withdraws, and allows the lesson that dissolves those tensions to dawn upon us spontaneously through its appeal to our natural and historical linguistic sense.

The second feature is the phenomenon of 'revelation,' which involves an encounter with logically unforeseeable meanings. Revealed meanings are neither the creations nor the discoveries of the autonomous human self. They are, instead, meanings provided to us by a source outside the self. On a resolute account of realism, revelation functions as the mechanism by which a remembrance of meaning dawns spontaneously upon our natural and historically conditioned linguistic intuitions. However, a crucial problem stands in the way of any such realism: it is not clear how we should understand our intentional relationship to a meaning that is yet to be revealed. A way of resolving this problem emerges when we take stock of the third oft-overlooked feature of Wittgenstein's

philosophy that comes into view from the Kierkegaardian perspective: 'embodiment,' or 'incarnation.'

The body plays a crucial role in Kierkegaard's Christian account of the self, of the ethical truth to which the self relates, and of that relation. Just as the self is a synthesis of the eternal soul and the temporal human body, Christ is a synthesis of the eternal God and the embodied life of Jesus. Further, the self's commitment to Christ is a practical, bodily, capacity to follow His example and 'go on' according to the rules that comprise Christian ethical life. This tripartite significance of the body provides us with the conceptual resources we need to understand the possibility of revelation as it enters into Kierkegaard's account of repetition. Similarly, for the resolute Wittgenstein, the self is the incarnation of a non-temporal soul in a temporal human body, and language is the incarnation of non-temporal meaning in a temporal linguistic sign – paradigmatically, the written or spoken word and its use in linguistic practice. Finally, our understanding of meaning is, most fundamentally, manifest as our practical ability to 'go on' according to logic's rules for the use of such signs. As is the case in Kierkegaard, this three-fold function of embodiment helps us to understand our relationship to possibilities of revelation in Wittgenstein.

The phenomena of indirect communication, revelation, and embodiment enable us to account for Wittgensteinian meaning-remembrance as a matter of Kierkegaardian repetition. This account helps us to defend the resolute reader from the charge of anti-realism and to provide a positive picture of what a resolute realism involves. The practical significance of such realism is three-part. It calls for, 1) a renewed respect for the autonomy of the individual to whom the work of philosophy is addressed, 2) a turn away from top-down and revolutionary views of how 'progress' can be achieved in philosophy, and 3) a renewed deference to our organic, historical, pre-philosophical sense of what we do and do not mean by our words.

To Margie Blanchet, knight of faith.

The one who will not work fits what is written about the virgins of Israel: he gives birth to wind – but the one who is willing to work gives birth to his own father.

<div align="right">Kierkegaard</div>

This was all clear to me, and I was glad and tranquil. And it seemed as if someone said to me: 'See that you remember.'

<div align="right">Tolstoy</div>

Acknowledgements

Reflecting upon the past seven years of his life and work, Kierkegaard was taken aback. He wrote:

> Perhaps someone is amazed when he had read these books, but no one more than I when I turn around now (after having been an author for approximately seven years and just as if in one breath) and look at what has been accomplished and with almost a shiver of amazement to see that the whole thing is actually only one thought, something I quite clearly understand now, although in the beginning I had not expected to go on being an author for so many years, nor did I have such a grand objective. Philosophically, this is a movement of reflection that is described backward and is first understood when it is accomplished. Religiously, this indicated to me personally in what an infinite debt of gratitude I am in to Governance, who like a father has benevolently held his hand over me and supported me in so many ways. This also signifies to me personally my own development and upbringing, for however true it is that when I began I had basically understood that I essentially belonged to the religious, in various ways this relationship still needed development and upbringing, which I need now also. (PV, 254-55)

The past seven years of my own life and work have culminated in this dissertation. I have brought the project to a close not because I consider it finished but because, as Wittgenstein wrote of his *Philosophical Investigations*, "the time is past in which I could improve it" (PI, 4). At the same time, looking back at this protracted labour, I wonder, optimistically, if what I feel isn't the same sense of gratitude and surprise that Kierkegaard describes in the above retrospective musing. Certainly, like Kierkegaard, I hadn't planned to go on writing as long as I have. The story of this dissertation is one of derailings and upset expectations, redirections and somehow revitalized hopes. One of those hopes ran like an repeated refrain that resounded in ever-deeper tones of 'fear and trembling' with each year's progress report to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, each year's budget, and each year's birthday. That hope was that, if I journeyed for just one more year into the dark of what are, for me, Wittgenstein's most interesting ideas, I would finally arrive at a more-or-less satisfying sense of how they hang coherently together as a single, unified, whole. It seems to me that these seven years have come to that happy ending, but that will be for the reader to judge. In any case, whatever the objective merits of this project, writing it has done me a world of good. And, so, many thanks are in order to the people without whom the project might never have been completed.

Thank you to my supervisor, Bernard Linsky, for his superhuman patience, his willingness to grant me the time and freedom I needed for this most personally necessary endeavour, and for his

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Abbreviations of Wittgenstein's Works Most Frequently Cited

BB   *Preliminary Studies for the 'Philosophical Investigations': Generally Known as the Blue and Brown Books.*

CV   *Culture and Value* (1984)

CVR   *Culture and Value: a Selection from the Posthumous Remains* (1998)

LC   *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology, and Religious Belief*

LFM   *Wittgenstein's Lectures on the Foundations of Mathematics: Cambridge 1939*

OC   *On Certainty*

PG   *Philosophical Grammar*

PI   *Philosophical Investigations*

PO   *Philosophical Occasions: 1912-1951*

PR   *Philosophical Remarks*

T   *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*

WVC   *Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle*

Z   *Zettel*

Abbreviations of Kierkegaard's Works Most Frequently Cited

CUP   *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*

EO   *Either / Or*

F   *Philosophical Fragments*

FT   *Fear and Trembling and Repetition.*

PV   *The Point of View on My Work as an Author* (2009)

SUD   *The Sickness Unto Death* (1980)

1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction

I offer this dissertation as a contribution to the 'resolute' reading of Ludwig Wittgenstein's philosophy, in both the early and later periods of his thought.[1] I aim to explore the question of what it might mean for a resolute reading to be a *realist* reading. This realism will not primarily concern empirical facts; it will concern what Wittgenstein calls *logic* or *grammar,* which he identifies with *meaning* in his later writings (PG, X-§133). I propose that a model for such a realism can be found in the philosophy of Søren Kierkegaard and, in particular, in Kierkegaard's Christian reinterpretation of the Platonic doctrine of *recollection* (*anamnesis*). Resolute Wittgenstein can be regarded as a kind of realist if we take seriously his claim that philosophy only reminds us of the meaning of our words (PI, §127), and if we interpret his notion of remembrance in a Christian-Kierkegaardian light. On this interpretation, the remembrance of meaning is not a matter of Platonic recollection, but of what Kierkegaard calls *repetition* (FT, 131).

As I will read him, this first point of similarity between Wittgenstein's project and Kierkegaard's is bound up with a second. I claim that Wittgenstein, like Kierkegaard, endeavours to facilitate a process of self-transformation in his reader. By urging us away from the anti-realism that we will find in Platonic recollection, and toward the realism of Kierkegaardian repetition*,* he will be urging us to undergo just such self-transformation. This process will involve our coming to regard the self as essentially incarnate in the body and to regard meaning as essentially incarnate in the word.

My guiding question, then, is whether we can consider the resolute Wittgenstein a realist. There are, however, three tightly-related subsidiary questions that motivate me, and which I hope to answer in the course of addressing the over-arching issue of realism. The first is the question of how we ought to understand Wittgenstein's claim that philosophy is the business of assembling reminders (PI, §127); the second concerns the role of linguistic revisionism in his philosophical method; the third concerns the so-called question of 'alternative grammars.' The prospect of a resolute realism will come into view only if we understand Wittgenstein's concept of remembrance, his concept of remembrance will come into view only if we grasp his position on the issue of linguistic revisionism, and we will grasp his position on linguistic revisionism only if we can solve the

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[1] I expand on what I mean by 'resolute reading' in what follows (see infra, 7 ff.).

problem of alternative grammars. In this introduction, I present these questions and a brief overview of how I hope to address them.

1.2. The Question of Remembrance

Wittgenstein considered philosophy a kind of therapy, and the philosopher something like a physician of the soul. "A philosophical problem has the form: 'I don't know my way about'" (PI, §123), and philosophy helps us to regain our bearings by rectifying conceptual confusion. "The philosopher treats a question; like an illness" (PI, §255), and the remedy is conceptual clarity.[2] "[T]he clarity we are aiming at is *complete* clarity, but this simply means that the philosophical problems should *completely* disappear" (PI, §133). Wittgenstein illustrates such puzzlement when he describes his struggles to understand the meaning of philosophy itself. In his own life, he tells us, intellectual disquiet often took the form of endless philosophizing about philosophy – endless questioning about what the discipline involves. "The real discovery," he wrote, "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 [*gepeitscht*] by questions which bring *itself* in question" (PI, §133). There is a sense in which this 'therapeutic' method will differ from person to person. "There is not a single philosophical method, though there are indeed methods, different therapies, as it were" (PI, §133), since different individuals have different philosophical problems, and different problems call for different treatments (ibid.; cf., Baker 2006, Ch 8-10). Nevertheless, at a certain level of generality, we can speak in the singular of *a* therapeutic method, a single problem of intellectual puzzlement, and a single goal of conceptual clarity. The classical conception of philosophy as care for the soul resounds in the submission that "[w]orking in philosophy [...] is really more a working on oneself. On one's own interpretation. On one's way of seeing things. (And what one expects of them)" (CV, 16).

Wittgenstein avoided systematic study in the classics of philosophy, not enjoying material that he was unable completely to master (see von Wright 1955, 543). This being the case, G.H. von Wright submits that "it is significant that he did read and enjoy Plato" (ibid.). Von Wright adds: "He must have recognized congenial features, both in Plato's literary and philosophical method and in the temperament behind the thoughts" (ibid., 544.). Norman Malcolm points us to an aspect of Plato's philosophy that von Wright might have had in mind; Malcolm reports that "Wittgenstein

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[2] Wittgenstein is famous for his excessive use of punctuation, which he explained as follows: "I really want my copious punctuation marks to slow down the speed of reading. Because I should like to be read slowly. (As I myself read)" (CV, 68). With Wittgenstein's intentions in mind, I will leave his punctuation in place, in PI §255 and elsewhere, even when it seems unnecessary.

once observed in lecture that there is a similarity between his conception of philosophy [...] and the Socratic doctrine that knowledge is reminiscence" (Malcolm 1984, 44). Just as we hear echoes in Wittgenstein of the ancient idea that philosophy is care for the soul, we can hear echoes of Plato, in particular, in Wittgenstein's claim that philosophy performs this office by reminding us of something like repressed memories. "The work of the philosopher consists in marshalling reminders [*Erinnerungen*] for a particular purpose," (PI, §127)[3] the purpose, most generally, of providing us with the kind of clarity that "gives philosophy peace" (PI, §133).

The idea that philosophy is a matter of remembrance is part and parcel with the idea that philosophy should not advance novel 'theses' (PI, §128). The philosopher should simply draw our attention to things already familiar but, in a sense, 'hidden' from conscious awareness. What is hidden, what fails to strike us despite our nebulous awareness of it, and what we need to be reminded of, are the 'real foundations' of our questioning.

> 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 enquiry 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. (PI, §129)

Wittgenstein qualified his suggestion that there is a similarity between his view of philosophy and the ancient account of knowledge as recollection: "there were also other things involved in the latter" (Malcolm 1984, 44). The qualification is unsurprising given Wittgenstein's well-known criticisms of Plato's metaphysical 'essentialism.' Still, we are left wondering just how great the

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[3] In their 2010 translation of this remark, Peter Hacker and Joachim Schulte render *Erinnerungen* as 'recollections.' This translation is in keeping with the continuity we are finding between Wittgenstein and Plato. However, we are reading Wittgenstein as a disciple of Kierkegaard, and from this perspective, it would be misleading to adopt the term 'recollection' for Wittgenstein's account of philosophical remembrance. Most often, Kierkegaard uses the term 'recollection' to denote the Platonic-metaphysical account of philosophical remembrance to which, I will argue, both he and Wittgenstein are opposed. As we will see (cf. Infra, 18), there are exceptions to this rule. Sometimes Kierkegaard uses the term 'recollection' in a general way that encompasses repetition – his alternative to the Platonic understanding of remembrance – so that repetition turns out to be a kind of recollection. Notwithstanding this occasional, broad, use of the term 'recollection,' some of Kierkegaard's readers (see Mooney, 1997, Westphal 1996) have adopted the convention of using the term 'recollection' to designate the Platonic illusion of remembrance that Kierkegaard will critique, and to which repetition will be an alternative. In what follows, I adopt this conventional use of the term 'recollection' as well. To avoid the Platonic-metaphysical connotations carried by the term, I stand by G. E. M. Anscombe's 1958 translation of *Erinnerungen,* at PI, §127, as 'reminders.' In the terminology that I will use here, not all accounts of remembrance involve the metaphysics of recollection; another such account is repetition, and we will find no such metaphysics in repetition. As I will read him, when Wittgenstein uses the term '*Erinnerungen'* at PI, §127, he is leaving his reader a hermeneutic latitude to interpret the term either as recollection or as repetition (more on this latitude in Chapter 2), hence, the felicity of Anscombe's translation, which remains neutral between those ways of reading '*Erinnerungen,'* and the infelicity of Hacker's.

similarity is supposed to be – how much light the comparison is supposed to shed. Anthony Rudd and William Brenner leave us with the same question. They submit that "Wittgenstein's methodology can be seen as a 'demythologised' version of that practiced by Socrates in the *Meno*; he is trying to make us aware of what we have really known all along" (Rudd 2005, 155, n. 16). But how, exactly, does the notion of remembrance in Wittgenstein map onto the notion of remembrance in Plato? And what of the claim that philosophy reminds us of "the real foundations of our inquiry" (PI, §129)? How does this evident foundationalism compare to that which we find in the Greek thinker? What are the similarities and differences here? In any case, it seems safe to accept that Wittgenstein is not rejecting the Socratic-Platonic picture. He is trying to retain those aspects of the picture that we still find necessary by disentangling them from those which we no longer find believable. When he indicates that philosophy is a practice of remembrance, he is doing philosophy about philosophy itself and reminding us of what the practice is and how it is done. In his comments on this issue, Stephen Mulhall stresses the same point highlighted by Malcolm, Brenner and Rudd: "Wittgenstein's methodological advice is, strictly speaking, not a recommendation or a command, but a reminder" (Mulhall 2011, 316).

Where Brenner and Rudd challenge us to read Wittgenstein as trying to retrieve the classical conception of philosophical method, H. O. Mounce challenges us to read him as trying to retrieve the classical realism with which that view of philosophical method is paired.

> In classical philosophy, the realists denied that order is imposed on the world by the human mind. Rather the mind can make sense of the world only because it partakes of an order which exists independently of it. This view was defended, for example, by the Pythagoreans, Plato, and Aristotle. It was opposed by the sophists and skeptics, who argued that the measure of things is in the human will as it expresses itself through the individual, social consensus or the conventions of language. In short, man is the measure of all things. (Mounce 2005, 103)

Though skepticism and anti-realism have historically been minority views, Mounce laments that they have found their heyday in our post-modern times. "Nietzschians, Deconstructionalists, Neo-Pragmatists and Heideggarians, all argue, though in various ways, that objective order is a delusion and that man is the measure of all things" (ibid, 104). These philosophical revolutionaries "differ among themselves but they are as one in repudiating our philosophical inheritance" (Mounce 2001, 187). Mounce reads Wittgenstein, early and late, as urging us to preserve it.

Mounce is not suggesting that Wittgenstein is urging a rote repetition of Plato's metaphysics any more than Rudd and Brenner are suggesting that Wittgenstein is urging a rote repetition of the Socratic philosophical method. Mounce is suggesting that Wittgenstein's work, early and late, is an attempt to retrieve what Rudd and Brenner called a 'demythologized' version of the classical view. Mounce acknowledges that "[i]t would be an exaggeration to say that Wittgenstein belongs to the tradition of classical realism. But [...] he has evident connections with that tradition. The connections are most evident in the *Tractatus* and *On Certainty*. Indeed, we may say that in his last work he reclaims, in a purified form, the realism he advanced in the first" (Mounce 2005, 121). My own suggestion will be that realism was also alive and well in the works between these first and last writings. The *Investigations* reference to "the real foundations of our enquiry" (PI, §129), for example, should be taken seriously, and in a genuinely realistic sense.

Mounce offers his realist account as a bulwark against the growing tide of the 'resolute reading' of Wittgenstein, the interpretation advanced by commentators like James Conant, Cora Diamond, and Alice Crary (Mounce 2005, 105). Mounce notes an obvious sense in which 'resolute Wittgenstein' rejects "the idea that our discursive practices depend for their integrity on the existence of features of reality that transcend them and determine their correctness" (ibid., 104). But what do resolute readers mean when they make this claim? And what follows from it? Mounce worries that they mean to suggest that the grammatical/ logical rules that regulate our use of words are little more than what they were for the 19th-century positivists. For these thinkers, "logical necessity reflects the rules for our use of words [...,] it belongs to our method of representing the world, not to the world itself" (ibid., 110), and Mounce wants to distance Wittgennnstein from any such view. For the early Wittgenstein, logical rules are expressed in 'logical propositions,' tautologies like 'p or not-p' (T, 6.11). For the later Wittgenstein, they are expressed in 'grammatical propositions' (PI, §247-52), a category encompassing both the logical propositions of the early work but also other linguistic 'truths' like, "Every rod has a length,' 'One cannot hear red,' and '2+2=4.' Where Mounce draws his comparison to the 19th positivists, a version of the same view is familiar from the 'logical positivists' or 'logical empiricists,' of early 20th century Vienna.[4] Though grammatical propositions seem to assert something about the world – something that might be either true or false – this is a misleading appearance. Rules are like definitions: once they are in place, we can use them to make true or false claims, but they themselves are neither true nor false of anything. If grammatical propositions are neither true nor false, the realist's claim that certain

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[4] See Carnap 1950; Carnap 1959, *Forward* and *Part 5: Philosophy and Syntax;* Ayer 2001, Ch. 1, Ch. 4.

grammatical propositions are true turns out to be unintelligible, but so, too, does the anti-realist's claim that all such propositions are false (Mounce 2005, 110). The dispute between realist and anti-realist is supposedly 'dissolved' when we see that both sides of the debate confuse grammatical propositions for a kind of empirical proposition. On Mounce's reading, resolute Wittgenstein joins ranks with positivism, and holds that logical (later, grammatical) propositions are not 'cognitive' claims – they don't describe the world. Rather, they express the linguistic conventions that we presuppose when making such descriptions.

Has this reading undercut the dispute between realists and anti-realists? Mounce is unconvinced: "Wittgenstein's views, as they emerge on this interpretation, seem to me, and perhaps to others, not to undercut the dispute at all. For they bear a striking resemblance to those advanced by one of its parties, namely, the anti-realists" (ibid., 104). How so? The worry seems to be this: If we say that rules of language are not grounded in a reality transcending mere convention, we open the door to those "Nietzschians, Deconstructionalists, Neo-Pragmatists and Heideggarians" (Mounce 2005, 103) who, in Mounce's view, all assert that language is grounded in nothing more than something like the human 'will to power.' In the case of the resolute reading, this will to power would be manifest as our will to countenance certain linguistic conventions rather than others. Thus, in Mounce's view, the resolute reading amounts to "an evident variation on the idea that man is the measure of all things" (Mounce ibid., 105). Peter Hacker registers a similar concern when he dubs the resolute approach the "deconstructionist" (Hacker 2000, 359), or "post-modernist interpretation" (ibid., 360) of Wittgenstein's thought.

In my view, Mounce raises legitimate worries that resolute readers have not done enough to address. My main is to address them on the resolute reader's behalf. Taking my lead from the suggestions of Rudd, Brenner, and Mounce, I want to develop and defend the idea that Wittgenstein sought to revitalize both the classical conception of philosophy as a practice of remembrance, and the robust realism to which that vision of philosophy is bound. *Pace* Mounce, however, I will contend that a sufficiently robust realism can be found within the ambit of the resolute approach. More pointedly, my claim will be that such realism can be found within the Kierkegaard-inspired brand of the resolute reading that has been offered by James Conant and, before him, Stanley Cavell.[5] Wittgenstein aims to help us remember the meaning of 'realism' anew, and he aims to do this by helping us to remember the meaning of philosophical 'remembrance' itself anew, as well. The realism of the resolute reading will come into view when we consider Wittgensteinian remembrance,

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[5] See Conant 1991a, 1993, 1995; Cavell 1984, 195-234

not as a matter of Socratic recollection, but of Christian-Kierkegaardian repetition. Before introducing this alternative notion of remembrance, I note another question in Wittgenstein studies that I want to answer with this dissertation: the question of linguistic revisionism.

1.3. The Question of Linguistic Revisionism

In an important sense, to say that philosophy is a practice of remembrance is to say that we should not look for the solution to our conceptual problems in novel insights. "The problems are solved, not by coming up with new discoveries, but by assembling what we have long been familiar with" (PI, §109). "The name 'philosophy' might also be given to what is possible *before* all new discoveries and inventions" (PI, §126). If philosophy is a practice of remembrance, its method is supposed to describe established determinations of grammar as opposed to creating new ones. "We don't want to refine or complete the system of rules for the use of words in unheard-of ways" (PI, §132-33). "Philosophy must not interfere in any way with the actual use of language, so it can in the end only describe it [...]. It leaves everything as it is" (PI, §124). There is, then, a crucial sense in which this method does not involve imparting new information. This 'non-informative' character of Wittgenstein's approach is captured in his commitment to the past-oriented practice of remembering the meaning and grammar of our words, rather than in any future-oriented practice of *creating* new meanings – new grammars –, perhaps for the purpose of resolving philosophical problems. Here we arrive at a long-standing puzzle in Wittgenstein scholarship: it is hard to see how Wittgenstein can be practicing what he preaches in these methodological remarks.

Often, Wittgenstein does indeed seem to be simply describing the ways we ordinarily use words and then chastising us when we deviate from that use. On these occasions, his reminders of how we commonly use words frequently strike us as checks upon our temptations to 'take language on holiday' (PI, §38) away from that common use. Frequently he cautions us against using words outside these familiar contexts of their usual employment, which we do, for example, when we confuse their meaning for the meaning of different but in some ways similar words. "As long as there is still a verb 'to be' that looks as though it functions in the same way as 'to eat' and 'to drink,' as long as we still have the adjectives 'identical,' 'true,' 'false,' 'possible,' as long as we continue to talk of a river of time & an expanse of space, etc., etc., people will keep stumbling over the same cryptic difficulties & staring at something that no explanation seems capable of clearing up" (CVR, 22). Misled by such false analogies, we might have the confused impression that one can enter into the state of *being* in the same way that one can enter into the state of eating. Consequently, we also

fall under the impression that a person can, in some sense, exist without having the property of being. In this way, a misleading analogy can move us to use a word – 'being' in this case – outside the context of its ordinary, intelligible, employment, and we begin to use it in a nonsensical way (PI, §115-117). This sort of mistake is characteristic of what Wittgenstein calls 'metaphysics.' Often, Wittgenstein's method seems to involve correcting these mistakes by reminding us how we ordinarily use words and suggesting to us that our deviation from that ordinary use is incoherent. Here, his methodological advice is this: "one must always ask oneself: is the word ever actually used in this way in the language in which it is at home? – What *we* do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use" (PI, §116)

On the other hand, the *Investigations* is replete with insights that seem to make room for just the kind of philosophical novelty that its own methodological pronouncements seem to prohibit. Consider the rule-following considerations of how the meanings of words can be extended in unforeseeably novel ways (PI, §185-242), the critique of metaphysical 'essentialism' (PI, §79-108), the idea of the family-resemblance concept (PI,§ 64-75), the notions of secondary sense (PI, §282, II-§274-78), 'imponderable evidence' (PI, II-§358-64), and the related hints about the responsibility we bear for carrying on in language as we do, unguided by any rules that could 'unambiguously' determine their own application (PI, §222-23; PI, § 426; cf., Cavell 1999, 107). Since all these various lines of investigation seem to allow us a latitude for legitimate linguistic novelty, it is surprising that the methodological remarks in the *Investigations* would seem to deny the philosopher any license to enjoy that latitude, and to create new uses of words and new determinations of grammar. More mysterious still is that Wittgenstein himself often seems to sin against this proscription and indeed create the novel grammars that he claims simply to describe (Wittgenstein 1988, 168; Z, §461; cf., PI, §144; Baker 2006, 192-93).

The question of linguistic revisionism is this: How can Wittgenstein's practice of creating new grammars be reconciled with his apparent prohibition on doing any such thing? How can the philosopher's creative efforts to facilitate the emergence of new grammars cohere with the insistence upon simply describing grammar and the methodological prohibition on "all new discoveries and inventions" (PI, §126)? After noting that Wittgenstein says "that he will 'assemble reminders' and call our attention to well-known facts" (Wright 1980, 262), Crispin Wright makes the following comment on our prospects for working through this difficult terrain in Wittgenstein scholarship.

> To carry through a satisfactory such examination would be no easy matter. For it is difficult
> to reconcile Wittgenstein's pronouncements about the kind of thing which he thinks he

ought to be doing with what he actually seems to do [....] At the time I write this, the complaint is justified that the great volume of commentary on the *Investigations* has so far done very little to clarify either how we should interpret the general remarks on philosophy so as to have our understanding enhanced of Wittgenstein's treatment of specific questions, or conversely. (What are the 'well-known facts' arranged in the course of the Private Language discussion?) Wittgenstein's later views on philosophy constitute one of the so far least well understood aspects of his thought (ibid.)

Wright made that comment in 1980. In 2005, Anthony Rudd reported that we had made little headway since then:

There is in fact a tension here that runs throughout Wittgenstein's later work. On the one hand he wishes to insist that utterances have meaning only in context, and to combat the errors which arise from confusing different contexts, different language games. On the other, he insists on the flexibility of language, the lack of sharp boundaries between language-games, the ways in which the meaning of an expression can develop and alter in unpredictable ways as it is used creatively in new contexts, yet without simply becoming something entirely different and new. (Rudd 2005, 148-49)

One the one hand, we have an apparent argument against projecting words into new contexts of use. To use words in novel ways is supposed to use words in ways at odds with their meaning and to lapse into nonsense. On the other hand, Wittgenstein's substantive insights into the flexibility of language suggest that the meaning of a word should not be tied to its common uses in any such rigorous way, and that novel applications of words can be legitimate indeed. There is more than an apparent 'tension' here, for it is not only that these substantive insights seem to allow for the kind of linguistic novelty and linguistic revisionism that seems to be prohibited by Wittgenstein's stress upon grammatical remembrance. There is an apparent *contradiction* here because, as I argue in Chapter Seven, Wittgenstein seems to engage in just such linguistic revisionism himself.

Unless Wittgenstein is simply contradicting himself, he must be making the following suggestion: In some sense of 'remembering,' the activity of remembering things already familiar can allow that the remembered content is also created anew, perhaps in and through that very activity of remembrance. There is an apparent coincidence here of old and new, familiar and unfamiliar, discovered and created. To understand Wittgenstein – to see our way past the problem of linguistic revisionism – we need a concept of remembrance that incorporates this strange coincidence of a past-oriented movement back into the familiar, and a future-oriented movement out toward the

new. My submission is, first, that we will find the concept of remembrance that we need in the Kierkegaardian notion of remembrance as repetition.[6] Second, when we apply this concept of remembrance to the resolute reading, we can save that reading from the charge of anti-realism to which it currently vulnerable.

1.4. The Question of Alternative Grammars

In discussing this issue of creating new grammars, I will be raising anew the long-standing question of whether Wittgenstein thinks the notion of 'alternative grammars' – grammars different from our own– is intelligible. Such grammars are supposed to comprise meanings (rules, concepts) that we cannot so much as imagine or intelligibly describe using the grammar that we have. The question is this: How can we acknowledge the possibility of alternative grammars if our attempt to characterize them turns out to be unintelligible? If we cannot express the possibilities of sense they comprise, what exactly are we saying when we try to acknowledge their 'possibility'? This question of how we ought to make sense of talk about alternative grammars is, I think, is the "great difficulty" Wittgenstein speaks of at PI, §374.

Bernard Williams (1973) and Jonathan Lear (1982, 1984) have been read by many as concluding that Wittgenstein ultimately rejects the idea of alternative grammars, and with it the notion of grammatical novelty. Subsequent readers on the issue divide up into those who support the Williams-Lear reading (Kusch 2012, Hutto 1996, Coliva 2010, Cerbone 2000) and those who reject it (Stroud 1984, Mulhall 2009, Moore 2007, Forster 2004). The debate shows little sign of letting up. My sympathies naturally lie with the latter camp of readers. Wittgenstein's realism will involve the disclosure of new possibilities of sense – possibilities constitutive for grammars alternative to our own – but is it not yet obvious how we are to make sense of such things. We need to resolve this 'great difficulty' to understand Wittgenstein's view of remembrance, for that view of remembrance involves the 'revisionary' creation of new grammars.

Kierkegaard's concept of repetition will help us to frame this problem of alternative grammars in an illuminating new way. However, to adequately address the issue, we will also need to invoke what I will describe as Wittgenstein's 'embodied' or 'incarnate' thinking of the self and of the meanings that the self remembers. Only once we have taken this embodied thinking of the self and

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[6] It may bear repeating that, on my reading of Kierkegaard, not all remembrance is recollection. Repetition, for example, is a form of remembering that encodes none of the metaphysics that attaches 'recollection' in Kierkegaard's usual the term (cf. Infra. 16-19).

of meaning together with Wittgenstein's Kierkegaardian understanding of remembrance as repetition will we be able to discern an answer to the question of alternative grammars. To approach Kierkegaard's concept of repetition, it will be useful briefly to describe Kierkegaard's own understanding of Platonic recollection.[7] For this I consult Johannes Climacus, the pseudonymous author of Kierkegaard's *Philosophical Fragments* (see F, 11-12).

1.5. Socrates and Recollection in the *Philosophical Fragments*

Climacus reflects on Socrates' answer to *Meno*'s question: How are we to understand our effort to search our memories for philosophical truth?

> Meno: How will you look for it, Socrates, when you do not know at all what it is? How will you aim to search for something you do not know at all? If you should meet with it, how will you know that this is the thing that you did not know?

> Socrates: I know what you want to say, Meno. Do you realize what a debater's argument you are bringing up, that a man cannot search either for what he knows or for what he does not know? He cannot search for what he knows – since he knows it, there is no need to search – nor for what he does not know, for he does not know what to look for. (*Meno*, 80d-e)[8]

On the one hand, philosophical reflection begins from a kind of ignorance: we are in search of an answer that we do not yet have. This seems self-evident, for if we already had the answer, we would not be in search of it. On the other hand, this particular kind of searching is curious, for when we discover what we are looking for, it strikes us as a truth of which we were already aware. If we didn't already know the truth we sought, how could it strike us, when we find it, as having been precisely the truth for which we were searching? Moreover, if we were not already aware of what we are looking for, how could we know, as we do, when we are looking in the right place? How could we feel that certain avenues of reflection are bringing us closer to the truth that we are seeking if we don't already know what that truth is? On the one hand, it seems that philosophy can teach us things that we don't already know; on the other hand, the *a priori* nature of a philosophical investigation seems to presuppose that we already know what philosophy has to teach. We can also describe this paradox about philosophical remembering as a paradox about philosophical forgetting. On the one hand, such forgetting is supposed to leave us with enough awareness of the truth-to-be-remembered

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[7] I set aside the question of whether Kierkegaard's view of Plato is correct.
[8] All references to Plato's dialogues are keyed to Plato 1997.

that we know what to search for in memory; on the other hand, we are not left with enough awareness of that truth for the search to be unnecessary. As a practice of remembrance, the very activity of philosophy is obscure (F, 11-12).

According to Climacus' analysis in the *Fragments*, Socrates answered these questions by construing philosophical truths as innate ideas: pre-given, fully-determinate denizens of something like the philosophical sub-conscious. These were supposed to be truths already present in one's eternal soul but *hidden* there in a way that rendered them temporarily unavailable to reflection (ibid.). The Platonist's picture of philosophical forgetting, then, is something like the picture of an object lost in a darkened warehouse; the corresponding picture of remembrance involved something like the light of reflection coming to illuminate its place. We know where to look because we are already intimately acquainted with what we are looking for, and we are so acquainted because what we are looking for is a pre-given part of our eternal soul. The Socratic recollection of philosophy's eternal truths amounts to a recollection of the eternal aspect of the human being: not the body, but the soul, which has already learned everything that philosophy might teach (ibid.). Again, the *Meno* displays the important aspects of Climacus' view:

> The human soul is immortal; at times it comes to an end, which they call dying; at times it is reborn, but it is never destroyed [....] As the soul is immortal, has been born often, and has seen all things here and in the underworld, there is nothing which it has not learned; so it is in no way surprising that it can recollect the things it knew before, both about virtue and other things. As the whole of nature is akin, and the soul has learned everything, nothing prevents a man, after recalling one thing only – a process men call learning – discovering everything else for himself, if he is brave and does not tire of the search, for searching and learning are, as a whole, recollection. (*Meno*, 81b-d)

The *Fragments* stresses that this picture of remembrance as recollection is connected to the idea that we are *self-sufficient* in our pursuit of philosophical truth. Providing that he has the necessary courage and stamina, the learner can remember philosophical truth on his own because it is already there, written in the linings of the soul's eternal memory. Truth is supposed to lie within us, and since we are supposed to be intimately acquainted with what lies within us, we are supposed to be capable of discovering the truth through our unaided powers of self-reflection. It is in this sense that Socrates "had the courage and self-possession to be sufficient unto himself" (F, 14).

A similar kind of self-sufficiency exists on the part of Socrates' pupil. For if I am that pupil, "the Truth in which I rest was within me, and came to light through myself, and not even Socrates

could have given it to me, as little as the driver can pull the load for the horses, though he may help them by applying the lash" (Kierkegaard 1962, 15). The philosophical teacher can encourage the learner to reflect. In this capacity, however, the teacher only plays the role of a midwife, drawing out from the learner what is already within him and what he might have discovered on his own, without the teacher, had he possessed the intellectual energy for the task. If philosophical learning is a matter of recollection, or *anamnesis,* philosophical teaching is a kind of midwifery, or *maieusus*. The philosopher leaves the labour to the pupil, helping him give birth, not to the body, but the soul (*Theaetetus*, 150-151).

Climacus stresses a Pelagian consequence of recollection in the *Philosophical Fragments:* "In the Socratic view, each individual is his own centre, and the entire world centres in him, because his self-knowledge is knowledge of God" (F, 14). Since we can achieve self-knowledge using nothing more than our willful efforts in reflection, and since knowledge of the self is at the same time knowledge of God, it turns out that those same voluntary efforts are all we need for knowledge of God. There is nothing in this recollective picture – as there is in the Christian doctrine of grace, for example – of the idea that the human being is constitutively incapable of achieving spiritual salvation without the aid of a power beyond itself. If I don't need Socrates to gain knowledge of my soul and God – if this knowledge is already within me and therefore within reach of willful reflection – then, similarly, "[m]y relation to Socrates [...] cannot concern me with respect to my eternal happiness, for this is given me retrogressively through my possession of the Truth, which I had from the beginning without knowing it. [...] [T]he underlying principle of all questioning is that the one who is asked must have the Truth in himself and be able to acquire it by himself" (F, 15).

A final important feature of the Socratic maieutic teaching is that it proceeds *indirectly*. Rather than imposing positive views upon the learner, the philosopher proceeds negatively, merely questioning the learner and allowing him the opportunity to distinguish, for himself, between truth and illusion. Socrates tells us: "The common reproach against me is that I am always asking questions of other people but never express my own views about anything" (*Theaetetus*, 150c). We will later see Kierkegaard acknowledge a consequence of this: many learners credit themselves entirely for what they learn, unaware of the role that the teacher has played in guiding them to that knowledge (*Theaetetus*, 150-151).

These conjoined views of philosophical teaching and learning come out in the *Meno*. Socrates stresses that he aims to illuminate a truth that the learner *himself* will recognize as true. Socrates *states* this feature of recollection to Meno when he describes a pupil's learning of mathematics. This

feature of recollection is also *shown*, however, when Socrates has Meno explicitly acknowledge the truth in what Socrates is teaching Meno about the nature of remembrance itself. The need for the learner himself to understand and accept the truth he learns is on display, for example, when Socrates makes sure that Meno has followed his resaonong about the nature of recollection. Meno is not *forced* to accept anything.

> Socrates: You see, Meno, that I am not teaching the boy anything, but all I do is question him. And now he thinks he knows the length of the line on which an eight-foot figure is based. Do you agree?
>
> Meno: I do. (*Meno*, 82e) [....]
>
> Socrates: What do you think, Meno? Has he, in his answers, expressed any opinion that was not his own?
>
> Meno: No, they were all his own.
>
> Socrates: And yet, as we said a short time ago, he did not know? – That is true.
>
> Socrates: So these opinions were in him, were they not? – Yes.
>
> Socrates: So the man who does not know has within himself true opinions about the things that he does not know? – So it appears [....]
>
> Socrates: And he will know it without having been taught but only questioned, and find the knowledge within himself? – Yes.
>
> Socrates: And is not finding knowledge within oneself recollection? – Certainly (*Meno*, 85b-d).

Recollection is, then, the movement of reflection whereby we remember the essential truth about the self and also about other matters, and we do this by turning our powers of reflection inward, upon the eternal structures of the soul's *a priori* past. The philosopher's continual checking to ensure that the learner himself can recognize the truth is bound up with the idea that the truth is determinately *there*, within him, to be discovered. The self becomes both the locus of all philosophical truth and the self-sufficient mechanism of truth's discovery.

Of course, Plato is often considered the preeminent metaphysical realist. Indeed, we have just seen Mounce contend that the antidote to the anti-realist drift in the resolute reading is to retrace Wittgenstein's intellectual ancestry back to classical realists like Plato. From Kierkegaard's Christian perspective, however, Platonic recollection is a misfiring attempt at philosophical realism for the reasons to which I just adverted. Since it allows no role for the concept of grace, recollection locates philosophical truth within the self and, correspondingly, it misidentifies the self's voluntary

efforts in reflection as the means of truth's discovery. We can appreciate, then, why Kierkegaard associates the recollective model of remembrance with the tradition of idealism, rather than realism, in philosophy.[9] The Greek thinking of remembrance amounts to little more than the self's willful reflection upon itself rather than a reflection upon a reality to which the self is answerable. By Kierkegaard's lights, and *pace* Mounce, the Greek picture of philosophical truth will not revitalize our sense of realism, for the Greek picture too is "an evident variation on the idea that man is the measure of all things" (Mounce 2005, 105).

On the resolute reading I offer, Wittgenstein agrees with Plato in the following sense: he holds that our connection to the real can be established in the activity of remembrance. But he agrees with Kierkegaard that the Greeks misunderstood remembrance when they theorized it as a recollection, thereby failing to establish the connection between remembrance and realism. Wittgenstein's task is to help us remember the meaning of our words. Still, the meaning of our words is not somewhere "hidden" (PI, §92, §102, §126) in a pre-given stock of philosophical memories "and which an analysis is supposed to unearth" (PI, §92).[10] Since the meaning of a word is what is manifest in its use, such a pre-given, recollection-theoretic, meaning would legislate a pre-determined use. But Wittgenstein rejects any such recollective picture. Consider what he says about what happens when we issue an order, the meaning of which is for another person to take certain steps in the application of a mathematical rule. He writes:

> Here I'd like to say first of all: your idea was that this *meaning the order* [*Meinen des Befehls*] had
> in its own way already taken all those steps: that in meaning it, your mind, as it were, flew
> ahead and took all the steps before you physically arrived at this or that one. So you were
> inclined to use such expressions as 'The steps are *really* already taken, even before I take
> them in writing or in speech or in thought.' And it seemed as if they were in some *unique* way
> predetermined, anticipated – in the way that only meaning something could anticipate reality.
> (PI, §188)

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[9] Robert Bretall emphasizes this aspect of the Kierkegaardian view of recollection:
> [I]n coming to know something, we merely come into full possession of what was latent in us all along – merely bring into consciousness what was in our 'subconscious,' or in other words merely realize our true selves[.] This [...] was the assumption of Socrates, who in all his philosophizing regarded himself not as one who has certain truths to communicate to others, but rather as one only a little less ignorant then they, whose mission was simply that of a midwife – i.e., to help others becomes conscious of themselves and to bring to birth what they already bore within themselves. This has also been the assumption, explicit or implicit, or all Idealist philosophy from Socrates and Plato to the present day. (Quoted in Kierkegaard 1946, 153-54).

Our impression here is that, in advance of a rule's actual use, all its possible applications "had to be really – in a mysterious sense – already *present"* (RFM, I-§122). Such possibilities of expression would be rigidly fixed in advance by the rules of language in the way that a machine's possibilities of movement are fixed in advance by the physical laws that govern the machine. "[A] machine *has* (*possesses*) [*besäße*] such-and-such possibilities of movement" (RFM, I-§125; cf., RFM, I-§126; PI, §193, §184) but, *pace* the recollective philosophical tradition, we do not 'possess,' intellectually, the possibilities of sense that might find expression in and through the actual application of grammatical rules.[11] If meanings (rules of grammar) are not pre-given in consciousness in this recollective way, what is going on when Wittgenstein urges us to remember the meaning of our words? My claim, again, will be that we can regard his understanding of remembrance as a matter of Kierkegaardian repetition.

I will argue that Kierkegaard's Christian thinking of remembrance as repetition succeeds where the Greek picture does not: it will succeed in establishing the connection between memory and realism. Accordingly, when we recognize the affinity between Wittgenstein's thinking of memory and Kierkegaard's, we will find a way of saving the resolute Wittgenstein from the charge of anti-realism as well.

1.6. Repetition

Kierkegaard's project, of course, was to remind us of what we mean by 'Christianity.' In the contemporary age, "one has forgotten what it is to exist and what inwardness means" (CUP, 203). Since the truth about the meaning of 'inwardness' – the meaning of human existence – is articulated by Christianity, the corrective to this forgetting is, effectively, a reminder of what it means to be Christian. That Kierekggard's philosophy is an effort of remembrance is also clear when we consider what he says about his style of teaching. He explictly frames the teaching of his pseudonymously-authored texts as a return to the *maieutic* method, the method by which the Socratic 'midwife,' draws out a truth that was already present in the learner's memory. "All the pseudonymous writings are *maieutic* in nature" (PV, 7, cf., ibid., 247, 279) but, in Kierkegaard's Christian thinking, the maieutic method of teaching undergoes a transformation..

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[11] The relevant passages might be useful to see in context:

> When does one have the thought: the possible movements of a machine are already there in it in some mysterious way? – Well, when one is doing philosophy. And what leads us into thinking that? The way we talk about machines. We saw, for example, that a machine *has* (*possesses*) [*besäße*] such-and-such possibilities of movement; we speak of the ideally rigid machine which can only move in such-and-such a way. (RFM, I-§125; cf., PI, §193)

Paradoxically, the effort to remind us of the meaning of Christianity seems to involve an attempt to facilitate a *change* in that meaning. Kierkegaard writes: "It is clear that in my writings I have supplied a more radical characterisation of the concept of faith than there has been up until this time" (PV, 253). There is something *new* in this thinking of Christianity, but the new coincides, paradoxically, with the old and familiar. On the one hand, Kierkegaard grants that he is dealing with an eternal and immutable truth. "Jesus Christ, it is true, is himself the prototype and will continue to be that, unchanged, until the end" (PV, 131). On the other hand, the eternal and immutable character of this truth does not preclude the truth's undergoing a kind of transformation in and through Kierkegaard's authorship. Indeed, Kierkegaard wants to save Christianity from its modern misinterpretations by facilitating just such a change in its meaning. He writes:

> [I]n the course of time, the essentially Christian, unchanged, has nevertheless been subject to modification in relation to changes in the world. My view is certainly not that it is the essentially Christian that should be improved and perfected by new modifications – I am not that speculative. No, my view is that the essentially Christian, unchanged, at times may need by way of new modifications to secure itself against the new, the new nonsense that is now in vogue. (PV, 131)

Paradoxically, we can remember the genuine meaning of Christianity by arriving at a new and more helpful interpretation of what Christianity is. Since we are remembering something, we were already aware of it as an aspect of our past. But as a *new* interpretation of Christianity, its presence in memory is not to be thought of in recollective terms as a kind of object with a predetermined nature and location, warehoused in mental space.

One finds surprisingly little discussion of remembering and forgetting in the secondary literature on Kierkegaard. After citing copious instances of where Kierkegaard stresses that he is trying to remind us of something we have forgotten, R. H. Johnson highlights this oddity in Kierkegaard scholarship. "Given the pervasiveness of this claim and its analytical centrality, it is all the more remarkable that it has gone so long unnoticed and uninvestigated" (Johnson 1972, 142., n. 1). In some ways, this issue of remembrance is more apparent in Wittgenstein than it is in Kierkegaard. Accordingly, scholars have been able to shed light on the darker parts of Kierkegaard's view by comparing them to these more transparent parts of Wittgenstein's. Taking such an approach, James Conant has not only used Wittgenstein to highlight the overlooked issues of remembering and forgetting in Kierkegaard's *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. He has argued that Kierkegaard is reminding us of what Wittgenstein calls the 'grammar,' or meaning, of words (Conant

1989, 255). We concur with John Lippitt: "We can take on board Conant's illuminating suggestion that the *Postscript*, rather than advancing original theses, offers us 'grammatical remarks' which function as reminders of what we already knew (but have forgotten, or have become confused about). As Climacus tells us, what he is saying about Christianity is nothing new, but 'old fashioned orthodoxy'" (Lippitt 2000, 110). In my analysis as well, there are places where I invoke Wittgenstein to clarify aspects of remembrance that remain obscure in Kierkegaard. In other ways, however, the nature of the philosophical memory is more evident in Kierkegaard than it is in Wittgenstein and, for the most part, I will use these clearer aspects of the former thinker to illuminate darker aspects of the latter.

I will not aim to offer a full-bodied account of remembrance in Kierkegaard. My goal will only be to highlight those particular aspects of his view that help with an understanding of remembrance, and thereby realism, in Wittgenstein. Two such features will be especially important. First, Kierkegaard tells us more than Wittgenstein does about how his own practice of *maieusis* involves a suitably transformed understanding of that method of 'indirect' communication that we saw in Socrates. Second, when Kierkegaard theorizes remembrance as repetition, he says more than Wittgenstein says about the structure of remembrance. We will see that Kierkegaard explicitly describes remembrance as a curious intertwining of old and new meaning by which we are reunited with some aspect of our linguistic history that we are in danger of forgetting. In Wittgenstein, this interplay between old and new is not explicitly acknowledged, thus raising the question of linguistic revisionism. Kierkegaard reminds us of what we always meant by 'Christianity,' but not by helping us to recollect a purely eternal and immutable meaning that was pre-written into the platonic-Socratic soul. Instead, we remember the meaning of 'Christianity' when that meaning is changed through the particular activity of remembering that Kierkegaard calls repetition. And it is this concept of repetition that will be so helpful in understanding Wittgenstein.

At times, Kierkegaard speaks of recollection as a degenerate kind of repetition. He describes it as a kind of repetition where what is 'repeated' through the act of remembring already existed, so that the act of remembering is a 'backward' movement of thought, into the past. On his own non-recollective account of remembrance as repetition, what is repeated has not already existed, so that repetition is a 'forward' movement toward a meaning yet to be revealed. "Repetition and recollection are the same movement, except in opposite directions, for what is recollected has been, is repeated backward, whereas genuine repetition is recollected forward" (FT, 131; cf., F, 12). It is misleading of Kierkegaard to speak about genuine repetition as a forward-looking kind of 'recollection' because he

usually *contrasts* genuine repetition with recollection. As I understand it – and this will be reflected in my use of terminology – the point of calling repetition a kind of 'recollection' is that genuine repetition is a kind of *remembrance*. We are dealing here with a Christian account of memory that constitutes a significant advance over the recollective account that we find in the Greeks. When I speak of 'recollection,' I will have in mind this Greek view or the descendants of it that we will see Kierkegaard trace into modern philosophy.

Northrop Frye submits that the typological reading of the Bible manifests the sort of interplay between new and old that we find in repetition, and his thoughts might help to shore up this introduction to the idea. Repetition helps us recover a connection to some aspect of our past that can't be 'repeated' as a mere rote replay of history as it was originally experienced or understood. In these cases, Frye writes,

> [t]he mere attempt to repeat a past experience will lead only to disillusionment, but there is another type of repetition which is the Christian antithesis (or complement) of Platonic recollection, and which finds its focus in the biblical promise: 'Behold, I make all things new' (Revelation 21:5). Kierkegaard's 'repetition' is certainly derived from, and to my mind, is identifiable with, the forward-moving typological thinking of the Bible. (Frye 1982, 82)

Of course, from the Christian perspective, there are illusions of sense in the Old Testament. These include concepts of God and His intentions that the New Testament will reveal as having been limited or confused. Such illusions are dispelled for good when we re-read the Old Testament through the lens of the Gospels. But this is no brute rejection of our biblical past; it's a way of retaining that past by interpreting it anew. The interpretation will strike us as the discovery of a meaning that we were already aware of, but darkly so. In the *Meno*, Socrates accounted for this impression of foreknowledge by postulating a stock of eternal meanings, pre-given and warehoused in the eternal memory of the soul. In the Kierkegaardian-Christian picture, the remembered meaning will, paradoxically, have no being at all until it is revealed in and through the activity of remembrance itself. Maurice Merleau-Ponty might as well have been describing the paradox of repetition when he wrote of a form of reflection "that constitutes [...], like an original past, a past that has never been present" (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 252). In repetition, a new meaning is created for our words, though we encounter it as *the same* meaning with which we were always familiar. The *newness* of the new meaning is, in this way, evanescent. Hence we are inclined to speak not discovering something new but remembering something long familiar.

1.7. Remembrance Remembered: Other Aspects

Let me summarize what I have said so far. I have said that the question of realism is my main interest in this dissertation. I also identified three subsidiary questions in Wittgenstein studies with which this issue of realism will be bound up. I called these the question of remembrance, the question of linguistic revisionism, and the question of alternative grammars. It is by coming to grips with these three sub-questions that I hope to come to grips with the central question of realism. My answer to these three sub-questions will emerge when I read Wittgenstein as trying to facilitate a return to the truth in classical realism through a Christian-Kierkegaardian rethinking of the activity of remembrance to which that realism is tied. As I have put it, Wittgenstein, like Kierkegaard, is trying to help us return to realism by facilitating a transformational remembrance of 'remembrance' itself. When we come to think of remembrance as a matter of repetition, we will see how the resolute Wittgenstein, like Kierkegaard, can be regarded as a kind of realist.

As I have said, the question of remembrance has logical priority over the question of revisionism and the question of alternative grammars. We need to answer these latter two questions in order to answer the first, but the first is our key to the main question of realism. In this section, I want to anticipate three further important features of Wittgenstein's Kierkegaardian re-thinking of Greek remembrance.

First, we will see that Wittgenstein's picture involves a retained but renewed understanding of classical philosophical learning. The Wittgensteinian learner will not be 'self-sufficient' in the process of his own philosophical education. Self-sufficiency will be an aspect of the classical thinking of remembrance that goes by the board in the Christian-repetitional thinking of remembrance that Wittgenstein adopts from Kierkegaard. However, there will remain an important sense in which the Wittgensteinian learner, like the Socratic learner, will be left to do his learning on his own. The philosophical learner will remain autonomous, though his autonomy will be decoupled from its classical concomitant: the idea of self-sufficiency. The unaided use of human reason will not be what establishes our relationship with philosophical truth.

The second aspect of the classical picture that we will see preserved in Wittgenstein goes hand in glove with the first and concerns the *maieutic* method of philosophical teaching. Since the learner must be left to acknowledge the truth of things on his own, the Wittgensteinian teacher should function only as a midwife. For the resolute Wittgenstein, this will involve a turn to a brand of 'indirect communication' that we find in Kierkegaard and which we will ultimately recognize as a transformed version of that indirect method that we saw in Socratic questioning.

This brings me to the third and most important aspect of the classical picture that will resound in Wittgenstein: the idea that a proper remembrance of philosophical truth will involve a proper remembrance of *the self*. Four features of this re-thought notion of the self are worth highlighting up front.

1.7.1. Remembering the Self

In the classical tradition, the truth of the self is pre-given; it is the eternal philosophical subconscious, hidden from us but already there, in its eternal reality, awaiting discovery. In this recollective picture, recovering a sense of who we are does not involve any *essential* transformation of the self. On the resolute reading that I will offer, Wittgenstein's picture of self-remembrance is very different. It will require a 'repetition' of the self in the Kierkegaardian sense. Though we will be 'made new' in a deep sense that we don't see in recollection, and the new person we become will register with us as the expression of the person we always were.

We will see this issue of self-transformation most clearly in the *Tractatus*. What is less evident in the *Tractatus* is how this transformation is supposed to manifest itself in the life of the reborn individual. Once one has undergone this transformation, how does one act? How does the event of self-transformation make a meaningful difference in one's life? My claim will be that the change manifests itself, most generally, as a change in the way one relates to the world as we know it, the world as it meaningfully presents itself to one in language. In other words, the change will manifest itself in a changed relationship with language, where 'language' is to be understood in the rich sense of 'linguistic experience,' or 'the linguistically-structured world.' With resolute readers, my claim will be that this alteration in the way we relate to the linguistically-structured world is present in the *Tractatus*, but as the hidden meaning of the text that comes more clearly to the fore in the later writings. But what is this changed way of relating to the world we know in language? How are we to think about it?

Here, in part, I take my cue from the Tractarian claim that the self is the microcosm of the world (T, 5.63; cf., NB, 84). This curious remark suggests an interpretation that I develop, once again, through a comparison to Kierkegaard. When it is transformed through self-remembrance, the self is characterized by its new willingness to look upon the linguistically structured world as a field of sense capable of undergoing this same kind of repetitional transformation. As a self remembered anew, we come to regard the world in general as an open-texture of meaning, everywhere and continually shot through with the same promise of renewing remembrance that characterizes the

original renewing memory of the self. In short, the transformational remembrance of the self will involve a fundamental change in what we take to be the meaning of the self. This new meaning of the self will be manifest as a willingness to look upon words and the world we know in their terms as a site of potential for the same kind of transformational remembrance by which we have been, ourselves, renewed. Here we arrive the first and most general way in which the Wittgensteinian account of self-remembrance will differ from the classical Socratic-Platonic picture: The remembered Wittgensteinian self relates to language as the place of potential repetition, of renewing remembrance. This is the view which, I argue, is present as the nascent promise of the *Tractatus* but which comes out most clearly in the later work.

The second essential difference between the role of the self in the classical and Wittgensteinian pictures of realism is implicit in the first. The transformation in our thinking about realism is bound up with the above-described transformation in our thinking about self and language. The movement into genuine realism will involve our eschewing the recollective picture of remembrance and the associated understanding of the phenomena we thereby remember: the meaning of the self and the linguistically-structured world. I have said that a return to realism will require returning to the idea that meaning is transcendent to the self, and in a more profound sense of 'transcendence' than that which we find in the Greeks. In the Kierkegaardian picture of remembrance as repetition, realism involves encountering a new truth that breaks in upon the self from outside, rather than encountering a static truth already written into the structure of the eternal Socratic soul. This disclosure of new truth will occur to us of its own accord, rather than as a result of any willful effort of human reflection. The shift away from this Greek realism will be, at the same time, a shift away from the Greek picture of the self as the repository of the reality we wish we know and whose unaided intellectual effort is the effective mechanism by which we come to know it.

The third important feature of this movement away from the Greek picture of the self will be a movement away from the tendency, most visible in Plato's *Phaedo*, to envision the true self as something metaphysically divorced from the body. We will come to accept a more sophisticated understanding of the self as something essentially incarnate, or embodied, in our bodily uses of words and deeds. We will see that some readers find a version of this dualistic, post-Platonic, account of self in the *Tractatus*. I will argue that Wittgenstein means for us to reject it in favour of the non-dualistic alternative. This embodied picture of the self, once more, becomes more apparent in the later writings.

This conception of the language-using subject as essentially incarnate in the body will go together with an analogous sense in which *meaning* is essentially incarnate in words. Where we see a disembodied picture of the human being in the immortal soul of the *Pheado*, we see an analogously disembodied picture of meaning in the Platonic doctrine of the Forms. Of course, the Forms were supposed to be an order of eternal meanings metaphysically set off from the temporal order of things that were their mere shadows. Wittgenstein's picture will be different. Just as the soul – the "philosophical self" (T, 5.641) – is distinct from but essentially incarnate in the body, so too is the meaning of words different from but essentially 'incarnate' in words and their use. The issue of the soul and its relation to the body will be most present in the *Tractatus*. The analogical connection between soul and body, and meaning and word will, once again, be implicit in the *Tractatus* but will come out most clearly in the *Investigations* the discussion of the "soul of words" (PI, §530-46).

1.8. On the Incarnation of Meaning

Recall the question of alternative grammars: How can we speak about the 'possibility' of grammars about which nothing can be said using the grammatical resources we have? My claim is that the analogical connection between soul and body, and meaning and word, serves us as a hint to an answer here. How so?

The meaning of a word will not be a straightforwardly temporal phenomenon. Still, it will be essentially manifested in the word's temporal characteristics, the shape and sound of the word and, most importantly, its use. We w ill see that, for Wittgenstein, words, and the use of words, bear a kind of internal relation to the meaning they express, just as the soul (or the Tractarian 'philosophical self') bears a sort of internal relation to the body. What does this mean? It means, in part, that, ordinarily, we experience the use of words as being already 'ensouled' with meaning, and we react to it as such, pre-reflectively, by producing an immediate and unthinking but a normatively appropriate response in our own words or deeds. What is *not* needed here is any reflective act of *interpretation* to mediate between the experience of meaning and our understanding of it. I describe these capacities for a norm-appropriate response as responses of the 'body,' for they are not the result of any intellectual calculation of the sort that Wittgenstein associates with the mind, thought, or reason (CV, 31; OC, §475; Z, §540-545). If we understand 'the body' in this way, as a nexus of pre-reflective capacities to navigate the field of sense, we can describe the notion of a speaker who always needed a reflective act of interpretation to discern meaning as a kind of 'disembodied' intellect. He would be incapable of responding to meaning in a bodily way until the intellect had

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done the appropriate interpretive work, and made a reflective decision about how to interpret the words and deeds of others, and about what responses are, therefore, in order.

When we appreciate this sense in which the reflective interpreter is 'disembodied,' we can see how it is this disembodiment that tends to lock him into meanings already familiar. It is disembodiment in the sense I've just described, which closes the interpreter off to the dawning of new meaning – meanings *not* already immanent within the self – and to the kind of realism that the encounter with such meaning will involve. Wittgenstein's embodied thinking of both the subject and of the meaning that solicits the subject's response provides us with a way of seeing past the sort of solipsism and anti-realism that troubles recollection. Let me says a word more to sketch out the point.

If we do not think of meanings as the pre-given inventory of the mind, but as meanings essentially manifest in our pre-reflective linguistic know-how, we will come to see how novel, unforeseeable, determinations of sense can emerge in and through the deployment of that know-how. In its pre-reflective use, language can be seen to involve a dynamic, living grammar manifest in the immediate and unthinking communion between embodied subject and embodied meaning. Here, grammar will not be a static stock of intellectual possibilities that we uncover in reflection. When we appreciate the incarnation of both speaker and meaning, we will see our way past the 'great difficulty' of alternative grammars and arrive at full-blooded understanding of repetition as a form of remembrance. Once we have come clear on the nature of repetition, we will be in position to appreciate the distinctly resolute brand of realism that repetition involves.

In sum, the incarnation of the speaker in the body, and of meaning in the word, will provide us with a way of thinking about the possibility of alternative grammars. In doing so, it will help us to address a critical barrier to our understanding of that revisionary element in Wittgenstein's philosophy that involves the creation of new grammars. Having understood this element of revisionism, we will be in a position to understand Wittgenstein's concept of remembrance. Finally, we will be in place to see a kind of realism in Wittgenstein's Kierkegaardian vision of remembrance as a repetitional interplay of meaning, both old and new.

1.9. Summary of Intended Contributions to Scholarship

The primary way in which I hope this dissertation contributes to scholarship should be clear. I want to show that a Kierkegaardian interpretation of Wittgenstein's notion of remembrance can save the resolute reader from the charge of anti-realism. This main contribution, however, breaks down into

four others. First, I hope to show how a Kierkegaardian interpretation of the *later* Wittgenstein can help us appreciate a sense in which his later work is genuinely realistic about meaning. Second: the Kierkegaardian realism I offer will provide a way of making sense of the long-recognized tension between Wittgenstein's various suggestions that he is trying to create new concepts – new determinations of meaning – and his insistence elsewhere that he is only reminding us of the concepts we already have. The strength of my thesis that the later Wittgenstein is operating with a Kierkegaardian model of realism will rest upon the power of that model to account for this tension between the revisionary and non-revisionary aspect of Wittgenstein's philosophy. Third, by offering this account of what realism might be in the later work, I hope to shed light upon a plausible way of thinking about realism in a resolute reading of the early work, the *Tractatus*. If I succeed on this front, I will have described one way of resolving the debate between resolute readers and orthodox readers dissatisfied with the apparent anti-realism of the resolute approach. Fourth, I develop an account of how an 'embodied' speaker and meaning can help resolve the problem of 'alternative grammars' and, thereby, provide a clear view of Wittgenstein's realism. The concept of *revelation* will be central to the kind of realism I describe here, and it is this concept that can be understood once we think of meaning as essentially embodied meaningful words and deeds.

> I think I summed up my attitude to philosophy when I said: philosophy ought really to be written as poetic composition.
>
> Wittgenstein (CV, 24)

> [T]here is nothing that requires as gentle a treatment as the removal of an illusion.
>
> Kierkegaard (PV, 43)

2. Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein, and Indirect Communication

2.1. Introduction

The term 'resolute reading' originally described the interpretation of the *Tractatus* spearheaded by James Conant and Cora Diamond in the early 1990s.[12] Since then, resolute readings of the post-*Tractatus* writings have also emerged because, as Conant points out, "issues parallel to those which arise in connection with the interpretation of the *Tractatus* arise in connection with the interpretation of Wittgenstein's later work as well" (Conant 2004).[13] In addition to working on different texts, both early and late, resolute readers differ in their interpretations of those texts (see Conant and Diamond 2004, 47). The consequence is that the 'resolute reading' names not a specific analysis, but a general hermeneutic approach (ibid.). The approach goes by several other names: the 'therapeutic reading' (McGinn 1999, Coliva 2010), the 'new reading' (Proops 2001), and the 'austere' reading (Williams 2004), amongst others.[14] For ease, I will speak mostly of the 'resolute' reading, and I will use the

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[12] Conant's major articles on the resolute *Tractatus* are Conant 1989, 1991, 1993, 1995, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2005a. Diamond was the other main pioneer of the resolute approach, developing it independently of Conant but around the same time (See Diamond 1991, 1996, 2000). A mature statement of the resolute approach to the *Tractatus* is Conant and Diamond's co-authored 2004, where they respond to their critics.

[13] Conant's 1995, 1998, 2004 and 2005 take a resolute approach to parts of *Philosophical Investigations* and *On Certainty*. Stephen Mulhall has offered a resolute reading of the private language argument in the *Investigations* (2007) and, following Conant's lead, Read (2005) and Crary (2005) have offered resolute readings of important passages in *On Certainty*. Crary and Read collect a variety of resolute readings of both the early and later Wittgenstein in their 2000. Exploring yet another application of the reading, Michael Kremer (2001, 2004) and Stephen Mulhall (2015) have offered varieties of the resolute reading that suggest connections between Wittgenstein's teaching and Catholicism.

[14] Most often, the term 'therapeutic' is applied to what I am calling 'resolute' readings of the *Investigations*. In fact, the resolute reading of the *Tractatus* resembles Stanley Cavell's 'therapeutic' way of reading the *Investigations* (see Conant 1989, Cavell 1984), and can be taken as an application of that therapeutic reading to Wittgenstein's first book. I avoid calling the resolute reading 'therapeutic,' however. As Meredith Williams notes, such language misleadingly suggests that proponents of the orthodox reading ignore the therapeutic element of Wittgenstein's method (Williams 2004, 10 n.7). What is distinctive about the resolute approach is not that it takes stock of the therapeutic element, but its resistance to the orthodox account of what that therapeutic element involves.

term in the ecumenical sense I have just described. 'Resolute reading,' names a basic interpretive approach to Wittgenstein's works, early or late.

Resolute readers are united by their opposition to what is variously called the 'orthodox' reading, the 'received' reading, the 'standard' reading, the 'Carnapian' reading (Witherspoon 2000), the 'inviolability' reading (Crary 2000b, 120; Crary 2005), and the 'irresolute' reading (Goldfarb 1997). Like the resolute alternative, this orthodoxy is best described as an interpretive approach shared by many different commentators who focus on different texts and whose readings differ in their details.[15] Many disagreements divide these two general camps of readers, but perhaps the most fundamental disagreement concerns their differing views of Wittgenstein's philosophical evolution. Resolute readers find far more continuity between Wittgenstein's early and later thought than do their orthodox confreres. In other words, resolute readers all adhere to some version of what I will call the *continuity thesis*.

2.1.1. The Continuity Thesis

In a sentence, the orthodox view of Wittgenstein's intellectual development goes as follows: he published the *Tractatus* in 1921, came to recognize that it was fundamentally mistaken and, at about 1930, began developing a very different philosophy whose centrepiece is the *Philosophical Investigations*, published posthumously in 1953. Though there are various kinds of resolute reader, all agree that there is more continuity between the early and later epochs of Wittgenstein's philosophy than the orthodox view admits. In other words, all agree that many of the later Wittgenstein's best insights were already there to be found in the *Tractatus* (see Crary 2000a, 1-2). The sort of resolute reading advanced by Conant and Diamond has been described as a 'weak,' or 'Girondin,' resolute reading. It has been contrasted with 'strong,' or 'Jacobin' resolution, which is primarily associated with the writings of Juliet Floyd, Rupert Read, and Rob Deans.[16] In his 2007 case for the 'weak' resolute

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[15] Influential orthodox approaches to the *Tractatus* include the early commentaries by G.E.M. Anscombe (1959) and Max Black (1966). The most famous statement of the orthodox approach to the later work is Gordon Baker and Peter Hacker's four-volume commentary on the *Philosophical Investigations*. Other oft-quoted parts of the orthodox canon are Hacker's *Insight and Illusion* (1997) and Hans-Johan Glock's dictionary of Wittgensteinian concepts (1996). David Pears (1987) adopts an orthodox approach to the *Tractatus* that comes close to Hacker's, in certain respects, and one that will differ from the orthodoxy we will find in Mounce's interpretation of that early book.

[16] Read and Deans originally made the distinction between 'strong' and 'weak' versions of resolution in their 2003, where they advocated for strong resolution, aligning themselves with Floyd (Deans and Read 2003, 248, 267). In his 2011, Goldfarb marks the distinction between weak and strong resolutists with the terms 'Girondin' and 'Jacobin.' Deans and Read defend strong resolution in their co-authored 2011 and in Read's 2005a and 2006. Floyd's most frequently cited statements of the view are her 2002 (see Floyd 2002, 338-41) and 2007 (see Floyd 2007, 181; cf., 181 n. 12), but she had been advancing the reading since the early 1990s (Floyd 2007, 181). In their 2017, Conant and Bronzo describe these varieties resolution and the major criticisms that have been made against them.

approach, Conant rebrands the view as 'mild mono-Wittgensteinianism,' signifying the merely 'mild' element of continuity that he and Diamond find between early and late Wittgenstein. Conant rebrands strong resolute readings as ranging from *Severe* Mono-Wittgensteinianism to *Zealous* Mono-Wittgensteinianism. The latter kind of strong resolute reader suspects that, by the time Wittgenstein published the *Tractatus,* he had already recognized and abandoned all, or almost all, of what the *Investigations* would later identify as the problematic doctrines of that first text (Conant 2007, 90-93). Mild Mono-Wittgensteinians find more continuity between the early and later Wittgenstein than orthodox readers, but less than these two kinds of strong resolutists. The orthodox reader believes in *two* Wittgensteins, early and late, who are supposed to have espoused two very different views of language and philosophy. Resolute readers, or 'mono-Wittgensteinians,' believe in only *one* Wittgenstein, in the sense that they find more continuity between Wittgenstein's early and later work than orthodox readers, with zealous mono-Wittgensteinian finding more continuity than their 'severe' counterparts. To rephrase, weak resolutists adopt a weak version of the continuity thesis; strong resolutists adopt a strong version. In this dissertation, I presuppose a strong version of the continuity thesis. I hold that Wittgenstein's failure in the *Tractatus* was not principally a failure to understand language and philosophy as it is described in the *Investigations*. I suspect that Wittgenstein had already had the most critical insights of that later text by the time he had published the *Tractatus* in 1921. Unless otherwise specified, is this strong version that I mean when I speak without qualification of the 'continuity thesis' henceforth.

The continuity thesis will play a key role in my argument. It is what will permit me to claim that the kind of realism that I will find in Wittgenstein's later work can also be seen in the resolute *Tractatus*, where that realism is less apparent. Since this reading of Wittgenstein will be unusual, I should pause to anticipate how that argument will go, and how it will deploy the continuity thesis. In the last chapter, we saw that the resolute *Tractatus* strikes some orthodox readers as involving a kind of anti-realism about the logic of language. Now, most orthodox readers regard the *Tractatus* as a realist view of logic, and they view the *Investigations* as its anti-realist antipode. From this perspective, the apparent anti-realism of the resolute *Tractatus* can seem to suggest that resolute readers accept the anti-realist reading of the later work and then, true to the continuity thesis, read that anti-realism back into the earlier text. On the resolute reading that I offer, the relation between the early and later work on the topic of realism will run in precisely the reverse direction. The resolute reader indeed sees the later philosophy as already present in the *Tractatus*, and resolute readers will indeed reject the kind of realism that we see in the orthodox *Tractatus*. I argue, however, that a resolute reader need

not regard the later philosophy as anti-realistic. I argue that the later work is best viewed as a contribution to the kind of realism that we will find in Kierkegaard, and which I will associate with the repetitional concept of remembrance. Assuming the truth of the continuity thesis, I then read that realism back into the apparent anti-realistic resolute *Tractatus*.[17]

Thus, if the continuity thesis is unacceptable, then the realism I find in the later work will be of limited interest. Even if the thesis can save the resolute reading of the *later* texts from the charge of anti-realism, it will do little to save the resolute reading of the *Tractatus* from that charge. My aim is not to mount a full-bodied defence of the resolute reading or of the continuity thesis that is so central to it. My goal is to show that the resolute reading can avoid the charge of anti-realism *if* the thesis is accepted, and this is a different task from defending it. However, given the centrality of the thesis to my argument, I must at least acknowledge and address, in a schematic way, the *prima facie* implausibility of the view. That is the aim of this chapter.

2.1.2. *Prima Facie* Objections to the Continuity Thesis

Isn't the continuity thesis condemned by what Wittgenstein wrote about the *Tractatus* in the forward to the *Investigations*: "I have been forced to recognize grave mistakes in what I wrote in that first book" (PI, 4)? Isn't this mention of 'grave mistakes' clearly at odds with the strong resolute reader's claim that the *Tractatus* had already gotten things basically right? And are we to believe that Wittgenstein is disingenuous when he says that he came to discover these grave mistakes only *after* the publication of the *Tractatus,* through his conversations with Frank Ramsey (ibid.)? Given that Wittgenstein describes his philosophical development as a movement *away* from the ideas of his early work, we can readily appreciate Michael Hymer's incredulity at the resolute reader's suggestion that Wittgenstein himself never actually believed in those ideas. "Surely Wittgenstein held these doctrines in the *Tractatus* and later gave them up!" (Hymers 2010, 74).

When one turns from the forward of the *Investigations* to the body of the text, one finds what seems to be further conclusive evidence that the later work marks a pivotal turn away from Wittgenstein's earlier thinking. The *Investigations* specifically and continually identifies "the author

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[17] Incidentally, since, as I will argue, the supposed realism of the orthodox *Tractatus* is tied to a recollective concept of remembrance, I will also argue that its supposed realism amounts to a kind of *anti*-realism in the end, namely, the kind of anti-realism that we will presently see Kierkegaard associate with recollection. In other words, my claim will be that both resolute and orthodox readers have left themselves open to the charge of anti-realism, though these will be anti-realisms of two different kinds (more on this in Chapter 3). After showing that the *Tractatus* leaves room for the more satisfying kind of realism that we will find in Kierkegaard, I attempt to show that realism can be more clearly seen in the later work. With the continuity thesis in hand, I can then conclude that that more satisfying kind of realism can, in fact, be attributed to the resolute *Tractatus*.

Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus" (PI, §23) as someone held captive by the kinds of conceptual confusions that the *Investigations* is meant to correct (see PI, §46, §97, §108, §114, §134). Even setting aside these places in the *Investigations* where the *Tractatus* is explicitly targeted for criticism, isn't it also abundantly clear that the *Tractatus* is one of the intended targets of the critique of metaphysics the find in the opening one hundred and thirty-three paragraphs of the later book? How could a resolute reader possibly acknowledge Wittgenstein's own assertions that there is a stark discontinuity between the *Tractatus* and the *Investigations* and yet maintain the continuity thesis, especially in its stronger varieties?

In the Introduction, we saw Peter Hacker call the resolute reading the "deconstructionist" (2000, 359) or "post-modernist interpretation" (2000, 360). H. O. Mounce was also inclined to place resolute readers amongst the 'deconstructionalists' because resolutists appear to saddle Wittgenstein with a kind of post-modern 'subjectivism' about the meaning of words in general.[18] Hacker places resolute readers amongst the deconstructionalists because they seem to manifest that same subjectivism in their approach to the meaning of the *Tractatus*:

> In so far as deconstruction subscribes to the hermeneutic principle that an author never says what he means or means what he says, this epithet seems eminently suitable to characterize many of the tactical moves of the proponents of this interpretation in disregarding what Wittgenstein actually wrote and said about what he had written. (Hacker 2000, 359, n. 22)

Surely the resolute reader can't just be *disregarding* what Wittgenstein wrote, but the only obvious alternative to this desperate hermeneutic tactic seems equally unacceptable. As I suggested a moment ago, if the resolute reader is not simply disregarding Wittgenstein's claims about what he wrote, it would seem that the resolute reader is suggesting that Wittgenstein is simply *lying* when he makes those claims. As an exegetical strategy for making a philosopher look self-consistent, this would be, in general, an implausibly wild leap. It would, however, be especially untenable when it comes to *Wittgenstein*, who, as Norman Malcolm reports, "really *hated* all forms of affectation and insincerity" (Malcolm 1984, 28).

Wittgenstein had given the virtue of honesty serious thought, and he seems to have regarded it as a condition of doing good philosophical work. He wrote:

> No one *can* speak the truth if he has still not mastered himself. He cannot speak it; – but not because he is not clever enough yet. /[19] The truth can be spoken only by someone who is

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[18] I will have more to say about subjectivism in the next chapter.
[19] Slashes between sentences indicate a paragraph break in the original.

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already *at home in* it; not by someone who still lives in falsehood and reaches out from falsehood towards truth only on occasion. (CV, 35; cf., ibid., 33, 49)

However clever one's propositions, if one is not a habitually truthful person, one's words will, in some way, lack the full significance of truth. "When you bump up against the limits of your own honesty it is as though your thoughts get in a whirlpool, an infinite regress: You can *say* what you like, it takes you no further" (CV, 8).

Often, the sort of honesty that concerned Wittgenstein was an honesty about the facts of one's own life and, in particular, facts about one's past sins. One had to be able to look far and wide into one's past and to acknowledge and admit one's moral errors. But again, if one could not do so, the consequences of this self-deception in one's personal life would ramify outward into one's work. Where the above passage suggests that deceit will come between a person and the truth, the following passage indicates that it will have a corrosive effect on the style of one's writing.

If anyone is unwilling to descend into himself, because this is too painful, he will remain superficial in his writing. Lying to oneself about oneself, deceiving oneself about the pretence in your own state of will, must have a harmful influence on [one's] style; for the result will be that you cannot tell what is genuine in the style and what is false [....] If I perform to myself, then it's this that the style expresses. And then the style cannot be my own. If you are unwilling to know what you are, then your writing is a form of deceit. (Quoted in Monk 1991, 366-67)

In a further development of the thought, the individual person is described as 'standing' either 'within' or 'outside' an honest grasp of who he is. We then read: "The greatness, or triviality, of a piece of work depends upon where the man who made it was standing. But you can equally say: a man will never be great if he misjudges himself: if he throws dust in his own eyes" (CV, 49). Ray Monk encapsulates this role of sincerity about oneself as the gravitational centre of one's philosophical life. "[F]or Wittgenstein, *all* philosophy, insofar as it is pursued honestly and decently, begins with a confession" (Monk 1991, 366; cf., CV p. 18). "The *edifice of your pride* has to be dismantled. And that is terribly hard work" (CV, 26).

It was not only dishonesty about the self that Wittgenstein found so corrosive. It was, as Malcolm wrote, "*all* forms of affectation and insincerity" (Malcolm 1984, 28) that he found unacceptable; his honesty about himself was part of a devotion to honesty in general. Wittgenstein's Russian teacher, Fania Pascal, describes how deeply this devotion ran in her student. She recalls the way Wittgenstein would express his dissatisfaction by crying out '*Intolerable, intolerable,*' throwing his

head back and rolling his eyes upwards: "It was impossible to doubt the sincerity of this as of everything else he said" (Pascal 1999, 226). She adds: "He asked about every single subject: 'But is it genuine?'" (ibid., 225) and was, all in all, "a man of great purity and innocence" (ibid., 236). Wittgenstein's allergy to insincerity could be severe, however, when it came to criticizing others. Once, when Pascal admitted to a blunder she had made, he considered the error and then issued his judgement: "Yes, you lack sagacity" (ibid., 228). On an occasion that would be yet more wounding to Pascal, Wittgenstein wrote to discourage her from teaching a course in current events for the Workers Educational Association: she ought under no circumstances do it, for she could only damage the students (ibid., 236). For all its obvious faults, this ruthless devotion to the truth is quite in keeping with the hatred of affectation and insincerity described by Malcolm, but it also probably owes something to a certain jejune insensibility on Wittgenstein's part to how injurious even honesty can be. For all his genius, Pascal recalls that "[h]e was an altogether naive man, remarkably unselfconscious" (ibid., 226). Given his "great purity and innocence" (ibid., 236), it seems fair to assume that his severity with others was born, not of malice, but of a combination of his principled commitment to the truth and to this naturally unselfconscious character.

Occasionally, Wittgenstein failed to live up to his exacting standard of truthfulness, but his torment over these failures only further illustrates just how committed to that standard he was. He once requested that his closest friends witness what he considered a confession of his sins (Monk 1991, Ch. 18). Having made the confession to G. E. Moore, later that day, he called Pascal to arrange a similar audience with her, informing her that the matter was urgent and couldn't wait (ibid., 238). What were his sins? Pascal can remember two: first, he had felt that he had not been forthright enough in correcting the false impression amongst people who knew him that his ancestry was more Aryan than Jewish (Pascal 1999, 238). This was no lie, but it was close enough to have troubled his mind with what Pascal describes as "an oppressive burden of guilt" (ibid., 239). The second was that he had once struck a pupil while working as an elementary school teacher in lower Austria, and then denied doing so to the schoolmaster. Pascal comments that "this event stood out as a crisis of his early manhood" (ibid., 240).[20] The bulk of Wittgenstein's guilt would undoubtedly have had to do with his mistreatment of the pupil but, as Pascal tells the story, his deceitfulness in the matter was also extremely significant. "On this occasion he did tell a lie, burdening his conscience for ever" (ibid., 240).

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[20] Pascal speculates: "It may have been this that made him give up teaching, perhaps made him realise that he ought to live as a solitary" (Pascal 1999, 240).

Norman Malcolm offers us a final anecdote that will return us to the apparent trouble for the resolute approach. After his return to philosophy, Wittgenstein had been delivering the lectures that we know as the *Blue and Brown Books*, his preparatory studies for the *Investigations*. At this time he learned of a colleague who had suggested in print that one could only speculate about the nature of Wittgenstein's work since the *Tractatus*:

> Someone showed the article to Wittgenstein and he was extremely angered by it. He said that the author merely pretended to be ignorant of his work. What made Wittgenstein furious was not only his belief in the author's dishonesty, but also the implication that Wittgenstein kept the nature of his work secret. (Malcolm 1984, 48)

If resolute readers are asking us to believe that Wittgenstein was dissembling when said that he abandoned the doctrines of the *Tractatus* only *after* its publication, they seem to be asking too much, and not only because such an interpretation is incompatible with Wittgenstein's general concern with honesty. Resolute readers would seem to be suggesting that he was being dishonest in precisely the way that he so furiously insisted he was not: they would seem to be suggesting that Wittgenstein was keeping the nature of his work secret.

The proponent of the strong continuity thesis finds himself on the horns of a dilemma. He either disregards those remarks where the later Wittgenstein criticizes his own earlier views (for these suggest a fundamental *discontinuity* between the early and later work), or he regards Wittgenstein as intentionally misrepresenting himself in those remarks. The first option is straightforwardly unacceptable as scholarship, and the second seems incompatible with the moral character of the man. These are serious *prima facie* objections to the strong continuity thesis, and resolute readers have done little to address them. No serious resolute reader can take the first horn of the dilemma, and, I think, no serious resolute reader has. In what follows I argue that the key to defending the resolute reading lies with the second option.

Of course, the second option seems no better than the first. However, the plausibility of this second line of defence comes into view when we take up the Kierkegaardian interpretation of Wittgenstein that we find in the commentaries of Cavell, Conant, and others.[21] Like Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein sought to communicate his message indirectly, and doing so required him not to lie, but to engage in a kind of benevolent deception. When we read Wittgenstein as a philosopher with deep intellectual debts to Kierkegaard, the continuity thesis will no longer seem as implausible as it

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[21] Charles L. Creegan offers a book-length study of the important connections between Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein (1989). Steven M. Emmanual (1996, Ch. 6), James C. Edwards (1982, 208, 150), and Henry Allison (1967) have also indicated these connections.

seems at first blush. To make our way to this reading, we need to begin with an account of Kierkegaardian indirect communication.

2.2. Kierkegaard and Indirect Communication

Johannes Climacus, the pseudonymous author of Kierkegaard's *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, calls the meaning of human existence *essential truth* (CUP, 168, n.; cf., PV, 109-110), or "the truth which essentially relates to *existence*" (CUP, 168, emphasis added). We are not speaking about existence in general here, but *human* existence (CUP, 68). More carefully still, Kierkegaard's project is to remind us what it means to be a *self*. The claim comes out in a famously tortuous passage from *The Sickness Unto Death:*

> A human being is spirit. But what is spirit? Spirit is the self. But what is the self? The self is a relation that relates itself to itself or is the relation's relating itself to itself in the relation; the self is not the relation but is the relation's relating itself to itself. A human being is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity, in short, a synthesis. A synthesis is a relation between the two. Considered in this way, a human being is still not a self. (SUD, 13; cf., CUP, 49)

The human being is a first-order relation between two terms, variously described as the eternal and the temporal, the infinite and the finite, freedom and necessity, essence and existence, soul and body (SUD, 13).[22] A *self*, however, is more than just this first-order relation between eternal soul and temporal body; it is the second-order relation that consists in the way we understand this first-order relation. In the *Postscript*, Climacus elucidates this second, distinctly 'subjective,' aspect of the truth of selfhood by contrasting it with its opposite, which he calls "objective truth" (CUP, 168-69):

> When truth is asked about objectively, reflection is directed objectively at truth as an object to which the knower relates. Reflection is not on the relation but on it being the truth, the true that he is relating to. If only this, to which he relates, is the truth, the true, then the subject is in the truth. If the truth is asked about subjectively, reflection is directed subjectively on the individual's relation; if only the how of this relation is in the truth, then the individual is in the truth, even if he related in this way to untruth. (CUP, 167-68)

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[22] In the Lowrie translation of SUD we have 'soul' and 'body' (Kierkegaard 1954, 146); in the Hong and Hong Translation that I mostly rely upon (Kierkegaard 1980), we have 'psychical' and 'physical.' Dreyfus and describes the subtler differences between the above ways of describing the two aspects of the human duality (2012, 103-107).

There a sense, then, in which *our relation* to a belief can be true whether or not the belief itself is true. An 'objective' investigation is concerned with whether the belief itself is true; a 'subjective' investigation is concerned with whether our relation to the belief is true.

A self, as we will see, is a human being in whom the eternal aspect of our being finds its proper expression in a temporal, human, life. *Existence*, in the Kierkegaardian sense, is the task of becoming a self, and it's clearest expression is the Christian faith. Accordingly, I will shift between describing Kierkegaard's effort to communicate "what it is to exist and what inwardness means" (CUP, 203) as an effort to communicate the meaning of Christianity, and as an effort to communicate what it means to be a self. Our need to have a properly subjective relation to the Christian truth means that that relation will be a matter of faith, rather than knowledge. Put differently, our relationship to Christianity will be passionate, rather than epistemic.[23]

2.2.1. Indirection and Knowledge

"Christianity is not a matter of knowledge, [and] much knowledge is of no help except in making it easier to fall into the confusion of regarding Christianity as a matter of knowledge" (CUP, 180-81; cf., CUP, 217). Christianity is a matter of *faith*. Climacus goes on: "When I had grasped this, it also became clear to me that, if I wanted to communicate anything on this point, the main thing was that my exposition be in *indirect* form" (CUP, 41).

If we are trying to communicate knowledge, our 'mode' of communication can be direct: what we wish to express "can be understood directly and rattled off by rote" (CUP, 64). If Christianity were a matter of knowledge, then, we could argue for it in the ordinary way – directly – by providing reasons that support a belief in Christian doctrines. But since Christianity is no such object of knowledge, Climacus is in an awkward position. On the one hand, he needs to remind his reader that Christianity is not a matter of knowledge, but faith. On the other hand, he cannot offer direct reasons for believing that Christianity is a matter of faith, for doing so would be to treat Christianity as an object of knowledge after all, and to fall into the very illusion that he is trying to unseat. Paul Muench makes the point by highlighting the difference between the ordinary epistemic business of imparting new knowledge to another, and the therapeutic business of *reminding* another of something he is in danger of forgetting. The problem with the direct approach is that it only

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[23] Though it serves us with a rough and ready first pass at the issue, this formulation could be misleading. Kierkegaard will hold that faith is "[n]ot the content of a concept but a form of the will" (FT, 249). As we will see, to *contrast* faith with knowledge is to conceptualize faith in the way that Kierkegaard is warning us against here. A proper understanding of faith will require us to overcome our attraction to such contrasts.

exacerbates the problem Kierkegaard and Climacus want to correct. "By doing philosophy in this way the individual 'forgets' herself or himself, effectively losing sight of herself or himself as an ethical and religious being" (Muench 2010, 41). Muench continues:

> Climacus seems to think that he will be able to communicate with readers who suffer from [the] condition of ethical and religious forgetfulness only if he employs a non-straightforward manner of writing. That is, if he is to *remind* his readers of what has been forgotten, he will have to find a way of getting around or past their present habits of thought and their current appetite for knowledge. This means, in his view, that his writing must be given a non-didactic form and not come across as providing readers with yet another thing to know (Muench 2010, 41; emphasis in original).

One reason we need indirection, then, has to do with the nature of the truth of which Climacus wants to remind us: Christianity, and its account of what it means to be a self. If we proceed directly, that truth will be misunderstood as an object of knowledge when, in fact, it is an article of faith. Another reason has to do, not with the nature of the truth we are trying to communicate, but with the fact that an *illusion* needs to be dispelled before any such communication can succeed.

2.2.2. Indirection and Illusion

We are assuming here that Kierkegaard, like Wittgenstein, is trying to remind us of *grammar*. When Kierkegaard points out, for example, that 'a revelation cannot be proven by evidence,' (see Kierkegaard 1955, 91), he is not informing us of any ordinary fact in the way, for example, that I might inform you that it's raining outside. Rather, Kierkegaard is reminding us of what we mean by the word 'revelation,' just as we remind someone of the meaning of the word 'bachelor' when we point out that all bachelors are men. Conant explains:

> Kierkegaard offers this as a grammatical remark. [...] To say that Kierkegaard intends his […] statement as a grammatical remark is to say he is offering it as a criterion of what it is for something to count as a genuine revelation. If we do not understand this much about revelations, then, by his lights, we do not know what a genuine religious revelation is. (Conant 1989, 255; cf., Cavell 2002, 169; Lippitt 2000, 110)

To say that Kierkegaard's is a grammatical investigation is not to say that he is interested in simply adumbrating the rules of language willy-nilly. He is not interested, for example, in listing rules of grammar for words that we already understand very well and have no inclination to misuse. He is interested in clarifying the grammar of Christianity, revelation, inwardness, existence, etc., (CUP,

217) because, in this nexus of ideas, clarification is *needed* (CUP, 217), and it is needed because we have fallen under an illusion of what Christian selfhood involves.

As we saw a moment ago, the first reason for indirect communication is that Christianity is not an object of knowledge. It can't be understood as a belief that we can justify with epistemic reasons in the way that we can justify claims that we can properly be said to *know*. Since direct communication would involve providing just such epistemic reasons in support of Christianity, the effort to use direct communication betrays a misunderstanding of what we are trying to communicate. The second reason for indirect communication does not concern the nature of this truth that we are trying to communicate, but the nature of the grammatical confusion that blocks our way to acknowledging that truth. In other words, in addition to being required for communicating the truth without misrepresenting it, the indirect method is also required for the preliminary business of dispelling the illusion that currently binds us. A false belief can be corrected by directly attacking that belief and showing that it is unjustified. On the other hand,

> [a]n illusion can never be destroyed directly, and only by indirect means can it be radically removed. If it is an illusion that all are Christians – and if there is anything to be done about it, it must be done indirectly [....] That is, one must approach from behind the person who is under an illusion. (Kierkegaard 1962, 24-25; cf., Conant 1995, 272)[24]

Our presumption that Kierkegaard is engaged in a grammatical investigation provides us with two ways of understanding why we cannot directly attack an illusion.

First, direct argumentation will only avail when the parties involved in the dispute are agreed about the meaning (grammar) of their terms; if they are not so agreed, they will just be talking past one another. But we lack this fundamental kind of agreement when one person in the dispute is confused about the grammar of his terms. The point is familiar from the everyday experience of realizing, in the midst of a disagreement, that we have been unable to resolve the issue by the ordinary, epistemic give and take of reasons because one party simply *means*, by a given word, something that the other does not mean. In some cases, this is a faultless disagreement, but sometimes one of the parties is wrong; one party can be under an *illusion* of meaning. To resolve differences that are rooted at this deep grammatical level, indirect communication is required, and this involves a certain kind of deception:

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[24] I have deviated from my usual use of the Hong and Hong Translation here. The cited translation by B. Nelson (Harper and Row, 1962) makes the point more clearly.

On the assumption that someone is under an illusion and consequently the first step, properly understood, is to remove the illusion – if I do not begin by deceiving, I begin with direct communication. But direct communication presupposes that the recipient's ability to receive is entirely in order, but here that is simply not the case – indeed here an illusion is an obstacle. (PV, 54)[25]

For the benighted person to receive a genuine understanding of the faith, he needs to be unburdened of the illusion that blocks the way. "This being the case, being able to *impart* becomes in the end the art of taking away" (PV, 230, n.).

We now come to the second way that our presumption that Kierkegaard is engaged in a grammatical investigation can help us to see why an illusion cannot be directly attacked. An epistemic error involves an intelligible but unjustified proposition. Hence, in such cases, there is some comprehensible propositional content for a philosopher to attack. When it comes to a grammatical error – an illusion of meaning –, however, there is no such propositional content. Since the very *attempt* at a direct attack presupposes that there is such an intelligible proposition in play, the strategy of direct attack is confused. Commenting on the last quoted passage, Conant puts the point this way:

Why can an illusion not be destroyed directly? What can be destroyed directly? The intended contrast here is between an illusion and an ordinary case of *false* belief. A false belief can be confronted directly. One does this by arguing for the truth of the negation of the false belief. Kierkegaard suggests that this method of direct confrontation is not available to him because there is a sense in which there is no matter of fact or doctrine about which he wants to enter into a dispute with his reader. It is not that his reader has a point of view which he wants to *disagree* with (in the sense of wishing to argue for the negation of that point of view). The problem, rather, is that his reader suffers from an *illusion*. Kierkegaard understands the prospective reader of the pseudonymous authorship to be someone who is in the grip of an illusory point of view. For the point of view the reader imagines himself to occupy is only an illusion of a point of view. To attack an illusory point of view directly is precisely to concede that it is a point of view. It is to concede the intelligibility of what is under attack. A direct attack only reinforces one's interlocutor's conviction that what is at issue is a matter about which one can, at least, provisionally, agree or disagree. Kierkegaard does not imagine his reader to have a set of false beliefs about Christianity. The problem is rather that he has a set

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[25] For continuity with the Nelson translation I have changed the Hong's 'delusion' to 'illusion.'

of incoherent beliefs. He is completely confused about what it means for someone to become Christian. (Conant 1995, 272-73)

2.2.3. Indirection and Intransigence

The problem that Conant has just identified is partly conceptual. If we directly *argue* with a person who says that a given bachelor is female, we are placing that person's claim in the same logical category as the claim that that bachelor was stood up at the altar. The second is an intelligible claim with a propositional content that can be either true or false. The first is an illusion about the meaning of words void of any propositional content. In the case of an illusion, there is no intelligible claim directly to attack. In this way, directly attacking an illusion muddies the critical conceptual distinction between an illusion and an ordinary case of false belief.

The problem here is not merely conceptual, however. Launching a direct attack on an illusion also has a counter-productive practical consequence. When, in this way, we *treat* an illusion as if it has an intelligible content, we very often confirm, in our interlocutor, the very impression we are trying to unseat: the impression that his words make sense. As a matter of psychological fact, according to Kierkegaard, a direct attack can actually make the interlocutor more intransigently committed to the illusion. This is our third reason for communicating indirectly. To explore it, we can consider an evident difference between the indirect method practiced by Socrates, and that practiced by Kierkegaard.

Socrates understood that philosophical teaching requires that the pupil himself recognizes the truth that he is being taught.[26] Since genuine conviction cannot be coerced, Socrates would not have the pupil mouth beliefs that he didn't both understand and accept. In this Socratic principle, we see an element of respect for the learner's autonomy. Famously, however, the gadfly Socrates had an adversarial, argumentative, approach to his interlocutor, prosecuting the pupil till he confessed his ignorance of the matter in question. In the Socratic dialogue, very often, one idea after another is attacked until, premise by disproven premise, Socrates brings the pupil to his knees. Importantly,

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[26] I am here assuming a view of Socrates that Kierkegaard describes in the *Fragments*. On that view, as we will see, there is a determinate, positive philosophical truth to be recollected, and the recollection of which the philosopher works to facilitate. How might this view of Socrates be in keeping with his avowed ignorance of the truth, and with Plato's own use of the dialogical form rather than straightforward prose? These facts about Socrates show that he is an indirect communicator in a certain sense, though not in the sense that, on my reading, Kierkegaard recommends. (See the immediately following paragraphs of Section 2.3.)

this was often a *public* embarrassment, with the interlocutor being exposed as a charlatan in Socrates' presence, and also sometimes in the presence of a crowd who had gathered to watch the dispute.[27]

Kierkegaard's worry about this approach comes into view when we turn from the *Meno* and consider Socrates' dialogue with the young and politically ambitious Alcibiades. Michel Foucault describes the encounter: "Socrates shows Alcibiades that he does not know what harmony [amongst citizens] is and that he is not even aware of his ignorance of what it is to govern well. So Socrates demonstrates this to Alcibiades and Alcibiades immediately despairs" (Foucault 2005, 45). The philosopher's aim, here, is to help the young upstart remember the character of his particular soul and, with it, his place in the polis amongst the ruled rather than the rulers (see Foucault 2005, 8). But Alcibiades' drunken rant in the *Symposium* teaches us that Socrates' demonstration of the young man's political incompetence failed to have its intended effect. Alcibiades confesses: "I am only too aware that I have no answer to [Socrates'] arguments. I know I should do as he tells me, but when I leave him I have no defence against my own ambition and desire for recognition. So I run for my life, and I avoid him, and when I see him, I'm embarrassed, when I remember conclusions we've reached in the past" (Symposium 216 b-c). Though there is a sense in which Alcibiades recognizes the truth in Socrates' arguments, there is something about those arguments that leaves the young man unwilling or unable resolutely to commit himself to that truth.

We saw a moment ago that one must "begin by deceiving" (PV, 54) if one wishes to help an interlocutor overcome his attraction to an illusion. There seems to be an element of deception in the indirect approach, for it seems to involve falsely presenting oneself as if one is in the grips of the illusion that troubles one's interlocutor, and even allowing the interlocutor to think that he is the more knowledgeable party. Kierkegaard is unabashed about this tactic. He regards it as being necessary if one is to communicate the truth to a pupil in a way that avoids the sort of pedagogical failure that we see in the case of Alcibiades.

> If you cannot begin with him in such a way that it seems as if it is he who should teach you,
> and if you cannot do this in such a way that he, who impatiently refuses to listen to a word
> from you, is gratified to find in you a willing and attentive listener – if you cannot do that,

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[27] This reading of Socrates is perhaps most often associated with Nietzsche. Walter Kaufman, for one, regards Nietzsche's interpretation as being quite self-evidently true:

> In the case of Socrates, Nietzsche emphasized the element of rancour in his sarcasm – what he called *Bosheit*, malice [....] After all, what Socrates boasted of was perfectly true: he had taken pleasure in engaging men of reputation in the marketplace to humiliate them before the crowd that gathered – often (assuming, as is surely fair, that Plato did not mean to slander Socrates) by using clever debater's tricks. He had a wicked sense of humor and found all this very funny; those he bested certainly did not. (Kaufmann 1989, 207-08).

then you cannot help him either [....] He shuts himself off from you, shuts himself up in his innermost being – and then you merely preach to him. Perhaps by the power of your personality[28] you will be able to force him to confess to you that he is in the wrong. Ah, my dear fellow, the very next moment he sneaks around by another path, a secret path, to a rendezvous with the secret passion, for which he now longs all the more. (PV, 45-46)

How does a teacher avoid this kind of result? He patiently avoids all temptations to remove the pupil's illusion directly:

On the assumption [...] that a religious author has from the ground up become aware of this illusion, Christendom, and to the limit of his ability with, note well, the help of God, wants to stamp it out – what is he then to do? Well, first and foremost, no impatience. If he becomes impatient, then he makes a direct assault and accomplishes – nothing. But in a direct attack he only strengthens a person in the illusion and also infuriates him. Generally speaking, there is nothing that requires as gentle a treatment as the removal of an illusion. If one in any way causes the one ensnared to be antagonized, then all is lost. And this one does by direct attack. (PV, 43; cf., Conant 1995, 272-73)

The procedure, then, is this: the indirect author gains the trust of his conversation partner who takes him, initially, for a companion in the relevant illusion. The interlocutor is artfully left to read his own self-deceived commitments into the Kierkegaardian philosopher, who articulates the illusion in full living colour. The interlocutor thus feels that the philosopher has understood his position and done it justice. Thus disarmed, the interlocutor leaves himself open to being guided wherever the philosopher may lead him – namely, beyond his illusion – and without the sense of indignation that a more direct argumentative approach might provoke. In this way, the philosopher is best able to ready the reader *resolutely* to abandon his illusions and accept the truth. The method of direct attack might chasten the reader into submission, but unless the movement into the truth comes about as the *free* abandonment of one's illusion, one's movement away from that illusion will be as tenuous and temporary as it is in the case of Alcibiades.

A philosopher's effort to dispel the other's illusion might come to naught, then, if he comes out too critically of the other at the outset. And this danger exists even if the philosopher proceeds as Socrates does, merely asking questions and urging the other to acknowledge his own errors as they emerge. Admittedly, Socrates practices a *kind* of indirect communication, and he evidences a

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[28] The Hong and Hong translation of PV has 'by personal power', which strikes me as obscure. I have adopted 'by the power of your personality' from the Nelson translation.

kind of respect for the autonomy of the learner. Socrates proceeds indirectly in the sense that he only questions his interlocutor, employs a dialogical rather than didactic form of communication, and never forces the interlocutor to accept anything that the interlocutor isn't himself ready to acknowledge as accurate. However, if we adopt Kierkegaard's perspective, we must conclude, I think, that this Socratic practice of *maieusis* is not quite indirect enough, at least if it can be said that Socrates did not begin his dialogues with the sort of benevolent deception that we have just seen Kierkegaard recommend.

Another trouble with the Socratic approach can be discerned not in the way it begins, but in the way it often ends. As I mentioned, Socrates typically requires his interlocutors to confess their illusions while face-to-face with him; Socrates often pursues the dialogue until he can, in person, secure his interlocutor's ultimate admission of defeat. In addition, then, to involving an initial impatience with the interlocutor and unwillingness to engage in Kierkegaardian deception, the tactic of "direct attack [...] also contains the presumption of demanding that another person confess to one or face-to-face with one make the confession that actually is most beneficial when the person concerned makes it to himself secretly" (PV, 43; cf., Conant 1995, 272-73). Forcing the other to admit and abandon his confusion publicly, face-to-face with the teacher who shows that illusion up for what it is, might well inspire the sort of embarrassment and indignation that we saw in the case of Alcibiades, and bring about a merely irresolute commitment to the teacher's message. The 'upbuilding' Kierkegaardian teacher/author wants to spare his learner/reader this discomfort, and prevent this irresolution. The Kierkegaardian approach only positions the learner to recognize his error privately, 'before God alone,' and thereby to acknowledge and escape that error without humiliation. "The latter is achieved by the indirect method, which in the service of the love of truth dialectically arranges everything for the one ensnared and then, modest as love always is, avoids being witness to the confession that he makes alone before God, the confession that he has been living in an illusion" (PV, 43-44)

Plausibly, a reader's autonomy in abandoning an illusion is greater to the extent that he feels that that abandonment has not been coerced. If this is so, the Kierkegaardian-*maieutic* method allows for a more autonomous movement away from the illusion then that which we see in Socrates. By leaving the interlocutor to acknowledge and abandon his illusion privately, this movement of acknowledgment and abandonment is experienced as a movement he makes on his own, and in a more radical sense than we see in Socrates. The learner gains, thereby, the lasting sort of commitment to what he learns that we do not see in the case of Alcibiades, who was deprived of the

opportunity to abandon his illusion in any such radically autonomous way. Kierkegaard's use of pseudonyms is a crucial part of this indirect approach.

2.2.4. Indirection and Pseudonymity

In an oft-quoted passage from the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, Kierkegaard requests that his words be attributed to the pseudonyms, not to himself:

> [I]n the pseudonymous books there is not a single word by myself. I have no opinion about them except as third party, no knowledge of their meaning except as reader, not the remotest private relation to them, that being impossible in a doubly reflected communication. [...] My wish, my prayer, therefore, is that if it should occur to anyone to want to quote a particular remark from the books, he will do me the favour of citing the name of the respective pseudonymous author, not my own. (CUP, 528-29)

Why are we being asked so emphatically to distinguish between pseudonym and Kierkegaard? One reason is that this: by stressing the distinction, Kierkegaard highlights the possibility that the pseudonym might not be a reliable guide to the views that Kierkegaard himself holds, and wants to impart. This leaves the reader maximal latitude to grapple with the text, and maximal autonomy in the movement by which he abandons his illusions and accepts the truth that the text is meant to convey. John Lippitt makes the point in a comment on the pseudonymous author of *Fear and Trembling*, Johannes de Silentio:

> [T]aking the pseudonyms seriously safeguards several significant possibilities for the reader while foreclosing none. By doing so, we leave open the possibility that Johannes is less than a fully reliable guide to the subject on which he addresses us. This is one method by which Kierkegaard leaves the reader on her own to find her way to the meaning of the text [….] That is, the fact that he denies that he understands faith does not necessarily imply that this denial is Kierkegaard's. (Lippitt 2003, 10)

The pseudonym's words are meant to guide us toward genuine faith, but they do so by gesturing at faith elliptically, never presenting it as a thesis being argued for. In the course of the pseudonymously authored text, genuine faith is presented in paradoxical terms, and amidst a crowd of doppelgangers. As in the case of de Silentio's 'faith,' the pseudonym's own worldview may emerge as a mere chimera of faith that a reader ought to resist (FT, 32, 49). The text will make these chimeras of faith maximally tempting to a reader, who is then left on his own to resist those temptations.

The pseudonymous work, then, is constructed to leave open multiple possible readings. In this capacity, it has the character of what Kierkegaard calls a *double reflection*; it is designed to reflect back to the reader the spiritual condition he brings to the work (PV, 18 n.). A spiritual defect may manifest itself in our inclination to identify with a character like de Silentio, who falls short of faith, and to deny the good example presented with *Fear and Trembling's* rendering of Abraham. By the same token, a reader's higher spiritual state may manifest itself in his ability to overcome his temptation to identify with de Silentio and to feel a greater affinity for Abraham. The crucial point is that the text leaves itself to be read in various ways. The reader's character is thus allowed to manifest itself in the particular reading to which he is given. "[A]ll doubly reflected communication makes contrary understanding equally possible; then the one who passes judgment is disclosed by the way he judges" (PV, 18 n.). This disclosure, ideally, makes the reader aware of his spiritual condition, either as a person at home in faith, a person arrested at some form of religious life that falls short of faith but aspires to it, or as a person who refuses faith altogether.

Though the doubly-reflected text allows the reader fully to indulge in the interpretation to which he is initially given, is it not meant, in general, to leave him comfortably at home in that initial interpretation. If the text were meant to function in this way, it would validate *any* interpretation, but one task of the doubly-reflected text is to separate interpretative insight from interpretative illusion. The doubly-reflected work is designed to help the reader understand his illusions in the full depth of their tensions and, ultimately, to help him resist their allure. Enchanted by the pseudonymous text, the reader follows the author deeper and deeper into an illusion that the author depicts. The reader believes that he is exploring the position that the author means for him to accept when, in fact, the author is preparing him autonomously to recognize the illusion for what it is, and without the author's needing to attack the illusion. In this way, the reader comes fully to explore his own temptations to that illusion and, at the same time, he comes to experience the tensions in that illusion in the particularly acute, first-personal, way that the pseudonym Anti-Climacus calls the condition of *despair* (SUD, Part 1; cf., EO, I: 35, 41). Having been brought to understand that the illusion is unlivable, the reader is then left on his own to respond, either intransigently, by insisting upon his identification with the illusion and enduring in his despair, or by allowing himself to be delivered from fantasy and brought into the truth. Of course, the pseudonymous work doesn't guarantee that the reader will take the latter, ethical path. Here as elsewhere in ethics, the freedom of the will is left to take its due, and the reader might choose wrongly if he is so inclined. In the context of an indirect communication, this means that the author does not tell the reader that he *must*

abandon his illusions, that 'must' being only audible as the reader's own inward recognition that life in despair is ultimately no life at all. A reader may find his hero not in *Fear and Trembling's* relatively faithless de Silentio, but in the faithful Abraham. But he does not come to this state by charting any logically coercive line of reasoning. Instead, he realizes that the tensions in the life of de Silentio makes for a life in despair.

Just as the reader is not told that he must aspire to the faith of Abraham, neither is he told what commitment to the faith of Abraham involves. Part of the reason why de Silentio can't achieve the faith of Abraham is that he can't understand what it amounts to, and the only guide the reader has to Abraham's faith is the commentary of this relatively ignorant pseudonym. The reader is left to work out all these details on his own, through his efforts to understand the text. "It is […] left to the reader's discretion whether he should put it all together by himself; nothing is done for a reader's convenience" (CUP, 250). As an indirect communicator, Kierkegaard himself remains at a silent remove from the text, withdrawn behind his pseudonyms and providing the reader with no explicit instruction for how the text ought to be read.

In our short discussion of Alcibiades, we saw that the indirect approach is supposed to allow for a more stable, resolute, rejection of our illusions than was permitted by the more direct, adversarial route. We also saw that the indirect approach allowed the interlocutor a greater latitude of autonomy in the movement away from that illusion and into the truth. These two features of the indirect method are related. It is *because* the pseudonyms allow the reader a greater measure of freedom and responsibility in his reading of the text that, when he arrives at that reading, it is shot through with the correspondingly greater measure of personal existential significance. And it is because his reading is galvanized with this charge of existential significance that he finds himself resolutely committed to his reading of the text in the way that the vacillating Alcibiades was not committed to the lessons of Socrates. Edward Mooney nicely summarizes the point:

> The use of pseudonyms is a pedagogical strategy. It works by drawing readers one by one into a life-view. The view is meant to appeal inwardly, as if in fact it could be one's *own*. Having established a sympathetic bond with the reader, the pseudonym can then expose, from within that intimate relationship, its limitations and inadequacies. / When successfully deployed, this technique corrects and transforms by insuring that one becomes fully identified – intellectually and emotionally – with the perspective that is developed. Then, when inevitable instabilities emerge, the underlying critique is experienced as self-critique, rather than as presumptuous judgemental attack. And the corresponding motivation to seek

some sort of resolution, through further emotional, imaginative, and decisional labour, is experienced as self-motivation. (Mooney 1991, 6)

It is this latitude of hermeneutic freedom, afforded to the individual reader, that Climacus has in mind when he writes that the "deviousness and art of double reflection" is required to pay the proper respect to "subjectivity, and by the same token to inwardness and appropriation" (CUP, 64). To this same field of concepts also belongs Kierkegaard's notion of *passion*, or the "passionate certainty of faith" (CUP, 412, cf., 362, n. cf., FT, 42). When the reader is brought to make and sustain a choice, not on the grounds of directly communicated epistemic reasons, but out of an inward appreciation of what he himself finds livable and unlivable, intelligible and unintelligible, "passion chooses and continues to reaffirm its choice" (CUP, 37).

2.2.5. Indirection and Individuality

So far, I have been speaking as if there is only one proper reading of a pseudonymous text, a one-size-fits-all answer to the question of how a reader ought to distinguish between insight and illusion. This isn't so, however. There is a plurality of acceptable ways to read a Kierkegaardian text, just as there is a plurality of ways that one can live a properly Christian life. One function of indirect communication is that it leaves the reader to identify the particular reading that is appropriate for him. The example of Abraham's faith in *Fear and Trembling* will both shed further light on the sense in which faith cannot be 'directly' communicated, and it will help to highlight the sense in which indirection is essentially a call to *individuals*.[29]

Called by God to sacrifice his son, there is a sense in which Abraham is willing to break with his culture's ethical rules (FT, 55) and, in particular, with the rule that 'the father must love the son' (FT, 20, 57, 59). In permitting Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, Abraham's faith permits him to do what is incomprehensible from the perspective of these 'universal' ethical rules (FT, 55, 68). Part of the point here is epistemological: Abraham is not *justified* as a member of the ethical community, and by

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[29] Since *Fear and Trembling* is primarily an analysis of faith in the Genesis story of Abraham and Isaac, one might wonder what the book has to do with *Christian* selfhood. As a first answer, we can note with Clair Carlisle that "*Fear and Trembling* was written, like other Kierkegaardian texts, in order to provoke genuine reflection on the task of becoming Christian" (Carlisle 2010, 3), that *Fear and Trembling's* "analysis of faith moves between the Hebrew Bible and the Christian scriptures" (ibid.), and that "the title of *Fear and Trembling* is taken from one of the earliest Christian texts, Paul's letter to the Philippians" (ibid.). Paul was writing to exhort the Christians in Philippi to "work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12-13). As I read him, Kierkegaard finds Christian faith anticipated in the faith of Abraham, and he wants to help us remember the Genesis story in such a way that that anticipation would become clear to us (FT, 56). Kierkegaard is interpreting Genesis retrospectively, from the vantage point of the Gospels, and reading a distinctly Christian faith back into the person of Abraham.
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the standard of that community's ethical norms. He is justified as 'the single individual,' the individual as he stands alone before God, the 'absolute':

> How did Abraham exist? He had faith. This is the paradox by which he remains at the apex, the paradox that he cannot explain to anyone else, for the paradox is that he as the single individual places himself in an absolute relation to the absolute. Is he justified? Again, his justification is the paradoxical, for if he is, then he is justified not by virtue of being something universal but by virtue of being the single individual. (FT, 62; cf., FT, 82, 60)

There is, then, an epistemological aspect to Abraham's alienation from the ethical community. This alienation consists in the fact that he is not justified by the public, 'universal,' third-personally, intelligible epistemic standards of that community. "The ethical is as such is the universal; as the universal it is in turn the disclosed. The single individual [...] is the hidden" (FT, 82), conversely, because his justification is invisible to the everyday ethical community. He "enter[s] into [a] private relationship with the divine" (FT, 60) so that he is justified, not by the ethical community, but "by virtue of the absurd, by virtue of the fact that for God all things are possible" (FT, 46), including God's willing the death of Isaac. We will later see that there is more to Abraham's faith than his willingness to go through with the sacrifice when called to do so by God. Still, this aspect of his faith – this willingness to go through with the sacrifice – is enough to make the present point about the relationship between faith and ethics: there is a sense of 'ethics' in which the person of faith can discern a dimension of the moral life that can't be justified in the everyday language of ethical discourse.

Abraham's alienation from the ethical community is not only epistemological. To put the point in Wittgensteinian terms, his alienation would be only epistemological if the act of killing Isaac were an intelligible, even if unjustified, move within the 'language-game' of ethics. But the incomprehensibility of what Abraham is prepared to do runs deeper than this. "Abraham *cannot* speak, because he cannot say that which would explain everything (that is, so it is understandable)" (FT, 113; cf., ibid., 114, 60, 76) to the community. What Abraham is prepared to do is not just an intelligible but ethically unjustified action. Rather, it is not even so much as a candidate for ethical justification, for it cannot even be intelligibly expressed in the grammar of ethical discourse. Abraham's "life not only is the most paradoxical that can be thought but is also so paradoxical that it

simply cannot be thought" (FT, 56). It is in this sense that Abraham and the ethical community "have no *language* in common" (FT, 35, emphasis added).[30]

We now come to the issue of individuality. Throughout *Fear and Trembling*, de Silentio is clear that not all of us should model our religious lives on the faith of Abraham. Not all of us should come away from reading *Fear and Trembling* feeling at liberty to break with our culture's ethical norms and to kill our innocent son if we have the impression that we have been asked to do so by God. This concern resounds in de Silentio's preoccupation with the question of how a pastor can praise Abraham without incurring the risk that a parishioner unsuited for Abraham's particular way of living the religious life might mistakenly follow the patriarch's example. The danger is that such a parishioner (or such a student of *Fear and Trembling*) might confuse the voice of an illusion for the voice of God and, flouting established ethical norms, (FT, 29-32, 52-53, 75, 116-20), commit a sinful act of murder.

What is de Silentio's solution to the problem? He proposes that the pastor should speak about Abraham's extraordinary love for his son (FT, 28, 31), and Abraham's extraordinary anxiety about carrying out the sacrifice (FT, p 63-64), in such a way that the average father in the pews would never have the audacity to compare himself with Abraham and to do what Abraham was prepared to do (FT, 31). Further, de Silentio submits that the pastor should stress that not even he, the shepherd of the flock, is so spiritually elevated as to have Abraham's particular kind of relationship with God (FT, 32). A final aspect of de Silentio's solution is audible when he stresses that a person unsuited for Abraham's elevated kind of faith is nevertheless an upright and admirable adherent to the religious life (FT, 21, 32, 34).

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[30] I have simplified Kierkegaard's complex discussion of faith and ethics here. In fact, there is a sense in which the sacrifice of Isaac does not violate 'universal' ethical norms, the norms of "social morality" (FT, 55, 68). De Silentio lacks Abraham's faith and, therefore, cannot permit himself to do what is 'absurd' from the perspective of those ethical norms (FT, 34, 50). However, like Abraham, de Silentio *would* be able to carry out the sacrifice of Isaac, if he were called to do so (FT, 34-35). Evidentially, in some sense of 'the ethical,' the sacrifice of Isaac *is* ethically intelligible. At the same time, however, there is also a sense in which it *isn't* ethically intelligible, and this is the sense that I want to deal with at this stage in this chapter. Let me say a word more to explain.

If de Silentio were to carry out the sacrifice, he would be acting in the capacity of a "tragic hero" (FT, 34-35), the character who, by his nature, can violate a lower-order ethical norm for the sake of a higher-order ethical norm. "[W]ithin its own confines the ethical has various gradations" (FT, 57), and what is unintelligible at a lower-order level of ethical life can still be intelligible at a higher one. It is in this sense that "the tragic hero is still within the ethical" (FT, 59) even while, in another sense, he is 'beyond' it. Accordingly, at a higher-order level of ethical life, the sacrifice of Isaac can be intelligibly expressed in ethical speech, while, at a lower level, it can't be. It is this lower-level of inexpressibility that de Silentio has in mind when he writes that it would be "madness" to believe that God could require the sacrifice of Isaac (FT, 77), and when he presents Abraham as being unable to express his intentions to sacrifice Isaac in an ethical language that would be intelligible to Sarah and Eliezer (FT, 21). Again, for simplicity, I focus in this section on the sort of inexpressibly that we find at this lowest level of ethical life where the sacrifice seems absurd.

The upshot is this: not all of us are called to Abraham's task of challenging the established conventions of ethics. The average father in the pews is not called to this task, for example, and neither, of course, are the ethically corrupt.

> It may well be that there are those who need coercion, who, if they were given free rein, would abandon themselves like unmanageable animals to selfish appetites. But a person will demonstrate that he does not belong to them precisely by showing that he knows how to speak in fear and trembling, and speak he must out of respect for greatness, so that it is not forgotten out of fear of harm, which certainly will not come if he speaks out of a knowledge of greatness, a knowledge of its terrors, and if one does not know the terrors, one does not know the greatness either. (FT, 75, cf., CUP, 58)

There are various necessary characteristics of the person who teaches about Abraham: his sensitivity to the danger at issue in his occupation, his understanding that the risk of danger must nevertheless be incurred, and the fact that he himself is not amongst the ethically corrupt who would misunderstand and misuse Abraham's social and religious role. All these characteristics are manifest in his ability to communicate the faith indirectly, so that his efforts to do good do not become "a snare for the weak" (FT, 31) and have the very opposite of their intended effect of revitalizing the faith. Of course, it should be borne in mind that some of us *are* worthy disciples of Abraham, called to act according to his example and to contravene the common understanding of ethical norms.[31] The indirect author's task is to communicate the Abrahamic-Christian calling to these individuals without communicating it to others.

On the one hand, then, Abraham is the object of continual praise in the *Fear and Trembling*, and part of Kierkegaard's readership is being called to the challenge of emulating Abraham's great example. On the other hand, de Silentio speaks to his readers about Abraham just as the pastor speaks about Abraham to his parishioners; he speaks to us in such a way that only a select few of us will recognize ourselves in Abraham, and take up the mantle of speaking and acting in ways that outstrip what can be expressed in the established grammar of ethics.

In *Two Ages*, Kierkegaard suggests that Christianity allows our need for community to harmonize with our need for individually. This harmony is achieved when the members of a community are not only united in their commitment to a shared ideal but when each individual is

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[31] If there were no one suited to Abraham's particular kind of task, there would be no point in remembering the story of his trial with Isaac at all, "for what is the value of going to the trouble of remembering that past that cannot become present" (FT, 30)?

also left to work out the meaning of his own particular relationship to that ideal.[32] The indirection of the pseudonymous works facilitates just this harmony between our need for individuality and our need for community when it allows different readers to find themselves in different forms of the Christian-religious life. An author concerned to communicate the meaning of Christianity needs to do so using terms ambiguous enough that each of us will appropriate that meaning in a way uniquely suitable for the unique individuals we are. Some of us will be religious on the model of Abraham, and our task will be to respond to revelations of sense unimaginable from the perspective of established ethical norms. Others of us will be religious in the manner of the average father in the pews, Sarah, Eliezer (FT, 21), or the character that de Silentio calls 'the poet,' the character who sings the praises of the hero Abraham from a reverential distance, never daring actually to emulate the hero's example himself. This last character is worth a comment more in connection with what we said in the previous chapter about the difference between the recollective and repetitional pictures of remembrance.

In Chapter Five, we will see more clearly that Abraham models the activity of remembrance as repetition. He does so because he manifests an openness to revelations of *new* meaning, determinations of sense not already laid down in our established ethical grammar and expressible in its terms. The poet, on the other hand, models a form of recollection. His role is only to respect the possibilities of ethical sense that *are* already laid down in our repository of sense, and to operate within their bounds, even while revering the higher calling of his hero, Abraham. In the poet, we have a clear illustration of the idea that there are different, mutually acceptable lessons for a reader to take from *Fear and Trembling*. The poet is no Abraham, but he plays an honourable, even if humble, role in the religious life.

> The poet or orator can do nothing that the hero does; he can only admire, love, and delight in him. Yet he, too, is happy—no less than that one is, for the hero is, so to speak, his better nature, with which he is enamoured—yet happy that the other is not himself, that his love can be admiration. He is recollection's genius. He can do nothing but bring to mind what has been done, can do nothing but admire what has been done; he takes nothing of his own but

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[32] "When individuals (each one individually) are essentially and passionately related to an idea and together are essentially related to the same idea, the relation is optional and normative. Individually the relation separates them (each one has himself for himself), and ideally it unites them [....] Thus the individuals never come too close to each other in the herd sense, simply because they are united on the basis of an ideal distance. The harmony of the spheres is the unity of each planet relating itself to the whole" (Kierkegaard 1978, 62).

is zealous for what has been entrusted [....] This is his occupation, his humble task; this is his faithful service in the house of the hero. (FT, 15; cf., FT, 43-44) [33]

It must be stressed that, though the pseudonymous texts can be read in multiple ways, Kierkegaard is most interested in communicating the sort of faith he finds in Abraham and communicating it to the sort of reader worthy of enacting that particular form of the religious life. The main task of *Fear and Trembling* is to subtly, indirectly, facilitate God's call to the particular individual for whom *this* way of living the religious life is appropriate.[34] I have been trying to show that part of the task of indirect communication is to write in such a way that readers not suited for the Abrahamic form of religious life would find no such calling to that life in the text (cf., CUP, 58). Once more, and to conclude the thought: indirect communication should not fearfully shy away from communicating the highest tasks of religious existence, even though doing so comes at the risk that those tasks will be taken up by those of us not able properly to fulfill them. It requires "an honest earnestness that fearlessly and incorruptibly points to the tasks, an honest earnestness that lovingly maintains the tasks, that does not disquiet people into wanting to attain the highest too hastily but keeps the tasks young and beautiful and lovely to look at, inviting to all and yet also difficult and inspiring to the noble-minded (for the noble nature is inspired only by the difficult)" (FT, 121).

2.2.6. Indirection and Difficulty

The mention of 'difficulty' in the last-quoted passage relates to the issue of existential significance that we encountered earlier. We considered the importance of not directly telling the reader that his illusions are illusions, nor directly arguing for an account of the truth he's missing. We saw that one reason an author might resist this temptation: a reader comes to be resolutely, wholeheartedly,

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[33] At FT 43-44, 'recollection's genius' is associated with the 'knight of infinite resignation.' The suggestion is that the knight of resignation has something in common with the poet: both are confined to recollection. De Silentio is himself a knight of infinite resignation (FT, 34-35) and yet, as the author of '*Fear and Trembling*: a dialectical lyric' he is a lyricist – a poet – and his task is to sing the praises of the hero Abraham. The poetic mentality of resignation also comes out when de Silentio – knight of resignation – describes himself as being able to observe and describe the movements of faith (which he does in *Fear and Trembling*) but as being unable to make those movements himself (FT, 37-38).

[34] Hence, the philosopher's effort to communicate truth needs to be understood as involving all that respect for the autonomy of the interlocutor that we have seen in the discussion of indirect communication. The communication involves 'creating difficulties' (CUP, 156-57) that heighten a reader's awareness of his own illusions so that those illusions can ultimately be overcome. "[N]othing is done for a reader's convenience" (CUP, 250). We will see that this way of proceeding can fail and leave, for example, a Kantian or a Hegelian even more dismissive than he already is of the Kierkegaardian idea of an immediate encounter with a call from God the content of which cannot be translated into the established public grammar.

bound to a truth only when he arrives at it through his own hermeneutic work, and not when the truth is simply handed to him. To have this kind of significance, however, it is not enough that the reader's work is done autonomously. It must also be *difficult* work. It was this realization that dawned upon Climacus the afternoon that he decided to become a spiritually-edifying author. His whole long reflection on the issue will prove useful to have on hand. He writes:

> I sat there and smoked my cigar until I fell into a reverie. I recall these thoughts. You are getting on, I said to myself, and are becoming an old man without being anything, and without really taking on anything. Wherever you look about you on the other hand, in literature or in life, you see the names and figures of the celebrities, the prized and acclaimed making their appearances or being talked about, the many benefactors of the age who know how to do favours to mankind by making life more and more easy, some with railways, others with omnibuses and steamships, others with the telegraph, others through easily grasped surveys and brief reports on everything worth knowing, and finally the true benefactors of the age, who by virtue of thought make spiritual existence systematically easier and yet more and more important. And what are you doing? Here my soliloquy was interrupted, for my cigar was finished and a new one had to be lit. So I smoked again, and then suddenly this thought flashed through my mind: You must do something, but since with your limited abilities it will be impossible to make anything easier than it has become, you must, with the same humanitarian enthusiasm as the others, take it upon yourself to make something more difficult. This notion pleased me immensely, and at the same time it flattered me to think that I would be loved and esteemed for this effort by the whole community, as well as any. For when all join together in making everything easier in every way, there remains only one possible danger, namely, that the ease becomes so great that it becomes altogether too easy; then there will be only one lack remaining, if not yet felt, when people come to miss the difficulty. Out of love for humankind, and from despair over my embarrassing situation, having accomplished nothing, and being unable to make anything easier than it had already been made, and out of a genuine interest in those who make everything easy, I conceived it as my task everywhere to create difficulties. (CUP, 156-57; cf., FT, 6-8)

In the context of a modern technological culture concerned with making life easier, we have come to think that Christianity should come easy too. This happens when we conceive of Christianity as an object of knowledge, passable from one person to another by well-worn routes of direct

communication so that, in the end, the faith is sapped of the essential difficulty that makes it a worthwhile life-task. Despite our modern taste for ease and convenience, it is precisely because this modern Christianity comes so easy that it strikes us as hardly worth practicing at all. De Silentio describes the same problem in his forward to *Fear and Trembling*: "Not only in the business world, but also in the world of ideas, our age stages *ein wirkliche Ausverkauf* [a real sale]. Everything can be had at such a bargain price that it becomes a question whether there is finally anyone who will make a bid" (FT, 5). Climacus realized that the key to revitalizing the faith was not appease the modern mentality and go further down the road of making it easier, but to turn back in the opposite direction, and to "make it more difficult to become a Christian" (CUP, 321).

We saw that the need for difficulty is especially felt by the 'noble-minded' reader (FT, 121); the reader called to those highest responsibilities of religious life that we see in Abraham. But the need for difficulty is also felt by the simpler soul. Climacus writes: "That [the simple-minded] individual will also need to exert himself to the utmost in order to become Christian, I also believe; nor do I believe that anyone does him a service by making it altogether too easy; every essential existence-task pertains to all human beings equally and makes the difficulty therefore proportionate to the individual's endowment" (CUP, 321). We have seen that a text communicating the meaning of Christianity leaves itself to be understood under different aspects. We are now learning that some of those aspects will be more difficult for a reader to see than others. For a given reader, a particular reading may be too accessible to be significant, and so the text is also pregnant with a deeper and more challenging meaning that will attract *his* interest. Since "Christianity can be appropriated by everyone" (CUP, 308), "[t]he simple soul must be given leave to exist in it as much as the wise man" (ibid.). But to appropriate Christianity is *essentially* to appropriate it in a way that renders it spiritually significant. This requires that the spiritually edifying text needs to provide many different inroads to the faith, and to present the faith under a multi-levelled complex of aspects tailored to a readership of individuals who require varying degrees of intellectual challenge.

We will see that there is no subjectivism of meaning here. There is only *one* truth about what it means to be a human being – what it means to be a self –, and Christianity articulates that truth. Becoming a Christian is the same task for everyone, and this is why the individualistic nature of the task is so difficult: we need to work out our *own* faith in fear and trembling, without simply following a general blueprint for how 'one' ought to live the Christian life.[35] This singular truth of the self can

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[35] "[B]ecoming a Christian is really the hardest of all tasks, because, although the same, the task itself varies according to the abilities of the individual. This is not so with those tasks calling for variable skills. With comprehension, for instance,

be understood at higher or lower levels of resolution, but, crucially, less sophisticated appropriations of Christian selfhood are in no way less capable of full participation in that truth.

2.2.7. Indirection and Vanity

The story so far has gone as follows: the indirect communicator presents himself as if in the grips of an illusion that he wishes to subvert. For instance, in *Fear and Trembling,* Kierkegaard left his reader mistakenly to think that de Silentio was a trustworthy spokesperson for Kierkegaard's own faith.[36] But this benevolent deception aims to help at least some of those readers resist the confusions that these pseudonyms represent and, ultimately, to expose the despair inherent in those confusions. For the pseudonyms to function in this way, the reader must be kept in the dark about that function."[I]f something is to function enticingly, it is wrong to explain it. A fisherman does not tell the fish about his bait, saying 'This is bait'" (PV, 182). Hence, Kierkegaard himself withdraws from the pseudonymous text and leaves the message of the book to posterity, hoping that the more profound and more challenging interpretation of faith on offer in that book will be recognized and taken up by the elect individual to whom the book is addressed.

This way of proceeding means that the author can be misunderstood, in at least two ways. First, the reader may take the bait and be appropriately guided past his illusions and into the truth. But, failing to notice that the author meant for precisely this to occur, and failing to notice that the author intentionally misrepresented himself in the guise of his benighted pseudonym, such a reader might take himself to have discovered something that the actual author overlooked. The indirect author needs to accept the possibility that he may be misunderstood in this way. "Instead of wishing to have the advantage of being oneself that rare thing, a Christian, one must let the prospective captive enjoy the advantage of being the Christian, and for one's own part have resignation enough to be the one who is far behind him" (ibid., 25). This method calls for a certain humility on the part of the author. It requires an unwillingness to pride himself on his greater understanding and even, as

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a person of high intelligence has a direct advantage over one of limited intelligence. But this does not hold of faith" (CUP, 316; cf., CUP pp. 321-22).

[36] What do I have in mind by 'Kierkegaard's own faith'? I have in mind the sort of faith we find Abraham, and which finds expression as a willingness to challenge established ethical norms. In its details, the content of such a faith will be between Abraham and God, and will resist any full explication in terms of established linguistic convention. On my (controversial) reading, though, faith *can* be characterized in certain general terms. I attempt such a characterization in Chapter Five.

we have seen, the humility involved in allowing himself to be regarded by the student, at least temporarily, as having been the benighted party.

> If […] I am disposed to plume myself on my greater understanding, it is because I am vain or proud, so that at bottom I want to be admired. But all true effort to help begins with self-humiliation: the helper must first humble himself under him he would help, and therewith must understand that to help does not mean to be sovereign but to be servant, that to help does not mean to be ambitious but to be patient, that to help means to endure for the time being the imputation that one is in the wrong and does not understand what the other understands. (Kierkegaard 1962b, 27-28)

Recall, the teacher's humility is required so that when his student arrives at the truth, it is stamped with the significance of an autonomous achievement. The student is denied this opportunity if the teacher crudely exposes his own understanding of faith and its indirect method for the sake of priding himself on his greater understanding.

We have just seen one way in which the indirect author might be misunderstood: the student might fail to give credit to his teacher for what the teacher puts him in a position to learn. However, this is really only a worry for the vain teacher and, so, it is no genuine worry at all. A second and more serious misunderstanding would be for the most difficult-to-discern messages of a text to be completely overlooked by its readers. De Silentio expresses the worry when he reflects on the fate of his *Fear and Trembling* in the present age of ease where, as he noted in the forward to his book, Christianity is being sold for so low a price that hardly anyone can imagine it having any genuine value. Recall that in Climacus' rendering this was the age of modern science, its technological conveniences and, in the world of ideas, the direct mode of communication that offers us "easily grasped surveys and brief reports on everything worth knowing" (CUP, 156-57). What would become of a doubly-reflective text like *Fear and Trembling* in a world where we have ceased to find value in difficulty? De Silentio speaks to the point in the forward to *Fear and Trembling*, signalling us to the evident esotericism of his project. On the one hand, "[h]e writes because to him it is a luxury that is all the more pleasant and apparent the fewer there are who buy and read what he writes" (FT, 7). On the other hand, "[h]e easily envisions his fate in an age when an author who desires readers must be careful to write in such a way that his book can be conveniently skimmed during the after-dinner nap [....] He foresees his fate of being totally ignored" (FT, 8).[37] Bearing in mind this danger

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[37] The same concern is palpable in Kierkegaard's description of his nearly parental (and nearly biblical?) relation to his publications. We sense the joy of a father who, having released his child to the world, is relieved to see that the child is

that the hidden meaning might go completely unacknowledged, we can understand Kierkegaard's anxiety about the fate of his publications, and his temptation to break his silence. For a time, however, he resisted the urge and recovered his conviction that he ought to hold his peace. He writes:

> I have frequently felt the need to use direct communication [...], but it seemed to me as if I wanted to be lenient with myself, as if I could achieve more by holding out. / For the present I use no means that would disturb this possibility, for example, by *premature* direct communication. The situation is like that of a fisherman when he sees the float move – maybe it means a bite, maybe it is due to the motion of the water. But the fisherman says: I will not pull up the line; if I do, I indicate that I have surrendered this possibility; perhaps it will happen again and prove to be a bite. (PV, 249)

Notice that there is no blanket prohibition on direct communication here. As we've seen, we require indirect communication when helping a person out of his illusions and into the truth. If our interlocutor has already overcome his illusions, Kierkegard seems to allow for a sense in which we *can* speak to him 'directly' about the faith. The problem is *premature* direct communication. On the other hand, one perfectly noble reason why we might be tempted to engage in premature direct communication is to prevent the worst of all possible outcomes: the meaning of the pseudonymous text might not be able to fend for itself, and go entirely overlooked.

In Chapter Five, we will see that there are other noble reasons why an indirect communicator might break his silence and, indeed, why Kierkegaard himself broke his silence in the end, with his tell-all, *The Point of View for My Work as an Author*. The point of the present section, however, has been to appreciate why an indirect communicator might resist such temptations to speak plainly, and perhaps even take his secret authorial intentions to the grave. If we can appreciate

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noticed and accepted by others. But we also sense the father's fear that the child might not meet with such acceptance, powerless as the father is to guarantee this happy outcome.

> Inasmuch as in being published it is in a figurative sense starting a journey, I let my eyes follow it for a little while. I saw how it wended its way down solitary paths or walked solitary on public roads. After a few little mistakes […] it finally met that single individual whom I with joy and gratitude call *my* reader, that single individual it is seeking, to whom, so to speak, it stretches out its arms, that single individual who is favorably enough disposed to allow himself to be found, favorably enough disposed to receive it, whether at the time of the encounter it finds him cheerful and confident or 'weary and pensive.' – On the other hand, inasmuch as in being published it actually remains quiet without moving from the spot, I let my eyes rest on it for a little while. It stood there like a humble little flower under the cover of the great forest, sought neither for its splendor nor its fragrance nor its food value. But I also saw, or thought I saw, how the bird I call my reader suddenly noticed it, flew down to it, picked it, and took it home, and when I had seen this, I saw no more. (Kierkegaard 1990, Forward)

this, then we can appreciate what is, in my view, a resolute reader's best defence against the *prima facie* objections to the continuity thesis. Resolute readers should hold that Wittgenstein adhered to a model of indirect communication close to Kierkegaard's, that he systemically misrepresented his project in the *Tractatus*, and that he never offered us anything like the final admission of that fact that Kierkegaard offered us in the *Point of View*. I submit that this is a part of his debt to Kierkegaard which often goes unacknowledged by resolute readers – Cavell and Conant being the notable exceptions – and even less acknowledged by their critics.

2.2.3. Wittgenstein and Indirect Communication

Genia Schönbaumsfeld argues that Wittgenstein had his earliest exposure to Kierkegaard during childhood and adolescence, through the mentorship of his older sister, Margarete ('Gretl'). Ray Monk describes Margarete as "the intellectual of the family, the one who kept abreast of contemporary developments in the arts and sciences, and the one most prepared to embrace new ideas and to challenge the views of her elders" (Monk 1991, 16). Noting that Kierkegaard was Margarete's favourite author (Wuchterl and Hübner 1979, 30), Schönbaumsfeld submits that "[t]here is every reason to suppose that Wittgenstein was introduced to the writings of Kierkegaard from a very early age" (Schönbaumsfeld 2013, 60). In any case, we know that Wittgenstein was reading Kierkegaard while at war in November of 1917 (Schönbaumsfeld 2007, 13-22). He had requested that another of his sisters, Hermine, send him some of Kierkegaard's books. She obliged, sending him "a number of Kierkegaard volumes" (quoted in Schönbaumsfeld 2007, 14-15), including the *Diary of the Seducer*, Kierkegaard's description and critique of the so-called 'aesthetic life,' originally published as part of *Either / Or*.[38] Brian McGinness reckons that Wittgenstein would have read Kierkegaard before his captivity as a prisoner of war in Monte Casino in January of 1919 (McGuinness 2005, 205, 269). This agrees, finally, with what Bertrand Russell's reports in a letter to Ottoline Morrell about his first meeting with Wittgenstein after the war:

> I had felt in his book a flavour of mysticism, but was astonished when I found that he has become a complete mystic. He reads people like Kierkegaard and Angelus Silesius, and he

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[38] Hermine writes the following in a letter to Wittgenstein while he was at war:
> Thank you very much for your lovely card from 13th November. You were perfectly correct in supposing that I did not receive the earlier one with your request for books, but I've just been out for them and a number of Kierkegaard volumes are already on the way. I hope they are the ones you want, because, given that I don't know anything about him and his writings, I simply chose a few at random. *The Diary of a Seducer*, which I bought in a different bookshop, will follow. (quoted in Schönbaumsfeld 2007, 14-15)

seriously contemplates becoming a monk. It all started from William James' *Varieties of Religious Experience*, and grew (not unnaturally) during the winter he spent alone in Norway before the war, when he was nearly mad. (Quoted in Edwards 1982, 24)

We know, then, that Wittgenstein had read Kierkegaard before the publication of the *Tractatus*. We also know that he held Kierkegaard in exceptionally high regard. Desmond Lee reports that Wittgenstein "clearly had a great admiration" for the Dane, and that "he learned Danish in order to be able to read Kierkegaard in the original" (Lee 1999, 195). If that isn't high enough praise, Wittgenstein once remarked to Maurice Drury: "Kierkegaard was by far the most profound thinker of the last century. Kierkegaard was a saint" (Drury 1999, 180).

These details make it easy to appreciate why some scholars have thought that the works of these two thinkers have important features in common. In the introduction, I presented two such features: the first was the view that philosophical learning is a matter of remembrance, the second was the view that what we are reminded of is grammar: the meaning of our words. In what remains of this chapter, I want to show that there is also a third commonality between Wittgenstein and Kierkegaard: both believe that philosophical teaching requires a form of indirect communication. These three common features of their positions are related. Like Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein seeks to communicate indirectly because grammatical illusions cannot be exposed by direct means. And, as is the case with Christianity for Kierkegaard, for Wittgenstein the need for indirect communication in philosophy is related to the idea that our understanding of grammar is not a matter of what we ordinarily mean by 'knowledge.'

2.3.1. Grammar and Knowledge

Let us begin with a more in-depth look at the difference between grammatical and empirical propositions. Empirical propositions describe contingent matters of fact, states of affairs that can either obtain or not obtain, and in ways that we can easily imagine. For instance, when I say I know the empirical proposition 'All my housemates are male,' even if I think the proposition is true, I can imagine what it would be like for it to turn out false. Perhaps, unbeknownst to me, one of my housemates moved out last night, and a woman took his place.[39] Things are different when it comes to grammatical propositions like 'All bachelors are male.' Since "it is grammatical rules that

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[39] In Wittgenstein's language, empirical propositions are *bipolar* (NB, 93-97): we can understand what they mean without knowing whether or not they are true. Put differently, we can imagine what the world would be like, not only under the condition that they are true but also under the condition that they are false (T, 4.023-4.024; cf., Conant 1991a, 136, 140). We come back to the issue of bipolarity next chapter.

determine meaning (constitute it)" (PG, 184), grammatical propositions express the meaning of the words they contain (cf., PG, I-§133; PI, 155, §497; Z, §320).[40] Hence, when I say that know that all bachelors are male, I am not stating a fact about the empirical world; I am saying that I know what it means to be a bachelor. This being the case, I can form no idea at all of what it would be like for the proposition to be false.

We can further appreciate the difference between empirical and grammatical propositions by considering their different epistemic profiles. One epistemic difference between these two kinds of expression concerns their different susceptibility to *doubt*. Unlike empirical propositions, when I say I 'know' a given grammatical proposition, what I claim to know cannot be intelligibly doubted. "If 'I know etc.' is conceived as a grammatical proposition […] it properly means 'there is no such thing as doubt in this case' or 'the expression 'I do not know' makes no sense in this case'"(OC, §58; cf., OC, §51, 54; T, 6.5, 6.51; PI, §246 -251, §288). It makes no sense to doubt a proposition of grammar, "[f[or doubt can exist only where a question exists, a question only where an answer exists, and an answer only where something *can be said"* (T, 6.51). "When the answer cannot be put into words, neither can the question be put into words" (T, 6.5). The skeptic who presumes that everything can be doubted might try to question even his commitment to grammatical propositions. Might not such propositions be false? I will later argue that there is a sense in which this is an intelligible question. The present point is that, *when it is expressed as a doubt*, the question is unintelligible because we can form no idea of how to answer it. What, exactly, is the skeptic imagining here? What states of affairs would confirm his suspicion that it is false, for example, that 'All men are mortal,' that 'One cannot hear red,' or that 'Grey is lighter than black'? "Skepticism is not irrefutable, but obviously nonsensical, when it tries to raise doubts where no questions can be asked" (T, 6.51), and no such questions can be asked about the truth of grammatical propositions.

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[40] We should distinguish between grammatical propositions and the rules of grammar that those propositions express. But what are the rules of grammar, exactly, and what are grammatical propositions? These are the crucial questions that this dissertation is meant to answer. On my realist reading, rules of grammar are not identical with established linguistic conventions, but they will always be manifest *in* such conventions. Put differently, the rules of grammar stand to the conventions of language as a 'transcendence in immanence.' The element of 'transcendence' here captures the sense in which, on my (controversial) reading, the rules of grammar are features of *the world*, not merely features of a language that we use to describe the world. Since, for Wittgenstein, *propositions* describe substantive features of the world, I will claim that grammatical propositions are genuine propositions, though not propositions of the empirical kind. Not all genuine propositions are 'grammatical propositions' in Wittgenstein's technical sense of the term, even though all genuine propositions will be grammatical in the ordinary sense of 'grammatically well-formed.' To put the point a bit misleadingly, and in terms that we will need to refine, we can say that grammatical propositions are 'true in virtue of meaning.' Empirical propositions are either true or false in virtue of what may or may not obtain in the order of contingent empirical facts. This distinction, notice, presupposes that the rules of grammar that we describe with grammatical propositions are not merely contingent empirical facts, facts, for example, about how words are conventionally used. I defend these controversial claims in chapters four and seven.

The epistemic differences between grammatical and empirical propositions go beyond this observation that the latter, but not the former, can be intelligibly doubted. A second significant epistemic difference is that there is a sense in which grammatical propositions, unlike empirical propositions, cannot be *justified*. These two major epistemic differences are related; it only makes sense to seek 'justification' for a claim that we can doubt – a claim that we can imagine turning out to be false under certain clearly specifiable circumstances – and we have just seen that grammatical propositions express no such claim. When it comes to these descriptions of grammar, the demand for justification is not only unmotivated; we are entirely unclear about what possibility of error the justification would be presuming to rule out.

> Our justification could only take the form of saying 'As reality is so and so, the rules must be such and such.' But this presupposes that I could say 'If reality were otherwise, then the rules of grammar would be otherwise.' But in order to describe a reality in which grammar was otherwise I would have to use the very combinations which grammar forbids. The rules of grammar distinguish sense and nonsense and if I use the forbidden combinations I talk nonsense. (Wittgenstein 1982, 37, 47)

To illustrate, we can return to my earlier belief in the empirical proposition that all my housemates are male. To justify this claim, I would have first to imagine the conditions under which I would count the proposition false and, second, I would have to take specific steps to show that these conditions don't obtain. I might imagine that a woman replaced one of my housemates, and I might go around to their rooms and assure myself that this is not the case. But now imagine that I tried to justify the grammatical proposition that all bachelors are men. I would have to be able to imagine a state of the world where some bachelors were not men so that I could then go around, determine that *that* state of affairs does not obtain and that, in fact, all bachelors *are* men, just as my grammatical rule states. But this is unintelligible. Since the grammar of my language blocks my way to imagining any situation where bachelors are not men, so too does it block my way to imagining what it would mean to justify the grammatical proposition by showing that that situation does not obtain. To mark this sense in which the rules of grammar cannot be justified, Wittgenstein sometimes says that they are, in a sense, 'arbitrary,' a fact that we overlook when we confuse grammatical propositions for verifiable, empirical, claims. "One is tempted to justify the rules of grammar by sentences like 'But there really are four primary colors.' And the saying that the rules of grammar are arbitrary is directed against the possibility of this justification, which is constructed on the model of justifying a sentence by pointing to what verifies it" (Z, §311, cf., PG, 186).

We might think that the justification of grammar can come more much more easily than this reasoning presumes. Why do we need to be able to imagine what it would be like for our grammatical propositions to be false in order for us to consider them justified? Why should we not grant that we *can't* imagine what it would mean for them to be false but hold that, for just that reason, they are *always* justified? Why not say that we're justified in saying that there are only four primary colors because we never encounter more than four? We ought not to say so, because this would beg the question. Such a justification would need to refer to the facts that justify the grammatical rule in question. The trouble is this: the specification of the relevant facts – say, examples of the primary colors invoked to justify the corresponding colour grammar in our language – would presuppose our commitment to the very rules of grammar that we were trying to justify. For this reason, the facts would offer no independent epistemic support for those grammatical rules. Efforts to justify a sentence stating a grammatical rule founder because such sentences express the limits of our linguistic understanding, and yet the sort of justification we are after requires that we grasp the world in a way that does not presuppose our commitment to those limits. "The limit of language is shown by its being impossible to describe the fact which corresponds to (is the translation of) a sentence, without simply repeating the sentence" (CV, 10).

Related here is Wittgenstein's view that for a particular consideration to justify – to constitute *grounds*, or *evidence* – for a given belief, that consideration needs to be more epistemically secure than the belief it is adduced to support. For example:

> My having two hands is, in normal circumstances, as certain as anything that I could produce in evidence for it. That is why I am not in a position to take the sight of my hand as evidence for it. (OC, § 250)

Grammatical propositions register my basic linguistic sense of how a word can be intelligibly used – my 'way of going on with a word' – and there is no 'evidence' more secure than this basic linguistic sense to which one could appeal to either confirm or challenge my belief that a grammatical proposition is true.

> [H]ere the strange thing is that when I am quite certain of how the words are used, and I have no doubt about it, I can still give no *grounds* for my way of going on. If I tried I could give a thousand, but none as certain as the very thing they were supposed to be grounds for. (OC, §307)

This explains why I can't justify grammatical propositions, like 'All bachelors are male,' by pointing to the fact that the proposition always seems to be confirmed by my experience of things, e.g., by

the fact that I only encounter male bachelors. Since the very ability to cognize the relevant fact *presupposes* my fidelity to the grammatical rule in question, the fact could be no more epistemically secure than the rule and, therefore, the fact cannot justify the rule in the above epistemic sense.

The thought here may still seem wrong-headed. Why, exactly, couldn't one point to a use of language as if it were evidence for a grammatical proposition, say, 'All bachelors are male'? Why could one not point, for example, to the empirical fact that people do not apply the term 'bachelor' to non-men? The trouble is that, if I am not *already* able to regard this use of the word as a genuine expression of the term's meaning, I will not regard it as evidence at all for the grammatical proposition you invoke it to support; I will simply regard it as a misuse of the word, perhaps one quite widespread. The effect of your argument will not be that I abandon my sense of what 'bachelor' means, but that I reject your sense that the word's meaning is manifest in the empirical use that restricts its application to men. Once again, *On Certainty* is apropos:

> If a blind man were to ask me 'have you got two hands?' I should not make sure by looking. If I were to have any doubt about it, then I don't know why I should trust my eyes. For why shouldn't I test my eyes by looking to find out whether I see my two hands? *What* is to be tested by what?" (OC, §125)

I could not be persuaded to your view about the meaning of 'bachelor' by considering the use of the word that restricts its application to men, just as I could not be persuaded that I have two hands by looking to see if I do. As we saw in our discussion of grammar in Kierkegaard, the kind of justification at issue here – I have been calling it 'epistemic justification'– presupposes a prior agreement about the logical-grammatical rules that will be employed in the justification. But that agreement is not in place in the therapeutic philosophical context, where one party is in the grips of an illusion. The problem of trying to doubt the existence of one's hands illustrates the logic of the issue. Since my conviction that I have two hands is at least as strong as my conviction that my eyes are working properly, looking at my hands cannot provide me with any *evidence* of their existence. For this same reason – because these beliefs are equally certain – if my vision didn't confirm the existence of my hands, I could abandon the belief that my eyes are working properly and maintain my belief in my hands. I would have just as much right to do this as I would have to reason in the opposite direction, maintain my belief in my good vision, and reject the belief in my hands. Our discussion of grammar in Kierkegaard showed us that we face a similar conceptual situation when we get down to disputes about the meaning of words, but Wittgenstein helps us to understand the situation more clearly. For me, nothing is more certain than what I take my words to mean. For this

reason, it will always remain open for me to reject whatever epistemic, evidence-based reasons you wish to put against my linguistic intuitions. The therapeutic dialogue will, of course, involve the philosopher's drawing my attention to uses of language (PI, §90, §122). But it will involve his enabling me to look upon these uses of language as expressions of what I *already* took to be their meaning. In so far as it tries to invoke these observations about language-use as fodder for a direct argument, and as proof that the word's meaning is not what I have hitherto taken its meaning to be, that argument will always arrive too late. As I've anticipated, the therapeutic philosopher will promote the novel, creative, projection of words into new contexts of use, and will allow even for applications of terms so novel that they could not have been anticipated. But the idea here is that he cannot promote these developments in language by forcing a purely forward-looking, ahistorical, blindness to our sense of what we have hitherto meant by our words. This is why philosophy needs to be a matter of remembering what we always took to be the meaning of our terms and not merely a brute, ahistorical creation of *new* meanings. This chapter argues that, as in Kierkegaard, such remembering needs to be facilitated indirectly.

Here we are returned to the central idea that philosophy's business is not to propose new and controversial (and hence doubtable) 'theses,' but to assemble reminders of things so utterly uncontroversial as to be indisputable (PI, §128). When a philosopher helps us to determine the meaning of a word, the insight at which we arrive strikes us as a clarification that 'rings true' to linguistic intuitions we already had but hadn't articulated in clear terms. Discussions about the meaning of words just *are* like this. When we try to convince another person (who shares our language) that a word means this or that, the discussion comes quickly to our merely relying upon the other's natural linguistic capacity to 'see what we mean,' to see that our rendering of the word's meaning is in accord with what the other takes to be its intelligible use. If it does not, there is little more that we can do. "To be sure there is justification; but justification comes to an end" (OC, §192), and it ends when we pass from debates about the truth or falsity of empirical propositions and turn to uncontroversial truisms about the meaning of words. Since knowledge is traditionally considered a matter of justified, true belief, it is unsurprising that Wittgenstein concludes that our epistemically unjustified 'knowledge' of grammar is not a matter of *knowledge* at all (OC, §243, cf. OC, §1, §245, §250, §111, §307, §429). "Knowledge is in the end based on acknowledgement" (OC, §378) because, in the end, it rests on an understanding of grammar that can't be justified in the usual way. At this juncture, we see that the Wittgensteinian relationship with grammar, like the

Kierkegaardian relation with Christ, is not *epistemic*. Our 'knowledge' of grammatical rules is really a matter of *certainty*, and "'[k]nowledge' and 'certainty' belong to different categories" (OC, §308).

2.3.2. Philosophy's Raw Material

We are dealing here not only with a fundamental difference between grammatical and empirical propositions; we are dealing with a fundamental difference between the methods of the two disciplines that trade in these two different linguistic currencies: philosophy and science. "[W]e are not doing natural science, nor yet natural history" (PI, II-§365).

> [O]ur considerations must not be scientific ones […] And we may not advance any kind of theory. There must not be anything hypothetical in our considerations. All *explanation* 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. These are of course not empirical problems; but they are solved through an insight into the workings of our language, and that in such a way that these workings are recognized – *despite* an urge to misunderstand them. (PI, §109)

The remark after the last hyphen is especially important. It reminds us that therapeutic philosophy is not concerned with clarifying grammar *in general,* say, as opposed to the general scientific business of discovering facts about the natural world. Like Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein is interested in a particular subfield of grammar – we are interested in those specific rules of language *that we are tempted to misunderstand*. "What we are 'tempted to say' [...] is, of course, not philosophy; but it is its raw material [...,] something for philosophical *treatment*" (PI, §254).

Let us pose to Wittgenstein the same question that we posed to Kierkegaard: If grammar cannot be justified in the standard epistemic way, and if we are particularly tempted to resist the philosopher's clarifying view of things, how ought the philosopher to proceed? As with Kierkegaard and Socrates, part of the answer here is that the philosopher will take special care to safeguard the autonomy of the philosophical learner. Wittgenstein speaks to the point in his conversations with Friedrich Waismann: "One can only determine the grammar of a language with the consent of a speaker, but not the orbit of the stars with the consent of the stars. The rule for a sign, then, is the rule which the speaker commits himself to" (WVC, 105). Elsewhere, Wittgenstein gestures at his debt to Freud in this therapeutic view: "We can only convict another person of a mistake […] if he (really) acknowledges this expression as the correct expression of his feeling. /For only if he acknowledges it as such, is it the correct expression. (Psychoanalysis)" (Wittgenstein 2005, 410).

Lacking standard epistemic grounds for the rendering of grammar he wants to illuminate, the philosopher will not be able to impose his views on the other as if the other *must* accept them. Instead, his line of questioning will be shorn up on all sides by his interlocutor's acknowledgement of how he himself is inclined to use words. As in the Socratic picture, the philosopher will not tell the other how he ought to speak but will position him to experience certain tensions inherent in his use of words, leaving the interlocutor to acknowledge those tensions for himself. But might it be that in Wittgenstein, as in Kierkegaard, the Socratic form of indirection is not quite fit to purpose? Might it be that, for Wittgenstein, the grammar of misused words quite generally needs to be illuminated by the same sort of indirection that Kierkegaard used to illuminate the grammar of the misused word 'Christianity'? I think so.

2.3.3. Indirection in Three Forwards

In the Autumn of 1919, Wittgenstein had returned home from war to Vienna and was suicidal with depression. The impoverishment of his country and the death of his friend, David Pinsent, would well have contributed to his psychological state. However, Wittgenstein's most celebrated biographer believes that "the most important cause of his depression was his failure to find a publisher for the *Tractatus* – or even a single person who understood it" (Monk 1991, 173). In these desperate circumstances, Wittgenstein decided to write to the publisher Ludwig von Ficker and to say something that he had carefully avoided saying in the pages of the *Tractatus* itself. He needed to signal von Ficker to the meaning of the book and to save it, perhaps, from what de Silentio called the "fate of being totally ignored" (FT, 8). Wittgenstein wrote to Ficker, "I am pinning my hopes on you," and proceeded to offer the following clue:

> [T]he point of the book is ethical. I once wanted to give a few words in the forward which now actually are not in it, which, however, I'll write to you now because they might be key for you: I wanted to write that my work consists of two parts: of the one which is here, and of everything which I have *not* written. And precisely this second part is the important one. For the Ethical is delimited from within, as it were, by my book; and I'm convinced that *strictly* speaking, it can only be delimited in this way. In brief, I think: all of that which *many* are babbling today, I have defined in my book by remaining silent about it. Therefore the book will, unless I'm quite wrong, have much to say which you want to say yourself, but perhaps you won't notice that it is said in it. For the time being, I'd recommend that you

read the forward and the conclusion since these express the point most directly. (Quoted in Monk, 1991, 178)

The *Tractatus* was meant to convey an ethical point, but to convey it from behind a telling silence. And this point, initially offered in the forward, was itself something about which Wittgenstein ultimately decided to remain silent, making an exception only for von Ficker. More subtle clues remained in the book, however, in the forward and the conclusion.

What do we find in the forward? In the first paragraph, we can hear echoes of the esotericism that we heard in de Silentio's forward to *Fear and Trembling*:

Perhaps this book will be understood only by someone who has himself already had the thoughts that are expressed in it – or at least similar thoughts. – So it is not a textbook [*Lehrbuch*]. – Its purpose would be achieved if it gave pleasure to one person who read and understood it. (T, 3)

The book is not a *textbook* or, as Conant translates the German, it is not a *body of doctrine* (Conant 1991a, 155-56). What does this mean? The forward connects this claim with the idea that not everyone who picks up the *Tractatus* will be able to understand it, and with the idea that it is not even *intended* to be widely understood. Elsewhere, Wittgenstein says that "a sound doctrine [*eine gute Lehre*] [is something] you can follow [...] as you would a doctor's prescription [*Vorschrift*]" (CV, 53). At least in part, the analogy can be taken to suggest that a 'textbook,' or 'doctrine,' is a piece of clear instruction, a direct communication whose meaning is unambiguous. If this is part of what it means to be a doctrine, then the claim that the *Tractatus* is no doctrine suggests that the meaning of the book will not be unambiguously clear. This is unsurprising given what Wittgenstein wrote in his letter to von Ficker: like the meaning of *Fear and Trembling* and the *Postscript*, the meaning of the *Tractatus* is not perspicuously stated in pages of the text.

In Kierkegaard, the activity of indirect communication, on the Kierkegaardian philosopher's side of the therapeutic dialogue, is related to the activity of remembering on the side of the pupil. A second noteworthy feature of the forward to the *Tractatus* is that that same relation is faintly audible here. As the forward tells us, to understand the book is to see that one has *already* had the thoughts that the book is concerned with communicating. We will see that the *Tractatus* urges a radical change in our relationship with language, and one so complete as to constitute a transformation of the self. At the same time, already in the forward we see glimmers of the idea that this fundamental transformation of the self and the self's relationship with language will not involve a repudiation of thoughts already familiar to us. In the later work, Wittgenstein writes that he is not interested in

reforming language (PI, §132-33) or in the discovery or creation of new philosophical insights (PI, §124-27). In *Tractatus'* forward, he writes that, in addition to solving the problems of philosophy, "the second thing in which the value of this work consists [...] is that it shows how little is achieved when these problems are solved" (T, 4). We've seen that Wittgenstein intended for the forward to the *Tractatus* to present us with only the vaguest gestures toward the meaning of the book, and so we should not over-interpret them. As vague gestures go, however, these gestures seem to point away from the idea that the solution to our philosophical problems will lay in a brute, ahistorical, revolutionary-philosophical program of language reform. They point, rather, toward the connection between indirection and remembrance that we saw in Kierkegaard. This pointer is suggestive when we turn the second part of von Ficker's clue: the *Tractatus'* conclusion.

What do we find when we turn from the forward to the book's conclusion? We hear an echo of the Kierkegaardian idea that the book traffics in illusions which the reader – or some readers – are ultimately meant to recognize and reject. Wittgenstein writes:

> My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical, when he has used them – as steps – to climb up beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it.) / He must transcend these propositions, and then he will see the world aright. (T, 6.54, 7)

The reader is supposed to make his way to the meaning of the text on his own, without undue instruction from the author, and his doing so will involve his recognizing that the views set forth in the book's 'propositions' are meant to be thrown away in the end. Revolutionary as it may seem, the gestures of the forward suggest that this movement away from the illusions that the *Tractatus* wants to expose will not be so revolutionary after all.

As Conant reads Wittgenstein, the method described in the *Tractatus'* conclusion is Kierkegaardian: the author of the book draws us into an illusion to help us fully experience its appeal, and then to experience the despair it involves, and then to throw it away for the sake of a truth about which the book remained silent, and left us to discern on our own (Conant 1991b, 331, 343-45). Of course, Wittgenstein does not distance himself from the views advanced in the *Tractatus* by publishing the book under a pseudonym, but resolute readers note a similar technique. They stress that, in the above-quoted conclusion of the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein distinguishes between understanding the *propositions* of the *Tractatus* and understanding *him* (T, 6.54; cf., Conant 1991b, 344, Diamond 2000, 150). Where Kierkegaard uses the distinction between himself and his pseudonyms, Wittgenstein invokes a distinction between himself and his propositions.

In 1931, we see a more direct expression of the indirect method: "I ought to be no more than a mirror, in which my reader can see his own thinking with all its deformities so that, helped in this way, he can put it right" (CV, 18). In 1948, the point emerges again, this time as advice to the would-be author: "Anything your reader can do for himself leave to him" (CV, 77). Once more, finally, we find the thought in a cryptic summation of what it means to write philosophically: "I think I summed up my attitude to philosophy when I said: philosophy ought really to be written as poetic composition" (CV, 24) A later aphorism illuminates the point: "An observation in a poem is overstated if the intellectual points are nakedly exposed, not clothed from the heart" (CV, 54). As in Kierkegaard, a certain silence on the part of the author, and a certain autonomy on the part of the reader, is central to Wittgenstein's sense of how philosophy ought to be taught and learned. His ideal was to write philosophy in the manner of a poet and, for Wittgenstein, this meant leaving his reader to discern the meaning of his philosophy autonomously, without having it handed to the reader directly, as an object of knowledge 'nakedly exposed.'

A few sentences after the above comment about the method of poetry, Wittgenstein adds: "[A] key can lie forever in the place where the locksmith left it, and never be used to open the lock the master forged it for" (CV, 54). As we saw when discussing Kierkegaard, the key might go unused if were never noticed at all, and this hazard attends any philosophy whose points are poetically "clothed from the heart" (CV, 54). Given that Wittgenstein concealed the deep message of the *Tractatus*, it is no surprise that, like Kierkegaard, he would worry that it would not get through to the reader, and felt it necessary to provide von Ficker with the 'key' to the book in private correspondence. We can appreciate that Wittgenstein's fears on this front would be especially pressing when we consider what he writes immediately after stating his ideal that philosophy ought to be written as poetry: he confesses his doubts about his own 'poetic' skill, his impression of himself as "someone who cannot quite do what he would like to be able to do" (CV, 24). Wittgenstein may well have been right about his weakness here. If a poetic philosophy is one of indirection, and if indirection involves the soft touch that Kierkegaard has described, we can imagine that Wittgenstein's tendency harshly to criticize others would hardly have been fit to his purpose.

We learn more about the methodological function of silence when we turn from the forward of the *Tractatus* to the forward for Wittgenstein's second book, the unfinished manuscript we know as the *Philosophical Remarks*, drafted by 1931 but ultimately abandoned as a false start. In 'the long draft' of this forward, we hear echoes of Kierkegaard's intimate appeal to the rare reader who can see past those trappings of the present age that Climacus described in his recounting of the

afternoon when he decided to become an author. He spoke about the ease of things facilitated, in everyday life, by modern technology and, in spirituality, by the dominance of epistemology and its currency of direct communication. Indirectly, Kierkegaard offered the pseudonymous text to be discovered by "that single individual whom I with joy and gratitude call *my* reader, that single individual it is seeking, to whom, so to speak, it stretches out its arms" (Kierkegaard 1990, Preface). Wittgenstein's ennui with the modern world, and his hopes for a rare reader not lost to its illusions, are no less palpable in the forward to the *Remarks*.

We read in the forward that "the book has nothing to do with the progressive civilization of Europe and America" (CV, 7e). "I have no sympathy for the current of European civilization," Wittgenstein explains, "and do not understand its goals, if it has any. So I am really writing for friends who are scattered throughout the corners of the globe" (CV, 6). The book is written for a select audience of kindred spirits because there is a sense in which it will inevitably be misunderstood by the modern reader and his 'progressive civilization.' Even if the modern reader 'understands' the book in some abstract sense, both his aims and his way of thinking are so antithetical to Wittgenstein's own that he will misunderstand the *spirit* of the book. The draft forward continues:

> It is all one to me whether or not the typical western scientist understands or appreciates my work, since he will not in any case understand the spirit in which I write. Our civilization is characterized by the word 'progress.' Progress is its form rather than making progress one of its features. Typically it constructs. It is occupied with building an ever more complicated structure. And even clarity is sought only as a means to this end, not as an end in itself. For me on the contrary, clarity, perspicuity, are valuable in themselves. / I am not interested in constructing a building, so much as in having a perspicuous view of the foundations of all buildings. / So I am not aiming at the same target that the scientists and my way of thinking is different from theirs. (CV, 7)

Amongst other things, 'progress' suggests an adventurous trajectory toward new horizons, outward and away from familiar intellectual shores. I've anticipated that we will find a crucially important place for novelty in Wittgenstein's philosophy.[41] Nevertheless, I have been stressing that this

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[41] Wittgenstein's 1931 objection to Ramsey's 'bourgeois' way of thinking makes clear that this element of novelty is present at this period of Wittgenstein's thought (see CV, 17). For Wittgenstein, Ramsey was too preoccupied with remaining true to established forms of thought and talk. The following 1930 remark suggests a way in which the progressive culture of the West is, in a sense, not progressive enough. In its incessant onward motion, it does not allow for a fundamental transformation in the premises from which it begins, and which determine its future thinking. "If

element of innovation cannot be described as a purely future-oriented movement away from understandings already familiar to us. At least in part, it seems to have been this preoccupation with endless forward motion, away from established wisdom, that so offended Wittgenstein about the progressive spirit of the West. When he says more about this progressive spirit, he contrasts its constructive orientation and its tendency to 'go on ahead' with his own aim to understand the place where he already is.

> I might say: if the place I want to get to could only be reached by way of a ladder, I would give up trying to get there. For the place I really have to get to is a place I must already be at now. / Anything that I might reach by climbing a ladder does not interest me. / One movement links thoughts with one another in a series, the other keeps aiming at the same spot. / One is constructive and picks up one stone after another, the other keeps taking hold of the same thing. (CV, 7)

The keys to the *Tractatus* – the forward and conclusion – suggested that there would be an odd temporality to its investigation. The book is to solve all the present problems of philosophy through what, seen from one angle, appears to be a revolutionary throwing away of the very theory that is supposed to solve them. This is what we saw Wittgenstein describe as the first achievement of the book. The second achievement is that the Tractatus shows how *little* is achieved once we have made this apparently revolutionary move. After reading the *Tractatus,* our world is changed, but, at the same time, it has stayed the same. "In short, the effect must be that it becomes an altogether different world. It must, so to speak, wax and wane as a whole" (T, 6.431). We will see that this change involves an activity of the ethical will and that, "[i]f the good or bad exercise of the will does alter the world, it can alter only the limits of the world, not the facts"(ibid.) so, in a sense, the world remains the same. Wittgenstein's philosophical aim, as expressed in the long draft of the forward to the *Remarks*, duplicates this same strange interplay between past and future, old and new, change and stasis, creation and discovery, revisionism and remembrance. His aim, as he put it, is a temporal paradox: "the place I really have to get to is a place I must already be at now" (CV, 7).

It was not just the *aim* of Wittgenstein's philosophy that distinguished him from the progressive West. Here we can recall what we read a moment ago: "So I am not aiming at the same target that the scientists and my way of thinking is different from theirs" (CV, 7). The objection to

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someone is merely ahead of his time, it will catch him up one day" (CV, 8). The trouble is not merely that the West is too preoccupied with novelty and forward motion; the kind of kind novelty and forward motion it seeks is not the kind we need.

the progressive spirit is an objection to both its aims ("an ever more complicated structure" (CV, 7)) *and* its means, its way of thinking. What way of thinking did Wittgenstein have in mind? He gestured at *his* way of thinking when he told us that philosophy ought to be written and poetry, and when he informed von Ficker that the point of the *Tractatus* was nowhere stated in the book. My suggestion has been that Wittgenstein's way of thinking, like Kierkegaard's, requires that the fundamental point be communicated in silence. If this indirect way of doing philosophy captures Wittgenstein's manner of thinking, then the opposite style of thinking is the direct approach that we saw Kierkegaard also shun. In some sense of 'familiar,' I am already familiar with the insights that Wittgenstein means to communicate – these are features of 'a place I must already be at now' – but they are insights that I have come to forget or overlook (PI, §127-28; §132-33). We are returned to these insights not primarily by means of ordinary, linear, arguments that will deliver us directly to their conclusions. The propositions of the *Tractatus* will serve us as so many rungs of a ladder that takes us up, step by step, to the mere *illusion* of a perspective. When we throw away the illusion, we throw away the ladder as well. And when we throw away the ladder, we will find that it was silence rather than speech that permitted us to the return to the world in which we began our climbing, the same world and yet entirely renewed.

I said earlier that the 'long draft' of the forward to the *Remarks* was ultimately abandoned. The reason was that it somehow described the spirit of the book, which ought to have been 'evident' in the text but officially passed over in silence.

> The danger in the long forward is that the spirit of the book has to be evident in the book itself and cannot be described [....] The book must automatically separate those who understand it from those who do not. Even the forward is written just for those who understood the book. (CV, 7)

"It is a great temptation to make the spirit explicit" (CV, 8), and the long forward came too close to indulging that temptation. Evidently, Wittgenstein felt that it did so because it explicitly said that the modern reader, oblivious to the spirit of the text, would not be able to understand it. He explains:

> Telling someone something he does not understand is pointless, even if you add that he will not be able to understand it. (That so often happens with someone you love). / If you have a room which you do not want certain people to get into, put a lock on it for which they do not have the key. But there is no point in talking to them about it, unless of course you want them to admire the room from outside! / The honourable thing to do is to put a lock on the door which will be noticed only by those who can open it, not by the rest. (CV, 7e)

The point is familiar, and it resounds with an echo of Kierkegaard's esotericism: One reason for remaining silent about a particular hidden meaning of a text is that doing so leaves the text to be read in different ways by different readers. Some readers will arrive at the point the author is most concerned about communicating, and some will not. Though the latter may be able to understand the text in perfectly respectable ways, they will not understand it in the more profound sense that involves an appreciation of its spirit.

It is clear from the above-quoted passage that Wittgenstein, like Kierkegaard, thought this was quite as it should be. Those readers not inclined to read the book in the proper spirit ought to be left to their attenuated, but perhaps still perfectly noble, interpretation. Like *Fear and Trembling*, and like the *Tractatus*, the *Remarks* contained rooms which Wittgenstein "did not want certain people to get into, and so [he] put a lock on them for which they do not have the key" (CV., 7). His silence leaves the text itself automatically "to separate those who understand it from those who do not" (CV.,7). The Tractarian tactic of placing the keys to the text in its forward is repeated, then, in the forward to the *Remarks*. And in the *Remarks*, too, Wittgenstein writes in the draft for the forward something that he would later retract, just as he told von Ficker that he ultimately withdrew the key passages that he had initially provided in the forward to the *Tractatus*. In both cases, silence is used as a mode of communication, and a concern about the danger of saying too much is offset by a countervailing concern about saying too little and leaving the point to meet the "fate of being totally ignored" (FT, 8).

As we might expect, at this point, Wittgenstein's Kierkegaardian despair at the present age resounds in the prefatory material to the *Investigations*. The earlier ennui with 'progress' returns as the motto of the text, a quotation from the Austrian playwright Johann Nestroy: "The trouble about progress is that it always looks much greater than it really is." In the forward to the *Investigations*, once more, we can hear a nervous hope against hope that an autonomous, individual reader might make his way to a meaning of the text that will, once again, be far from self-evident. Wittgenstein writes:

> I make [what I publish here] public with misgivings. It is not impossible that it should fall to the lot of this work, in its poverty and in the darkness of this time, to bring light into one brain or another – but of course it is not likely. / I should not like my writing to spare other people the trouble of thinking. But if possible, to stimulate someone to thoughts of his own. (PI, 4).

A 1948 draft of the forward to the *Investigations* makes clear that here too, as in the earlier books, Wittgenstein wanted the message of the book to bypass certain readers. His journal entry for 8 January 1948 begins with what is, presumably, an allusion to those 'progressive' thinkers we earlier encountered in the forward to the *Remarks*. We can also presume that these are the thinkers that Wittgenstein has in mind when he goes on, in the same journal entry, to draft a further remark for the forward to the *Investigations*:

> (For the Forward.) It is not without reluctance that I deliver this book to the public. It will fall into hands which are not for the most part those in which I like to imagine it. May it soon – this is what I wish for it – be completely forgotten by the philosophical journalists, and so be preserved perhaps for a better sort of reader. (CV, 66)

We can presume that he omitted this direct attack on 'philosophical journalists' for the same reason that, in the forward to the *Remarks*, he deleted his attack on the progressive philosophers of the West. As Kierkegaard put it, "a direct attack only strengthens a person in the illusion and also infuriates him" (PV, 43).

Given these echoes of the indirect approach of the *Tractatus* and the *Remarks*, we are unsurprised that the *Investigations* offers us little in the way of direct arguments for well-defined conclusions. Rather than "force [his thoughts] along a single track against their natural inclination" (PI, 3), Wittgenstein presents the reader with philosophical remarks that approach "the same, or almost the same points […] from different directions" (PI, 3). We're told that this way of proceeding is "connected to the very nature of the investigation. For it compels us to travel criss-cross in every direction over a wide field of thought" (PI, 3). As is the case with the Kierkegaardian pseudonymously authored text, and also with the *Tractatus,* it is not always easy to identify the voice addressing us from the pages of the *Investigations*. Is it Wittgenstein's own voice offering us a view of which he approves, and which we ought to adopt? Or might we be hearing what Stanley Cavell calls the "voice of temptation" (Cavell 2002, 71) – the voice of Wittgenstein's 'interlocutor' expressing a kind of philosophical confusion that we are meant to resist? Developing a Cavellian view on the dialogical structure of the text, David Stern suggests that it is not even clear that there are only *two* voices to be heard in the various arguments of the *Investigations*. Stern writes: "Rather than seeing these arguments as exchanges between 'Wittgenstein' and 'his interlocutor,' I propose that we approach them as an exchange between a number of different voices, none of which can be unproblematically identified with the author's" (Stern 2004, 22). What might be the point of such ambiguity? If the forward to the *Investigations* is any guide, it has something to do with Wittgenstein's

very Kierkegaardian wish that we read his words autonomously and as individuals – his wish that his writing should not "spare other people the trouble of thinking" (PI, 4). In the last months of his life, he interrupts the train of thought he is charting in *On Certainty* as if to remind us of this wish: "I believe it might interest a philosopher, one who can think for himself, to read my notes, for even if I have hit the mark only rarely, he would recognize what targets I had ceaselessly been aiming at" (OC, §387). In the end, as in the beginning of his life's work, Wittgenstein could say of his authorship what Climacus said of the *Postscript*: "It is […] left to the reader's discretion whether he should put it all together by himself; nothing is done for a reader's convenience" (CUP, 250).

Cavell makes the point that both Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein are addressing what they regarded as a form of spiritual malaise prevalent in our modern times. "Both Wittgenstein and Kierkegaard see their worlds as labouring under illusion. Both see their function to be the uncovering or diagnosing of this illusion, and freeing us from it" (Cavell 1984, 217). The illusion involves a desire to know that which, in a certain sense, cannot be *known* at all. For Kierkegaard, what can't be known is the meaning of human existence – Christianity–; for Wittgenstein, it is the meaning of words more generally. But for both figures, "[w]e live in an Objective Age, an Age of Knowledge, and we have stopped living our lives in favour of knowing them" (ibid., 218). Both figures seek to unmask our illusions and, for both, "[t]he effort to unmask requires a few masks or tricks of its own. Traditional forms of criticism, of logical refutation pre-eminently, are unavailing [....] [N]ot just any way of addressing an audience will leave them as they are, leave them alone, but transformed" (ibid., 218-19, 225). In Cavell's estimation, "[n]othing is more characteristic of the writing in the *Investigations* and in the *Unscientific Postscript* than its shunning of normal modes of argument" (ibid., 219).[42] Driving home the connection to Kierkegaard, James C. Edwards stresses what we have already seen. In avoiding an impersonal, one-size-fits-all argument addressed indifferently to all readers, Wittgenstein's spiritual-therapeutic intervention, like Kierkegaard's, is directed to individuals. From the perspective of the resolute reading, what Edwards says here about the later Wittgenstein can be said of Wittgenstein *simpliciter*.

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[42] See also, James C. Edwards:

> Wittgenstein wants to prevent his constituting ethical sensibility from seeming a philosophical thesis, to prevent it from becoming just another 'way of seeing.' That vision must, therefore, be hidden: shown, not said at all. The moment it appears on the page it assumes a philosophical form in our apprehension; it becomes a product of the philosophical mind, to be dissected, evaluated, and appropriated in a particular way. / Since it is that philosophical mind which is the later Wittgenstein's true antagonist, he (like Kierkegaard) must present his vision 'indirectly.' He must find a way of thinking and writing that exemplifies his sensibility without representing it. The vision must never become literalized; it must never lend itself and its power to the sensibility it seeks to overthrow. (Edwards 1982, 208)

> For the later Wittgenstein […], philosophical argument models aesthetic reasoning in fundamental respects. Philosophical judgements […] are aimed at some particular individual, some subject; and they aim at the alteration of his most fundamental philosophical sensibilities. In this emphasis on the personal, 'subjective' character of philosophical enlightenment there is a deep connection between the later Wittgenstein and Kierkegaard [….] Neither has any confidence in the worth of large-scale, impersonal, 'objective' philosophizing. Both see their task as the engagement of the reader *as an individual* in the common search for sound understanding and life. Both want to address their readers as particular persons, as subjects, and the non-traditional literary forms in which they cast their work are attempts to guarantee that they not be read 'objectively,' as presenting conclusions (theses) to be considered. In capsule, both Wittgenstein and Kierkegaard aim at getting the individual reader to recognize himself in the process of philosophizing – to 'come to his senses' – and then to make a certain movement in relation to this philosophizing. (Edwards 1982, 150)[43]

Recall that, for Kierkegaard, this sensitivity to the needs of the individual learner requires humility on the part of the philosophical author. Part of the relevant passage is worth re-quoting:

> If […] I am disposed to plume myself on my greater understanding, it is because I am vain or proud, so that at bottom I want to be admired. But all true effort to help begins with self-humiliation: [....]to help means to endure for the time being the imputation that one is in the wrong and does not understand what the other understands. (Kierkegaard 1962, 27-28)

In Chapter Four, we will find a dogmatic tone in the *Tractatus*, but here I want to note a countervailing humility in our three forwards. Given the other points of continuity between Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein that we have seen so far, it is not difficult to hear, in these three forwards, echoes of the sort of humility that Kierkegaard has just described: the humility of an author who, resisting the temptations of vanity, conceals his own understanding of things for the sake of his reader. The forward to the *Tractatus* explicitly introduces the book as an *incomplete* expression of the thoughts it contains, and explicitly calls upon readers to do a better job of what

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[43] In his later writings, Gordon Baker is especially keen to emphasize Wittgenstein's attention to individuals, and the sense in which he is wary of one-size-fits-all solutions to philosophical problems. "[F]ar from undertaking to give any general outline of the logical geography of our language […], [Wittgenstein] always sought to address specific philosophical problems of definite individuals and to bring to light conceptual confusions which these individuals would acknowledge as a form of entanglement in *their own rules*" (Baker 2006, 68, my italics; cf., ibid., 12, 68, 132, 147-48). In pressing this point, Baker is breaking with the earlier, orthodox, reading of Wittgenstein that he developed in collaboration with Peter Hacker.

Wittgenstein presents himself as having insufficient philosophical power to do himself.[44] Might there have been an element of benevolent deception here? Even if Wittgenstein was genuinely aware that he had not produced a perfect book, mightn't his calling attention to his own weaknesses as a philosopher serve a partly Kierkegaardian function? Mightn't Wittgenstein be trying to stimulate the reader to recognize the problems of the text that Wittgenstein arranged for him to recognize, to overcome those problems and, believing that he is going beyond 'the author of the *Tractatus*,' make his way to the deeper meaning that that author slyly arranged for him to discover? And might a similar intention underlie Wittgenstein's calling attention to the supposed poverty of the *Investigations* in the forward to the book, immediately after expressing his hope that the book will "stimulate someone to thoughts of his own"? (PI, 4). And might our emerging Kierkegaardian reading provide us with a way to understand Wittgenstein's concern about his own vanity in the forward he eventually chose for the *Remarks*? He wrote:

> I would like to say 'This book is written to the glory of God,' but nowadays that would be chicanery, that is, it would not be rightly understood. It means that the book is written in good will, and insofar as it is not so written, but out of vanity, etc., the author would like to see it condemned. He cannot free it of these impurities further than he himself is free of them. (PR, 8)

From our perspective, the concern about vanity was, at least in part, what moved Wittgenstein to say less in this forward to the *Remarks* than he had originally planned, just as he decided to say less than he had originally planned to say in the forward to the *Tractatus*. Vanity, perhaps, announced itself to Wittgenstein as the urge 'to plume himself on his greater understanding,' to present that understanding too ostentatiously, and to deprive his reader of the opportunity to arrive at it on his own or, as Kierkegaard would insist, on his own "with, note well, the help of God" (PV, 43).

2.3.4. Wittgenstein and Christianity

I am not arguing in this dissertation that Wittgenstein's project, like Kierkegaard's, is to remind us of what it means to be Christian, but neither do I want to deny that claim. Though I have been stressing that Wittgenstein, like Kierkegaard, wants to leave his reader to discern the meaning of things 'on his own,' we will see that this solitary discernment of sense involves the incursion of meaning *from outside oneself*. This process will not involve the subject creating sense and projecting it

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[44] "Here I am conscious of having fallen a long way short of what is possible. Simply because my powers are too slight for the accomplishment of the task.—May others come and do it better" (T, 4).

outward upon the world. Instead, it will feature something on the side of the world providing sense to the subject. We will see that Kierkegaard describes this providing power as the Christian God. Although I do not want to insist that Wittgenstein would describe it in these terms as well, my claim will be that Wittgenstein's realism lies in his belief that new revelations of meaning come to us from a reality outside ourselves. Nothing I will say commits me to the more ambitious claim that Wittgenstein conceived of that reality as the Christian God. However, Wittgenstein once said: "I cannot help seeing every problem from a religious point of view" (Rhees 1981, 94), and we will see that he does not shy from invoking the notion of God. Further, I find it very likely that he saw many issues in philosophy from a Christian-Kiergaardian point of view, in particular. One such issue is the one I have been considering in this chapter: the method of indirect communication.

We saw earlier that the *Tractatus* is not a body of doctrine, or a *textbook* [*Lehrbuch*] (T, 3), and we saw that Wittgenstein compares 'doctrines' to a doctor's prescriptions. We gathered that a doctrine wears its meaning on its sleeve and that the *Tractatus* does not. Our suspicion is confirmed when we consider the remark in its context, where Wittgenstein's frames his opposition to doctrines in a specifically Kierkegaardian and Christian light.

> I believe that one of the things Christianity says is that sound doctrines [*guten Lehren*] are all useless. That you have to change your *life*. (Or the direction of your life.) / It says that wisdom is all cold; and that you can no more use it for setting your life to rights than you can forge iron when it is *cold*. / The point is that a sound doctrine need not *take hold* of you; you can follow it as you would a doctor's prescription [*Vorschrift*]. – But here you need something to move you and turn you in a new direction. – (I.e., this is how I understand it.) Once you have been turned round, you must *stay* turned round. / Wisdom is passionless. But faith by contrast is what Kierkegaard calls a *passion*. Wisdom is cold and to that extent foolish. (Faith on the other hand, a passion.) We might also say: wisdom merely conceals life from you. (Wisdom is like the cold grey ash covering the glowing embers.) (CV, 53e)

We need a significant, lasting, resolute movement away from illusion, the sort of movement that we failed to see in Alcibiades. This can only come about freely, through a 'passionate' willingness to accept a truth for which no direct argument is given. We only 'stay turned around' when we have been left to experience, on our own, the hopelessness of the illusions that beset us before our turn. We are thus left to divest ourselves of those illusions and to make our way into the disillusioned truth.

The connection between silence on the part of the author and autonomy on the part of his reader comes out yet more clearly in a second reflection on religious belief. Once more, Wittgenstein's debt to Kierkegaard is audible in the interplay he describes between the author's silence, the reader's autonomy, and the role of passion as the force by which the reader is brought out from his temptations and bound to the truth.

> It strikes me that a religious belief could only be something like a passionate commitment to a system of reference. Hence, although it's *belief,* it's really a way of living, or a way of assessing life. It's passionately seizing hold of this interpretation. Instruction in a religious faith, therefore, would have to take the form of a portrayal, a description, of that system of reference, while at the same time being an appeal to conscience. And this combination would have to result in the pupil himself, of his own accord, passionately taking hold of the system of reference. It would be as though someone were first to let me see the hopelessness of my own situation and then show me the means of rescue until, of my own accord, or not at any rate led to it by my instructor, I ran to it and grasped it. (CV, 64e)[45]

How is it that a religiously edifying text can leave the reader to appropriate its meaning on his own? How is it, in other words, that such a text can be written in the spirit of an invitation (see Cavell 1974, 147) that encourages the reader significantly to commit to its truth? Beyond remaining silent about the point one wishes the reader to grasp, we've seen that an author might employ the voices of various conflicting characters, this same method being at work in the panoply of Kierkegaard's pseudonyms. Wittgenstein finds a paradigm of such a methodological approach in the invitation to Christianity presented in the Gospels:

> [W]hy is this Scripture so unclear? If we want to warn someone of a terrible danger, do we go about it by telling him a riddle whose solution will be the warning? – But who is to say that the Scripture really is unclear? Isn't it possible that it was essential in this case to 'tell a riddle'? And that, on the other hand, giving a more direct warning would necessarily have had the *wrong* effect? God has four people recount the life of his incarnate Son, in each case differently and with inconsistencies – but might we not say: it is important that this narrative should not be more than quite averagely historically plausible *just so that* this should not be

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[45] Here we see that Wittgenstein does not always maintain the distinction between action and belief that he draws for example, here: "I don't try to make you *believe* something, you *don't* believe but to make you *do* something you won't do" (quoted in Rhees, 1970, 43).

taken as the essential, decisive thing? So that the *letter* should not be believed more strongly than is proper and the *spirit* may receive its due [….] The spirit puts what is essential, essential for your life, into these words. The point is precisely that you are only SUPPOSED to see clearly what appears clearly even in *this* [ambiguous – L. McN.] representation. (CV, 31)

Though the lessons of the Gospels are given in different and sometimes conflicting voices, they are no less clear than they ought to be, for they must be written in such a way that the reader is left to discern for himself what lessons those voices might have to say to *him*. What is essential for his life is that he be able to see clearly (and hence come *resolutely* to embrace) the truth of Christianity under these conditions where there is no direct path to that truth available. What we have is a plurality of different voices and a salient silence about which voice ought primarily to resonate with any particular reader, or about how those voices might be brought into harmony with each other.

We have considered the forwards to the *Tractatus*, the *Remarks*, and the *Investigations*. These indicate that Wittgenstein uses silence and ambiguity in a way similar to that which he finds in the Gospels, and which he would also have found in Kierkegaard. His texts communicate indirectly, not only for the sake of allowing different possible readings for different readers but because the message of the text can only be understood when it is freely appropriated through the reader's own hermeneutical work. My claim here is that Wittgenstein's writings, like Kierkegaard's, leave the reader autonomously to undergo a form of self-transformation into the ethical truth that Wittgenstein sought to communicate. For Kierkegaard, this self-transformation involves becoming a self which, as such, stands in a non-epistemic relation to Christ; for Wittgenstein, whether or not it involves any such Christianity, it involves coming to stand in a non-epistemic relation to grammar. For both, I will argue, this transformation of the self requires the reader's embrace of *realism*, namely that which we will find in a Christian-Kierkegaardian thinking of what it means to remember the grammatical past.

2.4. Benevolent Deception and the Continuity Thesis

My suggestion that Wittgenstein used Kierkegaardian methods to illuminate a Kierkegaardian vision of the self may still seem a stretch, given how little Wittgenstein said about any debt to Kierkegaard. In the forward to the *Tractatus,* Wittgenstein acknowledges Frege and Russell, and he adds the names of Frank Ramsey and Pierro Straffa in the forward to the *Investigations*. We find a longer list of his influences in *Culture and Value*, where he names Boltzmann, Hertz, Schopenhauer, Krause, Loos,

Weininger, and Spengler (CVR, 16), but still no mention of Kierkegaard. Although this may seem an obvious problem for a deeply Kierkegaardian reading of Wittgenstein like my own, in fact it is precisely what a deeply Kierkegaardian reading would predict. If Wittgenstein, like Kierkegaard, is engaged in the ethical task of reminding us of ourselves, and if he agreed with Kierkegaard that a text designed to remind us of ourselves must communicate indirectly, then we could imagine that he might veil the ethical purpose of his work. And this he does, as we saw in the last section of this chapter. Further, we can imagine that if Wittgenstein means to communicate a Kierkegaardian point by indirect Kierkegaardian means, he would not want this to be obvious to his reader and, so, he might strategically avoid any overt acknowledgement of a deep debt to Kierkegaard. If Wittgenstein were taking his lead from Kierkegaard, *that* would certainly have been something that we could expect him to have passed over in silence.

It is worth noting that there is a conspicuous oddity in Wittgenstein's remarks about Kierkegaard. We earlier considered the following report from Desmond Lee: "[Wittgenstein] told me that he learned Danish in order to be able to read Kierkegaard in the original, and clearly had a great admiration for him, though I never remember him speaking about him in detail" (Lee 1999, 195). Isn't it somewhat strange that Wittgenstein should say so little about a figure of whom he thought so much? And isn't there something similarly odd in Malcolm's description of Wittgenstein's esteem for Kierkegaard: "He referred to him, with something of awe in his expression, as a 'really religious' man. He had read the *Concluding unscientific Postscript* – but found it 'too deep' for him" (Malcolm 1984, 60). It is not impossible that Wittgenstein found Kierkegaard 'too deep' for him; he indeed did write: "Kierkegaard bewilders me without working the good effects which he would in *deeper* souls" (quoted in Malcolm 1984, 62). But again, it is odd that Wittgenstein would speak of Kierkegaard with *awe* in his expression unless he felt that he understood Kierkegaard better than these comments to Lee and Malcolm would lead us to believe.

These considerations return us to the question from which we set out in this dissertation: should the resolute reader claim that Wittgenstein was being deceptive about his philosophical project? In particular, should the resolute reader defend the continuity thesis by claiming that Wittgenstein was misrepresenting himself when he says that the move from the *Tractatus* to the *Investigations* marks a fundamental change in his views? Recall, if the resolute reader wants to go this route, he needs a compelling account of how such misrepresentation could be compatible with Wittgenstein's honesty. This is a tall order, for we are speaking here of a deception that the man would have had to sustain for his whole life after the *Tractatus*, not breaking character even in the

company of his closest friends. How could a man who felt an urgent need to confess even relatively minor dishonesties be expected to have kept up such an act? We can expect him to have done so if, as I've argued, the deception at issue was a *benevolent* deception of the Kierkegaardian stripe. We need to return to Kierkegaard for a closer look at the issue.

Kierkegaard wrote that the Christian who wishes to communicate the truth of his faith should not begin by claiming to be a Christian, but by allowing the person under an illusion of Christianity to claim that distinction for himself (PV, 25). If this element of dissemblance is not disconcerting enough, Kierkegaard even goes further and allows that the indirect communicator should be prepared explicitly to say that he is *not* the Christian that he is!

> Thus one does not begin (to hold to what essentially is the theme of this book) in this way: I am a Christian, you are not a Christian – but this way: You are a Christian, I am not a Christian [....] The deception consists in one's speaking in this way precisely in order to arrive at the religious. (PV, 54)

We are naturally inclined to describe this way of proceeding as deceptive*,* and Kierkegaard does so himself: "What does it mean, then, 'to deceive'? It means that one does not begin directly with the matter one wants to communicate, but begins by accepting the other man's illusion as good money" (ibid., 40). This is precisely Kierkegaard's method. I now want to argue that this method is less deceptive than it seems. If this can be shown, then, based on the similarities we have seen between Kierkegaard's method and Wittgenstein's, we will be able to conclude that 'deception' is an unhappy epithet when it comes to describing a resolute Wittgenstein who dissembled about his *Tractatus*-era views. There are at least six reasons why Kierkegaard should not be called 'deceptive' for his use of the indirect method and, *mutatis mutandis*, these reasons also exonerate Wittgenstein of the charge.

First, as John Lippitt pointed out to us, the use of pseudonyms is meant, in part, to take the illusory claims about selfhood explored in the pseudonymously authored texts out of Kierkegaard's mouth. Recall that Kierkegaard insisted that the views of these works should be attributed to the pseudonyms and, in doing so, he subtly told us that these might not be *his* views. As we saw earlier, Wittgenstein does not distance himself from the illusions of the *Tractatus* through the use of pseudonyms; but he does distance himself from those illusions in a similar way, by distinguishing between himself and his propositions. This practice is not quite deceptive because anyone with ears to hear *is* being told the truth.

A second reason why we should be reluctant to call Kierkegaard's approach 'deceptive' is this: Kierkegaard signals us to his red herrings by means even more evident than his use of

pseudonymity. Sometimes the reader is moved to see that a position is a red herring by a glaring problem with the position. For example, the position may jar with facts that an informed reader could be assumed to know, it may be internally inconsistent, or it may be incompatible with an essential aspect of the text that an attentive reader could be expected to have noticed.

One example of the last kind is the use of Kierkegaard's forward in *Fear and Trembling*, where de Silentio indicates that the message of the book is not meant for everyone and that it would be difficult on that account. A similar use of the forward appears in the 'Editor's Preface' to *Training in Christianity* (see Kierkegaard 2004b). In the *Point of View*, Kierkegaard explains that this forward warns the reader against an overly revolutionary reading of the text. The text can certainly be taken as an effort to do away with the established ecclesiastical order, but the forward urges us to look for a deeper meaning: the book aims to revitalize the established order, not repudiate it. We will only appreciate this deeper meaning of *Training in Christianity* if we are careful not to overlook the prefatory forward to the book. Kierkegaard explains in *The Point of View:*

> Provided an ecclesiastical established order understands itself, it will to the same degree understand the latest book, *Training in Christianity*, as an attempt to find, ideally, a basis for the established order. I was not immediately willing to state this (which, incidentally, the preface expresses directly by stating how I understand the book) as directly as I do here [….] It cannot be said *directly* that the book (except for the editor's preface, which stands by itself) is a defense of the established order, since the communication is doubly reflected; it can also be just the opposite or be understood as such. This is why I directly say only that an established order that understands itself must understand it in this way. (PV, 18)

Training in Christianity is doubly reflected: it can be read as a revolutionary call to abandon the tradition, but it can also be construed as a call to restore it. But the forward – what Kierkegaard calls the Editor's Preface – provides us with the clue we need and points us in the direction of the patient, non-revolutionary, interpretation. We saw the same crucial and clandestine use of the forward in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, the *Remarks*, and the *Investigations*. And, I have suggested, that use of indirection serves the same general philosophical goal of helping us to remember something we are in danger of forgetting.

C. Stephen Evans offers us a second example of how Kierkegaard's texts feature errors or inconsistencies that function as more or less clear pointers away from the illusions that those texts present. In the *Postscript,* Kierkegaard has Johannes Climacus present his theory of the self in untenable terms: as his own invented alternative to the view of the self that we find in the Socratic-

recollective view of philosophical insight. The reader will not take this suggestion seriously for reasons Climacus explains in the *Fragments*. First, the thinking of the self that Climacus describes will be recognizable to any reader, not as some novel invention, but as *Christianity*. Second, Climacus explicitly admits that he is a plagiarist and has stolen his 'invention' from God. Third, as Kierkegaard's reader would know, Christianity cannot be invented; it must be revealed (Kierkegaard 1962, 43-44; see Evans 2006b, 74). Only in a relatively superficial sense can Kierkegaard be charged with deception when we notice his efforts to signal the attentive reader past his red herrings and toward the insights he wants to convey. For resolute readers, the clue to the idea that the Tractarian theory of meaning is a mere illusion is more direct: the *Tractatus* tells us that the propositions setting out the theory are simply nonsensical [*einfach Unsinn*] (T, 6.54, 7; cf., Diamond 2000, 159)!

A third general reason that 'deception' is a misleading epithet can be found in the contextualism of Kierkegaard's Christianity. We've noted that part of the reason for the indirect method is that it leaves the reader to arrive at the reading appropriate for *him,* and the reading appropriate for him might not be the reading that Kierkegaard himself is most concerned to communicate. Has Kierkegaard deceived such a reader out of the truth? It will seem to us that he has done so only if we assume that the Christian truth *must* be enjoyed under one and only one aspect tenable for all, and this is precisely what Kierkegaard has denied. Even if some believers remain and ought to remain outside the faith of Abraham, they are nevertheless participants in the singular Christian truth. Not all the Christian faithful should regard themselves as called by God to act in ways that 'go beyond' what can be justified by established ethical norms. The corresponding point is present in Wittgenstein's suggestion that the proper reading of his books will differ with different readers. We saw Wittgenstein write: "the rule for a sign […] is the rule which the speaker commits himself to" (WVC, 105). Since the private language-argument militates against the idea that different individuals all follow different linguistic rules (rules are public property), I think Wittgenstein has to be speaking incautiously here. The point, I think, is that different members of a linguistic community understand the rules of language under different aspects, and at higher or lower levels of resolution.

A fourth reason why indirect communication cannot be happily described as a form of deception emerges when we recall that the truth of Christianity can't be communicated by any less 'deceptive' means. We have seen that Kierkegaard insists that Christianity is not an object of knowledge grounded in everyday epistemic reasons but, rather, an article of faith, rooted in inwardness, subjectivity, and passion. We have not understood Christianity at all unless we have: 1)

secured the particular understanding of Christianity uniquely appropriate to the specific individual we are, with our unique gifts and shortcomings, 2) arrived at that interpretation on our own, with maximal autonomy, and 3), as a consequence of this autonomy and of the difficulties we overcome in working out the meaning of our faith, our understanding of Christianity is galvanized in existential significance. If these three conditions are not met, we will not be resolutely bound to the Christian truth; we will be left wavering in all the uncertainty and instability of Alcibiades.

Now, 'deception' is a normatively loaded notion. Packed into its meaning is the idea that that one ought not to deceive. But if Kierkegaard is correct, the truth of Christianity can't be communicated to the benighted except by 'deceptive' means, for it is only by those means that the above three features of Christian commitment are secured. In this case, though, communicating this truth by those means can't possibly be avoided and, therefore, we can't consider it a 'deception' in the full sense of the word. To call a speech act a *lie* implies that it ought to have been avoided. If the 'lie' can't be avoided, then we are pushing our grammatical luck when we call it a lie. It *isn't* a lie, at least not in the normatively-loaded sense that would carry the usual implication that a lie ought not to be told. If we insist upon calling the indirect approach a 'deception,' then we must remember that the deception is *required* for communicating a spiritually necessary truth and that, for this reason, the word 'deception' does not carry its usual normative charge. This deception is *benevolent*. If this line of thought exonerates Kierkegaard, it will exonerate Wittgenstein too.

A fifth reason that indirection can't be conflated with deception relates to all the anxiety that characterizes an indirect communicator. Recall that an indirect communicator "knows how to speak in fear and trembling" (FT, 75). One reason for the fear and trembling has to do with the danger that a confused reader might think himself comparable to Abraham when he is not and, flouting the established ethical order, fall into sin when he believes he is doing God's work. A second reason for the fear and trembling, however, derives from the indirect communicator's genuine uncertainty in his faithful belief. Two aspects of this uncertainty are worth stressing.

One aspect of this uncertainty concerns the fact that the indirect communicator does not know, in advance, which particular interpretation of the faith is appropriate for any given reader. Which interpretation is proper will only be revealed by the way in which the reader comes to understand what he reads. If it turns out that he can overcome the intellectual and moral difficulties that stand between a reader and an understanding of Abraham's faith, then that faith is *ipso facto* appropriate for him. If he can't, then some more modest understanding of the religious life will be in order. The point is this: if an indirect communicator does not know in advance how a particular

reader should interpret the meaning of Christianity, then he cannot be said to be deceiving that reader when he resists the temptation to tell him, more directly, how exactly that reader's interpretation ought to go. Just as the meaning of 'deception' encodes the idea that deception ought to be avoided, it encodes the idea that one knows the truth about which one is being deceptive, and is intentionally concealing that truth. But the indirect communicator does *not* know in advance how the particular individuals of his audience ought to interpret what he is telling them, and so he cannot be charged with deception for not saying more than he says.

This first aspect of the communicator's uncertainty is his uncertainty about which of the possible readings left open by a pseudonymous text ought to be adopted by a particular reader. The second aspect concerns his uncertainty of whether the tasks of faith that the work means to illuminate for most elect kind of reader is not itself a complete illusion that everyone, including the most elect, really ought to reject. The indirect communicator is not only uncertain about which form of the religious life a given reader ought to adopt; he is also uncertain about how the 'hidden' message that he wants to communicate to his most elect reader ought to be understood, or even whether that message expresses a genuine truth that ought adopted by anyone at all. To appreciate this element of the indirect communicator's uncertainty, we need to take a closer look at the faith of Abraham.

I said earlier that Abraham's faith involves more than just his willingness to carry out the sacrifice of Isaac. The crucial part of his faith that I have not yet mentioned is his belief that ultimately the sacrifice will *not* need to occur. What did Abraham do when called to proceed up Mt. Moriah to the place where he was to sacrifice his son? Kierkegaard has de Silentio recount the story as follows:

> He arrived neither too early nor too late. He mounted the ass, he rode slowly down the road. During all this time he had faith, *he had faith that God would not demand Isaac of him*, and yet he was willing to sacrifice him if he was demanded. He had faith by virtue of the absurd, for human calculation was out of the question, and certainly it was absurd that God, who required it of him, should in the next moment rescind the requirement. He climbed the mountain and even in the moment when the knife gleamed he had faith – that God would not require Isaac. (FT, 35-36; cf., FT 20, emphasis added)

This description of faith requires the reader to rethink what it means for Abraham to do and say things unintelligible in the universal grammar of ethics.[46] At one level of ethical life, ethics requires that Abraham honour the father's moral duty to love the son. This is the level of ethical life at which we find Sarah and Eliezer (FT, 21). In his willingness to sacrifice Isaac, Abraham goes beyond *this* level of the ethical life, but he still remains on the 'universal' ethical plane. That his willingness to sacrifice does not take Abraham outside the space of ethics comes out most clearly when de Silentio, who lacks Abraham's faith (FT, 34), tells us that he too would be willing and able to carry out the sacrifice (FT, 35), namely "in the capacity of a tragic hero" (FT, 59). "[W]ithin its own confines the ethical has various gradations" (FT, 57) and, though the tragic hero eschews the level of ethical life at which we find Sarah and Eliezer, his actions are both intelligible and justified at a higher level of the ethical 'universal.' He has not undergone the "teleological suspension of the ethical" (FT, 59) that places Abraham *altogether* beyond the reach of what is intelligible to conventional ethics.[47] What is most absurd about Abraham's faith – what cannot be justified or expressed in the established grammar of ethics *at all* – is not the belief that God could call for the sacrifice of Isaac; it is Abraham's faith that God could demand the sacrifice of Isaac and then, at the last minute, rescind that demand. With this highest-order dimension of Abraham's faith in view, we can appreciate that second aspect of the indirect communicator's uncertainty, which makes it infelicitous to consider indirect communication a matter of deception.

Part of the Christian faith that de Silentio is using Abraham to model is the faithful person's use of indirect communication, the very aspect of the Christian life that Kierkegaard himself is also modelling in writing the pseudonymous texts. Put differently, indirect communication is an act of faith in the Kierkegaardian sense, and Abraham models the fundamental fear and trembling – the *uncertainty*, as I'm calling it – that ought to characterize its use.

Abraham's use of indirect communication comes out in his response to Isaac's question as the two proceed up Mt. Moriah. Not knowing that it may be him who is to be sacrificed, "Isaac asks Abraham where the lamb is for the burnt offering. And Abraham said: 'God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering'" (FT, 115-16). Kierkegaard has de Silentio describe this communication in palpably paradoxical terms, cueing to the reader that something worth attending to is in the

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[46] See note 23, above.

[47] "The tragic hero is still within the ethical. He allows an expression of the ethical to have its *telos* in a higher expression of the ethical [....] Here there can be no question of a teleological suspension of the ethical itself. / Abraham's situation is different. By his act he transgressed the ethical altogether and has a higher *telos* outside it, in relation to which he had suspended it" (FT, 59)

offing. De Silentio describes this final word of Abraham's as Abraham's 'saying nothing' and, immediately contradicting that description, as Abraham's saying one thing: "So Abraham did not speak. Just one word from him has been preserved, his only reply to Isaac" (FT, 115). As Stephen Mulhall puts the paradox, "Abraham speaks to Isaac in such a way as not to say anything" (Mulhall 2001, 360).[48]

This curious paradox of saying something without saying anything is just the effort of indirect communication. The indirect communicator says more than nothing, for what he says cannot be interpreted just any which way. At the same time, the indirect communicator fails to say something fully determinate, because what he says leaves open the question of how that interpretation should go. Abraham's last word to Isaac expresses two of the defining features of his faith that we have just considered: Abraham's belief that the sacrifice of Isaac will ultimately *not* be required, and Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac if that belief turns out to have been mistaken. The reply to Isaac artfully leaves open both these possibilities – the lamb may or may not be Isaac himself. The result is that Abraham has neither broken with his faith that Isaac will be spared nor lied to Isaac and asserted without ethical justification that Isaac will be spared indeed. Although Abraham has overwhelmingly ample evidence that it is *Isaac* who must be sacrificed, when he answers his son that God will provide a lamb for the sacrifice, "he is not speaking an untruth, because by virtue of the absurd it is indeed possible that God could do something entirely different. So he does not speak an untruth, but neither does he say anything, for he is speaking in a strange tongue" (FT, 119). It is by way of what Mulhall calls the "determinate indeterminacy" of Abraham's words – their "invitation to interpretation" – that Abraham avoids untruth (Mulhall 2001, 362, 362).[49] My suggestion is that kind of indirect communication we see in the dialogue between Abraham and Isaac is mirrored in Kierkegaard's dialogue with his reader, and that the latter avoids untruth in a

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[48] De Silentio continues: "Without these words the whole event would lack something: if they were different words, everything would perhaps dissolve in confusion" (FT, 116). Mulhall seems right to highlight the evident importance of this particular use of speech. "Abraham's reply to Isaac is the element that holds everything in the story together, and hence is deserving of the most careful analysis" (Mulhall 2001, 360).

[49] Mulhall comments:

>[Abraham's] reply […] is so constructed that the fulfillment of either of his and Isaac's possible futures (more precisely, the fulfillment either of their possible future or their impossible future) will, with equal legitimacy, render it true. Since his words exclude some possible futures (those in which God will not provide a lamb for the sacrifice), they are not empty – they do say something; but since what they predict is equally consistent with two very different ways in which that lamb will be provided, they can also be said to say nothing about their apparent topic. In effect, then, in his situation, Abraham can only speak truthfully (true to what he knows about the future, to his beliefs about God, and to his own intentions) and intelligibly (in both the general and moral sense of the term) not only by saying something that says nothing, but by this particular way of saying something that says nothing. (Mulhall 2001, 360)

way similar to the former. This must be so, I think, because Abraham is offered to us as a model of the Christian faith that Kierkegaard also practices and which is informing his authorship.

My suggestion will seem initially implausible. Recall that Kierkegaard directly acknowledged the legitimacy of denying one's own Christianity in order to facilitate its proper appropriation by another. Isn't it evident, here, that Kierkegaard has not avoided lying in the way that Abraham has? I think not, for two reasons. First, we have seen that Kierkegaard often stations clues that guide the attentive reader to the fact that he is a faithfully Christian author. For instance, as we saw, his fidelity is evident in the forward to *Training in Christianity*, even while it is hard to discern elsewhere. In the broader context of these clues, there is a determinate indeterminacy to what is said when Kierkegaard seems to disavow his Christianity, for it is not clear to a reader which voice expresses Kierkegaard's own view: the voice of faith or the voice of faithlessness. In the case of Abraham's last word, the ambiguity in meaning exists at the level of the individual phrase where, in Kierkegaard's work, the ambiguity exists at the level of the whole text and even, as we will see, at the level of the whole authorship. In the case of Abraham's speech, we are left unsure of what he means by 'the lamb.' In the case Kierkegaardian speech, we are left unsure of which of the characters described in his texts represent 1) unethical illusions that ought absolutely to be resisted by all of us (the author of 'The Seducer's Diary' in *Either /Or*), 2) honourable but lower forms of the religious life appropriate for some but not all (the poet in *Fear and Trembling*), or 3) the apotheosis of faith (Abraham, read retrospectively, from the vantage point of the Gospels). Whether we are dealing with an individual phrase or an entire philosophical book, the reader is left with an invitation to interpretation rather than with a piece of language whose meaning is unambiguously clear. This is, then, a reason for thinking that Abraham's communication to Isaac exemplifies the kind of indirect communication by way of which Kierkegaard is approaching his reader. And if the former is not deceptive, then neither is the latter, and for the same reason. And neither are the analogous cases of 'deception' that we find in Wittgenstein.

We embarked on this discussion of Abraham's last word to Isaac in order to see a second sense in which the indirect communicator's uncertainty constitutes a second reason why we should not describe his communication as an act of deception. The case of Abraham makes clear that part of the indirect communicator's fear and trembling is that he has faith in something 'objectively uncertain' (CUP, 362), for it can't be expressed and justified in the eyes of the ethical community. What does this 'objective uncertainty' amount to? We will come back to this in Chapter Five, but in part, it means that the person of faith is without the security of public approval, for his life is

predicated on his faith in something that cannot be justified or even expressed in the public 'universal' grammar of ethical language.[50] Most fundamentally, as we will see, this is faith in Christ, but faith in Christ will find expression as faith in particular events, for example, the event of God's calling off the sacrifice of Isaac. Abraham is *objectively uncertain* that this event in which he faithfully believes actually is God's will, and his speech is designed to leave room for the possibility that it is not God's will at all. From his perspective, what he takes to be the voice of God might be the voice of demonic illusion. As I will argue at greater length in Chapter Five, Kierkegaard has not overlooked this particular kind of humility without which Abraham would be a demonic figure. Far to the contrary, this humility is an essential aspect of faith's fear and trembling.

If Abraham is our model of faith, then the indirection with which he expresses his 'ethically unintelligible' hope that Isaac will be spared is a model of Christian indirection more generally. If this is the case, then Kierkegaard manifests an analogous faith when he hopes to revitalize Christianity by portraying it as non-epistemic truth that must be communicated indirectly. Abraham stands to his hope that Isaac will be saved by God's ethically unimaginable intervention as Kierkegaard stands to his hope that Christianity may be saved by that same miraculous means: "by virtue of the absurd, by virtue of the fact that for God all things are possible" (FT, 46). In both cases, the article of faith is something neither justifiable nor even expressible in the established grammar of ethics. Kierkegaard's way of thinking about Christianity takes him beyond the safety and security of publicly defensible beliefs, and into the same sort of solitude that Abraham experiences when he believes that the sacrifice will be called off. Because Abraham's faith that Isaac will be spared is objectively uncertain (ethically inexpressible and unjustified), his last word to Isaac needs to leave room for two possible futures, one in which God genuinely wills the sacrifice of the son, and one in which He doesn't. Similarly, Kierkegaard's texts leave room for a possible future in which God wills that the meaning of Christianity be remembered in the way that Kierkegaard invites us to remember it, and a possible future in which He does not. In Abraham's case, his faith will have turned out to have been a mere chimera – not God's will at all – if Isaac has to die. In Kierkegaard's case, his faith will have turned out to be a mere chimera if even his elevated and autonomous reader

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[50] De Silentio presents this as the essential *solitude* of the faithful 'single individual:'

> He knows that it is refreshing to become understandable to himself in the universal in such a way that he understands it, and every individual who understands him in turn understands the universal in him, and both rejoice in the security of the universal. He knows it is beautiful to be born as the single individual who has his home in the universal, his friendly abode, which immediately receives him with open arms if he wants to remain in it. But he also knows that up higher there winds a lonesome trail, steep and narrow; he knows it is dreadful to be born solitary outside of the universal, to walk without meeting one single traveller. (FT, 76)

is ultimately unable to find Kierkegaard's rendering of 'Christianity' an intelligible rendering of what he, the ideal reader, means by the word. This result would indicate Kierkegaard himself was in the grips of just the kind of illusion that he worries about when he worries about a person confusedly comparing himself with Abraham, and confusing the voice of fantasy for the voice of God.

Here we come to the point: if Abraham does not *know* that Isaac will be spared, he can hardly be called a deceiver for not directly saying that Isaac will be spared. Once again, deception involves dissembling about something that we know to be true, and all of faith's anxiety – all its fear and trembling – reminds us that there is no such knowledge in faith. Similarly, Kierkegaard cannot be considered deceptive for not having told us directly about the meaning of Christianity that he wants to convey, and which he *faithfully* hopes posterity will vindicate. I submit that a resolute Wittgenstein cannot be considered deceptive by proceeding by similarly indirect means.

2.5. Back to the Resolute Reading

Just as the *Tractatus* itself leaves the reader on his own to determine what he takes to be its meaning, the resolute reading leaves *its* reader on his own to do the difficult hermeneutic work of trying to determine what the resolute reading amounts to. This is why there is both a plurality of acceptable resolute readings and why each individual resolute reading will leave its reader to flesh out the details. As this element of indeterminacy in the resolute (or 'austere') approach will be essential to my own interpretation of the view, I quote at length from Conant and Diamond's clarification on this point:

> [A] resolute reading is better thought of as a program for reading the book, and not only for the reason […] that a variety of such readings is possible […] but also because conformity to the basic features of such a reading leaves underdetermined exactly how a great deal of the book works in detail. 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 – a recipe that one could apply to the various parts of the book in anything like a straightforward or mechanical way. And we do not apologize for this. For we think that this is just how it should be. There should be no substitute for the hard task of working through the book on one's own. A resolute reading does not aim to provide a skeleton key for unlocking the secrets of the book in a manner that would transform the ladder into an elevator; so that one just has to push a button (say, one labelled 'austere nonsense') and one will

immediately be caused to ascend to Tractarian heights without ever having to do any ladder-climbing on one's own. (Conant and Diamond 2004, 47)

In no uncertain terms, Conant and Diamond have just told us that their reading of the *Tractatus* is carefully crafted to veil the secrets of the text. Following Wittgenstein's hopes for his own texts, Conant and Diamond hope that the individual reader of their interpretation can arrive at an understanding of resolution autonomously: unmolested by commentators who would do his reading for him, and deprive him of the experience of discovering the meaning of resolution for himself. Now, this suggests that the meaning of the 'weak' resolute reading championed by Conant and Diamond may be veiled, just as Wittgenstein veiled the meaning of the *Tractatus*. I should clarify up front that I assume, in this dissertation, that the meaning of the weak resolute reading *is* veiled, and this assumption will guide my use of the literature on resolution.

My own resolute reading may seem surprising because it lands somewhere on the 'strong' side of the weak-strong distribution but draws continually upon the supposedly 'weak' resolution of Conant and Diamond. To explain: I suspect that the whole idea of a distinction between weak and strong resolute readers is a smokescreen and is meant by Conant and Diamond to be recognized as such. More specifically, I suspect that Conant and Diamond are engaging in a brand of Wittgensteinian self-misrepresentation. They are leaving us on our own to see our way past the illusion of two resolute Wittgensteinian philosophies – strong and weak – just as they tell us that Wittgenstein left us on our own to see our way past the illusion of two Wittgensteinian philosophies more generally: early and late. Lest this introduction become a commentary on a commentary, I will not spend time arguing for this suspicion, but it will be worth our while to note one place where Conant gestures in this direction.

Intriguingly, to a reader of Kierkegaard, Conant structures his 2007 'defence' of 'mild mono-Wittgensteinianism' in various ways to resemble the *Postscript,* including by listing Johannes Climacus as the editor of the text. What happens in the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*? After having afforded us a direct argument for the conclusion that faith 'is subjectivity' Kierkegaard's Johannes Climacus – 'John of the ladder' – concludes his book with "an additional notice that everything is to be understood in such a way that it is revoked" (CUP, 522). Thus, once we have followed the directly communicating argument for the conclusion that faith involves standing in a properly subjective relation to the Christian truth, we recognize it as an argument that self-destructs and turns out not to have been an argument for genuine Christian faith at all, for the faith cannot be argued for. 'John of the ladder' has brought us step-by-step up to a conclusion which, we finally realize, cannot be the

conclusion of any step-by-step argument at all. Both the argument and the conclusion it seemed to support need to be revoked in the end as what the later Wittgenstein would call "a misfiring attempt to express what can't be expressed like that" (OC, §37). Conant's suggestion is that the Tractarian injunction to throw away the ladder of propositions that we mount when reading the *Tractatus* has its provenance in Wittgenstein's reading of the *Postscript* (Conant 1991a, 1993, 1995).

There are two points that I wanted to make with this brief excursus on Conant's Kierkegaardian interpretation of the *Tractatus*. First, it allows me to round out the resolute interpretive principles that I bring to this dissertation, addressing the disquiet that some might feel about those principles. Second, it allows me to say more about the Wittgenstein-Kierkegaard connection that I have been gesturing at in this introduction, and which might inspire some disquiet of its own. To the first of the above two points, I noted a moment ago that Conant presents Climacus as the editor of his (Conant's) article defending the weak resolute Wittgenstein from strong resolute Wittgenstein. In doing this, I suspect that Conant is suggesting that his own argument for weak resolution needs to be thrown away in the end. Wittgenstein will have us throw away the theory of meaning apparently advanced in *Tractatus,* and embrace the resolute interpretation; Conant would have us throw away mild-mono Wittgensteinianism apparently advanced in his 2007 'defence' of the view, and embrace mono-Wittgensteinianism of the stronger (severe or zealous) kind. This, at any rate, is how I will read the supposedly 'weak' resolution of Conant and Diamond, and it is the reason why I treat their insights as being substantively the same as the insights we find in stronger resolute readings.

In the chapters to follow, I accept the strong version of the continuity thesis, which I take even 'weak' resolute readers secretly accept as well. I hold that the failure of the *Tractatus* was not principally a failure to understand language as it is described in the *Investigations* – I suspect that the most celebrated insights of that later text were already understood in 1921. The failure of the *Tractatus,* in my view, was the failure that so worried de Silentio in the preface to *Fear and Trembling,* and which worried Wittgenstein enough to write his letter to von Ficker. It was the failure effectively to communicate a counter-cultural truth in the only way it could be communicated, namely, "by remaining silent about it" (quoted in Monk, 1991, 178; cf., Conant 1995, 297). In this chapter, I have tried first to substantiate the suggestion of Conant and Cavell that Wittgenstein's silence can be understood as a commitment to Kierkegaardian indirect communication. Second, I have argued that such indirect communication does not constitute a deception in any sense of the word incompatible with Wittgenstein's honesty.

3. Misadventures in Remembrance, Misadventures in Anti-realism

3.1. Introduction

As I am using the term, 'anti-realism' is characterized by *subjectivism* or, equivalently, *voluntarism*. Charles Taylor describes subjectivism as a view of meaning that "centres everything on the subject, and exalts a quite unreal model of self-certainty and control. The ultimate absurdity into which the […] view can fall is the voluntarism parodied in Lewis Carroll's Humpty Dumpty" (Taylor 1985, 11), the character who insists, to Alice's incredulity, that words mean whatever he wants them to mean. As Taylor intimates, subjectivism need not take so extreme a form as this, but, in my usage, it will always involve some version of the idea that a sound understanding of meaning can be achieved and sustained *at will*, hence, voluntarily. As Taylor puts it, the question is whether our effort to express meaning in language can be understood as a merely human attempt to express something about the merely human condition without leaving something essential out of the account. "Is what we are articulating ultimately to be understood as our human response to our condition? Or is our articulating striving, rather, to be faithful to something beyond us, not explicable simply in terms of human response?" (ibid.) Subjectivism answers yes to the first disjunct. Taylor, and Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein, as I will read them, answer yes to the second.[51]

In this chapter, I distinguish two different forms of anti-realism by the two different kinds of subjectivism they involve. I call these *recreative* anti-realism and *recollective* anti-realism. What I am describing as two forms of anti-realism, Kierkegaard describes as two forms of remembrance. The first is recollection, which we considered in the last chapter. The second is a kind of *poetic remembering* (EO, I: 289), which, borrowing the term from Stephen Mulhall, I will call *recreation* (Mulhall 2001, 405). Hence, these two anti-realistic misunderstandings of remembrance will serve us as benchmarks

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[51] My claims here might seem implausibly bold. First, with regard to Kierkegaard: Doesn't his view that "truth is subjectivity" (CUP, 159) amount to exactly the kind of voluntarism that I have just associated with anti-realism? And if so, won't this cause a problem for my attempt to develop a realistic reading of Wittgenstein by comparing him to Kierkegaard? Certainly, the voluntarist reading of Kierkegaard is familiar and, if it were correct, Kierkegaard could serve me as no such paradigm of realism. I will argue in Chapter Five, however, that the voluntarist reading is mistaken. As Merold Westphal cautions, "we should not assume that subjectivity is synonymous with subjectivism [....] The synonym for subjectivity in Climacus' usage is 'inwardness' not 'arbitrariness' (Westphal 1998, 112) and inwardness, I will argue, involves our relation to an order of meaning that lies beyond the self. Second, with regard to Wittgenstein: in saying that he takes a stand on the related questions of realism and anti-realism, or subjectivism and anti-subjectivism, am I not reading his project in terms of traditional philosophical dichotomies that he would to 'deconstruct'? Certainly, Wittgenstein will reject the traditional understanding of these dichotomies but, I argue, he does not want to reject the dichotomies altogether.

of what a realistic thinking of remembrance is *not*. In this capacity, they will guide us in our search for a realistic understanding of remembrance in the resolute reading of Wittgenstein.

In what sense does subjectivism characterize these two anti-realisms? In different ways, both regard the human subject as the ground, or origin, of meaning, that is, of philosophical truth. Put differently, both regard philosophical truth as a projection of the human being upon the world. In recreative anti-realism, philosophical truth is something the subject creates or at least tries to create. Since all such creation operates in a field of meaning already in place, it is better described as *recreation* ('re-creation'), creation that willfully tries to remake the order of meaning to suit the goals of the philosophizing subject. In recollection, 'man is the measure of all things,' not in the sense that an act of the unaided human will creates philosophical truth, but in the sense that the unaided human will *discovers* it. In recreation, we will to create a truth that didn't exist before the act of creation. In recollection, we will to unearth a truth already latent within the recesses of human reason, and which we unearth with the use human reflection. The human will is primary in both pictures, but it functions differently in each.

I have just said that the human will is primary in both of these pictures of remembrance. Seen from another angle, we can say that human *foresight* is primary in both these pictures of remembrance. Recreation presumes that the future of philosophical truth can be foreseen by grasping the meanings that we willfully create, and projecting those meanings into our future understanding of things. Recollection presumes that the future of philosophical truth can be foreseen by grasping meanings that are not created, but pre-given in human consciousness, and by projecting *these* meanings into our future understanding of things. In recreation, there is a closure to the idea of meanings that do not have their origin in the human creative will, and to the idea that the future of philosophical truth cannot be gleaned from an understanding of any such creations. In recollection, there is a closure to the idea of meanings that are not already immanent within in our established repository of sense, and to the idea that the future of philosophical truth cannot be gleaned from an understanding of any such established philosophical truths.

To illustrate these two kinds of anti-realism, I present two case studies of each. Beginning with recreative anti-realism, our first case study will be a familiar interpretation of Jean-Paul Sartre's philosophy, existentialism. Second, I present the more extreme version of recreative anti-realism that we find in Kierkegaard's characterization of the so-called 'reflective aesthete,' the character at home in the 'aesthetic sphere of life.' The case of the existentialist (by which I shall mean the *Sartrean* existentialist) will provide us with an especially clear and concrete account of the sense in which a

'recreative' understanding of philosophy is anti-realistic. The case of the reflective aesthete will provide us with a more extreme example of recreative anti-realism, and it will help us to reframe this anti-realism as a misuse of memory.

Turning to recollective anti-realism, our first case study will be Kierkegaard's interpretation of Kant, who Kierkegaard considers a recollective philosopher akin to Plato. Our second case study in recollective anti-realism will be Kierkegaard's reading of Hegel. In fact, Kierkegaard associates Hegel not primarily with recollection, but with the more historically-informed view of philosophical reflection that Kierkegaard calls 'mediation.' However, I will argue that, for Kierkegaard, even this 'meditational' thinking of philosophical reflection contains a Platonic-recollective core and, indeed, amounts to a kind of recollection in the end.

I offer the Sartrean and reflective aesthetic accounts of recreation as examples of what Wittgenstein is decrying when he writes that philosophy "leaves everything as it is" (PI, §124), and when he writes that "[t]he name 'philosophy' might also be given to what is possible *before* all new discoveries and inventions" (PI, §126; cf., PI, §109). When Wittgenstein contrasts the activity of philosophical remembrance with the business of reforming, or inventing, meaning (PI, §127, §132-33), he is distancing himself from any recreative anti-realism. When he insists that philosophy's efforts in remembrance are also not efforts to "unearth" a meaning already fully given, but "hidden" in consciousness (PI, §92; cf., PI, §102, §126), he is distancing himself from the recollective kind of anti-realism that we see in Kierkegaard's analysis of Plato, Kant, and Hegel.

It should be noted that, to my knowledge, Wittgenstein never read Sartre. However, in the last chapter, we saw that Hermine Wittgenstein had sent her brother *The Seducer's Diary*, wherein Kierkegaard describes and indirectly critiques of the reflective aesthetic life (see Schönbaumsfeld 2007, 14-15). We also know that Wittgenstein had thought enough about the distinction between the 'stages' of the aesthetic life, the ethical (Kantian/ Hegelian) life, and the religious life to explain the distinction to Maurice O'C. Drury (Drury 1999, 180). Now, even if Wittgenstein were as ignorant of Kierkegaard's analysis of the aesthetic life as he was of Sartre's existentialism, the discussion of the aesthetic life would be helpful. It would serve us in the way that the discussion of existentialism will serve us: as an example of a kind of anti-realism that a resolute reading of Wittgenstein will need to avoid. However, on our assumption that Wittgenstein is best read as a student of Kierkegaard, it is no terrible stretch to say that, when Wittgenstein rejects the recreative vision of philosophy, he is showing his debts to the lessons he would have learned from *The Seducer's Diary*. Since we also know that Wittgenstein read the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (Malcolm 1984, 60), it is similarly no stretch

to say that his critiques of recollection may well have been influenced by the critiques of recollection that we will find in that text.

3.2. Recreative Anti-realism, Case Study 1: Existentialism

On the evening of 24 October 1945, Jean-Paul Sartre delivered a public lecture on his philosophy of existentialism to a crowded room at Paris' Club Maintenant (Moran 2000, 373). One of his aims was to provide a short and approachable statement of the views that he had presented two years earlier in his book *Being and Nothingness* (Sartre 1992). Another of his aims was to defend himself from a charge that had been levelled against him by his Christian readers (Sartre 1948, 23). They had accused him of denying the objective reality of values and of suggesting, instead, that there were no values at all, save for those that human beings arbitrarily create. "From the Christian side," Sartre writes,

> [existentialists] are reproached as people who deny the reality and seriousness of human affairs. For since we ignore the commandments of God and all values prescribed as eternal, nothing remains but what is strictly voluntary. Everyone can do what he likes, and will be incapable, from such a point of view, of condemning either the point of view or the action of anyone else. (Sartre 1948, 23-24)

The Christian is concerned about subjectivism. Where the Christian seeks meaning and truth in a realm transcendent to the human subject, the existentialist seeks meanings and truth in the freedom of the individual to endow his life with a significance that life intrinsically lacks. The result seems to be a blanket tolerance of whatever values a person creates since we are without an objective standard by which to assess some creations as better than others.

3.2.1. Recreating Values

Some have argued that the anti-realism and subjectivism that had worried the readers of *Being and Nothingness* is still present in Sartre's 1945 defence, and this is the view of Sartre that I will presuppose in my reading here. It should be noted that this is not an uncontroversial view. Emil Fackenheim notes that many readers find subjectivism in Sartre's 1945 lecture but, more charitable to Sartre, Fackenheim argues that this is a misreading (Fackenheim 1961, 84 n. 47). On this point of interpretation, a disclaimer is in order, and a clarification about how the following reading of Sartre should be taken: I assume the reading of Sartre that Fackenheim rejects. I make no effort to defend that reading from Fackenheim's critique, nor do I claim that the interpretation that I assume is true

to the historical Sartre. My aim here is simply to take up a familiar interpretation of Sartre because it serves me as a good example of recreative anti-realism. To function in this way, this reading of Sartre could be perfectly mythological and still be fit to purpose. It should be understood, then, that what I say about 'Sartre' is offered only as a description of a familiar interpretation of his philosophy and which might very well be mistaken or unfair. This is no strike against my use of this familiar interpretation because the interpretation serves me only what Wittgenstein called "an object of comparison – as a sort of yardstick; not as a preconception to which reality *must* correspond" (PI, §131). As I explain later in this chapter, the use I make of Kant, Plato, and Hegel should be understood in the same way.

Why then, was this Sartre of lore taken for a subjectivist and anti-realist? As he had maintained in *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre maintained in his 1945 lecture that, in the case of the human being, the existentialist believes that "*existence* comes before *essence*, or, if you will, that we must begin from the subjective" (Sartre 1948, 26). When we are trying to determine the meaning of human being, we ought to begin by reflecting upon truths indubitably evident to the human mind – to 'subjectivity'– rather than with dubious speculations about a transcendent reality to which the human mind might be answerable. In the *Transcendence of the Ego*, Sartre writes that this starting point reveals that consciousness is, in a certain sense, empty (Sartre 1957, 41-42). It contains, for example, no pre-given Platonic Idea of what it means to be human, nor any other *a priori* moral rule that could guide us in our efforts to live a morally righteous, properly human, life. Additionally, a sober inventory of consciousness turned up no representation of a moral reality beyond human consciousness, for example, in the mind of God. The Christian critics gathered at Club Maintenant would have heard little in the following assertion to assuage their worries about moral anti-realism in Sartre's philosophy:

> It is nowhere written that 'the good' exists, that one must be honest or must not lie, since we are now upon the plane where there are only men. Dostoievsky once wrote 'If God did not exist, everything would be permitted;' and that, for existentialism, is the starting point. Everything is indeed permitted if God does not exist, and man is in consequence forlorn, for he cannot find anything to depend upon either within or outside himself. (Sartre 1948, 33-34)

3.2.2. Recreation: Beyond Values

This anti-realism about values is bound up with an anti-realism about the nature of the self. Our choice of who we wish to be as individuals involves the choice of a self-defining 'fundamental project,' and this choice of fundamental project is at the same time a choice of the fundamental values by which one defines oneself. If I dedicate my life to the project of fighting for the Free French, I thereby dedicate myself to the values implicit in that cause. If my chosen project is to care for my family, I thereby dedicate myself to values of a different kind (see Sartre 1948, 35).

In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre seems to suggest that this free choice of the fundamental project has radical implications. One implication seems to be that we freely determine the norms of reasoning to which we will be answerable. The fundamental project is "that by which all foundations and all reasons come into being" (Sartre 1992, 616). The view seems to be this: considerations will weigh as reasons for us – reasons for us to do this or that, to believe this or that, etc.,– only *after* we have chosen a fundamental project. This is because it is only in their relevance to some such project that things can take on significance *as* reasons. As David Jopling comments, "[Sartre's] claim that the choice of self is a choice of what will actually count as reasons for us suggests that we alone choose what rules of argumentation, and what moral conflict-resolution procedures, we will agree to be bound by" (Jopling 1992, 116-17). In keeping with the universality of Sartre's reference to "all foundations and all reasons" (Sartre 1992, 616), Iris Murdoch reads him as believing that "we confer meaning, not only upon ethical and religious systems, but upon the physical world too, in that we see it as the correlative of our needs and intentions" (Murdoch 1999, 107). Could the freedom of the existentialist really be so wide-ranging as this? Sartre seems to suggest as much in *Being and Nothingness*:

> [M]an being condemned to be free carries the weight of the whole world on his shoulders; he is responsible for the world and for himself as a way of being. We are taking the word 'responsibility' in its ordinary sense as 'consciousness (of) being the incontestable author of an event or of an object.' In this sense the responsibility of the [human being] is overwhelming since he is the one by whom it happens that there *is* a world; since he is also the one who makes himself be. (Sartre 1992, 707)

Thomas Anderson notes the problem with this radical understanding of human freedom. Sartre "completely ignores the role of facticity, of the being of objects, and of others in making one's situation and one's being what they are" (Anderson 1993, 25). Contra Sartre, it is simply not the case

that, by sheer force of will, one can *decide* what one will value, who one will be, and what meanings will structure one's experience of the world.

We now come to a second radical implication of the *Being and Nothingness* account of self-making. Since it is only in relation to a fundamental project that a consideration has any valance as a reason, Sartre seems to be suggesting that the initial choice of fundamental project must itself be fundamentally *unreasoned*. In this regard, Charles Taylor reads Sartre as working in the spirit of Nietzsche, and suggesting that the choice of the self has its origins in something like a brute 'will to power.' When choosing between fundamental projects, the Sartrean agent "has no language in which the superiority of one alternative over the other can be articulated; indeed, he has not even an inchoate sense of the superiority of one over the other, they seem quite incommensurable to him. He just throws himself one way" (Taylor 1982, 119; cf., Murdoch 1999, 105). For Taylor, Sartre begins by rightly acknowledging the responsibility we bear for freely committing to certain fundamental values – certain dispositions to what Taylor calls 'strong evaluation' (Taylor 1982, 112). Proceeding from this starting point, Sartre then arrives at the pertinent question to which, on Taylor's reading, he gives the wrong, and broadly Nietzschean, answer:

> How are we to understand this responsibility? An influential strand of thought in the recollective world has wanted to understand it in terms of choice. The Nietzschean term 'value,' suggested by our 'evaluation,' carries this idea that our 'values' are our creations, that they ultimately repose on our espousing them. But to say that they ultimately repose on our espousing them is to say that they issue from a radical choice, that is, a choice not grounded in any reasons. For to the extent that a choice is grounded in reasons, these are simply taken as valid and are not themselves chosen. If our 'values' are to be thought of as chosen, then they must repose on a radical choice in the above sense. (Taylor 1982, 118)[52]

3.2.3. Recreation and Self-transformation

The irrationalism of Sartre's picture is not only manifest in the initial choice of the self. It is also evident when we repeat the movement of self-choice in the event that our chosen fundamental

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[52] The passage continues: "This is, of course, the line taken by Sartre in *L'Être at le Néant*, in which [he argues] that the fundamental project which defines us reposes on radical choice. The choice, Sartre puts it, with his characteristic flair for striking formulae, is 'absurde, en ce sens qu'il est ce par toutes les raisons viennent à l'être'" (Taylor 1982, 118; cf., Murdoch 1999, 105). Murdoch and Jopling's interpretations of Sartre align with Taylor's. As I mentioned in the text, a less subjectivistic reading of Sartre is offered by Fackenheim, who rejects the view, shared by Taylor and Murdoch, that Sartre is an advocate of what Taylor calls 'radical choice' (see Fackenheim 1961, 84 n. 47). I assume the Taylor-Murdoch reading in what follows, but, as I explain in the text, nothing depends, for my purposes, upon its correctness.

project should fail. When we meet such hardship, the reasons we had initially furnished for ourselves lose the significance they had in their relevance to that erstwhile project. Returned to our original condition of pre-rational self-chooser, we need to provide some new grounding for the order of meaning and truth, which we do by assigning ourselves to some new purpose for the sake of which to live.

> One may recall the instant at which Gide's Philoctetes casts off [...] his fundamental project, his reason for being, and his being. One may recall the instant when Raskolnikoff decides to give himself up. These extraordinary and marvellous instants when the prior project collapses into the past in the light of a new project which rises on its ruins and which as yet exists only in outline, in which humiliation, anguish, joy, hope, are delicately blended, in which we let go in order to grasp and grasp in order to let go – these have often appeared to furnish the clearest and most moving image of our freedom. (Sartre 1992, 612)

There something right in this description of how one lets go of who one has been for the sake of becoming the person one might yet be. But, if readers like Charles Taylor are right, there is also something palpably unrealistic about this description when it is situated within the theory of existentialism. For Sartre, such a movement of the self could not be guided by an even incipient understanding of any *reasons* for letting go of the past, or for reaching out to the future. There can be no such reasons because the Sartrean agent is rationally moved only by reasons *internal* to the fundamental project that defines the self he already is. When we imagine the person whose project has failed, we are imagining the person between projects and, so, wholly unmoored from any order of reason to guide his movements forward, into his future, or to guide him in his effort to come to terms with his now-troubled past. Both his understanding of his future and his understanding of his history will be determined by an unreasoned choice of project. As Murdoch summarizes the Sartrean self, "freedom is simply the movement of the lonely will. Choice is outward movement since there is nothing else there for it to be" (Murdoch 1999, 328), "the individual strikes one as curiously depersonalized and mechanical" (ib, 149), and the narrative of self-understanding, punctuated by periods of self-dismantling hardship and *ex nihilo* self-recovery, constitutes "a grandiose leaping about unimpeded at important moments" (ibid., 329).[53] Murdoch raises the relevant question: "If we

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[53] Joseph P. Fell finds the same tendency in *Existentialism is a Humanism:*
> When Sartre states in the lecture that 'at first [man] is nothing, only afterward will he be something,' he means that [...] [man] must choose 'out of nothing' the meaning and weight that the past will have for him [....] Purifying reflection yields the knowledge that the weight and influence of the past are chosen *ex nihilo.* (Fell 1979, 155)

Fell elaborates elsewhere:

are so strangely separate from the world at moments of choice are we really choosing at all, are we right indeed to identify ourselves with this giddy empty will?" (Murdoch 1997, 328)

Again, what is most incredible here is the latitude of freedom we are presumed to possess. The rupture in one's life is supposed to be something with which one copes *on one's own*. What might such coping look like? One might imagine that we ought simply to forget our now-failed project. Such forgetting would be possible, both morally and psychologically, if we were dealing with some minor trouble. If, however, we are dealing with something as significant as the failure of a self-defining pursuit, such a strategy for managing the now-troubled past is less plausible. Psychologically, it is very challenging to simply banish such a momentous upset from consciousness; morally, there is something disagreeable in trying to. We think more of the person who confronts a significant failure forthrightly and works to find whatever sense it might have in the narrative of his now-changed life. So, if Sartre is not suggesting that we can (or should) simply forget the now-failed project altogether, he would seem to be implying that one can simply *decide* to find one's failure acceptably meaningful by some creative force of the will. It is as if we are supposed to conjure up some comforting new interpretation of our past, and then simply decide to find it believable. At best, this is psychologically unrealistic. Even if we could simply invent some new meaning by which to interpret our lives, philosophers working on the ethics of belief point out that we could not just *decide* to find that interpretation believable. "Believing seems more like falling than jumping, catching a cold than catching a ball, getting drunk than taking a drink, blushing than smiling, getting a headache than giving one to someone else"(Pojman 1985, 41; cf., Williams 1970, Heil 1983). At worst, the idea that one can willfully decide what one believes involves a conceptual confusion about the meaning of 'belief.' A 'belief' is something our commitment to which is determined, not by mere force of will, but by the reasons we have for thinking that the belief is true. A 'belief' to which we are committed merely because we will to believe it would not be a *belief* at all (Pojman 1985, 49).

Sartre's view is extraordinary, but we should not misunderstand it as being more extraordinary than it is. He does not deny that we are 'thrown' into an experience of the world that is already structured by the language and cultural traditions into which we have been reared. Nor does he deny the biologically universal needs of human life that make certain aspects of the natural

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This is Sartre's reappropriation of Heidegger's appropriation of Nietzsche's *amor fati*. In Sartre's reappropriation, however, Heidegger's notion of the future as a 'repetition' of one's inheritance loses its reverence for the past; [...] the past is left behind, ideally without a trace. It is an outlook that Sartre in retrospective self-criticism will characterise as 'a revolutionary and discontinuous catastophism.' (Fell 1979,146)

and social world cross-culturally interesting, salient, features of human experience. By virtue of just such aspects of human life, "I find myself engaged in an *already* meaningful world which reflects to me meanings which I have not put into it" (Sartre 1992, 655; cf., Sartre 1948, 46-47). The idea of *Being and Nothingness*, as least as it has appeared to Murdoch, Taylor, and others, is that these culturally and biologically-determined structures of experience make no *rational* claim upon us unless we freely choose to grant them such a claim, which we do from an original position of absolute freedom when we assign a meaning to our lives. To say this freedom is 'absolute' is to say its choices are not rationally informed by any order of reason or value that are normatively binding, for us, prior to our choice of project. Thus, if I am unable to scale a rock face, I am free to divest myself of my interest in doing so, and I would thereby eliminate the effective reality of the rock face as an obstacle in my life. If I am in prison, I retain the freedom to adjust my project so that I no longer desire to escape. I would thereby cease to be unfree, for there would no longer be anything thwarting my will (Sartre 1992, 619-29). There is a "brute being" (ibid., 627) to rocks and prisons that Sartre does not want to deny (ibid., 655). To repeat, what he does seem to deny is that their existence has any valance as a reason for us to believe or to do anything except in relation to a project that we voluntarily choose.[54] Anderson notes that the apparent consequence is a troubling "quietistic or Stoical ethics" (Anderson 1993, 25; cf., Sartre 1992, 622), which is as unrealistic as the conception of human freedom that it presupposes.

> If human reality is freedom and human freedom is total, absolute, and unlimited, if all situations are equivalent in freedom, then there is no reason to change the concrete

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[54] Dermot Moran notes the highly abstract and intellectualistic character of any such absolute freedom. For Sartre,

> [f]reedom is absolute, not a matter of degree, and to that extent human freedom is the same as divine freedom. Furthermore, freedom resides in a decision of the intellect, in autonomous thinking, rather than arising in action. One can be free and yet unable to act. (Moran 2000, 358)

Murdoch argues that the Sartre of *Existentialism and Humanism* tries to walk back the amoralism of *Being and Nothingness* by pledging allegiance to a Kantian ethic (Murdoch 1999, 150; Cf., Ibid., 138-39; Moran, 2000, 373). In her view, in that public lecture he also adopts a more tempered view of human freedom.

> Is it individual choice which founds freedom and value, giving to my actions a meaning which otherwise they would not have and which is their meaning? In this sense of freedom stone walls do not a prison make, I am free so long as I am conscious. If on the other hand one thinks of freedom also in the ordinary sense of civil, political freedom as a domain of personal spontaneity which might be infringed and which ought to be respected – then how is *this* to be connected with *that*? They can only be connected by assuming some sort of universal human nature, which Sartre does in *Existentialism and Humanism*, although this contradicts his earlier position. Sartre wants the best of both these worlds" (Murdoch 1999, 138-39).

These tensions in Sartre are, perhaps, a testament to the truth of Moran's appraisal: "Sartre's philosophical interests manifest themselves in the form of an undisciplined eclecticism [....] In general, Sartre's outlook is something of a hodgepodge of different ideas, hammered somewhat idiosyncratically into a system, which never received the refinements to which an academic career would have exposed his thought" (Moran 2000, 355-56). Mary Warnock seconds the point: "As a philosopher, Sartre is fluent and illuminating, but not particularly original or consistent" (Warnock 1971, vii).

conditions in which humans live, even if they appear terribly oppressive. Along the same line, if it is a human being's freely chosen goal that alone is responsible for the meaning, including the adversity, of things, then if he or she wishes to change that meaning and make his or her situation less adverse, he or she should simply choose a different goal. If my poverty is an obstacle to my living the life-style of the rich and famous, all I need to do is choose instead to live an ascetic life and my poverty will become a positive benefit to me. No need to attempt the more difficult, risky, and perhaps unsuccessful task of changing the system in order to eliminate poverty. (Anderson 1993, 25-26)

On Sartre's brand of recreative anti-realism, we can *will* ourselves out of experienced adversity by simply re-creating the order meaning by which we know the world. If resolute Wittgenstein were advancing anything like the existentialist's view of freedom, the ethical aspect of his philosophy would be marred by a recreative anti-realism of a similar kind. In this case, Wittgenstein would be enjoining us to resolve the philosophical problems that trouble us by merely recreating the order of meaning from which they arise. In fact, we will see that just such a stoical ethics has been found in the *Tractatus*. If this way of reading Wittgenstein were correct, we would need to say of him what Murdoch says of Sartre: his philosophy is the wrong philosophical response to a genuine cultural need.

> [W]hat is at stake here is the liberation of morality, and of philosophy as a study of human nature, from the domination of natural science: or, rather from the domination of inexact ideas of science which haunt philosophers and other thinkers. / Existentialism [...] is an attempt to solve the problem without really facing it: to solve it by attributing to the individual an empty, lonely freedom, a freedom, if he wishes, to 'fly in the face of the facts.' What it pictures is indeed the fearful solitude of the individual marooned upon a tiny island in the middle of a sea of scientific fact, and morality escaping from science only by a wild leap of the will. (Murdoch 1999, 321).

Existentialism is a fantasy of self and world, but it is a fantasy rightly motivated to resist the countervailing fantasy of what philosophers nowadays call 'scientism:' the illusion that natural science is the "final vocabulary" (Rorty 1979, 368) of truth. Not incidentally, when it is not well understood, the vocabulary of natural science seems to saddle us with determinism, depriving the existentialist of words with which to express the freedom that he is so concerned to defend. Indignant, he reacts to the illegitimate hegemony of (what he thinks is) natural science by asserting the equally illegitimate hegemony of human freedom. In this way, the illusion of natural science as

the absolute arbiter of truth provokes the reactionary illusion that the absolute arbiter of the truth is the individual human will. Murdoch asks us to question both poles of this dichotomy. "Do we really have to choose between an image of total freedom and an image of total determinism? Can we not give a more balanced and illuminating account of the matter?" (Murdoch 1999, 328-29). With Murdoch, we hope so. The realism we are looking for in Wittgenstein will involve an understanding of freedom that lies between these two extremes.

3.2.4. Recreation and Other Persons

My own sense is that certain principles of *Being and Nothingness* do indeed lead to the extreme account of human freedom that Murdoch and others have found in that text. In fairness to Sartre, however, it must be noted that much of what he says, certainly in the 1945 lecture but in *Being and Nothingness* as well, shows his awareness of just how unrealistic this view of freedom and ethics is.[55] This is most clear when the book acknowledges the reality of other persons, and of the meanings that they assign to the world. Sartre's claim that "[i]n the end we must say yes and no and decide alone, for the entire universe, on what is true" (Sartre 1955, 172) stands in tension with his evident awareness that the existence of others means that we have no such absolute power.

Just as the existentialist self wants to create the meaning of his own life, he also wants to create the meaning of the lives of others. He desires to confine the being of the other person within the meanings that he imposes upon him, and one can endure the other only to the extent that he is indeed reduced to a construction of one's own meaning-making will. "Hell is– other people" (Sartre 1989, 45) because our success in this effort to remake others in our own image can only ever be tenuous. For a time, the other person might submit to the meanings that I impose upon him, but he might always awaken to the dormant power of his own meaning-making freedom, and try to make the meaning of *my* being a function of his will, just as I tried to do to him. At the moment when this threat becomes an assault, my experience is the 'shame' of realizing that I am, after all, not the pure origin of meaning and value that I wish to be. I realize that an aspect of me is an object in eyes of the other, subject to his meaning-making will, just as an aspect of his being is an object subject to mine. "[S]hame […] is the recognition of the fact that I am indeed that object which the other is

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[55] Anderson is careful to make the same clarification about *Being and Nothingness*:

> I hasten to add that I do not mean that Sartre himself, even at this early stage of his career, would be completely comfortable with the passive, Stoical kind of ethics I have just outlined. Nevertheless, I believe that his exaggerated conception of human freedom, his extremely abstract understanding of human reality, and his neglect and/or minimization of the power of facticity lead in that direction. (Anderson 1993, 26)

looking at and judging. I can be ashamed only as my freedom escapes me in order to become a *given object*" (Sartre 1992, 350). The insight is not only that I am partly an object, a piece of brute being, as opposed to a subject that endows brute being with significance. The insight is that, *qua* object, I am something whose essence is partly determined by the meanings that others ascribe to me. When dealing with the self *qua* object, "[w]e are dealing with my being as it is written in and by the other's freedom" (ibid., 351).

If I am a Sartrean, how do I respond when the presence of another person threatens my aspiration to meaning-making hegemony? I can recover my existential stability only by becoming the dominant subject in the encounter, the subject whose meaning-ascriptions win out over the countervailing meaning ascriptions by which the other person attempts to read the situation. "But this is conceivable only if I assimilate the other's freedom. Thus, my project of recovering myself is fundamentally the project of absorbing the other" (ibid., 475). "My project of recovering my being can be realized only if I get hold of his freedom and reduce it to being a freedom subject to my freedom" (ibid., 477).

This Sartrean version of the master-slave dialectic is supposed to describe an essential feature of the human condition. "Conflict is the original meaning of being-for-others" (ibid., 475) in the sense that I am always, and unavoidably, either trying to render the other an object of my creative will or to overcome his attempts to do the same to me. "It is not true that I first am and then later 'seek' to make an object of the other or to assimilate him; […] I am – at the very root of my being – the project of assimilating and making an object of the other" (ibid., 474). The self of existentialism wishes all reality to be a construction of its own free will, entirely unconstrained by the reality of others, the meaning they find in the world, and by the meaning manifest in the biologically, historically, and culturally conditioned practices and language into which the self has been reared.[56] We can appreciate why Murdoch submits that the essence of this denatured and ahistorical self is "selfishness" (Murdoch 1999, 352).

> The picture is exceedingly egocentric. Our existence as historical entities and as members of a society is quickly shuffled aside. Our 'fundamental dilemma' is seen as that of a solitary

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[56] MacIntyre stresses this aspect of Sartre's picture *circa Being and Nothingness*:

> Sartre – I speak now only of the Sartre of the thirties and fourties – has depicted the self as entirely distinct from any particular social role that it might happen to assume [....] [F]or Sartre the self's self discovery is characterized as the discovery that the self is 'nothing,' is not a substance but a set of perpetually open possibilities [....] [He sees] the self as entirely set over against the social world [....] [W]hatever social space it occupies it does so only accidentally, and therefore he [...] sees the self as in no way an actuality. (MacIntyre 1984, 32)

being. Values have a solipsistic basis in the vain attempt of each consciousness to be a *causa sui* – and even other individuals exist ultimately as threats or instruments. […] Other people, on Sartre's picture, appear as unassimilated parts of oneself. (ibid., 149)

We have so far spoken about the 'fundamental project' as the particular purpose to which I devote my life, but a purpose in which others may take no interest at all. However, in Sartre's ontology of the human being, there is a project even more fundamental than this, one to which all of us are necessarily committed, whatever our different, particular, fundamental projects may be. This is the fundamental project to be God, the goal of being the absolute origin of one's own being, undetermined by any order of meaning or truth independent of oneself.

The fundamental value which presides over this project is […] the ideal of a consciousness which would be the foundation of its own being-in-itself by the pure consciousness which it would have of itself. It is this idea; which can be called God. Thus, the best way to conceive of the fundamental project of human reality is to say that man is the being whose project is to be God. […] To be man means to reach toward being God. Or if you prefer, man fundamentally is the desire to be God. (Sartre 1992, 358-59)

When we recall that the choice of one's own being determines the being of things as they meaningfully appear to us, we see that this desire to be the ground of one's own being is also the desire to be the ground of being in general.

The development of the existentialist self, then, is the movement from the claim that God is an illusion to the usurpation of the authority that He was once presumed to hold. The existentialist self "is, or tries to be, cheerfully godless. Even its famous gloom is a mode of satisfaction. From this point of view, man is God" (Murdoch 1999, 226).

3.2.5. Recreation and Irresolution

The qualification that the existentialist self "is, *or tries to be*, cheerfully godless" (ibid., 226, emphasis added) signals us to the sense in which the existentialist is fundamentally *irresolute*. The existentialist self can only try to be cheerfully godless, for this self is an unstable illusion, only ever to be maintained in bad faith (Sartre 1992, 96-112). At some level, we are aware that we are *not* God, for we are aware of the perpetual threat that is the gaze of other persons, and the world as it appears to them. "Man is a useless passion" (Sartre 1992, 784) because he can never fully become the God that he essentially desires to be, and he maintains his hope of fulfilling this project only by refusing lucidly to acknowledge and accept its hopelessness. At a certain level of consciousness, he is aware

that he is not the origin of all meaning and truth that he wants to be. On the other hand, he fails to confront the hopelessness of this desire forthrightly and remains intransigently devoted to it. In this wavering, unstable, disposition, Sartre's hero is a model of irresolution.

The case of Sartre's existentialism constitutes an especially concrete illustration of recreative anti-realism. By comparison, the case of the reflective aesthete will seem less tractable and more abstract. However, the example of the reflective aesthete will focus our attention on two features of recreative anti-realism at which I have been gesturing, and which will be crucial for our purposes of approaching the issue of realism in Wittgenstein. First, Kierkegaard's account of the aesthete will help us to see recreative anti-realism as a particular misuse of remembrance. More specifically, the reflective aesthete will serve us as a model of what a realistic thinking of remembrance is not. Second, the case of the reflective aesthete will help highlight the tight connection between a realistic understanding of remembrance and our need to live lives that manifest an intelligible narrative integrity over time.

3.3. Recreative Anti-realism, Case Study 2: The Reflective Aesthete

We can imagine that the existentialist, once burned by disappointment, would be careful never again to commit himself too whole-heartedly to any fundamental project. Kierkegaard's reflective aesthete can be read as just such a once-burned existentialist. We can approach an understanding of this character by comparing him with a second character, the immediate aesthete, and highlighting his values as we go.

3.3.1. Reflection and Immediacy

The immediate aesthete enjoys momentary pleasures that are 'immediate,' in the sense of 'natural,' and simply 'given' in his 'pre-reflective' experience (EO, II: 18-21; cf., Evans 2009, 72-74). We see this, for example, in the child at play, or in the infatuated young lover, incapable of considering his romance from the sort of sober intellectual distance that we might recommend to him when asking him to be 'objective,' perhaps about the imprudent character of the relationship (EO, II: 28, 23; cf., FT, 37; CUP, 339, 357). Far from this pre-reflective way of carrying on in the world, the reflective aesthete maintains a highly reflective relationship with his experiences, considering them always from an intellectual distance. Standing back from his experiences, he recreates their meaning to suit his aims.

One of his aims is to avoid boredom (EO, I: 281-88). To achieve this goal, he avoids committing to any of those particular pursuits that different Sartreans might take up as their fundamental projects, fighting for the Free French, tending to one's family, and so on. In Sartre, the commitment to a fundamental project imbues one's life and world with a singular meaning that persists for the duration of that project. Resistant to understanding his self and his world in terms of any such singular meaning, the reflective aesthete seeks enjoyment in continual change. Importantly, however, he is not primarily interested in 'extensive' change, which requires an actual adjustment in the external conditions of one's life. One who pursues extensive change

> tires of living in the county, and moves to the city; one tires of one's native land, and travels abroad; one is *europamüde,* and goes to America, and so on; finally one indulges in a sentimental hope and endless journeyings from star to star. Or the movement is different but still extensive. One tires of porcelain dishes and eats on silver; one tires of silver and turns to gold; one burns half of Rome to get an idea of burning Troy. (EO, I: 287-88)

The reflective aesthete finds extensive change "vulgar and inartistic" (EO, I: 287), but a deeper reason for his distaste for such change emerges when he reveals a second of his aims, in addition to the objective of avoiding boredom. He is concerned to maintain maximal control over his well-being, safeguarding himself from the sort of severe existential harm that we saw the Sartrean agent incur when the fundamental project comes to naught. The reflective aesthetic allergy to fundamental projects emerges when this character cautions his reader fully to abandon hope for particular worldly states of affairs, for hope is vulnerable to disappointment, quaintly charming though the hopeful person may be. "It is a very beautiful sight to see a man put out to sea with the fair wind of hope, and one may even use the opportunity to be taken in tow; but one should never permit hope to be taken aboard one's own ship, least of all as a pilot; for hope is a faithless shipmaster" (EO, I: 288).

In fact, the difficulty is not merely that hopes can be disappointed, rendering us vulnerable in the obvious way. They also leave us vulnerable in a second respect: when hopes are disappointed, the pain of that disappointment leaves its traces in memories that prove difficult to forget. "To forget – all men wish to forget, and when something unpleasant happens, they always say: Oh, that one might forget!" (EO, I: 289). But "[w]hoever plunges into his experiences with the momentum of hope, will remember so that he cannot forget" (EO, I: 289). The initial hazard that our hopes might be disappointed is compounded by this additional concern: the memory of that disappointment will not be easily forgotten. The immediate aesthete takes these risks. The reflective aesthete wants no part of them.

These concerns about the hazards of hope shed light on the reflective aesthete's preference for *intensive*, rather than extensive, change. Though the reflective aesthete finds something 'vulgar' about the pursuit of extensive change, the deeper objection is that the extensive quest for variety in outward, worldly, experiences involves a kind of hope, namely, the hope that those various adventures will turn out well. For all the reflective aesthete's talk about the pleasure of variety, as C. Stephen Evans notes, "[w]hat the aesthete really is seeking is some degree of self-sufficiency and control" (Evans 2009, 79), and that control is diminished if one looks for pleasure in external states of affairs. We will now see that the pursuit of intensive change primarily involves finding pleasure in the internal activity of meaning-making itself.

In our discussion of Sartre's stoical ethic, we saw that maximal control was to be found not in one's effort to manipulate the outward world, but in one's effort to manipulate the meanings by which one knows that world. It was in this domain of meaning-making, recall, that one retains perfect unimpeachable freedom even if one is imprisoned. Something similar to this insight is anticipated by the reflective aesthetic pursuit of intensive, rather than extensive, change. The reflective aesthete describes this practice in the recreation of meaning as a practice of remembrance.

3.3.2. Intensive Change as Recreative Remembrance

The related issues of intensive change and recreative remembrance are complex enough that it will be helpful for us to begin with a sketch of the main ideas. We will then fill in this sketch by considering the text of *Either/Or*, where recreative remembrance is represented by the pseudonymous editor of that text, who Kierkegaard calls 'A.'

Where extensive change involves altering one's outward experiences, intensive change involves altering the meaning that one remembers those experiences as having. In intensive change, "[i]t is the eye with which you look at reality that must constantly be changed" (EO, I: 295), not reality itself. This change is brought about by concerted effort to resist our natural temptation to be drawn in by the immediate meaning of those experiences, the sort of meaning that fully absorbs the immediate aesthete. The reflective aesthete resists such absorption by disengaging from immediate experience, which he does by consciously reflecting upon it. When absorbed in its immediate meaning, the subject's self-awareness is completely immersed in his awareness of the experience. In reflection, however, the thinker becomes aware of himself as a subject who stands at a certain intellectual distance from the experience. What formerly absorbed his attention too deeply for him

to notice it is now brought consciously before his mind's eye and transformed into something he is thinking *about*.

This practice of intellectual detachment is fundamental to the reflective aesthetic alternative to the immediate aesthetic life, but it is only the first of two crucial reflective aesthetic movements away from the meaning of the immediate experience. The distinctly recreative aspect of reflective aesthetic practice concerns the second of these two movements, that brand of "poetic remembering*"* (EO, I: 289) that I am calling remembrance as *recreation*.[57] Paradoxically, this second movement is both a practice of remembering and, at the same time, a practice of forgetting. "Forgetting and remembering are [...] identical arts" (EO, I: 291), for the reflective aesthete. "The more poetically one remembers, the more easily one forgets; for remembering poetically is really only another expression for forgetting" (EO, I: 289).

We can get an initial feel for this practice of remembering and forgetting by considering its application to unpleasant immediate experiences. In this connection, A distinguishes the art of recreative forgetting (and remembering) from the sort of brute *forgetfulness* that we briefly considered in our discussion of Sartre. I offered, there, that it would be psychologically implausible for the existentialist to try to simply banish his memory of a failed fundamental project. The implausibility of any such crude forgetfulness is, in part, what moves the reflective aesthete to recommend forgetting (and remembering) of the more sophisticated kind:

> T]his art does not consist in permitting the impressions to vanish completely; forgetfulness is one thing, and the art of forgetting is something quite different [....] Forgetting is the true expression for an ideal process of assimilation by which the experience is reduced to a sounding-board for the soul's own music [....] The art in dealing with such experiences consists in talking them over, thereby depriving them of their bitterness; not forgetting them absolutely, but forgetting them for the sake of remembering them. (EO, I: 290)

The art involves forgetting the *immediate* meaning of experiences. We do this by reflectively choosing to remember those experiences in terms of contrived, self-fashioned, non-immediate, meanings that put a pleasant gloss on unpleasant experiences. "One does not enjoy the immediate, but rather something which he can arbitrarily control" (EO, I: 295), namely, the meaning that one contrives and assigns to things. By thus reducing the experience to "a sounding-board for the soul's own

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[57] We shall later see that A is wrong about what poetic remembering involves. When A speaks of the poetic memory, then, we should bear in mind that he is not offering us an apt description of poetic memory but the misguided rendering of such memory that reduces it to mere recreation.

music" (EO, I: 290) one renders a 'bitter' experience agreeable. "In a poetic memory the experience has undergone a transformation, by which it has lost all its painful aspects" (EO, I: 289).

We have been learning that the reflective aesthete is guided by a preoccupation with control. That same preoccupation shows up in his refusal to accept any order of meaning of which he is not the author. He rebels against any such order and creates the meanings he assigns to experience in the way that pre-rational Sartrean self-chooser creates the fundamental project: arbitrarily. Indeed, the Promethean pleasure of recreation lies precisely in this refusal to allow one's readings of the world to be determined by anything other than one's own will. "The more rigidly consistent you are in your arbitrariness, the more amusing the ensuing combinations will be" (EO, I: 295). The only consistency in the life of the reflective aesthete – the only unifying feature in the narrative of such a life– is the consistently disordered, arbitrary, nature of his meaning-ascriptions.

> The whole secret lies in arbitrariness [....] One does not enjoy the immediate, but rather something which he can arbitrarily control. You go see the middle of a play, you read the third part of a book. By this means you ensure yourself a very different kind of enjoyment from that which the author has been so kind to plan for you. You consider something entirely accidental; you consider the whole of existence from this standpoint; let its reality be stranded thereupon. (EO, I: 295)

To drive home the point, A offers a final example of this poetic artistry. He reports upon how he amused himself during a tedious lecture by attending to the experience in his own freely chosen way, rather than in the way that the lecture's 'author had been so kind to plan'.

> There was a man whose chatter certain circumstances made it necessary for me to listen to. At every opportunity he was ready with a little philosophical lecture, a very tiresome harangue. Almost in despair, I suddenly discovered that he perspired copiously when talking. I saw the pearls of sweat gather on his brow, unite to form a stream, glide down his nose, and hang at the extreme point of his nose in a drop-shaped body. From the moment of making this discovery, all was changed. I even took pleasure in inciting him to begin his philosophical instruction, merely to observe the perspiration on his brow and at the end of his nose. (EO, I: 295)

We saw that we are to "consider the whole of existence from this standpoint" (EO, I: 295). In the totalizing scope of this desire to be the author of meaning, we sense that desire to be God that we also saw in Sartre. Once one has severed oneself from immediacy, one's willful artistry in the practice of forgetting and remembering becomes the foundation of all being. "Forgetting is the

shears with which you cut away what you cannot use, doing it under the supreme direction of memory. Forgetting and remembering are thus identical arts, and the artistic achievement of this identity is the Archimedean point from which one lifts the whole world" (EO, I: 291).

3.3.3. Two Kinds of Forgetting, Two Kinds of Remembering

A complexity of recreation concerns the connection between the above technical sense of recreational 'remembering and forgetting,' and 'remembering and forgetting' of the everyday, ordinary, kind. In the recreational sense of 'forgetting,' remembering *is* forgetting. We have just seen that it is forgetting an event *as it is immediately experienced* so that it can be remembered in terms of one's own reflective designs. In the recreational sense, remembering does not involve the ordinary business of calling something to mind that was not presently at the forefront of consciousness. However, this recreational sense of 'remembering and forgetting' is a requirement for having maximal control over remembering and forgetting in the ordinary, more familiar, sense of these words. By rewriting the meaning of his experiences through the recreative use of memory, one is able *willfully* to forget and remember one's past in the ordinary sense of 'remembering and forgetting.'

There are two parts to this mastery over one's life with memories. First, once we have recreated the meaning of our experiences, we can put them out of mind and recall them to mind again at will. Second, by this same recreative art, we can assign our experiences meanings that will make them maximally pleasant when we subsequently call them to mind. Both aspects of this mastery over past events come out in the following reflection on the dangers of brute 'forgetfulness.' We are to consider the effort of trying completely to forget an unpleasant experience whose meaning we have neglected to rewrite in our own terms.

> The unpleasant has a sting, as all admit. This [...] can be removed by the art of forgetting. But if one attempts to dismiss the unpleasant absolutely from mind, as many do who dabble in the art of forgetting, one soon learns how little that helps. In an unguarded moment it pays a surprise visit, and it is then invested with all the forcibleness of the unexpected. (EO, I: 290)

The comment returns us of the issue we considered in the discussion of Sartre: how is one to cope with the painful memory of a failed project?[58] If one tries *completely* to forget the past, one is bound only to repress the memories one wishes entirely to banish. This strategy leaves the memory to re-

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[58] Of course, we have seen that the reflective aesthete does not commit to fundamental projects, but he too can have more or less pleasant experiences and so, in a way, the problem of how to manage less pleasant memories arises for him as well.

emerge unannounced later on and to visit upon us all the pain of the original experience, plus the pain we incur for having been unprepared for the visit. Notice the two respects in which there is a lack of control here. The two-part hazard of failing to recreate the meaning of the unpleasant past is that 1) memories of the unpleasant past will revisit us unbidden, and against our will, and 2) we will find the memory of that past event upsetting.

These same dangers present themselves even when it comes to memories of pleasant events. An unexpected encounter with a happy memory can disturb us with its tinge of nostalgia no less than an unexpected encounter with an unhappy memory can disturb us by reminding us of the original unhappy event. "A pleasant experience has as past something unpleasant about it, by which it stirs a sense of privation" (EO, I: 290). Hence, recreative forgetting "should be exercised quite as much in connection with the pleasant as with the unpleasant" (ibid.). The meaning of events, both pleasant and unpleasant, needs to forgotten and remembered anew in the technical, recreative sense of 'remembering and forgetting.' If we do this, the ordinary, everyday, practices of remembering and forgetting can be brought entirely under the dominion of our voluntary control. Shifting between the recreative and ordinary senses of 'remembering and forgetting' A describes how the first is preparation for having maximal mastery over the second. "[I]n the midst of one's enjoyment [one must] look back upon it for the purpose of remembering it" (EO, I: 289) and one does this, we are learning, through a practice of detaching, intellectually, from the experience and recreating its meaning. For the sake of maximal control, one forfeits the enjoyment of giving oneself over fully to the enjoyment of experiences.

> No moment must be permitted a greater significance than that it can be forgotten when convenient; each moment ought, however, to have so much significance that it can be recollected at will [....] To remember, in this manner, one must be careful how one lives, how one enjoys. Enjoying an experience to its full intensity to the last minute will make it impossible to either remember or forget [....] Hence, when you begin to notice that a certain pleasure or experience is acquiring too strong a hold upon the mind, you stop a moment for the purpose of remembering. No other method can better create a distaste for continuing the experience too long. From the beginning one should keep the enjoyment under control, never spreading every sail to the wind in any resolve, one ought to devote oneself to pleasure with a certain suspicion, a certain wariness. (EO, I: 289)

We have seen that one goal of this continual recreation of experience and of the past is to avoid boredom. Another goal is to avoid the difficult work of confronting a world whose own

meanings might not always be agreeable to us, either in our present experience or as our remembered past. Above all, perhaps, the recreative anti-realist revels in the pure power of being the origin of meaning. He writes:

> The essence of pleasure does not lie in the thing enjoyed, but in the accompanying consciousness. If I had a humble spirit in my service, who, when I asked for a glass of water, brought me the world's costliest wines blended in a chalice, I should dismiss him, in order to teach him that pleasure consists not in what I enjoy, but in having it my own way. (EO, I: 35)

Similar to Sartre's prisoner, the reflective aesthete seeks insensitive, rather than extensive, change because in this domain, one can have it one's way no matter what one's external circumstances may be.

3.3.4. A Role for Extensive Change

We have seen that the reflective aesthete is not primarily interested in extensive change. He amuses himself, not with "endless journeyings from star to star" (EO, I: 287-88), but with the private, inward, occupation of rewriting the meaning of experiences in his own terms. My submission has been that we can understand his motives by comparing them to the motives of the existentialist. The pursuit of intensive change allows us to maintain maximal control because our capacity for such change is absolute; it does not depend upon externals in the way that extensive change does.

However, the reflective aesthete is not altogether indifferent to externals. On the contrary, one of the functions of recreative remembrance is that it allows us to resist becoming attached to things so that we can abandon them at will. Just as recreation enables us to put troubling memories behind us when we want to, by training us to remain detached from various external enjoyments, it allows us to move on from them if need be and, indeed, it stops us altogether from engaging in projects that require deep attachment.

On the topic of relationships in general, A writes: "The art of remembering will [...] insure against sticking in some relationship of life, and make possible the realization of a complete freedom" (EO, I: 28). By remembering our relationships poetically, we will never be controlled by those relationships. For instance, we will not be troubled by what happens in them, or by their coming to an end. One rewrites their meaning in terms that will make them insignificant enough for us easily to abandon them if need be. Friendships, for example, are projects that bind one existentially to others, curtailing the maximal freedom and control that reflective aestheticism seeks.

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"When you are one of several, then you have lost your freedom; you cannot send for your travelling boots whenever you wish, you cannot move aimlessly about in the world" (ibid, I: 30). For similar reasons, "[o]ne must never enter into the relation of *marriage*" (ibid., I: 292). We are to assign meanings to these events that prevent them from getting too powerful a hold upon us.

A further problem with marriage stems not from the ordinary instability of human relations, but from its character as an institution rooted in social convention which, as such, has an instability of its own. "Who knows but the time will come when the customs of foreign countries will obtain a foothold in Europe?" (EO, I: 293). The married person leaves himself vulnerable not only to the ordinary vicissitudes of life with others; he also risks the disruptions that could come from the shifting of ethical conventions. What, for example, if he marries and his culture comes to disregard the importance of marriage or to think of marriage in terms that he rejects? More casual social relationships than marriage and friendship are less precarious, but only "provided that you always have so much more momentum in yourself that you can sheer off at will, in spite of sharing for a time in the momentum of common movement" (EO, I: 292). We maintain this momentum by never allowing ourselves to get bogged down in the trappings of immediate experience, and we do this by recreating the meaning of every experience in terms that will enable us to cut from it when we wish. Our natural tendency may be to give ourselves over to a naive, immediate absorption in the given meaning of these experiences. If we do so, however, we make it difficult to 'sheer off' from those experiences if need be, without being haunted by unpleasant memories of them later on.

The preoccupation with self-sufficiency and control drove the existentialist to try to force the world into the singular order of meaning he wanted to assign it, in keeping with his singular fundamental project. Wary of the ways that commitment to any such unitary meaning can expose one to disappointment and leave one with a past haunted by unhappy memories, the reflective aesthete channels his own desire for self-sufficiency and control down a different route. He avoids singular meaning-making commitments altogether and pursues intensive change. With this inward change as his priority, he best enables himself to make extensive changes in his life when need be.

3.3.5. What Eternal Meaning is Not

The reflective aesthete shuns social conventions, including those that constitute the popular, public understanding of what it means to live a meaningful human life; what it means, in other words, to bring the eternal and temporal aspects of our human being into their proper harmony and, thereby,

to 'become a self.' Rejecting popular, conventionally-established accounts meaning, we've seen that the reflective aesthete prefers to create 'arbitrary' meanings of his own.

Far from this preoccupation with individuality, Judge William, the representative Hegelian of *Either/Or* (see Westphal 1996, 24; Evans 2009, 104), regards the task of becoming a self as the task of aligning one's individual desires with the established ethical conventions of one's culture. We will now see that, for the judge, the self needs an unconditional, 'eternal' love, and this is ultimately the need for a love of the Christian God. However, for the judge, this love of God is expressed in and through one's socially-sanctioned Christian-conjugal love for another human being.[59] We gain a deeper understanding of the reflective aesthetic life when we consider just what his failure to manifest any such eternal love involves. The nature of this failure comes out in the Judge's letters to A, where the older man argues that the recreational use of the memory makes for a life of despair and falls short of the genuinely poetic use of memory that the aesthete claims to champion.

I have been describing the reflective aesthetic life as a rejection of the immediate meanings in which, for example, the naive young lovers are wholly, pre-reflectively, absorbed. The judge agrees with the reflective aesthete that a properly eternal love is not to be found in naive immediacy. The young lovers in the immediate aesthetic stage *proclaim* their love to be eternal, but they are mistaken. For a marriage to be an expression of eternal love, the lovers must regard the commitment as *certain*, and there can be no such certainty in the pre-martial life where 'eternal' love is based merely upon 'temporal,' or *natural*, phenomena."[Naïve] romantic love was built upon an illusion, […] the eternity it claimed was built upon the temporal, and […] although the knight of [naive] romantic love was sincerely convinced of its absolute durability, there nevertheless was no certainty of this" (EO, II: 28). In naive immediacy, love is founded only upon the *natural* necessity of the lover's emotional, pre-rational, infatuation with the other (EO, II: 28). "It is based upon beauty, in part upon sensuous beauty, in part upon the beauty which can be conceived through and with the sensuous" (EO, II: 28).

As we have seen, the reflective aesthete rejects a commitment to a certain, lasting love, and so there is no *genuine* expression of eternal love in the reflective aesthetic life, just as there is no such

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[59] Westphal writes:

> Judge William is […] a Hegelian, for whom ethics is always a matter of *Sittlichkeit*, the laws, customs, practices, and institutions of a people. The right and the good are to be found, not abstractly in a rational principle but concretely within one's social order, which is, for each individual, the essential mediator of the absolute and the eternal. / Accordingly, Judge William embeds his theory of self-choice in a theory of marriage, the first moment of Hegel's theory of *Sittlichkeit*. (Westphal 1996, 24)

expression of eternal love in the ethical life of the judge. However, there is a sense in which the reflective aesthete, no less than the judge, *seeks* an 'eternal' meaning. He reports: "I immerse everything I have experienced in a baptism of forgetfulness unto an eternal remembrance. Everything temporal and contingent is forgotten and erased." (EO, I: 41). His trouble is that, like the young lovers arrested at the immediate aesthetic stage, he misunderstands the meaning of eternity. Since he rejects the pursuit of 'fundamental projects,' the only sense of eternity available to the reflective aesthete is the eternity of enjoyment in the punctual moment. In the reflective aesthetic life, "[t]he sensual seeks instant satisfaction, and the more refined it is, the better it knows how to make the instant of enjoyment a little eternity" (EO, II: 22). For A, "the eternal element in love becomes an object of derision, the temporal element alone is left, but this again is refined into the sensuous eternity, into the eternal instant of the embrace" (EO, II: 22). The eternal expression of the self, here, amounts to a hyper-reflective variety of the 'live in the now'-type sensual enjoyment of the isolated temporal moment. In such enjoyment, the moment feels eternal because we have disregarded all concern for the past and the future. We confuse this use of attention for an intuition of the genuine eternal because, 'living in the now,' we abandon ourselves to the moment in a distinctly pernicious sense: we close our eyes to the condition of our life's broader narrative. From A's perspective, this misuse of attention would be naturally appealing, because that broader narrative is a disordered tangle and so, strictly speaking, no real *narrative* at all. We will see Wittgenstein highlight a genuine truth in the cliché that one ought to 'live in the now.' But when we misunderstand that ideal, it is no spiritual achievement, but a self-deceptive escapism that refuses to confront and grapple forthrightly with the tensions in one's past and future. "The true eternity in love," says William, "delivers it […] first of all from the sensual" (EO, II: 22).

The trouble with both immediate and reflective aesthetic love is not merely that, in both cases, the couples are not married. Marriage is not the issue, for not just any marriage would suffice to provide the lover, *qua* lover, eternal self-expression. William has us consider a marriage where the partners conceive of the relation as potentially temporary, bearing lucidly in mind the possibility that the marriage might someday be annulled. Such a "civil arrangement" as William calls it, "does not confine itself to the single instant, but extends this to a longer period, [….] It thinks that for a time one can well enough endure living together, but it would keep open a way of escape so as to be able to choose if a happier choice might offer itself" (EO II: 23). Here, the erotic element in love is

> disheartened by a cool common-sense consideration that one must be prudent, not be too
> quick in sorting and rejecting, that life after all never presents the ideal, that it is a quite

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respectable match etc. The eternal, which (as has been shown) is properly a part of every marriage is not really present here; for a common-sense calculation is always temporal. Such an alliance is therefore at once immoral and fragile. (EO, II: 28; cf., FT, 42)

This marriage of common sense is still merely 'temporal'– still merely 'for now' – and so it still lacks the eternal dimension that we are seeking.

3.3.6. Irresolution as Perdition

The recreational self is irresolute. On the one hand, he is a temporally unfolding narrative. On the other hand, he is (or thinks he is) a detached point of observation on the world, relishing in his own observational artistry, and his invulnerability to the world whose meaning he wishes to author. By standing aloft at a reflective distance from all of his pursuits, he is never fully 'within himself' when he is engaged in them. William claims that this way of living is at odds with the salvation of one's immortal soul:

> this is the pitiful thing to one who contemplates human life, that so many live on in a quiet state of perdition; they outlive themselves, [...] in the sense that [...] they live their lives, as it were, outside of themselves, they vanish like shadows, their immortal soul is blown away, and they are not alarmed by the problem of its immortality, for they are already in a state of dissolution before they die. (EO, II: 172-73)

For all his self-sufficiency, A admits to the despair that is his life, a life cleaved off from the world of immediate meanings that we know in natural, pre-reflective, experience, and refashioned in artificial terms that suit his whims.

> Carking care is my feudal castle. It is built like an eagle's nest upon the peak of a mountain lost in the clouds. No one can take it by storm. From this abode I dart down into the world of reality to seize my prey; but I do not remain down there, I bear my quarry aloft to my stronghold. My booty is a picture I weave into the tapestries of my palace. There I live as one dead. (EO, I: 41)

Committed to the enjoyment of punctual moments and isolated projects, A has declined every opportunity to allow the various moments and projects of his life to take on an overarching meaning that unites those punctual moments into the coherent unity that Judge William, our advocate for the ethical life, calls the *personality* (EO, II: 171). There is no more a singular meaning running through and unifying the different epochs of A's life than there is a singular meaning running through and unifying the different homonymous uses of a given word. The reflective aesthete confesses:

> My life is absolutely meaningless. When I consider the different periods into which it falls, it seems like the word *Schnur* in the dictionary, which means in the first place a string, in the second, a daughter-in-law. The only thing lacking is that the word *Schnur* should mean in the third place as camel, and the fourth, a dust-brush. (EO, I: 35)

Anthony Rudd comes to the point: "This is the sense in which the aesthete lacks any stable personal identity; his life is without continuity" (Rudd 1993, 93).

Judge William's criticism, a moment ago, was that the aesthete's way of life endangers his immortal soul. He goes on to suggest that the remedy for this condition is for A to give himself over to an 'eternal love' that might imbue his life with the unity and integrity it lacks. William writes to his interlocutor: "Of [the eternal determination of love] you and all natures born for your conquest have no conception. You are never in yourselves, but constantly outside yourselves" (Ibid, 99). This state of self-alienation is the cause of A's despair. Hidden in his castle out beyond the temporal world, at a reflective distance from all his worldly pursuits, the reflective aesthete does not reveal himself *in* those pursuits, and this, says William, is perdition. Especially crippling is A's refusal to reveal himself *in* love.

> He who cannot reveal himself cannot love, and he who cannot love is the most unhappy man of all [....] [F]or your own sake, for the sake of your salvation – for I am acquainted with no condition of the soul which can better be described as perdition – stop this wild flight, this passion of annihilation which rages in you. (EO, II: 164)

We see the irresoluteness of the reflective aesthetic life in the discord between A's expressions of despair and his explicit assertions of how one ought to live. Regardless of what he says, his occasional feelings of sorrow show that he is not fully existentially invested in the aesthetic life of reflective detachment but, instead, he is a self divided. On the one hand, as we have seen, he has an intellectual preoccupation with self-sufficiency and control that moves him to spurn existential investment in worldly hopes and the personal vulnerability that such investment carries. In keeping with this pursuit, he refuses to allow any experience to take on a more than momentary meaning in his life, a meaning from which he can "sheer off at will" (Ibid, 29) because its only value, for him, is as an artistic production from which he remains existentially remote. At a less intellectual level, however, he is aware that what safety he procures through the ongoing cultivation of his disintegrated life comes only at the cost of meaninglessness and despair. We have here, once more, an example of the kind of wavering double-mindedness that, as we will see, is characteristic of the irresolute person both in Kierkegaard and in Wittgenstein.

3.3.7. Eternal Meaning as Embodied Meaning

What, exactly, is this strange determination of eternity that is lacking in the reflective aesthetic life? In what sense can a temporal love be at the same time eternal? The claim here will be a properly eternal love needs to be lived rather than 'represented.' As I will prefer to describe it, a love that expresses an eternal meaning needs to be *embodied*, or *incarnate*, in the way one lives.

First, we are told that eternal love "has an entirely different conception of time" (EO, II: 144) than the punctual conception of time as a series of disjointed, temporary events that time becomes when every experience is objectified in recreational remembrance. The fundamental illusion at issue here – and the illusion to which the judge will also fall prey – is the idea that the eternal determination of the self can be represented. We are told that "an ideal marriage *cannot* be represented, for the very point is time in its extension" (EO, II: 141). What is this time 'in its extension' wherein love will find its *eternal* expression? Whatever it is, rather than being 'represented,' the eternity that we find in marriage counts amongst the "the highest and most beautiful things in life [that] are not to be heard about, nor read about, nor seen but, if one will, may be lived" (EO, II: 141). What does it mean to say that such an eternal love must be lived rather than represented? We are left to glean the lesson from a comparison between the internal and external struggles that the lover might face. Let us begin with the external struggles.

William characterizes the immediate aesthete's merely temporal relation to marriage in terms of the sort of challenges the aesthete faces in his struggle to win his lover's hand. As William puts it, these are struggles with the merely *external*, worldly, challenges that might stand in the lover's way. Such problems would include, for example, a class division between the lovers, a feud between their families, rival suitors, etc.. William laments that it is merely the naive, pre-marital, stage of romantic love, that gets glorified in works of art where the power of love is presented as the power to overcome these merely external struggles. Such works of art present marriage only as the future event that brings these pre-marital struggles to a close. In doing this, however, such works fail to present the genuine 'aesthetic validity' of marriage itself, which can be appreciated only after the marriage has taken place.

> [T]his is precisely the pernicious, the unwholesome feature of such works, that they tend to end where they ought to begin. After the many fates have their outcome and the lovers sink into one another's arms. The curtain falls, the book ends; but the reader is none the wiser [....] Hence it is rather rare to see a wedding on the stage. (EO, II: 18)

In this case, marriage cannot be the expression of an eternal love of the kind that William wants to illuminate. Why not? The problem seems to be that an eternal love cannot be adequately understood as a future goal for the sake of which one fights 'external foes.' To relate to marriage in this way is not yet to relate to it as an *eternal* meaning, for we still relate to it as an event to come. The immediate aesthete "waits, let us say for fifteen years – then comes the instant which rewards him" (EO, II: 140). The reward, indeed, is that his love will become 'eternal,' in the sense of acquiring that stamp of certainty that marriage embosses upon the merely natural bond of naive infatuation. But the eternity of love cannot be understood so long as this eternal love is thought of as an event still *to come*. We misrepresent the sense in which marriage renders love eternal if we conceive of this eternity as *beginning* at a particular point in time, just as we misrepresent it when we think of it as a 'civil arrangement' that might come to an *end*. An eternal meaning, naturally enough, is one to which we relate as something having neither beginning nor end.

The general point is that to find, in love, a genuinely eternal meaning, love cannot be represented, for representation involves standing 'outside' love's bounds. The immediate aesthete misrepresents the eternity of love when he thinks of that eternity as having its onset with the *future* event of marriage. The reflective aesthete misrepresents the eternity of love when he thinks it either as a blissful absorption of the self the oblivion of sensuous 'eternal' moment, or when he thinks of marriage a civil arrangement, as one temporary project amongst others. To understand love in its eternity is to understand it not as one event, or one temporary project, amongst others; it is to understand love as the essential structure of one's life – as a horizon of significance in terms of which one interprets all events and projects. This is the sense in which an understanding of love, in its true eternity, is "not to be heard about, nor read about, nor seen but, if one will, may be lived" (EO, II: 141). To experience love in its eternity is to be *in* love, rather than outside love at a perspective from which one might speak about it as one possibility amongst others, placed before the reflecting mind's eye. As I will prefer to put it, a properly eternal meaning is not understood as an object of thought but as a meaning *embodied* in the practice of virtues that manifest one's commitment to that meaning. Judge William says the following:

> [Conjugal love] is faithful, constant, humble, patient, long-suffering, indulgent, sincere, contented, vigilant, willing, joyful. All these virtues have the characteristic that they are inward qualifications of the individual. The individual is not fighting with external foes but with himself, fights out of love from within him. And they have reference to time, for their

truth does not consist in being once and for all, but in being constantly what they are. (EO, II: 142).

In the constant, lived, non-representable, and fundamentally embodied expression of these virtues, the married man overcomes the immediate aesthete's illusion of marriage as a mere event to-come, and he gives them eternal expression in the form of married *life*. The lived exercise of these virtues is, of course, extended in time –"it is in time that [conjugal love] accomplishes its work" (EO, II: 144) – but it is precisely in such temporal activity, according to William, that we experience the true meaning of love's eternity. Though Kierkegaard never says as much, the reason, I think, is that that meaning is not grasped *merely* as the meaning of a temporal event, but as the meaning of a temporal event that has an eternal significance. This, I think, is what William has in mind when he writes that the married man alone "has triumphed over time" (EO, II: 141). "The married man, being a true conqueror, has not killed time but has saved it and preserved it in eternity. The married man who does this truly lives poetically" (EO, II: 141). His love, now gilded in marriage, is not a mere temporal event, but a horizontal contexture of meaning in which the different events of his life find their integral and eternal significance. And this horizon of significance is not a representation, for it is not something to which the ethical man is intentionally related in reflection, as if from outside that representation. Instead, it is something that finds its eternal expression in the ongoing lived, temporal, practice of the marital virtues. Having discovered its eternal determination, the logical role of this love in his life is not that of a time-bound temporal event – even an ongoing one – because he does not relate to it as something temporally bounded, as an event *in* time with an intelligible start and endpoint, set off against neighbouring temporal events. Put differently, his love has become an *infinite* passion, and a passion is infinite because we do not relate to it as merely a passion for something *in* the world. Dreyfus comments:

> For Kierkegaard, an infinite passion can be called infinite because it opens up a world. Not only what actually exists gets its meaning from its connection with my defining passion; anything that could possibly come into existence would get its meaning for me from my defining commitment. In that sense, the commitment is infinite [....] In sum, when you have a defining commitment, the finite object of your commitment is infinitely important, that is, the object of your passion is both something particular and also world defining. In short, it is the concrete condition for anything showing up as meaningful. (Dreyfus 2012, 106).

It is in this sense that the judge understands his love not as something to which he is intentionally related, but as a world of meaning that he himself *is*. In this case, the choice to give one's love

rational grounding in marriage provides him with "the inmost and holiest thing of all in a man, the unifying power of personality" (EO, II: 164). "The choice itself is decisive for the content of the personality, through the choice of the personality immerses itself with the thing chosen, and when it does not choose it withers away in consumption" (EO, II: 167) as we have seen in the case of the reflective aesthete.

> Thereby the personality announces its inner infinity, and thereby, in turn, the personality is consolidated [….] For the choice being made with the whole inwardness of his personality, his nature is purified and he himself brought into immediate relation with the eternal Power whose omnipresence interpenetrates the whole of existence. This transfiguration, this higher consecration, is never attained by that man who chooses merely aesthetically. (EO, II: 171)

Proper marriage is not merely an event in time. Preserved in eternity, it has become an aspect of the meaning of one's life and, strikingly, the temporal expression of one's love of God, the 'eternal Power.' In this way, one's love of God love is expressed through one's love of particular finite blessings and becomes the basis of what William has called the 'personality,' or what Evans calls *identity*. Evans summarizes Judge William's ethical critique of reflective aesthetic selfhood nicely.

> What all the forms of the ethical life have in common is […] the quest for identity. The ethicist sees that the aesthetic life that is lived for 'the moment' ultimately reduces the self to a collection of moments. Such a self lacks coherence and in some sense fails to be a self in the proper sense at all. The ethical life is this struggle to become a unified self in a twofold sense. The first sense is that the self seeks to be something more than a collection of hopelessly warring desires; it seeks some degree of coherence and unity at a given point in time. The second sense is that this unified identity is one that endures overtime. For Kierkegaard to be a self is to know who one is, and to know who one is one must have something to live for, commitments and 'values' that permeate all one does and is and that do not change on a daily or hourly basis. (Evans 2009, 90-91)

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In our earlier discussion of Sartre, I suggested that his picture is unrealistic if it is supposed to suggest that we can simply *choose* to look upon a troubled past in a way that will render it acceptably intelligible to us. Faced with a failed fundamental project, if the Sartrean hero tries to come to terms with his now-troubled past at all, it seemed to us that he does so by simply conjuring up an interpretation of that past in a way that renders it intelligible in light of his new circumstances, and then deciding to find that interpretation convincing. Perhaps, for example, he chooses to regard his

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divorce as having been all to the good, for it has allowed him to devote more time to his career. My suggestion was that this is unrealistic. It is not always within one's power to simply drum up new, intelligible, genuinely convincing, and existentially livable ways of weaving some unhappy episode of one's past into one's broader understanding of one's life. In agreement with Anderson, I suggested that this is one sense in which our freedom in the order of meaning is not as extreme as a recreative anti-realist like Sartre takes it to be.

The reflective aesthete illustrates a second sense in which our freedom as linguistic agents is not as extreme as the recreative anti-realist demands. The profile of the reflective aesthete reads like an account of an existentialist who has learned the above lesson and has accepted that one cannot simply choose to regard the losses of one's life as events in an intelligible story. Having appreciated that lesson, he tries to exercise the only kind of absolute freedom he has left: the freedom to simply abandon the hope that his life will take the form of an intelligible narrative at all. In my discussion of Sartre, I noted that such a use of freedom might involve trying simply to forget the past altogether, in a herculean movement of the will. Having realized that this brute forgetting is a hopeless endeavour, the reflective aesthete strives for a recreative poetic remembrance that rewrites the meaning of his past as a series of disjointed punctual moments. But we have found that this use of recreative freedom is as hopeless as the others. Just as we cannot simply decide to regard the troubles of our past as fitting intelligibly into our broader autobiography, neither can we simply decide to do without a sense of narrative integrity in our lives. It is this need for integrity that will be so essential to a realistic thinking of remembrance.

In my argument, the crucial point of convergence between Wittgenstein and Kierkegaard will be this: for both, the narrative integrity of the meanings by which one understands the different epochs of one's linguistic life can only be established by a source of meaning that lies outside the self. In Sartre, and in the reflective aesthete, the recreative use of memory has been invoked to overcome or prevent the experiences of meaninglessness and confusion that result when our life projects come to naught. Wittgenstein was equally concerned with experiences of meaninglessness and confusion. "A philosophical problem has the form: 'I don't know my way about'" (PI, §123). Philosophy, recall, treats a disorientated question "like an illness" (PI, §255), in hopes of bringing us to a state of "*complete* clarity, but this simply means that the philosophical problems should *completely* disappear" (PI, §133). For Wittgenstein, as for the reflective aesthete, this search for clarity is a labour of remembrance (PI, §127). But does Wittgenstein urge us to remember the meaning of our words in the way that the reflective aesthete urges us to remember the meaning of our experiences?

Would Wittgenstein have us relate to the meaning of our words from a safe existential distance, a distance from which to *represent* the meaning of our words and, if need be, to rewrite that meaning anew? My claim will be that he does not. Instead, Wittgenstein strives to remind us of an 'embodied' understanding of word meaning, where that understanding is manifest in our 'lived' linguistic competence. At any rate, if there is hope for a realistic reading of Wittgenstein, it will need to avoid this recreative anti-realism while also avoiding anti-realism of the recollective sort. We now turn to our two case studies of these: the case of Kant and the case of Hegel.

3.4. Recollective Anti-realism: Case Studies of Kant and Hegel

We might hope that one way around the trappings of recreative anti-realism would be to join Sartre's critics at Club Maintenant and return to Christianity. A return to Christianity, after all, would supply the constraints upon our freedom in meaning-making without which our lives become that disordered Sartrean melodrama that Murdoch called "a grandiose leaping about unimpeded at important moments" (Murdoch 1997, 329). However, for Kierkegaard, Christianity is not enough for a realism of the kind we need unless it is properly understood, and it will not be properly understood in the 'speculative' accounts of philosophical remembrance that Kierkegaard finds in the philosophy of Kant and Hegel. In recreation, we arrive at anti-realism through an excess of freedom. Recreative freedom is so totalitarian that is not constrained by the values of realism and integrity without which freedom becomes unintelligible. Recollective anti-realism overcorrects for these errors by too severely reducing our freedom, and this is so whether or not this recollective anti-realism is nominally Christian as it is, in different ways, for both Kant and Hegel.

I said in the introduction to this chapter that Kierkegaard most often refers to Hegel's view of philosophical reflection as a matter 'mediation,' reserving the word 'recollection' for the view of philosophical reflection that we find in Plato and Kant, and generalizing over mediation and recollection with the term 'speculation.' As I anticipated, however, we will see signs in Kierkegaard that even Hegel's view of philosophical reflection will turn out to be a form of recollection in the end. Following Kierkegaard, then, I will primarily use the term 'recollection' with reference Plato and Kant, 'mediation' with reference to Hegel, and 'speculation' as a general term that captures both mediation and recollection. It should be borne in mind, however, that the difference between mediation and recollection will turn out to be a chimera. Mediation will turn out not to be an alternative to recollection, but a form of it, so that speculation will amount to recollection in the end.

3.4.1. Justification, Irresoluteness, and Infidelity

In his romantic pursuits, the reflective aesthete 'outlives himself' in the sense that he refuses to live out any relationship of love 'from within.' He relates to every 'love' not as the lived meaning of his life, but as a representation from which he stands at a certain intellectual distance. He distances himself from his projects in this way primarily because he is concerned with controlling his life, and he can maintain maximal control from this intellectual distance. In the reflective aesthetic life, the desire for such control is manifest in the activities of detachment and meaning recreation. However, this is not the only way that a desire for self-sufficiency can be manifested. It can also be expressed as a desire to *justify* one's self, to supply oneself with reasons that provide epistemic support for one's understanding of experience. This epistemic expression of the desire for self-sufficiency does not involve an effort to create the meaning of one's experiences, as it did in the case of the reflective aesthete. All the same, the desire to justify one's understanding of experience places one 'outside' any resolute commitment to understanding, just as the reflective aesthete places himself outside his understandings of experience by his desires to create them.

The idea is familiar from our discussion of grammar in the last chapter. To relate to a belief as one for which we need to supply arguments is to relate to it as a commitment of which we are not wholly convinced. It is to relate to the belief as if it were provisional – up for adoption or abandonment – rather than one to which one is unconditionally committed. Climacus' illustration of the point is striking enough to quote at length.

> Imagine a lover. Is it not true that he would be capable of speaking about his beloved all day long and all night, too, day in and day out? But do you believe it could ever occur to him, do you believe it would be possible for him, do you not think he would find it loathsome to speak in such a manner that he would try to demonstrate by means of three reasons that there is something to being in love [?] [....]. To go on, do you believe that a lover would ever think of conducting a defense of his being in love, that is, admit that to him it was not the absolute, unconditionally the absolute, but that he thought of it as being in a class with arguments against it and on that basis developed a defense; that is, do you believe that he could or would confess that he was not in love, inform against himself that he was not in love? And if someone were to suggest to a lover that he speak this way, do you not believe that the lover would consider him crazy; and if besides being in love he was also something of an observer, do you not think he would suspect that the person suggesting this to him had never known what love is or wanted him to betray and deny his love – by defending it? – Is it not obvious

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that the person who is really in love would never dream of wanting to prove it by three reasons or to defend it, for he is something that is more than all reasons and any defence: he is in love. Anyone who does it is not in love; he merely pretends to be, and unfortunately—or fortunately—he is so stupid that he merely informs against himself as not being in love. (SUD, 103-104)

The lover who feels the need to supply arguments for his love is not genuinely *in* love at all, but outside it, observing it, wondering if he is rationally entitled to it and looking for reasons to assure himself that he is.[60]

As I indicated a moment ago, the connection between the tendency to observation here – the tendency to *view* one's love – can be appreciated when we recall Wittgenstein's reflections on the structure of epistemic justification. We saw in Chapter Two that the desire to justify a belief is a desire to show that some intelligible possibility of error does not obtain. Naturally, this means that one needs to have some clear view of what it would be like for the belief to be false, for the desire to justify the belief is a desire to show that *those* conditions do not obtain. When we feel a need to justify ourselves in some belief, we are 'viewing' the belief in relation to some relevant alternative to the truth of the belief; some clearly envisioned counter-factual condition which, if it obtained, we would consider the belief false. However, if the lover enters imaginatively into the possibility that he is not in love, he has already fallen out of love and into an irresolute wavering. He wants to justify his belief that he is in love, but if he were in love, he would feel no need to justify his belief that he is in the first place. If he were in love, the possibility of *not* being in love would register with him not as a genuine possibility that needs to be negated, but as a mere illusion of possibility, an abstraction so remote from his life as to be, *for him*, unintelligible. For the person in love, the very idea of needing to justify one's belief that one is in love is absurd – a kind of madness, as we have just seen – for it requires one to reckon with possibilities that are themselves absurd.

3.4.1.1. Two Illustrations

Bernard Williams offers two examples that can be taken as illustrations of the Kierkegaardian point. Williams writes, "that the *unthinkable* [is] itself a moral category" (Smart and Williams 1973, 92). How so, concretely? William's first pass at an answer is misleading. He writes: "It could be a feature of a

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[60] Compare: "[W]hen the wife marked by age is happily convinced that her husband is absolutely faithful, of what is she convinced? Is it of his mediating and of his heart being divided in mediation? Or is it not rather of him, in stillness, steadily making the absolute distinction of love, only that she, in happy confidence, is convinced that he does it with ease and reliability and therefore needs no external proof" (CUP, 346).

man's moral outlook that he regarded certain courses of action as unthinkable, in the sense that he would not entertain the idea of doing them" (Smart and Williams 1973, 92). Elsewhere, however, we see that it is not merely that William's moral agent *would* not entertain the idea of taking such courses of action; there is a sense in which he *could* not entertain such an idea because, for him, the 'idea' does not even so much as express a morally intelligible possibility. "Entertaining certain alternatives, regarding them as alternatives, is itself something that he regards as dishonourable or morally *absurd*" (Smart and Williams 1973, 92, emphasis added). The inability here is not an inability to do something that might intelligibly be done given the grammar of moral life, perhaps for utilitarian considerations that require one to violate one's commitment. Instead, the inability to operate outside one's commitment comes much closer to the kind of inability encountered by the faithful Kierkegaardian lover when he is asked to defend his belief that he is in love, thereby having to entertain the possibility that he isn't. In both cases, a moral agent imagines a scenario at odds with his most fundamental commitments, perhaps a scenario wherein he acts in a way that violates those commitments. In doing so, he tries occupy a perspective from which to view something that lies beyond the limits of his moral reality and, as in Kierkegaard, he descends into a kind of madness. Such imagined scenarios –those which represent alternatives to acting in accord with the moral agent's commitment – are conceivable as abstract empirical possibilities, but not as possibilities for *him*. They are not moves that can be made within the grammar of *his* moral world because they require him to consider 'himself' as a mere empirical object rather than as the person he is, the person for whom it would be unthinkable to sacrifice his love for his self-defining fundamental commitment to a higher good. He dismisses such considerations as frivolous, or irrelevant, for to take such considerations seriously would be to dissociate from the self he is and to experiment with a kind of insanity.

> Logically or indeed empirically conceivable as they may be, they are not to him morally conceivable, meaning by that that their occurrence as situations presenting him with a moral choice would represent not a special problem in his moral world, but something that lay beyond its limits. For him, there are certain situations so monstrous that the idea that the process of moral rationality would yield an answer to them is insane. […][T]o spend time thinking about what one would decide if one were in such a situation is […] insane, if not merely frivolous. (Smart and Williams 1973, 93)

William's second and more famous example drives home the point. He considers again this business of going moral-psychologically beyond the limits of our moral lives and veering into

madness. Suppose, the famous example goes, that one's wife is drowning at a certain distance from a drowning stranger, and one can save only one of the two people. Suppose also, Williams elaborates, that rule-utilitarianism happily provides a ready-to-hand justification for doing what one is immediately inclined to do anyway – rescue one's wife – and suppose that one invokes that justification to support one's inclinations. The point is Kierkegaardian: by the time the reasons are in, the ethical loss to the reasoning agent has already been incurred. He has already entertained 'one thought too many.'

> Rule-Utilitarians might favour the idea that in matters of this kind it is best for each to look after his own, like house insurance […]. But this construction provides the agent with one thought too many: it might have been hoped by some (for instance, by his wife) that his motivating thought, fully spelled out, would be the thought that it was his wife, not that it was his wife and that in situations of this kind it is permissible to save one's wife. (Williams 1981, 215)

As the Williams passage continues, echoes resound of Kierkegaard's applause for the individual willing to cleave to his faith without the comfort of 'impartial,' third-personal, epistemic support. The love that Williams' hero has for his wife reminds us of Abraham's love for Isaac.

> The point is that somewhere (and if not in this case, where?) one reaches the necessity that such things as deep attachments to other persons will express themselves in the world in ways which cannot at the same time embody the impartial view, and that they also run the risk of offending against it. / They run that risk if they exist at all; yet unless such things exist, there will not be enough substance or conviction in a man's life to compel his allegiance to life itself. Life has to have substance if anything is to have sense, including adherence to the impartial system; but is it if to have substance, then it cannot grant supreme importance to the impartial system, and that system's hold on it will be, at the limit, insecure. (Williams 1981, 215)

What we find here, then, is a particular thinking of what is involved in going beyond the limits of the ethical, namely, an effort to justify the beliefs in which those limits find articulate expression. As in Kierkegaard, the trouble is that even so much as offering epistemic reasons in support of one's commitment involves placing oneself outside that commitment and outside the moral parameters of integrity: the wayward moral agent is unfaithful both to himself and to the object of love for the sake for which he lives, in this case, his wife. The same would go, *mutatis mutandi*, with the Christian's love

for Christ. Indeed, Kierkegaard uses the above example of romantic love us used to illustrate what he takes to be the unquestioning character of Christian faith (SUD, 103).

3.4.2. Two Kinds of Objective Truth

We encountered this unquestioning character of Christian faith last chapter when we considered the need for indirect communication on the part of the author and the related need of subjectivity of the part of the reader who freely invests himself a particular understanding of the religious life. In the present chapter, rather than stressing these different modes of communication by which the Christian truth can and cannot be conveyed, we approach the troubles with recollection by stressing the kind of truth that the Christian author is trying to communicate. That truth is not a merely 'objective' truth. In the *Postscript,* Climacus describes such truths as falling into two general categories.

> [O]bjectively understood, truth can mean: 1) the historical truth, 2) the philosophical truth. Looked at historically, the truth must be made out through a critical consideration of various reports etc., in short, in the way that historical truth is ordinarily brought to light. In the case of philosophical truth, the inquiry turns on the relation of a historically given and ratified doctrine into an eternal truth. (CUP, 19)

We can call the first form of objective truth *natural-historical,* or *empirical* (CUP, 21-43). The second amounts to the more *a priori* sort of truth that Kierkegaard associates with philosophical speculation (CUP, 44-50).

3.4.3. Objective Truth as Natural History

From the empirical perspective, the truth of Christianity is a matter of the empirical-historical veracity of claims made by the Bible or the church (CUP, 34-36). This particular brand of objective truth can't account for Christianity because Christianity is supposed to provide us with an "*eternal* happiness" (CUP, 16, emphasis added). Like Judge William, Climacus contends that any such happiness requires that we believe in that truth with an unquestioning certainty. However, to regard Christianity as an object of natural-historical knowledge is to regard it as what Climacus calls an *approximation*, a more or less probable belief that leaves no room for the certainty in question. "[T]his more or less, this better or not better, lies within the essential incompleteness of an approximation, as being incommensurate with any decision about an eternal happiness" (CUP, 35 n. h.). In the domain of the approximate, there is always room for doubt. The wavering, skeptical, inclination that

threatens us here can only be kept at bay by looking for "the passionate certainty of faith" (CUP, 412, cf., 362, n.) in the subjective, rather than in the objective, domain.

> [I]t is impossible with historical problems to reach an objective decision so certain that no doubt could find its way in. This too shows that the problem has to be put subjectively, and it is nothing but a misunderstanding to seek objective assurance, and in that way avoid the risk in which passion chooses and continues to reaffirm its choice. (CUP, 37)

This subjective certitude will attach to beliefs that are, in the objective sense, *uncertain* (CUP, 362). They will possess, however, the distinctly subjective certainty required to close off the temptations to doubt that are everywhere present in the field of empirical, natural-historical, objective truth. The 'approximating,' probabilistic, considerations of objective reasoning contrast with the subjective *decision,* which will take us beyond probability to a truth that holds absolutely. "[A]ll essential decision is rooted in subjectivity" (CUP, 29). Indeed, in Climacus' language, anything less than the essential decision that takes one beyond probability to an absolutely certain commitment is no genuine *decision* at all. "What does it mean to say of a decision that it is 'to a certain degree'? It means denying the decision. Decision is designed precisely to put an end to that everlasting 'to a certain degree' chatter" (CUP, 186).

The subjective certainty we are dealing with here is the certainty of Christian faith. It is the "certitude of faith that […] is defined through lack of certitude" (CUP, 382; cf., CUP, 362, n.) and which requires a decision – a movement of subjectivity – to bind a person to the faith in the appropriate way. This means first, that faith is necessarily shot through with epistemic risk. "Without risk, no faith" (CUP, 171). Second, this means that the movement into faith needs to be made freely, rather than on pain of being at odds with 'objective' reasons that supposedly demonstrate Christianity's truth. We arrived at this need for freedom in faith by a different route in the last chapter, when we discussed the need for indirection. In this chapter, we want to highlight that freedom is what the speculative accounts of philosophical remembrance leave no room for, and we want to develop Chapter One's brief account of why these 'recollective' accounts of remembrance turn out to be just as anti-realistic as the recreative alternatives.

3.4.4. Objective Truth as Speculation

We've just seen that, from the natural-historical perspective, all truths concern contingent facts, and all beliefs about such facts involve propositions that we consider true with some degree of probability. This leaves the natural-historical perspective incapable of accounting for the eternal

happiness that Christianity offers, for this eternal happiness requires that Christianity lie beyond the reach of an intelligible doubt. Speculation has the opposite problem: it tries to account for the certainty of Christianity in purely metaphysical terms, terms that are supposed to lay out the meaning of Christianity as an order of truths so objectively necessary that faith's essential "lack of certitude" (CUP, 382) and, hence, the required role for subjectivity, is eliminated. The difficulty here is that Christianity could only be understood as an *a priori* certainty of this purely objective kind by a purely eternal intellect. "Since the human being is a synthesis of the temporal and the eternal, the happiness to be had by the speculator will be an illusion, since he desires in time to be merely eternal. Herein lies the speculator's untruth" (CUP, 49). Like the empirical account of objective truth, the speculative account can't accommodate the eternal happiness of faith. We briefly saw how speculation amounts to anti-realism when we considered the Platonic version of speculation – recollection – in Chapter One. Before turning to the more detailed analysis of speculation in Hegel, we can briefly review the point by considering the sort of recollection that Kierkegaard finds in Kant.

3.4.5. Speculation as Recollection

Like Plato, in some areas of his thought Kant portrays the individual human intellect as a universal, ahistorical, and unquestionably certain measure of possibility. Consider, for example, his ethical doctrine of the categorical imperative, human reason's foundational rule of morality. The dictates of the imperative are so utterly binding that not even God can breach them. Hence, Kant's very unkierkegaardian assessment of how Abraham ought to have responded to the request for Isaac's sacrifice: "Abraham should have replied to this supposedly divine voice: 'That I ought not to kill my son is quite certain. But that you, this apparition, are God – of that I am not certain, and never can be, not even if this voice rings down to me from visible Heaven'" (Kant 1979, 115). Since the categorical imperative prohibits a father from murdering his innocent son, Abraham ought to have concluded that the voice calling for the sacrifice is not the voice of God.

Kant's assessment of moral theology is similar to his assessment of private revelation: it cannot disclose any truth transcendent to the 'immanent' sphere of truths discernible by human reason alone. To say otherwise, as Kierkegaard is prepared to do, is to licence bald fanaticism. For Kant

> [w]e […] shall believe ourselves to be acting in conformity with the divine will only in so far
> as we hold sacred the moral law which reason teaches us from the nature of the actions

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themselves [….] Moral theology is thus of immanent use only […] by warning us against the fanaticism, and indeed the impiety, of abandoning the guidance of a morally legislative reason in the right conduct of our lives, in order to derive directly from the idea of the Supreme Being. (Kant 1965, A 819/ B847)

From Kierkegaard's perspective, Kant fails to pay religion its proper due. As a protestant, Kant dresses his ethics in religious vocabulary. Still, since he reduces what is possible for God to what is possible for human reason, he drains that vocabulary of any genuinely theological content and deprives his moral agent of any genuine relationship with God. God transcends the merely immanent sphere of ethical duties discernible by human reason, and this transcendence is lost in the Kantian reduction of religious to ethical categories.[61] De Silentio writes that "[h]e who loves God without faith reflects upon himself; he who loves God in faith reflects upon God" (FT, 37). Kant serves us as an example of the former, faithless, sort of 'faith' in the unaided human capacity for ethical reasoning, dressed up as faith in God. De Silentio expands upon the point, reminding us of that concept of the ethical that we first encountered in the last chapter. For a philosopher like Kant "[t]he whole existence of the human race rounds itself off as a perfect, self-contained sphere, and then the ethical is that which limits and fills at one and the same time. God comes to be an invisible vanishing point, an impotent thought; his power is only in the ethical, which fills all of existence" (FT, 68). In fact, de Silentio has Hegel in mind here (FT, 68), but Climacus says that the problem is equally acute for Kant, whose errors are only duplicated in Hegel's attempt to overcome them (CUP, 275). We need to consider these errors because they will shed light on the nature of recollection. Merold Westphal's commentary on the *Postscript* (1996) will provide us with a quick and helpful guide through this challenging terrain, but first, a clarification is in order.

3.4.6. Plato, Kant, and Hegel as Objects of Comparison

I am not writing a dissertation on Plato, Kant, or Hegel, nor would I be qualified to write one. I am writing a dissertation on Wittgenstein, informed by a reading of Kierkegaard. However, it would be nearly impossible to say anything about Kierkegaard without speaking about Plato, Kant, and Hegel,

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[61] De Silentio elaborates:

> The ethical is the universal, and as such it is also the divine. Thus it is proper to say that every duty is essentially duty to God, but if no more can be said than this, then it is also said that I actually have no duty to God. The duty becomes duty by being traced back to God, but in the duty itself I do not enter into relation to God [....] If in this connection I then say that it is my duty to love God, I am actually pronouncing only a tautology, inasmuch as 'God' in a totally abstract sense is here understood as the divine– that is, the universal, that is, the duty. (FT, 68)

since Kierkegaard is continually characterizing his own views by contrast to theirs. This is especially true when it comes to Kierkegaard's use of Hegel. The difficulty, then, is to present Kierkegaard's views as he does, by contrast to these other figures, without doing the other figures an injustice. Toward this end, I append the following disclaimer: in this chapter and elsewhere in this dissertation, I don't presume to provide a faithful account of Plato, Kant, or Hegel; I aim only to present Kierkegaard's views of these figures. At least in the case of Hegel, it is quite clear, in fact, that the view I'll be presenting is not exactly *Hegel's* at all.

Steven M. Emmanuel provides us with a useful caution: "We must be careful [...] not to place too much emphasis on Kierkegaard's competence as an interpreter of Hegel" (Emmanuel 1996, 31).[62] That Kierkegaard should be unreliable on this front is not surprising if, as Niels Thulstrup and James Collins argue, his views about Hegel were based primarily on his reading of secondary sources. It seems that Kierkegaard had "earlier and wider acquaintance with the mass of Hegelian and anti-Hegelian writings, which followed close upon the master's death, than with the actual text of Hegel himself" (Collins 1983, 104; cf., Thulstrup 1967, 101). Concurring with Collins and Thulstrup, Emmanuel argues that this was less an oversight on Kierkegaard's part than the nature of his project. "Kierkegaard did not concern himself very deeply with the technicalities of Hegel's philosophical system" (Emmanuel 1996, 31) because he studied Hegel "as one studies the *fons et origio* of a broad intellectual and social movement" (Collins 1983, 105; cf., Emmanuel 1996, 31). Once more, then, when I speak of 'Hegel,' I am speaking of Kierkegaard's view of Hegel, and I don't intend to vouch for the accuracy of that view. The same goes for what I say about Kierkegaard's interpretation of Plato and Kant.

This reliance on Kierkegaard's views of these philosophers might seem dubious, but it is in order, I think, given my purposes. First, part of my effort here is to clarify Kierkegaard's views. Concerning the interpretation of Hegel, it is not Hegel, but Kierkegaard's view of Hegel that we need to understand in order to understand, by contrast, Kierkegaard's anti-'Hegelian' philosophy. Second, I want to use Kierkegaard's take on these figures to illuminate the recollective tendency in their work, in the same way that I used Murdoch's view of Sartre to highlight the recreative tendency in his.[63] As I anticipated in my earlier discussion of Murdoch's Sartre, I use Kierkegaard's

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[62] Mark C. Taylor concurs. He argues that Kierkegaard is even mistaken in his fundamental complaint that Hegel champions a totalizing, monistic, view of truth that absorbs into itself all subjectivity, viewpoint plurality, and 'otherness.' In fact, Taylor argues, "Hegel walks a fine line between the extremes of undifferentiated monism and abstract dualism or pluralism" (Taylor 1980, 166).

[63] See Sect. 3.2.

presentation of these figures as Wittgenstein uses his contrived examples of simple language-games in the *Investigations*, viz., as "objects of comparison" (PI, §130) which, as such, could serve their function if they were completely fictitious (PI, II-§365). An as an object of comparison, a simplified language-game functions in the same way as does a caricatured portrait of a person's face: it portrays certain features of an actual phenomenon in exaggerated form, thereby enabling us to recognize those features in the actual world where they are less pronounced and more difficult to notice. Objects of comparison, therefore, can differ significantly from the actual phenomena they are used to illuminate, for they shed this light by way of their similarities *and* their differences from those phenomena (PI, §130-131).

This is all to say: if Kierkegaard's renderings of Kant, Hegel, and Plato are caricatures, that will not impair their function as objects of comparison. We are *not* invoking Kierkegaard's interpretations as descriptions that can be mapped onto the men themselves without "friction and resistance" (PI, II-§365; cf., PI, § 130), in the way that a true proposition can be mapped onto the fact that it accurately describes. We are using Kierkegaard's renderings of these three figures as he did: to highlight a certain recollective tendency in their thought. That there is such a tendency may not always be evident, and it may be that a more charitable or informed or subtle reading would show that the move toward recollection that emerges in some areas of their thought is corrected for in others. As I acknowledged, this may well be the case with the recreative tendency in Sartre. All the same, Kierkegaard's portrayals of these figures will help us to see where and how *he*, at least, found enough of a recollective undercurrent in these philosophers for him to use them as a foil for his own non-recollective view.

3.4.7. Two Footnotes to Plato

To capture it's relatively individualistic, asocial, and ahistorical character, Merold Westphal describes the Kantian view as "Platonic or ahistorical rationalism" (Westphal 1996, 29). Why 'Platonic'? Because, as Westphal notes, the Kantian view "is just the view we have […] encountered as the recollection theory [...] according to which human reason can disengage itself from its entanglement with the senses and its social context and attain a direct apprehension of eternal truth" (Westphal 1996, 29). We can explain this aspect of the view by contrasting it with the opposing view, which Westphal calls "Hegelian or historical rationalism" (Westphal 1996, 29).

On the Hegelian view, the universal moral standard is to be found in human convention and, therefore, it has a social and historical component that it doesn't have in Kant or Plato. For Hegel,

"wisdom or virtue consists in living in accordance with the customs of one's nation" (Hegel 1977, §135) so that, as John Lippitt comments, "the ethical life [*Sittlichkeit*] is 'universal' in so far as it comprises the law, customs, and institutions of a particular society" (Lippitt 2003, 86; cf., Westphal 1996, 24-30). On the Hegelian picture, justification involves more than just the Kantian or Platonic self's solitary recollection of the moral law. It also requires that one justify the results of solitary reflection by the standard of one's culture's historically emergent ethical conventions. In this sense, the individual's relationship with moral truth is 'mediated' by these conventions (see Westphal 1997, 106). What does the Platonic/Kantian view have in common with the Hegelian view? Westphal answers: "both involve the claim that human reason is the ultimate standard of truth and goodness" (Westphal 1996, 29). In both cases, we find the illusion that the human being can come to grasp the normative content of Christianity as a complete and final understanding of what Christianity means. Both are mistaken because no such complete and final understanding is available to the essentially finite, human mind. "Speculation, whether Platonic or Hegelian, is a mode of objectivity in which the finitude of the subject is stripped away for the sake of an objective, universal, timeless apprehension of the truth" (Westphal 1997, 111). Rightly recognizing that the empirical, natural-historical account can't provide the certainty required for the eternal happiness of Christianity, these views overcorrect for the problem and offer us an account of certainty so completely rigid as to be inhuman.

3.4.8. Speculation, Anti-realism, and Freedom

What is the connection between speculation and anti-realism? And what is the connection between this kind of anti-realism and speculation's understanding of freedom? We can view the relevant links under different aspects. In Chapter One, we saw that recollection's anti-realism can be expressed with the spatial metaphor that all truth already present 'within' the eternal human soul. The cash value of the metaphor comes out when we bear in mind the presumptions that went along with it. One presumption was that we are intimately acquainted with the contents of our own soul. A second was that, this being the case, we can recollect those contents at will. Platonic recollection was unrealistic because it made our willful endeavours of human reflection the measure of all philosophical truth. In a way, we will see that this same anti-realism emerges in Kierkegaard's criticism of Hegelian mediation, and is the reason that mediation will collapse into a form of recollection in the end.

The anti-realism that we will find in speculative philosophy can also be described under a second aspect, using a temporal metaphor. We can say that speculation is unrealistic because it results in our confinement to past understandings of meaning; it encodes a spirit of intellectual closure to future understandings that can't be foreseen from the perspective of philosophical truths already in our intellectual repertoire, however strong our powers to reflect upon those truths may be. This is the essentially recollective aspect of speculation and the reason I call its anti-realism 'recollective' anti-realism.

From the perspective of this second way of describing this kind of anti-realism, we can also appreciate how it gives short shrift to human freedom. It amounts to our forgetting the freedom of the faithful individual – the Abraham in our midst– to act on the basis of a revelation that can be neither expressed nor justified in terms of truths already available to us. In recreative anti-realism, the need for individuality and freedom in philosophy becomes too grand, and the realistic need for constraint and integrity goes forgotten. In speculation's recollective anti-realism, the reverse is true. As if properly recoiling from the incoherence and disintegration of the recreative self, speculation prioritizes constraint and the self's integrity across time but does so to so extreme a degree that it crowds out the necessary room for subjectivity's freedom. By swinging to this opposite extreme, the recollective element in speculation not only ends up being, like recreation, a variety of anti-realism; it also ends up sharing the recreative anti-realist's Promethean desire to be God. And as in recreation, this desire will be manifest in the speculator's tendency to relate to the meaning of things as if from the perspective of an outsider.

3.4.9. Speculation as Mediation

Both recollection (Plato, Kant) and mediation (Hegel) presuppose that we can 'step out beyond' our time-bound existence *in* the normative structures that regulate our ethical lives. The illusion is that we can achieve a 'God's-eye perspective,' a perspective out beyond the vicissitudes of time from which to survey the whole of history, and to confirm that our understanding of those structures is absolutely valid for all time. "If someone existing really were to come outside himself, the truth for him would be something concluded" (CUP, 165), its meaning no longer to be disclosed by a future to come. But we are not able to come outside ourselves except as a form of abstract metaphysical fantasy. To fall into such fantasy is to forget the inherently temporal condition of finite human existence – of *life* – and to fall under the sway of the idea that the meaning of such existence can be summarized in what Climacus calls a *system*. In fact,

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[t]here can be no system for life itself [....] Life is a system – for God, but cannot be that for any existing spirit. System and finality correspond to each other, but life is just the opposite. From an abstract point of view, system and existing cannot be thought together; because systematic thought in order to think life must think of it as annulled and hence not as life. (CUP, 100)

The illusion at issue is two-fold. First, it confuses the human being for God when it assumes that the human being can view the world as God might. Second, it misconstrues that which the human being can supposedly view from this divine perspective: the eternal meaning of human life, that is, Christianity. What we need, and what speculation fails to offer, is an "explanation of how the eternal truth is to be understood in the category of time by one who, through existing, is himself in time" (CUP, 162, cf., 190). To think that we can view our life as God might is to forget the inherently temporal, mutable, and ever-becoming aspect of human being, and to think that we can view the meaning of our lives as a story already finished. For this confusion, Climacus takes Hegel, especially, to task: "[T]he Hegelian philosophy distractedly goes ahead and become a system for life, and what is more, is finished [....] Once it is remembered that philosophizing is not a matter of talking fantastically to fantastic beings, but that it is those existing who are addressed […] finality is put aside and postponed" (CUP, 103). Since we are not these fantastic beings, no such finalizing view upon the meaning of our lives is open to us. The condition of being human cannot be summed up in any absolutely conclusive doctrine about what that condition amounts to. It involves, instead, a continual striving for understanding, which always comes up short of the complete and final understanding that the 'metaphysician' presumes to possess.

The continued striving expresses the existing subject's ethical life-view. So the continued striving must not be understood in a metaphysical sense. But then neither has any individual existed metaphysically [….] Existing must be annulled in the eternal before the system can bring itself to a close. (CUP, 104-105)

The speculative pursuit of finality and closure would effectively annul the temporal, ever-unfinished, and objectively uncertain dimension of Christianity and Christian existence. "The continual becoming is the uncertainty of earthly life, in which everything is uncertain" (CUP, 73). Notice, from the sober and genuinely finite perspective that Climacus is urging upon us, it is not only the meaning of Christianity that we come to regard as bring (objectively) uncertain. Instead, from this perspective, "*everything* is uncertain" (CUP, 73, emphasis added), and this, as I will argue at greater length in Chapter Five, includes the meaning of ethical rules. In sum:

Every subject is an existing subject, and that fact must therefore express itself in all his knowing, and in preventing the knowing arriving at an illusory finality, whether in sense certainty, historical knowledge, or speculative result [....] [A]s existing he cannot be but only be constantly arriving [….] The speculative result is an illusion in so far as the existing subject wants as thinker to abstract from the fact that he is existing, and to be *sub specie aeterni.* (CUP, 69)

This is something of an exaggeration; there is such a thing as objective certainty, for example, the kind that we have in natural-history. Climacus even allows that "there is no obstacle to our abstractly defining the truth abstractly as finished" (CUP, 160), as we do when we engage in speculative philosophy. The point is only that such abstract truth *is* an abstraction*,* and one nested within the more concrete, more existentially fundamental, subjective, and objectively uncertain truth of faith. "Objectivity is believed to be superior to subjectivity, but it is just the opposite. That is to say, an objectivity that is within a corresponding subjectivity is the finale" (POV, 185).[64] However, once we have placed objective certainty within this more fundamentally subjective field of Christian truth, we will no longer be inclined to think of objective certainties as the distinctly *metaphysical* certainties that speculative philosophy takes them for.

We have just seen that Kierkegaard's philosophy aims at certainty, and we can say that it allows for a kind of completeness and finality as well, most fundamentally in Christianity. By the same token, we have seen that Wittgenstein's philosophy seeks "*complete* clarity, but this simply means that the philosophical problems should *completely* disappear" (PI, §133). It does not mean that we have arrived at a metaphysical perspective outside time, from which to view the world *sub specie aeterni,* as a story already told. What, then, is the difference between a metaphysical and non-metaphysical understanding of objective truth? When objective truths are nested within a broader Christian faith, we relate to them as Abraham relates to the truth of ethics. We relate to them, namely, as provisional, as objective certainties the truth of which might be undone by the revelation of an as-yet unforeseeable sense.

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[64] The speculative, abstracting, intellect may pretend to have arrived at the final word on truth, but "[f]or the existing spirit *qua* spirit, the question of truth is still there. For the abstract answer is only for the *abstractum* which the existing spirit becomes by abstracting from himself qua existing, which is only possible momentarily, while even in these moments he is paying his debt to existence through nevertheless existing" (CUP, 160).

3.4.10. Speculation and Ordinary Language

The fantastical tendency of speculation is not confined to speculative *philosophy*. Throughout the *Postscript,* Climacus shifts seamlessly between a critique of Hegelian speculative philosophy and a critique of a more culturally widespread form of *a priori* reasoning that he also considers a matter of speculation. Claire Carlisle makes the observation:

> Kierkegaard detected […] a self-deceiving religious complacency among his educated, middle-class contemporaries, and a fashion for Hegelian ideas in philosophy, theology, and aesthetics. He regarded these as two signs – one indicating a broad cultural tendency, the other a narrower intellectual development – as essentially connected, and for this reason they often appear to be interchangeable in his analysis of 'the present age.' (Carlisle 2010, 172)

Speculative philosophy is one variation on speculation as a more general cultural theme. The other variation on the theme can be helpfully compared to certain popular confusions about the nature of ordinary language. I have in mind the idea that our everyday understanding of language can afford us with a kind of *a priori* certainty more robust than the certainty we find in self-consciously fallible considerations of objective natural history, but less erudite than the presumption of certainty that a specialized philosophical treatise is supposed to deliver. In Kierkegaard's opinion, it was this subtle encroachment of speculation into our ordinary lives with language that troubled the understanding of Christian morality for 19th-century Danish Christendom. We see an illustration of this pop-cultural sort of speculation in the *Postscript* when a man begins to wonder if he is truly a Christian. His wife presumes to refute her husband's doubts by reciting 'criteria' that are supposed, objectively and decisively, to prove that he *must* be Christian.

> Dearest husband, how can you get such notions into your head? Aren't you a Dane, and doesn't the geography book tell us that the prevailing religion in Denmark in Lutheran Christianity? You aren't a Jew are you, or a Mohammedan; so what else can you be? […] Don't you attend to your duties at the office as a good civil servant should; aren't you a good subject of a Christian nation, a Lutheran Christian state? Then you must be a Christian. (CUP, 44-45)

In his comment on this passage, Westphal helpfully captures the sense in which the wife misunderstands her husband's question. She assumes that its answer hangs upon purely objective considerations, thereby overlooking the element of subjectivity that is actually at stake when it comes to the question of what it means to be Christian.

> [S]he instinctively transforms a subjective question into an objective question. Her husband is asking, out of personal passion and interest, how he should live his life. By moving the discourse to the area of objective facts […], she tells him at one and the same time 1) that his question is already answered objectively so there is nothing for him to ponder or choose, and 2) that for this reason his question is a silly one that should never have arise in the first place. (Westphal 1997, 114)

Though she may seem to be offering an empirical argument for her husband's Christianity, by considering the wife as an example of the speculative-philosophical mindset, Climacus suggests that her argument is offered in something like the *a priori* spirit of Hegelian speculative presuppositions. Certainly, the wife does not take herself to be articulating any truth of reason stamped with *a priori* validity. Her position is nowhere near so philosophically sophisticated. All the same, Westphal's suggestion, and my own, has been that her claim shares with Hegelian-philosophical speculation the presumption that we can give an easy, fully conclusive, answer to the question of what it means to be Christian. If the specifically philosophical Hegelian regards the truth as an ineluctably certain manifestation of reason in history, this pop-cultural Hegelian looks more like a proponent of certain Wittgenstein-inspired forms of Ordinary Language Philosophy. She assumes, I submit, that the unambiguous meaning of Christianity can be simply read off from the historical social conventions that regulate our thought and talk about what we mean by 'Christianity,' its prescriptions, and its prohibitions. The crucial point is this: Here, as elsewhere in speculation, objective, purely third-personal reasons crowd out all room for freedom and subjectivity.

3.4.11. Speculation and Self-sufficiency

We saw that the reflective aesthete is preoccupied with self-sufficiency and that this makes him resistant to investing himself in any understanding of things that involves a risk of existential harm. It was his pursuit of self-sufficiency that moves the reflective aesthete to that practice of recreative remembrance by which "experience is reduced to a sounding-board for the soul's own music"(EO, I: 290). A concern with self-sufficiency is also a fundamental motivation for the speculative vision of ethical life that we have just been finding in Kant and Hegel, though this is a self-sufficiency of a different kind. The anti-realist we are finding in Kant and Hegel tries to achieve self-sufficiency in the sense that he wants to be able to *justify* himself, namely by drawing upon the epistemic resources that are readily available to him in the space of ethical reasons, fully intelligible to all. Our earlier discussion of Williams showed that one trouble with the desire for such justification is that it

involves a kind of irresoluteness and a kind of infidelity to the self. I now want to recognize that part of the desire for that justification is the desire for self-sufficiency. The danger of this desire is that it closes us off to any Abrahamic hope for possibilities that cannot be expressed or justified in 'universal' terms intelligible to all. For an illustration, we can return to *Fear and Trembling's* knight of infinite resignation.

The knight of infinite resignation is capable of believing that Isaac will be sacrificed, and is willing and able to go through with that ordeal. But the knight of resignation is incapable of believing, with Abraham, that Isaac will ultimately be spared. In this regard, the knight of infinite resignation acts in the capacity of the "tragic hero" (FT, 34) who, as I read *Fear and Trembling*, adopts a Hegelian concept of ethical reason (see Evans 2006a, xxi; cf., Evans 2006b, 215-17; Lippitt 2003, 85, 97-102). So closed is this tragic hero to the possibility of anything like a non-epistemic justification – a justification by faith – that he deprives himself of hope for the survival of his son. He resigns his son for the love of God and, in this, he manifests a genuinely respectable form of the religious life. But as was the case with Kant, there is no genuine faith here because God, and what is possible for God, has been levelled down to the merely human possibilities of ethical grammar.

> The act of resignation does not require faith [….] This is a purely philosophical movement that I venture to make when it is demanded and can discipline myself to make, because every time some finitude will take power over me, I starve myself into submission until I make the movement, for my eternal consciousness is my love of God, and for me that is the highest of all. (FT, 48)

Were de Silentio in Abraham's position, a finite event would indeed take power over him, namely the potential death of Isaac. What is it that makes the knight of resignation so closed to the possibility that Isaac might be saved? What is it that keeps him closed to the possibility of revelation and the kind of justification that it offers? Evidently, it is his desire to remain within the sphere of spiritual movements that he can make on his own, "purely human" (FT, 49) power, when those movements are demanded, and which one can learn through the practice of merely human discipline. Put differently, it is his desire to "rejoice in the security of the universal" (FT, 76), to remain securely within the fold of reasons fully intelligible to his ethical community. The movement of infinite resignation, "takes a purely human courage [....] But it takes a paradoxical and humble courage to grasp the whole temporal realm now by virtue of the absurd, and this is the courage of faith" (FT, 49). Unwilling to look for justification outside the resources that he can summon with

human reason alone, our knight of resignation admits: "I do not have faith; this courage I lack" (FT, 46).

Anti-realism, here, does not involve denying a universal order of human reason, as was the case in the recreational anti-realism of Sartre and the reflective aesthete. Here, anti-realism means ascertaining that the universal order of human reason is the only order of reason there is. This is precisely what Abraham does not insist upon. Repeatedly, Abraham's faith in the absurd survival of Isaac is presented as faith in a possibility that goes beyond the order of possibilities intelligible to *human* reason, to the 'understanding.' Abraham "was convinced of the impossibility, humanly speaking; that was the conclusion of the understanding" (FT, 46, cf., 34, 47). Or again: "He had faith by virtue of the absurd, for human calculation was out of the question" (FT, 35). Going beyond a mere reliance upon unaided human reason, Abraham had faith "by virtue of the absurd, by virtue of the fact that for God all things are possible" (FT, 46).

When faced with a hope that can't be justified with the resources of philosophy alone (FT, 48) – when faced with a hope that can only be justified with the resources of genuinely faithful Christianity – mere resignation of the hope is the highest spiritual achievement we can secure, for we can secure it *for ourselves*. "I can resign everything by my own strength and find peace and rest in the pain; [...] I can save my soul as long as my concern that my love of God conquer within me is greater than my concern that I achieve earthly happiness" (FT, 49; cf., FT, 48). Once more, the motive behind such self-confinement to the ethical seems to be familiar from the motive behind recreation: it seems to be a desire for a kind of self-sufficiency, a desire to be one's own salvation. This means confining oneself to the justificatory resources ready to hand as objective, epistemic, reasons and pursuing the security that one can use those resources to buy in the eyes of others. For all the merits of his criticism of the reflective aesthetic life, the Hegelian judge William shares the aesthete's concern with self-sufficiency when he reduces justification to epistemic justification, justification with which one can supply oneself. Lippitt makes the point:

> Judge William exaggerates the degree of our self-sufficiency insofar as he assumes that the ethical self has within itself the resources to conquer despair. 'The religious' in a deeper sense than Judge William countenances it shows that our need for 'divine assistance' (CUP, 216) is more radical than the judge allows. (Lippitt 2010, 152; cf., Mooney 1997, 287, 297)

3.4.12. Mediation and Freedom

When we considered the natural-historical conception of objective truth, we saw that it left out the essential subjectivity by which we are bound to a Christian form of self-understanding. The operation of that subjectively was a movement of freedom, precisely the movement of freedom for which indirect communication was meant to leave room. The idea was that faith-based beliefs, for example, Abraham's belief that Isaac will be spared, cannot be justified by reasons that one can articulate in the public, universally intelligible, grammar of ethics. What does this have to do with freedom? The connection is this: The illusion that we have arrived at a metaphysically final understanding of a Christian ethic is one form of the illusion that there are no reasons that an essentially public, third-personal, ethical grammar cannot articulate. If the only justifying reasons are those that can be articulated in the public, well-worn, grammar of ethics, then there is no room for that particular activity of freedom that is manifested by Abraham when he believes the absurd proposition that Isaac will be spared. There is no room, in other words, for the freedom that lies in our willing receptivity and response to revealed truth, precisely because revealed truths can't be expressed in terms of a grammar already intelligible to all. As I argued in the last chapter, the highest responsibility of faith lies in a willingness to bear the burden of this freedom and this responsibility.

Here we see, once again, that a speculative Christianity is not enough for the sort of realism we are after, the sort of realism that would remain open to the possibility of grammatical revelations. Kant considers himself a Christian, but there was no such realism in Kant. And despite his valuable critique of the reflective aesthete, and his own Christianity, Judge William's Hegelianism leaves him saddled with anti-realism as well. Seung-Goo Lee summarizes the reason why:

> For Judge William [...]. God is the universal background of his life and he accepts his duty as from God. His relationship to God is never separated from what is universal, and is always understandable to everyone. God does not in any special sense break into or intervene in his life. Hence it is difficult to equate Judge William's God with the God of Christianity, even though Judge William thinks his God is the God of Christianity. (Lee 1993, 106)

3.4.13. Where Mediation Meets Recollection

Hegel promised an improvement upon Kant and Plato when he recognized the social and historical dimensions of reason and truth. "It is just that he spoils his magnificent achievement by making an absurd claim about finality and completeness" (Westphal 1997, 102), which he does when he claims that history will ultimately bring us to a point where philosophical truth will arrange itself before the

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mind's eye as a completed system. Plato regarded the essence of the remembered self to be its purely eternal soul, shorn of all temporal flesh. And even Hegel, the philosopher so attuned to our temporal, historical condition, also ends up picturing the human being as a purely eternal abstraction in such a way that the essential temporality of human existence is annulled. In other words, Hegelian mediation is actually only a further variation on the theme of recollection: "[I]f the ethical – that is, social morality – is the highest [...] then no categories are needed other than what Greek philosophy had or what can be deduced from them by consistent thought" (FT, 55). Again, Westphal puts the point nicely:

> The annulment of existence in the eternal has two forms [...]. Individually, the focus is on the Platonic escape from time, backing into eternity by means of recollection. Collectively, the focus is on the Hegelian completion of world history. Since both of these involve the attempt of philosophical speculation to see the world *sub specie aeterni*, Climacus treats both of them as variations on a single theme. Hegel's philosophy of world history is a footnote to Plato. (Westphal 1997, 102, n. 4)

Westphal is distinguishing recollection and mediation here, as we have done. But Clare Carlisle draws out the point to which I also just adverted: there is a sense in which even Hegelian mediation collapses into recollection when the Hegelian dialectic comes to its end. "Mediation is sometimes aligned by Kierkegaard with recollection, at other times added as a [...] semblance of recollection" (Carlisle 2010, 183, n. 22). The alignment is clear when Judge William describes self-knowledge as an achievement of recollection (EO, II: 145) and when, as we just noted, *Fear and Trembling* presents Hegelian mediation as being deducible from the categories of Greek, recollective, thought (FT, 55). We see this same convergence between mediation and recollection elsewhere in *Fear and Trembling*. As a 'knight of infinite resignation,' de Silentio cannot follow Abraham and become a knight of faith, and this is connected with his disposition to recollection (FT, 43-44). That mediation is ultimately a form of recollection is evident when we then recall that this recollecting knight of infinite resignation acts in the capacity of the 'tragic hero' (FT, 34) who, as we have seen, has a Hegelian, historical-mediational, concept of ethical reason (Evans 2006a, xxi; cf., Evans 2006b, 215-17; Lippitt 2003, 85, 97-102). It follows that, ultimately, *Fear and Trembling's* paradigm Hegelian and proponent of mediation is barred from faith by his commitment to *recollection* as his fundamental philosophical operating system. We see the assimilation of mediation to recollection once more when we consider that, though de Silentio is confined to a variety of Hegelian, meditational, reasoning, he is also a kind of *poet*. He entitles his book a dialectical *lyric*, and his task is the poet's

task of singing the praises of the hero whose faith he admires but can't manifest himself. What do we know about this poet? We know that despite his confinement to the Hegelian, ethical, domain of mediation, *qua* poet

> [h]e is recollection's genius. He can do nothing but bring to mind what has been done, can do nothing but admire what has been done; he takes nothing of his own but is zealous for what has been entrusted [....] This is his occupation, his humble task; this is his faithful service in the house of the hero. (FT, 15; cf., FT, 43-44)

How, exactly, is there a recollective core to Hegelian mediation? I think Kierkegaard's idea has to be this: In Hegel, history ultimately brings us to the point from which Plato begins, a position at which all the truth is already written into the mind so that nothing lies essentially beyond our ken. We can, I think, rephrase the point as follows: The fundamental idea that linking Hegel to Kant, and linking both back to Plato and recollection, is the idea that finite thought can occupy a perspective from which the whole future of philosophical truth can be *foreseen*. For Platonic and Kantian recollection, all philosophical truth is already written into the *a priori* memory of the recollecting self. There is a sense in which truth is not pre-given within the subject for Hegel since for Hegel truth emerges in the dialectic of history. However, even for Hegel, human reason is supposed to arrive, sooner or later, at a perspective from which we can, as it were, survey the whole of future thought at once, and foresee that our current philosophical conclusions will never be modified or undone in all of history to come. Whether thought begins at this position, as in Plato and Kant, or only arrives at this position when the Hegelian movement of history is complete, the anti-realism here consists in the attempt to reduce the world to the understanding that we have of it from the perspective of established truths.

As was the case in recreation's understanding of remembrance, there is subjectivism and anti-realism in recollection, and we have found that all speculation amounts to recollection in the end. In recollection, as in recreation, we see a desire to measure future philosophical truth by human foresight. In recreation, we view the future from the perspective of truths we create ourselves; in recollection, we view the future from the standpoint of truths we have not created, but which are pre-given in thought. But in the recollective desire to measure the possibilities of sense by the possibilities available to human foresight, no less than in the recreative form of that desire, we sense the desire to enthrone the human being in the traditional office of God.

Murdoch reminds us of Kant's hero, "so beautifully portrayed in the *Grundlegung*, who confronted even with Christ turns away to consider the judgement of his own conscience and to

hear the voice of his own reason" (Murdoch 1997, 365-66). We can say that this anti-realism lies in the refusal to acknowledge a measure of truth higher than the human being. Murdoch finds the 20th-century zenith of such anti-realism in existentialism, but she traces the existentialist's lineage back through Nietzsche to Kant, and ultimately to the character who most exemplifies our temptation to consecrate ourselves as the ground of all being. "It is not such a very long step from Kant to Nietzsche, and from Nietzsche to existentialism [....] In fact, Kant's man had already received a glorious incarnation nearly a century earlier in the work of Milton: his proper name is Lucifer" (ibid., 365-66). Sartre's hero is only "the heir of nineteenth-century Luciferian pride in the individual" (Murdoch 1997, 226; cf., ibid., 358, 385).

If Kierkegaard is right, Sartre's forefathers include Kant and Hegel and Plato. We can say that, for both recreative and recollective anti-realism, philosophical truth is purely *immanent* to the human subject, and is projected by the human being upon the world. In the speculative picture, it is present in the subject as an order of meaning and truth that constrains our creative activity. In the recreative picture, it is present in the subject as a meaning which one creates and then projects upon the world. On both the recollective and the recreative pictures, we lose the traditional idea that philosophical truth is transcendent to the human being, and is something to which the subject needs to conform itself. In the next chapter, I argue that the resolute reading of the *Tractatus* is essentially a rejection of a recollective reading. The worry about the resolute reading is that it can easily appear to reject this recollective anti-realism only to accept an anti-realism of the even more virulent, recreative kind.

[W]e are, as it were, entangled in our own rules. This entanglement in our rules is what we want to understand: that is, to survey. It throws light on our concept of meaning something. For in those cases, things turn out otherwise than we had meant, foreseen. (PI, §125)

4. Resolution, Orthodoxy, and the Question of Remembrance

4.1. Introduction

Though Wittgenstein's attention to ordinary language and his therapeutic understanding of philosophy is most prominent in his later work, we should not overlook that such attention is also present in the *Tractatus*. Already, in that earlier work, he writes that "[a]ll propositions of our everyday language, just as they stand, are in perfect logical order (T, 5.5563). In the early work, as in the later work, the trouble is that that order is not apparent from our actual use of language in everyday life. Wittgenstein makes point in a passage that intriguingly invites us to see a connection between the logic of language and the human body:

> Man possesses the ability to construct languages capable of expressing every sense, without having any idea how each word has meaning or what its meaning is – just as people speak without knowing how the individual sounds are produced. / 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 body, but for entirely different purposes. / The tacit conventions on which the understanding of everyday language depends are enormously complicated. (T, 4.002)

We are invited to see a connection between two analogies. On the one hand, we are given the analogical relation between the logical form of language – here described as an order of tacit conventions – and the physical form of the human body. On the other hand, we are given the analogical relation between language itself and the body's clothing. Since, as we will see, logic determines meaning (and hence, thought,) Wittgenstein begins with the essential point: our everyday familiarity with the practice of language (the outward clothing) does not necessarily provide us with

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a clear understanding of the logic (the body) upon which that practice hangs. In a related passage, we learn more about how this discord between everyday language and its underlying logical rules can give rise to the problems of philosophy, and we learn that the *Tractatus* aims to rectify those problems by clarifying those logical rules.

> In everyday language it very frequently happens that the same word has different modes of signification […] or that two words that have different modes of signification are employed in propositions in what is superficially the same way. […] In this way the most fundamental confusions are easily produced (the whole of philosophy is full of them). (T, 3.324)
>
> The book deals with the problems of philosophy, and shows […] that the reasons why these problems are posed is that the logic of our language is misunderstood (T, Forward, 3) [65]

The *Tractatus,* as much as the *Investigations,* seeks to remind us of what we are inclined to forget. It aims to remind us of the body of logic, which goes unnoticed because it isn't worn on the sleeve of everyday linguistic practice.

How does the *Tractatus* remind us of logic and, with it, the meaning of our words? On the orthodox reading, the book moves us to recognize logical distinctions that we overlook in our everyday thought and talk, and which we can mark in a logical notion where those differences are made perspicuous and represented by different symbols.

> In order to avoid such errors we must make use of a sign language that excludes them by not using the same sign for different symbols and by not using in a superficially similar way signs that have different modes of signification: that is to say. A sign-language that is governed by *logical* grammar – by logical syntax. (T, 3.325)

This interest in drawing up a perspicuous logical notation finds no echo in Wittgenstein's later philosophy, but other aspects of this Tractarian program do. The account of philosophy in the *Tractatus* suggests that the early Wittgenstein already felt that "[t]he work of the philosopher consists in marshalling reminders for a particular purpose" (PI, §127), namely, the purpose of resolving conceptual disorder. "The name 'philosophy,'" we read in the *Investigations*, "might also be given to what is possible *before* all new discoveries and inventions" (PI, §126), just because the determinations

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[65] In the *Tractatus*, one example of this confusion is given by the sentence 'Green is green,' when said of Mr. Green. We are misled into thinking that 'is' is functioning as the law of identity rather than as the copula. Struck by the fact that we understand this sentence, we might conclude that a person (Mr. Green) is, in some mysterious way, identical with a colour rather than being the logical subject of a predicate (cf., T, 3.323)

of logic of which the philosopher reminds us are, in some way, already familiar to us (PI, §129). In the early work too, "there can *never* be surprises in logic" (T, 6.1251) and, it seems, for the same reason: philosophy only reminds us of a logic with which we already acquainted but with which we have lost our way. Also, finally, the early Wittgenstein, like the later Wittgenstein, tells us that this philosophical business of clearing away misunderstandings is meant to provide *elucidations* but no *theory*, no *doctrine*. "The object of philosophy is the clarification of thoughts. Philosophy is not a theory [*Lehre*] but an activity. A philosophical work consists essentially of elucidations" (T, 4.112) – reminders – rather than arguments for novel philosophical claims.

In the last chapter, I looked to Kierkegaard for a distinction between recreative anti-realism and recollective anti-realism, where these involve two anti-realistic uses of remembrance. In this chapter, I use this distinction between remembrance as recreation and remembrance as recollection to offer a new interpretation of what is at issue in the debate between orthodox readers and their resolute opponents. I submit that the debate can be understood as follows: the resolute reader of the *Tractatus* rejects a recollective understanding of Tractarian remembrance. The orthodox reader is concerned because he worries that the resolute reader thereby adopts a recreative understanding of remembrance instead. In Chapters Five through Eight, I try to exonerate resolute readers of this charge. I argue that the early Wittgenstein, like Kierkegaard, is urging us to navigate between the mutually anti-realistic Scylla of recollection and Charybdis of recreation and to arrive at a realistic thinking of remembrance as repetition. In this chapter, I only want to show that the orthodox charge is justly made and that my coming defence of the resolute reading from that charge is required. Orthodox readers are *right* to worry that resolute readers place Wittgenstein in the dubious company of characters like the reflective aesthete, for resolute readers have said much to encourage this misapprehension of their view and little to correct it.

What would correct this misapprehension? Resolute readers need to clarify how resolute Wittgenstein could reject both these anti-realistic pictures of remembrance, and this would require resolute readers to say what alternative vision of remembrance he adopts instead. I conclude this chapter by suggesting that the resolute reading of Cora Diamond is best read as a pointer in this direction. Diamond draws our attention to the concept of 'revelation,' in Wittgenstein, where a revealed truth will be neither one already written into our philosophical sub-conscious, as in recollection, nor a truth that human beings create, as in recreation. Our study of repetition in Chapter Five will show that Wittgensteinian 'revelation' can be best analyzed in terms of the

Kierkegaardian notion of repetition.[66] For the purposes of this chapter, I only want to show that what Diamond says about Wittgensteinian revelation points in the direction of a route by which the resolute Wittgenstein can avoid both recollective and recreative anti-realism. The rest of the dissertation will aim to chart this route more clearly, by offering an analysis of Wittgensteinian revelation that locates it within a broader, Kierkegaardian-repetitional, account of remembrance.

Once more: my aim in this chapter is to lay out a standard, orthodox, reading of the *Tractatus,* and to set it off against my interpretation of the resolute alternative. A disclaimer is in order here. We saw in Chapter One that there are different varieties of both the orthodox and the resolute reading, so we can't give a statement of *the* orthodox reading or *the* resolute reading. My aim in this chapter is to characterize these two positions in terms of certain typical (though not universal) views that are either stated or implied by readers from the two different camps. My thesis is this: orthodox readers generally share a *recollective* interpretation of Tractarian philosophical remembrance, and resolute readers reject that interpretation. This move away from the recollective *Tractatus* is a salutary step in the direction of realism since, on my Kierkegaardian reading of Wittgenstein, recollection amounts to a form of anti-realism. However, as I propose to frame their concern, orthodox readers rightly worry that, when resolute readers reject the recollective reading of the *Tractatus*, they come unnervingly close to adopting a recreative reading and saddling Wittgenstein with an even more anti-realist view of remembrance than that which we find in recollection. Diamond's reflections on the concept of revelation, in Wittgenstein, will provide us with the pointer toward the position that I go on to defend in the chapters that follow, the position that charts a course between the anti-realisms of recollection and recreation, and arrives at the realism of repetition. Let us begin, then, by delving into the details of the *Tractarian* theory of meaning.

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[66] This may seem a leap. What has revelation, in Kierkegaard's sense, to do with the Wittgensteinian revelation of a new meaning of words such that a philosophical question is dissolved? I tried to establish one part of the connection in Chapter One when I presented an assumption of the dissertation: both Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein are trying to dispel illusions of meaning by 'revealing' the grammar of words. On this front, I assume, Kierkegaard can be helpfully viewed in light of Wittgenstein. In Chapter Five, I will argue that the Kierkegaardian philosopher's effort to reveal grammatical truth just is an effort to facilitate God's own self-revelation, and I suggest that something similar is true of Wittgenstein. Here, I argue, Wittgenstein is best viewed in light of Kierkegaard. Leap though it may be, my thesis is that 'revelation,' in Wittgenstein, can be helpfully understood on the model of revelation in Kierkegaard, where the notion is bound up in an account of remembrance as repetition.

4.2. The Proposition as Picture

Wittgenstein states the fundamental assumption of the *Tractatus* as follows: "The general form of the proposition is: This is how things stand [*Es verhält sich so und so*]" (T, 4.5). In other words, the meaningful unit of language is the proposition, the linguistic construction that says, either truly or falsely, that something is the case. More carefully, the proposition is a particular kind of *fact* (T, 2.141, 3.14); it is a linguistic fact that we use to picture other facts, which may or may not exist (T, 2.201). The meaning, or sense, of the proposition is the fact it pictures (T, 2.22).

The picture theory is an answer to the following question: given that language is this picturing relation, what conditions need to obtain for language to be possible? Wittgenstein reasons as follows: "If a fact is to be a picture, it must have something in common with what it depicts. There must be something identical in a picture and what it depicts, to enable the one to be a picture of the other at all" (T, 2.16-2.161). In the *Cratylus*, Plato has Socrates raise the issue: "[H]ow could anyone ever compose a picture which would be like anything at all if there were not pigments in nature which resembled the things imitated and out of which the picture is composed?" (Cratylus 434a-b). Wittgenstein's question is similar: How could a piece of language picture a non-linguistic fact? For the one to picture the other, the two must have something in common. As Aristotle puts the point, "interaction between two factors is held to require a precedent community of nature between the factors" (De Anima 429b25),[67] and it is not clear what this 'community of nature' is between the linguistic proposition and the empirical fact it pictures. In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein submits that the commonality in question is *logic*, or *logical form* (T, 2.161). This "form of reality" (T, 2.18) pervades both linguistic facts – propositions – and the empirical facts that we use propositions to describe. When we recognize that a proposition means the state of affairs it depicts, we are recognizing that the two have the same logical form. It is in virtue of this formal isomorphism between language and world that a proposition can be about – can *mean* – the worldly state of affairs that it portrays. The proposition is true or false depending on whether a state of affairs that shares its logical form actually exists (ibid.).

In the sweeping generality of the claim that *all* propositions are pictures, we can already hear the recollective tendency. The picture theory's dictum that every proposition essentially says 'this is how things stand' is supposed "to give a description of the propositions of *any* sign–language *whatsoever*" (T, 4.5). The familiar, essentially recollective, idea is that this view of the general propositional form could never be undermined by the unfolding future of our dealings in language.

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[67] Quoted in Aristotle 1941, 591.

"The existence of a general propositional form is proved by the fact that there cannot be a proposition whose form could not have been foreseen" (T, 4.5). A more forceful articulation of the thought occurs in the *Notebooks*:

> The fact that it is possible to erect the general form of proposition means nothing but: every possible form of proposition MUST BE *foreseeable.*[68] / And *that* means: We can never come upon a form of proposition of which we could say: it could not have been foreseen that there was such a thing as this. / For that would mean that we had a new experience, and that it took that to make this form of proposition possible. / Thus it must be possible to erect the general form of proposition, because the possible forms of proposition must be *a priori*. Because the possible forms of proposition are *a priori*, the general form of proposition exists. (NB, 89)

This is worth questioning. Mightn't we come to think of the proposition in a way that *can't* be foreseen? Mightn't there be a depth to the meaning of 'proposition' that the picture theory of meaning might have overlooked? Notice, unless we are wed to some version of recollection, this can't be ruled out. The *Tractatus* tempts us with a philosophy that invites the recollective interpretation that orthodox readers give it, but it also invites us to join resolute readers and overcome that temptation in the end. My own claim will be that a resolute reader who wants to avoid the charge of anti-realism can and should accept that we are also meant to overcome the idea that all propositions are pictures (see Chapter Six). Before we proceed into the Tractarian system, we should note a terminological oddity that will be important in this connection.

At times, Wittgenstein uses the term 'proposition' [*Satz*] to describe parts of language that have a very different logical profile than the fact-stating uses of language that he has been calling 'propositions' so far. So far, we have been talking about *empirical* propositions. These are the propositions that picture 'states of affairs,' and which do so in virtue of the particular configurations of logical form that structure both those propositions and those states of affairs. Now, these particular configurations of logical form make up the larger, all-encompassing, logical structure of the world that includes all possibilities of thought, language, and fact. "Logic pervades the world: the limits of the world are also its limits" (T, 5.61) so that – and here we notice the second use of the term 'proposition' – "[t]he propositions of logic describe the scaffolding of the world, or rather, they represent it" (T, 6.124). How should we take this talk about the 'propositions' of logic? Are these

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[68] I have modified Anscombe's translation here. The German reads "muß sich *voraussehen* LASSEN," which Anscombe renders "must be FORSEEABLE." Robert Burch has pointed out to me that the translation I have used in the text is more faithful to the German.

genuine propositions? Do they also assert substantial, 'contentful' (*gehaltvoll*) truths about a reality that transcends the human being? This is the question at stake in the debate between orthodox, realist, readings of the *Tractatus* and the apparent anti-realism of the resolute approach. To set the stage for that realism, we need now to delve deeper into the details of the Tractarian system.

4.3. Logic, Objects, States of Affairs

"Logic is transcendental" (T, 6.13). It is a condition for the possibility of language and linguistic, discursive, experience.[69] Tightly bound to the transcendental necessity of logic is the transcendental necessity of 'objects,' logically simple determinations of reality that make up [*bilden*] the "substance" of the logically structured world (T, 2.021). This necessary order of objects is the foundation of empirical reality, for it is this order of objects that can be arranged into different, contingent, empirical, states of affairs (T, 2.0271-2.0272). However, objects also constitute the logical form of reality as a whole (T, 2.021- 2.027, 2.161, 2.18). "Objects are just what constitute this unalterable form" (T, 2.023). Hence, the necessity of logic for the possibility of language *is* the necessity of objects. "There must be objects, if the world is to have unalterable form" (T, 2.026). "Objects, the unalterable, and the subsistent are one in the same" (T, 2.027).

4.3.1. Truth in Virtue of Meaning

A brief digression is needed to clarify my (perhaps anomalous) understanding of the relationship between logic and objects. It has seemed less than clear to some readers how objects can constitute the unalterable form of the world. Max Black submits that the notion of 'form' at work in both the above mention of "unalterable form" (T, 2.026) and earlier, in the mention of the "form of the world" (T, 2.022), "is an approximate synonym for 'logic'" (Black, 1964, 63). Why merely 'approximate'? I see no reason why we cannot take the notion of form at work in all these cases for *logical* form, nothing approximate about it. The matter is worth pursuing because it bears upon what Wittgenstein means by 'logic' and, in particular, whether he considers truths in virtue of meaning 'logical' propositions. As I understand him, he does.

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[69] We should not be misled by recollective connotations of this Kantian language. As I've anticipated, the resolute *Tractatus* will ultimately have us see beyond recollection and, hence, beyond the Kantian project. There will remain a sense in which my own reading of the *Tractatus* is 'transcendental,' for my reading does acknowledge certain limits to what can be justified and explained. On my reading, however, these limits are historically conditioned and contingent. They lack, therefore, the strong *a priori* necessity of the structures of experiences that we find in Kant.

Perhaps Black is diffident because the apparent synonymy he notes leads to the conclusion that objects constitute logical form, and this conclusion raises the following question: How can objects constitute the states of affairs that logic structures and, at the same time, constitute the formal structure that is logic itself? At first blush, this is puzzling. But if this puzzle is the reason why Black says that the 'form of the world' that objects constitute is only 'approximately' equivalent to logic, it seems to me that his timidity is unnecessary. If I understand them, Black's reservations are unnecessary because a resolution to the relevant puzzle can be found in the claim that the substance of the world, earlier identified with the totality of objects, is both "form and content" (T, 2.025, cf., T, 2.0233). In his commentary on T, 2.025, Black himself makes this point, though without noticing that it provides him with all the reason he needs to say with confidence what he is inclined to say only with some reserve:

> The substance of the world consists of objects (T, 2.021). Considered as determining the [...] facts in which they occur, each of them has its own form (T, 2.0141) – together, they constitute in this aspect *the* form of the world (T, 2.026, cf. 2.023). But objects are also the stuff of which facts are made. From this standpoint, then, objects also have content. (Black 1963, 65)

There is a sense in which the 'unalterable form' constituted by objects is identical to reality's logical form, even while objects also constitute the substance of the logically structured world. What we have here, I submit, are two aspects under which objects can be described: they constitute the logical form of reality in virtue of their logical form; they constitute the substance of reality in virtue of their non-logical 'content.' Described in terms of their formal properties, objects constitute the logical form of the world; described in terms of their non-formal properties (their content), they constitute the substance of the world that logic structures.

In contrast to empirical propositions, logical propositions are tautologies, or what Wittgenstein also calls "analytic truths" (T, 6.1-6.12). Given what we have just learned about logic and objects, we can characterize this contrast between empirical propositions and logical propositions as follows: An empirical proposition describes a particular arrangement of objects– determinations of both form and content – which may or may not actually exist. A logical proposition describes the formal, internal, properties of objects, which are the object's logical possibilities for combination with other objects into logically structured states of affairs (T, 2.033).

How do these ideas bear upon the issue of whether 'logical propositions' include truths in virtue of meaning? So far as I can see, they entail that a proposition will count as a logical

proposition if its truth follows necessarily from the nature of the objects, in their logical relations, that are pictured by the proposition. It follows that the notion of a logical proposition includes more than just self-evidently logical truths like that 'it is raining or not raining.' This is a self-evident logical truth; we can know it is logically true just by virtue of its form, without knowing anything about the meaning of 'raining' (see Quine 1951, 23). But from what we have seen about the connection between logic and objects, even truths in virtue of meaning – analytic truths that aren't self-evidently logical – would count as logical propositions by Tractarian lights. It is a logical proposition that 'all bachelors are men' because this truth holds necessarily given the logical form (the combinatorial possibilities) of the objects related to one another in the analytic proposition. One will not know that one is dealing without a logical truth unless one knows the meaning of 'bachelor' and 'man,' but once one does know the meaning of these terms, one will know that one is dealing with a logical truth indeed.

4.3.2. Objects, Not Atoms

A second clarification will be important for what we will say later about Wittgenstein's 'context principle,' the principle that a name has a meaning only in the context of a proposition in which it occurs. To set the stage for this aspect of the *Tractatus*, we need to acknowledge an important wrinkle in the *Tractatus*' 'logical atomism.'

There is, I think, a sense in which Tractarian objects are *not* logical atoms, for "there is no object that we can imagine excluded from the possibility of combining with others" (T, 2.0121; cf., T, 2.012; Allen 1993, 117-18). The identity of an object is not, as it were, 'original,' but is derived from the logical role that the object might play in different states of affairs. This is why the actual world – the world as described by true empirical propositions – is not a chaotic totality of conceptually isolated objects, but the set of existing states of affairs in which objects stand in intelligibly structured relations. "The world is the totality of facts, not of things" (T, 1.1, cf., T, 1-2) – not objects.[70] Similarly, the context principle states that the *meaning* of a name is derived from its possible role in the propositions.

4.3.3. No Surprises in Logic

I have said that for the resolute reader, the *Tractatus* is written as a recollective illusion that we are meant to overcome. We have seen one aspect of that illusion in the idea that one can foresee, for all

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[70] In the *Tractatus*, 'thing' [*Dinge*] and 'object' [*Gegenständen*] are synonyms (see T, 1.1, 2.01-2.0122).

future thought, that all propositions are pictures. We see another aspect of this illusion in the suggestion that one can foresee the total order of true logical propositions. We read:

> If we know the logical syntax of any sign-language, then we have already been given all the propositions of logic. / It is possible [...] to give in advance a description of all 'true' logical propositions. / Hence there can *never* be surprises in logic. (T, 6.124-6.1251)

Of course, we need to learn a language before we can know its logical syntax; we need to have learned the meaning of words. But once we know the meaning of words for a given language, logic reveals itself so fully and completely to the mind's eye that we can survey in advance all that the logic of language will and will not permit. Kierkegaard's pseudonymous representatives of recollection tempt us with the idea that all philosophical truth is already immanent within us. The *Tractatus* tempts us with a version of the same illusion when it offers us the view that "we have already been given all the propositions of logic" (T, 6.124). Since logical possibility is simply a function of the combinatorial possibilities of objects, the view entails that we have also already been given an intellectual awareness of all those combinatorial possibilities.

> If I know an object, then I also know all the possibilities of its occurrences in states of affairs. (Every one of these possibilities must be part of the nature of the object.) A new possibility cannot be discovered later. (T, 2.0123)

There can never be surprises in logic because all logical possibilities have already been given; none remains to be provided. As I understand it, Lee Braver captures the idea: "This metaphysical-semantic picture requires objects to 'contain' or fully anticipate all of their combinatorial possibilities. [...] Each object predetermines all of its combinatory possibilities, so the connective potentials of all objects join to map out the totality of possible states of affairs, that is, logical space as a whole" (Braver 2012b, 56). Like other recollective philosophies, the *Tractatus* leaves us to imagine that human thought could never witness possibilities of sense that it was constitutionally incapable of foreseeing.

4.4. The Determinacy of Sense

A tendency to recollection can also be found in the Tractarian account of logical analysis. To properly understand the resolute take on this issue, we need to take a closer look at the parts of language that such analysis will seek to lay bare. Before we consider this technical machinery, it will serve us well to appreciate the troubled intuition that the machinery was invented to support.

Wittgenstein describes that intuition in the *Investigations*, looking back upon the theory he presented in his earlier book.

4.4.1. The Determinacy of Sense in Retrospect

> [I]t seems clear that where there is sense, there must be perfect order. – So there must be perfect order even in the vaguest sentence. / 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.* (PI, §98-99)

Our impression, in other words, is that any meaningful use of words would have to be regulated by logical rules that have an utterly univocal application. But must the determinacy sense be so utterly, metaphysically, determinate as to rule out all vagueness of meaning in this way? No. "This is similar to: a boundary which is not sharply defined is not really a boundary at all" (PI, § 99; cf., PI, §100). In fact, as the later Wittgenstein would clarify, the logical rules of language can and do admit of vagueness in their application and still, for all that, they are rules that determine the meaning of words. Our desire here is for the meaning of our words – the rules of our language (PG, 184) – to be such that they can be laid out explicitly before the mind's eye so that nothing they permit or don't permit could remain essentially outside our ken. We are inclined to insist that vagueness can be in our understanding of the rules, but not in the rules themselves (PI, §100). The later Wittgenstein has us consider whether we would also say that a game is not a game if its rules are not defined with such perfect precision as to determine all their applications in advance. After helping us to feel the temptation, he adds: "But I want to say: we misunderstand the role played by the ideal in our language. That is to say: we too would call it a game, only we are dazzled by the ideal, and therefore fail to see the actual application of the word 'game' clearly" (PI, §100). So it goes with the word 'language,' and with the particular words that language comprises. We have idealized the notion of 'rules' and saddled ourselves with the illusion that a rule is not a rule unless it governs the use of words unambiguously.

> 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 [....] We think the ideal must be in reality; for we think we already see it there. / The strict and clear rules for the logical construction of a proposition appear to us as something hidden in the background – hidden in the medium of the understanding. I

already see them (even though through a medium), for I do understand the sign, I mean

something by it. (PI, §101–102)

We saw that when the *Tractatus* fell on deaf ears, Wittgenstein grew concerned that the message of the book would go entirely unnoticed. For this reason, he reached out to the publisher von Ficker and tried to say, a bit more directly, what the *Tractatus* had failed to show. From the strong resolute perspective that I presuppose here, the hint to von Ficker was still too indirect to communicate the point, and the above passages from the *Investigations* were yet another attempt to clarify it.

4.4.2. The Determinacy of Sense in the *Tractatus*

We can now take a yet closer look at the complex moving parts of the Tractarian view of language. The picture theory is 'atomistic,' not in its conception of the object, but in its conception of the *elementary*, or *atomic*, state of affairs.[71] Elementary states of affairs are pictured by elementary propositions, and the meaning of elementary propositions is a logical construction of the simple names from which the proposition is constructed (T, 4.21-4.221). The meanings of these names, finally, are the logically simple objects (T, 3.2 -3.21). Elementary propositions are the constituent logical parts of *complex proposition*s, which picture the world in virtue of the elementary propositions from which they are composed. The elementary proposition pictures the world in virtue of the fact that the simple names from which the proposition is constructed depict a particular logical arrangement of simple objects in the world (T, 3.21). If the world actually contains the arrangement of objects pictured by the proposition, then the proposition is true; if the world does not contain that particular arrangement of objects, the proposition is false.

We've seen that the being of the object derives from the logical relations in which it stands to other objects in a possible state of affairs. Symmetrically, Wittgenstein's 'context principle' has it that the meaning of a name derives from the logical relations in which it stands to other names in the context of a proposition. "Only propositions have sense; only in the nexus of a proposition does a name have meaning" (T, 3.3).[72] The logically simplest semantic unit is the name, just as the logically simplest ontological unit is the object. But, the logically simplest *independent* semantic unit is the elementary proposition, just as the logically simplest independent ontological unit is the

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[71] The Ogden translation of the *Tractatus* (2007) calls elementary states of affairs 'atomic facts.' I have taken the language of elementary states of affairs from the Pears-McGuinness translation (2002).

[72] Wittgenstein inherits the context principle from Frege, who enjoins us: "never ask for the meaning of a word in isolation, but only in the context of a proposition" (Frege 1980, x). For a helpful analysis of Wittgenstein's debts to Frege on this point, see Conant 1991a, 1998 and Diamond 1991, 73-93.

elementary state of affairs. "The world is the totality of facts, not of things" (T, 1.1., cf., T, 1-2) and the totality of facts is set forth in true elementary propositions, each one of which "can be the case or not be the case while everything else remains the same" (T, 1.21). The context principle mirrors the claim about the being of objects in its claim about the meaning of names. While the meaning of a name depends upon its logical relations to other names, the meaning of an elementary proposition does not depend upon any logical relation it bears to other elementary propositions.

So far the story has been that *a priori* insight can determine, unambiguously and for all future linguistic practice, 1) a complete and final account of what we mean by 'proposition,' 2) a complete and final register of true logical propositions, and 3) a complete and final account of the combinatorial possibilities for individual objects. In all three of these aspects of the picture theory, we are being tempted with our tendency to recollection. That tendency arises for a fourth time when we are told that 4) the meaning of each particular empirical proposition also has "one and only one complete analysis" (T, 3.25). The particular logical structure of each empirical proposition codifies one and only one way the proposition can be applied to the world, and it is this structure that logical analysis is supposed to reveal.

The view that logical analysis must terminate in a final specification of meaning – an 'elementary fact' – is connected to the Tractarian view of truth, and also to the idea that there *must* be names to function as the terminal points of that analysis. "The requirement that simple signs be possible is the requirement that sense be determinate" (T, 3.23). Correspondingly, it is our feeling that sense has to be metaphysically determinate in this way that moves us to say that there *must* be objects – "the substance of the world" (T, 2.0211) – as the ontologically simple correlates of the semantically simple names:

> The object is simple. / Every statement about complexes can be resolved into a statement about their constituents, and into the propositions that describe the complex completely. / Objects make up the substance of the world. That is why they cannot be composite. / If the world had no substance, then whether a proposition had sense would depend on whether another proposition was true. / In that case we could not sketch any picture of the world (true or false). (T, 2.02–2.0212)

If there were no logically simple objects to be picked out by names, the analysis of an elementary proposition would give way to an analysis of yet more elementary propositions, which would describe the composition of objects from out of yet simpler objects *ad infinitum*. In this case, we would arrive at no final, complete analysis of what a proposition means. This is to say; we would

arrive at no final, complete account of the conditions that must obtain in order of the proposition to be true.[73] Thus we find that the need for a final analysis is at least partly driven by our need for *truth*, where truth, on this view, can be conclusively known. Once we know that the elementary fact obtains, we can be certain that the proposition is true. The uncertainty that would follow from the above epistemic regress would be closed off.

Bear in mind: the claim is not only that there *is* some one and only one complete analysis of the proposition. If the claim were only that, the complete analysis of the proposition could lie inextricably beyond our ken, perhaps in the mind of God. In this case, there would be neither anything especially recollective about the picture, nor anything especially objectionable from a Kierkegaardian point of view.[74] The view, instead, is that I am supposed implicitly to *know* what this complete analysis is, "for I do understand the sign, I mean something by it" (PI, §102). For the picture theory, it is philosophy's job to make that knowledge explicit. We are dealing here, at the level of propositional analysis, with the same recollective pursuit of finality and closure that we saw in the account of the general propositional form, and in the different aspects of the claim that there can never be surprises in logic. The idea that we can arrive at a singular terminal analysis of the empirical proposition is the idea that we saw the later Wittgenstein critique: the idea that we can foresee all the ways in which that proposition can be intelligibly applied to the world.

To be clear, the claim is not that we can tell, just by considering the logic of an elementary proposition, whether or not the claim is *true* (see Hacker 1997, 59, 101). The claim is that, once the meanings of terms is fixed – once names are paired up with objects– our understanding of the logic of a proposition positions us to render the meaning of that proposition fully explicit; we can tell precisely, and with unimpeachable foresight, what we ought to look for when we look to the world to see *if* the proposition is true. As Braver writes, Tractarian "[r]ules contain their consequences and applications, leaving us the job of merely unpacking what's already there" (Braver, 2012, 57). The recollective bent of the picture theory lies in this idea that the future intelligible application of a

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[73] Max Black describes the sense of necessity here nicely:
> If all facts were irreducibly contingent complexes, i.e., if there were no ultimate objects in direct connection with the names standing for them, no proposition could say anything definite, i.e., no proposition could say anything at all. […] The sense of S1 would depend upon the truth of some other sentence S2 (affirming the existence of a complex apparently mentioned in S1) and the sense of S2 would depend upon the truth of some other S3, and so on without an end. This would be a vicious regress: we could never know what the sense of a given S1 was without first, *per impossibile*, knowing an infinity of other propositions to be true. (Black 1966, 60; cf., McManus 2006, 31)

[74] Recall from above: "There can be no system for life itself [....] Life is a system – for God, but cannot be that for any existing spirit. System and finality correspond to each other, but life is just the opposite"(CUP, 100; see Evans 2006b, 57)

given proposition is 'already there,' laid down in the recesses of thought, as soon as the meaning of words is fixed. We are dealing with a recollective form of subjectivism and anti-realism.

4.4.3. Freedom and the Determinacy of Sense

If the rules of logic fully determine the application of words, then they *ipso facto* curtail the freedom we enjoy as linguistic agents. Here we see an important difference between the recollective subjectivism of the orthodox *Tractatus,* which acknowledges a regulative structure that constrains our freedom of thought, and the recreative subjectivism we find in Murdoch's Sartre and Kierkegaard's reflective aesthete, who try to repudiate such constraints. Far from any such recreative primacy of the subject's freely choosing will, the *Tractatus* describes the subject as an entirely passive witness to whatever logic necessitates. "Logic" we read, "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 natural and inevitable signs speaks for itself" (T, 6.1124). "What expresses *itself* in language, *we* cannot express by means of language (T, 4.121; see Mounce 1997). Part of the claim here is that certain linguistic signs – those for the logical constants, for example – are inevitable for any language recognizable as such (see Mounce 1997, 5). We can imagine that certain logical laws might be necessary for any form of linguistic life. It could be that a sign codifying these laws will exist in any language that we can imagine and that our understanding of those signs will be *presupposed* by any actual, subsequent decision we make intentionally to countenance any other rules of language.[75] A deeper part of the point is that it is not up to *us* to decide what will count as the intelligible application of these rules (Mounce 1997, 5). Mounce explains:

> In short, it is not one's thinking that determines the rule or method of projection. It is whether one follows the rule or method of projection which determines whether one is thinking. To say there is a rule for the application of signs is to say there is a difference between using them correctly and incorrectly. One thinks when one uses signs correctly. In other words, there is, on this point no substantial difference between Wittgenstein's early and later work. (Mounce 1997, 5)

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[75] "I can speak of the world only because there is already a relation between the language I use and the world, only because there is an *internal* relation between the two. I can, of course, set up the relation between a particular symbol and the world. But that is because I rely in doing so on a relation between symbols and the world which I have *not* set up" (Mounce 1997, 7)

The whims of the subject are equally irrelevant when we are dealing with truths in virtue of meaning. Not every language needs to include the concept 'bachelor,' but for every language that does, it is a logical truth that all bachelors are men. Here we are not dealing with "the natural and inevitable signs" (T, 6.1124) that must obtain for all languages, but here, too, logic "speaks for itself" (ibid.). "[T]he rules of logical syntax must go without saying, once we know how the individual sign signifies" (T, 5.43); that is, they must go without *our* saying what those rules will and will not permit. Once the meaning of signs is fixed, the application of signs to the world is supposed to be fully and completely determined by logic. Our wishes as to how we *want* to combine words into propositions falls out of the analysis as entirely irrelevant. "Logic takes care of itself; all we have to do is look and see how it does it" (NB, 11). Accordingly, as Braver puts it, Tractarian logic "relieves the logician of the burden and responsibility of making up her mind" (Braver 2012b, 63) when it comes to how she ought to apply the rules that regulate her use of words. The only freedom granted to the philosopher is the recollective freedom to reflect upon the rules that unambiguously determine that application. As Wittgenstein explains, "*unambiguous* rules of inference can be distinguished from ones that are not unambiguous, I mean from such as leave an alternative open to us" (RFM, I-§119).

4.5. The Bipolarity Principle

The substance of the picture theory has been this: for every genuine proposition, we have to be able to specify some contingent state of affairs upon which the proposition's truth value depends, and the sense of the proposition is that contingent state of affairs. Two conclusions follow. First, the total order of what can be *said* (the total order of 'genuine propositions') is given by the *a posteriori* propositions of natural science (T, 6.53). Second, genuine *truth* is always a matter of things in the empirical world being as they are pictured to be by such propositions (T, 2.22 -2.223). The author of the *Tractatus* has been exploring (without, on my reading, genuinely committing to) the idea that the genuine proposition – the linguistic form that says something genuinely true or false of the world – is 'bipolar' (see NB, 93-98; cf., Hacker 1997, 32, Ch. 3). Here we are returned to the earlier-mentioned issue of whether logical propositions are 'genuine' propositions at all.

If we accept the bipolarity principle, we need to conclude is that logical propositions are not, strictly speaking, *true*. In the *Notebooks,* Wittgenstein puts the point paradoxically: "One cannot say of a tautology that it is true, for it is *made* so as to be *true*" (NB, 55). "A tautology has no truth conditions, since it is unconditionally true" (T, 4.461). "Tautologies and contradictions are not pictures of reality. They do not represent any possible situations" (T, 4.462). And if a proposition

does not represent any possible situations, it can be neither true nor false. "For example, I know nothing about the weather when I know that it is either raining or not raining" (T, 4.461). As paradoxical as it sounds, the idea is intuitive. If indeed a tautology is 'made' to be a linguistic construction which, by definition, will never be regarded as false, then the truth-value of a tautology is wholly insensitive to whatever might come to pass in the world. But if the truth-value of a tautology is utterly insensitive to whatever might come to pass in the world, then it is natural to say that it isn't really *about* the world at all. The same goes for contradictions – logical impossibilities – if these are 'made' to be false. If we can determine in advance that they will never come out true, then they do not say anything *false* of the world, for they say nothing of the world whatsoever. From this perspective, if we wish to call tautologies and contradictions 'true' and 'false,' the respective notions of truth and falsity will be merely 'degenerate,' and we will say, as Wittgenstein was once inclined to say, that "Ramsey quite correctly called tautologies and contradictions degenerate propositions" (PG, 317). In truth, they are not *propositions* at all, for genuine propositions say something genuinely true or false about the world beyond our representational scheme.

We can describe the bipolarity principle as having both an ontological and an epistemological aspect. On the ontological side, a bipolar proposition has to be such that it can *be* both true and false (though not at the same time, of course). "A proposition must restrict reality to two alternatives: yes or no" (T, 4.023; cf., NB, 93-97). On the epistemological side, for a proposition to be bipolar, it must be such that we can *know* in advance under what conditions we would count it false, in addition to knowing the conditions under which we would count it true. Therefore, unlike analytic 'propositions,' such as 'all bachelors are men,' we can grasp the meaning of a bipolar proposition without knowing whether it is true. In this context, as elsewhere, Wittgenstein speaks about the bipolar proposition as if it were the only kind of proposition there is. "To understand a proposition means to know what is the case if it is true. (One can understand it, therefore, without knowing whether it is true)" (T, 4.024). Symmetrically, "the truth or falsehood of non-logical propositions can *not* be recognized from the propositions alone" (T, 6.113).

Notice, the bipolarity principle of the proposition is just another way of expressing the fundamental thesis of the *Tractatus*: the thesis that a genuine proposition is a *picture*. "A proposition is a picture of reality" (T, 4.01) and "a picture represents its subject from a position outside it" (T, 2.173). Accordingly, Wittgenstein has presented himself as believing the following: if we find ourselves unable to 'step outside' our belief in the truth of an apparent proposition – if we find ourselves unable to envision not only the conditions under which we would count it true but also

the conditions under which we would count it false – then our intentional relation is not to a genuine proposition at all. We may be dealing, rather, with a logical 'proposition,' which isn't *really* a proposition (see Conant p. 136, 140). We will now see that another possibility is that the apparent proposition is really a piece of nonsense.

4.6. Sense, Senselessness, and Nonsense

As we have seen, empirical propositions have a *sense*, which is the state of affairs they picture. Since logical propositions are supposed to state nothing about the empirical world, Wittgenstein says they *say nothing*, they are *senseless [sinnloss]*, they lack content. Moreover, we are told that any philosophical theory that leads us astray of this realization is false. "The propositions of logic are tautologies. / Therefore the propositions say nothing. (They are the analytic propositions.) / All theories that make a proposition of logic appear to have content are false" (T, 6.1-6.111). And again, earlier in the text: "Tautologies and contradictions show that they say nothing [….] Tautologies and contradictions lack sense [*sind sinnloss*]. (T, 4.461). Though they are senseless, logical propositions are not *nonsensical [unsinnig]* (T, 4.4611). This is to say, roughly, that they involve no unintelligible combination of words (T, 4.4611). It is senseless to say that it is either raining or not raining or to say that all bachelors are men. We are in the grips of nonsense, however, if we are misled by sentences like 'Green is green' (when said of Mr. Green) into thinking that 'is' is functioning as the law of identity rather than as the copula. Struck by the fact that we understand this sentence, we might conclude that a person (Mr. Green) is, in some mysterious way, identical with a colour rather than being the logical subject of a predicate (cf., T, 3.323). We encounter *nonsense* when a person attempts to use certain words in ways out of joint with their logical character. This kind of misunderstanding often results when the logical form of a thought is not well represented in its everyday linguistic expression, as can happen when we make a homonymous use of a given word. As Wittgenstein puts it, the kind of confusion at issue here is a matter of two logically distinct *symbols*, or meanings, being misleadingly represented by the same time verbal or written *sign,* or word (T, 3.32-3.322). To address these kinds of confusion, philosophy needs to elucidate the proper logical structure of linguistic expressions.

On Hacker's orthodox reading, the general category of nonsense divides into two main types: *plain nonsense*, which is generated by the meaningless use of meaningless signs (that is, gibberish) and *philosophical nonsense*, which is supposed to involve the meaningless use of meaningful signs. Philosophical nonsense, in turn, divides into two sub-types:

> [W]ithin the range of […] philosophical nonsense we can distinguish […] between what might (somewhat confusedly) be called illuminating nonsense, and misleading nonsense. Illuminating nonsense will guide the attentive reader to apprehend what is shown by other propositions which do not purport to be philosophical; moreover, it will intimate, to those who grasp what is meant, its own illegitimacy. (Hacker, 1997, 18)

Misleading nonsense expresses mere conceptual confusion; illuminating nonsense expresses deep, ineffable, truths that can be 'shown but not said' to obtain. In this category, famously, orthodox readers place the *Tractatus'* own claims about the necessity of logic and objects.

4.7. Saying, Showing, Logic and Necessity

Only contingent facts can be pictured by language, and logic is not contingent. Rather, logic is a necessary*,* transcendental structure of the world. This being the case, we cannot 'stand outside' the framing of the logical proposition and form a picture of logic in the way that we can stand outside the framing of the empirical proposition and form a picture of empirical reality. I can't stand outside my belief in the logical proposition 'p or not-p' and imagine a world in which it is both raining and not raining; I can't stand outside my belief in the logical proposition that 'all bachelors are men' and imagine a world in which there exists a female bachelor. This has the remarkable consequence that, in fact, nothing intelligible can be said about that logic which makes language possible, and about which the *Tractatus* has been trying to say so much.

> 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 from, we should be able to station ourselves with propositions somewhere outside logic, that is to say, outside the world. / 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. / What *can* be shown, *cannot* be said. (T, 4.12- 4.1212)

Here, orthodox readers say, we don't have 'misleading' nonsense that ought to be exorcised through the work of philosophical clarification. Here we have 'illuminating' nonsense in matters of deep but ineffable philosophical importance. To get a sense of one familiar orthodox interpretation of the above saying/showing distinction, I lay out three presumptions that implicitly inform it, at least according to the resolute reader.

4.7.1. Three Orthodox Presumptions about the Saying / Showing Distinction

The first presumption is that the *Tractatus* aims to tell us something *true* about the necessary structure of mind and world. Courting controversy, in the next chapter, I will argue that this presumption is unobjectionable. The second presumption is that, since these truths do not picture contingent states of affairs, they are not truths that could be expressed by any *ordinary* kind of bipolar proposition. Here too, I will find no reason to object. I will argue that the third important presumption is the faulty one. Though the orthodox reader never says as much, he implicitly presumes that, since these propositions express genuine truths, they have to be *a kind* of bipolar proposition, even if not the ordinary kind by which we describe empirical facts.

Though I think the third presupposition is mistaken, it is undoubtedly natural, for the *Tractatus* certainly gives us the impression that propositions expressing necessary truths, including logical propositions, possess a curious kind of bipolarity. We just saw that, for us to state the necessities we wish to state with these propositions, we would have to "station ourselves with propositions somewhere outside logic, that is to say, outside the world" (T, 4.12), and this we are unable to do (see Russell 2001, xx). A bipolar proposition, recall, is a proposition that we can grasp from a perspective 'outside' our commitment to its truth, a perspective from which we could imagine what it would be like for that proposition to be false. When he suggests that we could only express the necessary truths of logic from a perspective outside their bounds, Wittgenstein certainly seems to be implying that the only way we could express those truths would be to express them with bipolar propositions. But since we are clearly not dealing with any *ordinary* bipolar proposition here, we are naturally inclined to conclude that we are dealing with an extraordinary bipolar proposition, a kind that describes a metaphysical, rather than an empirical, fact. With Hacker, we are inclined to say that "Wittgenstein did think, when he wrote the *Tractatus*, that there were ineffable metaphysical necessities" (Hacker 1997, 54).

Resolute readers do not claim that their orthodox opponents *explicitly* claim that assertions of necessity are a species of bipolar proposition. The claim, instead, is that orthodox readers speak about the saying/showing distinction in ways that betray that those readers are, at least implicitly, committed to this presumption. Consider the following reflection on saying and showing from G.E.M. Anscombe.

> [A]n important part is played in the *Tractatus* by the things which, though they cannot be 'said' as yet 'shown' or 'displayed.' That is to say: it would be right to call them 'true' if, per

impossible, they could be said; in fact they cannot be called true, since they cannot be said, but 'can be shewn,' or 'are exhibited,' in the propositions saying the various things that can be said.' (Anscombe 1959, 162; cf., Diamond 2000, 158)

Notice the assumption: when Anscombe says that these propositions can't be called 'true,' she assumes that the only kind of truth they could possess would be the truth they would have if they could be *said*. We know that the Tractarian concept of 'saying' applies only to the expressive powers of bipolar propositions. Anscombe is assuming, then, that the only kind of truth that could be possessed by an expression of necessity would be a showable but unsayable *bipolar* kind of truth.

This presupposition is more evident in David Pears than it is in Anscombe. Pears submits that Wittgenstein's "leading idea was that we can see further than we can say. We can see all the way to the edge of language, but the most distant things that we can see cannot be expressed in sentences because they are the preconditions of saying anything" (Pears 1987, 146-47). Insofar as they express truths, the assertions of necessity in the *Tractatus* presuppose that we can gain a glimpse *beyond* the terrain of possibilities that these necessities are supposed to circumscribe. We imagine ourselves looking down upon the order of what *can* be thought, viewing it in relief against an illogical order of things that *can't* be thought, just as we might look down upon a bounded geographical territory and view it in relief against a neighbouring territory (see Conant and Diamond 2004, 51). Less metaphorically, we imagine that we can envision both the conditions under which logical propositions would be true, and the conditions under which they would be false. One the one hand, we imagine a world whose inherent logical form is perfectly isomorphic with the logic of our language and in which, happily, the propositions of logic turn out to be true. On the other hand, we imagine that the world is in some way or other illogical: it is structured by some other logic, or none at all, and our logical propositions turn out to be false. From this perspective, we imagine that our rational grasp of a necessary truth is a matter of recognizing that the former sort of scenario obtains, rather than the latter which, we tell ourselves, *cannot* obtain. In doing so, we are trying to gesture at an 'illogical thought'– a thought of what, by our own lights, cannot be thought because the logical truths whose necessity we are trying to assert block our way from thinking it. "The truth is that we could not *say* what an 'illogical' world would look like" (T, 3.031). Though our understanding of this illogical world can't be *said*, it can be shown in our understanding of logical necessity, in our understanding that those (illogical) states of affairs cannot obtain, and that those (illogical) thoughts cannot be thought. It is in this way that the orthodox reader seems to be attributing a certain

bipolarity to Tractarian statements of necessity. In a helpful comparison, Conant submits that this orthodox take on the saying /showing distinction comes

> very close to Descartes' idea that we can apprehend what we cannot comprehend: we can apprehend what we cannot say by grasping what is meant by a piece of nonsense [….] The central feature of the Cartesian picture persists [in the orthodox *Tractatus*]: because of the logical structure of our thought there is something we *cannot* do. We cannot think against the grain of logic. When we try, we come out with bits of nonsense. But these bits of nonsense are, nonetheless, useful; they can convey the unsayable thing our words were after but could not reach. (Conant 1991a, 152)

Wittgenstein told von Ficker that the key to the *Tractatus* was to be found in the book's forward and conclusion. In the forward, we are told that the above, 'irresolute' way of thinking about the saying-showing distinction is a confusion. "[I]n order to be able to draw a limit to thought, we should have to find both sides of the limit thinkable (i.e., we should have to be able to think what cannot be thought)" (T, 9). Hence, when we try to draw a limit to thought, we go beyond the limit and come out with nonsense. The lesson is repeated when Wittgenstein speaks about 'the world,' not as the totality of all existing facts (T, 1.1.), but as the totality of all logical possibilities.

> Logic pervades the world: the limits of the world are also its limits. / So we cannot say in logic, 'The world has this in it, and this, but not that.' / For that would appear to presuppose that we were excluding particular possibilities, and this cannot be the case, since it would require that logic should go beyond the limits of the world; for only in that way could it view those limits from the other side as well. (T, 5.61; cf., CVR, 22)

We can see then, how we arrive at the idea that propositions that attempt to limn the necessary structures of mind and world can easily seem to be a curious species of bipolar proposition. For Wittgenstein, to grasp this sort of bipolar proposition, we need incoherently to help ourselves to a grasp of what those metaphysical necessities are supposed to rule out as things that *cannot* be grasped. This strong uses of the *a priori* 'cannot' is, strictly speaking, nonsense, for it means that these statements of metaphysical necessity presuppose a grasp of how the world would be if those necessities did not obtain. But since these necessities are *ex hypothesi* necessary for all thinking, we can form no such idea of what the world would be like under this condition.

4.8. Resolution *contra* Metaphysical Realism

The troubled impression that the ineffable truths of the *Tractatus* possess a kind of bipolarity involves a correspondingly troubled thinking about the *reality* of the necessary structures that these truths are supposed to describe. This realism amounts to the idea that the atemporal reality of logic, and of the objects that constitute it (T, 2.023), are conceptually and ontologically independent of the temporal practice of language in which logic is expressed. Here we are speaking about the sort of thing that later Wittgenstein would deride as "some non-spatial, atemporal non-entity" (PI, 52) which, nevertheless, "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)" (PI, §97). Objects, and therefore the logic they constitute, are not temporal, for they are not subject to change. "Objects are what is unalterable and subsistent; their configuration is what is change and unstable" (T, 2.0271).

Pears writes: "In the *Tractatus* the beginning of language is the naming of objects. Objects are set in a fixed grid of possible states of affairs, which is in no way dependent on any contribution made by our minds" (Pears 1987, 9). Accordingly, on this view, "the *Tractatus* is basically realistic in the following sense: language enjoys certain options in the surface, but deeper down it is founded on the intrinsic nature of objects, which is not our creation but is set over against it in mysterious independence" (Pears 1987, 8). Marie McGinn elaborates on the view helpfully:

> A name's possibilities for combining with other names to form propositions must mirror the intrinsic possibilities of the object for combining with other objects in states of affairs. Thus, the logical structure of language is imposed on it from outside, 'by the ultimate structure of reality' (Pears 1987, 27). It is in virtue of this isomorphism between the logical structure of language and the independently constituted structure of reality that the connection between language and the world is made; the isomorphism explains language's ability to represent the world. (McGinn 2006, 3-4)[76]

The orthodox view that logic is a metaphysical structure of reality might seem odd. After all, we have been told that logical propositions *say* nothing, that they are *senseless* and, hence, lack content (T,

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[76] Cora Diamond offers another helpful summary of the sort of orthodoxy that Pears has just described.

> Here is the view. / Among the kinds of things there are, are concepts and objects. That something – say, the number four – is an object, is why it is appropriate for a term to have the logical character of a proper name; [...] *that* something is a concept is why it is appropriate for a term for it to have the logical character of a predicate [...]. Our linguistic expressions thus properly have a character which matches the independently fixed logical character of the things they stand for. The logical character of those things is prior, and belongs to them on their own; and we can in the use we fix for our signs get it right or wrong. (Diamond 1991, 128)

For similar characterizations of this realism, see Goldfarb 1997, 60, 64-65, Sullivan 2002, 47, and Kremer 2001, 53- 52.

6.111). Indeed, resolute readers point out that one tension in the orthodox view is that it jars with this aspect of the *Tractatus*. As Conant and Diamond put it, the orthodox idea is that Tractarian 'showing' is a mysterious kind of *communication,* but this leads to a problem:

> [I]f showing is a kind of communication, then there is a kind of content that is showable, and logical truths (if they are able to show) must partake of such content. [...] [T]his would undo what Wittgenstein thought he had accomplished by making clear that logic has no content – that a proposition of logic is *sinnlos* and that 'theories that make a proposition of logic appear contentful [*gehaltvoll*] must be false' (T, 6.111). (Conant and Diamond 2004, 55, n. 24)

The orthodox brand of realism comes to the idea that logical truths, like other kinds of necessary truths, *do* have content, namely a metaphysical content that we only grasp from an imagined perspective beyond logic's bounds. From the standpoint of orthodox realism, then, the view is this: in those moments when Wittgenstein said that the truths of logic are contentless, he was merely saying what, 'strictly speaking,' could be said about these truths, and was passing over the more profound truth in silence. That deeper truth is that there is indeed content to logical propositions, not the empirical content of a proposition about the contingent order of things, but the metaphysical content that is the world's necessary logical structure.

Metaphysical realism presents us with a particular way of thinking about the sense in which logic 'transcends' the linguistic understanding of the world that logic makes possible. Let us call it *metaphysical transcendence*. What is the cash value of this way of thinking about logic's transcendence? What does it amount to, concretely? We can answer the question by exploring two conceptual roles that logic can play in this orthodox-metaphysical picture. Metaphysically construed, a language-transcendent logic can both *explain* language and *justify* it.

4.8.1. Metaphysical Realism and Explanation

To appreciate the explanatory function of this realism, we need to bear in mind the difference between language and logic in the Tractarian picture. What post-Tracatrian Wittgenstein says about the essential temporality of language reflects a view that he already held in the *Tractatus*, even on the orthodox accounts. "What we understand by the word 'language' unwinds in physical time" (PR, VII- §69). We've seen that the proposition is a kind of *fact* (T, 2.141, 3.14), just like the empirical facts that the proposition can be used to picture. Since facts belong to the temporal order of "what is changing and unstable" (T, 2.0272), language, and the propositions that constitute language, are

also temporal. When we talk about *language* "[w]e're talking about the spatial and temporal phenomenon of language, not about some non-spatial, atemporal non-entity" (PI, 52). On the other hand, in the illusion of the recollective *Tractatus,* when we talk about logic, and the objects that constitute logic, we are speaking of something purely atemporal and hence, unlike the empirical world, immutable. Another aspect of such a logic is not ontological, but epistemological: we can know it with a kind of absolute, metaphysical, certainty: From the Tractarian, metaphysical, perspective

> 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. But this order, it seems, must be *utterly simple*. It is before 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; cf., PI, §89)

The illusion here, as I put it, is that atemporal logic is *metaphysically* transcendent to the temporal practice of language. How so? Because the illusion is that we can grasp logic from God's all-seeing, all-knowing, perspective. Echoing Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein is suggesting that grasping logic with any such certainty means grasping it as something sublimely set apart from the mundane world of language, time, and change.

Since, on this view, the atemporal reality of logic can be conceptually and ontologically cleaved from its temporal expression in language – since on this view logic is metaphysically transcendent to language – logic can provide us with a semi-causal, metaphysical, explanation of why language has the structure it has. However, resolute readers might point out, there is a problem with the notion of such explanation. The only evidence we have of an extra-linguistic logic is that which we gain through our discursive experience of things. But if this is the case, the orthodox realist's reference to the real logical order of things can no more explain the structure of our language than Molière's doctor's reference to opium's unseen 'dormitive power' can explain why the drug puts us to sleep (see Nietzsche 2003, I-§11). As an explanation, this gets us nowhere because saying that opium has an unseen dormitive power is just another way of saying that opium puts us to sleep – the content of the one proposition is identical to the content of the other and, so, can't explain it. If atemporal logic were *metaphysically* transcendent to the temporal phenomena of language, then we could explain language the way that Molière's doctor tried to explain the effects of opium. On the resolute reading, this is just the kind of failed explanation that orthodox readers find in the Tractarian transcendental account of how logic makes language possible.

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4.8.2. Metaphysical Realism and Justification

Just as a metaphysically transcendent logic could explain language, so too could it justify language. If this metaphysical realism were correct, the logical aspects of our time-bound linguistic practices could be epistemically grounded in 'facts' about the language-transcendent nature of logic itself. These would be those same facts about the logical structure of the world that Pears invoked in his earlier, semi-casual, explanatory thesis about why language has the logical structure it has. Put differently, if we could conceive of logic as something metaphysically transcendent to linguistic practice, our rational intuitions of this logic 'in itself,' shorn of all the temporal flesh of language, could provide some independent epistemic support for the logical ordering that is manifest *in* that temporal language. Just as it is in the nature of an explanation that the explanans is logically independent of the explanandum, it is in the nature of a justification that the considerations adduced as justification be logically independent of the considerations they are supposed to justify.

The effort to justify logic comes to grief for reasons we saw Wittgenstein articulate in Chapter Two, and reasons we also considered from another angle when discussing Kierkegaard's insistence upon the essential temporality of the human understanding. Once more: such justification would presuppose that we could grasp logic as if from a perspective outside the inherently temporal, linguistic, perspective we have. Only if we could eschew our finite, temporally, and linguistically structured, understanding of the world could we 1) grasp logic in its independence from language, 2) grasp that logic is mirrored in our temporal linguistic practices, and 3) thereby provide ourselves with a justification for those practices. Resolute readers see orthodox readers as assuming that the saying/showing distinction is Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* is an attempt to do exactly this, exactly what he says we cannot do: eschew our finitude and grasp the world from the perspective of God. For resolute readers, orthodox Wittgenstein does, implicitly, try to grasp the world from such a perspective; it is just that what he grasps from that perspective cannot be said. The resolute reader aligns Wittgenstein with Kierkegaard and regards him as urging us to resist this desire to be God altogether.

4.8.3. Injustice to the Orthodoxy?

As I have presented it, the resolute readers' interpretation of their opponents might well seem unfair. Resolute readers view orthodox readers as treating necessary truths, including logical truths, as a species of bipolar proposition. Some orthodox readers insist, however, that the metaphysical

realism they find in the *Tractatus* treats the propositions of logic in no such way; it does *not* presuppose that we can imagine what it would be like if the propositions of logic were false.

H.O. Mounce is one reader who denies both that the orthodox reading presupposes any such outside perspective on language, and that any such outside perspective is necessary for a genuinely realistic understanding of logic. In other words, Mounce grants that to the resolute reader that we cannot ground language upon logic by holding logic in the one hand, language in the other, and verifying that the one truly corresponds to the other. But, for Mounce, our inability to ground language in this way undermines neither "'the idea of an external standpoint on discourse' [nor] 'the idea that our discursive practices depend for their integrity on the existence of features of reality that transcend them and determine their correctness'" (Mounce 2005, 104).[77] What it shows, instead, is that such a standpoint cannot be occupied *by us* and, hence, that our belief that the logic of language is grounded in an extra-linguistic logic cannot be justified by us either. As Mounce puts it, the resolute reader presumes that "language cannot be grounded in the world unless it is we ourselves who ground it" (Mounce, 2005, 105). But to dismiss the idea that the logic of language corresponds to a real logical order on the meagre ground that *we* cannot justify that belief "is an evident variation on the idea that man is the measure of all things" (Mounce 2005, 105). Mounce is turning the tables on the resolute reader and suggesting that it is *he*, the resolute reader, who attributes to Wittgenstein a philosophy predicated on a veiled desire to be God

From what Mounce has said so far, it seems to me that he is on solid ground in this objection to resolution. Moreover, for all he has said so far, Mounce's view is in keeping with the sort of Kierkegaardian realism we are after. That realism, recall, was bound to an epistemology according to which Abraham cannot offer an *epistemic*, third-personally intelligible, justification for his belief in a God who could call off the sacrifice of Isaac. However, nothing in our analysis of Kierkegaard rules out that Abraham could be justified in believing in such a God by *faith*. Indeed, C. Stephan Evans offers that this seems to be exactly what Kierkegaard is suggesting when he writes that the knight of faith is justified not by any easy agreement between his belief and established epistemic norms, but '[b]y virtue of the absurd" (FT, 49), "by virtue of the fact that for God all things are possible" (FT, 46). Kierkegaard has a "non-evidentialist," or "externalist" view of faith according to which "[b]elief in God can and should be properly basic, rather than something that is derived from arguments or proofs" (Evans 2006b, 17). This is not to abandon the belief that one can be justified in matters of faith; it is to say that one's justification in such matters does not consist

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[77] Mounce is quoting from Crary 2001, 258.

in one's being able to provide straightforward, directly communicable, reasons that would pass muster by the standards of an epistemic language-game intelligible to all. One example of such justification by faith is Abraham; another is the man of Williams' example, who was justified in saving his wife from drowning, even though he was unable, morally and psychologically, to offer internalist, epistemic, justifications for doing so. His justification was not *evidentialist*, or *internalist*, in this sense. When it comes to justification by faith, the reasons in virtue of which we are justified are 'external' to the domain of reasons that could justify our belief in these easy third-person terms. Not all justification is internalist/evidentialist justification, or, as I am putting it, not all justification is *epistemic*.[78]

In Chapter Two, we saw Wittgenstein suggest that beliefs that don't meet the internalist standard of justification are not 'justified' at all. However, nothing in these earlier remarks undermines the idea that these beliefs are justified by an externalist's conception of justification and, I submit, Wittgenstein would have put his point more clearly had he chosen the terminology that I have chosen, and simply said that justification, in these cases, can have an externalist character. We will return to these considerations when we return to discussing Wittgenstein's later work. For the moment, I submit that resolute readers can and should claim that, when it comes to logical commitments, Wittgenstein repudiates epistemic justification and embraces a conception of justification by faith. Such a view of justification would be paired with a genuine realism of the kind we are after, for it would allow for belief in a logical order that transcends everything that could be expressed using the immanent conventions of language.

We saw Mounce rebuke the resolute reader for implying that, for Wittgenstein, "language cannot be grounded in the world unless it is we ourselves who ground it" (Mounce, 2005, 105). Here Mounce *seems* to be urging the resolute reader to an externalist view of justification of the kind that I have proposed. The trouble with Mounce's critique is that this is *not*, in fact, the sort of thing that he actually has in mind. When Mounce claims that we have a right to be realists about logical truth even though we can't 'ground,' or justify, our logical beliefs, he is really only claiming that justification, here, is not the specific sort of epistemic justification we can have when it comes to empirical

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[78] I am aware that many externalists would reject this identification of epistemic justification with internalism (see Goldman 1979). Typically, externalists deny that internalism has a monopoly on epistemic justification in the way that my terminology suggests that it does, and they hold that epistemic justification is externalist in nature. For my purposes, it seems easiest to give the internalists the monopoly they want on epistemic justification and to say that externalist justification is a matter of justification by faith.

propositions. Instead, for Mounce, the propositions of logic have a kind of *transcendental* justification, which is, however, *epistemic* (*internalist*, *evidentialist*) for all that. He offers us the following illustration of "a profound connection between the *Tractatus* and the greatest works in the classical tradition" (Mounce 2005, 111):

> For example, in Plato the Forms are the symbol for the objective order. We know the Forms are real not because we can prove it but because they are the condition for our proving anything at all. But then, by that very token, whenever we prove anything at all, we show the reality of the Forms. Similarly in the *Tractatus* we show the reality of logic in whatever we say about the world. (Mounce 2005, 111-12).

Elsewhere, Mounce describes the point in terms of a contrast between transcendence and immanence: "Wittgenstein's point was conveyed in classical philosophy through an analogy with light. Light transcends our seeing, since it is never an object of sight. Nevertheless its existence is manifest in our seeing, for without it we can see nothing at all" (Mounce 2001, 188). This is an *epistemic* justification. To put the point in Kierkegaard's terms, it is the sort of thing that one might say when trying 'directly' to communicate the truth of a proposition or, in this case, a set of propositions, the propositions of logic. The claim has been that orthodox metaphysical realism about logic follows immediately from the finding that we cannot *but* parse the world in terms of the logic that is shown in our extant linguistic practices. For Mounce, such realism does not require the illicit travels beyond the bounds of sense that resolute readers think it requires.

In Section 4.7.1, I described three presuppositions that resolute readers find in the orthodox reading of the *Tractatus*. My claim was only that resolute readers believe that these presumptions are *implicitly* at work in orthodox interpretations. This is important to bear in mind when it comes to the third presumption I mentioned, the presumption that necessary truths, including logical truths, are in some round-about way a species of bipolar proposition. Mounce has denied that his realism is predicated upon any such presumption. How then, by resolute lights, is he supposed to be implicitly committed to that presumption after all? How is it that Mounce is supposed to be trying to take up an outside perspective on logic despite his protestations that he is making no such attempt? Our Kierkegaardian approach to the resolute *Tractatus* sheds light upon the question. From that perspective, Mounce places both himself and his interlocutor outside the fold of logic by the very act of trying directly to *argue* himself and his interlocutor into a fidelity to logic's norms.

Recall, in Chapter Two, we saw that the danger of the direct approach is that one's interlocutor can become more encouraged in his illusion, and will fail to enter into an appropriately

committed relationship with the truth. This was one problem with presenting philosophical truths as directly communicable *doctrines*. I argued that for Wittgenstein as much as for Kierkegaard, the direct presentation of a philosophical truth deprives the pupil of the opportunity to appropriate that truth autonomously. Thereby, I argued, we deny the pupil the chance to find the sort of existential significance in the truth that he needs to find if he is to be resolutely bound to the truth in the way that Alcibiades is not. We saw that, for both Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein, this resoluteness is a matter of coming to recognize that a certain truth of grammar is indubitable; that it is *certain*.

This discussion of grammar and epistemology in Chapter Two dovetails with what we are finding in the resolute *Tractatus*. If the philosopher tries to communicate the necessary truths of logic as a body of doctrine – if he tries to communicate them directly – he undermines his own effort and deprives the pupil of the opportunity to relate to those truths as genuinely *necessary*. The pupil will relate to them in the way that the man whose marriage judge William describes as a mere "civil arrangement" (EO II: 23), or a marriage of "common sense" (EO, II: 28) relates to his belief that he is married. He will regard the truths of logic as a web of beliefs that are merely *contingently* true, as beliefs that are true *for now*, but which could become false *in time*, for he thinks he can imagine what their being false would be like. The man is irresolute, recall, for one cannot both meaningfully say that one is 'married' unless one relates to one's marriage as the *eternal* structure of one's life. We saw that such a relation involves manifesting one's conjugal love *in* the way one lives out the marital virtues, rather than relating to it from the outside as a 'representation,' understood in relief against the possibility of divorce. The man whose marriage is a mere common sense civil arrangement regards his marital commitment as a merely contingent fact and thereby fails to grasp the eternal character of conjugal love. Mounce nicely describes how, in parallel form, we fail to grasp the necessary and timeless nature of logical truth when we try to grasp it as the content of a metaphysical *doctrine*.

> For Wittgenstein there is truth in all the great metaphysical doctrines. For they reveal the conditions which are not contingent or accidental, the permanent conditions of our existence, without which nothing that is contingent or accidental could ever have been expressed. But they are misbegotten when expressed as a doctrine, since in that form they have the effect of turning what is permanent into what is contingent or accidental, thereby falsifying themselves. (Mounce 1997, 2)

From the resolute and Kierkegaardian perspective, it is ironic that Mounce should so nicely express the problem with regarding logic as 'a body of doctrine' (T, 3), for Mounce himself ends up

presenting logic in just this doctrinal way. Mounce has not appreciated how deep Wittgenstein's criticism of 'metaphysical doctrines' runs. As a result, he ends up attributing to Wittgenstein just the kind of doctrine that Wittgenstein rejects. To make sure that the problem clear, let us describe it once again from another angle.

Trying to grasp an eternal truth as contingent is an obvious non-starter. We saw this not only in Kierkegaard's discussion of common sense marriage but also in his rejection of the natural-historical, empirical account of the eternal truth of Christianity. Marriage and Christianity are *necessary* structures of a person's being, and this necessity directly ruled-out by any attempt to grasp these structures as merely contingent. The problem with trying to grasp the eternal truths of logic as the content of a metaphysical doctrine lands us in the same problem but by a more indirect route. Such doctrines are supposed to communicate the necessary, liminal, structures of linguistic life. But when the need to recognize those limits is directly communicated – when we are not left to experience that need on our own, autonomously working through all the conceptual and existential hurdles along the way – we remain, like Alcibiades, an outsider to the world that those limits circumscribe, rather than as a reader resolutely at home within their bounds. Concretely and existentially speaking, we saw such missteps in the examples, in both Kierkegaard and Bernard Williams, of persons who try to entertain thoughts of things that lie beyond the limits of their moral world; thoughts of things they 'cannot' do given the ethical rules that regulate their lives. Kierkegaard suggested that we are led into the illusion of such thoughts when the *necessity* of following those moral rules is directly communicated to us, rather than something we come to accept through autonomous hermeneutic work. Wittgenstein evidentially concurs: "When an ethical law of the form, 'Thou shalt ...' is laid down, one's first thought is, 'And what if I do not do it?'" (T, 6.422). We will take a closer look at Wittgenstein's ethical thought in Chapter Six. For the moment, I only want to suggest that the connection between direct communication, irresolution, and ethical norms is duplicated in the connection between direct communication and logical norms and that *this* is the feature of the resolute reading that Mounce overlooks. A direct argument that the necessary truth of logical propositions *must* be acknowledged leaves us inclined to relate to such propositions as merely contingent, bipolar, truths. It moves us to regard a logical proposition as a "picture of reality" (T, 4.01) where, as we have seen, "a picture represents its subject from a position outside it" (T, 2.173).

The *Tractatus* itself, of course, is full of transcendental arguments of the kind which Mounce takes to heart. A resolute reader need not deny this. The point is that, on the resolute reading, the *Tractatus* uses such transcendental arguments to *show* us that they are ineffective, and they show us

that they are ineffective because they place us outside the fold of logic itself in the way I have described. Once the *Tractatus* has done its work, we no longer relate to logic as something in need of any kind of epistemic justification at all, nor as something that can be communicated to others as such. By trying to offer a positive rationale for logical norms, Mounce *ipso facto* represents logic as a structure of prohibitions that *cannot* rationally be violated. He claims that logic can be represented in these terms without at the same time representing the linguistic agent as a subject somehow outside logic. But the Kierkegaardian psychological and existential insight has been that this is not so. When logic is represented as a coercive code of prohibitions, we find ourselves in the position of Alcibiades, resentfully refusing to accept the conclusions being foist upon us. At best, we relate to logic irresolutely, proclaiming its necessity on the one hand, but always with a wandering eye, preoccupied with doing the things that we take logic to prohibit as things that cannot be done. In this sense, we actually relate to logic as something contingent.

The sort of resentment at issue here easily comes to mind if we consider, for a moment, another possible character: the resentfully married person. Such a person conceives of his marriage as a prohibition on his freedom that bars him from extra-marital romantic encounters, encounters which he imagines to himself as things that 'cannot' be done. On Judge Williams' understanding of marriage, such a character would be as irresolute as he is resentful, for one cannot both be married, in the full sense of the world, and permit oneself to fantasize about certain things that 'cannot' be done given one's marital commitment. We saw in the last chapter that the genuinely, resolutely, married man has no thought of infidelity – he does not even much as allow himself imaginatively to explore the idea of extra-marital romantic adventures. For the resolutely married man, infidelity has no intelligible place within the limits of his moral-marital world, not even as a thought that 'cannot' be thought.

The path to irresolution isn't necessarily paved with resentment. Kierkegaard's insight in the last chapter was that marital love would also be marred by irresolution if one retained, not a resentful, desire for romantic adventures outside the marriage, but a *neurotic* need to justify one's flagging belief that one is genuinely in love. Recall, this sort to justification involves demonstrating to oneself or others that the kinds of facts that would prove that one was *not* in love do not obtain. (Perhaps he reminds himself that he does not fantasize about women other than his wife). Here too, however, we saw that we make the fatal misstep of permitting ourselves to enter imaginatively into the idea of scenarios that place us outside the fold of a properly, resolutely, trusting love. One the one hand, we have a resentful desire to escape from the marital commitment into thoughts of things

that the resolutely married person does not think; on the other hand, we have neurotic desire to reinforce our belief in our marriage with justifications that the resolutely married person does not need. The neurotic in our example does need them, however, because he is destabilized by thoughts of what 'cannot' be done or, as in our example, by thoughts that he cannot think. He is distracted by such thoughts not out of a desire to enjoy them, but out of fear that they might storm the gates of his moral-marital consciousness and corrupt his relationship with his wife. Motivated by this fear, he has a desire to justify to himself or to his wife that *those* thoughts are thoughts that he cannot permit himself to enjoy. In both cases, whether from resentment or neurosis, we have fallen outside ourselves as persons bound in conjugal love to another, and we have fallen into that condition that Judge William called 'perdition.' Marriage, properly and resolutely understood, cannot be understood in relief against some order of things that the married person cannot do.

The *Tractatus* allows us to indulge this same state of irresolution not merely in our understanding of marriage, but in our understanding of logic (and ethics, as we will see in Chapter Six). In the marriage example, perdition amounts to a resentful or neurotic misunderstanding of marriage, and to a state of alienation from one's own condition of being married. In the *Tractatus*, perdition amounts to a resentful or neurotic misunderstanding of logic, and to a state of alienation from one's own finitude as a speaker of language incapable of grasping the world from a perspective outside the logic that structures one's linguistic life.

We are dealing here with another version of the paradox of the irresolute human being, desirous of being the God he knows he is not. Such a human being often conceives of himself in opposition to a power to which he both feels entitled and, at the same time, which he construes as a power of which he has been unfairly deprived. This power, namely, would be the power to eschew the finitude that marks his situatedness in language so as to grasp language's limits from the perspective of one unconstrained by those limits and able to envision, darkly, certain *ill*ogical possibilities that logic rules out. Our sense of entitlement to this perspective, and our sense of having been deprived of it, would amount to a sense of indignation that we are not God, that we are creatures and not the creator. Mulhall gestures in the direction of these ideas when he describes how the resolute approach would apply to the condition of the human speaker in Wittgenstein's later work, where the limits of logic are construed as the rules of grammar. A resolute reading, Mulhall writes, "will, in short, see the primary task of the later philosophy as a matter of identifying and attempting to overcome our sense that grammar is a limitation on our capacities for speech and thought – that it deprives us of something. It will, in effect, amount to the same project of

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acknowledging (as opposed to despairing of, or resenting, or denying) our finitude that resolute readers find always already at work in the *Tractatus*" (Mulhall 2007, 10). The strategy of the *Tractatus* has been to offer just the kind of transcendental argument for the necessity of logic and its norms that Mounce has described, but this is only the opening gambit in an argument whose conclusions we are left to draw for ourselves. The conclusion comes when we notice that the epistemic relationship with logic brought about by such transcendental arguments amounts to a state of what Kierkegaard called 'perdition,' and ultimately needs to be thrown away as the mere illusion of a relationship, just as the neurotic who tries to argue himself or others into the commitment of marriage is arguing for a mere illusion of marriage.

The first trouble with Mounce's brand of orthodoxy, then, is that it fails to recognize how the author of the *Tractatus* felt he needed to communicate the genuine necessity of logic. There is also a second trouble with the sort of realism that Mounce seems to attribute to Wittgenstein. If we take the transcendental elements of Mounce's view at face value, it would seem that Mounce finds in the *Tractatus* a recollective view of logic. If that is so, however, Mounce's metaphysical realism about logic turns out to be recollective *anti*-realism in the end.

4.8.4. How Metaphysical Realism Becomes Anti-realism

From the Kierkegaardian perspective, the recollective tendency in the orthodox *Tractatus* means that even the above metaphysical realism amounts to a form of anti-realism, namely, recollective anti-realism. To construe logic as something metaphysically transcendent to language is to construe it as a regulative structure that licenses us to say that certain things cannot be done with words. To construe logic in this way, however, is to construe it as within the ambit of recollection. Recollection assimilates possibility to foreseeability, makes the human being the measure of meaning and truth, and amounts to a kind of anti-realism.

In the last chapter's discussion of Kierkegaard, we saw that the illusion of a God's-eye perspective has two components. The first was the illusion about ourselves; it was the illusion that an essentially temporal, linguistic, mind can ascend, intellectually, to such a perspective. The second was an illusion about the nature of that which we are supposedly able to grasp from that perspective. In Kierkegaard, this is, most fundamentally, the meaning of human life, the meaning (the grammar) of 'Christianity.' In Wittgenstein, so far, we have been trying to grasp the logic of our language. In both cases – Wittgenstein and Kierkegaard – we mistake ourselves for God, and we mistake the

object of our attention for a frozen, purely eternal, totality rather than a living order essentially inherent in the temporal order of things it structures.

We can helpfully recast the illusion in the language of transcendence and immanence. When we conceptualize logic as metaphysically transcendent to the finite subject's temporal and linguistic understanding of things, the transcendent is, paradoxically, rendered something metaphysically immanent to the subject. We saw one consequence of this in Kierkegaard's analysis of Plato: if we cleave to the idea that truth is purely eternal, we conclude by saying that the subject, as soul, is purely eternal as well, and denying the essential temporality of the human understanding. For Kierkegaard, Kant and Hegel end up facing the same fate.

How might we work toward a more compelling realism where logic is transcendent to the temporal phenomenon of language, but not *metaphysically* transcendent? I provided a sketch of this view in Chapter One, when I described the kind of realism that we will find in Kierkegaard's thinking of remembrance as repetition. Kierkegaard will construe transcendence in terms of possibilities that altogether outstrip the stock of possibilities already immanent in human thought and, hence, possibilities altogether beyond the reach of human foresight. My claim will be that this is, in fact, the kind if realism we find in the resolute *Tractatus*. It must be admitted, however, that the resolute reader's criticisms of orthodox metaphysical realism certainly seem to forget the need of realism altogether, and leave us with nothing but anti-realism in its place.

Cora Diamond raises our suspicions in this regard. She writes that the *Tractatus* "is not a view about what there is, external to language or thought" (Diamond 1991, 18-19). She claims that the conditions of sense are "internal to the character of language as language" (ibid., 19), and she claims that articulating those conditions of sense "does not involve what is unsayably the case outside language" (ibid.). There are, she writes, no "ontological categories, objectively fixed and independent of language, which the logical syntax of language is then required to mirror" (ibid., 194). In what is probably her most quoted statement of this apparent anti-realism, she submits that clinging to the metaphysical realism of orthodoxy is 'chickening out.'

> One thing which according to the *Tractatus* shows itself but cannot be expressed in language is what Wittgenstein speaks of as the logical form of reality. So it looks as if there is this whatever-it-is, the logical form of reality, some essential feature of reality, which reality has all right, but which we cannot say or think it has. What exactly is supposed to be left of that, after we have thrown away the ladder? Are we going to keep the idea that there is something or other in reality that we gesture at, however badly, when we speak of 'the logical form of

reality?, so that it, what we were gesturing at, is there but cannot be expressed in words? / That is what I want to call chickening out. What counts as not chickening out is then this, roughly, to throw the ladder away is, among other things, to throw away in the end the attempt to take seriously the language of 'features of reality'. To read Wittgenstein himself as not chickening out is to say that it is not, not really, his view that there are features of reality that cannot be put into words but show themselves. What *is* his view is that that way of talking may be useful or even for a time essential, but it is in the end to be let go of and honestly taken to be a real nonsense, plain nonsense, which we are not in the end to think of as corresponding to an ineffable truth. (Diamond 1991, 181)

Since the resolute reader rejects metaphysical realism, we might naturally assume that he takes Wittgenstein at his word when, in the *Tractatus*, he tells us that logical truths are purely contentless (T, 6.111). We've seen that orthodox realists take this claim to mean that logical propositions are contentless 'strictly speaking' but, less strictly speaking, they grant that these propositions have a metaphysical content that can be shown but not said. If Diamond were an anti-realist, she would simply have us drop the idea that there is any shown content here and accept that logical propositions *are* contentless, full stop. Diamond and Conant can certainly seem to be going this route when they write, of orthodox metaphysical realism, that "[t]his would undo what Wittgenstein thought he had accomplished by making clear that logic has no content" (Conant and Diamond 2004, 55 n. 24).

In Chapter One, we saw that H. O. Mounce is worried about this kind of anti-realism in the resolute approach. For the resolute Wittgenstein, he suggested, "logical necessity reflects the rules for our use of words. In short, it belongs to our methods of representing the world, not to the world itself" (Mounce 2005, 110). On Mounce's reading, the resolute approach aligns Wittgenstein with "the sophists and skeptics, who argued that the measure of things is in the human will as it expresses itself through the individual, social consensus or the conventions of language" (ibid., 103). It was this primacy of the human will, for Mounce, that placed resolute Wittgenstein in the dubious company of "Nietzscheans, Deconstructionalists [*sic*], Neo-Pragmatists and Heideggereans [*sic*], [who] all argue, though in various ways, that objective order is a delusion and that man is the measure of all things" (ibid., 104).

I sympathize with Mounce's worry about anti-realism in the resolute reading. Given the resolute reader's antipathy for metaphysical realism and his apparent enthusiasm for anti-realism, it is natural to assume that he would reduce the laws of logic to mere contentless linguistic

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conventions in the way Mounce thinks he does. I think we have here, in other words, a serious criticism of the resolute approach, and one for which I hope to provide a resolute response in the coming chapters. Before doing so, however, I want to put Mounce's worry in sharper terms.

As it stands, Mounce's charge of resolute anti-realism is ambiguous. On the one hand, if his objection is to the idea that logical propositions are contentless, the objection can be read as a worry about a kind of recollective anti-realism. We have seen different versions of recollective anti-realism in Plato, Kant, and Hegel. We will see that another version of this view can be found in the post-Kantian thought of the Viennese logical positivists, and it will be this brand of the recollective anti-realism that Mounce can be read as attributing to resolute readers. On the other hand, when Mounce aligns the resolute Wittgenstein with Derrida, Heidegger, and others, his objection can be read as a worry about recreative anti-realism. This, recall, was that repudiation of recollective philosophy whose extreme manifestations were the existentialist and the reflective aesthete, both of whom want to regard meaning and truth not as something we need to remember, but as something we need to re-create. We will see that Viennese positivism contains an element of just this recreative kind of anti-realism, just as it contains an element of recollective anti-realism.

In what remains of this chapter, I make two arguments. First, if Mounce is concerned that the resolute reader goes in for an anti-realism of the kind we find in Viennese positivism, his claim needs to be qualified. There is an element of recreative anti-realism in the positivist model, and one that we ought genuinely to worry about creeping into the resolute view as well. Thus, if Mounce is worried about recreative anti-realism in the resolute reading, his worry is fair. However, as I've just written, the positivist model of anti-realism also harbours a recollective tendency, and this the resolute reader abjures. Thus, if Mounce is worried about recollective anti-realism in the resolute reading, he worry is off the mark. Second, it will be precisely the resolute reader's rejection of recollection that can seem to burden the resolute account with an anti-realism of the even more radically recreative kind that we saw in existentialism and in the reflective aesthetic life.

4.9. Resolution as Recollective Anti-realism?

The later Wittgenstein reflects on the illusion of logic that he presented in the *Tractatus*. Tractarian logic "is prior to all experience, must run through all experience; no empirical cloudiness or uncertainty may attach to it [....] (*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* 5.5563)" (PI, §97). As in Kierkegaard, the metaphysical illusion that we can grasp logic as something purely transcendent to time and language is bound to a metaphysical kind of certainty, in the Tractarian case, a certainty about what

uses of words logic will and will not permit. When the *Tractatus* asserts that logic is contentless (T, 4.461), the book can easily be read as a recipe for securing this *a priori* certainty without the metaphysics that we find in orthodox metaphysical realism. The book inspired just this sort of view in anti-metaphysical philosophers associated with the Vienna Circle, for instance, A. J. Ayer. He wrote: "The principles of logic and mathematics are true, universally, simply because we never allow them to be anything else. And the reason for this is what we cannot abandon them without contradicting ourselves, without sinning against the rules which govern the use of language" (Ayer 2001, 71). If the truth of a logical proposition consists in *our* refusal to use words in ways that would be at odds with the rules, then logical propositions register, not facts about the world, but facts about us, specifically, "our determination to use words in a certain fashion" (Ayer 2001, 71). Ayer's opinion that talk of 'truth' is out of line here comes out when he applies his view to the propositions of geometry:

> We see now that the axioms of geometry are simply definitions, and that the theorems of a geometry are simply the logical consequences of these definitions. A geometry is not in itself about physical space; in itself it cannot be said to be 'about' anything. But we can use geometry to reason about physical space. [...] There is no sense, therefore, in asking which of the various geometries known to us are false and which are true. (Ayer 2001, 78)

A Kantian position would have it that logical propositions can't come out false because they express universal structures of the mind, or because they are analytic, and so have to do with the containment of concepts. But why couldn't we say that a logical proposition could be false on Ayer's account? Why couldn't we say, for example, that it could be false that all bachelors are men? We couldn't say so because any occasion where we are inclined to say that we have encountered a non-male bachelor would be an occasion where we have changed the meaning of 'bachelor' and started talking about something else entirely. If ever we are inclined to think we have encountered a non-male bachelor, we will not have met an exception to the heretofore necessary truth that all bachelors are male; we will have introduced a new, non-standard, meaning for the term 'bachelor' and simply changed the subject. The necessary truth remains intact because it invokes the word 'bachelor' in the old sense of the term, and it will remain necessary even if we decide no longer it use the term with that meaning. Even a tautology that falls into disuse never becomes false. And so too for all other necessary truths.

> We cannot deny them without infringing the conventions which are presupposed by our very denial, and so falling into self-contradiction. And this is the sole ground of their

necessity [....] It is perfectly conceivable that we should have employed different linguistic conventions from those which we actually do employ. But whatever these conventions might be, the tautologies in which we recorded them would always be necessary. For any denial of them would be self-stultifying. (Ayer 2001, 80-81)

The notion that our conventions are contingent, combined with the idea that there is nothing more than such contingent conventions to necessary truth, suggests an element of recreative anti-realism. For Ayer, one can't ask whether our linguistic conventions are true to an extra-linguistic order of things. "What one can ask is which of them is more useful on any given occasion" (Ayer 2001, 78). Though we are forced to acknowledge certain necessary truths once certain conventions are in place, a worrisome subjectivism looms here because it seems that the choice of linguistic rules is entirely up to us. We should ask: how general is this thesis supposed to be? Are we supposed to be able to drop our commitment to any rules of language? Is it being presupposed here that we could drop our commitment to the law of the excluded middle? If we are resolute readers, we will not want to say that this is something that we *cannot* do, but surely we will be overstating the case if we swing to the opposite extreme and assert that it is something that we *can* do. If this is something Ayer would be prepared to say, he is elevating the human will beyond its proper dignity, and flirting with recreative anti-realism. And if the resolute Wittgenstein held an anti-realism of this same kind, then we can see good reason for Mounce's worry that resolution makes man the measure of all things in the manner of the recreative anti-realists. The concern is that the resolute reader leaves himself open to just this kind of reading.

A comparison to the last chapter's Kierkegaardian reflections will help me make my worry here more clear. One way of taking the resolute reader's aversion to saying that anything *can't* be done is as the assertion that we *could* simply stop using even the most central necessary truths of logic and mathematics if we so wished. From this perspective, the resolute reading would have us throw away the earlier talk about "the nature of the natural and inevitable signs" (T, 6.1124) that express certain universal rules of logic. This would be to suggest that we could resolve our philosophical problems by simply recreating language so that it no longer contains these rules. But is it so evident that *any* of the rules of language can be dropped at whim? If Mounce's reading of Wittgenstein is correct, 'the natural and inevitable signs' code for rules that are not so obviously dispensed with. Again, we don't want to say with Mounce that these rules *cannot* be dropped, but neither does it seem warranted to presume in advance that they can be.

Neither should we assume that all non-logical concepts can be simply dropped at will. Wittgenstein writes:

> Life can educate one to a belief in God. And *experiences* too are what bring this about; but I don't meant visions and other forms of sense experience which show us the 'existence of this being,' but e.g., sufferings of various sorts. These neither show us God in the way a sense impression shows us an object nor do they give rise to *conjectures* about him. Experiences, thoughts, – life can force this concept upon us. So perhaps it is similar to the concept of 'Object.' (CV, 86)

Even if, in some abstract sense, one could simply banish the concept of 'God' to the dustbin of forgetfulness, it may be that a concept of this kind could have played so important a role in one's linguistic history that it cannot be *really, effectively,* banished from linguistic memory any more than the existentialist could realistically banish from memory all thought of a failed fundamental project. Some concepts, like some projects, can surely be forgotten. But is it not obvious that all can, and one reason for this is that some concepts play an essential structural role in the narrative integrity of our lives.[79] The danger of Ayer's positivism is that its recreative tendency flirts with a sweeping linguistic revisionism that overlooks the necessity that some concepts play in holding together the narrative integrity of our linguistic lives.

If, like Ayer's positivism, the resolute reading makes our logical commitments a subjectivist matter of free choice, then it too will border on the more incoherent forms of recreative anti-realism. The comparison between resolution and positivism on this particular point is fair, worrisome, and we will consider it from closer up later in this chapter. For the moment, however, I want to note the following: there is a sense in which this comparison of resolute Wittgenstein to positivism could also be unfair and misleading. Though it contains the above recreative tendency the threat of which genuinely looms in the resolute reading, there is also a recollective tendency in

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[79] Charles Taylor makes the point in his case against reductive, scientistic, accounts the human being that would try to dispense with the concept of human freedom.

> Proponents of a reductive theory may congratulate themselves on explanations which do without [certain] terms current in ordinary life e.g., 'freedom' and 'dignity'[...] [But] what does this prove if I am unable to do without it as a term in my deliberations about what to do, how to behave, how to treat people, my questions about whom I admire, with whom I feel affinity, and the like? / But what does it mean 'not to be able' to do without a term in, say, my deliberations about what to do? I mean that this term is indispensable to (what appears to me now to be) the clearest, most insightful statement of the issues before me. If I were denied this term, I wouldn't be able to deliberate as effectively, to focus the issue properly, as, indeed, I may feel (and we frequently do) that I was less capable of doing in the past, before I acquired this term [....] My point is that this kind of indispensability of a term can't just be declared to be irrelevant to the project to do without that term in an explanatory reduction. (Taylor 1989, 57)

Ayer's kind of anti-realism, and the resolute reader certainly cannot be aligned with positivism on this score. In this respect, I now want to show, the comparison between resolution and positivism is misleading.

4.9.1. Positivism's Recollection

In Chapter Three, we saw that Kant rejects a moral theology that would try to discern truths transcendent to the limits of human reason. He rejects metaphysics as a 'science of the transcendent' as well.[80] But Kant did not use the term 'metaphysics' in this pejorative sense only; he also uses the term to refer to his own critical enterprise of trying to determine those limits of human reason without going beyond them.[81] Though Kant's metaphysics was meant to stay within the limits of experience that pre-critical metaphysics breached, for Kierkegaard, it was still a metaphysic worthy of suspicion. Its suspicious quality lay not in any aspiration to secure knowledge of anything metaphysically transcendent to the limits of finite thought but, in part, in its ambition to offer a final, complete, articulation of those limits. C. Stephen Evans writes that metaphysics of this critical kind of which Kant himself approved "presumes to be *absolute knowledge* or claims some other kind of grand epistemological status because it promises a kind of certainty and finality" (Evans 2006b, 49). Kant's own terminology, then, permits us to say that his aspiration to finality and completeness is 'metaphysical' in the sense that Kierkegaard has found in the recollective tradition, including in the works of Kant and Hegel. As Gordon Baker observes, we see a rejection of this second, post-Kantian kind of 'metaphysics' not only in Kierkegaard but Wittgenstein's later work as well. "Wittgenstein suggested that statements with 'must' and 'cannot' constitute dogmas or prejudices. Their presence is diagnostic of what he called the metaphysical use of words" (Baker 2006, 244; cf., BB, 130, 137, 35; PI, § 116).

By this post-Kantian understanding of 'metaphysics,' even the ostensibly anti-metaphysical positivism of Ayer is metaphysical, for here a philosophical view can be metaphysical even if it does not intend to look for the source of its sought-after completeness and finality in any language-transcendent structures of the world. Neither does the Kant-inspired definition require that

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[80] Kant's target here was 'transcendental realism' which sought to account for the reality of the mind-independent world by speculating beyond the limits of human reason that Kant's own transcendental philosophy sought to discern and respect. It was with this sense of 'metaphysics' in mind that Kant told us "all metaphysicians are therefore solemnly and legally suspended from their occupations" (Kant, 1950 p. 25) and declared that "there is, as yet, no such thing as metaphysics" (ibid., 4-5).

[81] As C. Stephen Evans puts it, for Kant, "at times metaphysics seems to be an enterprise that *they* (the metaphysicians) try to carry out, but at other times Kant seems to see his own critical inquiry as a kind of science that is perhaps to be the new metaphysics, the successor science to the failed, transcendent kind of metaphysics" (Evans 2006b, 52).

'metaphysical' truths be ahistorical, for we can imagine that a given truth is ineluctably certain even if we grant that it is a historical achievement. We saw that, in Hegel, even historically emergent truths can be regarded as perfectly certain. Once they have been put in place by history, a recollection of these truths will be as much an infallible testament to its own future truth as any truth written into the recollecting Socratic soul. Now, a positivist like Ayer holds that these truths are only true by convention, that they are thoroughly historical, that they are not transcendent to language, and that they can be abandoned for pragmatic reasons if we like. But still, in the post-Kantian use of the term, statements of these rules are metaphysical because they are supposed to be unassailably true in a strict, definitional, sense that is supposed to provide us with what Oskari Kuusela calls 'once-and-for-all' answers to philosophical questions (Kuusella 2008, 48; cf., PI §23). Kuusela highlights how even the purely linguistic account of once-and-for-all answers that we find in the positivists encodes the troubled understanding of 'essence' critiqued in Wittgenstein's later work, and which I am associating with the metaphysics of recollection:

> Notably, once-and-for-all answers of this type may be conceived as relative to particular languages and need not involve 'an absolutist view of essences' in which essences and concepts are conceived as something ahistorical or transhistorical. 'Once and for all,' that is to say, may be taken to mean merely 'once and for all in the context of a particular language' or 'once and for all insofar as we mean by the concept what it normally means,' and so on. A once-and-for-all answer need not make a stronger claim than this [.…] A statement, that is to say, is universal insofar as it covers all cases falling under a concept, although the concept may be conceived as historically contingent. (Kuusela 2008, 296, n.101)[82]

If Kant and Plato endorse the ahistorical sort of recollection, Ayer can be said to come closer to recollection of the more historical, Hegelian, kind. Ayer's strong use of the logical 'cannot' presumes to 'fly ahead' (PI, §188) of linguistic practice and say categorically what a given rule of language will and will not permit. Accordingly, though Ayer would be happy to grant that the conventional rules of language are contingent and historically conditioned, I submit that his view is also bound to a recollective view of philosophy. How so? It presumes that the whole future intelligible application of language's rules must be foreseeable to the reflecting individual who calls those rules to mind. Once

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[82] Kuusela continues: "Wittgenstein's critique of universal philosophical thesis about essences […] applies whether such theses are interpreted in a strong (absolutist) sense or a weak (historically contextualized) sense" (Kuusela 2008, 296, n. 101).What Kuusela says about the later Wittgenstein goes equally for the early Wittgenstein of our strong resolute reading.

the conventions of language are fixed, uses of words that cannot be foreseen cannot be *possible*. It is this tendency to assimilate the possible to the foreseeable that I have described as the essence of recollection. If that is fair, it is recollection's attempt to measure possibility by human foresight that Cora Diamond describes as *metaphysical* here:

> It is metaphysical, I want to suggest, in holding that the logical relations of our thoughts to each other can be shown, completely shown, in an analysis of our propositions. It is metaphysical in holding that it is possible for propositions to be rewritten in such a way that these logical relations are all clearly visible, and that, by rewriting them in that way, *what* propositions our propositions are, what combinations of signs, would also be clear, as would be what all propositions have in common. This is not a view about what there is, external to language or thought, but about what they essentially are (despite appearances), and about what we can do, what it must be possible to do. The belief that there must be a certain kind of logical order in our language (the belief reflected in our seeing that order as already *there,* given the understanding we have of the signs we use (PI, §101-02): this is a belief also in what we must be able to do, given that we understand sentences and use them, where using them is saying things in determinate logical relations to each other; and these relations are what (totally laid out) shows us what sentences we use, as Russell's analysis of sentences containing definite descriptions showed us in part. (Diamond 1991, 18-19)

The illusion at issue here should be familiar. It is just the illusion that there is one and only one complete analysis of any given proposition, that we grasp that analysis insofar as we understand the proposition, that that analysis completely rules out all possible vagueness in the application of its terms, and completely alleviates the language user of all responsibility for applying terms to the world as he does. Even a self-proclaimed opponent of metaphysics like Ayer has gone in for this sort of metaphysics. As against metaphysical accounts of the sense in which logic is transcendent to language, Ayer tries to render logical truth something purely immanent to language. But his account of this immanence ends up being just as metaphysical as his opponent's account of transcendence.

4.9.2. Resolutions Weak and Strong

I have already acknowledged that Diamond and Conant present themselves as advocating a 'mild,' or 'weak,' version of the resolute reading. According to such readings, Wittgenstein had overcome his temptations toward orthodox metaphysical realism by the time he published the *Tractatus,* but he remained enchanted by the sort of metaphysical anti-realism that we have just found in Ayer's

positivism, and which we have just seen Diamond characterize. 'Strong' resolute readers, recall, hold that Wittgenstein had overcome *both* kinds of metaphysics already in the *Tractatus*. As I am framing it, that resolute position comes to this: For strong resolutists, Wittgenstein is urging us to see past a central tenet of recollection. He is dispelling our impression that philosophy can provide us with the sort of complete and final analysis that both these forms of metaphysics seek to provide. This is part and parcel with the strong resolute reader's claim that the early Wittgenstein already holds the views of the later Wittgenstein, including the contention of the rule-following considerations that the proper application of our rules cannot be foreseen (PI, §188, §125).

Strong resolutists like Rupert Read and Rob Deans urge us to question the goal of a complete and final understanding of language or its sentences: "how would we ever know we had done that, or even what it means?" (Deans and Read 2011, 154; cf., PI, §88). Similarly, they urge us to question the whole idea that, for the early Wittgenstein, there is "something that could usefully be called *the* logic of our language" (Deans and Read 2011, 157). Read and Deans are echoing Juliette Floyd, who was the first explicitly to contend that it is "a great myth of twentieth-century philosophy that Wittgenstein was a logical atomist" (Floyd 1998, 85, cf. Floyd 2007, 192) and that "the very idea of a canonical, correct, concept script reflective of the logical order of thinking [is] an idea Wittgenstein was trying to overcome in the *Tractatus*" (Floyd 2007, 196), alongside the whole idea of the "definiteness of sense" (Floyd 1998, 96; cf. Floyd 2007, 200). What about the notion of simple objects? Was this also just a smokescreen? Recall: "The requirement that simple signs be possible is the requirement that sense be determinate" (T, 3.23). Since the requirement of simple objects is just the ontological side of this semantic requirement for the determinacy of sense, Floyd's reading suggests that the whole doctrine of objects was also presented in the *Tractatus* only as an illusion for us to overcome. It is in this connection that Floyd reminds us of how little Wittgenstein said about the actual nature of objects. She urges us to ask: Why did Wittgenstein never specify the particular nature of objects, or even offer up any examples of what an object is?

> Is it that he was merely uninterested in the practical business of analysis (or perhaps not smart or decisive enough)? Is it because he thought it a purely empirical matter? I would say it cannot be just this. Wittgenstein was not a lazy or programmatic thinker. Nor was he ever an empiricist about matters of logic. Instead, I suggest he was trying to recast the conceptual framework, the very *Fragestellung*, within which Russell's talk of analysis could proceed. Analysis was not just an empirical or logical problem for a rainy day. (Floyd 2007, 203-04)

Floyd has left us to draw the resolute conclusion on our own: the notion of a terminal object, and the notion of the determinacy of sense to which it was bound, was always offered as a piece of elucidatory nonsense; a part of the Tractarian ladder that we are meant to kick away once we have come to find unendurable the tensions to which such pieces of nonsense give rise.

One implication of this is that language is not undergirded by an order of rules that function as prohibitions that bar us from things we absolutely cannot do with words. If we are unable to say with absolute certainty what we mean by a word – if a complete and final analysis of its meaning is not available – neither can we say which uses of that word would be incompatible with that meaning and, hence, *cannot* intelligibly be made. To abandon the idea of a final analysis is to abandon the idea that we can so fully plumb the meaning of our words as to say what *cannot* be done, with even the sort of intra-linguistic certainty we find in the anti-realistic metaphysics of Ayer. And to say that the early Wittgenstein was urging us to abandon this illusion is to say that, by the time he published the *Tractatus*, he was already urging us to resist the recollective illusion that, in Chapter One, we saw him reject in the *Investigations*.[83] If this is true, then the resolute Wittgenstein will be suspicious of recollective metaphysics in all its forms, including the anti-realistic form it takes in logical positivism. It may be unimaginable to us what a person could possibly mean if he were to say that that product of two and five might not be ten. But later Wittgenstein, and the resolute early Wittgenstein, will not presume to make himself the measure of what is possible in logic, and to proclaim in advance that such a use of words *cannot* be made. He will not say, with Ayer, that "the one explanation [of the other's claim] which would in no circumstances be adopted is that ten is not always the product of two and five" (Ayer 2001, 69).

4.9.3. Where Pure Immanence Meets Pure Transcendence

Mild resolution says that the early Wittgenstein was a genuine advocate for the sort of positivist metaphysics that we have found in Ayer. This is a curious position, for it attributes to Wittgenstein the same overly-strong use of the logical 'cannot' that we also see in sophisticated forms of orthodox metaphysical realism, such as the realism we found in Mounce. Unlike orthodox realists

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[83] The earlier-quoted crucial passage was this:

> Here I'd like to say first of all: your idea was that this *meaning the order* had in its own way already taken all those steps: that in meaning it, your mind, as it were, flew ahead and took all the steps before you physically arrived at this or that one. So you were inclined to use such expressions as 'The steps are *really* already taken, even before I take them in writing or in speech or in thought.' And it seemed as if they were in some *unique* way predetermined, anticipated – in the way that only meaning something could anticipate reality. (PI, §188)

like Pears, Hacker, and Anscombe, Mounce's Wittgenstein insists that he is *not* attempting to grasp logic from position 'beyond' the limits of language. But we have seen that Mounce's version of orthodox metaphysical realism is ultimately no different from an orthodox realism like Hacker's, for Mounce's Wittgenstein makes the same coercive use of the logical 'cannot' as Hacker's. Since mild-resolute Wittgenstein uses the logical 'cannot' in the same coercive way, shouldn't his positivist view of logic face the same fate? If the problem with Mounce's realism is that his overly strong use of the logical 'cannot' implicates him in the attempt to go beyond the limits of language, then mild resolute Wittgenstein should also find the same problem in his own disposition toward a metaphysics of the positivist's variety, for a positive metaphysics uses the logical 'cannot' in the same, overly-strong way. We can agree with Silver Bronzo that the mild resolute reading "threatens to blur the distinction between the resolute reading and the best versions of the traditional reading" (Bronzo 2012, 58). Adrian Moore and Peter Sullivan put the point in stronger terms. Moore notes that "there are ways of construing the two readings whereby […] [s]uddenly it seems that what makes the difference between [them] has the width of a knife edge" (Moore and Sullivan 2003, 180). Sullivan then adds his doubt that the difference "has *even* the width of a knife edge" (Moore and Sullivan 2003, 204). If we construe resolute Wittgenstein as succumbing to the sort of positivist metaphysics that Conant and Diamond attribute to him in their 2004 defence of mild resolution, it is not clear what, at the end of the day, is supposed to distinguish this mild version of resolute Wittgenstein from orthodox Wittgenstein. Rupert Read makes the proper assessment when he says that the mild resolute readers are "only verbally different from Wittgenstein's thoereticist readers (including under that heading such luminaries as Peter Hacker)" (Read 2006, 80). More oddly still, it not at all clear how mild resolute Wittgenstein could have failed to notice this, as Conant and Diamond would have us believe.

As I wrote in Chapter One, my own suspicion is that, in their 2004 defence of mild resolution, Conant and Diamond are misrepresenting themselves in good Wittgensteinian fashion, for the purpose of leaving us to throw away the 'mild' resolute reading, and to adopt the strong resolute reading, on our own. Certainly, in the case of Conant, it seems to me that this is the only way of accounting for an inconsistency between his 2004, with Diamond, and what he writes elsewhere. In earlier articles, Conant is clear that he regards the early Wittgenstein as already believing that the metaphysical anti-realism of a figure like Ayer (and of the mild resolute Wittgenstein!) is only nominally different from the orthodox metaphysical realism it is supposed to supplant. For convenience, Conant occasionally distinguishes between 'ineffable substantial

nonsense,' which he associates with the sort of pre-Kantian metaphysical realism we have found in the orthodox reading, and 'positivist substantial nonsense,' which he associates with the kind of post-Kantian metaphysical anti-realism that we have found in Ayer. He clarifies, however, that this distinction is only a useful heuristic which, like the propositions of the *Tractatus*, we will ultimately need to 'thrown away' as the mere illusion of a distinction. [84] In Conant's view, the earlier Wittgenstein already recognizes that the 'ineffable' nonsense of the orthodox metaphysical realist, no less than the 'positivist' nonsense of the metaphysical anti-realist who claims that logic is purely contentless, are two kinds of *substantial* nonsense. How so? Both kinds of nonsense encode the idea that logical propositions have substantive metaphysical content, that they are *truths* of the bipolar kind (Conant 2000, 176-77; 2002, 380-81). As we might put it, the positivist's anti-realist attempt to grasp logic as something metaphysically immanent to language is only nominally different than the orthodox realist's attempt to grasp logic as something metaphysically transcendent to language. Though Conant sometimes presents Wittgenstein as having overlooked this fact, elsewhere, he presents Wittgenstein as having been well aware of it.

It should be clear that one of the difficulties we have in reading the resolute approach is that it challenges us to look for 'metaphysics' in places where we would not normally be inclined to see it (see Mulhall 2007, 11). On the analysis I have just given, 'metaphysics' includes 1) the pre-Kantian sort of 'transcendental realism' that Kant critiqued, and a version of which we find in the orthodox *Tractatus* described by David Pears,[85] 2) the anti-realism we find in figures like Kant, who claim that philosophy's *a priori* certainty is grounded in features of experience that are a mere projection of ahistorical and universal features of the human mind upon the world, 3) the anti-realism of more historical thinkers like Hegel, for whom philosophy's *a priori* certainty is grounded in a historically emergent understanding of things, 4) the anti-realism we find in linguistic philosophers like Ayer, who ground philosophy's certainties in our historical and pragmatic interest in using certain linguistic conventions. Mulhall challenges Conant to answer the following question: in what sense are all these different views only nominally different from one another for the resolute Wittgenstein (ibid.)? In particular, in what sense does metaphysics of Kantian and post-Kantian kind – the kind which only aims to limn the structure of our representational scheme and which grants that the

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[84] Conant explains: "I distinguish between these two variants [of nonsense] because propositions of the substantial conception tend to present themselves as *prima facie* distinct in this respect. As we shall see, however, these variants cannot in the end be clearly distinguished from one another in the manner that I am here pretending they can be" (Conant 2000, 177 n. 14: cf., Conant 2002, 400, cf., 400 n. 76)

[85] Recall: "In the *Tractatus* the beginning of language is the naming of objects. Objects are set in a fixed grid of possible states of affairs, which is in no way dependent on any contribution made by our minds" (Pears 1987, 9).

statements that express those structures are not propositions that make any claim to truth – in what sense can *that* be a metaphysics no less 'substantial' than metaphysics of the pre-Kantian variety?[86] Our Kierkegaardian approach suggests an answer: All these views fall within a generally recollective philosophy. As such, they all imply an unreal understanding of the philosophizing subject and an unreal understanding of the truth he is supposed to grasp. Both 'positivist nonsense' and 'ineffable nonsense' arrogate to the philosopher the right to say with unimpeachable certainty what *cannot* be done in logic given our grasp of established philosophical truths. This presumes that our current understanding of established philosophical truth is an unimpeachable guide to future philosophical truth and thereby, commits the error that takes us beyond the limits of language. So long as he says of a logical rule that it cannot be broken, even the self-proclaimed anti-metaphysical positivist presumes to grasp logic as fixed, timeless totality, and to grasp it as such from a perspective out beyond the limits of that rule.

The above results permit us to draw a conclusion about the route ahead: we know that realism requires that logic is neither metaphysically transcendent to language, in the manner of orthodox metaphysical realism, nor something metaphysically immanent to language, in the style of logical positivism. Whatever such an account of logic amounts to, it will be our key to a realism with an essentially unforeseeable, non-recollective understanding of logic and philosophical truth in general. The worry about the resolute reading that we now need to consider from closer up is this: in overcoming recollective anti-realism, the resolute reading can seem to lapse into recreative anti-realism. Indeed, it can seem to lapse into an even more vicious brand of recreative anti-realism than that which we saw in the positivist notion that it is simply up to us to choose the rules by which we parse the world. On this front, as we will now see, the connection between the resolute reading and Kierkegaard can seem to exacerbate the problem.

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[86] Mulhall notes that Conant fails to say how an anti-realist account of grammar, such as that which we find in Hacker's account of Wittgenstein's later philosophy, can just be just as 'substantial' as pre-Kantian metaphysical claims.

> In my view, the specific details of James Conant's avowedly brief and highly general attempt to characterize that case in such terms seriously hinder his chances of convincing a general audience of its accuracy. For he makes it integral to his specification of a substantial reading of these remarks that it regard grammatical remarks or reminders as putative truths (whether genuinely necessary truths, or ultimately contingent ones, is then held to be a point of essential instability in the self-understanding of the substantial reader). Since, however, the mainstream commentator he specifies as paradigmatically substantial—Peter Hacker—has consistently argued that grammatical 'propositions' must be understood as a species of rule or norm, in relation to which the concept of truth is explicitly held to have no place, his argument is bound to appear to miss its central target. (Mulhall 2007, 11)

4.10. Resolution as Recreative Anti-realism?

If one begins from a certain familiar reading of Kierkegaard, it will seem odd that I propose to defend a realistic brand of the resolute reading by stressing the connection between Wittgenstein and Kierkegaard. I have offered Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism as one example of the kind of subjectivism and anti-realism that the resolute Wittgenstein opposes. But wasn't *Kierkegaard* the father of existentialism? More to the point, isn't the sort of subjectivism that I have found in Sartre's picture of how we choose our fundamental projects anticipated in Kierkegaard's accounts of the passionate, unjustified, 'leap of faith'? The fact that Kierkegaardian is opposed to the very Sartrean life of the reflective aesthete suggests that this is not Kierkegaard's view, but many have taken it to be. Indeed, for some, Kierkegaard himself is a recreative anti-realist.

Alistair MacIntyre sees just this kind of anti-realism in Kierkegaard's account of the way we choose between the so-called 'spheres of life.' MacIntyre writes that "the doctrine of *Enten-Eller* is plainly to the effect that the principles which depict the ethical way of life are to be adopted for no reason, but for a choice that lies beyond reasons, just because it is the choice of what is to count for us as a reason" (MacIntrye 1984, 41). For MacIntyre, there are no reasons for the aesthete to choose the ethical life, because the aesthete is only rationally beholden to aesthetic reasons. Similarly, there are no reasons for the ethical person to accept the religious life. On this interpretation, the criteria that determine what counts as reasonable for the Kierkegaardian agent are internal to the different spheres of life that he might choose just as, for the Sartrian existentialist, what will count as a reason is internal to the fundamental project to which one commits oneself. If this were true, it would mean that the move from the aesthetic life to the ethical life, or from the ethical life to the religious life, would amount to the very same kind of incoherent 'radical choice' that Taylor and Murdoch found in Sartre: "a wild leap of the will" (Murdoch 1999, 321). Anticipating Macintyre, Brand Blanshard considered Kierkegaard a "moral nihilist" (Blanshard 1969, 118) who strives to convey that our "clearest and surest judgments about values are worthless and it is no longer possible to hold that anything is really better than anything else" (ibid.). A similar reading moves Robert Adams to say that Kierkegaard's "conception of religion is demonic" (Adams 1977, 242). Given the prevalence of this way of reading Kierkegaard, it will strike many readers that my comparison of Wittgenstein to Kierkegaard only gives us further reason to share Mounce's worries about anti-realism and subjectivism in the ranks of resolute readers.

I think this familiar reading of Kierkegaard is mistaken and will try to show as much in Chapter Five. It must be admitted, however, that there is a fine line between the pernicious

meaning-making choices of the recreative anti-realist and the 'decision' by which a reader subjectively comes to accept the message of an indirectly-communicating text. The trouble with Mounce's orthodox realism was that, in two different ways, it did not recognize the place in the *Tractatus* for this latitude of choice. First, it did not recognize that the genuinely resolute commitment to logic comes about only when we come to relate to logic as something whose norms we ourselves have freely accepted as norms that will be rationally binding for us. The claim here was that we only properly appreciate the necessity of logic's norms when we freely and subjectivity decide to accept them. But, Mounce might well ask, how is *this* any different from that meaning-making choice by which the recreative anti-realist simply decides upon the order of meaning and truth to which he will be answerable? Isn't the resolute linguistic agent a narcissist who is only willing to acknowledge necessities that have their ground in his own will? And isn't the implied correlate of this narcissism the equally anti-realistic view that we could simply withdraw our commitment to these norms if we wish, and with rational impunity?

This first worry about this apparent recreative anti-realism concerns the nature of the free and subjective movement by which we move out of the orthodox metaphysical realist's relationship with logic and into a resolute relation. Here, the worry is that the resolute reader rejects the recollective idea that logic has a normative authority other than that which *we* grant to it in a moment of radical choice.

The second worry arises when we consider how one would relate to logic *after* one has come to think of its authority as being merely grounded in the human will in this way. We know that becoming resolute means overcoming the temptation to think of logic as a structure of rules whose prescriptions and prohibitions cannot be violated. But isn't this an elliptical way of saying that they *can* be violated? On Michael Kremer's resolute reading, "the [*Tractatus*] in fact embodies a thorough-going deconstruction of the notion of 'limits' of language, thought and world" (Kremer 2004, 64; cf., Kremer 2004, 65).[87] How are we to take this claim that the *Tractatus* "rejects as illusory the very notion of a 'limit' of language or the world" (Kremer 2004, 64). How, concretely, is the linguistic

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[87] This attack on the idea that there are any limits to language is also a constant refrain in the writings of Conant. To take one example:

> [T]he early Wittgenstein seeks to show that any theory which seeks to draw such 'a limit to thinking' commits itself, as he says at the outset of the book, to being 'able to think both sides of the limit' and hence to being 'able to think what cannot be thought.' The Tractarian attack on substantial nonsense – on the idea that we can discern the determinately unthinkable thoughts which certain pieces of nonsense are trying to say – is an attack on the coherence of any project which thus seeks to mark the bounds of sense. (2004, 184-85; cf., Conant 2005, 53; Conant 1991a, 134).

agent meant to put into practice this supposed Tractarian lesson that are no limits to what we can do in logic? On the face of it, the lesson would seem to be that, in logic, we can do whatever we want.

If the above two worries tracked the genuine position of resolute readers, the hidden message of the resolute *Tractatus* would be nothing short of what Murdoch called "Luciferian" (Murdoch 1999, 365-66, cf., 226, 358, 385). The recollective notion that there is an order of reason and truth in the world that needs to be remembered, rather than recreated, would be a noble lie set out in the text for the benefit of the simple soul. The hidden meaning, then, would be set out in the text for the Luciferian ruling class who reads the book as a call to recreate meaning according to the rulers' whims. We will see that the familiar, anti-realist, reading of Kierkegaard that we saw from MacIntrye, Blanshard and Robert Adams elides the distinction between Kierkegaard and A, his reflective-aesthetic pseudonym, in ways that later readers of Kierkegaard do not. However, once more, the worry is this: for any of us who share their widely received view of Kierkegaard, my comparison of Wittgenstein to Kierkegaard will come as only one more reason to join orthodox readers and suspect that the resolute reading involves a vicious account of the relation between the subject and logic. I want to unpack this worry by highlighting three specific places in the resolute reading where the concern about recreative subjectivism and its anti-realism can naturally arise.

First, the resolute reader's depiction of Wittgenstein's therapeutic method can leave us to worry that the interlocutor simply decides what meaning he will find in the use of words. When resolute Wittgenstein tries to help us remember the meaning of words, it can easily look like he is advocating a recreative concept of remembrance. Second, the resolute reader's depiction of how to read the *Tractatus* seems to confirm the impression that there is no objective truth about what we mean by our words at all. Here, the business of recreating the meaning of the text seems to replace the traditional aim of discovering what its meaning always was. Third, the critique, amongst resolute readers like Kremer, of the idea that there are no 'limits' to language can easily seem a licence for us to apply the established rules of language in whatever ways we wish. This would not be a recreative choice of the rules with which we will use words (the first of these three worries). Rather, this would be a matter of confusing Wittgenstein's critique of recollective realism for a licence to *apply* the rules however we wish after we have chosen them. We consider each of these potential sites of recreative subjectivism in turn.

4.10.1. Recreative Remembrance and the Therapeutic Dialogue

The early Wittgenstein agrees with Frege that the simplest meaningful parts of the proposition – the names – have no meaning apart from the contribution they make to the proposition as a whole. Rather than being an atomistic determination of sense, the meaning of an isolated word derives from the logical relations in which it stands to the other parts of the proposition in which it factors. This has consequences for the Tractarian logical analysis of language. It means that we do not arrive at a grasp of significant sentences by first determining the meaning of independently significant sub-sentential word-meanings. Instead, we arrive at the meaning of sub-sentential words by reverse engineering the complete propositional thought.[88]

We can better appreciate the Fregean context principle by considering how it manifests itself concretely in the philosopher's effort to help us remember meaning. The principle enjoins us not to assume that our interlocutor's use of a given word carries the meaning that the word normally has. Recall that, in the language of the *Tractatus,* the same perceptible sign is not always expressive of the same symbol (T, 3.1-3.11, 3.32-3.321). To illustrate with Frege's example, "[w]e must not let ourselves be deceived because language often uses the same word now as a proper name, now as a concept word […] 'Vienna' is here a concept word, like 'metropolis.' Using it in this sense, we may say: 'Trieste is no Vienna'" (Frege 1971, 17, quoted in Conant 1998, 234). When trying to determine the meaning of 'Vienna,' we do not take it as given that the word functions as a proper name in the way it usually does. We begin, instead, from the other direction, we try to take the significance of the proposition as given, and work back to a conclusion about what logical role 'Vienna' would have to be playing in order for the proposition to make sense. We find that 'Vienna,' in this context, plays the logical role of a concept word rather than that of an object word. It tells us, perhaps, that Trieste is not an especially majestic city. We find, in the end, that our interlocutor's sentence is not the nonsense that it would appear to be to the person who insists upon hearing 'Vienna' as a genuine proper name.

What is the consequence of the context principle for Wittgenstein's therapeutic method? Conant finds it in Rush Rhees' comment that Wittgenstein's aim was "to demolish […] the whole idea of philosophical discussion as a contest in which one settles who's right and who's wrong" (quoted in Conant 1995 p. 298, n. 130). How so? For the resolute reader, the key idea here is that "[w]e cannot give a sign the wrong sense" (T, 5.4732; cf., Conant 1998: 247-48). The orthodox

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[88] As Frege put it: "I do not begin with concepts and put them together to form a thought or judgment; I come by the parts of the thought by analyzing the thought" (Frege 1979, 253).

reader overlooks this insight. He begins from decisive conclusions about what his interlocutor means by his words, and he then determines that, given *those* (recognizably determinate) meanings, the interlocutor cannot combine words in the way he wishes to combine them. But as Wittgenstein puts it, "how could we ask whether THAT can be expressed which cannot be EXPRESSED?" (NB, 52). Or, as Mulhall puts it, "how can we know that [our interlocutor] cannot say or think what he wants to say or think, without knowing what exactly it is that he wants to say or think?" (Mulhall 2007, 9). Or finally, to quote Conant, what the orthodox therapeutic approach presupposes, and what we, in fact, lack, is "an account of how one can so much as recognize what it is that a piece of nonsense is even just trying to say" (Conant 1989, 247). The later Wittgenstein puts the point, not in terms of nonsense, but senselessness: "When a sentence is called senseless, it is not, as it were, its sense that is senseless" (PI, §500). When a sentence is called senseless, we are not saying that we have been able to determine its sense, and that it's sense is senseless in its context of utterance. We are saying that, since the sentence seems senseless in the context of utterance, we have not been able to determine its sense at all.

Here we can note the namesake of the 'resolute' reading. Orthodox Wittgenstein is said to adopt a vision of meaning and nonsense that amounts to an "irresolute dithering" (Diamond 1997, 79) because he accuses us of using words in a nonsensical way, but to make the accusation he needs (inconsistently) to presume some understanding of what he claims to be nonsensical. "We cannot give a sign the wrong sense" (T, 5.4732), but our reluctance to accept this leads us to think that the perplexing use of those signs *must* express the familiar meaning we expect them to express, albeit in some odd inexpressible way. We mistakenly locate the apparent problem in the sign rather than in the symbol, in the word itself rather than in the particular understanding of the word that animates our interlocutor's use. But Conant explains,

> Wittgenstein's teaching is that the problem lies not in the words, but in our confused relation to the words: in our experiencing ourselves as meaning something definite by them, yet also feeling that what we take ourselves to be meaning with the words makes no sense. We are confused about what it is we want to say and we project our confusion onto the linguistic string. Then we look at the linguistic string and imagine we discover what *it* is trying to say. We want to say to the string: 'we know what you mean, but 'it' cannot be said.' (Conant 1998, 247-48)

We have found the same kind of irresoluteness in the attempt to think of the saying/showing distinction as an attempt to picture logic with bipolar propositions, thereby implicitly helping

ourselves to a grasp of we think lies on the far side of those limits, all the while saying that *that* cannot be done.

The practical upshot of resolution is the non-adversarial therapeutic method earlier adverted to by Rhees.

> The *Tractatus* holds that we cannot take ourselves to be able to 'spot' nonsensicality in a proposition simply by noticing that a word or words in it is not used in the way it is normally used and that, as far as we can see, it has been given no other use. We cannot tell, merely from the fact that some word or words is not given the use that it normally has (or that its surface grammar suggests it ought to have), that it has been given no other use. (Conant and Diamond 2004, 76)

The Tractarian philosopher bears in mind that what at first might seem to be a nonsensical use of words might not be that at all, and for a reason that might become clear in the course of the therapeutic exchange. "This kind of demonstration involves patience and a willingness to try to understand what the person who comes out with the apparently metaphysical remarks might be trying to express" (ibid., 76-77).

The adversarial model of the therapeutic dialogue can be found in the interpretations of both Wittgenstein's early and later work. In these accounts of the therapeutic method, the philosopher emerges as the language policeman who enforces the grammatical law by impugning its violations as nonsense. Such violations go by different names in the works of Wittgenstein's different inheritors. Amongst ordinary language philosophers inspired by his later work, Gilbert Ryle called these infractions 'category errors'; amongst logical positivists inspired by his early work, Rudolph Carnap called them 'violations of logical syntax'; amongst contemporary scholars of the later work, orthodox readers like Peter Hacker and Hans-Johann Glock, describe them as 'violations of the rules of grammar' (see Read 2010, 71). As Rupert Read comments, "[t]hese philosophers have thought that Wittgenstein was *ruling out* various ways of expressing ourselves as untrue to our language; our conceptual scheme, or as incompatible with sense" (ibid., 71). Naturally, Read goes on to note, orthodox readers and the Wittgenstein for whom they claim to speak have won little favour in the eyes of philosophers who see no reason why the legitimate use of a word should be measured by its fidelity to the way the word has been used in the past.[89]

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[89] "They –rightly – refuse the right of the would-be language police […] to stop them from using words in novel ways, introducing technical distinctions that go beyond the language of the layman, and so on. And they see and hear these would-be language-police as the spokespeople or followers of Wittgenstein. And so (understandably), they (believe that they) reject Wittgenstein" (Read 2010, 71).

The resolute reader's point is not that the interlocutor cannot indeed be in the grips of nonsense; the point is not that we ought to invoke a mindless principle of charity that would require us always to interpret another person in ways that make sense of his words. The point, at least in part, is the now-familiar Kierkegaardian point that we considered in the last chapter: if the other is in the grips of an illusion, he will only overcome that illusion if he is not harangued into doing so and told that he wants to do with words something that *cannot* be done. The subject himself must be left to determine what he means by her words, and the philosopher throws up no *a priori* constraints upon his process of self-exploration. At issue is the freedom – the subjectivity– of the interlocutor: He must autonomously determine what he means by his words. We see the relevant emphasis upon subjectivity when Diamond and Conant take, for example, the way in which the therapeutic philosopher might approach the confusions of the solipsist.

> If claims made by a solipsist are nonsensical, that can be shown only through the solipsist's rejecting possible ways of using the sentences in question, and coming to see that he has no alternative use in mind, and not because there are no possible uses of the sentences in question. Neither in the later philosophy nor in the earlier philosophy is there some quickie principle that will enable us to identify a stretch of discourse as nonsensical; there is nothing that can enable us to pass such a verdict on a stretch of discourse apart from an engagement in a process of clarification in which as interlocutor comes to see *for herself* that no available use of a sentence will satisfy the 'ambition' that draws her to the form of words in question. (Conant and Diamond 2004, 76-77; cf., Diamond 2004, 47)

The stress upon subjectivity and freedom in this understanding of the Tractarian therapeutic method has much in common with Gordon Baker's views about the therapeutic method of the later work. Baker sees Wittgenstein's method as having been well-captured in the work of Frederick Waismann, for whom the task of helping a troubled person – oneself or someone else – to remember the meaning of his words is a matter of drawing a person's attention to his own linguistic *self-knowledge*.[90] Such knowledge is not a third-personal knowledge of language that holds indifferently for oneself and others, and when the philosopher reminds me of what I know but am in danger of forgetting, what he is doing is not akin to reminding me of geographical facts about our shared country. The first paragraph of the following quotation describes the view of grammatical

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[90] "In dealing with philosophical problems, the aim of the therapy is always the same. In my own case, it is to describe the grammar of *my* language; in another's case, to clarify for him the grammar of his language. As in psychotherapy, the goal is improved self-knowledge" (Baker 2006, 148).

clarification that Baker takes Wittgenstein, like Waismann, to reject. What Baker says about the latter-day method of facilitating a remembrance of grammar is, to my eye, close if not identical with the method of facilitating a remembrance of logic in the resolute *Tractatus*.

> Philosophical discussion is aimed at clarifying grammar. This is apt to suggest (to analytic philosophers) an enterprise of delineating the contours of an internal structure of a supra-personal institutionalized normative system, say on the model of writing a textbook or the English law of contract. The individual speaker might be conceived as participating in a complex practice of which he may have an imperfect understanding, and a philosopher might help to bring to his attention features previously unnoticed or to remind him of things temporarily lost from sight, just as a barrister may try to direct the attention of a judge to certain features of his case. / Waismann understood matters differently. In his view, the project of therapy is essentially one of cultivating *self*-awareness. The therapist tries to make the patient conscious of *his own* rules, of *his own* practice; especially of his own prejudices and of analogies and pictures that have 'unconsciously' guided his own thinking. The language whose grammar needs clarification is *his* language. He is to look at his own understanding of the words he uses, especially at his own preferred explanations of what they mean. He is, as it were, entangled in *his own* rules (PI, §125). Whether these are shared with others or clearly deviant in comparison with 'ordinary language' is of no interest whatsoever. (Baker 2006, 147-48)

So, too, for Wittgenstein:

> [F]ar from undertaking to give any general outline of the logical geography of our language […], [Wittgenstein] always sought to address specific philosophical problems of definite individuals and to bring to light conceptual confusions which these individuals would acknowledge as a form of entanglement in *their own rules*. (Baker 2006, 68; emphasis added)

In keeping with this attention to the subjectivity of the interlocutor, Baker's Wittgenstein, like the Wittgenstein of the resolute *Tractatus* and like Kierkegaard, thinks it inappropriate to *force* another to use words according to some particular, pre-given, linguistic regime. Once more, Baker finds Wittgenstein's understanding of the therapeutic method aptly represented in Waismann's:

> We don't force our interlocutor. We leave him free to choose, accept or reject, any way of using his words. He may depart from ordinary usage [....] He may even use an expression one time in this, another in that, way. The only thing we insist upon is that he should be aware of what *he* is doing. (Waismann 1968, 12)

Part of the claim here is unobjectionable and familiar from Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard told us that there is no 'one and only one complete analysis' for the meaning of 'Christianity,' each believer needs to be left to work out an understanding of the faith that is uniquely suitable to him. The resolute Wittgenstein is making a similar point about the meaning of words in general. There is a sense in which two people who share a language understand the same meaning just so long as they are competent to use a given word in everyday practical contexts. At the same time, however, different people also find different shades of sense in a given word, so there is a way in which they understand the meaning of particular words differently as well. This difference might be invisible at the level of everyday discourse, but it will show up when we attend to the more subtle ways in which the two parties articulate themselves. Of course, when he speaks about Wittgenstein trying to remind us of 'our own rules,' Baker is not trying to attribute to Wittgenstein the doctrine of a logically private language that Wittgenstein famously rejects (see PI, §243; cf., PI, §201). A logically private language is comprised of rules that would be in principle un-learnable by anybody but the language's user so that only the language's user can tell if he is following those rules correctly. Baker's Wittgenstein approaches his interlocutor not as the speaker of a language that he (Wittgenstein) could not learn, but as a speaker whose language he could only learn through careful attention to how that *particular* speaker is and is not prepared to use words. The therapeutic philosopher can know the public use of a word that all of us share insofar as we can use the word to communicate in everyday ways. But merely knowing the meaning of a word at this, what Heidegger would call 'levelled-down,' level of analysis tells us nothing about the meaning of a word as it enters into the narrative of a particular person's life with language.

If this much is unobjectionable, where does the worry about subjectivism arise? Our worry is about the role of subjectivity and decision on the part of the interlocutor. The worry is akin to the worry about the role of subjectivity and decision when it came to the Kierkegaardian movement across the different spheres of life. For all that has been said, an orthodox reader like Mounce might reasonably suspect that the resolute remembrance of meaning comes treacherously close to the poetic remembrance of the reflective aesthete. From this perspective, whether he is addressing the philosophical problems of himself or of others, the therapeutic Wittgensteinian philosopher urges a person to overcome his philosophical problems by availing himself of a Sartrean or reflective aesthetic freedom to simply rewrite the meaning of words in ways that prevent the problems from arising, and to do so in perfect indifference to the meaning that is manifest in thier immediate, public, and historical use.

Again, the concern is not that the resolute Wittgenstein is returning to the idea of a logically private language, for there is no suggestion here that the rules that he might decide upon can't be recognized and learned by others, and that the speaker is the sole authority on the question of whether he has followed those rules correctly. The worry is that the resolute reader says nothing to distinguish his own views about the particular subject's freedom to determine the meaning of his words from that ahistorical, asocial, and narcissistic illusion of freedom that we have found in the Sartrean existentialist, and which Kierkegaard parodies in his character of the reflective aesthete. Neither in the resolute reader's understanding of the Tractarian therapeutic method nor in Baker's very similar understanding of the therapeutic method of the later work, is there any acknowledgement of the obvious ways in which the meaning that a particular person finds in a word *is* constrained by the meaning that has animated the word's public and historical use.

The characters of the existentialist and the reflective aesthete highlight different aspects of what is objectionable here. The reflective aesthete rejects the immediate, pre-reflective, meaning of experiences and remembers those experiences in terms of a meaning of his own creation. The resolute Wittgenstein can easily seem to reject the immediate meaning of the public language into which he has been reared and which he uses pre-reflectively before his philosophical problems arise, and to remember the meaning of that language in a similarly recreative way. We saw that, for the reflective aesthete, recreative remembrance is pre-emptive: it occurs before the emergence of psycho-spiritual problems and is meant to enable a speedy resolution to any problems should they arise. The problems can be resolved because, unlike problems that emerge from an immediate meaning, problems that emerge from a recreated meaning can be forgotten, along with those meanings, at will.

In the resolute Wittgenstein, there is no suggestion of this distinctly pre-emptive use of recreative remembrance. Rather than mitigating the severity of philosophical problems before they arise by recreating the meaning of experiences in relatively harmless terms, any practice of recreative remembrance in Wittgenstein would take place only after the problems emerge. However, the fundamental difficulty with both pictures is the same: It is not at all obvious that one *can*, in good faith, be so indifferent to the 'immediate' meaning of things, especially since *that* is the meaning into which one was initially reared, and the meaning to which one had been historically committed, for better or for worse, before any willful efforts in recreation ensue. If one has always used 'bachelor' to mean 'unmarried man,' and if that understanding of its meaning has given rise to a philosophical problem, can one solve it simply *deciding* that 'bachelor' will have some new meaning that

circumvents the problem? Is one not more beholden, both logically and psychologically, to the ordinary, immediate, historical and public meaning of the term?

The point can be put differently through a comparison with Sartre. Neither in the resolute reading nor in the Bakerian reading that mirrors it, do we find any acknowledgment of the good point that Anderson made in his objection to Sartre's stoical ethic of meaning recreation. Recall those situations where Sartre's Stoical ethic comes into play. The meanings that the existentialist has freely assigned to the world cause him suffering. Perhaps he is committed to a set of meaning-determining values that cause him to experience his prison cell as an obstacle to his will. The solution was for him to abandon those values and rewrite the meaning of his experience in accord with new values, values in relation to which his prison cell would not have the significance of an obstacle. Anderson's rejoinder to Sartre, and our rejoinder to a recreative resolute Wittgenstein, is that this business of meaning-recreation is unrealistic. In a fundamental sense, the meaning we find or fail to find in our lives is not up to us, and neither is the meaning we find or fail to in our words.

We saw that the reflective aesthete assigns meanings to his projects that prevent them from becoming the all-encompassing, fundamental projects that we find in Sartre. The reflective aesthete quickly repudiates immediate meaning and replaces it with a recreated meaning that "can be forgotten when convenient [...] [and] recollected at will" (EO, I: p. 289). Through recreative remembrance, he mitigates the importance that he is naturally inclined to find in his pursuits, and this prevents those pursuits from becoming too 'fundamental' to his life. Anderson has a point when he says it is simply not true that we can recreate the meaning of experiences in total disregard for their immediate meaning in this way. But even if we could, Kierkegaard showed us an additional problem that besets this strategy: it results in a disintegrated self. The reflective aesthete is in despair because he is so busy recreating and forgetting the meaning of his experiences that no singular, integral, 'eternal' meaning pervades and unifies the events of his life in the way that the 'eternal' meaning of marriage pervades and unifies the life of Judge William.

The reflective aesthete hinted at a connection between the meaning of a life and the meaning of a word. His plight is that the different moments of his life are no more united by a singular meaning in which they all participate than are the different the homonymous uses of "the word *Schnur* in the dictionary, which means in the first place a string, in the second, a daughter-in-law" (EO, I: p. 35). "The only thing lacking," he continued, "is that the word *Schnur* should mean in the third place a camel, and the fourth, a dust-brush" (EO, I: p. 35). If resolute Wittgensteinian meaning-remembrance is a matter of recreation, no singular, integral meaning would run through

and unify our use of particular words. Judge William claimed that recreative remembrance overlooks our need to find, in the history of our lives, the manifestation of a singular human personality. So too, as we might put it, recreative remembrance in the context of Wittgensteinian therapy would overlook our need to find the manifestation of such a singular personality in the 'life' of particular words.

We've just seen Baker rightly point to the element of particularity that characterizes our relationship with the logic of our language. Each person can either look back upon his life with a given word and recognize that the different epochs of its use manifest a singular, integral meaning. Alternatively, one might look back upon his history with that word and find little more what Murdoch called "a grandiose leaping about unimpeded at important moments" (ibid., 329). When this wild leaping about takes the form that it takes in the reflective aesthetic life, we can no more find an intelligible, overarching, singular meaning in the different epochs of our use of the word than the reflective aesthetic can find an intelligible, overarching, singular meaning in the different moments of his life. The connection between the meaning of a life and the meaning of a word is more than merely analogical. Arguably, our success or failure in our efforts to find an integral meaning for our lives *just is* our success or failure to find an integral meaning in our historical uses of certain words.

If there is too much stress upon logical-grammatical constraint in the orthodox, recollective reading of the *Tractatus*, and not enough stress upon the freedom of the individual linguistic agent, in the resolute reading, it is the other way around. Indeed, the very notion of such constraint sometimes comes across as what the resolute reader most dislikes about the 'inviolability' reading of orthodox readers. Resolute readers depict the Wittgensteinian philosopher as helping the interlocutor to get clear about the meaning of terms in *his* idiolect, regardless of how widely his use of those words might deviate from their public, historically established use. And again, the worry is only exacerbated by the resolute reader's comparison of Wittgenstein to Kierkegaard, which I have taken up in this dissertation. We are concerned about the way the resolute reader envisions the freedom with which we determine the meaning of our words just as MacIntyre, Blanshard, and Adams are concerned about the way Kierkegaard envisions the freedom with which we determine the meaning of our lives. In this received reading of Kierkegaard, the knight of faith has grown so weary with recollection and its slavish devotion to the past that he grows cynical, tries to bury his past in an effort of brute forgetting, and tries to chart a virgin course into the future through ahistorcial, recreative, revolutionary action. One can hardly help but worry that the same

deracinated, revolutionary spirit has crept into the strong resolute reading of Read and Deans when they happily distinguish their view from the orthodox alternative as the difference between the 'Jacobin' and 'Girondin' interpretations (Read and Deans 2011, 149; cf., Goldfarb 2011)!

Nothing in the resolute account *entails* that a speaker's choice of words is purely determined by his own individual will, unhinged from a public and historical sense of what words mean. However, the resolute reader's stress upon attending to the particular meaning that an individual finds in his words, the resolute reader's squeamishness about accusing the other of nonsense, his silence about the way in which what we mean by our words is constrained by historically established public meaning, and his general aversion to the idea that there are logical limits to what can be intelligibly said, all leave us inclined to sympathize with Mounce and to suspect that a pernicious anti-realism is sneaking in here. Since Wittgenstein's philosophy, early and late, is a practice of remembrance, I have offered that the practice of recreative remembrance that we find in the reflective aesthete can provide us with a helpful model of the sort of anti-realism that worries Mounce. Like Kierkegaard, the resolute Wittgenstein is trying to respect an essentially subjective aspect of the meaning we find in words. This element of subjectivity, however, can easily give us the impression that we determine meaning in the manner of the reflective aesthete.

4.10.2. Recreative Remembrance and Reading the *Tractatus*

In the last section, we worried that the resolute reader seems to leave us with a revolutionary freedom to determine the meaning of words, leaving out of the account the sense in which the meaning we find in words is constrained by their unchosen, public, and historical use. The same worry arises in connection with what the resolute reader says about the freedom with which we determine the meaning of the *Tractatus*.

The resolute reader tells us that much of the *Tractatus* is nonsense and needs to be thrown away. It has been noted, however, that the resolute reader does not throw away the whole of the book. Resolute readers retain, for example, the book's lessons about the problems with trying to draw a limit to language. Thus, it has often been felt that the resolute reader owes us some principled way of distinguishing the voice of Wittgenstein, who offers us views we ought to accept, from the voices of illusion who present views we ought to resist. In their earlier writings, Conant and Diamond try to meet this need by distinguishing between the 'frame' and 'body' of the text. They suggest that we ought to accept the 'framing remarks' that Wittgenstein mentioned to von Ficker as the keys to the book's meaning: the remarks in the forward and conclusion (Diamond

2000, 158-60, 1991, 19; Conant 1991a, 159, 1995, 285).[91] The passages in the body of the book, the part between these framing remarks, are the ones we ought to jettison. A criticism of the resolute reading, however, has been that Diamond and Conant attribute to Wittgenstein some of the ideas that are articulated within the body of the text – for instance, the bipolarity principle as the defining feature of the empirical proposition.[92]

In response, Diamond and Conant have modified their view, now allowing that a resolute reader can accept as parts of the frame certain 'propositions' that occur within the body of the book (Conant and Diamond 2004, 68).[93] In this mature statement of their position, whether a proposition belongs to the frame, and hence ought to be accepted, is a matter of its functional role in the *Tractatus*, rather than its spatial location (Conant 2000, 198, n. 102).[94] Notice, however, that this amendment only returns us to the original problem. Once again, we want some principled way of telling sense from nonsense – frame from body – when we are reading the *Tractatus*, and this Conant and Diamond now refuse to provide. More to the point of our concern about subjectivism they allow that the line between sense and nonsense will differ from reader to reader. Here is Conant:

> What criteria govern whether a given remark is *Unsinn* or not? [….] [The *Tractatus* teaches that this depends on us: on our managing (or failing) to perceive [*erkennen*] a symbol in the sign. There can be no fixed answer to the question what kind of work a given remark within the text accomplishes. It will depend on the kind of sense a reader of the text will (be tempted) to make of it. (Conant 2000, 198, n. 102; cf., Conant 2002 p. 423, n. 131)

Conant's unwillingness to insist upon any particular way of delineating sense from nonsense in the *Tractatus* is in keeping with *Tractatus* itself; the work is designed to leave the reader to recognize its nonsensicality on his own. To presume to deprive the reader of this work would be antithetical to the spirit of the book which, we are finding, is written in such a way to leave the reader to determine for himself which passages he will take to heart. The result is a Kierkegaardian openness to a

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[91] Diamond 2000 was originally published in 1991, at the dawn of the resolute reading.

[92] Meredith Williams offers this objection with respect to the bipolarity principle (Williams 2004, 17-18). Ian Proops criticizes the resolute reader along similar lines. He points out that, while resolutists claim to respect only the forward and the conclusion of the book, they accept the passages in the body of text about philosophy being an activity rather than a doctrine (Proops 2001, 380-82)

[93] In their 2004, Diamond and Conant admit that the "recent explosion of work on the *Tractatus*" has moved them to "reformulate and sometimes re-think some of the details of [their] reading" (Conant and Diamond 2004, 47). The present issue of the frame and the body seems to be one such issue.

[94] "Question: What determines whether a remark belongs to the *frame* of the work (preparing the way for those remarks which do serve as elucidations) or to the (elucidatory) *body* of the text? Answer: its role within the work. The distinction between what is part of the frame and what is part of the body of the work is not, as some commentators have thought, simply a function of *where* in the work as remark occurs (say, near the beginning or the end of the book). Rather, it is a function of *how* it occurs" (Conant 2000, 198, n. 102).

plurality of possible resolute readings of the *Tractatus* just as, in the therapeutic context, there is an openness on the part of the therapeutic philosopher to various understandings of what the interlocutor's use of a word might mean. The worry is that resolute readers don't distinguish this healthy respect for the subjectivity of the reader from a kind of bald recreative subjectivism that would render the meaning of the *Tractatus* a mere projection of the person reading it.

This idea that the meaning of the *Tractatus* is somehow dependent upon the particular reader is also discernible in the strong resolute reading of Read and Deans. They write: "For us the possibility of a 'strong' resolute reading is the possibility of being able to say that Wittgenstein's writing [....] cannot stand and *dictate* anything" (Read and Deans 2011 p. 152). Again, here we have the familiar difficulty with describing the limits of the world as limits that cannot be breached, and the familiar necessity for a certain Kierkegaardian indirection. The concern, once more, is that this movement away from delimiting language in these metaphysical terms can easily be taken to suggest that, in their place, the human language user is granted some *un*limited subjectivist license to mean whatever he wants to mean by language, including the language we find in the pages of the *Tractatus*. With Conant and Diamond, Read and Deans offer that what counts as a rung of the Tractarian ladder that needs to be thrown away when reading the book "turns out to depend upon the person climbing" (ibid., 154). How is the reader of the resolute *Tractatus* any different from the reflective aesthete, who "does not enjoy the immediate, but rather something which he can arbitrarily control" (EO, I: 295)? Just as Mounce worries, the secret meaning of the resolute *Tractatus* come perilously close to that pick-and-choose subjectivism by which the reflective aesthete makes himself the measure of the meaning of a work of art by deciding which parts of the work he will take seriously, and which parts he will simply disregard. Recall his instructions: "The whole secret lies in arbitrariness [....] You go see the middle of a play, you read the third part of a book. By this means you ensure yourself a very different kind of enjoyment from that which the author has been so kind to plan for you" (EO, I: 295).

Peter Hacker called the resolute reading the 'deconstructionist" (Hacker 2000, 359) or "post-modernist interpretation" (2000, 360). Hacker said this because, in his view, the reading is guided by the policy of "disregarding what Wittgenstein actually wrote and said about what he had written" (Hacker 2000, 359, n. 22). Hacker's claim here is that the resolute reader seems to take a step in this subjectivist direction because he appears to disregard textual evidence external to the *Tractatus* that ought to be considered by any responsible interpretation of the book. We are now raising a concern about a second apparent step in this subjectivist direction. The resolute reader seems to allow that,

even when it comes to passages *internal* to the text, the individual is free to determine which passages he will consider nonsense and which he will take seriously. Ian Proops' worry about Conant and Diamond's mature understanding of the distinction between frame and body chimes naturally with the worries about the 'New Reading' that we have seen in Mounce and Hacker:

> This seems to imply that there is no fact of the matter, independent of a reader's psychological makeup, about whether a given proposition is part of the frame. But if that is so, then, since the frame is supposed to contain the instructions for reading the book, one would have supposed that there can be no answer independent of a particular reader's psychology to the question: 'how ought we to read the book'? But then is it hard to see how there can be any determinate, reader-independent, content to the New Reading. (Proops 2001, 380)

The *Tractatus'* attention to the readers' subjectivity – his freedom to arrive at a reading of the book uniquely appropriate to *him* – is difficult to distinguish from recreative subjectivism. It can seem that, for the resolute reader, there is no truth about the meaning of the *Tractatus* save for that meaning that the subject imposes upon it. Of course, this Promethean approach to the text will be just what an orthodox reader would expect of his resolute opponent. As we saw in the last subsection, Resolute readers seem to find, in the *Tractatus*, an anti-realistic view of logic and meaning general. To the orthodox eye, it will seem that the resolute reader is applying what he takes to be the *Tractatus'* recreative, anti-realist, lessons about meaning to the text of the *Tractatus* itself. It can seem, once more, that the only measure of truth in the resolute reading of the *Tractatus* is the recreative will of the remembering subject.

4.10.3. Recreative Remembrance in the Application of Rules

In the first of the above two places where we might worry about subjectivism (Sect. 4.10.1.), the interlocutor uses words in a way that seems confused to the philosopher, but this may be because the philosopher is inappropriately imposing his own understanding of certain words upon him. This picture seems to be open to a sort of subjectivism that would permit each of us to assign terms a personal meaning so that the philosopher's job is just to help us keep our own personal meanings straight. We can think of this as a kind of subjectivism in the *choice* of rules, or meanings, that one assigns to one's words. This subjectivism resembles that element of recreative subjectivism and anti-realism that we already found in Viennese positivism. If the strong resolute reader is right, then the resolute reader's stress upon subjectivity can seem to let subjectivism in the door from another

direction as well. This subjectivism would not lie in the choice of rules that we initially assign to a word, but in our choices of how we go on to *apply* those rules once we have chosen them.

One burden of the rule-following considerations is to unseat the rigid constraints on linguistic freedom that we have found in the orthodox *Tractatus*. The later Wittgenstein reminds us that the rules of language do not, in fact, divest us of the responsibility we bear for carrying on with words in the way the *Tractatus* can seem to suggest. A rule might seem to determine every step we take in applying it, but to be taken in by this appearance is to overlook that we can always apply a given rule in various ways. The proper application of rules is not determined by the rules themselves, but by *speakers* who either insist upon their previous ways of 'going on,' or who are open to a re-routing of rules toward into new avenues of application. "'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" (PI, § 219). This 'symbolical expression' of 'rules as rails' expresses a mythology of rule-following, but also a mythology of determinism, unfreedom, and irresponsibility. Wittgenstein explains, referring back to the last-quoted statement:

> My symbolical expression was really a mythological description of the use of a rule. 'The line intimates to me the way I am to go.' – But that is, of course, only a picture. And if I judged that it intimated this or that, as it were irresponsibly, I wouldn't say that I was following it like a rule. (PI, §222)

Recall, "*unambiguous* rules of inference can be distinguished from ones that are not unambiguous, I mean from such as leave an alternative open to us" (RFM, I-§119). For the strong resolute reader, the *Tractatus* is using its own internal incoherence to indicate that the book's superficial support for the mythology of the unambiguously-guiding rule is an illusion and that such alternatives *are* open to us. Our worry about a third sort of recreative subjectivism in the resolute *Tractatus* concerns the question of how the associated freedom is to be understood.

If the resolute reading is realistic, it can't be subjectivist. However, the resolute reader's apparent anti-realism, his distaste for talk about limits to what can intelligibly be said, and his stress upon subjectivity and allowing the reader to determine the meaning of words for himself, can all seem to point to subjectivism. All these views seem to betray a *recreative* subjectivism in the account of rule-following, no less than they seem to betray such a subjectivism in the account of rule-choosing. In the present context, that subjectivism would consist in the idea that the rules of language are so radically open-ended as to permit our 'going on' with words in any way we wish.

This would mean that the silent meaning of the *Tractatus* – the meaning to be conveyed only to the elect – would be something like the understanding of linguistic rules that Michael Dummett famously found in the later Wittgenstein's discussion of mathematics.

For Dummett, Wittgenstein's reflections on rule-following are supposed to usher in "a version (as we shall see, an extreme version) of constructivism" (Dummett 1959, 327) about logical necessity, which Dummett also calls *conventionalism.* This constructivism is extreme in that it goes beyond the familiar sort of constructivism espoused by the Viennese logical positivists and veers into an extreme form of what I am calling recreative anti-realism.

For the positivists, once certain rules are enshrined in linguistic conventions, certain necessary truths can be said to follow inexorably from them as their deductive entailments. The conclusions of particular logical and mathematical proofs are *indirectly* conventional because they rest on the conventions from which they necessarily follow. But they are not themselves directly established by convention (ibid., 328-29). Dummett reads Wittgenstein as going in for the more extreme view that the truth of every deduction is also itself the direct result of a convention. Where Ayer would say that the conventionally determined meanings of '5,' '7,' '+,' and '=' force us to conclude that five plus seven is twelve, Dummett reads Wittgenstein as saying that we only need draw that conclusion *if* we conventionally decide that this way of applying the rules that regulate our use of '5,' '7,' '+,' and '=' should be considered intelligible.[95] For Dummett's Wittgenstein, "the necessity of '5+7=12' consists in just this, that we do not count anything as a clash" (ibid., 329); if we come across an apparent instance where five and seven make thirteen, "we say, 'We must have miscounted'" (ibid. 329). But we *need* not say that. Our finding a move in language impermissible, given the rules that we have conventionally set up, is merely a function of our refusal to permit that move, which we could allow if we were so inclined, without going afoul of those rules.

The result of this view is a radical measure of freedom and responsibility in logical space. It is not merely that we are free to set up the rules that we then invoke in mathematical proofs, and which then set strict limits to their intelligible application that we could not rationally override. *That* would be the more moderate recreative anti-realism, a version of which we found in the logical positivism of Ayer. For Dummett's post-positivistic Wittgenstein, the rules of language are so

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[95] "Wittgenstein goes in for full blooded conventionalism; for him the logical necessity of any statement is always the *direct* expression of a linguistic convention. That a given statement is necessary consists always in our having expressly decided to treat that very statement as unassailable; it cannot rest on our having adopted certain other conventions which are found to involve our treating it so" (Dummett 1959, 329).

radically open-ended that we are free to apply them in *prima facie* unintelligible ways at each step in a mathematical proof, *even once those rules are in place*. Dummett takes this to be the consequence of Wittgenstein's rejecting the recollective idea that the future application of our words is determined by rules already laid down in thought, like "rails invisibly laid to infinity" (PI, §218).

> [W]e are free to choose to accept or reject the proof; there is nothing in our formulation of the axioms and of the rules of inference, and nothing in our minds when we accepted these before the proof was given, which of itself shows whether we shall accept the proof or not; and hence there is nothing which *forces* us to accept the proof. If we accept the proof, we confer necessity on the theorem proved; we 'put it in the achieves' and will count nothing as telling against it. In doing this we are making a new decision, and not merely making explicit a decision we had already made implicitly. (Dummett 1959, 329)

Naturally, I want to resist this reading of Wittgenstein. If the resolute reading is supposed, clandestinely, to urge its elect reader toward this unhinged kind of linguistic freedom, then it certainly is no realistic reading. In this case, the silent message of the text would be far from ethical; it would be exactly what Murdoch considers "Luciferian" (Murdoch 1999, 365-66, cf., 226, 358, 385) in the development of modern and post-modern thought. It would be a subtle attempt to illuminate, for the elect reader, the legitimacy of using fully non-rational forms of freedom to re-route the rules of language in whatever ways we wish. If this were the resolute point, then when Wittgenstein wanted to guard the 'ethical' point of the text from a mass readership, he wanted to ensure that not all of us would avail ourselves of this radical Luciferian licence. This would make for a chilling reading of the resolute Wittgenstein.

4.10.4. Philosophy's Esotericism

Murdoch finds this sort of esotericism in structuralism, which "generates the semi-secret elitist doctrine that although the average person is composed of 'codes,' there are some free clever ones who can invent language" (Murdoch 1992, 230). In this doctrine, she writes, we have "the old idea of the priestly class as an initiated few in its unattractive and dangerous modern dress" (ibid., 230).[96] Structuralism's modern philosophical esotericism is unattractive because it regards the need for

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[96] She elaborates:

> The structuralist Utopia is perhaps more cheerful than others, picturing the average man as a quiet codified fellow, perhaps even happy in his simple way, and the artists and thinkers of as an elite sporting in a *jouissance* of linguistic play, occasionally stirring up the average man a little by theatre, television or cinema. Perhaps a shadowing sketch of this state of affairs can already be seen in some of our free societies. (Murdoch 2003, 214)

individuality and freedom in language as the exclusive preserve of an intellectual elite (ibid., 216). In fact, Murdoch offers, "[e]very moral being, that is every human being, is involved in this fight, it is not reserved for philosophers, artists, and scientists. Language must not be separated from individual consciousness and treated as (for the many) a handy impersonal network and (for the few) an adventure playground" (ibid., 216).

Murdoch notes that there is a sense in which Kierkegaard opposes such elitism (ibid., 268). As we have seen, his category of the 'existing,' or 'single,' individual encompasses even the humble reader who freely, and as an individual, chooses to live out his life securely within the ambit of established grammatical norms (ibid.). Recall that one feature of the indirectly communicating text is that it leaves the humbler reader to freely embrace an interpretation of the text as the *individual* he is, without being directly admonished to this reading or that. *Fear and Trembling* exercises the individuality of even "recollection's genius" (FT, 15), the humble genius of a de Silentio who "can do nothing but bring to mind what has been done" (ibid.). Such a reader is not being duped into thinking that *all* remembrance is recollective. He recognizes that Abraham, for one, is capable of an encounter with a revealed, non-recollective truth, and he is open to the possibility that he himself might one day witness such a revelation as well (FT, 64). But de Silentio *freely*, without envy (FT, 64), and because of his deep admiration for Abraham (FT, 64), accepts that such revelations will not – at least not yet – come directly to him, but will come to him through the mediation of a person who has a closer affinity to Abraham than he himself currently has (FT, 64, 121).

Here, it seems to me, Kierkegaard has a genuine advantage over Wittgenstein. Where Kierkegaard's humble hero is aware that the third personal grammar of ethics is not the highest measure of intelligibility, it seems to me that Wittgenstein was genuinely trying to keep the simpler sort of reader in the dark about that fact. Because Wittgenstein communicates indirectly, it remains that case that his simpler reader freely accepts his humble station. However, unlike the simpler soul in Kierkegaard, the simple soul in Wittgenstein's accepts his station without recognizing that a higher station is appropriate for people more spiritually elevated than he. Be that as it may, my own worry about the resolute Wittgensteinian picture is not quite this worry that his humble reader seems to be left unaware of any distinctive role for a class of 'higher' readers. I worry that, for all we have seen, resolution seems to allow that 1) there can seem to be a kind of anti-realism and subjectivism even at the level of humble reader who agrees to think and speak in terms that have been created laid down for him by others, 2) at the level of the higher reader, this antirealism takes an especially virulent, ahistoricial, and recreative, form.

First, we have not yet seen what, if anything, distinguishes the humble reader from the sort of existentialist who decides to respect an established order of meaning and truth that he has not created, but who regards its normative authority over him as issuing entirely from his free choice to respect it. Even at the level of the humble hero, there can seem to be an element of subjectivism and anti-realism that remains to be sorted out.

Second, and more objectionable, is the idea that this order of established meanings by which the humble reader might choose to regulate his life is simply invented by a ruling class, indifferent to the sense in which the concepts of 'reality' and 'truth' properly apply in the domain of meaning. In Murdoch's view, this modern, structuralist interpretation of philosophy's esotericism is not only unattractive but dangerous, for it tries to detach considerations of meaning from considerations of truth. More pointedly, it tries to effect a divorce between the contemporary world and its past, in which any realistic, historical form of self-understanding needs to be rooted. Murdoch describes two broad contexts in which this ahistorical and anti-realistic effort to recreate meaning is liable to cause tension. First is the context of dialogue between two kinds of intellectual: ahistorical, anti-realist intellectuals and intellectuals of a more traditionally minded stripe. Second is the context of cultural interaction between ahistorical, anti-realist intellectuals and the non-intellectual public, once that public comes to see that the anti-realists have abandoned their post at the defence of truth.

> The structuralist phenomenon can [...] be seen as a recent sophisticated version of the recurrent anti-rational anti-intellectual reaction of intellectuals against what seems to them a tired old tradition, heavy with unavailing thoughts which have been worked over innumerable times: an exasperated weariness with the old metaphysical world with its continually defended systematic rationality and its ancient superannuated God and its grand self-conscious conceited art. The new anti-metaphysical metaphysics promises to unburden the intellectuals and set them free to play. Man has now 'come of age' and is strong enough to get rid of his past. Such a revolution suits the mood at a time of fast and amazing technological change. The same mood of admiration for science and disgust with the inefficiency and frivolity of humanistic ratiocination can affect both intellectuals and non-intellectuals alike. The suspicion of the latter that the former are merely playing about instead of serving society can stabilize a tyranny as well as prompting a revolution. Here the severance of meaning from truth, and language from the world can be seen, not only as

philosophically baseless and morally intolerable, but politically suicidal. (Murdoch 1992, 214)[97]

This description of these potential political consequences of an irreverent recreative philosophy reads like an account of what happens when a society is cut adrift by a philosophical master-class from the history in which their words have genuine meaning. Such a master class has become indifferent to the essential connections drawn by Judge William between meaning, truth, and history. There is a *truth* about what words mean, and we are deprived of it by any philosophical ruling class who would urge us to use words in ways uprooted from their historical sense, perhaps by assuring us that they could provide us with the 'one and only one complete analysis' of our propositions. If Judge William is right, the consequence would be the despair and disintegration of a people.[98] If Murdoch is right, politically dire implications might follow in turn.

If the esotericism of the resolute reading is supposed to function as a silent call to an intellectual elite of ahistorical, recreative, anti-realists, the view ought to worry us. Once more, however, if we accept the subjectivist reading of Kierkegaard, the Kierkegaardian interpretative approach to the resolute Wittgenstein can seem to compound our impression that the hidden truth of the resolute *Tractatus* is something Luciferian indeed. On the reading I offered in the last chapter, the resolute Wittgensteinian speaker stands to the established norms of grammar in general as Abraham stands to the established grammar of ethics. But mightn't we worry that Kierkegaard's Abraham was exactly the Luciferian we are worried about? It is in connection with this particular concern that Robert Adams voices his worry about Kierkegaard's treatment of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac. Kierkegaard can easily seem to revere the person who does "on a strenuous exertion of the will" (Adams 1977, 236) that which cannot be done on the basis of good reasons. Adams claims that part of the Kierkegaardian ideal is a willingness to part with all goods lower than our love of God,

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[97] Laurence Lampert hears Nietzsche voicing a similar concern in *Beyond Good and Evil.* If Lampert is correct in this reading, Nietzsche's concern is perhaps more pressing in our internet age of readily and rapidly available information of all kinds than it was in Nietzsche's time:

> [I]n the long history of moral lying by the 'improvers of humanity' the right to lie was understood as given. But now, perhaps, the lying ways of the wise so shake the rest of humanity that they are not able to find them believable any longer [....] The noble knower finds himself in a double bind: [...] his truths poison their recipient, while the lies he might be inclined to indulge in to avoid being poisonous have justifiably shaken the confidence of the lied to. (Lampert 2001, 141)

In his 2017 *The Death of Expertise,* Tom Nichols argues that a patently deceptive mainstream media is at least partly to blame for contemporary cynicism about formerly trusted sources of knowledge (see Nichols 2017, 213-14).

[98] Alasdair MacIntyre argues that a similar kind of spiritual crisis has resulted from our modern, deracinated, understanding of moral vocabulary. "What we possess are the fragments of a conceptual scheme, parts which now lack those contexts from which their significance derived. We possess indeed simulacra of morality, we continue to use many of the key expressions. But we have – very largely, if not entirely – lost our comprehension, both theoretical and practical, of morality" (MacIntyre 1984, 2).

including the good of having well-justified beliefs (ibid., 242). We ought to sympathize with Adams when he writes that "[s]uch a conception of religion is demonic" (ibid., 242).

My own view is that Kierkegaard is not claiming that faith-based beliefs are unjustified. He is claiming that they can only be justified by the non-epistemic reasons of faith, rather than by the epistemic reasons sought after by both the natural-historical and speculative-philosophical pursuit of 'objectively valid' truth. I will have more to say about this matter in Chapter Five, where I hope to show that Kierkegaard is no subjectivist and that neither is the Kierkegaardian resolute Wittgenstein. In fact, my suspicion is that part of the ethical challenge in reading both authors is overcoming our temptation to read them in exactly these unacceptable terms. In the final section of this chapter, I state the alternative, realistic reading of Wittgenstein that I wanted to defend in what remains of this dissertation.

4.11. Remembering the Proposition: A Proposal

4.11.1. Logic as Limit or Limitation

I have said that resolute readers invite a line of legitimate criticism when they say, with Kremer, that Wittgenstein "rejects as illusory the very notion of a 'limit' of language or the world" (Kremer 2004, 64). This is a needless provocation, however, since Wittgenstein does not, in fact, require us to abandon all talk about the limits of language. He is only against the idea that any such limits can be drawn from *outside* language, where this involves regarding logic as "excluding certain possibilities" (T, 5.61) as possibilities altogether incompatible with sense. Again, his conclusion is not we cannot draw a limit to language, but that "[i]t will [...] only be in language that the limit can be drawn, and what lies on the other side of the limit will simply be nonsense" (T, 9). With this remark in mind, we can appreciate why some resolute readers do not find in Wittgenstein the complete repudiation of all talk about the limits of language that Kremer seems to see.

For Stephen Mulhall, for example, Wittgenstein aimed only to show us that our relation to logic is a relation to the *limits,* rather than *limitations*, of sense. "[I]f the limits of sense are the limits of intelligibility, then nothing whatever lies beyond them; they are not boundaries fencing us off from a determinate or determinable region, and so not limitations on our capacity to think or speak" (Mulhall 2007, 8). The *Tractatus* is not against the idea that certain uses of words are nonsensical; it is against the idea that such uses of words "specify a thought that we cannot think – an identifiable place in the region that lies beyond the limits of sense, something that exceeds our mental grasp" (ibid, 8). To say that logical propositions express the limits of thought, but do not describe thought's

limitations, is to say that they do not describe anything like the boundary around a geographical territory of logical possibilities that neighbour some determinate neighbouring territory of alternative possibilities (see Conant and Diamond 2004, 51). As Mulhall puts it, "to acknowledge [limits] as limits rather than limitations is precisely a matter of acknowledging that there is nothing (no specifiable thing, no conceivable task or activity) that we cannot do" (Mulhall 2007, 8).

I will side with Mulhall and his use of terminology: Wittgenstein is not an opponent of limits, but an opponent of our temptation to grasp limits as if from outside their bounds, as limitations. In adopting this view, however, it is incumbent upon me clearly to distinguish this legitimate way of speaking about the limits of language from its various illegitimate look-alikes. What does it mean, concretely, to relate to logical truths as limits, but not limitations, of our world? More pointedly, is it possible for us to regard the 'propositions' describing these limits as genuine, contentful, propositions that describe a genuinely language-transcendent logic? I think it is. To conclude this chapter, I describe one step toward the sort of realism I have in mind.

4.11.2. The Ambiguous 'Proposition'

In the last chapter, I said that the anti-realism of recollective remembrance and the anti-realism of recreative remembrance share a preoccupation with foresight. Both presume that willful acts remembrance can put us in position to foresee all philosophical truth. In recollective remembrance, the subject gains this foresight into future philosophical truth by willfully unearthing truths already buried in human consciousness. In recreative remembrance, the subject gains this foresight by willfully inventing the truths which he then projects upon future linguistic experience. In neither case do we have a deep realism anchored in an appreciation of truths that might be essentially unforeseeable for us – essentially inaccessible to efforts of the human will. Such a realism would overcome both the recollective tendency that resolute readers find in the orthodox approach, and overcome the recreative tendency that orthodox readers like Mounce, Hacker, and Proops find in resolution. What might such a *via media* look like? We set out toward an answer to the question by beginning from that strange ambiguity in Wittgenstein's use of the term 'proposition.'

We have seen that the *Tractatus* presents us with two mutually incoherent (because ultimately indistinguishable) metaphysical theses. The first is that logical propositions describe a logical structure metaphysically transcendent to language. The second is the post-Kantian thesis that logical propositions are purely contentless (because purely invulnerable), projections of the human mind or human language upon the world. The reader is left to decide on his own if he is willing and able to

regard the propositions of logic as *genuine* propositions. With this ambiguity in mind, we can return to what, arguably, is a dimension of ethical interest in this ambiguous use of the term 'proposition' [*Satz*] in the *Tractatus*. The indiscriminate use of the word to range over both empirical and logical propositions is interesting because we can see in it the possibility of what Kierkegaard has called 'double reflection.'

As Danielle Moyal-Sharrock notes, in German, the term *Satz* can be taking to mean simply 'sentence' – a written or verbalized linguistic string that is itself neither true nor false. Alternatively, '*Satz*' can mean what we more typically mean by 'proposition': the abstract entity which is expressed by a sentence and which indeed makes a substantive claim about the world that is either true or false (Moyal-Sharrock 2004, 34). If we interpret Wittgenstein's talk about logical 'propositions' as meaning logical *sentences*, that talk will not suggest that logical propositions have genuine content, and a positivistic reading of the *Tractatus* will seem perfectly appropriate. The contentless formalisms of Viennese positivism are not genuine *propositions*, but they are genuine *sentences*. If we are inclined to this reading, when Wittgenstein writes of logical propositions being 'true' (T, 6.125), we will interpret him as speaking about the merely contentless, analytic, sense of 'true.' The question is: might Wittgenstein's use of 'proposition' have been *intentionally* ambiguous? And might he have been urging us to resolve the ambiguity in one way rather than another?

G.E. Moore informs us that the ambiguity in Wittgenstein's use of the word 'proposition' was preserved in his later-day Cambridge lectures, given in English.[99] The fact that the German 'Satz' can mean both 'proposition' and 'sentence' might partly explain Wittgenstein's odd English usage, but it remains strange that Wittgenstein should preserve this ambiguity by shifting seamlessly between the two English terms whose distinct philosophical meanings he would surely have been well-aware of. Might there have been a deeper reason for Wittgenstein's doing so? Might Wittgenstein have been preserving the ambiguity in order to leave his reader to determine, on his own, whether logical propositions are a) merely contentless 'sentences' b) metaphysical propositions that were in some strange sense bipolar, and whose content could only be grasped if we abandon our habitation in logic or c) some third kind of proposition – that is to say, some third kind of *genuine* truth – whose content is not to be thought of within the terms of the dichotomy set out by anti-realist positivism (a) and realist metaphysics (b)? And might such an intention also be at work in the dual use of the term 'proposition' in the *Tractatus*? I want to suggest as much.

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[99] Moore reports: "[Wittgenstein] seemed to me often to use the words 'proposition' and 'sentence' as if they meant the same, perhaps because the German word 'Satz' may be properly used for either; and therefore often talked as if sentences could be true" (PO, 61).

I propose that resolute readers can and should grant to their orthodox confreres that logical propositions can be understood as 'genuine' propositions, but contend that they are propostions of the above third kind. These propositions do have content; they aspire to express a truth about an eternal logic, irreducible to the temporal use of words. However, the 'truth' at issue here is not the content of a *bipolar* proposition. This is to say, most fundamentally, that a proper understanding of logic goes hand-in-glove with abandoning the presumption that human logical foresight is the measure of logical possibility. Logical propositions have content because, like bipolar propositions, *the world* could give the lie to those propositions. Our logical expectations could be upturned though logically unforeseeable developments of sense, and, in this regard, we might come to find that our logical propositions did not express the eternal reality of logic we thought they expressed. If we have granted that even our analytic truths could turn out to have been misguided – if we have granted that the world can thwart those purported truths – then, I am offering, we have granted that they have *content*. We have granted that they are, for all intents and purposes, genuine propositions.

Even into his later work, Wittgenstein held that "a proposition is whatever can be true or false" (PI, §136), and saying *that* requires that the proposition says something about *the world*. A genuine proposition, unlike an empty analytic truth, says: "'This is how things are'" (ibid.). My proposal is that, by this standard, logical propositions are genuine propositions. However, they are not *bipolar* propositions because there is no presumption here that we can specify in advance the conditions under which we would count those propositions mistaken, nor are we assuming in advance that there is any sense at all to be made of such conditions. Perhaps there isn't any. We are unable to peer past the limits of sense expressed by a purportedly analytic truth – 'All men are mortal,' 'All triangles have three sides,' or whatever – so as to grasp, on its far side as it were, the state of things that might move us to recognize that the propositions in question had failed faithfully to express the logical limits of our world. To use the terminology introduced earlier, on this proposal logical propositions will not be bipolar because they do not meet what I earlier called the *epistemic* condition of the bipolarity principle (see Sect. 4.5): we do not know in advance what it would mean for them to turn out to be false.

Of course, the kind of error in I have in mind here – the sense in which logical proposition might turn out to be 'false'– will be very different from the kind of error and the kind of falsity we can make in our empirical judgments. The question for my proposal, of course, is this: What do we mean by 'error' in this strange context, where the propositions in question are logical, and the possibility of being wrong seems fully incoherent? A comment from *On Certainty* is *apropos*:

Could we imagine a man who keeps in making mistakes where we regard a mistake as ruled out?, and in fact never encounter one? / But what is his relation to this error? What am I to suppose? (OC, §67) / The question is: what is the logician to say here? (OC, §68)

Error in logic will not involve our finding certain 'analytic truths' fully intelligible but noticing that they don't describe anything in the world. It will, instead, be a matter of our coming to recognize that those analytic truths are meaningless, that they fail to express the rules of language that they are supposed to express. By the same token, I have been stressing that truth in logic can't be understood on the model of empirical truth. Before coming back to my effort to sketch a realist account of logical propositions, we need to take a moment more to consider why we can't regard logical propositions as descriptions of contingent empirical facts any more than we can regard them as descriptions of necessary metaphysical structures of the world.

If we desist in our metaphysical inclination to say that we *cannot* do what contravenes logic, we will be inclined to say that we *can* do such things. The danger in this inclination is that we can easily misunderstand the nature of this 'can' and, at the same time, the nature of logic itself. If we resist the inclination to regard logic as an order of fixed metaphysical necessities from which we can read off the whole future of linguistic practice, the temptation will be great to make the error of regarding logic itself as kind of contingent, empirical, fact. Psychologistic versions of this error consider logical propositions as descriptions of 'laws of thought,' facts about the contingent psychology of human minds, and related biological and evolutionary facts about the human body, its natural environment, and its life interests. Other versions of the view might account for the contingency of logic in terms of socio-cultural practices, or the conventional use of words. But all such empirical accounts of the contingency of logic are ruled out by Wittgenstein's rejection of any such empiricism.

Consider, for example, Wittgenstein's objection to the claim that "God could create anything except what would be contrary to the laws of logic" (T, 3.031). His objection is not that God could indeed create something contrary to the laws of logic. Such a claim would be premature, for it is not clear what such a 'could' would mean. The 'could' would not have an empirical sense, for saying that the truths of logic are empirical contingencies would be no less confused than the assertion that they are metaphysical necessities. As we have seen, one requirement for intelligibly claiming that a proposition expresses an empirical contingency is that we be able to specify in advance conditions under which we would count that proposition false. Thus, to intelligibly assert that the laws of logic *could* be different from what we take them to be, we would have to be able to describe those possible

differences. In fact, however, "we could not say what an illogical world would look like" (T, 3.031). If he has an *empirical* contingency in mind, the person who claims that the laws of logic are 'contingent' presumes to usurp the perspective of God, the metaphysical perspective, beyond the space of what is intelligible to us and from which sublime thought could grasp what we find ungraspable. This returns us to Wittgenstein's question: If, as I am claiming, a realistic thinking of logic should regard logical propositions as genuine propositions, and if any genuine proposition needs to be such that it could turn out to have been in error, how are we to understand this possibility of error? How, to repeat, are we to respond to the recollective metaphysician who claims that 'God *could not* create anything except what would be contrary to the laws of logic'? (T, 3.031) if not by responding with the equally troubled *empirical* claim that God could indeed do so?

Here we come to what, in his later work, Wittgenstein would call the 'great difficulty' or what I am also calling 'the problem of alternative grammars.' On a strong resolute reading, the later Wittgenstein's views are a crucial source of illumination when it comes to reading the early work, and that is particularly true when it comes to the question of 'alternative grammars' that we are broaching here.

4.12. The Problem of Alternative Grammars

Alternative grammars are grammars still unimaginable for us; grammars which, if we were to encounter them, we would need to abandon our logical propositions as having been mistaken. How can we express the possibility of alternative grammars given that such new iterations of grammar will be inexpressible from the perspective of the grammar that we actually have? How, in other words, can we use the grammar that we have to express the possibilities of still unintelligible, unforeseeable grammars to come? How can we avoid such an effort veering into the attempt to *view* the limits of language as a set of metaphysically substantive limitations that close us off from an order of things we cannot do, and which we pretend to grasp from outside their bounds, like a kind of object amongst other objects in our field of vision? Wittgenstein himself offers no clear answer:

> 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 looks like. (PI, §374)

This 'great difficulty' besets any understanding of remembrance as repetition. When we attempt to characterize remembrance as repetition, recall, we are suggesting that there can indeed be grammars other than our own, grammars by which we might have known, or might come to know, the world very differently than we currently know it. The difficulty is making sense of how we can express the possibility that the grammar of our words could be different. How can we say that language could come to be augmented with expressive possibilities that it doesn't already have given that speaking intelligibly about the world *just is* (for us) to speak of it in terms of the grammar by which we (currently) know it. "If someone says "if our language had not this grammar, it could not express these facts' – it should be asked what *'could'* means here" (PI, §497). Wittgenstein's counterfactual conditional challenges us to imagine that the grammar of language 'could' be different than it is, in which case it 'could not' express the world as we know it. The suggestion is this: it is not clear what sense we are to make of this 'could,' for it is not clear how we can use the grammar that we actually have to envision a world *not* structured by that grammar (see Lear 1984, 323; Lear 1982, 389).[100]

A remark in the posthumously published notes that we know as *Philosophical Grammar* clarifies the general structure of our problem. Our intuition is this: to the extent that we can intelligibly speak about the possibility of a concept's grammar being different, we feel that we need to be able to *specify* what those differences would be like. But, *ex hypothesi*, we can carry out no such specification within the terms of the grammar that we *now*, actually, have. We are given the concepts 'proposition' and 'language,' for example:

> How did I come by the concept 'proposition' or the concept 'language'? Only through the languages I've learned. – But in a certain sense they seem to have led me beyond themselves, since I'm now able to construct a new language, for instance to invent new words. – So this construction too belongs to the language [….] The sense of 'etc.' is constantly given limits by its grammar. / That is also what I meant when I said 'there are surprises in reality but not in grammar.' / 'But language can expand.' – Certainly, but if this word 'expand' has a sense here, then I know *already* what I mean by it. I must be able to specify how I imagine such an expansion. And what I can't think I can't now express or even hint at. And in this case the

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[100] The problem here may be difficult for us to appreciate because a copious literature on Wittgenstein has made it all too common for us to speak about the consequences of the rule-following considerations in easy platitudes about the 'open texture' of language, the errors of metaphysical essentialism, and the way in which indefinitely extendable rules of language leave open unforeseeable vistas of family resemblance and secondary sense. Wittgenstein once worried that the reception of his thought would amount to little more than the adoption of a stale jargon (see Malcolm 1984, 53). We risk confirming his worry if we adopt this sloganeering about Wittgenstein's insights into the open texture of language and fail to appreciate the *great difficulty* of articulating those insights.

word 'now' means: 'in this calculus' or 'if the words are used according to these grammatical rules' […] It would be quite correct to add in thought the rider: 'It is not as if I was able to transcend my own thought,' 'It is not as if I could sensibly transcend what has sense for me.' We feel that there is no way of smuggling in by the back door a thought I am debarred from thinking directly. (PG, 1-§71)

Our inclination here is to revert back to Hacker-style post-Kantian metaphysical essentialism of 'once and for all,' analytic truths, and set Wittgenstein in a tense, if not fully incoherent relation, with all he had to say about the unforeseeable future application of rules that do not 'fly ahead' and determine that application on their own (PI, §188).[101] To indulge this inclination would be to renounce our aspiration to say that grammar *could* be different and to say, instead, that it *couldn't* be: to say that the expressive possibilities that already delimit human thought are the only expressive possibilities there could be. Of course, this will not do for, as we have seen, our inclination to say that the possibilities of expression could not be other than they are is no less troubled than the inclination to say that they could be. "[F]or in order to be able to draw a limit to thought, we should have to find both sides of the limit thinkable (i.e., we should have to be able to think that cannot be thought)" (T, 9).

It should be clear that, in my view, the principle dictums of Wittgenstein's thought are meant to show that grammars other than our own *are* possible. From this perspective, the above remark from the *Philosophical Grammar* does not set forth a view to which Wittgenstein himself subscribes; it explores a temptation that we are meant to resist. It explores the same, recollective, temptation that he was already urging us beyond in the *Tractatus*: the temptation to say that, since we cannot make sense, in advance, of what grammars alternative to our own would be like, the very idea of such things is fully incoherent. As against this recollective prejudice, however, Wittgenstein has also signalled us to a possibility of grammatical novelty, and genuine creativity on the part of the philosopher, albeit a possibility that beset by a 'great difficulty' of expression that it is our task, as Wittgenstein's readers, to overcome. The task is to recognize the philosopher's freedom to facilitate an openness to grammars other than those that currently circumscribe our experience of the world. In the context of philosophical therapy, these encounters with novel sense bring us to see that the

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[101] I have in mind, once more, what he taught us with the rule-following considerations of how the meanings of words can be extended in unforeseeably novel ways (PI, §185-242), the critique of metaphysical 'essentialism' (PI, §79-108), the idea of the family-resemblance concept (PI,§ 64-75), the notions of secondary sense (PI, §282, II-§274-78), the discussion of 'imponderable evidence' (PI, II-§358-64), and the related hints about the responsibility we bear for carrying on in language as we do, unguided by any rules that could 'unambiguously' determine their own application (PI, §222-23; PI, §426; cf., Cavell 1999, 107).

grammar by which we currently know the world is a kind of illusion. In this sense, to acknowledge the possibility of a grammar other than our own is to acknowledge the possibility that our grammar is in error. The question of alternative grammars again, is this: "[W]hat is [our] relation to this error? What am I to suppose? (OC, §67) / [...] [W]hat is the logician to say here?" (OC,§ 68).

Put differently, as I read him, Wittgenstein's view is that an encounter with these other grammars could show us that the grammatical propositions we currently consider true are, in fact, *false*. As we know, for Wittgenstein, the mark of a genuine proposition is that it can take either of the two truth values (T, 4.023; PI, §136). If this is the case, then clarifying the sense in which a proposition of grammar is a genuine proposition will involve clarifying the sense in which a grammatical proposition that we currently consider true could turn out to be false. Once more, to be clear, when we say that a genuine proposition is either true or false, we are saying that it is made true or false, not by some willful decision on the part of human speaker, but by *the world*.

I have so far been speaking about the question of alternative grammars as if it were only one question. In fact, it is two questions which, though importantly similar, can be usefully distinguished. The first question is about how we to think about grammatical possibilities that are, as we might put it, *contingently inexpressible* for human beings. These are possibilities that we do not currently find intelligible, but which we could come to find intelligible in the course of human natural history. It was unintelligible for Kant that the world could have a non-Euclidian structure, just as it was impossible for Kierkegaard's knight of resignation to imagine that God could revoke his request for the sacrifice of Isaac. But in time we were provided with a grammar for 'the world' that enabled us to make sense of what was unintelligible to Kant and, in time, the knight of resignation would have been provided with a concept of 'God' that permitted him to see that God's calling off the sacrifice was possible indeed, for this is indeed what God did. In these cases, we are ultimately able to see how these apparently deviant uses of 'world' and 'God' are, in fact, intelligible extensions of our own former use of these concepts. As we might put it, it turns out that we are able to 'translate' such at-first-unintelligible talk about 'the world' and 'God' into a language already familiar – we can come to see a sense in which these radically new iterations of concepts express *the same* meaning as that which we already expressed in our thought and talk about God and world. Sometimes, conceptual problems find their resolution when we come to see how a familiar concept can be intelligibly used in ways that seem, at first, unintelligible. Cora diamond calls conceptual problems like these 'ordinary' riddles (Diamond 1991, 281). They concern something which, at first, we find unthinkable, but which we can come to find thinkable – that is to say, expressible – with time.

We see a different kind of case when we come to the idea of a grammar that is what we might call, *necessarily inexpressible* for human beings. This is the sort of thing that Donald Davidson has in mind when he speaks about 'conceptual schemes' that would be, not just contingently 'untranslatable' into the words of a language with which we are familiar, but untranslatable *in principle* (Davidson 2001, Ch. 13). The rules of such a language would be so different from the rules of any language that a human being could learn that we could not coordinate that language's concepts with the concepts of any language we know. The use of a concept proper to any such *essentially* untranslatable language could never strike us as discernibly rule-governed at all and, hence, it could never strike us as the use of a concept, at least not according to what we currently consider a 'concept.' A whole language of such concepts would look, to us, not like a language, but like a chaos of fully meaningless behaviour. In principle, we could not follow such a language; we could not learn it. And yet, *ex hypothesi*, such a thing would nevertheless be a language. The second and deeper aspect of the question of alternative grammars is this: does Wittgenstein's view of language permit us to speak about the possibility of a language whose grammar is different from our own in this radical sense?

Davidson, famously, said the notion of such a language was incoherent (Davidson 2001, 196-197), and Wittgenstein seems to agree. Consider the following remarks:

> A language that I do not understand is no language. (Wittgenstein 2000, 109, 106)

> Whatever the language that I might construct, it has to be translatable into an existing language. (Wittgenstein 2000, 110, 144)

> It is an important fact that we assume it is always possible to teach our language to men who have a different one. (Wittgenstein 1980, §664)

Wittgenstein evidently agrees with Davidson. Just as we are unable to make sense of the idea of a logically private language (PI, §243, §256-58), we are unable to make sense of the idea of a language that would be, for us, in principle untranslatable. The question is: are we therefore supposed to read Wittgenstein trying to provide us with some kind of transcendental refutation of the idea that there could be such a language? Is he trying to demonstrate, in good Kantian fashion, the 'objective validity' of the grammatical categories comprised by the language we currently have? This seems unlikely. In the case of other, more humble, concepts like 'game' (PI, §68) we are counselled to resist the idea of such conceptual closure, to remember the lessons of family remembrance, the critique of metaphysical essentialism, and so on. In these cases, the lesson is that we should not think that the internal properties of something – properties that we can't imagine that thing lacking – are, in every

sense, necessary properties of that thing. Is he suggesting that there is something special about the concept of 'language' that makes it different from concepts like 'game'? Is he saying that 'translatability-for-us' is metaphysically *essential* to language (and what we mean by 'language') where he would not be willing to make such metaphysical pronouncements about other things, such as games (and what we mean by 'game')?

I don't see how he could be saying any such thing. Not only would his saying so fly foul of his case against metaphysics, he explicitly rejects the idea that the concept 'language' should receive a special, metaphysical treatment to which other, more humble concepts are not entitled. "[I]n 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'" (PI, §97). Moreover, Wittgenstein often seems to suggest that grammar would have been, or could still be, different in the deep, Davidsonian sense. He does so when he reflects upon the connections between the conditions of the natural world, the concepts we have, and the interests of life that motivate their use. Grammar would be different, he suggests, if certain very general facts about the natural world (see, e.g., PI §142; PI, 56,) or about the life interests of people, were different than they are (PI, §372, II-§521, II-§367, §497; PG, I- §133; Z, §320, §380, §378, §387, §388, §390; RFM, I-§74). As Michel Hymers develops the point, the idea is that the grammar by which we know the world is, somehow, a function of the fact that "human beings are bipedal, that we require food, companionship, and shelter from the elements, and we reproduce sexually, that we are vulnerable to certain diseases and kinds of injury, etc." (Hymers 2010, 121). After discussing the natural, but contingent, disposition to operate with mathematical concepts as we do, Wittgenstein adds: "This case would have similarities to that in which it comes naturally to a person to react to the gesture of pointing with the hand by looking in the direction from fingertip to wrist, rather than from wrist to fingertip" (PI, §185). If the human body was such that we lacked reliable control over the motions of our arms, presumably, we would lack our current concept of 'pointing' altogether. It would do us no good.

Part of our difficulty in grappling with the possibility of grammars untranslatably different from our own is that we are inclined to think about this possibility as an *empirical* possibility. We are inclined, for example, to interpret Wittgenstein's claims about the relation between our concepts and the contingent structure of the human body and the earth in empirical, natural-scientific, and perhaps evolutionary terms. But this is a non-starter. Just as the early Wittgenstein insists that "Darwin's theory has no more to do with philosophy than any other hypothesis in natural science"

(T, 4.1122),[102] the later Wittgenstein, insists that "our considerations could not be scientific ones" (PI, §109), not even in this context of considering the process of concept formation, which we are so naturally inclined to think about in natural scientific and specifically evolutionary, terms. Wittgenstein warns us against this temptation directly:

> If concept formation can be explained by facts of nature, shouldn't we be interested, not in grammar, but rather in what is its basis in nature? – We are, indeed, also interested in the correspondence between concepts and very general facts of nature. (Such facts as mostly do not strike us because of their generality.) But our interest is not thereby thrown back on to these possible causes of concept formation; we are not doing natural science; nor yet natural history. (PI, II-§365)

A natural-scientific investigation into grammar would consider the causes of grammar – evolutionary, biological, etc. – and it would seek to explain grammar by reference to those causes. But "[w]e want to replace wild conjectures and explanations by quiet weighing of linguistic facts" (Z, §447). Rather than looking for the causes of grammar, we are concerned to simply describe grammar itself (PI, §109, §126). Wittgenstein's aim in philosophy is to illuminate a certain order (PI, §132), the order of rules that regulate our use of words and constitute their meaning (PG, 184; PI, §197; RFM, I-§130; PI, 155; cf., §320, PI, §497). If, as I believe, one of his aims is to remind us of the possibility of alternative grammars, his claim has to be that a remembrance of grammar could indeed permit us to find sense in the idea of language that is, for us, in principle untranslatable.

Once more: early and late, Wittgenstein does, in my view, think that our concepts (our logic, our grammar) are contingent, and he does want to illuminate their contingency by highlighting the relatedly contingent constitution of our human natures, and of the life-interests that happen to have made some concepts (contingently) useful and others less so. But, this *grammatical* submission that the logic of the language by which we know the world could have been, or could still be, different is not to be understood as a *hypothesis*. He writes:

> I am not saying: if such-and-such facts of nature were different, people would have different concepts (in the sense of a hypothesis). Rather: if anyone believes that certain concepts are

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[102] Also see PI, II-§55:

> The evolution of the higher animals and of man, and the awakening of consciousness at a particular stage. The picture is something like this: Though the ether is filled with vibrations, the world is dark. But one day, man opens his seeing eye, and there is light. / In the first place, our language describes a picture. What is to be done with the picture, how it is to be used, is still obscure. Quite clearly, however, it must be explored if we want to understand the sense of our words. But the picture seems to spare us this work: it already points to a particular use. This is how it takes us in. [*Dadurch hat es uns zum Besten.*]

absolutely the correct ones, and that having different ones would mean not realizing something that we realize – then let him imagine certain very general facts of nature to be different from what we are used to, and the formation of concepts different from the usual ones will become intelligible to him. (PI, II-§366)

What, then, *is* Wittgenstein saying? How can we use the expressive powers of our actual grammar to express this possibility of a grammar alternative to our own, given that we cannot use our present grammar to say anything at all about what such an alternative would be like? "If someone says "If our language had not this grammar, it could not express these facts' – it should be asked what *'could'* means here" (PI, §497). This is *not* the claim that alternatives to our grammar are impossible; it is not the assertion of our extant grammar's metaphysical necessity, and this is only to be expected from all that we have seen so far. Neither, from what we have seen, can the claim be that these grammars are possibilities in the empirical, natural-scientific, sense. When Wittgenstein invites us: "it should be asked what *'could'* means here" (PI, §497), I take him to be asking us to do exactly what he says he is asking us to do: grapple with the question of what 'could' means here. He is urging us to grapple with the great difficulty of expressing the possibility that the grammar by which we know the various things of the world might change and endow us with powers of expression that we don't currently have. What is so tricky here is that we are inclined to think of the possibility of these possible future grammars from a perspective beyond language's bounds, a perspective from which we would grasp the future grammar as if it were already determinately given, 'out there' beyond the limits of sense.

We have seen that a great temptation here is to try to grasp the contingency of grammar on the model of empirical contingency. We have also seen the peril in trying to do so: we arrive only more directly in the same illusion that we end up in when we try to grasp grammar as a metaphysical necessity. How so? We end up implicitly construing ourselves as metaphysical subjects located somewhere out beyond the logical limits of the world, looking down upon the logic of our language as if it were one fact amongst others rather than the horizon of all that we find intelligible. The latter error, as we know, amounts to the effort to think of our own grammar as it were a kind of *object* – a cage that imprisons us and bars us from things we wish to do, but can't – so that our grammatical propositions become descriptions of that object. "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" (PI, §374). Since the 'cannot' of metaphysical necessity is out of bounds, there *is* a sense in which one *could* think, or say, what we

currently find logically, grammatically, unthinkable – there is nothing that 'cannot' be done. The question, once more, is this: what does 'could' mean here?

4.12.1. A Few False Starts

This question of alternative grammars has generated a massive, and still-growing, literature. Rather than go over this well-ploughed territory once again, I want to highlight a few important landmarks in the discussion, and I want to submit that none provides a clear and convincing solution to the great difficulty that concerns us.

In their pioneering papers on this topic, Bernard Williams and Jonathan Lear argue that the great difficulty of expressing the possibility of alternative grammars in Wittgenstein's later philosophy is meant to demonstrate the truth of the orthodox-Tractarian claim that there cannot be such things. Williams was the first to suggest that the very notion of a language that lacks the grammar of *our* language turns out to be a chimera. Since we can imagine no 'outside' to the grammar by which we know the world, what is intelligible to the 'we' of *our* linguistic community turns out to be the final measure of possibility, closed to the notion grammars that cannot be assimilated into itself.

> Thus, while much is said by Wittgenstein about the meanings we understand being related to our practice, and so forth, that *we* turns out to be only superficially and sometimes to be one *we* as against others in the world, and thus the sort of *we* which has one practice as against others which are possible in the world […] one finds oneself with a *we* which is not one group rather than another in the world at all, but rather the plural descendant of the idealist *I* who also was not one item rather than another in the world. (Williams 1973, 160)

As for Wittgenstein's suggestion that other worldviews could indeed exist and might be explained by reference to their holder's interests, Williams tells us that these remarks do not in fact suggest that genuinely alternative worldviews to our own are conceivable. Instead, for Williams, these remarks are offered as an aid to helping us understand the nature of 'other' worldviews as one more aspect of our own worldview, the only worldview there could possibly be. "[T]he imagined alternatives are not alternatives *to* us, they are alternatives *for* us, markers of how far we might go and still remain, within our world" (ibid., 160). Jonathan Lear concurs:

> Our various representations are an expression of our being so minded […] but we cannot make any sense of the possibility of being 'other minded' […] how we are minded is in part revealed to us by what (we are so minded as to find) does and does not make sense. There

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can be (for us) no getting a glimpse of what it might be like to be 'other minded.' […] for as we try to pass beyond the bounds of our mindedness we lapse into what (for us) must be nonsense: that is we lapse into non-sense. (Lear 1984, 232; cf., Lear 1982)

This is fair enough: we can form no clear idea of other mindedness. More controversially, Lear's Wittgenstein seems to conclude, on that basis, that the notion that there could be such other-mindedness is altogether incoherent. Considering a speaker whose grammar lacked the rule of *modus ponens*, Lear's Wittgenstein concludes that "he is nobody; and that he could not be anybody. We cannot begin to make sense of the possibility of someone whose beliefs were uninfluenced by *modus ponens*: we cannot get any hold on what his thoughts or actions would be like" (Lear 1982, 389).

David Cerbone (2000), Danille Hutto (1996), and Martin Kusch (2011, 2013) have all offered readings friendly to the Williams-Lear suggestion that Wittgenstein repudiated the very idea of alternative grammars. But we should be uneasy here. When Lear moves from our inability to imagine a rational creature who does not reason in terms of *modus ponens* to the conclusion that there could be no such creatures, is he not lapsing into our familiar attraction to the metaphysical 'cannot'? Is he not saying, for example, that both translatability and the use of *modus ponens* is essential to all language in the metaphysical sense of 'essential'? In the analysis of Lear and Williams, the fluid, open-ended, fabric of later-Wittgensteinian grammar seems to ossify into the fixed, crystalline, logical order of things (PI, §97) that we have found in the recollective, orthodox, reading of the *Tractatus*.

This is no position that a resolute reader can adopt. Certainly, we can accept, Wittgenstein recognizes that, according to the grammar that we have, it is incoherent to talk about a language that is, in principle, untranslatable for us, just as he recognizes that it is incoherent to talk about a language that is logically private. The question, recall, is this: does he conclude from this grammatical observation that there could be no such thing? Does he insist that there could be no experience of the world that is not structured by the discursive categories which, by accident of way that we happen currently to be embodied, structure our current experience of reality?

I can't see how he could. And so, I sympathize with readers on the other side of this debate, amongst them Barry Stroud (1965, 1984), Michael Forster (2004), Simon Blackburn (2004), Danielle Moyal-Sharrock (2007) and Analisa Coliva (2010). All these readers grant that Wittgenstein thinks that there could indeed be concepts alternative to our own – logics inexpressible from our own present grammatical perspective. The trouble with most of these accounts is that none say how we

are supposed to understand the possibility of such grammars without parsing it in either empirical or metaphysical terms.

Stroud's original response to the Williams-Lear line captures the sort of ambiguity I have in mind. Citing those remarks where Wittgenstein seems to indicate that different life interests and facts of nature could furnish human beings with different concepts. He writes:

> Even if we founder when we try to understand in some detail what it would be like to think in one or another of those ways, so that we do not find fully intelligible any particular way of thinking different from ours, Wittgenstein does seem to be suggesting that we can nevertheless be brought to see the contingency of our thinking in the ways that we do, or the contingency of anyone's being 'minded' as we are rather than in some other way. (Stroud 1984, 255)

How then, are to think about this possibility? Neglecting to address the various places where Wittgenstein suggests that our concepts could be different going forward if certain general facts about our natures and natural environments were to change (OC, §512-18, §613-19), Stroud fleshes out the contingency of our concepts by highlighting the way in such very general facts might have been different in the past:

> The only sense that has been given to the claim that 'somebody may reply like a rational person and yet not be playing our game' is that there might have been different sorts of beings from us, that the inhabitants of the earth might have come to think and behave in ways different from their actual ones. (Stroud 1965, 513)

One important worry about Stroud's analysis is that he says nothing at all about the textual evidence that moves Lear, Williams, and others to think that Wittgenstein ultimately abandons the idea of alternative grammars as a mere chimera: he says nothing about our 'great difficulty' of actually saying anything at all about what such alternative grammars might be like. Michael Forster adduces a relevant piece of evidence when he notes that Wittgenstein explicitly raises the question of whether, for this reason, his own continual talk about the possibility of alternative grammars has not turned out to be nonsense in the end.

> If [people] really have a different concept than I do, this must be shown by the fact that I can't quite figure out their use of words. But I have *kept on saying* that it's conceivable for our concepts to be different than they are. Was all that nonsense? (Wittgenstein 1977, III- §123-§124; Cf., Forster 2004, 173)

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As elsewhere, Wittgenstein is not saying that his earlier talk about the possibility of a logic other than our own is nonsense. Rather, I submit, he is reminding us of the great difficulty we face in trying to make sense of our intentional relation to such a logic, given that we can say nothing whatever about what its possibilities might be like. Rather than meeting Wittgenstein's challenge of grappling with the issue, Stroud avoids it, and simply reminds us that, in many places, Wittgenstein *does* indicate that our concepts could be, or at least could have been, different. Forster avoids the challenge as well, suggesting that we settle the debate between Stroud, on the one hand, and Williams and Lear, on the other, by a brute quantitative approach. Noting that the remarks evidently meant to illuminate the possibility of alternative grammars outnumber the remarks suggesting that the very idea of such grammars is incoherent, Forster concludes that "the great majority of cases strongly support Stroud's interpretation of [Wittgenstein's] intentions" (Forster 2004, 155).

As I have said, I think that Stroud and Forster are on the right track: Wittgenstein is trying to illuminate the possibility of alternative grammars. Furthermore, as Stroud notices, Wittgenstein tries to illuminate the possibility of alternative grammars by illuminating the possibility of our being embodied as very different kinds of creatures than we are, and of our inhabiting a world very different from the world we know. However, it seems to me that neither Stroud nor Forster takes seriously enough the above passages where Wittgenstein is evidently asking us to grapple with the difficulty in the view that Stroud attributes to him: if we cannot make clear sense of the idea of alternative grammars, does the very idea that there could be such things turn out to be nonsense? If it is an *empirical* hypothesis, it does turn out to be nonsense, for we can make no clear sense of the possibility we are trying to formulate. Indeed, as an empirical hypothesis, this amounts to a kind of evolutionary psychologism. But when Stroud accounts for the possibility of alternative grammars in terms of "the inhabitants of the earth […] think[ing] and behav[ing] in ways different from their actual ones" (1965, 513) he isn't clear how he avoids interpreting the possibility of alternative grammars in just such empirical and, perhaps, evolutionary, terms.

Danielle Moyal-Sharrock leaves us with the same question. She writes that, for Wittgenstein, after metaphysics, "[l]ogical necessity is not [...] lost, it is *conditional*, on our form of life" (Moyal-Sharrok 2004, 153). This means that "[o]ur [logical] framework is a blend of […] contingency and necessity" (ibid., 153). "Our [foundations] are specifically human, and yet they are *objective*, indeed, *logical*, bounds of sense" (ibid., 145). As in Stroud, the bounds of sense are contingent, because "they are related to our biological form of life and practices" (ibid., 154), and yet, they are *logical* in the sense that they are necessary for creatures like us. Moyal-Sharrock calls the central features of this

framework 'ungiveupable' and likens them to what P. F. Strawson calls "that general framework of beliefs to which we are inescapably committed" (ibid., 220 n. 9). Strawson, however, reads Wittgenstein as a naturalist (see Strawson 1983, 14-29), and it is unclear how a naturalistic account could avoid misconstruing the contingency of grammar as an empirical kind of contingency. As in Stroud, it seems that the account of logic at issue here comes dangerously close to some brand of psychologism.[103]

One inclination here might be to rebut the assertion that the laws of logic are metaphysically necessary by saying that they are, not empirically contingent, but *metaphysically* contingent. Analisa Coliva takes this line in her discussion of *On Certainty*, but her strategy could be applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to the *Tractatus*. Addressing the question of what it would like for the most fundamental features of our 'world-picture' to be different than they are, she writes:

> All it seems left to this idea is the purely *metaphysical possibility* that if certain 'facts of nature' (PI, II, xii) had been totally different, or if 'something really unheard of' (OC, §513) were to happen, there could be creatures who don't believe in the existence of material objects, who don't reason as we do, for whom 2 + 2 isn't equal to 4, who don't use their senses to gather evidence, who don't think that the Earth has existed for a long time before they were born, etc. (Coliva 2010, 21).

Accordingly, Coliva concludes – and I agree – that the contingency of these most general features of linguistic experience is not, for Wittgenstein, an empirical contingency. From this, however, she draws the more striking inference that it is a *metaphysical* contingency. For Wittgenstein, she writes, "our world-picture and conceptual scheme may well be metaphysically contingent, still they are unavoidable for us, and therefore, universal, if only from our own point of view" (Coliva 2010, 21). This will not do, I think, unless much more is said about what one means by 'metaphysics.' So far as Wittgenstein is concerned, trying to grasp a metaphysical contingency would be as troubled as trying to grasp a metaphysical necessity. Both presuppose an illusion of bipolarity.

In his introduction to the *Tractatus*, Russell suggested a way around the paradox of the saying /showing distinction that might be considered helpful here. Couldn't we speak about the logic of a given object language if we used a language of a higher type? If we could make sense of this movement to a meta-language, we would have a way of accounting for the sense in which the logic

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[103] It is also not clear that Moyal-Sharrock avoids the metaphysical conception of necessity. An air of metaphysical certainty creeps into her reading when she suggests that we can describe certain logical necessities that *cannot* be given up as a consequence of what happens to be our human form of life.

of language is contingent (see Conant 2004, 170). When we express its contingency, we would be saying that there could be a meta-language from the perspective of which we could regard the logic of the object language as one logic amongst others – one logic that we might either adopt or abandon – rather than the inescapable horizon of sense whose norms would characterize any language we can imagine. This move is unavailing, however. If the metal-language is characterized by same logical norms as the object language, then it isn't a meta-language in the necessary sense. If, on the other hand, the meta-language isn't characterized by the logical norms of the object language, then it amounts to an illogical language, and it isn't at all clear what this supposed meta-language is supposed to be. In this case, we would beg the question if we invoke the notion of a meta-language to account for the so-far- inscrutable possibility of alternative grammars because the meta-language would itself amount to just the kind of inscrutable alternative grammar whose possibility we are trying to elucidate. As Conant notes, the recourse to a meta-language is really just one way of trying to construe limits of thought as empirically contingent but, as we know, the idea that these limits are empirically contingent is just as incoherent as the idea that they are metaphysically necessary (ibid.).

Let me summarize the key ideas that make up this problem of alternative grammars. Wittgenstein alluded to the problem in the *Investigations*, when he highlighted the 'great difficulty' we face when trying to avoid the metaphysical 'cannot' (PI, §374). Since the metaphysical 'cannot' is out of bounds, one is rightly inclined to say that we *could* think, or say, what we currently find unthinkable. However, "it should be asked what *'could'* means here" (PI, §497). Wittgenstein tries to illuminate the thought by suggesting that we could think differently if we were creatures very different from the creatures that we actually are, and this seems fair enough. But unless we are very careful, we will interpret this 'could' as a reference to an empirical possibility. This would be to mistake the mysterious contingency of logic for a merely empirical kind of contingency and to allow our thinking to veer beyond the limits of logic and into the business of natural-scientific speculations. To avoid the empirical reading, we might go back down the garden path to metaphysics, only now we join Coliva and attribute to Wittgenstein a metaphysics of contingency rather than a metaphysics of necessity. Since this recourse to metaphysical contingency is also a dead end, it can easily seem that we are driven back into the position of Williams and Lear, and conclude that the grammar of our language is a metaphysically necessary structure of all linguistic experience. We have already ruled out this interpretive route, however, because of our ample evidence that Wittgenstein indeed took the notion of alternative grammars seriously. Hence, the great difficulty of

articulating the possibility of alternative grammars. It is not so easy to avoid the illusion that logic is a necessary metaphysical structure that bars us from things we 'cannot' do.

The alternative grammars that we are in search of will not, of course, be anything *hidden* in the metaphysical sense in which the Platonic Idea is supposed to be hidden in consciousness (PI, §60, §90-§108, §126) "and which an analysis is supposed to unearth through a process of ordering" (PI, §92). It must not be forgotten, however, that there is also a sense in which Wittgenstein's search for meaning is a search for something hidden indeed.

> The aspects of things that are most important for us are hidden [*verborgen*] because of their simplicity and familiarity. (One is unable to notice something – because it is always before one's eyes.) The real foundation of their inquiry does 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. (PI, §129)

Meaning is hidden as something overlooked but readily familiar, forgotten, but as a memory of greatest importance, repressed, and in need of acknowledgement (cf., OC, §378). To remember such meaning is to remember the rules that form the *real* foundation of language; the rules that pervade (cf., T, 5.61) and, at every moment, hold together at its seams the linguistically structured world. Our inquiry into the possibility of alternative grammars amounts to a search for something hidden in *this* sense. What kind of sense is this? My submission will be that what is hidden, for the resolute Wittgenstein, is not to be unconcealed through the activity of recollection, recreation, or any natural scientific investigation. Rather, I submit, it will be something unconcealed through the activity of what Wittgenstein will call 'revelation.' In fact, this submission can already be found in the resolute reading of Cora Diamond. In this aspect of her view, it seems to me that Diamond points beyond the troubles that riddle the literature on the question of alternative grammars and, in so doing, she points the way toward the sort of resolute realism that I want to develop in the remaining chapters of this dissertation.

4.13. Remembrance as Riddle and Revelation

> When the answer cannot be put into words, neither can the question be put into words. / The riddle does not exist. / If a question can be framed at all, it is also *possible* to answer it. / Skepticism is not irrefutable, but obviously nonsensical, when it tries to raise doubts where no questions can be asked. / For doubt can exist only where a question exists, a question only where an answer exists, and an answer only where something *can be said.* (T, 6.5-6.51)

The skeptic might try to doubt the propositions of logic; he might wonder if maybe they are failing to express the logical structure of the world. The above passage says that any such skeptical doubt is unintelligible, for legitimate doubt presupposes that we can make clear sense of what an answer to that doubt might look like. As I have presented it, the substance of the resolute reading has been that, indeed, one cannot doubt a logical (or grammatical) proposition. Nevertheless, one *can*, in some sense, wonder whether such a proposition adequately expresses the logic of things and whether a different logical proposition might express that logic more faithfully. Abraham's faith is objectively uncertain, and marked by fear and trembling. So too, I have proposed, are the logical/ grammatical commitments of the resolute Wittgenstein.

Diamond points in this direction when she suggests that the sense in which the riddle 'does not exist' is not meant entirely to deflate the riddle question of its philosophical importance. Wittgenstein's point is not that the riddle question should not command our intellectual interest, that it will not repay serious attention, or that it is devoid of even so much as the promise of an answer; far to the contrary. The point is that, when we ask for the answer to a riddle, our question is unlike the question of whether a given empirical proposition is true, or whether a given object falls under an already determinate concept (Diamond 1991, 269), for in riddle cases we cannot envision in advance what an answer to the question would even so much as look like. The later Wittgenstein illustrates the kind of problem at issue when discussing how it might arise in mathematics. Mathematical problems are, he writes,

> like the problem set by the king in the fairy tale who told the princess to come neither naked nor dressed, and she came wearing fishnet. That might have been called not naked and yet not dressed either. He didn't really know what he wanted her to do, but when she came thus he was forced to accept it. It was of the form 'Do something which I shall be inclined to call 'neither naked nor dressed.' It's the same with the mathematical problem. 'Do something which I shall be inclined to accept as a solution, though I don't know now what it will be like. (Wittgenstein quoted in Diamond 1991, 267)

As Diamond explains, the problem here is not that we haven't looked hard enough for the answer. It isn't as if the answer were already hidden somewhere in the logical space of the eternal Socratic memory, but we had yet to find it. The problem is that there is a sense in which the answer to a riddle question has, as yet, no determination at all. "There is not anything, present in our experience or thought of, which will of itself enable us to make the kind of connections we need to make to solve a riddle" (Diamond 1991, 270). "Trying to solve [a riddle problem] is like trying to move one's

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ears when one has never done so, like trying to unravel a knot which one does not know is actually a knot – and setting someone such a problem is like asking him how white can win in twenty moves a game that has yet to be invented" (Diamond 1991, 267). Riddle problems, then, "are of an utterly different sort – problems in a different sense – from those one gives a child, and for which it gets an answer according to rules it has been taught" (ibid.).

Riddle questions captivate us because they strike us as pregnant with an answer of which we have some dark intimation and an answer toward which we feel curiously drawn. But our intimation is dark indeed, and what draws us is not a *goal* of thought or action, for what draws us is clearly set out before the mind's eye. Here, thought's relation to the answer it seeks does not have this instrumental structure of a relation between a means and an end already understood, for we have no clear conception of the end – the answer – we seek, and we have no clear conception of the answer because for we are not even so much as sure of how to understand the question that the answer will satisfy. "It seems that it is only when we have the answer that we know how to understand the question" (ibid., 269). Hence, before the answer is at hand, "'there was only a rough pattern of that sense in the verbal language' – and the idea that it might in some way be filled in, the expression given […] sense" (ibid., 269, cf., PG, 374). Accordingly, our search for the answer to a riddle can only be a fumbling forth toward a meaning that "seems to exist, as it were, on borrowed sense, on an advance from the solution to the problem" (ibid., 271) that is yet to be provided.

Abraham is not guaranteed that sense will dawn upon his belief that Isaac will be spared. Similarly, it is not guaranteed that sense will eventually dawn upon a riddle. If we are asked to 'look for' the 'possibility' of a 'woman neither dressed nor undressed,' we start neither from the assumption that "the phrase does not express something which cannot be found or done"(ibid., 276) nor from the "assumption that the phrase does express something that can be found or done. We do not assume it makes sense. (You could say we play at using a phrase of that shape as an assumption)" (ibid., 276). We are dealing here not with a form of words that harbours an *already* determinate sense that can be 'shown but not said.' for *that* way of thinking about the saying/ showing distinction helps itself to the illicit notion that senselessness is itself an illicit kind of sense. Wittgenstein told us: "When a sentence is called senseless it is not as it were its sense that is senseless. But a combination of words is being excluded from the language" (PI, §500). Diamond amplifies: "When we talk about the imaginability of something's being conceivable (etc.), it is not as it were a matter of sense that possibly makes sense, but a combination of words is being entertained by us; we do not rule out the possibility of a new language game, in which that word-shape had a

place, being one we should find ourselves at home in" (Diamond 1991, 275). But there are no guarantees, and a phrase that might at first seem to harbour the promise of sense "we may wish in the end to throw out as meaningless" (ibid.). Like Abraham's hopes for Isaac, the hopes we have for the expression might come to nothing.

The paradoxes in play here are paradoxes of remembrance, and they are familiar from our discussion of the *Meno*. How is it that we can know how to look for an answer that we don't already have? How do we know when we are on the right track, or when we have found it? And if we don't know what we are we looking for, how do we know which candidate answers to reject? "[I]f it is the finding of something we are willing to recognize as the solution that fixes the sense of the riddle-question, how can we reject anything before we have the solution? [...] If, in a sense, we do not know what we are looking for, how can we say 'This isn't it'? And yet it is clear we can" (ibid., 270-71). In the *Meno*, of course, this question only ran so deep, for Socrates wanted to grant that we did, after all, have determinate fore-knowledge of what we were seeking, and that our investigation was guided by that fore-knowledge from the outset. In Diamond's analysis of the riddle, as in our own upcoming analysis of Kierkegaardian repetition, the problem of remembrance runs deeper. On our picture, we are, somehow, guided toward the proper solution despite our lacking any such mental copy of the answer already in our intellectual repertoire and, so, without any ability to guide *ourselves* towards its discovery. Here we need more than a mere midwife, for we are struggling after a promise of sense for which we know not how to look, and which we cannot find on our unaided own. If it dawns upon us as all, it will dawn only by meeting us halfway, and revealing *itself* to what, on our side, can only be a searching and essentially passive use of attention. "Taken as an answer to the question, as a proposition in the system we do not yet have, it is no more than the outer surface of what will be a true proposition. We might say it has meantime a sort of 'promissory meaning': its meaning has to come to it 'from without'" (ibid., 281). It must come to us 'from without,' I take Diamond to be suggesting, because we haven't the grammatical means of finding it on our own, or to guarantee for ourselves that there is any sense there to be found. Unlike in the *Meno*, the meaning of our words, remembered anew as a grammar alternative to our own, is nothing to which we are already rationally entitled in the recollective sense. It is, rather, something gratuitously *given* to us in a moment of revelation. In the *Philosophical Remarks*, Wittgenstein refers to the anti-skeptical comments in the *Tractatus* where we encountered the notion of the riddle a moment ago.

I said: Were you can't look for an answer, you can't ask either, and that means: Where there's no logical method for finding a solution, the question doesn't make sense either. / Only

where there's a method of solution is there a problem (of course that doesn't mean 'Only where the solution has been found is there a problem'). / That is, where we can only expect the solution from some sort of revelation, there isn't even a problem. A revelation doesn't correspond to any question. / It would be like wanting to ask about experiences belonging to a sense organ we don't yet possess. *Our being given* a new sense I would call revelation.

Neither can we *look for* a new sense. (PR, 172, first italics added)[104]

"'Revelation,'" Diamond explains, "because it is not a discovery in space, describable in advance, but a 'discovery' of a space" (Diamond 1991, 278). It is the discovery of a logical, or grammatical, space hitherto unavailable and which, when it comes to be, comes to be as something in some sense *new*. Despite all Wittgenstein's protestations against new inventions and discoveries, he seems to acknowledge that a revealed sense is, somehow, *new* indeed. In the case of an empirical proposition, the 'problem' of determining whether it is true is such that we know how to solve that problem by looking for its 'solution.' We can try to falsify the belief by looking to see if the conditions under which we would count it false actually obtain. In case of the riddle problem, searching for an answer can amount only to an intimation that an unforeseeable sense could be provided to what we can, as yet, only regard as an ungrammatical use of words.

My proposal, then, is that the related notions of riddle and revelation provide us with a first step away from the anti-realisms of recollection and recreation, and toward a genuinely realistic understanding of resolute Wittgensteinian remembrance. More specifically, the notion of revelation provides us with the first step toward an answer to what, in Chapter One, I called 'the question of remembrance.' It does so because revelation of the kind that Wittgenstein has described here incorporates a radical novelty akin to that which Kierkegaard finds in repetition. Might it be that Wittgenstein's answer to Meno's question can be, like Kierkegaard's, parsed as a matter of repetition as well? Might the answer to 'the question of remembrance,' in Wittgenstein, be repetition? If so, the realism that we will find in Kierkegaard's view of remembrance will also be found in Wittgenstein's. This is what I want to argue. As we saw in Chapter One, however, this way of answering the

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[104] See also PG, 377:

> Where you can ask, you can look for an answer, and where you cannot look for an answer you cannot ask either. Nor can you find an answer. / Where there is no method of looking for an answer, there the question cannot have any sense. – Only where there is a method of solution is there a question [...]. That is: where we can only expect the solution of the problem from some sort of revelation, there isn't even a question. To a revelation no question corresponds.

question of remembrance raises two other questions that also need to be answered if my proposal is to work.

The second question is the question of linguistic revisionism. We have considered Wittgenstein's protestations against the business of reforming the rules of language, and his insistence that his practice of remembrance does not involve our becoming aware of any new discoveries or inventions. However, as we have just seen, Diamond's comments about the role of revelation in Wittgenstein's philosophy suggest that the resolute remembrance of meaning is, after all, an encounter with something fundamentally new and that philosophy does, after all, preside over a revision of the rules that determine the meaning of words. The question of linguistic revisionism is the question of how Wittgenstein's impatience with language reform and the endless pursuit of novelty is supposed to hang together with the apparently legitimate role for language reform and novelty that is at work in revelation. Relatedly, of course, the element of novelty at issue here will need to be clearly distinguished from the preoccupation with novelty that we find in recreative, anti-realistic, accounts of meaning-remembrance. To come clear on these questions we need to take a closer look at the realism that we find in a repetitional account of remembrance. I do this in Chapter Five, by offering a deeper account of Kierkegaard's understanding of the self and self-remembrance as a matter of repetition. Thereafter, in Chapter Six, I submit that the Tractarian ethic invites us to accept a similar understanding of the self, and a similar repetitional and realistic account of remembrance.

Our Kierkegaardian considerations next chapter will also gesture at an answer to a second question that Diamond's analysis leaves open: How, exactly, at we supposed to think about the concept of revelation? Unless more is said about the matter, it will be unclear how we are not simply using this notion to slip metaphysics back into the picture under the banner of another name. My suggestion above was that the notion of revelation does not involve a metaphysical saying/showing distinction, because it does not involve a belief that revealed possibilities already exist in advance of their revelation, either within or beyond the bounds of sense. So far, though, this is just a bald assertion, and not obviously one that avoids making the metaphysical leap that I say it avoids. To substantiate my claim, I need to say more about the distinctly embodied form of intentional relation that, on my reading of Wittgenstein, we bear to such possibilities. This, too, will come out next chapter, in my study of Kierkegaard, with a little help from William James.

5. Self-Remembrance as a Model of Repetition and Realism

5.1. Introduction

As Climacus presents it, the fundamental paradox, or 'absurdity,' of Christianity is the Incarnation. "The absurd is that the eternal truth has come about in time, that God has come about, has been born, has grown up, etc., has come about as the single human being, indistinguishable from any other" (CUP, 177). This is the 'absolute beginning' of Christian history, where God undergoes a transformation. Without ceasing to be the eternal Father, He becomes the incarnate temporal Son. With this act, God comes to manifest the same paradoxical duality of time and eternity that we display in our own existence as a duality of body and soul, finitude and infinity, necessity and possibility, existence and essence or, to take the most general expression of the contrast in question, time and eternity (SUD, 13; see Dreyfus 2012, 103-107).

Of course, for Kierkegaard, there is an infinite difference between the divine person, Christ, and we merely human mortals. "The proposition that God has come into being in human form, was born, grew up, etc., is surely the paradox *sensu strictissimo*, the absolute paradox" (CUP, 182-83). We mortals are not paradoxical in this absolute sense. Nevertheless, we are paradoxical in a similar way, and it is along this axis of similarity that we can compare ourselves with Christ and attempt to follow His perfect example of how one manifests the eternal aspect of one's being in the course of one's temporal life. This imitation of Christ is what anti-Climacus has in mind when, anticipating Wittgenstein's use of the term, he writes that God is the *criterion* before which the faithful believer stands.[105] "Faith is: that the self in being itself and in willing to be itself is grounded transparently in God" (SUD, 82). When God becomes incarnate in Christ, being grounded in God means accepting Christ as the criterion of the self – the measure of the extent to which one's own life expresses the paradoxical harmony of eternity and time whose perfect expression is Jesus.

The Christian idea that eternity and time can be co-instantiated in a single being marks a radical break with earlier Greek philosophy. In this previous tradition, we see a metaphysical divide, or dualism, between the non-temporal and temporal aspects of reality. We see such dualism, for

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[105] If one does not 'stand before' God, in this sense, one is not a self at all, for it is only when one stands before God, as one's criterion, that one gains 'infinite reality.'

> [W]hat infinite reality the self gains by being conscious of existing before God, by becoming a human being whose criterion is God! A Cattle man who (if this were possible) is a self directly before his cattle is a very low self, and, similarly, a master who is a self directly before his slaves is actually no self – for in both cases a criterion is lacking. The child who previously has had only his parents as a criterion becomes a self as an adult by getting the state as a criterion, but what an infinite accent falls on the self by having God as the criterion! (SUD, 79)

example, in the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, which Plato has Socrates describe in the *Phaedo* (see Cullmann 2010, 19).[106] In this Platonist picture, the human essence is the eternal soul, and the eternal soul is alien to the temporal human body in which it is imprisoned for the duration of natural life. Death is liberation because it delivers the soul from the body and also from the rest of temporal creation, returning the soul to the eternal order of immutable verities to which it properly belongs.[107] To use the language of the last chapter, the *Phaedo* presents the eternal soul as being 'metaphysically transcendent' to the temporal human body in which the soul is temporarily and unfortunately housed.

As we have already seen in Kierkegaard, this Greek understanding of the truth about the self is part of an account of philosophical truth more generally. The essential truth (the essence) of anything whatever is imagined as a Platonic Idea metaphysically transcendent to the particular worldly things in which that essence is manifest. Accordingly, as Oscar Cullman reminds us, on this view Socrates "showed us how we serve the freedom of the soul, even in this present life, when we occupy ourselves with the eternal truths of philosophy. For through philosophy we penetrate into that eternal world of ideas to which the soul belongs, and we free the soul from the prison of the body" (ibid., 20). As we might put it, in the Greek tradition, the disembodied conception of self is mirrored in a 'disembodied' conception of philosophical truth more generally. Just as the invisible human soul is metaphysically transcendent to the visible human body, the invisible Form, or Platonic Idea, that is the true essence of any other entity, is metaphysically transcendent to the visible particulars that are its 'shadows' in the visible world. Cullmann goes on to describe how Christianity, and even Judaism before it, inaugurates a new dignity for both the visible human body and for visible creation more broadly.

> The Jewish and Christian interpretation of creation excludes the whole Greek dualism of body and soul. For indeed the visible, the corporeal, is just as truly God's creation as the invisible. God is the maker of the body. The body is not the soul's prison, but rather a temple, as Paul says (Corinthians 6: 19): the temple of the holy spirit! The basic distinction lies here. Body and soul are not opposites. God finds the corporal 'good' after He has created it. Death is accordingly something dreadful because the whole visible creation,

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[106] There are non-dualistic readings of Plato, and of the *Phaedo* in particular. In this dissertation I presuppose Cullman's more standard, dualistic, interpretation.

[107] "The soul, confined within the body, belongs to the eternal world. As long as we live, our soul finds itself in a prison, that is, in a body essentially alien to it. Death is, in fact, the great liberator. It loses the chains, since it leads the soul out of the body and back to its eternal home" (Cullmann 2010, 20).

including our body, is something wonderful, even if it is corrupted by sin and death. Wherever, as in Platonism, death is thought of in terms of liberation, there the visible world is not recognized as God's creation. (ibid., 30)

As Hubert Dreyfus puts it, Greek philosophy's error is that it regards the self as a *combination* of factors that, in fact, cannot be combined (Dreyfus 2012, 98-99). If we begin from the assumption that the harmony between body and soul is a matter of *combining* the two, we quickly conclude that such harmony is impossible, for body and soul are too qualitatively different for any such combination to occur. We naturally conclude that the true self can really only be identified with one set of factors or the other, either those that belong to eternity or those that belong to time. The remaining set of factors is then disregarded as belonging to a mere illusion of the self, rather than to one of the self's essential aspects. Breaking with Plato's idealism, philosophical materialists identify the self with the body rather than the soul. But when the materialist presumes, as he does, that the true self has to be either body or soul, but not both, he betrays his deeper Platonist presumption that any possible harmony between these determinations of eternity and time would have to take the form of a combination. From the Christian-Kierkegaardian perspective, both idealists and materialists correctly see that no such simple blending of body and soul – no such dissolution of the one into the other – is possible; their qualitative differences need to be preserved. However, both camps of philosopher incorrectly conclude that one or the other aspect of the self must, therefore, be rejected as inessential.[108]

With the onset of Judeo-Christian history, we begin to move away from this tendency to regard the eternal soul and the temporal body as mutually exclusive candidates for the role of the essence of the self, and we arrive that the thesis about the self that we saw Kierkegaard articulate in Chapter Two. Dreyfus situates that thesis in the post-Platonist religious tradition to which it belongs:

[A]ccording to the Judeo-Christian tradition both sets of factors were essential. The self is not a combination, but a synthesis [...]. [A] person's highest achievement was not to overcome this contradiction by getting rid of one or the other set of factors but to live in such a way as to fully express the tension between them. (Dreyfus 2012, 98-99)

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[108] Dreyfus provides the details: "For a long time thinkers argued over which set of factors was essential. Stoics, Augustinians, Cartesians, and idealists claimed that the soul was the essential self; Epicureans, Hobbes, and other sorts of materialists took sides with the body" (Dreyfus 2012, 98-99). My debts to Dreyfus will be evident throughout this chapter.

In the Old Testament, the emerging idea of a synthesis of eternity and time manifests itself as the eternal God's activity in the temporal world. It is *in time* that God creates the world, makes his covenant with the Hebrews, appears to his prophets, and so on (see Dreyfus 2012, 97-98). These signs of a break with any general dualism between what is infinite and what is finite correspond to a break with that more particular dualism that we see in the earlier Greek account of the self. However, as Dreyfus argues, only with the event of the Incarnation do we make a decisive break from the Greek's bifurcation between body and soul. Only when God enters time do we see that harmony between the temporal and eternal factors of the self is possible and that *both* sets of factors are essential to what we are. Christ represents (amongst other things) the possibility of a synthesis between soul and body, freedom of the will and deterministic causal necessity, human essence and human existence and, most generally, eternity and time.

> Jesus revealed that both sets of factors are equally essential and so can and must be brought into equilibrium. This is the truth about the essential nature of the self that went undiscovered until Jesus revealed it. In this way he established the Christian understanding of the self, in which we now live. This account leaves in despair all those who, like the Greeks, see the self as a combination, but it potentially saves all Christian selves by calling them to make an unconditional commitment to 'God in time as an individual being.' [...] All such Christian lives would thus be grounded in Jesus, the God-man, who, as the first object of unconditional commitment, first makes such salvation possible. (Dreyfus 2012, 108)

A Wittgensteinian analogy may help to fix the point in place, both by its similarities to, and its differences from, the relation between self and Christ (see PI, §130). The task of becoming a self was impossible before Christ in something like the way that being a meter-long was impossible before the establishment of the paradigm meter bar, the standard against which assessments of meter length, and the calibration of other meter bars, is made (see PI, §50). Of course, one salient difference between the relation between self and God, and the relation between a meter long slab of wood and the standard meter, is that the human being can never fully *be* the perfect unity of the temporal and the eternal in the way that slab of wood can indeed be a meter long (SUD, 79-80). A second salient difference will concern us later in this chapter: that neither the faithful self nor Christ, its criterion, can be grasped conceptually, or 'mediated,' as can both the slab of wood and the standard meter.

The foregoing can be summarized as an account of how, for Kierkegaard, Christianity is 'the truth of what it means to be a self,' and Jesus is the condition for the possibility of both self-

knowledge and spiritual salvation. Christ Himself is the truth of human existence. How so? He is the ever-unreachable standard of a unified harmony between time and eternity that we strive to approach in our own lives. Christ is the truth of what it means to be a self because, most fundamentally, the self is defined by its commitment to Christ as the criterion by which the self's perfection is measured.[109] In Christ, time and eternity are in perfect harmony and constitute the "prototype" (PV, 131) that one strives asymptotically to meet in one's own efforts to become a self.

But what does it mean to model one's life on Christ's example? In part, as we might put it, it involves a willingness to emulate, in the course of one's own life, that transformative activity of self-remembrance that God the Father undergoes when he 'remembers himself' as the incarnate Son. Just as the Incarnation is the moment in history when eternity and time find their harmonious expression in Christ, our acceptance of Christianity is the moment when the temporal and eternal aspects of our human being find their peaceful agreement in our own particular lives. Just as Christian history begins with God's self-transformation into Jesus, our individual Christian life begins with our self-transformation, when we accept Christ as the criterion of the self. Jacob Howland makes the point in his commentary on self-transformation in the *Postscript*: "When Climacus speaks of 'the moment,' he [...] has in mind not only the singular historical event of God's incarnation, but also the time at which the individual comes to embrace the truth of the Incarnation in faith" (Howland 2010, 112). The moment at which the eternal God Himself transforms into the embodied Christ is mirrored structurally in the moment of rebirth that occurs with the believer's acceptance of Christianity. Robert Bretall concurs: "This is the position that [Kierkegaard] is ready to defend – the Christian philosophy, according to which the absolute beginning was made in time nineteen and a half centuries ago – and continues to be made in the lives of individuals" (Bretall

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[109]Anti-Climacus writes:

> The criterion for the self is always: that directly before which it is a self, but this is the definition of 'criterion'. Just as only entities of the same kind can be added, so everything is qualitatively that by which it is measured, and that which is its qualitative criterion is ethically its goal; the criterion and goal are what define something, what it is [...]. (SUD, 79-80)

And the criterion and goal of the self is Christ. As the above passage continues, it can seem to undermine the point. We read:

> ...with the exception of the condition in the world of freedom, where by not qualitatively being that which is his goal and his criterion a person must have merited this disqualification. Thus, the goal and the criterion still remain discriminately the same, making it clear just what a person is not – namely, that which is his goal and criterion. (SUD, 79-80)

The claim that the human being is the exception to this idea that something is defined by its goal and criterion can seem to make the opposite point from the one that I have just attributed to Kierkegaard. Are we being told that, after all, the truth of the self is *not* defined by Christ? No. The point is that we are defined by this goal and criterion in the unique sense that are essentially *not* that criterion, in the sense that we can never completely measure up to it. Again, we can never be God in the way that a slab can be a meter long. The self is defined by Christ, its criterion, in the unique sense that the self is essentially not that which it aspires to be.

quoted in Kierkegaard 1946, 199). We might put it this way: When God remembers himself anew, as Christ, the meaning of 'God' undergoes a 'repetitional' remembrance in the Kierkegaardian sense. And when the rest of us are remembered anew at the dawning of our Christian lives, the meaning of our lives undergoes a repetitional remembrance of a structurally similar kind.

My aim in this chapter is to illustrate the logic of repetition as it emerges in Kierkegaard's account of faithful self-remembrance and to highlight the sense in which repetition provides us with a kind of realism that avoids the anti-realistic pitfalls of both recollection and recreation. In this chapter, then, I present the realistic thinking of remembrance, which, as I will go on to argue in Chapter Six, maps nicely onto the resolute reading of Wittgenstein.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

The above general characterization of what it means to model one's life on Christ remains intractably abstract. What does this 'rebirth' of the self involve, concretely? How is Christianity manifest in the life of the reborn individual? Our understanding of repetition's realism will only come fully into view when we have answered these more detailed questions. In the course of this chapter, I lay out five aspects of this Kierkegaardian-Christian process of self-transformation.

First, becoming a self will involve overcoming the dualistic and Platonist temptation to identify the self with an otherworldly soul, metaphysically transcendent to the body and alien to the temporal, finite world. Part of overcoming this temptation is overcoming the associated temptation to regard the finite world as a prison to which we are temporarily bound and, in the meantime, to seek happiness outside that world in the theoretical contemplation of eternal truths. Expressed as a general reorientation in our understanding of philosophical truth, what we have here is a renewed appreciation of truth's inherence in finitude. Expressed as a reorientation in our understanding of the self, what we have here is a renewed appreciation of the self's inherence in the body and the body's passionate interest in the everyday things of value. No longer will the ideal form of life be considered a life of 'detachment' characterized by a purely intellectual, or 'theoretical,' contemplation of otherworldly invisible verities and by the disparagement of visible creation. For a picture of this aspect of Kierkegaard's view, we will consider Kierkegaard's contrast between 'the knight of infinite resignation' and 'the knight of faith' in *Fear and Trembling*.

Second, becoming a self will involve an openness to the possibility of revelation that we found in the resolute reading, and which was ruled out by the recollective and orthodox reading of the *Tractatus*. Just as Christ constitutes the incursion of an unforeseeable sense into history, the

transformation of the self will involve the incursion of an unforeseeable sense into one's own life. Here we will see the essential role of novelty in the repetitional account of philosophical truth.

Third, Kierkegaard's way of thinking about the self will involve a movement away from a Pelagian conception of salvation, and toward an understanding of salvation as predicated upon divine grace.

Fourth, becoming a self will involve rethinking the meaning of 'remembrance.' When remembrance is reconceived as a matter of repetition, the remembrance of meaning need not presuppose that the meaning we remember was already present in the recesses of the mind prior to our remembering it. Paradoxically, we encounter the newly revealed meaning as being, and as having always been, the meaning we were darkly aware of, even though it was nowhere hidden in memory before the moment of its revelation (cf., PI, §60, §91-92, §102, § 126, §435). I argue that it is in this reinterpretation of remembrance that we find the distinctive realism of Kierkegaard's view. I illustrate this feature of repetition with a focus on Kierkegaard's autobiographical reflections in his text *The Point of View for My Work as An Author.*

These reflections of Kierkegaard's will be vague, and I will try to illuminate them by comparing them with views more clearly presented in the work of William James. In this connection, I return to the vital role of the body in Kierkegaard's account of the self, and I suggest that it provides us with a compelling solution to the problem of alternative grammars. In doing so, it helps us to overcome the worry with which we ended the last chapter. We worried that talk about alternative grammars – grammars that remain to be revealed – amounts to a pernicious attempt to gesture at a metaphysical truth that can be shown but not said. In clearing away this problem of alternative grammars, an embodied understanding of the self will clarify the notion of repetition and, thereby, repetition's realism.

Fifth, I clarify my interpretation of Kierkegaard's realism by placing it in relation to perspectives on realism that have recently been advanced by Charles Taylor, Lee Braver, and Jonathan Lear.

Sixth, I further illustrate and support the account of repetitional realism that I provide by showing how it solves a number of puzzles that continue to beset the interpretation of *Fear and Trembling.*

5.2. A Portrait of the Self as Synthesis of Body and Soul

5.2.1. Infinite Resignation, Detachment, and Self-Sufficiency

Kierkegaard sets forth his version of the Greek, dualistic conception of the self with his character, the knight of infinite resignation. His account allows us to describe more concretely how a Platonist-metaphysical dualism of soul and body manifests itself as a correspondingly metaphysical attitude of religious detachment. The knight of resignation's religious 'detachment style' becomes apparent when he imagines what he would do if he were in Abraham's position and was called by God to sacrifice Isaac. After hearing the call, Abraham maintains the "preposterous" (FT, 20) hope "that God would not require Isaac" (FT, 36; cf., FT, 35, 20). Conversely, the knight of resignation de Silentio would resign that hope, for he resigns all interest in the goods of the finite, temporal world. De Silentio writes: "I would have arrived too early in order to get it over sooner. But I also know what else I would have done. The moment I mounted the horse, I would have said to myself: Now all is lost, God demands Isaac, I sacrifice him and along with him all my joy – yet God is love and continues to be that for me" (FT, 35). De Silentio would say, he tells us: "'So maybe it is not your will that this should be; then I will give up my wish. It was my one and only wish, it was my blessedness. My soul is open and sincere; I am hiding no secret resentment because you denied me this'" (FT, 18).

There is undoubtedly something admirable in the knight of resignation's willingness to trust God's wisdom over his own (FT, 21), in his resistance to the trappings of resentment, and in his courageous willingness to abandon his 'one and only wish' (FT, 34). But we know that de Silentio's religious courage is not the courage of *faith* in the full Kierkegaardian sense of the word (FT, 34). The knight of resignation's love of God belongs to what Climacus calls "religiousness A" (CUP, 465), and genuine faith is what Climacus calls "religiousness B" (ibid.). Ronald L. Hall notes that, for Kierkegaard, "the greatest spokesman for religiousness A is a philosopher, Socrates" (Hall 2000, 10, 11), whose own resignation in the *Phaedo* is a version of the sort of religious 'detachment' that de Silentio wants to illustrate with the knight of resignation. Edward Mooney elaborates, emphasizing resignation's characteristically Platonist preoccupation with self-sufficiency:

> To escape painful vulnerability, Socrates devotes himself to resignation. His is not a mere denial of the value of worldly attachment, a kind of nihilism, but a resignation powered by an embrace of eternal virtue, an absolute good that gives him leverage against the weight of the worldly. Philosophy, as he says in the *Phaedo*, is a rehearsal for death, a letting go of the world [....] Letting go, resigning the world [he] grasp[s] the virtues of honesty, courage,

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freedom, and integrity – virtues that secure an eternal consciousness because they are not conditioned by threat, temptation, or corruption from worldly influence. (Mooney 1991, 141)

The knight of resignation exists at an exceptionally high level of the ethical life. Recall, at lower levels, one cannot so much as believe that God would call for Isaac's sacrifice (FT, 21, 112, 114), and the knight of resignation can indeed believe in this. Nevertheless, the knight's religiousness A remains a religiousness confined to a fundamentally faithless ethic and, indeed, a faithless ethic subtended by the sort of metaphysical detachment and metaphysical dualism a version of which we've found in Plato. Lacking here is Abraham's particular kind of orientation toward that which *transcends* established ethical grammar. Lacking here and that in virtue of which Abraham can be justified even when he lacks the distinctly epistemic sort of justification that involves being able to demonstrate one's righteousness to the human ethical community. The knight of resignation professes a love of God. Still, because he lacks faith, his love of God ultimately amounts to an 'otherworldly' religion of the kind that we see in the *Phaedo*, and of the kind that Nietzsche found in Christianity and so despised. As an adherent to religiousness A, the knight of resignation's practice of religious 'detachment' enervates, rather than energizes, his interest in the goods earthly existence (see Nietzsche 2003, Pt. 3, Pt. 5).

In making the movement of resignation, the 'knights of infinity,' as de Silentio also calls them, achieve their state of spiritual detachment. Resignation is an 'upward' movement, away from the finite world, and into the order of eternal ideas wherein these knights find their 'eternally valid' love of God (FT, 46; cf., FT, 48, 15). This movement by which they detach themselves, existentially, from the finite then allows them, spiritually, to 'return to' the finite just as Plato's philosopher, having grasped the truth of the Forms, returns to the cave of worldly illusions. But, in fact, their return to their finite is never quite complete, and they remain, like Plato's philosopher, strangers in a mundane world where they are never quite at home. "They make the upward movement and come down again, and this too is not an unhappy diversion and it is not unlovely to see. But every time they come down [...] they waver for a moment, and this wavering shows that they are aliens in the world" (FT, 41). Our knight's uncertain footing in the world is visible as a "trace of a timorous, anxious routine" (FT, 39-40) or as a "distant aristocratic nature" (FT, 39) that betrays his indifference to the everyday pursuits of finitude. After he makes the movement of resignation, the 'knight of infinity' no longer *cares* for the everyday earthly pursuits that formerly animated him (FT,

44-45; cf., Mooney 1991, 53; Lippitt 2003, 55), and the joy that he once took in those pursuits is eclipsed by an enduring existential pain.[110]

Kierkegaard illustrates the movement of resignation with the example of a young swain who has infinitely resigned all interest in the princess he loves. Note that the guiding motivation behind his detachment is the characteristically Platonist desire for self-sufficiency:

> From the moment he has made the movement, the princess is lost. He does not need the erotic titillation of seeing the beloved, etc. [....] He has grasped the deep secret that even in loving another person one ought to be sufficient unto oneself. He is no longer finitely concerned about what the princess does, and precisely this proves that he has made the movement infinitely. [...] [O]ne who has resigned infinitely is sufficient to oneself [....]. What the princess does cannot disturb him; it is only the lower natures who have the law for their actions in someone else's, the premises of their actions outside themselves. (FT, 44-45)

One way in which the knight of resignation secures his desired self-sufficiency is this: his well-being is no longer subject to the hazards of time and change that threaten all our hopes for particular earthly states of affairs. There is, however, a deeper sense in which the knight of resignation manifests his Greek preoccupation with self-sufficiency: he can make this movement of resignation, and secure this state of existential invulnerability, using the unaided resources of the human intellect alone. Speaking of himself as a knight of resignation, de Silentio clarifies that this is, indeed, the stumbling block that stands between him and faith, and causes his spiritual development to be arrested at the stage of infinite resignation. He cannot grasp the movement of faith because he cannot give himself over to possibilities that lie essentially beyond the reach of the human intellectual powers that mediate the Platonist philosopher's relationship with truth. He writes:

> I can perceive that it takes strength and energy and spiritual freedom to make the infinite movement of resignation; I can also perceive that it can be done. The next [movement] amazes me, my brain reels, for, after having made the movement of resignation, then by virtue of the absurd to get everything, to get one's desire totally and completely – that is over and beyond human powers, that is a marvel. (FT, 48)

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[110] The knight of resignation de Silentio makes the point in a further reflection on how he would have acted had he been asked to make Abraham's sacrifice:

> What was the easiest for Abraham would have been difficult for me – once again to be happy in Isaac! – for he who with all the infinity of his soul, *proprio motu et propriis auspiciis* [of his own accord and on his own responsibility], has made the infinite movement and cannot do more, he keeps Isaac only with pain. (FT, 35; cf., FT, 12, 36-37; cf., Mooney 1991, 50-52)

By my own strength I cannot get the least little thing that belongs to finitude, for I continually use my strength in resigning everything. By my own strength I can give up the princess, and I will not sulk about it but find joy and peace and rest in my pain, but by my own strength I cannot get her back again, for I use all my strength in resigning. On the other hand, by faith, says that marvellous knight, by faith you get her by virtue of the absurd. (FT, 50)

The movement of resignation is a "purely philosophical movement"(FT, 48) that one can make on one's own power, where faith will require the intervention of grace. De Silentio's active, heroic, voice, conveys his "human courage" (FT, 49), and his incapacity for the "humble courage" (FT, 49) of Abraham.[111]

Here we must remember that the knight of resignation is a kind of 'tragic hero' (FT, 34); he is a kind of Hegelian (see Evans 2006a, xxi; Lippitt 2003, 97-102). This is why he is able to believe only that which can be intelligibly expressed and justified within the received, public, grammar of ethics. De Silentio, one of our models of resignation, is "recollection's genius" (FT, 16; cf., 43-44) in the sense of 'recollection' that exists even in Hegel, who tries unsuccessfully to eschew the ahistorical recollective paradigm. It is in this capacity that he "has grasped the deep secret that [...] one ought to be sufficient unto oneself" (FT, 44). That self-sufficiency involves an otherworldly faith that forfeits all genuine care of the finite and adopts, instead, an ethic of metaphysical detachment fit not for a human being, but for the disembodied soul of the *Phaedo,* who retreats from the finite world into the distinctly intellectual activity of philosophical contemplation.

The knight of resignation is self-sufficient, then, for two reasons. First, he resigns his desires for the temporal goods of finitude and thereby renders himself invulnerable to the hazards of time and change that might prevent his satisfaction of those desires. Second, the knight is self-sufficient in the sense that he can achieve and sustain this desired invulnerability by the power of his own unaided will. For the knight of resignation, establishing one's eternally valid love of God means forfeiting our everyday joy in the finite and, indeed, any genuinely earthly happiness. There is pain in

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[111] "The act of resignation does not require faith, for what I gain in resignation is my eternal consciousness. This is a purely philosophical movement *that I venture to make when it is demanded and can discipline myself to make*, because every time some finitude will take power over me, I starve myself into submission until I make the movement, for my eternal consciousness is my love of God, and for me that is the highest of all. / Through resignation I renounce everything. I make this movement all by myself, and if I do not make it, it is because I am too cowardly and soft and devoid of enthusiasm and do not feel the significance of the high dignity assigned to every human being to be his own censor. [...] This movement I make all by myself, and what I gain thereby is my eternal consciousness in blessed harmony with my love for the eternal being" (FT, 48, emphasis added).

any such detachment from the world, but this bloodless brand of spiritual salvation is all that we can have if we maintain the Platonist-recollective preoccupation with self-sufficiency. "I can resign everything by my own strength and find peace and rest in the pain; [...] I can save my soul as long as my concern that my love of God conquer within me is greater than my concern that I achieve earthly happiness" (FT, 49). This is a repudiation of finitude in general, but at its centre is, as I would like to put it, a repudiation of the *body* in particular. I use 'the body,' here, in a broad sense of the term. I use it to encompass the joys and cares that normally animate human life, and also the natural, pre-reflective, patterns of perception and response to the world that characterize a life thus animated. Kierkegaard depicts this more animated, robustly human, form of religious life when he moves from describing the knight of resignation to describing the knight of faith.

5.2.2. Faith and Finitude

The knight of faith has felt the allure of faithless resignation and its otherworldly detachment, but he resists it. He remains joyfully enamoured not only of the worldly things that are most important to him but also of the everyday, humble, goods that naturally appeal to our bodily and passionate natures. The knight of faith's love of the earthy goods that are most important to him comes out clearly in Abraham's resolute hope that Isaac will be spared, even when that hope can be neither justified nor expressed with the resources of a faithless devotion to ethical grammar. The knight's love for finitude more generally, and the contrast between the earthly knight of faith and the otherworldly knight of resignation, comes out as a contrast between de Silentio's description of the sure-footed knight of faith, who we can call the 'faithful everyman,' and the unsteady, timorous, knight of resignation that we encountered earlier. One can do no better than the quote Kierkegaard's portrayal of the faithful everyman at length:

> His stance? It is vigorous, belongs entirely to finitude; no spruced-up burgher walking out to Fresberg on a Sunday afternoon treads the earth more solidly. He belongs entirely to the world; no bourgeois philistine could belong to it more. Nothing is detectable of that distant and aristocratic nature by which the knight of the infinite is recognized. He finds pleasure in everything, takes part in everything, and every time one sees him participating in something particular, he does it with an assiduousness that marks the worldly man who is attached to such things. He attends to his job. To see him makes one think of him as a pen-pusher who has lost his soul to Italian bookkeeping, so punctilious is he [....] In the afternoon, he takes a walk to the woods. He enjoys everything he sees, the swarms of people, the new omnibuses,

the Sound [....] Toward evening, he goes home, and his gait is as steady as a postman's. On the way, he thinks that his wife surely will have a special hot meal for him when he comes home – for example, roast lamb's head with vegetables [....] It so happens that he does not have four shillings to his name, and yet he firmly believes that his wife has this delectable meal waiting for him. If she has, to see him eat would be the envy of the elite and an inspiration to the common man, for his appetite is keener than Esau's. His wife does not have it – curiously enough, he is just the same. On the way he passes a building site and meets another man. They converse for a moment; in an instant he erects a building, and he himself has at his disposition everything required. The stranger leaves him thinking that he surely is a capitalist, while my admired knight thinks: Well, if it came right down to it, I could easily get it. He sits at an open window and surveys the neighbourhood where he lives: everything that happens – a rat scurrying under a plank across the gutter, children playing – engages him with an equanimity akin to that of a sixteen-year-old girl [....] In the evening, he smokes his pipe; seeing him one would swear it was the butcher across the way vegetating in the gloaming. With the freedom from care of a reckless good-for-nothing, he lets things take care of themselves. (FT, 39-40)

This long passage makes the very this-worldly aspect of faith amply clear. Notice, however, that this aspect of faith is not incompatible with a kind of religious detachment. Our knight of faith harbours no "secret resentment" (FT, 18) when he is denied the hot meal for which he hopes. Presumably, he would show the same equanimity if it turned out that he couldn't acquire the money for the ambitious building project that he speaks about with the man in the street. "[H]e lets things take care of themselves," (FT, 39-40), not in the manner of the cynical nihilist, indifferent to how things turn out in the world, but in the manner of Abraham who hopes ardently for Isaac, but who is willing to sacrifice Isaac if God does indeed require him to do so. In this knight of faith, we see the distinctly faithful form of religious detachment that Kierkegaard contrasts with the detachment that we find in the knight of resignation. In an ultimate sense, the well-being of the faithful person is not dependent upon his acquiring the particular worldly things he desires. However, unlike the world-weary knight of resignation, the knight of faith "belongs entirely to the world" (FT, 39). Abraham has faith for *this* life – the life he has with Isaac.[112] His faith is not merely a faith in an otherworldly life-to-come of

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[112] "In fact, if his faith had been only for a life to come, he certainly would have more readily discarded everything in order to rush out of a world to which he did not belong. But Abraham's faith was not of this sort, if there is such a faith at all, for actually it is not faith but the most remote possibility of faith that faintly sees its object on the most distant horizon but is separated from it by a chasmal abyss in which doubt plays its tricks" (FT, 20).

the kind that Socrates describes in the *Phaedo*, or which we find in other forms of philosophical pessimism that look for spiritual salvation in the idea that finitude is without value, and that our hopes for it ought to be curtailed by an awareness of that fact.[113]

In the knights of faith, we see a form of faith in which religious detachment is not the metaphysical form of detachment that we see in the *Phaedo* and in the knight of infinite resignation, where detachment is tied to a metaphysical dualism of soul and body. In the knights of faith, we see a kind of detachment appropriate to the Kierkegaardian-Christian conception of the human being as an essentially incarnate soul. In faith, just as the soul hangs in paradoxical harmony with the body, religious 'detachment' from the things of finitude hangs in a paradoxical harmony "with an assiduousness that marks the worldly man who is attached to such things" (FT, 39).[114]

5.3. Repetition and Novelty

Repetition is not the metaphysical (or speculative) sort of recollection that we found in Plato and Kant. Nor is it the metaphysical sort of recollection that we found in Hegel, and which Kierkegaard most often calls 'mediation.' As Mooney notes, "[r]epetition, mediation, and recollection are offered as alternative solutions to the problem of [...] the transition of self-development" (Mooney 1997, 286), and they correspond to different ways of thinking about what becoming a self involves. Repetition "will supplant or defeat the fashionable Hegelian reliance on 'mediation' and will be found superior to Greek 'recollection' – these being repetition's two metaphysical competitors" (Mooney 1997, 286). Repetition will also supplant the form of philosophical remembrance that we have called 'recreation,' and which we found in Sartre and in the reflective aesthete. The trouble with recollection, including the kind of recollection that is latent even in Hegelian mediation, is that it leaves no room for change, or novelty, in the truths that we remember. The trouble with recreation is that its preoccupation with change and novelty precludes the sense in which any movement of

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[113] William James offers the examples of Buddhism (James 2002, 39) and stoicism (James 2002, 52-53).

[114] I do not mean to suggest that what I have been describing as an extreme, 'metaphysical,' attitude of religious detachment from earthly goods is always *self-consciously* paired with a dualistic doctrine of a metaphysical detachment between the eternal soul that yearns 'for a life to come,' and a temporal body that desires the goods of the earthly life we presently have. It must be granted that we see the extreme, metaphysical, form of religious detachment in stoicism, for example, and the stoics did not explicitly endorse a corresponding metaphysical dualism of soul and body (see Brunschwig 2006). However, the whole thrust of the resolute objection to Mounce's orthodox reading has been that one can be committed to certain philosophical illusions without knowing it, and even while insisting that one rejects them (see Diamond and Conant 2004, 78). With this in mind, it could be argued that the stoics' metaphysical form of religious detachment involves an implicit commitment to the metaphysical dualism of body and soul that they explicitly disavow. However, for the purposes of my argument, we need only see that the metaphysical form of religious detachment goes naturally together with the metaphysical dualism of body and soul to which it is tied in the *Phaedo*. Metaphysical dualism about the nature of the self supplies a sort of justification for metaphysical detachment as a religious attitude.

remembrance is, after all, a *remembrance* of a meaning with which we were, in some sense, always already familiar.

We've seen that one unique achievement of Christianity is its expression, in the person of Christ, of the entwining of time and eternity that we seek to emulate in our own lives, and which is illustrated by the knight of faith's surefooted, robustly embodied, way of being in the world. Another achievement of the Christian picture is that it makes room for the element of novelty that is altogether lacking in recollection and misunderstood in recreation. Both the incursion of Christ into history and the incursion of Christian selfhood into the hitherto pre-Christian life of the convert involve a 'revelation' that, I submit, constitutes a helpful model for thinking about the Wittgensteinian notion of revelation that we canvassed last chapter. Here, revelation involves a disclosure of meaning that is genuinely and unforeseeably new. This essentially Christian insight is a profound development in philosophical thought for the same reason as is the notion that God became embodied: it marks a new significance for the role of *time* in philosophy. Time is the place of growth and change, and death and rebirth, and its prominence in Christianity marks a turn away from the Greek-recollective picture of philosophical truth as an order of timeless, fixed, ahistorical, and immutable Ideas.

Recall what Cullmann noted about the Greek view that the essence of the self is a purely eternal soul. The Greek denigration of the body is reflected in two regions of Greek thought. The first is the Greek view that the highest form of life involves the distinctly cerebral, 'disembodied' activity of philosophical contemplation. The second is the notion that what is most worthy of such contemplation is the order of eternal and 'disembodied' verities to which our eternal soul belongs. This dualistic elevation of eternity over time not only fails to acknowledge the importance of the body and its life-interests; it also fails to acknowledge the possibility of genuine novelty, which, like the body, belongs to the domain of time and change. The dignity of novelty, like the dignity of the body, is first expressed when eternity enters time with the Incarnation, and Christ becomes the criterion of the self. Dreyfus stresses this aspect of the contrast between the Greek and Christian pictures:

> Greek metaphysics tells us that the objects of theory are timeless, abstract, conceptual structures and that they are, therefore, the most real. Nothing important happens in time; there cannot be anything radically new, just as endless repetition of the cosmos and the events in the world. Therefore, according to Plato, you can live the best life if you cultivate a theoretical, detached frame of mind and die to your temporal embodied self. Indeed, when

your rational soul merges with the rational structure of reality you will become a 'friend of God,' and so become eternal. (Dreyfus 2012, 97-98)

Things are different in Christianity:

> After God's Incarnation, people live in a new and different world. For the Greeks nothing is radically new. People as they grow realize their potential, like a tree growing from a seed. For the Christians, on the other hand, radical transformation of the self is possible. People can be reborn; they can become new beings. (ibid.)

Once more, then, from the Christian perspective, achieving self-knowledge[115] is not a matter of unearthing a truth about oneself that is pre-given but hidden in the recollective memory. Rather, achieving self-knowledge is a matter of becoming a new person. This involves coming to 'remember' something about oneself which, in some sense, was not true of oneself before the moment of self-transformation in which one is reborn and remembered anew.

Christian rebirth does not only inaugurate a renewal of the self. More profoundly, it inaugurates a renewal of the world in general. Climacus offers us the following comparison of the 'Socratic' account of selfhood, where the condition of becoming a self is one's own recollective philosophical power, and the account of selfhood that we find in Christian thought, where the condition of becoming a self is the event of God's revelation of Himself in Christ. On the Greek view, we always occupy the same 'world' of truths, those that we can recollect and which, once recollected, permit us to foresee the whole static future of philosophical truth to come. Conversely, on the Christian picture, the learner begins in a 'state of Error,' and is essentially devoid of the truth about who he is. This is why the encounter with that truth involves his being reborn in so radical a way that he becomes a new person. By that same event of rebirth, he is born into a world that is also so radically new as to have been hitherto unforeseeable. Climacus explains in the *Fragments*:

> When the disciple is in a state of Error (and otherwise we return to Socrates) but is not the less a human being, and now received the condition and the truth, he does not become a human being for the first time, since he was a man already. But he becomes another man; not in the frivolous sense of becoming another individual of the same quality as before, but in the sense of becoming a man of a different quality, or, as we may call him, *a new creature* [....] / In so far as the learner was in Error, and now receives the Truth and with it the condition for understanding it, a change takes place within him like the change from non-being to being. But this transition from non-being to being is the transition we call birth.

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[115] I am using the term loosely here. As we know, in Kierkegaard 'knowledge' of the self is not an epistemic matter.

Now, one who exists cannot be born; nevertheless, the disciple is born. Let us call this transition the new birth, as an individual human being knowing nothing as yet about the world into which he is born. (F, 22-23)

In Platonism, the remembrance of the self, in particular, was part and parcel with a recollection of philosophical truth more generally, and remembrance in both cases – the particular and the general – was a matter of recollecting a fixed, static, structure. On Kierkegaard's alternative picture, the remembrance of self is, once again, bound with a remembrance of the world more generally, but now remembrance involves a renewal of self and world that is lacking in the Platonist account. The moment of the self's transformation into something new coincides with a more general transformational renewal of the world as a whole. The transformation involves the self now being able to see the world under an aspect hitherto unavailable.

We can see here that, despite the troubles with his understanding of Christianity, Judge William was right about this: the emergence into Christian selfhood includes the establishment of the self in terms of a singular, life-unifying, and eternal meaning that structures our entire outlook on things. For the person prior to the moment of rebirth, the life and world into which he is about to be born is *unthinkable* in the sense familiar from Chapter Three's discussion of Kierkegaard and Bernard Williams, and in the way that nothing is essentially unthinkable on the recollective view. The logic of the matter is lucidly described by Climacus, when he asks himself the following about the 'hypothesis' of this possibility of rebirth:

But is the hypothesis here thinkable? [...] Before we reply, let us ask ourselves from whom we may expect an answer to our question. The being born, is this fact thinkable? Certainly, why not? But for whom is it thinkable, for the one who is born, or the one who is not born? This latter supposition is an absurdity which could never scarcely have entered anyone's head; for the one who is born could scarcely have conceived the notion. When one who has experienced birth thinks of himself as born, he conceives this transition from non-being to being. The same principle must also hold in the case of the new birth. [...] But who then may be expected to think the new birth? Surely the man who has been born anew, since it would of course be absurd to imagine that one not so born should think it. Would it not be the height of the ridiculous for such an individual to entertain this notion? (F, 24-25)

It would. Before we have been reborn into the faith, the notion of such a rebirth is the paradoxical notion with which we have been grappling in our discussion of Wittgensteinian revelation: the notion of still-inexpressible, unthinkable, sense. It is because such sense cannot be expressed with

the resources of the pre-Christian understanding of self and world that our eventual acceptance of such sense requires that our understanding of self and world be renewed *in toto*.

Mooney notes that the same renewal of self and world can be found in the story of Job, and in the story of Abraham and Isaac. "The world delivered [to Job] is filled with magnificence and power, the wonder of the heavens, the stars, the sea and all its creatures – things the same yet born anew [....], as his world is renewed, so is he" (Mooney 1997, 299). In his comment on Kierkegaard's treatment of the story of Abraham and Isaac, Mooney points to the paradoxical quality of repetition that we need to bear in mind, and which we will consider from closer up in a moment: somehow, the newly revealed meaning registers with us as *the same* meaning that our life had always had.

> Repetition is [...] the grant of one's familiar life as it was previously possessed [....] It is also, paradoxically, the delivery of new and surprising meaning. God will appear to Job in an extraordinary whirlwind, in violation of all natural expectations; and in the context of Abraham's crisis, what could be less anticipated than God's demand for Isaac or Isaac's subsequent return? (Mooney 1997, 287)

The meanings of self and world that we arrive at through repetition *transcend* the meanings that are already laid down in the established grammar of ethics, and which we might have recollected at will.

This Christian conception of transcendence differs importantly from the Greek recollective view. Cullman gestures at the difference in question when he highlights how the different accounts of the relation between soul and body that we see in Greek and Christian thought go hand in hand with correspondingly different accounts of the afterlife. Where the Greeks believe in the immortality of the soul, Christians believe in the resurrection of the body. The notion of radical novelty plays no part in the Greek doctrine, for the Greek soul is always immutably the same, both before death and after. Conversely, the 'resurrection body' that is provided at the Christian eschaton involves a fundamentally and unforeseeably novel departure from the 'fleshly' body in which we are incarnated, and which conditions our experience of the world in the course of natural life. "The contrast, for the Christian, is not between the body and the soul, not between outward form and Idea, but rather between the creation delivered over to death by sin and *new* creation; between the corruptible, fleshly body and the incorruptible resurrection body" (Cullmann 2010, 31, emphasis added) – the body that is, as yet, unthinkable for us and which will, on the Christian account, condition our as yet unthinkable experience of the world to come.

In *The Concept of Anxiety*, Kierkegaard contrasts repetition with recollection in a comment on the nature metaphysics, or 'first philosophy.' "We might call it pagan" he writes, "its nature being

that of immanence, or use the Greek term 'recollection,' and understand by *secunda philosophia* that whose nature is transcendence or repetition" (Kierkegaard 2014, 27). How, exactly, are we to understand the transcendence of repetition and its advance over the immanence of Greek recollection? We will focus on the issue of realism in Section 5.5, below. We can anticipate that discussion, however, by noting how the Greek and Christian pictures of the soul's eternal reward suggest different pictures of realism or, what comes to the same thing in my analysis, transcendence. The Greek picture suggests a view of transcendence that involves what Mulhall calls a 'vertical' relation between the changing things of time and the changeless truths above them in a Platonist realm of the Forms (see Mulhall 2001, 92). By contrast, the Christian picture suggests that transcendence involves a 'horizontal' relation between the earthly existence that we know from the perspective of the embodied creatures that we already are, and a *new* earth that remains to be revealed, and which we will know only from the perspective of the new resurrection bodies that will ultimately be provided (Cullmann 2010, 31). The vertical conception of transcendence is an ahistorical metaphysic. It imagines an order of immutable, timeless truths, pre-given from the outset of history and supervening upon the changing and temporal particulars of the world in which those timeless truths are somehow manifest. The horizontal conception of transcendence maintains the idea of timeless and eternal truths but regards them as emerging in a moment of new creation, as needing to be revealed in the course of history, and as lacking any substantial being prior to that revelatory moment. Though it differs importantly from the vertical picture of transcendence, the horizontal picture is nevertheless realistic because it acknowledges that the revealed truth has its origin *outside* the self, in the broad sense of 'self' that includes the whole order of 'grammatical' truth that can be discovered or created through the efforts of the unaided human will. On this view, the structures of the self include the structures of the individual mind (Kant), the meanings laid down in established social convention (Hegel), and the creations of sense drummed up in the fantasies of Murdoch's existentialist or Kierkegaard's reflective aesthete. M. Jamie Ferreira makes the point I am angling at, not in connection with revelation at the eschaton, but with revelation as it enters into the course of a human life, for example in the moment of rebirth when one makes the 'leap' into faith. The self-understanding at which Abraham arrives when Isaac is returned to him, like the self-understanding provided to the Christian convert, "is an understanding initiated from outside the self, not an immanent intellectualism […], embracing the Paradox is […] embracing a new self-understanding and a concomitant new understanding of the world" (Ferreira 1997, 229). As

Diamond put it in her study of Wittgensteinian revelation, this new understanding of self and world is provided to us *from without* (Diamond 1991, 281).

What cannot be forgotten is that the new self is, at the same time, the old. But how can this be? How could *I* be someone different than I am? In that event, wouldn't I no longer be my former self at all? If my coming to grasp the truth of who I am involves my being completely transformed, in what sense is my coming to grasp the truth of who I am a matter of *remembering* who I always was? Here we encounter the deep question that the logic of repetitional remembrance is meant to address. Prior to my rebirth, the question of whether I might find *myself* in the Christian form of life is, I submit, a riddle question in the Wittgensteinian sense that we saw Diamond explicate at the end of Chapter Four. Thus, the structure of Kierkegaardian repetition will help us to understand the structure of riddle and revelation in Wittgenstein. It will do so because repetition permits us to see identity even in *essential* differences that mark the self's development over time. More carefully, for our purposes, the concept of repetition is intriguing for two reasons. First, it constitutes a model that helps us to understand the process of ethical self-transformation that we will see Wittgenstein describe in the *Tractatus*, next chapter. Second, and more generally, it is intriguing in connection with Wittgenstein's early ethical claim that "Man *is* the microcosm" (NB, 84; cf., T, 5.6.3) of the larger, logically structured world. As I will read it, this curious claim suggests, amongst other things, that the 'repetitional' structure of the *Tractatus* picture of what it means to remember the meaning of the 'the self' is mirrored in the *Tractatus* picture of what it means to remember the logic of language very generally. Accordingly, the same realism we will find in the Tractarian account of the self will also be discernible in the *Tractarian* account of logic. As I will argue in greater detail later on in the present chapter, when Abraham is reborn into faith, he is reborn into an awareness that the 'grammar' of ethical life can be remembered anew, just as he was remembered anew himself. So too, I want to argue, does the transformed ethical self of the *Tractatus* – the self remembered anew in *that* text – relate to the logic of his language as a logic that stands continually open to being remembered anew in a structurally similar way, namely, by way of repetition.

5.4. Beyond Self-sufficiency

If the truth were already given in the learner's intellect, as it is in the recollective picture, his discovery of that truth wouldn't require self-transformation of the radical kind that I have just described. In recollection, the learner need only unearth a truth he already intellectually possessed. Recall, this intellectual pre-possession of innate ideas is essential Socrates' solution to the Meno

paradox. Kierkegaard's Christianity constitutes a significant departure from this recollective solution to the paradox and marks a new significance for the moment of learning when the truth is, not unearthed by the willfully recollecting subject, but, provided to him by grace.[116] This Christian picture of the learner as being essentially incapable of understanding the truth on his own is thus paired with a picture of the teacher (who is ultimately God Himself, as we will see) as being essentially required. "[I]f the learner is to acquire the Truth, the teacher must bring it to him; and not only so, but he must also give him the condition necessary for understanding it. For if the learner were in his own person the condition for understanding the Truth, he need only recall it" (F, 17).

Now, I have said that the recollective view that the truth is 'hidden within' us captures the associated recollective point that the truth we seek can be brought to mind through an effort of the will. We picture the second, more fundamental, idea to ourselves when we envision the truth as being hidden inside the self because it seems natural to assume that what is already inside the self can also be called to mind at will. When we say, with the Christian, that the essence of the self is *not* originally within us, we are using a different picture to capture the opposite thesis about the relation between the will and self-knowledge. We are expressing the ineliminable necessity of grace in the development of such knowledge. Kierkegaard has anti-Climacus speak to the point when he describes the fool's errand of "in despair willing to be oneself" (SUD, 14). This character is in despair because he knows that he is not yet a self and, hopelessly, "now with all his power seeks to break that despair by himself and by himself alone – he is still in despair and with all his presumed effort only works himself all the deeper into deeper despair" (SUD, 14). As we've seen, in the state of faithful selfhood that we are after, this despair is completely overcome when we acknowledge the self's need for spiritual resources that come from beyond the ambit of the self's own will.[117]

In this chapter, I have so far described two senses in which, for Kierkegaard, the properly constituted self is not the ground of its own being and the mechanism of its own salvation. First, as we saw in the case of infinite resignation, the faithless self is the ground of its own being in the sense

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[116] "[If the moment] is to have decisive significance, the seeker must be destitute of the Truth up to the very moment of his learning it; he cannot even have possessed it in the form of ignorance, for in that case the moment becomes merely occasional. What is more, he cannot even be described as a seeker [...] He must therefore be characterized as beyond the pale of truth, not approaching it like a proselyte, but departing from it; or as being in Error" (F, 16-17).

[117] Anti-Climacus writes:

> The self cannot by itself arrive at or remain in equilibrium and rest by itself, but only in relating to itself to that which has established the whole relation [...] This then is the formula which describes the state of the self when despair is completely eradicated: in relating to itself and in willing to be itself, the self is grounded transparently in the power that established it. (Kierkegaard quoted in Dreyfus 2012, 103)

Here I deviate my usual use of the Hong and Hong translation of SUD. I use the Hannay translation (2004) and, as indicated, I borrow the abridgement from Dreyfus.

that its kind of 'salvation,' being fit for a disembodied soul, is indifferent to the goods of finitude and, therefore, is entirely invulnerable to the hazards of time and change upon which the acquisition of those goods depends. Second, the self can achieve this state of invulnerability using only its own intellectual powers. This involves the self's ability to justify its beliefs in terms of received epistemic-grammatical norms, that is, norms that we *can* recollect at will. Now, when the knight of faith goes beyond self-sufficiency, he goes beyond this desire for 'objective,' epistemic, justification in two ways. First, faith is not sustained by a justification that *negates* the illusion which faith comes to replace. Second, faith involves an essential openness to what lies outside the self and, therefore, to what cannot be demonstrated by familiar epistemic means. These two specific ways in which faith cannot be justified will be key to our understanding of faith's realism. We need briefly to review and reframe them now.

5.4.1. Beyond Retrospective Negation: Allison on Climacus' Revocation

We've seen that an ability to justify *p* presupposes a capacity to doubt *p,* and a capacity to doubt *p* presupposes that we can form some imaginative picture of what it would be like for *p* to be false. In this way, the desire to justify a liminal belief places us outside a resolute commitment to the truth of that belief. We find ourselves vividly imagining what it would be like for the belief to be false and, thus, thinking what Williams calls 'one thought too many,' even if we are able to satisfy ourselves that the belief is justified. This is incoherent, for if a belief pays a genuinely liminal role, "what lies on the other side of the limit will simply be nonsense" (T, 9). What lies on the other side it will not be an opposing, lesser-justified belief with an intelligible propositional content which we negate, in thought, when we cleave to the article of faith. In Wittgensteinian terms, a faith supported by epistemic reasons would be a faith the content of which we conceptualize as a bipolar proposition that is better justified than some countervailing proposition the truth of which we negate. But faith sustained in this way would be irresolute.

One of the functions of indirect communication has been to tempt us with the illusion that faith *can* be understood in epistemic terms so that we can then divest ourselves of that illusion and arrive at a properly subjective understanding of the truth. Henry Allison finds an instance of such indirect communication in the general presentation of essential truth with which Climacus begins the *Postscript*. This initial account *contrasts* the subjectively appropriated truth of Christianity with the objective truth of third-personal reason. Later in the text, Climacus subtly signals us to the incoherence in his, earlier, contrastive characterization of this inherently subjective truth:

> When subjectivity is truth, the definition of truth must include an expression of the antithesis to objectivity, a memory of that fork on the road, and this expression will at the same time serve as an indication of the tension of inwardness. Here is such a definition of truth: *the objective uncertainty maintained through appropriation in the most passionate inwardness is truth*, the highest truth there is for someone existing. (CUP, 171)

In the above-quoted translation, Alistair Hannay renders *Sandhedens Bestemmelse* as 'definition of truth.' Henry Allison prefers 'conceptual determination of the truth,' words that convey the point that Allison goes on to explain: Climacus is offering us a "conceptualization of 'the principle of subjectivity.' But to conceptualize it is to objectify it and, as we have seen, to speak objectively about inwardness (and Christianity, it will be remembered, is the highest form of inwardness) is stupidity" (Allison 1967, 459).

Nothing much hangs upon the difference between Hannay's translation of the text and Allison's. Allison's important point is this: to think of the truth of subjectivity (whose highest form of Christianity) as a *definition*, or 'conceptual determination,' is to think of it in contrastive terms, namely as the 'antitheses to objectivity.' This, however, is to think of the truth of subjectivity as the result of a typical Hegelian, speculative-meditational, movement from thesis to antithesis, from selfhood, as understood within the categories of third-personal objectivity, to the negation of that understanding and to acceptance of the consequent understanding of truth as subjectivity. What we have here is merely an illusion of the movement from speculation to Christianity because the movement is being carried out *within* the speculative, third-personal, logic of mediation. Later in the text, Climacus explicitly acknowledges the evident incoherence in this characterization of what, on the one hand, is supposed to be the Christian *alternative* to speculation but which, on the other hand, cannot be that, because this 'alternative' is being presented as a consequence of speculative-mediation. So presented, "Christianity becomes a moment within speculation" (CUP, 315) and, thereby, becomes a mere counterfeit of Christianity.[118] Allison describes Climacus' predicament as

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[118] Climacus elaborates:

> [E]ven if speculation assumes a distinction between Christianity and speculation, if only for the satisfaction of being able to mediate them, as long as it still fails definitely and decisively to mark the distinction, one must ask: Is not *mediation* speculation's idea? Consequently, when the opposites are mediated, they (Christianity and speculation) are not equal before the mediator, but rather Christianity becomes a moment within speculation, and the latter gains the upper hand because it already has the upper hand and because that instance of balance in which the opposed entities are weighed against each other never occurred. (CUP, 315)

Why did this moment never occur? Because the attempt to measure the truth of Christianity in meditational terms by contrasting it to a possibility that it is supposed to negate – the attempt of speculation – is to fail to grapple with the truth of Christianity altogether. Here we have not compared speculation and Christianity, but speculation and a counterfeit of Christianity that speculation fashions in its own self-image. The problem, as Climacus describes it, is that

follows: "In propagating the doctrine in this manner he has turned it into a result – an objective truth, a theory about the significance of subjectivity, and thus contradicted himself" (Allison 1967, 457). As Allison argues, Climacus leads us beyond the contradiction by telling us that the Postscript's *argument* for Christianity is to be 'revoked' in the end. It is, in other words, fundamentally misguided to think that the Christian truth of the self can be communicated directly through the provision of third-personal reasons, reasons that might be supposed to negate the illusions of the self that bedevil our interlocutor and, through that negation, *demonstrate* the Christian truth.[119] The crucial idea, again, is this: a true understanding of Christian selfhood cannot be understood by contrast to a false proposition that is negated in the Christian self-consciousness. There is a sense in which the Christian retains "a memory of that fork on the road" (CUP, 171) at which he abandoned his illusion and entered into the truth of subjectivity. But since, from within the Christian truth, he does not relate to the illusion as negated propositional content, Christianity cannot be regarded as objectively, epistemically, justified by contrast to that negation. Hence, the person at home in the subjectivity of Christian truth does not relate to that past moment at which he chose to abandon his illusion for truth in the way that one might relate to some past point in one's life when one chose to cross a boundary between two geographical territories, *both* of which one can still, retrospectively, grasp in thought. To choose the path of truth is to become so at home in truth that one can no longer grasp that choice in clear relief against an understanding of the illusion that one chose to rescind. Accordingly, one cannot be justified in one's commitment to the truth in the epistemic sense that would involve a negation of any such intelligibly grasped illusion.

> At the point where the path branches off (and where that is cannot be said objectively, just because it is subjectivity) objective knowledge is placed in abeyance. All he has objectively is uncertainty, but it is just this that tightens the infinite passion of inwardness, and truth is precisely this venture of choosing an objective uncertainty with the passion of the infinite. (CUP, 171)

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this speculative effort to present Christianity within the fold of mediation is that "it had made Christianity into a philosophical doctrine"(CUP, 318), a truth to be bandied about in the objective, third-personal terms of speculative thought, sapping Christianity of its essential subjectivity and rendering it 'Christianity' in name only. "In a state where a rebellious cabinet has seized power it removed the king while ruling in his name; that is how speculation behaves in mediating Christianity" (CUP, 316).

[119] "[U]nless we are to view Kierkegaard as guilty of the very stupidity which he went to such great lengths to condemn, we must view the whole 'argument' as a jest, as an expression of the author's artistry, the intent of which is not to 'prove' the superiority of Christianity [...], but rather to help us realize existentially what it means to become a Christian, and to see that the only valid concept which we can form about Christianity is that it defies conceptualization" (Allison 1967, 459-60).

The point here is crucial enough to risk over-emphasizing. Our temptation is to regard the 'leap' into faith as a point in history where we abandon a certain fully intelligible form of life for another. But, as we saw in Judge Williams' letters to the reflective aesthete, this is not the nature of the case. Since the pre-Christian view of things turns out to be only an illusion, our whole understanding of our history becomes saturated with the faithful understanding of self and world at which we have arrived. This is why, after the leap into the 'subjective truth' of Christianity, we cannot retrospectively view the past moment at which we accepted the faith as what James would call a 'live option' (James 2000, 199-200). In retrospect, we can no longer relate to our choice for the faith as a matter of abandoning one intelligible, but false, form of life for another. Rather, the idea of a life before faith registers with us as a mere illusion of a life. Faithlessness no longer strikes us as the genuine option, to be chosen or not chosen, that we once thought it was.

The same logic, we are finding, characterizes the spiritual movement made by the reader of the *Postscript*. This reader transitions from Climacus' objective illusion of the faith into the subjective truth that that illusion positions us to accept. When we take seriously that the truth of Christianity, unlike the truth of a bipolar proposition, cannot be understood in relation to a proposition expressing a false but intelligible understanding of Christianity, we will not regard the moment at which we accepted the faith as a rupture between two independently intelligible stages of our life's narrative. Instead, our understanding of our past prior to our Christian rebirth is, as we might put it, dismembered and remembered anew, in terms of the Christian truth we've now come to accept. As we might put it, our retrospective relationship to the illusions of our past is not a matter of *retrospective negation,* for we see that, in the illusions of our past, there is nothing there to negate.

I linger on these details because they will be crucial when it comes to understanding the realism of repetition. These details also need to be stressed, however, because the 'blindness' to the illusions of our past that I have just described is curiously analogous to our similar 'blindness' to revealed truth in advance of its revelation, which will also be key to the account of realism we are charting here. Just as our choice to reject our past illusions is not a matter of retrospective negation, our choice to accept the revealed truth is not a matter of what we might call 'prospective affirmation.' In both cases, the realism of Kierkegaard's view will be deeply tied up in the conception of human freedom that belongs to the business of 'choosing,' or declining to choose, to regard the world from the perspective of the world of meaning to which one is constitutionally blind. In this connection, we need to say more about the sort of freedom at issue in such matters of fundamental choice.

5.4.2. Beyond Prospective Affirmation: Ferreira on Freedom and the Leap into Faith

Since the revealed meaning of faith is unthinkable to the self before its revelation, there is a crucial sense in which the self cannot *will* that meaning into its own awareness. This can't be done because, as we've seen, a man prior to faith has, as yet, no concept at all of what he is to will. He has no idea of the world into which he is about to be born. I should be careful to qualify what I mean here, for there is a sense in which the human will *is* undeniably a fundamental aspect of the movement into faith which is, after all, "a form of the will" (FT, 249).

Faith is *not* a matter of the human 'will' in the sense of that term that we find in Murdoch's *Metaphysics of Morals*. She writes: "the word 'will' should, in my view, in philosophy and strictly speaking, be given a limited use, where something like an 'effort of the will' or a 'force' or imposition of will is indicated. This is close to the ordinary usage where 'will' often refers to certain kinds of self-consciously effortful movement" (Murdoch 1992, 456). We can add that this ordinary usage of the word also captures paradigm cases of self-consciously effortful *creation*. In these cases, the human mind grasps an idea which it then tries to realize in the world, so that the idea functions as a blueprint, pre-possessed in consciousness, which guides the creative activity. On the reading I have offered, such a picture of the will is also at work in Kierkegaard's reading of Platonist recollection and, in particular, in Socrates' answer to Meno's question about how one can look for something that one does not already know of in advance. Unlike a recollected truth, a revealed truth cannot be thought of as a 'willful' human creation in this sense of the will that presupposes any such self-sufficiency. Why not? Because, when it comes to revealed truth, the will has nothing to guide the supposedly creative effort. The will is passive in this fundamentally receptive form of attention to the still unrevealed sense. As willing agents, we are the mercy of a power beyond ourselves, which may or may not provide us with the grammatical resources upon which we can *thereafter* draw in our more characteristically willful creative endeavours. The kind of will, and freedom, and choice at work here is not the will, and freedom, and choice of either recreative or recollective subjectivism.

Should we say that this non-subjectivist use of the will is *creative*? There is indeed, I think, a sense in which Abraham can be said to participate in, or facilitate, the creation of the truth that is revealed to him. It is Abraham *himself* – the free and responsible agent – who is willingly attentive to the call from God, and who has "the courage of faith" (FT, 49, cf., FT, 30-35, 42) required to heed that call when it comes. In this aspect of Kierkegaard's view, we find the sense in which repetitional remembrance offers us a realism that charts that difficult course between recollective and recreative anti-realism. Correspondingly, the freedom at work in this particular use of attention charts the

difficult course between the freedom of recollective subjectivism, which simply calls up a truth already pre-given in the recesses of the mind, and the freedom of recreative subjectivism, which simply invents a meaning from out of the self, which the self then adopts at will. Unlike the freedom to recollect truth, and the freedom to recreate it, the freedom to accept a repetition of truth acknowledges that the human being is not sufficient unto itself to secure the truth that it remembers.

Focusing on the Kierkegaardian 'leap' into Christian selfhood, M. Jamie Ferreira offers us an analogy to clarify the freedom of the will at issue in the kind of cases that concern us. She has us consider the choice to see a hitherto unseen and unimagined *Gestalt* in an ambiguous image of the Jastrow duck-rabbit variety, where the image can be viewed as either rabbit or duck, a young woman or an old crone, etc. In such cases, we initially see only one possibility. At some point, after concentrated attention or perhaps coaching, a different figure discloses itself to us. Seeing the alternative *Gestalt* is not the direct or immediate result of any decision or volition since the two possible *Gestalts* are not initially arrayed before the mind's eye as options between which to choose. We can decide to look for the figure that we are told is there and cannot yet see. However, in 'looking,' we "cannot even be described as a seeker" (F, 16-17) in the recollective or recreative sense that belongs to the ordinary conception of the will that we have just seen Murdoch describe. Recognizing the new and qualitatively different *Gestalt* is not the direct result of willing, or the necessary result of the effort to look for it (Ferreira 1997, 217).

To say, as Ferreira does, that the choice of the self is not an act of the *voluntary* will is not to say that there is no activity of the will, and so no genuine freedom, at work here at all. It is to say, rather, that there is an element of passivity in this movement of the will, which is, nevertheless, *active* in its receptivity to the unforeseen *Gestalt*. Since the leap into Christian faith is the work of just such an active receptivity, the leap is no ordinary, volitional, kind of choice but, nevertheless, as Kierkegaard writes, "the leap is the category of decision" (CUP, 84), and "is essentially at home in the realm of freedom" (Kierkegaard quoted in Ferreira 1997, 215). As Ferreira puts it, "the qualitative change that occurs in a *Gestalt* shift can be free in the sense that it is not compelled (either physically or rationally), yet it is not self-consciously intentional nor does it involve an explicit acknowledgment of a variety of options" (Ferreira 1997, 219). Whatever else the will to Christian selfhood involves, minimally, it involves "a richer sense of willing than that normally thought to be involved in paradigmatic selections among options" (ibid., 228). This use of the free will involves choosing something the 'acquisition' of which we cannot so imagine in advance of our choosing it, and losing something the loss of which we cannot imagine losing before it is gone. What is lost are

the illusions that trouble the outgoing *Gestalt* of self and world, which are eclipsed by the *Gestalt* of self and world that we come to accept in faith. Ferreira reminds us: "One can take a risk, be threatened with loss, even if one does not know exactly what will be lost (or gained)" (ibid., 221).

Ferreira has only reminded us here of the point that we first saw Judge William make in another context (see Chapter Three). Since faith determines the 'eternally valid' meaning of our lives, a faithless person's *prospective* relationship to his future affirmation of faith cannot be understood, as Ferreira put it, as a relationship to an *option* to be chosen. Ferreira's *Gestalt* analogy is also helpful because it hangs happily together with the structurally similar idea that I explicated in the previous sub-section, 5.4.1: the faithful person's retrospective relationship to the illusions of his past cannot be understood as a negation of those illusions. It is in the nature of a *Gestalt* that, when one sees it, the alternative *Gestalt* is psychologically unavailable to one; it is not held in mind, side-by-side, with the new *Gestalt* that one now accepts, as that new *Gestalt's* fully intelligible but negated oppositional sense. One cannot view the image as the young woman and, at the very same time, view the image as the old crone. Once one sees the young woman, the old crone is eclipsed completely and, we discover, lacks the character of an option for our choice. In short, the analogy of the *Gestalt* not only captures the idea that the life of faith *into* which we leap is unintelligible to us in advance; it also captures the idea that, after that leap, we regard the faithless life from out of which we leapt, not as a genuine possibility, but as a mere illusion of sense.

I have been suggesting that an illusion is a species of what Williams James calls a 'dead hypothesis:' a hypothesis that we could no longer choose to believe (without self-deception) even if we wanted to, and which, indeed, we no longer even so much as regard as a premise in an argument for faith. "Faith therefore cannot be *proved, demonstrated, comprehended*, for the link which makes a linking together possible is missing, and what else does this say than that it is a paradox" (Kierkegaard quoted in Ferreira 1997, 399). Faith is a leap because it does not follow demonstrably from anything at all and, in this sense, it is not *continuous* with anything that precipitated it in the way that a conclusion is continuous with the premises from which it was drawn. [120] After the leap into faith, the continuity we find between the self we were and the self we've become emerges only retrospectively when what came before is remembered in the light of what came later. "This

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[120] Ferreira notes that notion of 'demonstration' at work here carries a capacious sense:

> Climacus highlights the limits of demonstration when he remarks that what passes for demonstration is usually only a case of developing 'the definition of a concept.' But he includes under demonstration inductive as well as deductive reasoning, teleological as well as ontological arguments, calling attention to the way in which the premises we accept in order to begin (as Socrates knew) must always be infused with the ideas with which we conclude. (Ferreira 1997, 209)

precisely is the irregularity in the paradox, continuity is lacking, or at any rate it has continuity only in reverse, that is, at the beginning it does not manifest itself as continuity" (Kierkegaard quoted in Ferreira 1997, 399-400).

For Kierkegaard, when we embrace a conclusion whose truth can be demonstrated, we don't make a *decision* in the essential sense. Things are otherwise when we embrace a truth that can't be demonstrated, as in the case where one comes to find the eternal meaning of one's life in faith. "[T]he transition whereby one will build an eternal truth on a historical account is a leap" (CUP, 74) where "the leap is the category of decision" (CUP, 84), and "is essentially at home in the realm of freedom" (Kierkegaard quoted in Ferreira p. 215) as opposed to the order of objective necessity that we find, for example, in the realm of pure logic. In the case of faith, one breaks off the characteristically Hegelian chain of affirmations and negations and arrives at a new foundational starting point for one's understanding of self and world, a starting point to which one does not stand in what I am variously calling a theoretical, intellectual, or reflective relation.

> It is only when reflection can be halted that can a beginning be made, and reflection can be halted only by something else, and this something else is quite other than the logical, because it is a decision. Only when the beginning that brings the process of reflection to a halt is a breakthrough, so that the absolute beginning itself breaks through the infinitely continued reflection, only then is it that the beginning has no presuppositions. (CUP, 96)

The claim to 'presuppositionlessness' here is not the claim that the Christian life has some utterly ahistorical starting point. Of course, precisely the opposite is true. Christian life begins with the historical event of the Incarnation, which comes to have eternal significance in the lives of individuals. The point is that the 'presuppositions' of Christianity are not presuppositions immanent in the individual minds or social conventions of human beings; they are not presuppositions from which Christianity could be shown demonstrably to follow. Ferreira drives home the point, highlighting the sense in which the freedom of the leap into faith manifests the 'break in immanence' that I earlier described as a matter of 'horizontal transcendence.'

> Climacus unambiguously sees the leap to Christian faith as a transition that is 'qualitative' and a 'break in immanence.' What is at stake is that the transition not be an experience of simple continuity, whether as a necessary unfolding or otherwise merely cumulative result. This rejection of continuity is the rejection of rational necessity or compulsion – what is at stake is that the transition be a free act. (Ferreira 1997, 216)

5.5. Remembrance as Repetition and Realism

I have already touched upon the issue that is of most importance to this study: the issue of realism. In the present section, I illustrate repetition and its realism with examples from *Either / Or*, and from Kierkegaard's own autobiographical account of his development as a Christian, as described in the *Point of View for My Work as an Author* (2009). I present my understanding of Kierkegaard's realism as a friendly amendment to the realist interpretation of Kierkegaard that has recently been offered by Lee Braver, and one that comes close to an importantly different interpretation of Kierkegaard recently been advance by Jonathan Lear. The aim here is to clarify my own position by situating it in relation to these recent interpretations.

I have compared the fulfillment that the self finds when it becomes Christian to the fulfilment that God finds when He becomes incarnate in Jesus. This comparison brings out a central feature of Kierkegaardian self-transformation: despite the newness of revealed meaning, such meaning is also, in a crucial sense, *old*: it is a repetition of a meaning with which we are already familiar. Here is it crucial to remember that, for Kierkegaard, "all the pseudonymous writings are *maieutic* in nature" (PV, 7, cf., PV, 247, 279). As such, they are efforts to facilitate remembrance, even while they aim to facilitate a change in the truth they help us remember. "Jesus Christ, it is true, is himself the prototype and will continue to be that, unchanged, until the end" (PV, 131) and the Christian seeks "to order his own life according to His example" (ibid.). At the same time, part of what it means to order one's life according to Christ's example is to maintain an Abrahamic attention to the possibility of a renewing remembrance – a repetition – of the meanings by which we know the world, just as Christ brought about a renewing remembrance of Judaic orthodoxy.

In a sense, then, Kierkegaard is just as opposed to "new discoveries and inventions" (PI, §126) as Wittgenstein. At the same time, for Kierkegaard, to save meaning from the confusions into which it can fall, the remembrance of meaning might need to incorporate the kind of renewal that allows for meaning itself to change (PV, 131). And as we have seen, the meaning whose repetition Kierkegaard is most fundamentally concerned to repeat is the meaning of Christianity. In the contemporary age, "one has *forgotten* what it is to exist and what inwardness means" (CUP, 203, emphasis added). The corrective to this state of forgetfulness is a reminder of what that meaning, in the repetitional sense, always already ways. We've seen Northrop Frye make the helpful submission that what Kierkegaard calls 'repetition' is exemplified by the interplay between old and new meaning

that we find in the Christian typological reading of the bible.[121] To understand Christ is to understand that Christ is *and always was*, eternally, God. This is a paradox since Christ comes into being at a specific point in history. Similarly, to understand the Gospels is to understand that the Gospels are *and always have been* the meaning of the Old Testament even though, paradoxically, the Gospels only came into being later on.

Charles Taylor invokes Kierkegaard's concept of repetition as a notion helpful for understanding the nature of biography. His thoughts on the matter provide a second illustration of how the new meaning – or *Gestalt* – that we find in things registers with us as the meaning things always had, even though that meaning only comes into being with the act of remembrance. In biography, Taylor writes,

> [t]he attempt to achieve clarity is met by a hermeneutic which can never establish a final interpretation, invulnerable to critique and admitting of no further improvement [....] This means, of course, that understanding oneself or others through biography is a potentially endless process. Any interpretation we reach can be upset, challenged, or amended by a new insight, which will ramify through the whole diachronic *Gestalt*, modifying previous takes, including the one I hold to at the present moment. Any continuities in my self-interpretation cannot amount to a simple repetition of the same take; the repetition, if there is one, must be 'non-identical,' in Kierkegaard's sense. (Taylor 2016, 314-15)

For an example of 'non-identical' repetition, we can look to two places, before turning to its more detailed development in our case study of *Fear and Trembling*. First, we can look back to the exchange between Judge William and the reflective aesthete. Second, we can look to its role in the autobiographical reflections of the *Point of View*.

5.5.1. Eternity in Time

The judge's discussion with the reflective aesthete already explored our current question about the harmony between time and eternity in human life. The question arose when we asked how a temporal love can take on an eternal significance. The judge submits – and takes the aesthete to agree – that the ultimate aim of love is the transformation of love's immediate, temporal, form into

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[121] The earlier-quoted passage was this:

> The mere attempt to repeat a past experience will lead only to disillusionment, but there is another type of repetition which is the Christian antithesis (or complement) of Platonist recollection, and which finds its focus in the biblical promise 'Behold, I make all things new' (Revelation 21:5). Kierkegaard's 'repetition' is certainty derived from, and to my mind, is identifiable with, the forward-moving typological thinking of the Bible. (Frye 1982, 82)

something eternal, without yet losing love's temporality. The aim, as the judge thinks of it, is to relate to love in such a way that it can be repeated eternally. The aesthete's trouble is that the only concept of repetition he has involves the impossible preservation of the original sensuous experience of love in all the 'visible signs' that originally characterized that experience. By 'visible signs' he has in mind the external, temporal, facts about that original experience, for example, the facts that are seen in the original moment of infatuation when "'the lovers *look* at one another'" (EO, II: 143; cf., FT, 28). In its external qualities, however, love will never be quite identical to what it was when it was experienced for the first time. Therefore, the aesthete fails to see how love can be 'repeated' – how it can survive its inevitable changes over the course of time. The confused idea that repetition involves a simple replay of an earlier event in all its external characteristics is also, of course, the target of Kierkegaard's critique in the book, *Repetition,* whose thematic unity with *Fear and Trembling* he indicted by publishing the books on the very same day (see Gouwens 1993, 284-88). Constantin Constantius, the pseudonymous author of *Repetition*, wants to 'repeat' his earlier experience of Berlin but, wanting it to be repeated in its external, rather than internal qualities, he finds that such a repetition is impossible (see FT, 151-76; cf., Burgess 1993, 247, 257). The judge offers a corrective to this confused understanding of repetition in a letter to the reflective aesthete. He writes:

> However you turn and twist, you must admit that the gist of the matter is to preserve love in time. If this is impossible, then love is an impossibility. Your misfortune is that you recognize love simply and solely by [its] visible signs. If they are to be repeated again and again, and must be accompanied, you are to note, by a morbid reflection as to whether they continually possess the reality they once had by reason of the accidental circumstance that it was the first time [...], a repetition is indeed impossible. (EO, II: 144)

Since the aesthete thinks of love in merely sensuous, external terms, he lacks a concept of how an eternal love could endure throughout the changes it undergoes in time. He realizes that the original experience of love cannot be eternally repeated in all its external details, and, lacking any other concept of repetition, he concludes that a repetition of love in time is altogether impossible. The judge believes that truly poetic remembering can indeed involve the repetition of such experiences because the judge has seen past this impoverished view of repetition. The repetition of a healthy, genuinely eternal love does not require that love must remain identical, in its external characteristics, to what love was at its inception. If this is what repetition involved, repetition would indeed be impossible in a world of time and change where the 'visible signs' of the original love are indeed

bound to alter. But "[h]ealthy love has an entirely different worth: [...] it has an entirely different conception of time and of the significance of repetition" (EO, II: 144).

"The true eternity in love" (EO, II: 22), can be experienced *within* time, namely, as the eternal meaning of the events that make up the lover's life. Judge William anticipates de Silentio when he writes that, for the man resolutely in love, eternity is not an afterlife of the sort sought after by the immortal soul of the *Phaedo*. For the man resolutely in love, "eternity does not come afterwards [...] he has had eternity in time" (EO, II: 141). He possesses his love, not as one might possess an ordinary object – as something that one *has* – because, as we saw in Chapter Three, he relates to his love, not as something represented, but as something lived (EO, II: 141). We also saw in Chapter Three that his love constitutes the living eternal, or 'infinite' meaning of his married life, eternal in the sense that this love plays an essential structural role in his understanding of the world, past, present, and future and, hence, is not merely understood by him as one event amongst others *in* time.[122] To say that this meaning of his life is lived rather than represented is to say that it is *embodied* in the married man's matter of course way of being in the world – for instance in his unquestioning practice of the marital virtues – rather than in his giving merely intellectual, theoretical, or reflective assent to a bipolar proposition that he considers true. As part of the eternal meaning of the married man's life, his love for his wife endures the hazards of time despite the external changes that love inevitably undergoes. "This possession has not been like a dead property, but he has constantly been acquiring his possession. He has not fought with lions and ogres, but with the most dangerous enemy – with time" (EO, II: 141).[123]

In pointing out that the truth of faith needs to be lived, rather than represented, the judge was anticipating the crucial feature of faith that Kierkegaard would later describe as the idea that faith is to be understood "not as the content of a concept but as a form of the will" (FT, 249). This crucial feature of faith came into clearer view with the contrast between the knight of resignation,

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[122] Recall Dreyfus's comment from Chapter Three:

> For Kierkegaard, an infinite passion can be called infinite because it opens up a world. Not only what actually exists gets it meaning from its connection with my defining passion; anything that could possibly come into existence would get its meaning for me from my defining commitment. In that sense, the commitment is infinite [....] In sum, when you have a defining commitment, the finite object of your commitment is infinitely important, that is, the object of your passion is both something particular and also world defining. In short, it is the concrete condition for anything showing up as meaningful (Dreyfus 2012, 106).

[123] As I've already suggested, and as I will argue later on, I think Judge William's talk of 'possession' here is misleading as to Kierkegaard's point. We are better off, I think, to read Kierkegaard as suggesting that we do *not* relate to the objects of love through which we express our eternally valid love of God (Abraham's Isaac, the Judge's wife, the young swain's princess, etc.) as possessions.

who is confined to thinking about faith with merely philosophical and *reflective* resources of recollection (FT, 43, 15), and the knight of faith, whose love of God is expressed in his viscerally passionate enjoyment of the everyday, earthly, things of finitude. The feature of faith in question also comes out when our knight of resignation de Silentio says that he is a mere *observer* with respect to faith and, as such, cannot make the *movements* of faith himself (FT, 37-37). At issue in all these gestures is the knight of resignation's 'disembodied,' overly reflective, and characteristically Platonist relationship with truth. He *represents* the truth of the faith, rather than lives it. More pointedly, like Plato, he has a *recollective* relationship with the faith (FT, 43, 15), an intellectual, contemplative, or 'theoretical' relationship of the sort that we saw in the *Phaedo*. Conceiving of the self's essence as a disembodied soul, the Platonist practiced a disparaging attitude toward finitude in general, and toward the human body in particular. Kierkegaard opposed this with his presentation of the robustly embodied knight of faith, vigorously at home finitude. My submission has been this: an essential part of the knight of faith's turn away from the world-weary spirit of resignation is his turn toward a distinctly embodied relationship with the truth, rather than the intellectual, contemplative, relationship with the truth that we see in Plato. Notwithstanding his Hegelian errors, when Judge William tells us that faith must be lived, rather than represented, he anticipates the finitude of faith and, in particular, the embodiment of the faithful soul that will be, on my reading, essential to understanding repetition's realism. It will be essential to repetition because the body will help us to understand the element of novelty and change that repetition involves. It is this role of novelty and change in revelation that we need to take a closer look at now.

I have just said that the repetition of eternal love over time requires that we overcome the idea that love is 'a dead property,' defined by certain impossibly changeless external qualities. Such a view of repetition directly rejects any room for change, for renewal, in that which is repeated. However, it must be noted that we have not yet achieved an understanding of repetition when we simply graduate from the aesthete's naïve construal of eternal love as a matter of a relationship having certain ageless external properties. We would be equally confused if we thought of eternal love as something anchored in similarly ageless *internal* properties that make up love's meaning. Recollection is, after all, a matter of recollecting the internal properties of eternal meanings (the interior angles of Platonic triangles, for example), and recollection is still inadequate for the kind of 'repetition' that would provide us with the eternal love we need. In recollection, there is no room for the idea that meaning itself can undergo a change and still, in some way, remain the meaning it

always was. We need a way of understanding 'repetition' that is neither the 'identical' repetition of the reflective aesthete nor the identical repetition of the recollecting philosopher.

We've seen Charles Taylor suggest that not *all* our attempts to come to grips with the past will involve a 'non-identical' repetition of the past's meaning (Taylor 2016, 314-15). This is in keeping with what we have seen in our analysis of Sartre and Wittgenstein. In some cases, we can come to grips with some aspect of our past by just forgetting about it altogether. We can deal this way with minor hardships. In other cases – here we have imagined long-lasting but failed projects (a marriage, a profession) – our need for a sense of temporal self-constancy prohibits us from simply forgetting our past in this way. Where our 'practical identity' has been somehow undone, we need to be provided with a new meaning for that now-expired chapter of our past, a meaning that allows us to acknowledge it as an intelligible part of our life's narrative. Here, as Taylor puts it, "[w]hat is threatening or painful is the absence of the kind of connections that I need to make acceptable sense" (ibid., 318-19). In cases like these, the change in one's life is so drastic that we can only sustain the necessary relationship with our past if we permit ourselves to remember the meaning of that past anew, and this is the work of repetition. As Taylor comments, "Kierkegaard's notion of the proper response to this kind of loss/exile is a change in the self, or a shift in the dimension in which it operates (into the religious dimension). The loss comes from an insistence on *identical* repetition, from too great a fixation on recollection" (Taylor 2016, 319).

Taylor also suggested to us that logic of repetition can be well-illustrated by considering the nature of biography. Taking this lead, in the next subsection, I consider, as an example of repetition, the *Gestalt* shift whereby Kierkegaard came to realize the meaning of his own life's work. This discussion will further clarify repetition's 'horizontal' type of realism, and the essential connection between this realism and the method of indirect communication.

5.5.2. Without Authority: Kierkegaard on Kierkegaard in the *Point of View*

Even in his spiritual immaturity, the reflective aesthete was well aware of the pitfalls of trying to manage one's past through a heroic forgetting of painful memories. This was a recipe for the sort of repression that would visit upon us the very memories we wished to forget. As *maieutic* texts, Kierkegaard's pseudonymous writings encourage a very different relationship with the past. Though they aim to change our view of things, they also remind us of something that we always knew. The following crucial passage is worth quoting again:

[I]n the course of time, the essentially Christian, unchanged, has nevertheless been subject to modification in relation to changes in the world. My view is certainly not that it is the essentially Christian that should be improved and perfected by new modifications [....] No, my view is that the essentially Christian, unchanged, at times may need by way of new modifications to secure itself against the new, the new nonsense that is now in vogue. (PV, 131)

The passage is rife with paradox, but it comes, I think, to this: 'The essentially Christian' needs to be properly repeated, and discovered anew, if we are not to lose our relation to our Christian past altogether. The effort to awaken us to this new meaning will take the form of a remembrance rather than a revolutionary overthrow of established Christian doctrine. I argued in Chapter Two that the key to facilitating such remembrance is the method of indirect communication. I now want to show that the method of indirect communication is equally essential to the realism that characterizes Kierkegaard's account of the truths that we thereby remember. As Wittgenstein suggested, it is only when an author communicates indirectly that "the *spirit* may receive its due" (CV, 31) as the inspiring source of the truth that we remember. In Kierkegaard's analysis, it is only when the spirit receives this due that the inspired insight bears the stamp of having its origin in a source of truth outside the self, in a *real* order of meaning.

Kierkegaard conveys the importance of indirect communication for expressing the 'higher ideality' of Christianity when he writes the following of the established church:

We must in no way want to overthrow it, no, but above it the higher ideality must hover as a possibility of awakening [...] This has now taken place through me, with the aid of a pseudonym, in order that it all might be a purely spiritual movement. (PV, 250)

Or again, about the pseudonymous authors:

Their importance [...] unconditionally does not consist in making any new proposal, some unheard-of discovery, or in founding a new party and wanting to go further, but precisely in the opposite, in wanting to have no importance, [...] in wanting, [...] once again to read through solo, if possible in a more inward way, the original text of individual human-existence relationships, the old familiar text handed down to us from the fathers. (CUP, 629-30)

The above-signs of openness to facilitating a change in Christianity are not at odds with the insistence upon the self-sameness of the essentially Christian over time. Nor are they at odds with Kierkegaard's claim that his *Training in Christianity* "is altogether conservative, wants only or is able

only to preserve the established order" (PV, 252).[124] The stress upon the tried, tested, and traditional is not a prohibition on efforts to reinterpret – even radically reinterpret – the faith. What Kierkegaard says about his effort, in the *Point of View,* to make sense of his own authorship could go equally for his effort to make sense of Christianity: "The present work is an *interpretation* of something past, something traversed, something *historical*" (PV, 271). Elsewhere, the radicalism of the view is acknowledged explicitly: "It is clear" Kierkegaard writes, "that in my writings I have supplied a more radical characterization of the concept faith than there has been up until this time" (PV, 253). However, the fact that Kierkegaard conceives of his task as one of reminding us of an already familiar understanding of things that we have come to forget calls for a certain interpretation of this radicalism. For Kierkegaard, a radical interpretation of Christianity is not a revolutionary severance of contemporary thought from its roots in the established Church, but a reverentially renewing remembrance of those roots.[125] The point, as I shall now try to show, is that such re-interpretations must be carried out indirectly so that the truth they articulate is intelligible to us as a remembrance of an essential truth that has always been, and as a truth that has its source outside the self in the grace of God which, as I read him, Kierkegaard has in mind when he speaks of 'Governance' [*Styrelsens*].

In the *Point of View*, Kierkegaard insists that he is 'without authority' when it comes to the truth that may or may not be conveyed by his authorship (PV, 6, 12, 87, 118, 180-81, 235, 256, 261, 266). How so? Kierkegaard regarded his own life's meaning as having being authored, not merely by himself, but in and through the assistance of Governance. The point I want to make clear here is this: the indirect method was meant to leave God to what is ultimately His responsibility to communicate the truth to Kierkegaard's reader, just as God had communicated it to Kierkegaard. The direct method, by contrast, is an attempt to step in for God, usurp this authority and, as we have seen, to convey only an 'objectively true' facsimile of Christianity. We are offered an analogy:

> As in the state, property falls to the state when it has been left for a certain number of years and no owner has claimed it, just so the human race, spoiled by knowing in a banal sense that Christianity does after all exist, has thought something like this: 'It is a very long time since God has let anything be heard from him qua owner and master; so Christianity has fallen to us, whether we want to abolish it totally or modify it *ad libitum* [as desired] and treat

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[124] In PV, the Hongs refer to the text under their translation of the title, 'Practice in Christianity.' Here and elsewhere I use Walter Lowie's translation (see Kierkegaard 2004b).

[125] Recall the point that Lippitt stressed when he was agreeing with Conant's emphasis upon this same point: "As Climacus tells us, what he is saying about Christianity is nothing new, but 'old fashioned orthodoxy'" (Lippitt 2000, 110).

it more or less as our possession and invention. This is treating Christianity not as something that in the submission of *obedience under God's majesty* **shall** *be believed*, but as something that in order to be accepted must seek with the help of 'reasons' to satisfy 'the time,' 'the public,' 'this distinguished assembly,' etc. (PV, 121)

Direct communication only succeeds in communicating a counterfeit of Christianity that remakes that truth over in one's own image, as if it were "more or less as our possession and invention" (ibid.). This is a mere counterfeit, in part, because Christianity needs to be received in a moment of revelation that direct communication is unfit to facilitate. In failing on this front, direct communication fails, in particular, to communicate the *reality* of Christ. Kierkegaard's realism, I am suggesting, involves a revelation of meaning which, as such, is *imposed* upon us by the imperious authority of God Himself who 'shall be believed,' and we deflate Christianity of any such authority when we try to communicate it directly. Direct communication leaves God to communicate the truth and, in so doing, it leaves truth to have the realistic structure of a revelation.

Steven M. Emmanuel draws our attention to a crucial point here. We can raise the question about the nature of religious communication "not only from the point of view of one who wishes to communicate something about one's faith, but also from the point of view of revelation itself [....] Kierkegaard's theory of communication [...] applies both to his purposes in the authorship and to his understanding of Christian revelation, which is also a form of indirect communication" (Emmanuel 1996, 131, 135). Indeed, for Kierkegaard, there is ultimately only *one* indirect communicator – God Himself. "Only the God-man is in every respect pure indirect communication from first to last" (PV, 248; cf., Emmanuel 1996, 133). As Emmanuel goes on to note, this means that Kierkegaard's own efforts in direct communication are actually only efforts to facilitate *God's* indirect communications to others (Emmanuel 1996, 133). If, as I am claiming, Kierkegaard's realism requires that revealed sense break in upon us from outside, as a gift from God, and if the author's efforts in indirect communication are efforts to facilitate such an incursion of revealed sense, then Kierkegaard's realism cannot be understood independently of his philosophical method. This is so because Kierkegaard's philosophical method is required in order to facilitate God's own revelation of Himself to the reader.

If the indirect method is so essential, the question arises why Kierkegaard wrote the *Point of View*, and chose directly to communicate what, *ex hypothesi*, should have remained more carefully veiled. We have already appreciated why Kierkegaard might have made the decision he did: like Wittgenstein, he was afraid that his point would go altogether unnoticed. A closer look at his

decision will shed further light on the work of God in revelation, and on the structure of repetition. Here we want to consider the role of God's self-revelation in the moment when Kierkegaard realized the Christian meaning of his own literary production.

I have already described this dawning of revealed sense with Ferreira's analogy of a *Gestalt* shift. But why should we be inclined to call such a humble phenomenon as a *Gestalt* shift a work of God? This is not the place to offer a comprehensive answer, but part of the answer comes out in Kierkegaard's own reflections on the *Gestalt* shift that dawned over the meaning of his life's work. Evidently, part of what moves him to acknowledge the hand of God in authoring that meaning is his ability to find, in the fragments of his authorship, a comprehensive, coherent Christian significance without ever having foreseen and planned for that outcome in advance. This is to say, the meaning of that authorship was not 'created' by Kierkegaard in the ordinary, volitional, sense that we saw Ferreira described earlier. Kierkegaard was not being guided by anything like a pre-given religious 'Idea' to invest his work with a Christian sense from the outset. However, he insists, it remains the case that the meaning of his oeuvre was *always* religious: "The directly religious was present from the very beginning" (PV, 8). He expands in a passage where he worries that this singular significance of his life's work will be lost on readers who might mistakenly think that he had simply changed his views over time, becoming religious only in his later books. He broke his silence and published the *Point of View* to prevent this misapprehension and to clarify that the singular meaning that does animate the entire work been written only with the assistance of Governance.[126] About the possibility of misapprehension on this front, he writes the following:

> This distresses me. I am deeply convinced that there is another integral coherence, that there is a comprehensiveness in the whole production (especially through the assistance of Governance) and that there certainly is something else to be said about it than this meagre comment that in a way the author has changed. (PV, 182)

On the one hand, then, a crucial purpose of the *Point of View* is to draw the reader's attention to the singular meaning that had, with the assistance of Governance, been revealed to Kierkegaard as the meaning of his *oeuvre*. On the other hand, an equally important task of the book was to communicate his debt to Governance for revealing this meaning of the pseudonymous authorship, which Kierkegaard himself had not grasped until after the *oeuvre* was written. Put differently, on the one

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[126] "If I do nothing at all directly to assure a full understanding of my whole literary production (by publishing 'The point of View for My work as an Author') [...] then what? Then there will be no judgement at all on my authorship in its totality, since no one has sufficient faith in it or time or competence to look for a comprehensive plan in the entire production. Consequently the verdict will be that I have changed someone over the years. / So it will be." (PV, 182)

hand, Kierkegaard needed to "communicat[e] something about the integral comprehensiveness" (PV, 182); namely, he needed to suggest to us that there *is* such comprehensiveness and that, in this sense, "[t]he directly religious was present from the very beginning" (PV, 8). The presence of a comprehensive meaning is offered as a testament to the work's having been written with the help of Governance. On the other hand, the danger of flagging the unity of the work is that doing so risks giving his reader exactly the opposite impression. It risks giving the false impression that the work was a voluntary creation of his own will, reflectively planned out from the beginning. 'After all,' the skeptical reader may reason, 'how could such comprehensive sense come about in any other way?' Thus, after highlighting the work's comprehensive meaning, Kierkegaard immediately adds: "I cannot emphasize enough that Governance is the directing power and that in so many ways I do not understand until afterward" (PV, 182). Or again: "What is presented here is all done in the names of the pseudonymous authors; yet it must be remembered that I, the author, now understand it far better than when I did it – it was also my own development" (PV, 236). This is the crucial and paradoxical point about the structure of repetition that is helpfully illuminated by the work of revelation in Kierkegaard's own life: repetition involves the revelatory work of Governance. In the case of Kierkegaard's own authorship, this work of governance is manifest in the fact that what was always his life's comprehensive meaning was unforeseen by him and needed to be revealed. Kierkegaard himself only came to understand his own early pseudonymous texts retrospectively, from the perspective of the revealed truth that he would, at the end of his authorship, remember those texts as having always had. He drives home the point:

> It would be untrue if I were unconditionally to claim the whole authorship as *my intention* from the beginning, because it is also the possibility of my author-nature that has come into existence but it has not been conscious (deleted: from the beginning). It would be untrue to say unconditionally that I used the aesthetic productivity[127] as *maieutic* from the very beginning, but for the reader the whole authorship actually will still be *maieutic* in relation to the religious which in me was most basic. (PV, 293, cf., 223, 247, 255)

And the same point again:

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[127] Clare Carlisle explains that Kierkegaard uses the term 'aesthetic' to refer not merely to the attitude toward life exemplified by the reflective aesthete, but also signify "the domain of art, considered from a philosophical point of view" (Carlisle 2010, 133). Thus when Johannes de Silentio discusses Abraham and other figures in that text, his perspective is not reflective aesthetic, but still aesthetic in the sense of 'artistic' or 'figurative' in so far as he is being used to present an artful, indirect, presentation of faith (ibid.)

No, in my case what I myself have planned, carried out, and said – I myself understand only afterward how correct it was, that there was something far deeper in it than I thought at first – and yet I am the one who is the author. Here in my thoughts is an inexplicable something suggesting that I was, as it were, helped by someone else, that I have come to work out and say something whose deeper meaning I myself sometimes understand only afterward. (PV, 292)

By the time Kierkegaard came to publish these words, he had realized the meaning of his earlier pseudonymous writings, which he had not realized when he wrote them (see Emmanuel 1996, 2-11).[128] Phenomenologically, the direction of revealed truth is not *outward*, from a subject who actively projects meaning upon the world after having recreated or recollected that meaning in some private act of reflection. Rather, the direction of the encounter with revealed truth moves from the outside in and takes the form of a *Gestalt* shift whereby the meaning of one's past expressive deeds (the books one has written, the words one has spoken, etc.) is remembered anew. Such repetition is a matter of remembrance since, when meaning dawns upon the past in this way, it dawns upon the past as if it were already the past's meaning, but yet it dawns upon us in the manner of a meaning genuinely and surprisingly new. Kierkegaard's reflections on the matter continue:

Perhaps someone is amazed when he has read these books, but no one more than I when I turn around now (after having been an author for approximately seven years and just as if in one breath) and look at what has been accomplished and with almost a shiver of amazement to see that the whole thing is actually only one thought, something I quite clearly understand now, although in the beginning I had not expected to go on being an author for so many years, nor did I have such a grand objective. Philosophically, this is a movement of reflection that is described backward and is first understood when it is accomplished. Religiously, this

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[128] Emmanuel directs this point to the attention of Henning Fenger, who claims that Kierkegaard misrepresents his own earlier views when he says that they were always already latent with a Christian sense (see Fenger 1980). Fenger's criticism begs the question against Kierkegaard, for it presupposes the volitional view of one's own creative output that Kierkegaard is at pains to reject in the *Point of View*. To this point, Emmanuel also draws our attention to the following passage from the *Postscript*, where Climacus comments on his own interpretation of the books by the other pseudonymous authors:

Of course, being only a reader, whether my understanding is the author's I cannot know for sure. On the other hand, I am glad that the pseudonyms themselves [...] have said nothing, nor misused a preface to take an official position on the production, as if an author were in a purely legal sense the best interpreter of his own words; as if it could help a reader that an author 'intended this and that' when the intention has not been realized; or as if it were certain that it had been realized because the author himself says so in the preface. (CUP, 211)

Here, Emmanuel notes, "Kierkegaard's most developed pseudonym directly challenges the assumption that knowledge of the author's creative intention is indispensable to the activity of textual interpretation" (Emmanuel 1996, 9).

indicated to me personally in what an infinite debt of gratitude I am in to Governance, who like a father has benevolently held his hand over me and supported me in so many ways. This also signifies to me personally my own development and upbringing, for however true it is that when I began I had basically understood that I essentially belonged to the religious, in various ways this relationship still needed development and upbringing, which I need now also. (PV, 254-55)

If the Christian meaning of the authorship was not intended in advance in anything like the form of action-guiding Idea, in what sense was it 'present' at all? The following pair of passages is suggestive in this connection and returns us to faith's essential connection to finitude and, in particular, to the faithful self's essential inherence in the body. Notice the passive voice that Kierkegaard uses when he speaks about the movements of his hand.

I take my pen, commend myself to God, work hard, etc., in short, do the best I can with the meagre human means. The pen moves briskly across the paper. I feel that what I am writing is all my own. And then, long afterward, I profoundly understand what I wrote and see that I received help. (PV, 221).

And then the partner remark:

[T]he whole movement is backward, which is why from the very first I could not state my plan directly, although I certainly was aware that a lot was fermenting within me. (PV, 249).

An idea, pre-possessed in consciousness, guides human creative activity on the volitional pictures of recollection and recreation. By contrast, Kierkegaard presents the pre-reflective body as leading the expressive endeavour. The writing hand (we might also consider the speaking tongue) is drawn forward in the *act* of expressing that which we know in advance only as the felt promise that a still-nebulous sense might, through the act of expression, emerge into the clarity words.

How are we to understand this ultimate moment when the meaning of our past expressive deeds dawns upon us? Two features of the process will help us to see the connection between what Kierkegaard seems to be describing here and what, in my argument, Wittgenstein has in mind when he describes the way in which we come to remember the meaning inherent in our past and present uses of language.

First, although the understanding of things at which we ultimately arrive is not 'reflective' in the sense of being derived from premises that contain and epistemically support a conclusion, it is still reflective in the sense that we come reflectively see the newly revealed sense in our past actions. It is this sort of 'reflection' that Kierkegaard has in mind when he writes: "my relationship [to God],

has the peculiar quality of being reflective, so that I do not see it until later – see, there, I have been helped again" (PV, 221).

The second point worth highlighting is that the meaning of our past deeds, revealed in this moment of reflection, is not the fully explicit, complete, and final determination of meaning that we have already seen both Wittgenstein and Kierkegaard critique. *One* reason Kierkegaard claims to be without authority for his literary production is that he was not the autonomous author of the message he ultimately came to find in it. A second reason he claims no such authority is that, his life and authorship being unfinished, he does not presume himself to have any absolutely correct, complete and final understanding of that message. He summarises, reminding us that our divine 'upbringing' – our spiritual development under the Governance of God – remains permanently ongoing and incomplete.

> In one sense I am indeed myself the author who has done everything that has been done; humanly speaking, in a human judgement, I must call the authorship predominantly my own production, even though helped and supported in numerous ways by a higher being; divinely understood, I call it my own development and upbringing, but not in the sense as if I were now complete or completely finished with regard to needing upbringing and development. (PV, 255)

Like Abraham, Kierkegaard does not presuppose any inappropriate, metaphysical, confidence that the comprehensive meaning that *he* faithfully believes to be present in his life's work is actually veridical. We are reminded: "[W]hether one himself is [a true Christian] cannot be known, surely not with definitiveness – it must be believed, and in faith there is always fear and trembling" (Kierkegaard 1968, 46). Accordingly, we note Kierkegaard's humility when he expresses his belief that his authorship really has been guided by governance toward the overarching Christian significance that he now finds in it. "When I look back on my life I must say that it seems to me not impossible that something higher hid behind me. It was not impossible. I do not say more" (PV, 249).

So far, I have described two main reasons for considering the revelations involved in repetition as expressing determinations of *real* meaning. The first reason is that we cannot arrive at these disclosures of sense on our own power, for they cannot be foreseen. In this sense, revealed meanings *transcend* the self and belong, in that respect, not on the side of the subject, but on the side of the world that the subject desires to know. The second reason is that these disclosures of sense reveal so comprehensive a meaning in our past expressive deeds (for example, the books, or

chapters, or words we have written), that it feels just as untenable to insist that our finding that meaning is a mere coincidence as it feels to insist that our finding that meaning is the result of either recreation or recollection.

The thought here will be familiar from our earlier discussion of Sartre, in Chapter Three. In his more idealistic and revolutionary moments, we saw Sartre insist that 'four walls do not a prison make,' so long as the prisoner retains the freedom to revise his values and, thereby, the order of meaning, aids, and obstacles he sees in the world. Whether one is literally imprisoned, or only conceptually imprisoned in a Wittgensteinian fly-bottle (PI, §309), one's attachments to the meanings by which one has hitherto known the world are far more stubborn than this. One cannot simply rewrite the meanings by which one has always known the world and find the new creation coherent and convincing. When we now consider this powerlessness together with our sense that the revealed meaning is *good*, we can find ourselves inclined to express this realism in religious terms and describe the revealed meaning as having been provided by God.[129] Now, as the last quoted sentence continues, we are stuck by what seems to be a third reason for accepting that these revelations are genuinely true*, as opposed to being mere illusions of the sort they supplant. In context, that last-quoted sentence runs as follows:

> When I look back on my life I must say that it seems to me not impossible that something higher hid behind me. It was not impossible. I do not say more. What have I done, then? I have said: For the present I use no means that would disturb this possibility, for example, by *premature* direct communication. The situation is like that of a fisherman when he sees the float move – maybe it means a bite, maybe it is due to the motion of the water. But the fisherman says: I will not pull up the line; if I do, I indicate that I have surrendered this possibility; perhaps it will happen again and prove to be a bite. (PV, 249)

Here, too, we see the essential connection between realism and indirect communication. The suggestion seems to be that indirect communication provides a test of whether Kierkegaard's own faithful but objectively uncertain belief about the meaning of his authorship is genuinely true. If Kierkegaard's interpretation of his authorship is true, then Governance itself will guide the reader to perceive and accept that interpretation. Thus, an author's use of indirect communication is not only a way of drawing a reader out of his illusions and putting him in position resolutely to accept what one, oneself – the indirectly communicating author – takes to be true. Indirect communication also

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[129] At one point Wittgenstein muses that we might be inclined to use different religious language in the event that the revelation provided seems not to have its source in God. "Is this the sense of belief in the Devil: that not everything that comes to us as an inspiration comes from what is good?" (CV, 87)

provides a test of whether the author is himself in the grips of an illusion. If the reader accepts the author's interpretation freely, on his own, and without even so much as having been humiliated into that interpretation by the force of social shame that we saw in the case of Socrates and Alcibiades, then we have a testament to the veracity of that interpretation. Indirect communication, in other words, provides a safeguard against any potential tyranny to which the author might otherwise be tempted and which could find expression, for example, in his attempts to force his reader into an acceptance of the renewed understanding of meaning that he wants to promote.

My claim here has been that indirect communication is necessary to preserve a crucial component of the realism in Kierkegaard's concept of revelation: the fact that revealed truth needs to enter the person from the outside, not by the seeker's own will but by the grace of God. Where the emotional valence of the anti-realist and voluntarist way of thinking about our achievements in the remembrance of meaning would be a sense of prideful self-satisfaction, the emotional valence of the realistic alternative would be a sense of gratitude. Thus, Kierkegaard's stirring expression of his own gratitude at having been provided with the Christian meaning of his life's work can be read as a phenomenological testament to the *reality* of that meaning. He writes:

> But lest I in any way – alas ungratefully – cheat Governance, as it were of the least little thing or falsely attribute anything to myself, I let what is set forth here come first. This is truly more important to me than the whole authorship, and it is closer to my heart to express this as honestly and as strongly as possible, something for which I can never give thanks sufficiently and something that I, when at some time I have forgotten the entire authorship, will eternally and unalterably recollect:[130] how infinitely more Governance has done for me than I ever expected, could have expected, or dared to have expected. This feeling is indescribably blessed; at times it has overwhelmed me in such a way that it has taught me to understand to some degree the words of the apostle: 'Depart from me, for I am sinful man' – that is, his very immensity makes me feel all the more deeply my own unworthiness. (PV, 255-56)

The Christian author must write in such a way that the mysterious work of Governance can be left to play its role, as He who ultimately does the work of guiding the reader (or not guiding him) to the understanding of things for which the Christian author has helped to set the stage. The author's effort to communicate the truth of Christian selfhood to others should arrange things for them in

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[130] Naturally, I think Kierkegaard has to be speaking loosely here.

the way that Governance has arranged things for the author: in such a way that Governance provides the truth.

5.5.3. A Kierkegaardian Approach to the Problem of Alternative Grammars

The above discussion of revelation returns us to the problems of alternative grammars that we left unsolved last chapter, for the revelations in question are revelations *of* alternative grammars. Our question in the last chapter was this: how can a faith that essentially includes a 'thought' about what has no intelligible determination within the limits of sense be anything other than an illicit, metaphysical, attempt to say something that, 'strictly speaking' can be 'shown but not said'?

Drawing on Diamond, I argued that the notion of revelation can help us makes sense of this possibility of alternative grammars. It can do so because talk about a *revealed* possibility makes no presumption that there is, or will be, any intelligible content to the use of words in which that possibility is expressed. If we make no such presumption, talk about the possibility of grammars other than our own does not presuppose that there already is such a grammar, determinately 'out there' beyond the limits of language. The point can also be rephrased in the language I have introduced in this chapter: when we understand 'transcendence' as horizontal transcendence, we come partway to seeing how our talk about transcendent possibilities are nowhere already given and, therefore, are not already given on the far side of sense.

However, the notion of revelation (and the notion of horizontal transcendence) does not fully clear away the problem of alternative grammars, for the concept of revelation itself remains mysterious. How, exactly, are we understand our intentional relation to a yet-to-be-revealed possibility? Until we have heard more, our recollective and recreative tendencies of mind incline us confusedly to think about this relation in the same way that we think about our orientation to the foreseeable possibilities of recreation and recollection. We will believe that, in speaking about these possibilities of revelation, we are assuming that there is *some* kind of content to our thought and talk about these possibilities already. In this section, I want to suggest that Kierkegaard's conception of the self, truth, and the relation between the two, points the way toward a clearer understanding of our intentional relation to revealed possibilities. Thereby, these aspects of his view point the way towards a resolution to the problem of alternative grammars, which is so essential to our understanding of repetition and repetition's realism.

The problem of alternative grammars issues from the idea that all significant talk of revealed possibilities must, at least implicitly, be talk about possibilities that we can clearly imagine in

advance. This is a prejudice at home in Platonism, where the self is a disembodied soul, truth is a disembodied Form, and of the relation between the two is a purely intellectual matter of recollection. Since the Platonic self is essentially disembodied, its characteristic activity – its understanding of truth – must itself be 'disembodied,' in the sense of being a pure act of reflection, in no way bound up with the self's corporal nature. There is little room in this conception of the self, truth, and their relation, for the idea that the body and its essentially pre-reflective, non-theoretical engagements in the world might be essential to that relation.

Kierkegaard's essentially embodied understanding of both the self and of truth (paradigmatically the truth of Christ Himself) contrasts with this radically disembodied understanding of the self and philosophical truth that we find in Plato. We've seen that Judge William spoke for Kierkegaard when he wrote that "the highest and most beautiful things in life are not to be heard about, nor read about, nor seen but, if one will, may be lived" (EO, II: 141). These words announce the same distinctly embodied, practical, and pre-reflective relationship with the truths of faith that *Fear and Trembling* portrays with the faithful everyman's fully corporal attachment to finitude. Just as the truth is itself embodied in Christ, that same truth is embodied in the life of the resolutely finite, embodied, self who *enacts* his devotion to Christ's example. My submission is that just such an enacted, embodied, understanding of the relation between the self and truth can help us answer our remaining questions about our intentional relationship to truths that remain to be revealed and, thereby, help us to answer the question of alternative grammars. Though the broad strokes of this picture are present in Kierkegaard, the details remain to be filled in. Toward this end, to make the thought clear, I enlist the help of William James, who reflects on the connection between the body and religious inspiration in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*.

On the sort of view I have in mind, revealed possibilities can come into being through the body's communion with an order of meaning and truth that solicits the body's pre-reflective action, and where that action manifests a sense that will only be reflectively grasped later on. For our most telling illustration of this process, we can reconsider the pregnant pair of passages that I quoted a moment ago. Kierkegaard said the following of his writing process:

> I take my pen, commend myself to God, work hard, etc., in short, do the best I can with the meagre human means. The pen moves briskly across the paper. I feel that what I am writing is all my own. And then, long afterward, I profoundly understand what I wrote and see that I received help. (PV, 221). / [T]he whole movement is backward, which is why from the very

first I could not state my plan directly, although I certainly was aware that a lot was fermenting within me. (PV, 249)

In this description of Kierkegaard's own relationship with God, we have something that could not have been written by a Platonist. Here the self's relationship with God – with truth – is not a merely intellectual relationship between a disembodied human mind, or soul, and an abstract order of Forms that can be grasped without actually *acting* in the world. Far from it, on this picture, the intentional relationship between the self and truth is presented as one that is achieved and sustained by the actual *movement* of the writer's hand. On this picture, the self's relationship with the truths-to-be-revealed by Governance is brought off by one's willingness to lend one's *body* to Governance, to permit Governance itself to move one's writing hand across the paper (PV, 221) and toward the expression of a sense that we 'possess,' in advance, only as a nebulous sensation that much is 'fermenting' within us (PV, 249), and seeking expression through the hand's guided activity.

Kierkegaard's feeling that "what I am writing is all my own" (PV, 221) is clearly a feeling of agency and freedom. However, this is evidently not the kind of freedom and agency that we have in ordinary, voluntarist, or subjectivist, cases of free choice. It is not, for example, the kind of agency where one either creates or recollects a truth on the power of one's own unaided human will. Kierkegaard depicts himself not as striving to express a sense that he already has clearly mind, and which he actively imposes upon the page. What motivates the act of expression is, instead, something like a darkly felt tension, and a sense that that tension might be released into the clarity of words though the actual, corporal, activity of writing. The passivity that we earlier described as a receptivity to inspiration from God is here described as a distinctly passive use of the body. One's writing hand *is moved* to the expression of truth that one will only later come reflectively to acknowledge as the meaning of the written word. When we later come reflectively to recognize the meaning of our expressive deed, we realize the deed for what it always was: a divinely-guided and pre-reflective use of the body, unfurling itself toward an end that one does not know in advance, and in relation to which one is more audience than author.

In the example of Kierkegaard's coming to realize the meaning of his earlier books, this process involves a long delay between the pre-reflective act of expression and the reflective moment when we realize the meaning of that act. Years passed before Kierkegaard could look back upon his earlier works and recognize their meaning. This is, perhaps, a more rare manifestation of the sort of interplay between the pre-reflective and reflective moments in the process of expression that we are dealing with. We can, however, clarify the process by noting its much more familiar manifestations,

where the delay between the pre-reflective act of expression, and the reflective recognition of the meaning manifest in that act, is hardly noticeable at all. In the course of an argument, one feels a hazy, unformulated sense that one's own position is not being done justice. Without knowing exactly where one's interlocutor has missed one's point, one permits oneself to speak and, when that act of expression is complete, one is surprised (reflectively) to notice that one has articulated the problem precisely. In such cases, the temporal lag between the body's pre-reflective act and the mind's reflective acknowledgement of that act's meaning is so brief as to be scarcely noticeable. However, even here, there is a distinction to be drawn between two moments in the process of expression: one brought about by the pre-reflective body, the other brought about by reflective mind once the body's work is done. One permits oneself to speak, and suddenly one finds oneself standing before the articulation of a thought which, in a crucial sense, one didn't have before that act of articulation, and which one had no epistemic right to expect of oneself. At the same time, paradoxically, we feel that the articulated thought is more authentically 'one's own' than thoughts that we can rehearse and justfy in advance, and we feel that the thought expresses something that we had *always* thought. Such examples could be easily multiplied and, I submit, they clarify the sort of phenomenon that is also at play when Kierkegaard came, at long delay, to realize the meaning of his *oeuvre*.

5.5.4. Objects of Comparison from *The Varieties of Religious Experience.*

A helpful comparison can be made between the embodied relation with truth that we are seeing in Kierkegaard and examples of automatism in James' study of revelation in *The Varieties of Religious Expereince*, especially revelation as it enters into the experience of religious conversion (see James 2002, Lectures IX, X). Let us not be distracted by the evident fact that James' examples of an embodied communion with truth are more developed and detailed than anything we find in more ordinary cases of the phenomena, in Kierkegaard's brief descriptions his own writing process in *The Point of View*, or in the passages from *Fear and Trembling* that we will consider presently. Our examples here, as in Chapter Three, are intended as objects of comparison (PI, § 130-31): examples that illuminate easily overlooked aspects of a phenomenon by way of both their similarities and differences to that phenomenon.[131] The aim here is to do justice to the features of meaning-

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[131] In this, capacity, recall, objects of comparison function like caricatures. By presenting us with an exaggerated depiction of some actual phenomenon, help us to notice that phenomena in our ordinary experience where it is present in a more subtle and harder-to-notice form (PI, §130-131; cf., PI, II-§365). It is no defect of our examples that they do not map perfectly onto the phenomena they clarify, for it is in their nature that they do not.

expression that we are finding in Kierkegaard by comparing it to a model wherein those features appear more clearly than they do in Kierkegaard's discussion. Wittgenstein reminds us:

> [W]e 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.) (PI, §131)

Thus, I do not mean to suggest that the relationship with revealed truth that we find in James' case studies map neatly onto those that we have found in Kierkegaard. The most salient difference is that, in Kierkegaard's depiction of things, he only comes reflectively to recognize the work of governance retrospectively, after the embodied expression of meaning is complete. In James' examples, on the other hand, the subjects are lucidly aware of the power that moves them *during* the act of expression itself. James' subjects are helpful to us just because they reflectively describe the work of 'Governance' *while* it is in play. In doing so, I submit, they provide us with a better understanding of the process that Kierkegaard describes himself as being aware of only pre-reflectively, which he can be seen as depicting when he describes his writing hand being guided toward the expression of truth that remains to be revealed, and which can be heard in his general Christian stress upon an essentially embodied understanding of truth. Though it involves a measure of conjecture, this way of reading Kierkegaard will be supported by the light it sheds when we come to reading *Fear and Trembling* in Section 7. Let us turn, then, to the discussion of the religious revelation in the *Varieties*.

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"The subjects here actually feel themselves played upon by powers beyond their will. The evidence is dynamic: The God or spirit moves the very organs of their body. The great field for this sense of being the instrument of a higher power is of course, 'inspiration'" (James 2002, 521). James goes on to illustrate with a testimony of such automatism that we find in the French Christian mystic, Antonia Bourignon: "'I do nothing but lend my hand and spirit to another power than mine'" (quoted in James 2002, 521, n. 1). A second testimony drives home the sense of one's own passivity in relation to the guiding power. James quotes W. Sandy's study of how the profession of "being under the direction of a foreign power" (James 2002, 522) is a continual refrain in the Hebrew prophets:

The process is always extremely different from what it would be if the prophet arrived at his insight into spiritual things by the tentative efforts of his own genius [...] [I]t always comes in the form of an overpowering force from without, against which he struggles, but in vain [....] Scattered all through the prophetic writings are expressions which speak of some strong and irresistible impulse coming down upon the prophet, determining his attitude to the events of his time, constraining his utterance, making his words the vehicle of a higher meaning than their own. [....] The personality of the prophet sinks entirely into the background; he feels himself for the time being the mouthpiece of the Almighty.' (Quoted in James 2002, 522-523)

As the passage continues, it returns us to a point that has been an important reason for the use of indirect communication: the gift of inspiration is not bestowed equally upon us all:

'We need to remember that prophecy was a profession, and that the prophets formed a professional class. There were schools of the prophets, in which the gift was regularly cultivated. A group of young men would gather round some commanding figure – a Samuel or an Elisha – and would not only record or spread the knowledge of his sayings and doings, but seek to catch themselves something of his inspiration. It seems that music played its part in their exercises [....] It is perfectly clear that by no means all of these Sons of the prophets ever succeeded in acquiring more than a very small share in the gift which they sought. (Quoted in James 2002, 522-523)

James develops this crucial connection between expertise and inspiration at length. He highlights that inspiration is more common amongst geniuses, who have an especially wide 'mental field' of ideas, than it does amongst plainer folk.[132] However, I want to suggest, such revelations are also possible in humbler persons. When long-practice in some normative domain results in a deeply embodied understanding of its rules, its problems, and the history of its development, the now-expert body can become a conduit through which inspiration can speak. The Abraham figure, to whom revelations of sense will be given, can be thought of as the figure who has achieved a deeply embodied understanding of given normative domain, but so too can the everyman who has the

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[132]"Different individuals present constitutional differences in this matter of width of field. Your great organizing geniuses are men with habitually vast fields of mental vision, in which a whole programme of future operations will appear dotted out at once, the rays shooting far ahead into definite directions of advance. In common people there is never this magnificent inclusive view of a topic. They stumble along, feeling their way, as it were, from point to point, and often stop entirely" (James 2002, 255).

fullness of faith, "and yet he is no genius" (FT, 40). To make the idea clear, we need to notice how the process of revelation that we have so far described can be repeated over and again.

Our picture so far suggests something like the following interplay between the practical (bodily, pre-reflective) and the theoretical (intellectual, contemplative, reflective) understanding in the dawning of new meaning. Our understanding of meaning is first 'present' only as the vague promise of a sense and is expressed through the pre-reflective actions of the body. Reflection then completes the process of revelation when it permits us to grasp that meaning in the clarity it lacked when it was manifested only as action. Kierkegaard gives his hand to Governance, who guides it in the expression of a sense that Kierkegaard only comes to recognize when he reflects upon his already-written words. A different example returns us to the issue of expertise: a natural athlete can manifest a pre-reflective attunement to the possibilities for intelligible action that characterize a given sport. He then comes explicitly to recognize those possibilities when he reflects upon his practice and codifies it in terms of specific action-guiding rules that another athlete might learn and follow. This second athlete then comes to embody these learned rules in the form of pre-reflective mastery. The process of reflection then, once again, enters the picture when the meaning of the second athlete's pre-reflective actions is grasped in reflection, and so on. Kierkegaard gestures at the emergence of inchoate meaning into clear, reflective, sense with his description of his writing process in *The Point of View*. The further transformation of reflective knowledge back into a pre-reflective bodily competence was illustrated in the *Postscript*. What Climacus first presented as an argument for the 'objective' truth about Christianity needed to be revoked, and we found ourselves with a properly subjective, embodied understanding of that truth. As I will argue at greater length in Section 7, the same transmutation can be seen in *Fear and Trembling*, when the "purely philosophical" (FT, 48), recollective (FT, 43), understanding of our life's eternally valid truth, which we achieve in resignation, is incorporated into one's embodied way of being in the world. In the case of *Fear and Trembling*, the truths that we come to embody are truths about the rules of ethics. In James, this process of incorporation (incarnation, embodiment) is illustrated with a quotation from the psychologist of religion E. D. Starbuck, who has us consider the rules of a sport, the rules of music, the rules of a religion and, using the same example we saw in Judge William, the rules of marriage:

> An athlete [...] sometimes awakens suddenly to an understanding of the fine points of the game and to a real enjoyment of it, just as the convert awakens to an appreciation of religion. If he keeps on engaging in the sport, there may come a day when all at once the game plays itself through him − when he loses himself in some great contest. In the same way, a

musician may suddenly reach a point at which pleasure in the technique of the art entirely falls away, and in some moment of inspiration he becomes the instrument through which music flows. The writer has chanced to hear two different married persons, both of whose wedded lives had been beautiful from the beginning, relate that not until a year or more after marriage did they awake to the full blessedness of married life. So it is with the religious experience of these persons we are studying. (James 2002, 228-229)

The expert athlete, the musician, the convert, or the properly married man comes to embody the normative structure of the practice which, as a novice, he grasped only intellectually. But this is not the end of the matter. Once practiced to the point that it has been incorporated into the body as a kind of practical know-how, that normative structure changes form. At first, it is understood theoretically, with reflective concentration upon individual rules, and with some deliberate effort to avoid error in their application. Later, it is understood by grace of a practical competence that we have acquired after the work of that reflective, theoretical, concentration is done. As Starbuck reports, for a person's understanding of religion to be transformed in this way,

'[h]e must relax [...] that is, he must fall back on the larger Power that makes for righteousness, which has been welling up in his own being, and let it finish in its own way the work it has begun [....] The act of yielding, in this point of view, is giving one's self over to the new life, making it the centre of a new personality, and living, from within, the truth of it which had before been viewed objectively.' (Quoted in James 2002, 232).

In this passage we can hear, I think, a description of the same kind of experience that Kierkegaard signals, when he wrote of coming to the act of writing with little more than a sense "that a lot was fermenting within 'him'" (PV, 249).

I now want to go beyond anything that has been explicitly said by either Kierkegaard or James about the connection between the body and revelation, but which can be granted, I think, as a readily acceptable truism. I want to note the following: it is precisely when a person has disciplined himself in a certain normative domain and has incorporated its rules into a capacity for pre-reflective action, that he becomes capable of genuine creativity in that domain. Only the person at home in a tradition has a nebulous and pre-reflective but nevertheless reliable sense of what has already been achieved in that tradition, of the problems that characterize its current state, and of the still-inexpressibly novel developments of the tradition that may be necessary to resolve those problems. It is precisely out of this inchoate but very general understanding of things that a person disciplined in the rules of a given tradition can *act*, in pre-reflective speech, or writing, or deed, in such a way

that his action can express the novel possibilities of sense that reflection will later find in it. Only the athlete corporeally at home in his sport comes pre-reflectively to deploy his body in ways formerly considered impossible by his sport. Maurice Merleau-Ponty has done much to illustrate this idea when he points out that only Cezanne or a Matisse renews the tradition of painting (see Merleau-Ponty 1964a, Ch. 1; Merleau-Ponty 1964b, Ch 1).

This role for the body as the mechanism of revelation cannot be easily accounted for in the traditional dualistic understanding of the self, where our relationship with truth is understood in recollection-theoretic terms. It is, however, comfortably at home in Kierkegaard's account, where the soul is essentially incarnate. It is in this way, I submit, that Kierkegaard's picture of the self can help us understand the process of revelation, clarify the distinctly pre-reflective nature our relationship to determinations meaning yet to be revealed, and provide a promising solution to the problem of alternative grammars that remained to be solved in our treatment of Wittgenstein. Now that we have an account of the distinctly embodied intentional relation between the self and yet-to-be-revealed alternative grammars, we will not be inclined to suspect that talk about such revelations is just another metaphysical attempt to say something that can really only be shown by an illicit gesture beyond the bounds of sense. If we have clarified the notion of revelation, in this way, so to have we clarified the notion of repetition. And if we have clarified the notion of repetition, we have taken one significant step toward clarifying the notion of realism that I am using the concept of repetition to articulate. In the next section, I want to do more to elucidate the kind of realism to which the understanding of repetition lends itself. I lay out my own view of the matter by situating it in relation to the perspectives on such a realism that we find in the recent writings of Charles Taylor, Lee Braver, and Jonathan Lear. I invoked their accounts of realism as objects of comparison that illuminate the realism that I find in Kierkegaard, once again, by way of both differences and similarities.

5.6. Perspectives on Realism

James' description of conversion experiences – which we are considering as paradigm cases of revelation – typically involve a sense that the revealed meaning has its source in what Adolphe Monod describes as "*some influence from without* [....] namely, of a real external supernatural action, capable of giving me thoughts, and taking them away from me, and exerted on me by a God as truly master of my heart as he is of the rest of nature" (quoted in James 2002, 268). Our impression here is that these revelations are expressive of something *real*, something *objectively true* (James 2002, 433-

35). For his own part, James is loath to deny this feature of their phenomenology. That is, he resists an anti-realistic analysis that would interpret such revelations as mere projections upon the world of something subjective and originally latent within the subject's subconscious (James 2002, 260, n. 1; ibid., 266-67, 555-564). Why should we accept this objective interpretation of the matter? Why should we grant that the insights brought to us in these apparent moments of revelation come from a source outside the self, and are irreducible to bubblings up from the psychological subconscious?

5.6.1. Taylor on Realism and Epiphany

One argument here might be that the objective reading is the only reading that stands the test of honest phenomenology. James signals in this direction when he describes a friend and 'first rate psychologist' who experienced the kind of bodily automatisms that James associates with religious inspiration. The psychologist was so struck by the plain absence of any feeling that such automatisms had their origin in his own psychology that he abandoned the theory that, in cases of normal, uninspired action, "we have no feeling of discharge downwards of our voluntary motor centres. We must normally have such a feeling, he thinks, or the sense of absence would not be so striking as it is in these experiences" (James 2002, 521, n. 1). James himself is willing to grant that many apparent 'revelations' can have their origin in the subconscious, or 'subliminal' region.[133] He grants that such experiences could indeed be explained psychologically, and would not be evidence of an encounter with any reality outside the self. "But" James adds, "candor obliges me to confess that there are occasional bursts into consciousness of results of which it is not easy to demonstrate any prolonged subconscious incubation" (ibid.), for instance, James offers, the revelation given to Saint Paul on the road to Damascus (ibid.). In such cases, where it is difficult to regard the revelation as the result of subconscious psychological phenomena, only two kinds of explanation are left available to us. The revelation "would have to be ascribed either to a merely physiological nerve storm, a 'discharging lesion' like that of epilepsy; or, in case it were useful and rational [...], to some more mystical or theological hypothesis" (ibid.). The last chapter of James' study argues that the theological hypothesis is useful and rational indeed.

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[133] What is the subliminal region? "Whatever else it may be, is at any rate a place now admitted by psychologists to exist for the accumulation of vestiges of sensible experience (whether inattentively or attentively registered), and for their elaboration according to ordinary psychological or logical laws into results that end by attaining such a 'tension' that they may at times enter consciousness with something like a burst" (James 2002, 202, n. 1). James submits that apparently religious experiences ought to be interpreted in this way where possible (ibid.) but, as we will see, he denies that such interpretations are always plausible.

James' defence of the theological explanation of revelation will seem unpersuasive to anyone opposed from the outset to any such account. It involves a realism about a non-naturalistic, mystical order of meaning, and one can always resist such an explanation by regarding the phenomenon of revelation in empirical terms and assuming that a subjective, psychological explanation will emerge in due course. However, the possibility of taking such an intellectual, and scientistic, and anti-realistic interpretation need not be regarded as a weakness for the theological and realistic alternative. Rather, it can be seen as a constitutive feature of such a theological realism that it should, in keeping with the method of indirect communication, leave us to accept that realism freely, on our own accord, without having been driven to it by a system of rationally demonstrable proofs. In any case, Taylor is surely right that all efforts to provide conclusive support for the realistic reading will come up short. He writes:

> The Christian believer has the felt intuition that her own power to love comes from being loved by God [....] And there are forms of art, common in post-Romantic age, which strive to produce what one could call 'epiphanies' which seem to point to such external sources [...] But this is often ontically very indefinite. Not to speak of the fact that this sense of an independent reality will often be accompanied by the doubt which is inseparable from faith. (Taylor 2016, 214)

The space for what Taylor calls 'doubt' here is the space in which the question arises: Can we bring about these epiphanies entirely on our own by,

> for instance, contemplating God, or nature, [...] because of some reaction these thoughts provoke in us? Or are we receiving a force which comes from beyond us? Which reading, the subjective or the objective, is the right one? We often have a strong sense which it is, even though the skeptic may recognize that this doesn't constitute a final proof. (Taylor 2016, 249)

What support for the realistic reading remains after we have admitted that 'final proofs' are out of place here? So far as Taylor's analysis goes, we are left with the phenomenology of the matter which, believers often feel, is simply lost in the subjective reading. It is simply a fact that "[s]uch epiphanies frequently strengthen our sense that the objective reading is the right one, that the force comes to us from 'outside,' in the sense that it is beyond our powers to produce it" (Taylor 2016, 250). Taylor says little to actually motivate the objective reading, though he does promise to return to the issue in

a book that has yet to emerge (Taylor 2016, 249).[134] The task of such a book would not, of course, be to offer conclusive proof for the realistic reading. However, such a book could motivate a realistic reading by showing, first, that such a reading of revelatory experience does indeed best capture the phenomenology of the matter, and second, that it provides us with a more coherent and compelling account of realism than other competing accounts. I hope my discussion of Kierkegaard so far has accomplished the first of these tasks. In the remainder of this section, I want to make a small contribution to the second task. I pick up where Taylor leaves off, by bringing his discussion into dialogue with two philosophers who, like me, have found a case for the realistic account in Kierkegaard: Lee Braver and Jonathan Lear.

5.6.2. Braver on Kierkegaard's 'Transgressive Realism'

In my realist reading of Kierkegaard, I have been following a lead that Braver has recently initiated. In what remains of this section, I want to clarify some of the darker aspects of this 'repetitional realism,' as I am inclined to call it, by contrasting it with what Braver's own characterization of Kierkegaard as a 'transgressive realist,' and by drawing my view into closer proximity with a reading of Kierkegaard that we find in Jonathan Lear. Much will be review, here, since Braver's reading of Kierkegaard has been the single-most important inspiration for my own, but the differences will not be trivial. By triangulating my own view between Braver and Lear, I hope to dispel any remaining questions about the sense in which Kierkegaard offers us a view that can fairly be called 'realism.'

Braver describes Kierkegaard's realism as a *via media* between the unsuccessful attempts at realism that we find in Kant and Hegel. We have so far been explaining Kierkegaard's realism by focusing on the contrasts between Kant's moral philosophy, which limits ethics to foreseeable possibilities, and the knight of faith's openness to meanings that are radically and unforeseeably new. Braver stresses that this same closure to the unforeseeable follows from the *a priori* limits that Kant places upon the possibilities of the phenomenal world:

> Kant's phenomenal world can never genuinely surprise us, not in any deep sense. We may have to find out the particular size of a planet on the far side of the galaxy empirically, but armchair astronomy assures us that it will conform to Euclidean geometry. Its basic structure is anticipated is advance, new information can never rise above superficial novelty. (Braver 2012a, 266)

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[134] "I shall return to discuss this further in the proposed companion study to this work" (Taylor 2016, 249).

Of course, Kant tries to accommodate our realist impulses with the doctrine of the noumenal world – the world as it is in itself, independent of how the world appears to us as phenomena, and pristinely indifferent to our intellectual faculties. For Braver, who adopts a 'two-worlds' reading of Kant, the trouble with noumena is that it is, to use our language, metaphysically transcendent to our essentially discursive, linguistic experience.[135] For Braver, Kant's noumena are not just things that never appear as phenomena in human discursive experience; they are precluded from entering into human discursive experience in any way at all. Braver sympathizes with Hegel's objection to Kant: Kantian noumena are utterly unthinkable,[136] a philosophy that speaks about them is utterly paradoxical, and, ultimately, the notion of the noumenal world has to be rescinded.

On Braver's reading of Kant, realism is worked out in terms of a world metaphysically transcendent to the discursively-structured world of things that we can actually experience. On Braver's reading of Hegel, realism involves a historical thinking of reality whose possibility was hidden in the Hegelian mind from the outset and is, therefore, as necessarily foreseeable as anything that might come to pass in the Kantian phenomenal realm. The advantage of the Hegelian turn, according to Braver, is that the epistemic humility appropriate for a finite intellect is no longer hitched to the unintelligible notion of a noumenal world that stands metaphysically beyond our ken. The disadvantage of the Hegelian turn is that it loses the humility characteristic of the realistic spirit since, for Hegelian reality, there comes time at which all possibilities have been given, precluding the possibility of the radically, unforeseeably, new. A Kantian realism of metaphysical transcendence (noumena) has the humility to acknowledge a reality richer than anything that human intellectual faculties are set up in advance to anticipate. Still, a Kantian realism comes only at the cost of rendering reality senselessly remote from human experience. A Hegelian realism of metaphysical immanence reestablishes experiential contact between the human being and the real. Still, a Hegelian realism has two shortcomings. First, it reduces reality to what can be explicitly said or thought about the world with the contrivances of human language. Second, it presumes that we can reason our way to a full disclosure of the real by deducing it, by a familiar chain of Hegelian affirmations and

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[135] I set aside the much-discussed question of whether the two-worlds reading of Kant is correct. Nothing in my analysis requires that it is. For my purposes in this chapter, I also set aside the question of whether Braver is right in his reading of Hegel.

[136] With Braver, we can agree that Hegel's criticism of such *noumena* is in order. Indeed, Hegel's critique anticipates the very same critique of a metaphysical conception of 'the limits of thought' that we have seen in the *Tractatus*. Hegel writes:

> It argues an utter want of consistency to say, on the one hand, that the understanding only knows phenomena, and, on the other, assert the absolute character of this knowledge, by such statements as 'Cognition can go no further'; 'Here is the natural and absolute limit of human knowledge.' […] No one knows, or even feels, that anything is a limit or defect until he is at the same time above and beyond it. (Hegel 1975, 91-92, quoted in Braver 2012a, 263 n. 8)

negations, from beliefs already familiar.[137] Kierkegaard enters Braver's story as the champion of a kind of realism that renders the world neither metaphysically transcendent to our historically-conditioned linguistic experience in the manner of Kant, nor – to use the term I introduced in connection with post-Kantian positivism last chapter – 'metaphysically immanent' to that experience, in the manner of Hegel.[138] Braver writes:

> Whereas Kant and Hegel place morality entirely within our reach, Kierkegaard insists that we dare not claim to know all that morality is and can be. In short, ethics and reason acquire an outside. / Not only is there an outside, as Hegel denies, but we can encounter it, as Kant denies; these encounters are in fact more important than what we can come up with on our own. The most important ideas are those that genuinely surprise us, not in the superficial sense of discovering which one of a determinate set of options is correct, as the Kantian model allows, but by violating our most fundamental beliefs and rupturing our basic categories. God doesn't insert new *content* into Abraham's mental template, but shatters the

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[137] Again, setting aside the question of whether Braver's 'two-worlds' reading of Kant is correct, I share Braver's assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of that interpretation of the Kantian picture, as compared the Hegelian alternative:

> I admire Kant's humility and would like to preserve it. It's an act of breathtaking hubris to say that the world must be cut to the measure of our minds, either with the rationalists that our thoughts line up with reality as they were made for each other, literally, or with Hegel that they encompass it exhaustively. On the other hand, the way Kant tried to accommodate this insight is deeply flawed, even self-contradictory. In positing a transcendent realm, he had to make use of immanent materials – our own transcendental concepts like substance, existence, arguably causality – thereby compromising its transcendence. It's still us thinking about noumena, after all. Hegel is right to dismiss the notion of noumena, but the way he did it shrank the real to what is thinkable by us – what arrogance, what profligacy. (Braver 2015, 6)

[138] Again, the view I have given of Kierkegaard and his critique of recollection comes very close to Braver's own take on the matter. As a statement of substantial agreement with my own views, Braver's own summary may be helpful to have on hand:

> In *Philosophical Fragments*, Kierkegaard frames his critique of these ideas by distinguishing the Platonist epistemological model from the Christian. Most philosophers adhere to the Platonist definition of knowledge as an explicit re-cognition of what we already implicitly know. Kant and Hegel certainly subscribe to this recollective model: Kant articulates the intellectual structures we are always already employing unconsciously, while Hegel portrays the phenomenological journey as an instance of ontogeny recapitulating phylogeny on the grand scale, whereby we go over for-us or explicitly what *Geist* has already undergone in itself without self-awareness. […] / Kierkegaard contrasts this Platonist approach with what he considers to be Christianity's implicit epistemology: God entered history to deliver insights precisely because we could not acquire them by our own resources. Platonist teachers give only maieutic aid, serving as midwife to help interlocutors give birth to knowledge already conceived within them, which matches the etymological meaning of 'educate' as 'to draw out of'. The Christian teacher on the other hand brings us something we not only lack, but which we lack the ability to attain, perhaps even to understand or become aware of. Rather than Hegel's cancelled and incorporated otherness, these lessons represents 'the different, the absolutely different', which so exceeds our capacities that we cannot grasp it without a profound change, undergoing something like a conversion rather than merely acquiring a new fact. Socrates gives us a conscious possession of what we already had without realizing it, thereby helping us to become who we are, God, on the other hand, gives us a new birth. (Braver 2012a, 269)

categories of right and wrong as he had understood them up to then, indeed, as our most thorough investigations could discover. […] Humble acceptance of our finitude entails accepting not just unknown facts, but the possibility of ideas that cannot fit into the conceptual scheme that structures our most basic ways of thinking, thoughts that exceed our thinking. Let us call this third step Transgressive Realism. (Braver 2012a, 269-70)

He then adds:

What is distinctive about this third step [i.e., the Kierkegaardian step to transgressive realism – L. McN.] is that, while limiting our comprehension, like Kant, it does not rely on a metaphysical reality cut off from our awareness in principle to do so. Kierkegaard's transcendence does not repose in undisturbed isolation but makes contact with us. The experience is not squeezed into our mental structures, but violates them, overloading and reshaping our categories. (Braver 2012a, 271)

Braver acknowledges that this is "a new perspective on realism" (Braver 2012a, 261). It is not a realism that concerns the correspondence between bipolar propositions and the already understood facts that they may or may not truthfully describe. Far from it, this is a realism wherein the real manifests itself in the 'transgression' of our language by the incursion of possibilities that we were not fit to foresee. The humility corresponding to this realism is neither the Kantian epistemic humility that acknowledges a metaphysically transcendent noumenal world, nor the ordinary epistemic humility that acknowledges that one's beliefs might well be false, namely under the condition that certain already intelligible possibilities (those incompatible with one's beliefs) might actually obtain in the world (Braver 2012a, 269). The humility of this realism is – as I think Braver would agree – *linguistic* or *grammatical* in nature; it is a humility concerning what we could and could not come to find intelligible. This is a realism about the meaning of words or, what comes to the same thing in my view of Wittgenstein, a realism about the essence of the things that we use words to speak about (PI, §371). 'Transgressive realism' does not concern the denizens of any particular domain of intellectual inquiry, for instance, the facts of natural science, moral proprieties, the self, other minds, or whatever. On Braver's reading, Kierkegaard's realism, and its humility, is not local to any of these different linguistic domains because it constitutes a particular way of relating to language as such and, hence, to the objects described in *any* linguistic domain. Very generally, this realism "opens us up to what which transcends us – to reality, to others, to the new, and to our own future selves" (Braver 2015, 12).

We may still feel odd about the idea that what we are talking about here is any *realism* worthy of the name. If the encounter with reality is not a matter of a correspondence between an empirical proposition and the fact that makes it true, but rather a matter of rupture where outworn concepts give way to the incursion of possibilities that could not have been foreseen from the outworn perspective, what is left in this account to motivate the appellation of *realism?* Braver's answer: "this is realism because the world's independence is vividly demonstrated by the radical alienness of what we experience" (Braver 2015, 10). The idea is that realism, at this very general level, involves contact with what is external to the self and to anything that the self might have recollected or created at will, and the defining mark of externality is the sort of conceptual violence that Braver means to signify with the word 'transgression' and its cognates. The prevalence of such revolutionary language is front and centre when Braver summarizes his view, reminding us of how far Kierkegaard has taken us from Kant and Hegel:

> The violation [of our concepts – L. McN.] is a sign of their externality since everything we can conceive remains the offspring of our concepts [....] Rather than the wholly independent noumenal realm that Hegel rightly rejects, these are the experiences that shatter our ways of understanding experience, exceeding our comprehension but not escaping our awareness. Thus, Kierkegaard's view combines Kant's admission of limitations on our (metaphysical) understanding with Hegel's rejection of noumena, without thereby falling into the latter's arrogant anti-realism. / [...] Transgressive realism [...] offers us *via media*, [....]. It gives us a reality that transcends our ways of thinking, but not all access to it. These aporetic experiences enter our awareness not through pathways prepared by our Active Minds but in spite of them, short-circuiting our anticipatory thought processes and violating the recollective model of learning that has haunted philosophy since Meno's slave learned a little math. (Braver 2012a, 271-272)

5.6.3. A Friendly Amendment

The characterization of this realism as a 'transgression, 'violation,' 'short-circuiting' or 'shattering' (Braver 2012a, 271) of our existing concepts captures the sense in which the meaning of things remembered in repetition is *new*. Of course, I agree that this element of novelty is essential to repetition and to repetition's realism. I only want to offer that when Braver defines Kierkegaard's realism as 'transgressive,' he locates that realism wholly in repetition's openness to the new, and neglects the sense in which repetition involves a remembrance of things already familiar. The

paradox in repetition is that what is new is, at the same time, old; what is created is, at the same time (and notwithstanding Wittgenstein's distaste for the word) *discovered*. Braver's emphasis upon transgression, violation, and rupture has a revolutionary ring that risks drowning out Kierkegaard's moderating and more conservative stress upon the idea that the new meaning is not, strictly speaking, a *violation* of the old, but its *fulfillment*. Repetition is not a revolutionary enthusiasm that unceremoniously discards the past meanings it transgresses in an onward march into the future. Instead, it is a *re*newal of those already familiar meanings that preserves them by disclosing what was always already their sense. Without rejecting anything that Braver has said, I only want to add to his account by highlighting the need for this second point of emphasis. I stress the conservative, non-revolutionary aspect of repetitional remembrance, not simply to nitpick about a detail that Braver might have included. Rather, I raise the issue of remembrance because I think that Braver's realist reading of Kierkegaard cannot survive without it. I have already described the problem in my discussion of Sartre. A brief comparison between Braver's revolutionary-sounding Kierkegaard and Thomas Kuhn's study of revolutionary science will illuminate the point from another angle.

Kuhn famously claimed that scientific revolutions were so dramatic in their scope as to render later paradigms semantically incommensurable with their forerunners. The overthrow of an outgoing paradigm could not be construed as the replacement of a false picture of the world with one more likely to be true because that construal presupposes that the two paradigms offer competing views about the same subject matter. But, Kuhn seems to have thought, revolutions of scientific paradigm occasioned such radical change in the meaning of terms that scientists on the far side of revolution were not making different, true, claims about the same facts that their pre-revolutionary forerunners had falsely described. Rather, they had changed the subject altogether. The shift to the Copernican worldview, for instance, was presented not as a matter of the Copernicans having learned something new about the same cosmos that was earlier described by Ptolemaic thinkers. Instead, as Kuhn provocatively put it, "after Copernicus, astronomers lived in a different world" (Kuhn 1996, 117). Paradigm shifts in science were thus thought not to mark periods of discovery but periods of pure creation. Where we are inclined to think that revolutions in science bring us progressively closer to knowledge of a singular truth, Kuhn's picture looked more like an epistemic relativism. Paradigm shifts simply ushered in a lateral change of worldview, where worldviews function as sets of rules *within* which truth claims could be evaluated but which could not, themselves, be evaluated for truth at all. And what, from the epistemological angle, looks very much like relativism about truth, from the ontological angle looks very much like constructivist

linguistic idealism about facts. By reading Kierkegaardian transformations in meaning too exclusively as transgressions, and by underemphasizing the role of remembrance, Braver places Kierkegaard too close to these two spectres of Promethean humanism – relativism and constructivism – which, in his stress on the importance of realism and humility, he above all wants to avoid.

The Kierkegaardian, conservative, emphasis on remembrance should be read as a hedge against the relativism and linguistic idealism that imperils the more revolutionary Kuhnian and Sartrean pictures. What Braver needs to augment his case for a Kierkegaardian realism, and what the account of repetitional remembrance affords, is the preservation of meaning across radical semantic transformation. Braver's case for a realistic reading of Kierkegaard can be helpfully shored up by balancing his emphasis on the prospective encounter with meanings unforeseeably new with Kierkegaard's equally weighty emphasis on the retrospective remembrance of the familiar meanings of old.

Let me be clear about the point I am making with this comparison to Kuhn. I am maintaining that the concepts of truth and progress in philosophy are indispensable, and that they need to have application even when we are describing intellectual developments that involve a radical conceptual change of the kind that Kuhn and Braver describe. The notions of truth and progress are, in my view, what an account of realism needs to make sense of. I accept Braver's claim that an account of realism cannot revert back to the sort of metaphysical abstraction that Braver finds in Kant's concept of noumena. Such a way of thinking about the structures of significance by which we know the world extends the correspondence theory of truth and justification beyond its legitimate bounds: we cannot hold the noumenal world in one hand, the discursively structured world in the other, and check to see if the two 'correspond.' For Kierkegaardian reasons that should now be familiar, I am also persuaded by Braver's criticism of the sort of view he finds in Hegel. Where Kant invokes a version of the untenable, 'vertical,' concept of transcendence, Hegel invokes an untenable 'horizontal' conception. Kierkegaard offers us a 'horizontal' conception that works. The question is: how is it to be understood?

For Braver, the way past these two untenable accounts of realism is to look for transcendence in transgression. My worry here is not merely that such a view deprives us of the concepts of truth and progress that realism needs to sustain (though that is also true). More concretely, the danger here is ethical. A realism of pure transgression is a recipe for the historically fractured, disintegrated, and disoriented existence that Kierkegaard diagnosed as the cause of reflective aesthetic despair. The argument there was that a fully human life is a richly historical life.

The reflective aesthete's problem, we saw, was that his life lacks narrative continuity. He cannot look into his past and find any singular meaning that unites his various adventures, gathering them together as the adventures a singular human being whose identity (judge William spoke of 'personality') is anchored in a singular purpose for the sake of which he lives. Murdoch was expressing the same danger when she described the non-narrative of the Sartrean life as "a grandiose leaping about unimpeded at important moments" (Murdoch 1997, 329). Braver does not do enough to distinguish his realism from the kinds of revolutionary tyranny that would force a break from our past and present understandings of meaning, rupturing the narrative of our linguistic lives rather than permitting us to move onward with the narrative integrity of those lives intact. Let us recall what is at stake here.

I have just said that both the reflective aesthete and the Sartrean existentialist lack a singular meaning and purpose for their life. However, as I argued in Chapter Three, the lack of any integral meaning that pervades the different events of a person's life involves a similar lack of any integral meaning that pervades his historical use of words. Sartre's Promethean hero was supposed to be able to rewrite the meanings by which he knows the world in ways that will resolve the tensions he finds in his life, reuniting him with his past on his own, newly created, terms. Kierkegaard, I argued, knew that any such happy reunion cannot be brought about at will because it is no easy task to simply invent new meanings for the past that strike us as genuinely convincing. The disintegration and despair of the reflective aesthete is what the existentialist is left with when he comes to learn that the meanings by which he knows the world cannot be simply rewritten at will. When he learns this, he sees that what he has left is a life of fragments. When he considers what he means by 'his self,' and when he considers the meaning of the various other words by which he has known the world, he cannot find an intelligible meaning that unifies their use. Unless we have a concept of realism that allows us to appreciate the preservation of identity within difference, of the old within the new, of tradition within transgression, then our historical relationship to our use of the words whose meaning we have remembered anew will be akin to reflective aesthete's relationship to his past use of his own name. What we will have is a relationship to a non-narrative: the story of a word whose historical use lacks any discernible, singular meaning that survives the different changes in that use. In the name of progress, we will have tried to solve our philosophical and existential problems by a myopic forward motion, severing ourselves from the sense that we had hitherto found in our words and baptizing them with meanings of our own creation. What we will have, then, is the disintegrated history of a homonym, of a world we know in terms of many such

homonyms, and of a person who fails to see any *rational* connections that tie together the different epochs of his linguistic life.

A realistic account of truth and progress does not require a return to vertical transcendence. What it requires is an acknowledgement that horizontal transcendence involves neither the sort of Hegelian historical determinism that Braver describes nor the merely transgressive break from the past that Braver finds in Kierkegaard. If we wish to say that it involves 'transgression' of past meanings, we should immediately add that such a transgression functions to preserve *those* past meanings in renewed form. Such a transgression allows us to see – for ourselves and without self-deception– *how* the same meaning is present in both the word's old and the new use. Such an account is realistic because it recognizes that the connections we need in order to preserve our sense of identity within difference – tradition within transgression, the past within the present– cannot be simply conjured up at will but must, rather, be provided by a source outside the self.

In Jonathan Lear, we will now find a helpful ally in the realist reading of Kierkegaard that, following Braver, I am trying to advance. Of particular merit is Lear's stress upon the connection between realism and indirect communication that I have also tried to bring to the fore. Lear's discussion of the transcendent in Kierkegaard emerges in the context of his study of Kierkegaardian irony.

5.6.4. Lear on Kierkegaard, Transcendence, and Irony

Lear explores the humility at work in Kierkegaardian irony as it conditions one's effort to live an appropriately human life. In this context, the opposite of irony – let us call it 'metaphysics'– involves being "perfectly sure of being human and knowing what it means to be a human being. So irony would seem to be a form of not-being perfectly sure – an insecurity about being human that is […] constitutive of becoming human" (Lear 2011, 6). But, as Lear explains, Kierkegaardian irony conditions not only my effort to relate with proper humility to my understanding of what, in general, it means to live a fully human life. It also conditions my effort to relate with appropriate humility to any more specific "principle, identity, or commitment mattering to me" (Lear 2011, 119).[139] In both the general and the specific case, and in keeping with what Braver has shown us about Kierkegaardian humility, Lear offers that the above-mentioned 'being perfectly sure' would be a matter of our taking the socially-received criteria that regulate our thought and talk about the

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[139] Lear explicates the relevant Kierkegaardian notion of identity as coming close to what Christine Korsgaard calls *practical identities* (see Lear 2011, 22-30).

meaning of our ideals and identities as the final arbiter of what their meaning in fact is. In Christendom, for example, this 'being perfectly sure' "shows itself in my reliance on Christendom to give me the materials for my reflection" (Lear 2011, 7), my reflection, that is, on whether I am living a fully Christian life.

What Braver calls an experience of 'transgression,' Lear calls the "experience of irony" (ibid., 9). We all have a capacity for such experience but, when we have honed that capacity to the point of excellence, we become a person who lives what Lear calls an *ironic existence* (ibid., 9). In the experience of irony, I come to feel unconvinced of the criteria that regulate common thought and talk about "some principle, identity, or commitment mattering to me" (Lear 2011, 119). "This form of confrontation is disruption: disruption of my practical identity as a Christian, disruption of my practical knowledge of how to live as a Christian" (Lear 2011, 15). As we saw in Judge William, the practical identity of being a Christian is manifest as a particular way of inhabiting some more particular practical identity, for instance one's being a husband. Illustrating with his own status as a teacher, Lear helpfully describes how the irony that subtends the Christian's attitude toward the meaning of Christianity also subtends his understanding of these more particular dimensions of the practical identity. Lear depicts a moment of vertigo when the meaning of the words in which we have always expressed our practical identities can suddenly seem to transcend what can be said about that identity with the expressive resources of established linguistic conventions. He describes the sense of confusion that comes to muddy his understanding of what it means to be a teacher, and of what he has been up to when he has described himself as such. What he says could equally be said about the cases of meaning-confusion to which Wittgenstein's addresses his own brand of philosophical therapy, when we no longer find sense in our long-standing use of a familiar word. In both cases, we have the uncanny sense that the socially sanctioned use of word has come apart from the word's meaning.

> That I have lost a sense of *what it means* to be a teacher is revealed by the fact that I can no longer make sense of what I have been up to. That is, I can certainly see that in the past I was adhering to established norms of teaching – or standing back and questioning them in recognized ways. In *that* sense my past continues to be intelligible to me. But I now have this question: What does *any of that* have to do with *teaching?* And if I cannot answer that question, my previous activities look like hubbub, busyness, confusion. (Lear 2011, 18)

The experience of Kierkegaardian irony does not come about through a realization that one's practical identity has been untrue to socially received views about what it means to inhabit an

identity of that kind. Such an experience of irony could be simply rectified by recollecting those received social understandings of what it means to be a Christian, or a teacher, or whatever, and to cleave to them more assiduously. To make this point, Lear draws a distinction between what we can call the *irony of words* or *irony of speech* and the vertiginous *experience of irony* described above. By contrast to the vertiginous experience of irony, the irony of speech is the more ordinary kind of irony, where one might say or write something one does not quite mean in order to shake up an audience and destabilize his comfort with the received criteria that regulate his practical identity. A species of the irony of speech is at play in the use of indirect communication.

For example, Lear offers, a priest's ironic use of words might be meant to indicate that, as a Christian, I ought to have been more generous to a person in need. But if this issue of ironic speech is meant only to highlight my infidelity to received criteria that regulate our common thought and talk about the Christian love of the neighbour, it does not bring about the experience of irony that Kierkegaard's own ironic (indirect) use of words is meant to bring about. In the case of the priest's use of ironic speech, "[w]e haven't left Christendom: my sense of falling short of the ideal, my sense of his 'irony,' all fall within received social understandings" (Lear 2011, 14). It is at this juncture, Lear writes, that where we come again to that "crucial feature of irony that has been in the background: namely, that in the paradigm case, it is radically first-personal, present tense" (ibid., 16). In the experience of irony we part ways from the regnant conventions of language and the third-personal truths that can be articulated in their terms, investing ourselves in a belief that finds no such third-personal support. It is the courage to endure the kind of solitude and risk involved in this effort to use words in ways that haven't (yet) acquired a third-personally intelligible sense that Kierkegaard has in mind when he speaks about the 'courage of faith.'

Braver's account of Kierkegaardian realism does not deal with the issue of indirect communication, which has been so important to Kierkegaard's realism on my own reading. In stressing the issue of ironic speech, Lear does broach this issue and, what is more, he shares my own sense of how indirect communication plays a crucial role in Kierkegaard's realism, which Lear describes as a matter of 'transcendence.' Further, Lear's reading aligns with my own when he stresses that the moment at which indirect communication succeeds in facilitating our encounter with the transcendent is not merely a moment at which we make a violent break from meanings past, but a moment at which we come to understand what those meanings always were.

Let us consider first Lear's discussion of how the experience of irony – the 'transgressive' experience that an ironic use of words might be used indirectly to bring about – does not enjoin us

to jettison the familiar meaning of words and to assign those words alternate meanings. Lear has us consider Socrates' ironic question in the *Republic*, which is meant to occasion the experience of irony with respect to what we mean by 'Doctor': 'Among all doctors, is there a doctor?' (Republic III 405a-408e, 409e-410e, cf., Lear 2011, 23). On Lear's reading, "we misunderstand the ironic movement if we think of Socrates as simply providing a revised set of criteria – for example as arguing that a true doctor doesn't prescribe diet pills but rather puts his patients on an exercise regime" (Lear 2011, 24).[140] What is Lear getting at here when he says that Socrates is not *simply* providing a revised set of criteria to determine what we mean by Doctor? As his discussion proceeds, it seems that he is making at least two points, both of which point to a problem in any such simply revisionist understanding of philosophy, and both of which I have raised in my concern about Braver's revisionist Kierkegaard.

First, the idea that Socrates is simply providing a revised account of the criteria that will determine what we mean by 'Doctor' leaves out the critical fact that these revised criteria do not usher in a Kuhnian change of subject. Instead, they register with us a *reminder* of what we have *always* wanted to express in our thought and talk about doctors. The revisionist picture overlooks that, in the experience of irony, what draws us away from all received understandings of a given ideal – say the ideal of *being* a doctor– *is that ideal itself.* Put differently; in the experience of irony, we appreciate that the meaning of 'doctor' *transcends* the criteria that determine what we currently, conventionally, count as falling under that concept. The transcendence at issue, however, is not *merely* a matter of transgressing established criteria (though it is also that). The merely transgressive account leaves out that the transgression of established criteria is, for Socrates, always in the service of recollecting the ideal that the outgoing criteria prevented us from expressing. Here Lear confirms what I have said about the crucial role of indirect communication, or irony in speech, to bring about our experience of the transcendent in and through its capacity to bring about our experience of identity in radical difference.

> When irony [in speech – L. McN.] hits its mark, the person who is its target has an uncanny experience that the demands of an ideal, value, or identity to which he takes himself to be already committed dramatically transcend the received social understandings. The experience is uncanny in the sense that what had been a familiar demand suddenly feels unfamiliar,

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[140] Lear says little to anchor his reading of this passage in the actual text of the Republic, and it is not obvious to me how, exactly, the text supports the reading he offers. In what follows, I simply describe Lear's reading, leaving aside the question of how the details of that reading might be worked out.

calling one to an unfamiliar way of life; and yet the unfamiliarity also has a weird sense of familiarity; as though we can recognize that this is our commitment. (Lear 2011, 25)

We are dealing here with a case where the use of words undergoes so radical change that it cannot be expressed in the everyday conventions of language. At the same time, we are left with the immovable impression that the new use of words, and the new meaning it involves, more fully expresses the meaning that the old use of words expressed only imperfectly.

Lear illuminates the psychological and phenomenological aspects of this encounter with the transcendent when he describes it as a kind of *anxiety*. In the course of doing so, Lear clarifies – again in agreement with Braver – that the experience of transcendence we have here is not to be accounted for in metaphysical terms. "Anxious irony is an immanent form of longing for transcendence. We do not need to posit a metaphysical or transcendent form in order to understand the longing for transcendence" (Lear 2011, 117). We experience the transcendent aspect of this transcendence-in-immanence when we recognize that our encounter with meaning is an encounter with a certain depth of possibility – of *potential* – that runs deeper than the merely immanent order of possibilities available to willful recollection. We experience the immanent aspect of this transcendence-in-immanence when we appreciate that the encounter with meaning is, although unforeseeably new from the perspective of the familiar criteria, nevertheless a remembrance of what was always the meaning – the ideal – that we sought to express in all our previous and ongoing thought and talk about, for example, doctors. Since our standard activities of reflection upon what we mean are carried out in terms of our standard, 'levelled-down' understanding of established criteria, the experience of irony

> shows our standard activities of reflection to be ways of avoiding what (we now realize) the ideal calls us to. It is as though an abyss opens between our previous understanding and our dawning sense of an ideal to which we take ourselves already to be committed. This is the strangeness of irony: we seem to be called to an ideal that transcends our ordinary understanding, but to which we now experience ourselves as already committed. (Lear 2011, 15)

Returning to the earlier example of being a teacher, Lear expands:

> [P]recisely by following the values of my practical identity, reflecting upon its norms and on how well or badly I live up to them [...] I am lead to a breakdown in these normal goings-on. There is something uncanny about teaching that transcends (what now seems like) the dross of social practice. There is something about my practical identity that breaks my practical

identity apart: it seems larger than, disruptive of, itself. This is the experience of irony. (ibid., 21)

The first – and by now familiar – difficulty with the revisionist, one-sidedly 'transgressive,' picture, then, is that it overlooks the responsibility of social convention to an ideal reality (a meaning) that transcends such convention. Lear is drawing our attention to such a real order of meaning when he insists that a change in conventions of even the Kuhnian kind is experienced, not as a revolutionary break with our past uses of words, but as a coming closer to the meaning that those uses of words always aspired to express.

The second and related difficulty with the revisionist picture has not to do with this way that it overlooks the nature of horizontal transcendence that I have just described, but with the way it overlooks the ethical considerations that motivate our felt *need* for such transcendence. It misunderstands the relationship between essences and we human beings who, unable to live with the reflective aesthetic options of either recreating essence or abandoning it, are committed to the practice of repetitional remembrance by our need for a historical existence. Lear finds the point in Kierkegaard when he juxtaposes Kierkegaardian irony, rooted in a resolute commitment to certain meanings by which we have come to know the world, with the reflective aesthetic irony of one continually willing to 'sheer off at will.' He notes that "[i]t is often assumed that irony is a form of detachment [....], a lack of commitment or seriousness" (Lear 2011, 19), an idea that Lear connects with the human pretension to a God's eye point of view on life. "On this view, reflective consciousness itself has no commitments, it is just a detached observer of commitment [...] [I]ronic experience, by contrast, is a peculiar form of *committed* reflection" (ibid., 21). Accordingly, "in the ironic experience, it is my *fidelity* to teaching that has brought my teacherly activities into question [....] [I]t is because, my life as a teacher matters to me that I am disrupted" (ibid., 21). It is because I am so deeply committed to the ideal in terms of which I understand myself and world that I remain aware that I, and perhaps my whole culture with its linguistic conventions, might be falling unspeakably short of meeting that ideal. And it is because I am so invested in these things that "a capacity for ironic disruption may be a manifestation of seriousness about one's practical identity. It is not merely a disruption of one's practical identity; it is a form of loyalty to it." (ibid., 22). Our deep need to preserve the principle commitments of our individual and cultural pasts requires that remembrance, as repetition and realism, is as much a fidelity to the past as it is pursuit of a new and still uncharted future.

5.6.5. A Closing Note on Sameness and Difference

A question lingers: What is it that leads Kierkegaard to say that the transformed meanings are 'the same' as the old ones? Or, to put the question differently, why does Kierkegaard say that he is trying to *remind* us of what we always meant by, for example, 'Christianity' when he is evidently trying to effect a change in the concept?

Let us focus the question on Frye's example of repetition. To a non-Christian, it might seem absurd to say that God became incarnate and was crucified, for it might seem to him that such talk would be incompatible with what he means by 'God.' And indeed, this feeling is surely easy to appreciate. Given the radical difference between old and new concepts of God at issue here, we can see why a person might simply fail to see the relation of sameness that is supposed to unite the new and the old. Of course, the Christian proposal is that the repetitional remembrance of God as Christ is necessary for any genuine resolution to the problems that beset the pre-Christian religious life. But why can't the pre-Christian simply refuse the offer, and intransigently remain with those problems? Why should such a pre-Christian self accept that the revealed, Christian, concept of God is actually the fulfillment of the concept of God with which he was always operating? So far as I know, Kierkegaard never addressed this question directly, so here we need to speculate. The following, however, constitute some intuitive fragments of an answer.

First, Kierkegaard would certainly grant that we *could* deny that there is any such identity-in-difference here. Just as we are left on our own to freely accept or reject that Christ is the same as the God of the Old Testament, so too are we left to accept or reject any other repetitional manifestation of sameness in radical difference. But this freedom to reject a repetitional remembrance of the truth is not a problem with Kierkegaard's picture; it is exactly what we would expect. A continual refrain in the Kierkegaard picture has been that a wholehearted, resolute commitment to the Christian truth needs to come about freely and, as we have seen, indirect communication is the means by which this free commitment is solicited from the reader. With the discussion of repetition in hand, we appreciate that one evident role of indirect communication is that it readies us to see identity in radical difference, where the direct approach might leave us seeing difference and nothing more.

A second part of an answer to this question of why we will see sameness in difference has been implicit in the idea that we touched upon in both chapters three and four, the idea, as Wittgenstein puts it, that we have "deep need" to parse the world in terms of certain concepts. "[T]o the *depth* we see in the essence" of a given object, he wrote, "there corresponds the *deep* need for the convention" (RFM, I-§74) of parsing our world in terms of that object's corresponding concept.

From this perspective, the deeper our *need* for a certain concept, the more open we will be to accepting even unforeseeably surprising depths of possibility in the corresponding essence. Imagine, to take Wittgenstein's examples, that we cannot get on without the concepts of 'God' or 'Object' (CV, 86). Imagine that trying to do away with either made it impossible for us to make sense of our futures or pasts. Imagine, in addition, that the healthy functioning of such a concept in the present is hampered by some aspect of its past use that is tied up with what we take to be an *essential* aspect of the concept in question. *These* are the cases that engender the sort of philosophical puzzlement that concern Kierkegaard as much as Wittgenstein: cases where we are tormented [*gepeitscht*] (PI, §133) by our conceptual problems. We are tormented because, first, these problems cannot be resolved by simply abandoning the troubled concept altogether and, second, because we do not see how we can retain the concept and abandon the apparently essential aspect of the concept that generates the problem. For example, we do not see how we could abandon the idea that a person has thoughts 'inside the head,' but we don't see how we can maintain the idea without thinking about the 'inside' relation on the model of an object inside one's pocket (see PI, §304). These, I think, are the cases where a preserving renewal of the concept is so necessary and where, just because of that necessity, we will be open to seeing similarly in even radically different interpretations of the concept. We will see identity in difference, here, just so long as such interpretations do indeed permit us to maintain a place for the necessary concept in our life and, thereby, to maintain the narrative integrity of the self.

A third part of an answer, finally, has been implicit in what we have said about the nature of an illusion. I can present the idea by beginning with the voluntarist, or subjectivist, picture of concept choice of the kind that we have seen Kierkegaard oppose, and which 'pragmatist' readers of Wittgenstein sometimes find in his account of philosophical method. Our temptation here is to say that a Kierkegaardian or Wittgensteinian philosophical investigation presents us with two determinations of meaning: the old, which engenders philosophical confusion, and the new, which doesn't. We are then inclined to say that we *choose* the latter for its pragmatic value over the former. If we could parse the situation this way, then it would be fair to say that we have simply adopted a new concept and abandoned an old one. Put differently; there would be no impetus here to say that the new concept is, in fact, the same as the old, or to say that we have been brought to remember what was always the meaning of our words. Here we could speak *merely* about a change of meaning – a simple swapping of old for new – rather than a repetitional change of meaning that renews our past and carries it forward into the present. It becomes difficult to speak about any such *mere* change of meaning, however, if we can no longer relate to the old meaning as a genuine determination of

meaning at all, and this is precisely the difficulty that indirect communication creates when it brings us to see that the former determination of meaning as a mere illusion.

Kierkegaard is not arguing that one *must* see similarity in the examples of difference that feature in cases of repetition. Instead, I think, he is merely describing the phenomenology of remembrance as it strikes us in these cases: under the conditions created by indirect communication, and when we feel a need to retain a past use of language rather than just forget about that use altogether. Under such conditions, we just do find ourselves inclined to regard the changed concept as something like the 'fulfillment' of the old.

5.7. *Fear and Trembling*: A Case Study in Repetition

So far, I have permitted myself to draw liberally upon the secondary literature in Kierkegaard studies in order to situate my understanding of repetition in relation to interpretations already familiar. Furthermore, my discussion of repetition has proceeded in broad strokes. These broad strokes may leave a reader uneasy and, in particular, unconvinced that I have adequately illustrated, developed, and defended the crucial Kierkegaardian concept of realism as repetitional remembrance over and against the alternative conception of realism as mere transgression. After all, a version of the merely transgressive view of Kierkegaard is implied by the familiar interpretation that we have seen raised, in different forms, by Robert Adams (Adams 1977, 242), Alistair Macintyre (Macintyre 1984, 32), and Brand Blanshard (Blanshard 1969, 118). For all these readers, the movement into faith involves a radical break from ethics, so that the faithful person is ready to manifest a wild disregard for the ethical norms to which he was committed in his past, pre-religious, 'merely ethical' form of life. Such self would surely lack the continuity that, I am suggesting, Kierkegaard thinks essential to the narrative integrity of the personality. If I am to defend the reading of Kierkegaard that I have advanced, I need to address this concern. Focusing on *Fear and Trembling,* I will suggest that the vision of repetition that I have offered can resolve this tension as it arises in that text and, in addition, it can resolve two other tensions in that text as well. One of these tensions concerns Kierkegaard's discussion of Isaac's miraculous resurrection. The other concerns the relationship between resignation and faith.

A second worry about my account so far will undoubtedly pertain to what I have said about the vital role of the body in the faithful self's pre-reflective, corporal, relationship with truth. I suggested, recall, that in Kierkegaard's picture of the self's communion with truth, the pre-reflectively active body takes over the role traditionally played by the reflecting, intellectual, and

disembodied soul of Platonist. Here too, so far, I have only sketched a proposal, and I need to say more to develop and defend my view. I do so in this section, once more, through a close reading of *Fear and Trembling*. Here, the reading of Kierkegaardian repetition that I developed with the help of James will be supported by the light it sheds on *Fear and Trembling's* portrayal of faith.

5.7.1. Remembering Ethics

So far, I have been saying that the knight of faith 'goes beyond' ethics, in the sense that he has faith in that which cannot be justified or expressed in ethical terms. This formulation of faith is importantly misleading. It encourages the familiar but mistaken view that we simply abandon ethics when we graduate from the ethical life to the religious life of faith. If ethics were simply abandoned, faith would be the demonic affair that we saw Adams and others describe it as being, *viz.*, as a relationship with God that requires a mere willingness to flout the rules of ethics.

So far as I can see, there is a powerful *prima facie* argument against any such interpretation of the knight of faith: it ascribes to the knight of faith a species of the same recreative anti-realism that Kierkegaard has worked so hard to criticize in his treatment of the reflective aesthete. In the readings of Adams, MacIntyre and others, the knight of faith recreates the rules of grammar in full indifference grammar's history, simply severing his ties to the grammatical past and tearing the narrative integrity of his life asunder. But if in this way the knight of faith fully repudiates his commitment to ethical norms when he enters the life of faith, his life would have fallen into the same state of disintegration and despair that plagues the reflective aesthete. To defend their reading Adams, MacIntrye, and others need to explain how their knight of faith doesn't just repeat the errors of the reflective aesthete which, surely, the knight of faith does not do. One reason we should resist the recreative reading of faith, then, is that it hasn't met its burden of proof of addressing this *prima facie* problem that comes into view when we compare the lessons of *Fear and Trembling* with the lessons of *Either/Or*. A second reason is that the recreative reading of faith is difficult to square with material immanent to the text of *Fear and Trembling* itself. Specifically, it is at odds with de Silentio's characterization of the relation between faith and ethics. Let me explain.

Though de Silentio frequently describes the knight of faith as holding himself to a higher standard than 'ethical' norms, to see past the concerns of Adams *et al.,* we need to see that the meaning of 'ethics' undergoes a 'repetitional' transformation over the course of de Silentio's discussion. When we appreciate this, we will see that what can at first look like the knight of faith's

rebellion against ethics is really better parsed as a deepening of his commitment to ethics in the sense of 'deepening' earlier described by Lear.

The movement into the religious life that we began charting in our look at the knight of faith requires that we 'suspend' our sensitivity to ethical reasons within a higher-order sensitivity to the reasons of faith. But de Silentio is clear that "that which is suspended [i.e., the ethical] is not relinquished but is preserved in the higher" (FT, 54). Thus, with the movement into faith,

> *it does not follow that the ethical should be invalidated*; rather, the ethical receives a completely different expression, a paradoxical expression, such as, for example, that love to God may bring the knight of faith to give his love to the neighbour – an expression opposite to that which, ethically speaking, is duty. (FT, 70, cf., FT, 48-49, emphasis added)

In faith, our salvation comes not by way of our fulfilling duties to perform certain ethical works, but by grace. This is not to say that good ethical works are unnecessary, however. The idea is that one can do good ethical works in the proper spirit only when one does them freely, and from a sense of love for the neighbour, rather than from a sense of duty. Thus, the movement into faith marks not a forgetting of ethics, but a repetitional remembrance of ethics whereby, amongst other things, ethical motivation comes to take a different form. We are not dealing here with an identical repetition since "the ethical receives a completely different expression" (FT, 70). How so? No perfectly general answer can be given, but one way it receives a different expression is this: When our relation to ethics is a matter of faithful love, rather than duty, we will not insist that the nature of our ethical duties must be cut to the measure of our recollective expectations. We will be able see, with Abraham, that the rules of ethics can permit more than what can be foreseen, articulated, and justified with our extant ethical grammar.

When *Fear and Trembling* is read as an illustration of repetition in the above way, *pace* Adams, it need not be read as calling for demonic disregard of ethical norms. What is really called for is a repetitional realism about the meaning of 'ethics,' about particular ethical norms and, most generally, about our human 'understanding' of the world. But we do not abandon our former commitment to ethics, to its rules, and to the human understanding. Faith requires that one "be able to lose one's understanding and along with it everything finite, for which it is the stockbroker, *and then to win the very same finitude again by virtue of the absurd"* (FT, 36). This finitude encompasses the everyday things that we love – for Abraham, Isaac, for the young swain, the princess, and so on – but finitude also includes the human understanding of things by which we navigate our finite lives. Appearances aside, this should not be read as a revolutionary overthrow of the understanding since, after the

knight of faith has made this movement of resignation, both finitude and the understanding that is the 'stockbroker' of finitude, is returned to him, just as Isaac is returned to Abraham.

Thus, once more, faithful Abraham, no less than faithless de Silentio, is devoted to ethics. The difference between them is that Abraham, unlike de Silentio, is willing to look upon ethical norms as possessing this deeper and inexhaustible reality that stands continually open to being revealed and remembered anew. Most fundamentally, it is his attunement to this inexpressible depth of meaning that pervades the things of finitude that makes the difference between the knight of resignation, who is returned to finitude only with pain (FT, 35, 45-46) and as an alien in the world, and the knight of faith who retains the finite with joy (FT, 35, 46, 50).

5.7.2. Remembering Justification

I have already spoken about the ontological significance of this view. That significance lies in the realism promised by this account of how grammar 'transcends' its temporal expression. We now need to remember the epistemological aspects of the view. We have seen that the knight of faith is "justified not by virtue of being something universal but by virtue of being the single individual" (FT, 62). His justification in being the single individual lies in his willingness to proceed of the basis of a hunch that cannot be justified ordinary third-personal terms. Now, there is no suggestion here or elsewhere in Kierkegaard that the faithful hunch cannot be vindicated by the lights of public reason *later on in time*. Indeed, the story of Abraham and Isaac suggests that it can be so justified. Abraham is vindicated, after all, when his faithful hunch that Isaac will be spared turns out to be correct, proving for all to see that God could do what seemed so roundly absurd to the perspective of the faithless ethical community. Nothing more demonic than this need be read into the claim that faith involves a "justified hiddenness, [a] justified incommensurability [with the ethical – L. McN.]" (FT, 82) "by virtue of the absurd" (FT, 115). But, what is faith then, if it is not a wild leap of the Luciferian will? We need to fill in the gaps on our own but we can do so, I think, without veering into fully unmotivated speculation.

For all that has been said, we are free to interpret Abraham's faith as the seasoned expert's willingness to operate on an as-yet publically inarticulate hunch. This would be a hunch that what counts as unethical in the received grammar of the day is somehow 'ethical' after all, and will be recognizable as such to others once they have come to appreciate the new revelation of grammar that is first communicated to the elect, Abraham-like, subject. Abraham is an expert in ethics – "a devout and God-fearing man" (FT, 31) and this, as de Silentio stresses, is the reason why *his*

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willingness to kill is not a willingness to commit a sinful action, which it would be the case of a lesser man (FT, 30-31). The reason that Abraham is prepared to kill Isaac is not that he lacks knowledge of our everyday, faithless, ethical grammar and thinks, therefore, that he might be justified in killing Isaac in terms of that levelled-down understanding of grammar after all (FT, 119). Such would be the case for an ordinary parishioner who was prompted to kill his own son by a careless pastor who has forgotten to mention, in his sermon extolling Abraham, the father's ethical duty to love the son (FT, 20). "Or perhaps the speaker forgot something equivalent to the ethical oversight that Isaac was the son. In other words, if faith is taken away by becoming *Nul* and *Nichts,* all that remains is the brutal fact that Abraham meant to murder Isaac, which is easy enough for anyone to imitate if he does not have faith – that is, the faith that makes it difficult for him" (FT, 30).

A reader of *Fear and Trembling* needs an account of why Abraham's thoroughgoing knowledge of ethics is so necessary if his killing of Isaac is to constitute a godly and sinless sacrifice rather than a godless and sinful murder. Why should Abraham be exonerated by his knowledge that the killing of Isaac would constitute murder according to established grammar of ethics? An even more difficulty question: How are we supposed to find this Abraham *praiseworthy*? Are we supposed to praise him for having the 'courage' of faith to do what, from his own perfectly well-informed ethical perspective, is nothing more than a bald act of murder? If this is so, "then let us forget him, for what is the value of going to the trouble of remembering that past which cannot become a present" (FT, 30). Even if there was a time when a reader could find value in such a picture of Abraham, it certainly has nothing of value to offer us. Wouldn't a lucid knowledge that the act of killing would constitute a murder make Abraham *more* sinful, rather than less, as compared to the person who kills Isaac, *not* knowing what a violation of ethics he is committing? Surely it would, and de Silentio is well aware of this: "faith cannot make it a holy act to be willing to murder [ones] son" (FT, 30). The notion that we should praise Abraham because he does what he knows is every sense an unethical deed is a dead hypothesis.

This dead-end reading of the Abraham story is not the only reading available, however. At least, it is not the only reading of de Silentio's version of the tale. If my own account of faith is correct, Abraham's expert knowledge of ethics is essential to making his act sinless because a deeply incorporated understanding of a given normative domain puts him in position to sense that what he is willing to do *is actually permitted by ethics,* which we come to see when the meaning of 'ethics' is renewed by a faithful repetition. When ethics is repeated in faith, one's understanding of ethics goes from being a merely theoretical, levelled-down, matter of operating according to explicit rules and

becomes a practical capacity spontaneously and appropriately to respond to patterns of ethical salience in the surrounding world. Once this repetition has taken place, one finds oneself receptive to the revelation of new ethical possibilities. To the faithless non-expert, like de Silentio, such novel ethical possibilities may look like a clear violation of ethical rules. In fact, these novel expressions of ethical rule are the fulfilment of those everyday rules that came before them.

There is nothing like a decisive textual proof of the reading I am offering here, but we read *Fear and Trembling* wrong if we expect any such thing. If the text is to mean anything to us today at all, Abraham should be regarded as the ethical analogue of Starbuck's seasoned athlete, musician, religious convert, or married man. From this perspective, *Fear and Trembling* should be read as a picture of what it means to follow the example of Christ. This means to embody ethical truth and to become the conduit through whom an understanding of the ethical-grammatical past is carried forward into the present and the future. On such a picture, grammatical truth is not recreated by the solitary, ahistorical, and demonic human will that plunges wildly into a future of its own making. Instead, on this picture, grammatical truth is preserved through the expert's mastery of a tradition whose renewal he strives to facilitate through a careful communion with God.

I can rephrase what I have just said in the epistemic terms that I introduced in Chapter Three. In faith, we are we not dealing with a lack of justification (FT, 55-56, 62). Rather, when ethics is remembered in faith, we see that ethical commitments admit of the sort of externalist justification that can consist in operating on what Louis Pojman calls the evidence of "intuitive judgements" (Pojman 2003, 550). I have in mind the sort of evidence that entitles the person well-versed in a certain normative domain to proceed on a kind of self-trust toward the fulfillment of still-publically inexpressible hope to which the rest of us have no such entitlement.[141] That trust is, ultimately, that

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[141] If this is right, then Kierkegaard himself advances something very close to the account of justification that Pojman presents as an *alternative* to what, for Pojman, is Kierkegaard's doxastic voluntarism (see Pojman 2003, 537). With MacIntyre and others, Pojman claims that Kierkegaardian faith involves being able to achieve certain beliefs by brute force of will, and in the teeth of countervailing evidence. Against any such voluntarism, Pojman points out that the cases that some have presented as examples of judging against the evidence, in this way, are more plausibly accounted for as matter of judging on the basis of intuitive evidence, the rational force of which cannot be easily explicated in third-personal terms intelligible to all. We are asked to consider Smith,

> [a] defense attorney who agrees with the prosecution and the jury that there is sufficient evidence against his client but, who, nevertheless, continues to believe in his client's innocence despite the evidence [....] When he is in court or looking at the evidence in private, he feels a subtle certainty that Brown [his client- L. McN.] is guilty, but when he faces Brown, looks him in the eye, and speaks to him, he senses that he must be wrong in believing the evidence that points to Brown's guilt. (Pojman 2003, 550)

In fact, Smith's intuitions are correct, and his belief in his client's innocence is vindicated years later (ibid., 550). Although he was not able to articulate his reasons, and although he granted that by 'objective,' 'third-personal' standards, Brown counts as guilty, for Pojman, Smith was always justified in believing that Brown was innocent. Why? Because

what present popular thought regards as a sinful violation of an ethical rule will be regarded by future thought as being in keeping with that rule. What seems to others to be so radically incompatible with received ethical rules might ultimately register with them as an unexpected expression of commitment to those rules. This can happen, however, only when we are provided with a *new* rule (a new grammar) which, paradoxically, strikes us as the fulfilment of the old. Here we have the externalist, non-epistemic, kind of justification that I am calling 'justification by faith.'

Here we also see the strange coincidence of identity and difference that defines the structure of repetitional remembrance. Difference is required so that activity of remembrance takes us beyond a mere recollection of the same. Identity is required so that difference in the remembered meaning does not destroy the narrative integrity of the self and its linguistic history. Repetitional remembrance involves a radical restructuring of past meaning when a new meaning for that past is provided. But repetitional remembrance does not slide into a Luciferian reflective-aesthetic pursuit of novelty, unhinged from the ideals of realism and truth. When the self's activity of remembrance becomes a matter of repetition, our need for remembrance – our need for integrity, truth and realism – finds it proper harmony with our need for novelty and change, just as the body finds its proper harmony with the soul.

5.7.3. Remembering Isaac

I have just tried to develop and defend the repetitional understanding of remembrance by showing how it allows for a non-demonic understanding of Abraham's relationship with ethics. I now want to show that it can also help us to understand Abraham's relationship with Isaac. Toward that end, we need to say more about infinite resignation and its role in the formation of personal identity.

Smith is an expert attentive to 'intuitive evidence' that fails to register in the merely third-personal evaluation of the matter.

> Smith's previous experience with people, especially defendants, both innocent and guilty, has caused him to form reliable beliefs about characteristic features and behaviours of the guilty and innocent, including the 'seemingly innocent' and the 'seemingly guilty.' He is unaware of the large repository of internalized evidence and cannot formulate it. Here we want to say Smith's reliability at judging character and legal evidence warrants our saying he has internalized skills, and sets of inductive generalizations (for example, judging from certain characteristic looks on innocent faces to a conclusion of particular evidence) that cause individual belief occurrences. Smith has data and skills that the jury does not, that a less competent attorney does not, and that the judge may not. (ibid., 550)

Pojman is inclined to call this kind of justification 'evidentialist,' which suggests an epistemic internalism. I find it more natural to side with Duncan Pritchard and regard such cases as examples of epistemic externalism (see Prichard 2006, 60-63) or, even better, as fully non-epistemic examples of justification by faith. When we work though the multiple layers of indirection in *Fear and Trembling*, Abraham is best regarded as a moral expert who is justified in just this way when he proceeds toward the sacrifice of Isaac.

5.7.3.1. Identity and Infinite Resignation

The Kierkegaardian movement into selfhood is most often described as proceeding in two steps: first, the 'movement of infinite resignation,' and then the 'movement of faith.' Resignation, as the story goes, is a necessary but not sufficient condition for faith, which requires the second movement as well.[142] This is right so far as it goes, but it is an oversimplification. The movement of resignation is anticipated by a prior movement. This prior movement is a pre-condition for resignation, just as resignation is a precondition of faith. Let us all this prior movement *immediate commitment*, since it looks a great deal like the kind of naive immediate commitment that we saw in the young lovers of *Either/Or.* In *Fear and Trembling,* our romantic is 'the young swain' who commits, in this immediate way, to the princess he loves.

> He assures himself that [his love] actually is the substance of his life, and his soul is too healthy and too proud to waste the least of it in an intoxication. He is not cowardly; he is not afraid to let it steal into his most secret, his most remote thoughts, to let it twist and entwine itself intricately around every ligament of his consciousness – if his love comes to grief, he will never be able to wrench himself out of it. He feels a blissful delight in letting love palpitate in every nerve. (FT, 42)

His love is not a momentary flight of infatuation, but an essential part of the meaning and purpose of his life, and of his very identity as a self. De Silentio has chosen a case of romantic love to illustrate this essential role for finite commitment in the development of identity, but the point is not narrowly one about romance. "[A]ny other interest in which an individual has concentrated the whole reality of actuality can [...] prompt the movement of resignation" (FT, 41).[143] Since, as we've seen, one's understanding of one's self involves a whole understanding of one's world, one who has concentrated his whole understanding of himself into a particular finite object of love has, at the same time, "concentrated the whole reality of actuality" (FT, 41) into that love.[144] As the reflective

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[142] "Infinite resignation is the last stage before faith, so that anyone who has not made this movement does not have faith, for only in infinite resignation do I become conscious of my eternal validity, and only then can one speak of grasping existence by virtue of faith" (FT, 46).

[143] The passage continues: "I have chosen a love affair to show the movements, because the interest is far easier to understand and thus frees one from all preliminary considerations that in a deeper sense could be of concern only to a very few individuals" (FT, 41).

[144] Dreyfus expands, returning us to the example of the young swain:

> The lad who loves the princess relates to himself by way of this relation. Thanks to it, he knows who he is and what is relevant and important in the world. Any such unconditional commitment to some specific individual, cause, or vocation whereby a person gets an identity and a sense of reality would do to make the point Kierkegaard is trying to make. In such a case the person becomes an individual defined by his or her relation to the object that draws him or her into an unconditional commitment [....] [I]n the case of an unconditional commitment that defines the self, one's identity is as eternal as a definition. (Dreyfus 2012, 105)

aesthete was well aware, such concentration of the self into a hope for some particular, self-and-world-defining object of love comes with the risk of tragedy. One's hope might prove impossible to realize and, since one's very identity is tied to that hope, its proving impossible will amount not to a mere misfortune but to a kind of existential death.[145]

Unlike the reflective aesthete, our young swain incurs the risk of such identity-grounding commitment. "Having totally absorbed this love and immersed himself in it, he does not lack the courage to risk everything" (FT, 42). There is nothing in our knight of the reflective aesthete's prudent effort to safeguard the self from the existential vulnerabilities that attend such risky investment. There nothing in him of the man who, refusing to anchor his identity in a single hope, is "dissipated in multiplicity," (FT, 43), and who "acts shrewdly in life as the financiers who put their resources into widely diversified investments in order to gain on one if they lose on another" (ibid.).

I have just described the preliminary movement that I called 'immediate commitment.' The movement resembles the naive love of the immediate aesthete, for it lacks the intellectual element of reflection that we saw in the Hegelian, Judge William, and which we will presently see in the knight of resignation. "Most people live completely absorbed in worldly joys and sorrows" (FT, 41) and, when de Silentio writes that the immediately committed young swain has "totally absorbed this love and immersed himself in it" (FT, 42), he seems to be indicating that the movement of immediate commitment involves this sort of existential absorption of the self in the world. The young swain goes on to make the distinctly *reflective* movement of resignation when he discovers that, by the standard of unaided human reason, the actual, finite, life that he hopes for is impossible (FT, 46-47; cf., FT, 34-35). That is to say, hope for the temporal existence he desires cannot be expressed or justified in the language of a *merely* human ethical grammar, an ethical grammar our understanding of which has not yet been repeated in faith. Thus, the young swain makes the movement after he realizes that he has lost his bet with fate and that, so far as unaided human reason is concerned (FT, 42, 50), the princess is lost.

Crucially, our knight of resignation does not abandon his conception of himself as a person existentially anchored in his love for the princess. In this, he refuses the particular brand of 'worldly'

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[145] This would be a death that we undergo freely, and in the course of our natural life, rather than that final death that we undergo, "as a unilateral result of a *dira necessitas* [cruel constraint of necessity" (FT, 46) when our natural life expires. "Thus," de Silentio explains, "if one believes that cold, barren necessity must necessarily be present, then one is declaring thereby that no one can experience death before one actually dies, which to me seems to be crass materialism" (FT, 46).

wisdom that we find amongst utilitarians.[146] An advocate of such wisdom might advise the knight to regard the value of his commitment to the princess as the object of a cost-benefit calculation, and to cut ties with that commitment in pursuit of a woman who is actually available to him and 'just as good.' De Silentio's rebuke of these the 'slaves to the finite' could not be harsher:

> Of course, the slaves of the finite, the frogs in the swamp of life, scream: That kind of love is foolishness; the rich brewer's widow is just as good and a solid a match. Let them go croaking in the swamp. The knight of infinite resignation does not do any such thing; he does not give up the love, not for all the glories in the world. (FT, 42)

The knight of resignation does not acquiesce in this utilitarian brand of worldly rationality and abandon his love for the princess. Far to the contrary, it is precisely in the movement of infinite resignation that that his love acquires its full reality as the eternally valid meaning of his life (FT, 46), and fully becomes the essence of who he is as an individual. What he 'does not give up,' then, is not only the princess, is it also himself.

> Will he forget it all? [...] No, for the knight does not contradict himself, and it is a contradiction to forget the whole substance of his life and yet remain the same. He feels no inclination to become another person, by no means regards that as something great. Only the lower natures forget themselves and become something new. The butterfly, for example, completely forgets that it was a caterpillar, and may in turn so completely forget that it was butterfly that it may become a fish. The deeper natures never forget themselves and never become anything other than what they were. (FT, 43)

The young swain appreciates the fundamental importance of integrity in the development of the self. Finding it a contradiction that he could retain the self's integrity and yet be reborn anew, he refuses to "completely forget" (FT, 43) his self-defining love for the princess and, thereby, he refuses "to become another person" (FT, 43). This point is crucial for seeing how *Fear and Trembling* is a reflection on the interplay between identity and difference that so central to repetitional remembrance. One reason why our young man does not simply forget his self-constituting commitment is that, so far as he can see, doing so would be an ethical failure of integrity of the kind that Judge William criticized in his letters to the reflective aesthete. The young swain fails to see how he could possibly "become something new" (FT, 43) and yet remain the same person in a way that

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[146] In agreement with my own effort to align Kierkegaard with the anti-utilitarianism of Bernard Williams, Klaus-M. Kodalle presents utilitarianism one of Kierkegaard's principle targets (Kodalle 1998, 397-410).

would preserve the integrity of the self. He fails to see how identity and difference can coincide. In short, he lacks the concept of remembrance as repetition.

What then, does the young swain do when he makes the movement of resignation? He uses reflection to galvanize his erstwhile pre-reflective, immediate, commitment to the princess. He does so by making the "purely philosophical movement" (FT, 48) of resigning all hope of actually living out that commitment with the princess in the actual, temporal world. Given his refusal to become something new, it is unsurprising that this philosophical movement is one whereby he *recollects* the changeless meaning that his life has always had (FT, 43). This allows him to have the princess in the only way that he can imagine having her at all now that, so far as he can see, he cannot *actually* have her in the worldly, finite, sense. The knight follows the paradigm of recollection that we have seen in Plato. By recollecting his love for the princess, he comes to construe that love in the way that Plato construed the Form, *viz.*, as a bloodless, changeless, and purely eternal Idea of the flesh and blood particular – the actual lived experience of love – to which that Idea corresponds in the world. The young swain's love for the princess becomes a kind of Idea (or Form) of that love, not to be enjoyed in the outward temporal world, but to be eternally, invulnerably, possessed in the privacy of his inner contemplative life, and mourned as a permanently unrealizable hope.

> The knight, then, will recollect everything, but this recollection is precisely the pain, and yet in infinite resignation he is reconciled with existence. His love for that princess would become for him the expression of an eternal love, would assume a religious character, would be transfigured into a love of the eternal being, which true enough denied the fulfillment but nevertheless did reconcile him once more in the eternal consciousness of its validity in an eternal form that no actuality can take away from him [....] The knight makes this impossibility possible by expressing it spiritually, but he expresses it spiritually by renouncing it. The desire that would lead him out into actuality but has been stranded on impossibility has now been turned inward, but is not therefore lost, nor is it forgotten. (FT, 43-44)

Though there is pain in the realization that the princess cannot actually be had in time, "in infinite resignation there is peace and rest and comfort in the pain" (FT, 45). There is peace, here, for one has retained one's fidelity to one's self, to the now-unavailable object of love upon which one's sense of self is predicated, and to God, 'the eternal being,' one's love of whom one expresses in and

through this enduring love for the princess.[147] In resignation, there is a sense in which the young swain's understanding of himself, of God, and of the princess is transfigured,[148] but this transfiguration is to be understood along Platonist-recollective lines. The transfiguration involves the discovery of a fixed, eternal truth, already available in consciousness. There is nothing here of the *novel* expressions of truth that we find when the remembrance of truth is reframed as a matter of repetition.

We saw a moment ago that the knight of resignation refuses to abandon his identity-grounding love for the princess, for he assumes that doing so would mean compromising his integrity as a self. He assumes that he could not possibly remain *the same person* and overcome his understanding of himself as the man defined by his love for the princess. Here we must ask: *Why* does the knight of resignation make this assumption? From what we have seen so far, three tightly related reasons come to the fore.

The first reason comes to mind when we remember that the commitment in which one finds one's identity conditions one's whole understanding of the world, past, present and future.[149] Now, since the knight's eternally valid love for the princess plays just such a pervasive, structural, role in his life, the possibility of his abandoning that meaning would not be what Williams called a possibility "in his moral world, but something that lay beyond its limits" (Smart and Williams 1973, 93).[150] Since his love for the princess is constitutive for who he is as a self, the knight of resignation

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[147] How is an enduring love for God expressed in this enduring love for the princess? Perhaps the reason is that one regards the princess as the God-given meaning of one's life. From this perspective, love of God is expressed as love for the things with which God has blessed one, and as a commitment to what one considers to be God's plan for one's life.

[148] In resignation, the knight undergoes what Mooney calls a "threefold transfiguration of existence" (Mooney 1991, 50). Transfigured first is the tie between the knight and his princess: An earthly, finite love becomes an idealized, eternal love. Then, the object of love is transfigured: a love for the princess becomes love of God. And finally, the lover himself becomes transfigured: his integrity now is based not on a finite tie to another, but on his 'eternal consciousness,' on his grasp of a point of leverage on the finite. (ibid.)

[149] Recall Dreyfus's comment:

For Kierkegaard, an infinite passion can be called infinite because it opens up a world. Not only what actually exists gets its meaning from its connection with my defining passion; anything that could possibly come into existence would get its meaning for me from my defining commitment. In that sense, the commitment is infinite [....] In sum, when you have a defining commitment, the finite object of your commitment is infinitely important, that is, the object of your passion is both something particular and also world defining. In short, it is the concrete condition for anything showing up as meaningful. (Dreyfus 2012, 106)

[150] Andrew Cross explains:

The point is that those psychological changes would be so drastic, and would involve such a radical alteration of his conception of himself and of his conception of what matters, that he cannot see the lad who emerges from this process as having enough in common with his present self to see this future lad as a future incarnation of *himself*. In the lad's view (at least), for him to cease loving the princess in the way that he does, de Silentio writes, would be for him to 'become another'. Moreover, insofar as the princess is seen as constituting the meaning of his life, his relation to her is seen, not just as essential to his practical self-conception, but as the condition of the meaningfulness or value, to him, of other things and pursuits in 'the finite' (that is, in the

can form no clear idea of a future in which he has abandoned that love and yet in which he would still be *himself*. He cannot *foresee,* that is*,* how he could remain the same person (and hence preserve his integrity as a self) and, at the same time, be reborn anew. This, evidently, is why he concludes that such a rebirth must be impossible. Like the author of the *Tractatus*, Kierkegaard presents us with a character who assimilates what is possible to what is foreseeable.

This explanation of the knight's refusal to be reborn only pushes our question further back, however. Why, we should now ask, does he assume that the limits of his foresight are the limits of what is possible? This brings us to the second reason for his refusal to be reborn: like the character presented to us in the *Tractatus*, he is committed to *recollection* as his philosophical operating system. As we have seen, recollection, in its different varieties, assimilates the possible to the humanly foreseeable in just this way. We can then ask our third question: why is the knight of resignation committed to recollection as his philosophical operating system? Our answer brings us to the heart of the knight of resignation's problem: he is committed to recollection because, as we saw in the above discussion of resignation, he shares recollection's preoccupation with the ideal of existential self-sufficiency.

We will now see that things are very different with the knight of faith. For him, identity and difference can coincide by virtue of the absurd, so that Abraham can remain the person he always was, even if Isaac should have to die, the eternally valid meaning of Abraham's life is lost, and Abraham is reborn into an unforeseeably changed understanding of himself and his world. The knight of faith, I submit, has the concept of repetition that the knight of resignation lacks. The differences between the two characters will help to flesh out my account of repetition and support that account by showing how the notion of repetition resolves the remaining puzzles in *Fear and Trembling* that I want to address.

5.7.3.2. Identity and Isaac

As I've said, on standard readings of *Fear and Trembling*, the knight of faith has made, and is continually making, the movement of resignation or, as de Silentio also calls it, the "movement of

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actual world) [....] For a person who has entered into a commitment of this kind, the prospect of losing the object of the commitment is not merely the prospect of losing one desired object among others, even if it is an object that is desired more than any of the others. The distinction between the lad's love for the princess and his other desires and emotive attachments is not quantitative - not just a matter of his placing his having a relation to her higher on his preference schedule than other prospects - but qualitative. To contemplate losing her is not just to contemplate losing one item in the world; it is to contemplate the loss of the world as a whole - the loss, that is, of the condition for anything in the world's being significant to him. (Cross 1999, 231-32)

infinity" (FT, 39; cf., 40).[151] Since Abraham stands to Isaac as the young swain stands to the princess, we can say with Dreyfus that "Isaac was obviously essential to Abraham's identity" (Dreyfus 2012, 105), and we can say that Isaac fully acquires that essential role in Abraham's life when Abraham undergoes the movement of resignation. This occurs when Abraham realizes that life with Isaac is 'impossible' in the same sense in which the young swain realized that life with the princess is impossible.

On the reading I have offered, the sense in which Abraham recognizes that life with Isaac is 'impossible' does not imply that he believes that life with Isaac is impossible *tout court*.[152] The knight of faith, like the knight of resignation, is "convinced of the impossibility*, humanly speaking*" (FT, 46-47, cf., 34-35) of actually having the finite object of love – Isaac, the princess – for the sake of which he lives. Both knights grant that "that was the conclusion of the understanding" (FT, 46-47). But where the knight of resignation concludes, on this basis, that the finite realization of that love is impossible *tout court*, the knight of faith concludes that a finite realization of that love is possible nevertheless, "by virtue of the absurd" (FT, 35, 46). The knight of faith can draw this conclusion because, for him, the merely human understanding is not the highest court of appeal. The knight of faith can hold himself to a higher standard he has spiritual resources that the knight of resignation lacks.

Recall, the knight of resignation has overcome that utilitarian brand of worldly wisdom in which "the slaves of the finite, the frogs in the swamp of life" (FT, 42) are bogged down. However, we have seen that the knight of resignation is a kind of Hegelian. As such, he remains bogged down in a higher-order but still faithless ethics of recollection, where recollection takes the Hegelian form of operating only within the confines of established ethical-epistemic conventions. "He is recollection's genius. He can do nothing but bring to mind what has been done, can do nothing but admire what has been done" (FT, 15), and this, I have argued, is because he is fundamentally preoccupied with the ideal of self-sufficiency. The knight of faith has overcome the preoccupation with self-sufficiency. With it, he has overcome not only the utilitarian understanding of reason that ensnares the 'slaves of finitude,' incapable of resignation, but also the Hegelian-recollective understanding of reason that ensnares the knight of resignation. Of course, we have seen that this is no rejection of reason or, as de Silentio calls it, "the understanding" (FT, 36, 46-47, 60, 86). Instead,

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[151] Once more: "Infinite resignation is the last stage before faith, so that anyone who has not made this movement does not have faith, for only in infinite resignation do I become conscious of my eternal validity, and only then can one speak of grasping existence by virtue of faith" (FT, 46).
[152] Here I am accepting Lippitt's interpretation of faith (see Lippitt 2003, 71).

the knight of faith has accepted a faithfully renewed notion of 'the understanding.' From this new perspective, he is attuned to possibilities that seem absurd to the faithless knight of resignation, possibilities that cannot be foreseen but which, rather, need to be revealed. Thus, though Abraham makes the movement of resignation, he also makes the movement of faith. As a consequence, his post-resignation relationship with Isaac is very different from, for example, the young swain's post-resignation relationship with the princess.[153]

We have already seen one place where that difference is clear. Unlike the recollecting knight of resignation, Abraham is able to sustain hope for a finite life with Isaac even when that hope cannot be justified with the merely human, and merely 'theoretical' (contemplative, intellectual, reflective) philosophical resources of recollection. Now, the difference between faith and resignation is also evident when we consider how the faithful Abraham would behave in the event that Isaac did indeed have to die. Abraham's faith involves not only a resolute, unwavering devotion to Isaac while he is alive; it also involves a faith that, *if* Isaac is sacrificed, he will be miraculously restored to life. De Silentio invites us to enter into the following thought experiment:

> Let us go further: We let Isaac actually be sacrificed. Abraham had faith. He did not have faith that he would be blessed in a future life but that he would be blessed here in the world. God could give him a new Isaac, could restore to life the one sacrificed. (FT, 36)

Thus,

> Abraham makes two movements. He makes the infinite movement of resignation and gives up Isaac, which no one can understand because it is a private venture;[154] but next, at every moment, he makes the movement of faith. This is his consolation. In other words, he is

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[153]Andrew Cross argues that the kind of reading I have just expressed is ruled out in *Fear and Trembling*'s third Problemata (see Cross 1999, 234). We read there:

> All those travesties of faith – the wretched, lukewarm lethargy that thinks: There's no urgency, there's no use in grieving beforehand; the despicable hope that says: One just can't know what will happen, it could just possibly be – those travesties are native to the paltriness of life, and infinite resignation has already infinitely disdained them. (FT, 37, cf., 47, 42)

For Cross, this claim that faith is not a matter of holding out hope for the improbably undermines the kind of reading I have offered, wherein faith is indeed a matter of doing just that. *Pace* Cross, however, when de Silentio returns to the claim, he clarifies that the notion of 'possibility' at work in the above quotation is possibility *humanly speaking*. This allows that what is impossible humanly speaking is possible by virtue of the absurd.

> The absurd does not belong to the differences that lie within the proper domain of the understanding. It is not identical with the improbable, the unexpected, the unforeseen. The moment the knight executed the act of resignation, he was convinced of the impossibility, *humanly speaking*; that was the conclusion of the understanding. [I]f he wants to imagine that he has faith without passionately acknowledging the impossibility with his whole heart and soul, he is deceiving himself [...] since he has not even attained infinite resignation [....] [T]he pain of infinite resignation [...] look[s] the impossibly in the eye. (FT, 46-47, emphasis added)

[154] Naturally, on our reading the 'no one' here refers to those at the ethical level of Sarah, Eleizer and Isaac, not to those at the level of the tragic hero, like de Silentio and the knights of resignation. The knights of resignation can understand each other, though they cannot be understood by those at the lower level.

saying: But it will not happen, or if it does, the Lord will give me a new Isaac, that is, by virtue of the absurd. (FT, 115)

This strange discussion of Isaac's miraculous return is showing us a second sense in which Abraham's willingness to abandon Isaac is no simple willingness to "completely forget" (FT, 43) him – it is no such simple form of religious detachment. We first saw this when we noted that Abraham's faith involves his holding the line against worldly wisdom, and having faith that Isaac will not need to be sacrificed at all. Secondly, now, we again see that Abraham's is no simple kind of religious detachment when we note the above sense in which Abraham has faith that Isaac will not need to be abandoned or forgotten *even if Isaac is sacrificed* for, in that event, Abraham believes that the boy will be miraculously restored to life. What does this second aspect of Abraham's faith involve?

Most fundamentally, I submit, we are being asked to contemplate the paradoxical interplay of identity and difference that lies at the heart of repetition. This is so in two respects. First, we are being asked to contemplate the miraculous possibility that a resurrected Isaac could be *new* and yet also be the very same Isaac that had been sacrificed. The paradox is presented directly in the de Silentio's formulation of Abraham's belief in the resurrection: "God could give him a new Isaac, could restore to life the one sacrificed" (FT, 36). Which is it? Is the resurrected Isaac – the Isaac whose body will be miraculously re-membered into a new unity by God – 'a new Isaac'? Or is the resurrected Isaac 'the one sacrificed,' the same Isaac that always was?' De Silentio's formulation of the matter leaves us to struggle with this paradox of identity and difference and, I submit, to see our way past the dichotomy between the two, which is predicated on a recollective understanding of philosophical remembrance.

The second respect in which we are being asked to contemplate this miraculous harmony of identity and difference concerns, not the remembrance of Isaac, but the remembrance of Abraham. Since, as Dreyfus noted, "Isaac was obviously essential to Abraham's identity" (Dreyfus 2012, 105), Abraham's openness to the possibility of a new Isaac is, at the same time, Abraham's openness to the possibility of a new Abraham as well. Abraham is open to becoming a person whose identity is no longer anchored in a love of Isaac, at least not in that way that he loved Isaac prior to the boy's hypothetical death. Would a new Abraham emerge with a new, resurrected Isaac? Or would we be dealing here with the same Abraham, since the revivified Isaac is also the old Isaac, 'the one sacrificed'? Here too, the paradox will resolve itself when we overcome the dead-end of recollection and, more deeply, the desire for self-sufficiency in which our recollective temptations are rooted.

5.7.3.3. Repetition as the Remembrance of Meaning

Let me be clearer about what I think is going on here. I have been permitting myself to play upon the notion of 're-membrance.' My intention has been to suggest that what we might at first be inclined to picture as a miraculous re-assembly of Isaac's bodily members into a revivified duplicate of the sacrificed boy might also be thought as a miraculous remembrance of *the meaning* of the word 'Isaac.' My suggestion, then, is that de Silentio is urging us to resist the assumption that Isaac's being 'restored to life' would have to involve a physiological reassembly of a sacrificed Isaac into precisely the same physical form that Isaac had taken prior to his death. So far as I can see, this physiological understanding of the miracle is nowhere necessitated by the text of *Fear and Trembling*. More decisively, so far as I can see, it is out of joint with the critique of 'identical repetition' that we have already seen in Kierkegaard's treatment of the reflective aesthete.

We saw that the reflective aesthete abandons the hope of 'repeating' love over time. He does so because he presumes that such repetition would have to involve the preservation of the original experience of love, and love's objects, in their original external qualities. Thus, recall, was the same kind of presumption that we find in Constantin Constantius' failed attempt at an identical repetition of his earlier trip to Berlin. This confused understanding of repetition overlooked the possibility highlighted by Judge William: the repetition of the original experience of love can involve the preservation, not of the original love in its external qualities, but of the internal qualities that constitute the *meaning* of that original experience. If we have heard the lessons of *Either/Or*, then, we will not think of Isaac's miraculous resurrection as a matter of his being re-membered in the physiological sense of his bodily members being reassembled into Isaac's original physical form. We will think of it rather, as Abraham' re-membrance of the *meaning* of Isaac, not Isaac in his accidental outward qualities, but a re-membrance of what Isaac *essentially* is. Furthermore, if we have heard the lessons of *Fear and Trembling* and the *Postscript*, we will not think of this remembrance of the meaning of Isaac (Isaac in his internal and essential properties) in recollective terms. We will not believe, that is, that meaning cannot remain the same if it undergoes an unforeseeable and essential change. Rather, we will think of meaning-remembrance in repetitional terms that permit us to see similarity in even radical difference.

De Silentio hints at the repetitional remembrance of Isaac in a challenging but, I think, crucial passage. He suggests that Abraham's being 'the single individual' involves a particular understanding of *Isaac*. In his understanding of Isaac, as in his understanding of ethics, the single individual forgoes 'the security of the universal,' which consists in letting one's understanding of

things be determined by the levelled-down grammar of the faithless ethical life. In *his* understanding of Isaac, Abraham is utterly alone.

> Partnership in these areas is utterly unthinkable. Only the single individual can give [himself] a more explicit explanation of what is to be understood by Isaac [...], the single individual would never be able to be convinced of this by others, only by himself as the single individual. (FT, 71)

We have agreed with Lippitt and Conant that Kierkegaard is concerned to remind us of grammar in the Wittgensteinian sense, where grammar constitutes the meaning of our words. Assuming that Abraham models this repetitional understanding of remembrance, we can read Kierkegaard's reference to 'what is to be understood by Isaac' in light of the 'use/mention' distinction, which was not customarily marked in the grammar of his day. From this perspective, and bearing in mind all that we already know about the nature of faith, the suggestion would be this: for the single individual, the genuine meaning (or grammar) of 'Isaac' is irreducibly richer than any meaning of 'Isaac' that we could arrive at by consulting the ethical community. Put differently, for the single individual, the meaning of 'Isaac' could not be discerned by simply recollecting the meaning of the word as it is already laid down in the established conventions that regulate the word's use. For the knight of faith, the meaning of Isaac (and 'Isaac') is an organic unity, essentially vulnerable to dis-memberment but also, "by virtue of the absurd" (FT, 38), to re-membrance as well. Faith allows for the repetition of the meaning of 'Isaac,' and also the meaning of 'Abraham,' which is internally related to 'Isaac,' just as faith allows for the repetition of the meaning of 'ethics.' In this way, *Fear and Trembling's* reflections on the identity of Abraham and Isaac challenge our recollective and recreative assumptions about the relation between identity and difference. Thereby, the book reminds us of the miraculous, unforeseeable, and paradoxical presence of the old in the new whose historical paradigm is God, the eternal Father who unforeseeably became incarnate and crucified in His temporal Son.

5.7.3.4. Repetition as Miracle

One may wonder why the picture I have just offered of Isaac's miraculous restoration is in any way *miraculous*. An answer emerges when we recall how a self-defining commitment determines not only the being of the self but the temporal horizon of possibilities that the self finds intelligible; it determines the self's *world*. This means that Abraham's openness to the repetition of Isaac amounts to an openness to the possibility of what is, from Abraham's current perspective, *impossible*. Once we

see this, we can appreciate the sense in which one might describe the resurrection of Isaac as 'miraculous.'[155] Certainly, we are dealing here with a humble, down-to-earth, perhaps 'repeated,' conception of the 'miraculous.' If so, we will nevertheless find that such a humble understanding of the 'miraculous' expresses what we always already meant by the word.

Dreyfus describes the sort of view I have in mind here. Recall, for Kierkegaard, when we accept Christ as the eternally valid meaning of our life we experience a miraculous renewal of time and space that occurs. This even of world renewal is mirrored, structurally, in the event of world renewal that occurs we come to express that eternally valid meaning in and through our commitment to some more particular object of love, the princess, our vocation, or whatever. Now, just as the meaning of time and space is transformed at the dawning of Christian history, we have also seen that, at a different level of analysis, the meaning of time and space is transformed for us when we become Christian. So too, Dreyfus submits, is the meaning of time and space transformed when we lose the particular things for the sake of which we live, and in devotion to which we express our devotion to God. In choosing a new purpose upon which to ground our identity as the particular Christians we are, Dreyfus submits that we exercise a

> radical kind of freedom, the freedom to change one's world. Although Kierkegaard does not say so in so many words, once we see that eternity can begin in time, we can see that not only can eternity *begin* at the moment of time [...], eternity can *change* in time. For example, Kierkegaard says Abraham had faith that if he sacrificed Isaac 'God could give him a new Isaac'. (Dreyfus 2012, 107)

Eternity can change, namely, with a change in the particular object of love in our commitment to which we express our eternally valid love of God. This is the kind of change that would occur if Abraham were genuinely to lose his son so that his very identity were dis-membered and needed to be re-membered anew.

Dreyfus' description of this as 'the freedom to change one's world' would be, I think, too voluntarist for Kierkegaard's liking. Ferreira's discussion of the *Gestalt* character of Christian self-choice helped us to see the sense in which it is primarily *God*, not Abraham, who gives Abraham a new Isaac and brings off the existential renewal of Abraham himself. This infelicity aside, however,

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[155] Once more, Dreyfus drives home the point:
> Kierkegaard says that Abraham had faith that if he sacrificed Isaac, 'God could give him a new Isaac.' This could happen because God is 'that everything is possible,' and that means that even the inconceivable is possible [....] For the truly impossible to be possible, we must be open to radically new worlds which we can't even make sense of until we are in them. (Dreyfus 2012, 107)

Dreyfus has put his finger on an important idea at the heart of remembrance as repetition: since the temporal horizon of possibilities that make up Abraham's world is determined by his current love of Isaac, the idea of a 'new Isaac' is not, for him, the idea of a genuine *possibility* at all. The remembrance of Isaac will be miraculous because it involves Abraham's openness to what is, from Abraham's perspective, fully unintelligible.

5.7.3.5. 'Going Further'

A puzzle about Abraham's faith remains. To see the puzzle, and its solution, we need to allow ourselves to be struck by the crucially pregnant expression that begins the following description of Abraham's faith:

> Let us go further: We let Isaac actually be sacrificed. Abraham had faith. He did not have faith that he would be blessed in a future life but that he would be blessed here in the world. God could give him a new Isaac, could restore to life the one sacrificed. (FT, 36)

We are taken aback by this description of Abraham's moral psychology, and not only because it invokes the initially intimidating category of the miraculous. We are also taken aback because, in *Fear and Trembling,* the language of 'going further' than faith is continually used to signify the temptation of the contemporary age to justify faith in the epistemic terms that Kierkegaard has urged us to resist. In particular, de Silentio is concerned about the kind of epistemic justification that we find in speculative philosophy, the kind that would try to set faith upon an objectively certain foundation, thereby sapping it of its essential fear and trembling. "In our age, everyone is unwilling to stop with faith but goes further [....] [forgetting] the fear and trembling that disciplined the youth, that the adult learned to control, but that no man outgrows – except to the extent that he succeeds in going further as early as possible" (FT, 7, cf., 5). It is our preoccupation with going further that makes 'shrewd,' 'worldly,' wisdom incapable of understanding faith as the paradox that it is. The faithless person

> wants to suck worldly wisdom out of the paradox. Someone might succeed, for our generation does not stop with faith, does not stop with the miracle of faith, turning water into wine – it goes further and turns wine into water. / Would it not be best to stop with faith, and is it not shocking that everyone wants to go further? Where will it end when in our age, as declared in so many ways, one does not stop with love? In worldly shrewdness, in petty calculation, in paltriness and meanness, in everything that can make a man's divine origins doubtful. (FT, 37)

The hallmark of faith is that it does not 'go further,' and descend into the 'worldly shrewdness' and 'petty calculation,' to which we succumb when we try to justify an article of faith. But it can easily seem that Abraham makes exactly this error if his faith involves the thought of Isaac's potential resurrection.

The worry is this: if Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac involves Abraham's belief that a sacrificed Isaac will be restored to life, it seems that Abraham cannot be quite the passionately devoted person of faith that Kierkegaard, like Bernard Williams, has praised. On the face of it, this Abraham seems not to be the father who finds the idea of losing Isaac so unthinkable as to perish the thought. Rather, we worry, this Abraham seems to be a father who calculates with his existence, enters imaginatively into the thought of what it would be like to lose his son, and realizes that in that event a "new Isaac" (FT, 115) would be miraculously provided. Then, however, this calculating Abraham maintains his hope that Isaac will be spared, evidently preferring the Isaac he currently knows and loves to the new Isaac that he might yet receive. Far from being resolutely ensconced in the world of meaning supplied by his particular, identity-grounding love of his existing son, we worry that if Abraham enters vividly into the thought of any such miraculous resurrection that might occur on the far side of the sacrifice, he has thought 'one thought too many.' Such an Abraham will have placed himself outside his love of Isaac and into moral-psychologically fraught territory not far from the reflective aesthete. To put the point in Wittgensteinian terms, we are worried that Abraham relates to his faithful belief that Isaac will not be sacrificed as if it were a belief in a bipolar proposition, a proposition with a clearly intelligible oppositional sense. In Williams' analysis, the husband makes this error when he decides to rescue his wife only after considering the possibility of letting her die, and concluding that saving her is the better-justified course of action. Abraham would make the same mistake if he decides to maintain his faith for his existing life with Isaac only after lucidly considering what it would be like to sacrifice him, and concluding that he ought still to hold out hope that *that* (determinate and for-Abraham-intelligible) event will not come to pass. Even if we agree with the conclusion, this Abraham has arrived at it by calculations that ought to have been, for him, not only unnecessary but unthinkable.

This way of reading the story cannot be correct, however. One reason it cannot be correct is that, having made the movement of resignation, Abraham's love of Isaac has become an eternally valid horizon of meaning that delimits Abraham's world, and beyond which he cannot 'see.' Moreover, if Abraham maintains his faith that Isaac would be spared only after permitting himself to imagine what it would be like for the boy to die, he would be engaging in a familiar existential

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strategy for coping with a potential loss: the strategy of 'hoping for the best, but preparing for the worst.' But de Silentio tells us that Abraham resists both facets of this particular sort of 'shrewd calculation.' This resistance, we learn, is the source of Abraham's enduring youth:

> Abraham had faith, and therefore he was young, for he who always hopes for the best grows old and is deceived by life, and he who is always prepared for the worst grows old prematurely, but he who has faith—he preserves an eternal youth. (FT, 18; cf., FT, 12)

De Silentio is highly critical of describing Isaac as 'the best' of Abraham's blessings (FT, 28, cf., FT, 20-21). Presumably this is because this description places his love of Isaac in the same class as his love for lesser things. An Abraham who regards Isaac as the best of his blessings sees only a difference of degree between Isaac and these lesser goods.[156] In fact, as we know, the love of Isaac is a categorically different, self-and-world-defining love through which Abraham expresses his love of God and to which there are, for Abraham, no intelligible alternatives at all. From this fact that Abraham does not consider Isaac as 'his 'best,' we also see why he does not engage in the strategy of preparing for the worst, namely, life after Isaac in the event that the sacrifice goes through. He cannot make such preparations because, presumably, they would involve vividly contemplating what it would mean for the worst to come to pass, and what it would mean to maintain a life of value under that condition. Preparing for the worst would mean considering Isaac as one blessing amongst other blessings against which Isaac could be compared, weighed up, and determined to be 'the best.' But to place Isaac in a category other amongst other commensurable goods, in this way, overlooks the categorical difference between Isaac and other things. As Andrew Cross notes, for Abraham, there is a qualitative, rather than quantitative, difference – a difference in kind rather than in degree – between the value of Isaac and the value of other goods (Cross 1999, 231-32).

We agree with C. Stephen Evans: "[Abraham] believes that even though God has asked him to sacrifice Isaac, somehow Isaac will not be sacrificed, or that if he is sacrificed, God will raise Isaac from the dead" (Evans 2004, 73). The question is: how can we make sense of Abraham's relationship to the possibility of Isaac's death and resurrection given that this possibility lies beyond the limits of what Williams would call Abraham's 'moral world'? The task is to appreciate how a belief in Isaac's miraculous restoration, should Isaac need to die, can feature as a part of Abraham's faith without featuring as an intelligible propositional content in relief against which Abraham would grasp his belief that Isaac will be spared. Put differently; the task is to see how the possibility of

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[156] On this point, see Andrew Cross's reflection, quoted at footnote 150, above.

Isaac's death and resurrection can feature as part of Abraham's faith without compromising the other part of his faith, his faith Isaac will not be sacrificed at all.

The broader significance of the issue for this dissertation can be brought to the fore by rephrasing the matter once more, this time in Wittgensteinian terms. Abraham's faith in the resurrection of Isaac can be neither faith in the truth of a for-him-senseful bipolar proposition, nor can it be faith in the truth of a bipolar proposition the content of which can be 'shown but not said.' Either of these two ways of parsing the matter would turn Abraham's ongoing faith that Isaac will be spared into an irresolute wavering (FT, 18, 41). Both, to re-quote Judge William, would place Abraham amongst those "who contemplate [...] human life" (EO, II: 172-73) and "outlive themselves, [...] in the sense that [...] they live their lives, as it were, outside of themselves, they vanish like shadows, their immortal soul is blown away" (ibid.). Abraham resolutely believes that Isaac will be spared (see Lippitt 2003, 66-77). The puzzle is to sort out his relation to the for-him-unintelligible possibility that Isaac will die and be brought back to life. What are we to say? While, for the most part, we are coming to Kierkegaard to illuminate the darker parts of Wittgenstein, this is one place where Wittgenstein can helpfully illuminate the darker parts of Kierkegaard.

Part of the trick here, I submit, is to remember that de Silentio is himself a victim of exactly the shrewd, calculating, tendency that is incompatible with faith. He reminds us: "By no means do I have faith. By nature I am a shrewd fellow, and shrewd people always have great difficulty in making the movement of faith" (FT, 32). Further, we know that, as the author of 'dialectical *lyric*,' de Silentio is a kind of poet, and a poet regards faith from an outsider's perspective, similar to those "who contemplate [...] human life" (EO, II: pp. 172-73).[157] We should be wary, then, that de Silentio's presentation of faith's moral psychology might be misleading, and that de Silentio might be reading into Abraham his own faithless tendencies by interpreting faith as the epistemic stance that it is not.[158] The task of *Fear and Trembling* is to heed what de Silentio tells us about the structure of faith, but to filter out from his analysis the epistemic illusions of faith to which he is prone, and of which he has warned us.

Now, de Silentio guided us into one such epistemic illusion when he described Abraham's faith in the resurrection of Isaac by way of thought experiment that requires us to 'go further' than

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[157] We are told that a poet like de Silentio "presumably" can describe the movements of faith but cannot make the movements of faith himself (FT, 37-38). This 'presumably' is one about which we should have suspicions. In fact, to describe faith is to represent it and, therefore, to misrepresent it, for faith cannot be represented at all, but must be lived.

[158] Recall what Lippitt said on this point in Chapter Two: the fact that de Silentio is a pseudonym suggests that we should "leave open that [he] is less than a fully reliable guide to the subject on which he addresses us. That is, the fact that he denies that he understands faith does not necessarily imply that this denial is Kierkegaard's" (Lippitt, 2003, 10).

Abraham's faith that Isaac will be spared, and vividly to imagine the possibility of Isaac's death and resurrection. 'Going further,' we are here inclined to think about Abraham's faith that Isaac will *not* have to die as a bipolar propositional content, held in clear relief against a clearly grasped but negated bipolar proposition that describes the scene of Isaac's death and resurrection. This Abraham is irresolute. He maintains his faith in Isaac's survival by casting a furtive glance beyond the limits of his moral world, trying to imagine what it would mean for the sacrifice to go through, and saying to himself that *that* cannot occur, given God's promise of Abraham's posterity through Isaac (FT, 20). The resolute Wittgenstein was opposed to any such way of thinking about the limits of thought and, on my reading, Kierkegaard is opposed to it just as much. However, since *de Silentio* lacks faith, his account of faith requires us to enter into just this irresolute illusion.

We are being tempted, I submit, to enter into an epistemic illusion of Abraham's faith, an illusion to which Abraham himself never succumbs. De Silentio wrote: "Let *us* go further" (FT, 36, emphasis added), inviting us to think about Abraham faith in the epistemic, bipolar-propositional, way that is natural to de Silentio, but which Abraham himself resists. De Silentio is offering us his outsider's glimpse into a thought about the death and resurrection that Abraham *would* come lucidly to think *if* the sacrifice were ultimately required but which, in fact, Abraham does not lucidly think as he proceeds up Mt. Moriah. We can agree with Lippitt: "[Abraham] believes one thing – Isaac will be spared– despite the overwhelming evidence to the contrary" (Lippitt 2003, 71). I hasten to add: Abraham does not relate to that belief as a bipolar proposition who oppositional sense he lucidly envisions as the potential event of Isaac's death and resurrection. On this second point, there is a crucial sense in which we need to agree with Cross: "An Abraham who continues to think that, perhaps by some miraculous circumstance, Isaac will not be lost is, in de Silentio's view, not properly facing up to his situation" (Cross 1999, 234). Cross is right in the sense that the thought of Isaac's death and miraculous resurrection does not enter into Abraham's faith as the fully-intelligible content of a bipolar proposition. If it did, Abraham would be "a man devoid of resolution who cannot make up his mind one way or the other and for that reason always speaks in riddles. A vacillator like that, however, is merely a parody of the knight of faith" (FT, 119).

Should we conclude, then, that Abraham does *not* have faith in Isaac's miraculous restoration as he proceeds up Moriah? Surely not. It has been clear from the text that this faith that a sacrificed Isaac would indeed be miraculously revived is indeed a crucial part of Abraham's religious moral psychology (FT, 36, 115). Rather, I think, we are forced to the conclusion that Abraham relates to the potential death and resurrection of Isaac as a possibility of revelation in the sense we have seen

in Wittgenstein. His faith in the resurrection is faith in a possibility whose sense is yet to be provided. Indeed, he 'considers' the possibility of Isaac's death and resurrection, and says, "But it will not happen, or if it does, the Lord will give me a new Isaac, that is, by virtue of the absurd" (FT, 115). My submission, drawing upon last chapter's discussion of riddle and revelation in Wittgenstein, is that the clause introduced by the disjunction – 'or if it does, the Lord will give me a new Isaac' – is, for Abraham, a string of words to which he can attach no clear sense at all but which, he has faith, would be provided with a sense should the worst come to pass. Our best strategy for making sense of how Abraham does not succumb to the temptation of thinking one thought too many is to say that he, like Diamond's Wittgenstein, makes no "assumption that the phrase does express something that can be found or done. [He does] not assume it makes sense. (You could say [h]e play[s] at using a phrase of that shape as an assumption)" (Diamond 1991, 276).

Andrew Cross understands the puzzle of understanding Abraham differently then I do. Nevertheless, his solution to the puzzle as he understands it will be instructive for my solution to puzzle as I understand it, and will dovetail with what I earlier described as an essential role, in faith, for a practical, embodied, understanding of meaning. Noting that de Silentio insists that Abraham is, in a sense, convinced that Isaac's survival is impossible (FT, 36, 43), Cross contends that *this* is what Abraham resolutely believes (Cross, 1999, 234). Accordingly, for Cross, the puzzle is to understand the sense in which Abraham has faith that Isaac will be spared. For Cross, the article of faith that lies beyond the pale of the intelligible is the faith that Isaac will be saved. For me, and for Lippitt, the article of faith that lies beyond the pale of the intelligible is the faith that, if Isaac should die, he will be resurrected. I have already indicated how I think this debate about how to frame the puzzle of Abraham's moral-psychology can be resolved in favour of Lippitt. In the passages where Abraham seems convinced that Isaac's survival is impossible, de Silentio means *humanly* impossible, that is, impossible from the perspective of a distinctly faithless ethical life. Indeed, Abraham *does* realize that Isaac is lost by the standard of a faithless ethic, but, as I have argued, his own faithful ethic permits his belief that Isaac will not be sacrificed after all. This disagreement between Cross and Lippitt isn't my main concern, however. The interest in Cross, once more, is that his solution to the problem as he sees it is intrinsically intriguing, for it can be repurposed to solve the problem as it is interpreted by Lippitt and I. What is more, it dovetails with what I have argued is the crucial role of the body in *Fear and Trembling's* account of faith.

Cross' question, again, is this: how are we to understand Abraham's comportment toward the possibility that Isaac will be saved if that 'possibility' lies beyond the limits of his world and is, for him, fully unintelligible? Here is Cross:

> The solution I propose is to see the positive orientation Abraham has toward Isaac's survival as practical, rather than cognitive. Abraham, on this approach, believes that Isaac will die (at the appointed hour, by his own hand, permanently), and believes only that. What de Silentio finds remarkable about him, and what is illustrative of his faith, is that even as he believes this, he goes on being as wholeheartedly committed to Isaac as before. Rather than finding peace and security by abandoning his interest in the finite (his love for Isaac), a security that would consist in his being sheltered from the kind of personal devastation that would occur if he lost that upon which the meaningfulness of his life is based, he goes on loving Isaac just as before, fully recognizing the devastation he thereby subjects himself to [....] The point [...] seems to be not that the knight of faith deludedly takes the finite to be 'certain,' but that he relates to it as if it were certain, at the same time he recognizes its instability. This is what it is to 'live joyfully' and happily; in the presence of the princess, 'every moment [seeing] the sword hanging over [her] head. (Cross 1999, 239)

If we need to avoid attributing one thought too many to Abraham, we need to conclude that Cross has things exactly backward here. What he says about the belief that Isaac will be spared really ought to be said about the belief that Isaac, if sacrificed, will be resurrected from the dead. It is the scenario wherein Isaac dies for which Abraham has not prematurely prepared himself, and it is the thought of *this* scenario that has no intelligible place within the limits of Abraham's moral world. I think Cross is on the track of a helpful thought when he submits that we can account for the curious 'content' of the relevant still-contentless 'thought' by acknowledging a distinction between a 'practical' and a 'cognitive' orientation toward to the still-unthinkable 'possibility.' But can it really be said that the possibility manifest in Abraham's practical action is his belief that Isaac will be spared? His practical action, after all, is his steadfast, forward march up Mt. Moriah (FT, 21), his splitting the firewood for the burnt offering, his binding of Isaac and his drawing the knife to put the boy to death (FT, 21). If there is a *distinctly* practical aspect to Abraham's faith it should be represented in Kierkegaard's account of what Abraham *did* and was prepared to *do,* and Abraham's actual actions express, not his faith that Isaac will be spared, but his openness to the unimaginable possibility of Isaac's death and ressurection. Indeed, Kierkegaard himself explicitly *contrasts* Abraham's faithful belief that Isaac will be spared with everything that Abraham actually *does*.

But what did Abraham do? He arrived neither too early nor too late. He mounted the ass, he rode slowly down the road. During all this time he had faith, he had faith that God would not demand Isaac of him, and yet he was willing to sacrifice him if it was demanded. He had faith by virtue of the absurd, for human calculation was out of the question, and it certainly was absurd that God, who required it of him, should in the next moment rescind the requirement. He climbed the mountain, and even in the moment when the knife gleamed, he had faith—that God would not require Isaac. (FT, 35-36)

Once more, I am intrigued by Cross's proposal that we account for Abraham's faith as a kind of paradoxical synthesis of a practical and a cognitive orientation. The proposal dovetails nicely with Kierkegaard's presentation of the self as an uncompromising synthesis of both body and soul. If the body can be aligned, conceptually, with the practical orientation, and the soul, or mind, can be aligned with the cognitive orientation, then Cross' reading conforms to the account of the body's role in Kierkegaardian faith that I developed with the help of Williams James earlier in this chapter. Kierkegaardian faith takes us beyond the monotony of recollection and opens us up to the possibility of an encounter with revealed truth. It does so by reminding us, through the person of Christ, of the possibility of a distinctly embodied intentional relationship with truth.

Cross does not explain how we ought to understand his distinction between a practical and cognitive orientation. Naturally, I want to resist his distinction if it is meant to suggest that our practical, non-'cognitive' readiness for the dawning of unforeseeable sense is not a readiness for an encounter with a genuine truth, a genuine feature of the world beyond the human representational scheme. However, if he is suggesting that our practical readiness for such sense-dawning is not an intellectual, recollective or recreative, matter of grasping a possibility in advance of its revelation, his suggestion is fully agreeable to me. As Ferreira argued, all we have, in advance of revelation, is faith, and faith comes with no guarantees that sense will dawn where we faithfully hope it will.

What might Cross mean by 'practical'? Of course, since I want to regard this practical openness to the dawning of new sense as an openness to truth, a practical openness to such revelation cannot be a brute animal willingness to simply throw oneself into a rationally unmotivated course of action (see Taylor, 1982, 119), perhaps in hopes that such action will seem rational to us in retrospect. On such an interpretation, the practical orientation would be little more than the Luciferian will of Murdoch's existentialist, who tries to escape the threat of determinism "by attributing to the individual an empty, lonely freedom, a freedom, if he wishes, to 'fly in the face of the facts'" (Murdoch 1997, 321). But Cross' stress upon the importance of a practical orientation

toward yet-to-be-revealed truths can also be read as a perfectly rational and respectable reminder of the expert's privilege to act on an intuitive hunch that he cannot justify in epistemic terms, but in which he is nevertheless justified by faith. Like my own, Cross' suggestion of an essentially practical relationship with revealed truth is at home in faith's essential connection to finitude and, more pointedly, to the essentially incarnate, embodied, character of the Kierkegaardian self. It is here, I have argued, where *Fear and Trembling*'s depiction of an essentially embodied, finite conception the self, of truth, and of the relation between the two can be brought into connection with the role of the pre-reflective body hinted at in the *Point of View*. The secret of Abraham's faith can be seen in his embodied, practical, openness to revelation, rather than in his theoretical understanding of any already intelligible proposition that he might be thought to grasp in recollective (or recreative) foresight. We return to this issue of embodiment now, where we will study it in connection with what I will claim is *Fear and Trembling*'s third example of repetition. In addition to facilitating a repetitional remembrance of 'ethics' (and the 'understanding'), and of 'Isaac' (and 'Abraham'), it urges us to undergo a repetitional remembrance of 'resignation.' In other words, it urges us to be transformed in our understanding of religious 'detachment.'

5.7.4. Remembering Resignation

We have seen that the knights of resignation are marked by a "distant aristocratic nature" (FT, 39), a "trace of a timorous, anxious routine" (FT, 39-40), a standing existential pain, an inability to take joy in the finite (FT, 35, 40, 43, 45) and, in particular, an indifference to features of finitude that they formerly hoped actually to enjoy in the course of their temporal lives. After their upward leap away from the finite and into the eternal consciousness that they grasp in resignation, they make only a half-hearted, irresolute, return to temporal, embodied, existence. "[T]he instant they touch and have touched the earth they waver for a moment, and this wavering shows that they are aliens in the world" (FT, 41). Like the self of the *Phaedo,* the knight of resignation is, in his temporal aspect, *in* the world. He has a human body like any other, and he goes through the motions of finite existence. But in his eternal aspect, he remains remote from the world and indifferent to its happenings. He finds his identity beyond time, in his soul's eternal validity, but is fated to suffer the soul's housing in a vulnerable human body, assailed by the hardships of finitude. The eternal dimension of the self is *heterogeneous*, or *incommensurable*, with that temporal dimension that is his being as a bodily creature, bound up in relations of care to the finite world around him. There is no trace of this heterogeneity

of the finite and the infinite – this irresolution of the self – in the faithful everyman, for example. De Silentio describes him:

> The instant I first lay eyes on him, I set him apart at once; I jump back, clap my hands, and say half aloud, 'Good God, is this the man, is this really the one – he looks just like a tax collector! But this is indeed the one. I move a little closer to him, watch his slightest movement to see if it reveals a bit of heterogeneous optical telegraphy from the infinite in its heterogeneity with the finite. No! I examine his figure from top to toe to see if there may not be a crack through which the infinite would peek. No! He is solid all the way through. (FT, 38-39)

Unlike the knight of resignation, the knight of faith makes a resolute return to the finite, recovering his sure-footed perambulations in the world. In him, the eternal meaning of his life is incarnate in his bodily action; the sublime is expressed in the pedestrian: "[T]o be able to come down in such a way that instantaneously one seems to stand and walk, to change the leap into life into walking, absolutely to express the sublime in the pedestrian – only that knight can do it, and this is the one and only marvel" (FT, 41).

Here we encounter what we might call the 'paradox of resignation.' On the one hand, the knight of faith is supposed to have made, and to be continually making, the movement of resignation. On the other hand, it is not clear how he can be doing any such thing given his robust love for finitude. After describing the knight of faith's apparent attachment to the finite, de Silentio goes on to express his frustration with his own inability to come to terms with the paradox.

> And yet, yet- yes, I could be infuriated over it if for no other reason than envy – and yet this man has made and at every moment is making the movement of infinity. He drains the deep sadness of life in infinite resignation, he knows the blessedness of infinity, he has felt the pain of renouncing everything, the most precious thing in the world, and yet the finite tastes just as good to him as to one who never knew anything higher, because his remaining in finitude would have no trace of a timorous, anxious routine, and yet he has this security that makes him delight in it as if finitude were the surest thing of all. (FT, 39-40)

Despite his sure-footed steps in the world, the joy he takes in earthly pleasures, the care he takes in his work – in short, his whole-hearted love of his earthly existence – the knight of faith has made and is continually making the movement of resignation. But how can this be? So far as de Silentio can see, the movement of resignation culminates in a bloodless, half-hearted, way of life that precludes all such self-assurance, joy, and assiduous care. Given the vast differences between the

knight of faith and the knight of resignation, how can it possibly be that the knight of faith "has made and at every moment is making the movement of infinity" (FT, 39-40)? If the knight of faith shows no outward sign at all of that "heterogeneity with the finite" (FT, 38) that characterizes the knight of resignation, what are we to make of the claim that the knight of faith has made, and is continually making, the movement of resignation (FT, 38)? This paradox of resignation is more than de Silentio – a knight of resignation, recall, – can work through. He acquiesces in the conclusion that an intractable absurdity lies at the very heart of faith.

What are *we* to make of the claim that, in addition to making the movement of faith and returning resolutely to the life, the earth, the body and its natural dispositions to wholehearted care for the things of *this* world, the knight of faith "does exactly the same as the other knight did: he infinitely renounces the love that is the substance of his life, he is reconciled in pain"(FT, 46)? I can explain my own understanding of the matter by situating it within the ongoing debate about the relationship between resignation and faith. Of particular interest is a disagreement between Edward Mooney and Ronald L. Hall.

5.7.4.1. Mooney: Faith as Selfless Concern

On Mooney's account, the knight of faith has made, and is continually making, the movement of resignation in that he has renounced all *proprietary claims* upon the finite world. The knight "infinitely renounces the claim to the love which is the content of his life" (FT, 75). This amounts, for Mooney, to something like a stoical stealing of the self against fate. Mooney notes:

> Much of the stoic hardening of the self to disappointment and change can be interpreted as narrowing the area of propriety claim. A person is rich, one could say, in proportion to that which he is willing to give up. Given something up, we cannot be hurt by its being taken away. (Mooney 1991, 53)

When we feel entitled to something, our sorrow over its loss will be augmented by our indignation at having been deprived of something we regard as rightfully our own. Mooney's thought is that the movement of resignation, both before and after the movement of faith, involves abandoning all proprietary claim to the finite and, with all such claim, the possibility of suffering worldly disappointments in this doubly difficult way. Stoicism is one register in which this kind of detachment can be understood, but, as we know, such a view is also present in Platonism, where it is conceptually supported by a metaphysical dualism of body and soul.

For Mooney, the knight of resignation falls short of faith because he cannot love, or care for, or take joy in the finite thing to which he lacks a sense of entitlement. Given what we know of resignation, what Mooney describes as a desired entitlement to the finite would, presumably, be a matter of *epistemic* entitlement. We are dealing here with a desire to *justify* our hopes of having the things we love in the course of our temporal lives. It is, recall, this epistemic entitlement to the finite that the knight of resignation realizes he does not have, and which prompts him to resign it. We cannot 'buy' our right to the finite with the currency of epistemic reasons. Mooney's knight of resignation realizes that the finite is not, in this epistemic sense, his *possession*. As a consequence, he loses his natural capacity to love, and care for, and take joy in the finite as well. Conversely, for Mooney's knight of faith, the realization that we lack an epistemic entitlement to the finite does not vitiate these natural dispositions of care, love, and concern for finite goods. For the knight of faith, resignation only prepares us to suffer any potential loss of the things we love with the tranquillity of a stoic or a Socrates. What is the crucial difference between the knight of faith and the knight of resignation? Unlike the knight of resignation, the knight of faith knows that

> not all cases of love or care are tied up with proprietary claim. I may enjoy and warmly anticipate the appearance of a sparrow at my feeder. Yet, I would claim no rights over this object of my enjoyment. The matter of its life and death is something over which I have no claim. Of course, I would feel indignation were someone maliciously to injure it. But in the course of things, the sparrow will go its way. Meanwhile, I will adjust myself to its comings and goings [....] / My joy at the return of the sparrow need be no less for my lacking a proprietary claim over it; and my care need be no less for my lacking bitterness or indignation, should it be lost forever. (Mooney 1991, 53-54)

What we establish in resignation, and what remains in faith, is "*selfless* concern" for the finite (Mooney 1991, 53). "Such concern or love would be care entirely distinct from the assertion of rights" (ibid.).

There is much that we can agree with here. Indeed, as Mooney's analysis suggests, a properly resolute commitment to the finite things we love cannot be bought with epistemic reasons. The knight of resignation responds to this realization by abandoning his hope for the finite as a lost cause, while the knight of faith sustains that hope, not by means of epistemic reason, but by faith. So far, so good. Moreover, to my eye, Mooney is right to frame this first point by saying that the knight of faith, having undergone resignation, gives up his earlier aspiration to *possess* the object of his desire. When one is properly, resolutely, related to the object of love for the sake of which one lives,

one does not relate to it as a *possession*. A possession is something that one *has*, where the object of a resolute love is part of what one *is*; a possession is merely something *in* one's world, where the object of a resolute love is also the meaning of one's world as a whole. A possession is something that one might intelligibly lose, without losing anything essential to one's identity. On the other hand, to lose the object of a resolute love is, indeed, to die as the person one is and to become someone new. In short, I think we should retain Mooney's description of resignation as an abdication of a proprietary claim. That description captures the essential idea that a resolute relation to a finite object of love permits that object of love to become more than something one has, and to become part of who one is. By faith, we overcome our epistemic temptation to stand at an intellectual distance from the finite object of love, and we allow that love to become incorporated into us, and manifested in our lives as the animating meaning of actual, corporal, being in the world.

The trouble with Mooney's reading is that he often speaks about the abdication of 'proprietary claim' in a way that nullifies all this rich promise of the term, undermining the essential connection between an object of resolute love and the identity of the lover. We saw earlier that Mooney associated the knight of resignation's spiritual detachment from the finite with the kind of spiritual detachment that we see in stoicism. We are unsurprised, therefore, that he interprets the detachment of resignation as involving something that looks very close to the stoical self's non-identification with all particular, finite objects of love.[159] When Mooney depicts the knight of faith's resignation as a cool willingness to let the things he loves come and go as they may, we see little sign of any willingness to identify in terms of those things. Even the knight of resignation, who is incapable of faith, is *pained* when he thinks the object of his love is lost. This pain is just what we would expect from a person who identifies in terms of that which he cannot have, and there is no such sign of pain and identification in Mooney's knight of faith.

Hall makes the point at issue here. He points out that Abraham's attitude toward the potential sacrifice of Isaac is not Mooney's laid-back attitude toward the potential loss of the sparrow at his feeder. Abraham has already infinitely resigned Isaac as he proceeds up Moriah; he knows that his hope for Isaac cannot be epistemically justified or expressed in the universal grammar of his ethical community. But, Hall notes, Abraham would not say of Isaac what Mooney

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[159] Lippitt makes the point in his own critique of Mooney:

> The 'stoic' counsel of non-attachment says 'Don't get too attached to anything: that way you will not be disappointed when it is taken from you' is not that of the knight of resignation. As we have seen, such a knight's attachment is vitally important: an identity-conferring commitment. The lad's love for the princess is 'the content of his life:' this clearly distinguishes him from stoical non-attachment. (Lippitt 2003, 55)

says of his sparrow: "in the course of things, the sparrow will go its way. Meanwhile, I will adjust myself to its comings and goings" (Mooney 1991, 54; see Hall 2000, 29-30). Such an attitude exemplifies the 'detachment' of one "who always hopes for the best [...] and [...] who is always prepared for the worst" (FT, 18; cf., FT, 12), and we have seen that this is not the 'detachment' of Abraham. As Hall puts it, Mooney's 'selfless concern' is not enough to capture the moral psychology of Abraham's "existential embrace of the world and of our human existence in it" (Hall 2000, 29).

Hall does not share my sympathy for Mooney's idea that the knight of faith, having undergone resignation, has renounced all presumed propriety claims to the finite. Far from that sympathy, Hall submits that the problem with Mooney's reading is registered in just this idea. Hall urges us to ask:

> What kind of marriage would it be for one spouse to say to the other that he or she does not make any claims upon the other, but will simply adjust to the other's comings and goings? And what would we think if both mutually acknowledged that in the course of things the other will go his or her own way? What does the disavowing of all proprietary claims have to do with the covenant of marriage? Isn't it just the point of the wedding vows publicly to enter into the mutual proprietary claims of each other? (Hall 2000, 31)

We might feel that the kind of identity-grounding commitment that Hall applauds – to a lover, to a vocation, or whatever – involves the forfeiture of some of our freedom.[160] Lippitt develops Hall's position by pointing out, on Hall's behalf, "the most obvious counter-response, which is surely to ask, 'So what?'. In other words, is it not part of the very nature of a serious commitment to marriage that the making a such a life-long commitment comes at the cost of some autonomy and independence?"(Lippitt 2003, 60).

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[160] Indeed, as he develops his critique, we see that what really troubles Hall is not so much the suggestion that faith abdicates all sense of proprietary claim, but the picture of freedom that Hall takes to be implied by such abdication. Hall continues:

> I suppose that Mooney would think that such proprietary claims of one spouse on the other implied in the mutual giving and taking of one another before others and before God would be a compromise of the autonomy and independence of one or the other or both. It is as though Mooney might think that the worst possible sin in a marriage is jealousy. After all, jealously, which is all too often confused with a genuinely destructive emotion, envy, implies a proprietary claim, a desire to protect one's own. (Hall 2000, 31)

Though I think Hall's defence of a proprietary account of marriage is off the mark, it seems to me that the umbrage he takes toward the above view of freedom is appropriately emphatic:

> What indeed would a marriage be without an appropriate sense of jealously on the part of both spouses? To be without any hint of jealousy is possible only on the condition that no proprietary claim whatsoever is made. Moreover, this is possible only when one no longer cares about the comings and goings of the other. This is no marriage! This is no human relationship! (Hall 2003, 32)

Hall is right in this: there is a lack of earthly vitality in Mooney's knight of faith. His conception of faith's freedom is insufficiently far from the freedom of the footloose reflective aesthete who avoids marriage because once married, "you cannot send for your travelling boots whenever you wish, you cannot move aimlessly about in the world" (EO, I: 30). Mooney's movement of resignation renders the night of faith *too* detached from the things of finitude that he is supposed resolutely to love. The consequence is that, on Mooney's reading, the Christian-Kierkegaardian picture of religious detachment from finitude, signified by resignation, comes too close to the sort of detachment that we find in stoicism and in Plato's *Phaedo*, where it is supported by the dualist doctrine that the true self is the otherworldly soul.

Where, exactly, has Mooney wrong? The problem is not, I think, the idea that the knight of faith has overcome the idea that he has a proprietary claim to the finite. The problem, I have suggested, is that Mooney associates our resigning a sense of proprietary entitlement to the finite with a stoical refusal to allow the finite things we love to become essential to our sense of who we are; to our identity. It is this refusal to identify in terms of the finite that best explains our sense that Mooney's knight of faith lacks the vigour and fortitude of the faithful everyman, and comes too close to the world-weary soul of Platonist. Faith's resolute love of finitude can be nicely captured in Mooney's idea that we cease to relate to those things as pieces of property. The trouble is that Mooney's faithful knight seems to relate to the finite in just this way.

If Mooney's account of the relationship between faith and resignation is unacceptable, how might we do better? Before turning to my own position on the matter, I need to consider Hall's.

5.7.4.2. Hall: Faith as Annulled Resignation

We've seen that both the reflective aesthete, by way of his skepticism about existential commitments, and the ethical man, Judge William, by way of his recollective relationship with established ethical norms, presuppose a troubled perspective 'outside themselves,' and remote from the lives they purport to live. In different ways, these two figures share the outside perspective on life to which the knight of resignation also ascends. Noting this, Hall offers that the distinctive feature of the knight of faith is that he refuses all such temptation to the "*resignation* and *refusal*" (Hall 2000, 18), of "human existence within the finite historical world" (Ibid, 19). It will emerge that I do not think that all forms of resignation match Hall's description. In particular, I do not think his description captures the movement of resignation that is being continually made by the knight of faith. What Hall does describe is the kind of resignation that we see in the faithless knight of

resignation, and whose historical paradigm is the detachment of Socrates in the *Phaedo*. In addition to a description of this kind of detachment, Hall offers us a helpful diagnosis of its motivations. He writes that

> this desire for transcendence of the human is both definitive of human existence – only human beings can desire not to be human! – and, at the same time, born of a deep-seated human resentment or, an alienation from, the human condition. / Where does this paradoxical resentment come from? There are no doubt many sources, but surely high among these are the disappointments of finitude: its sufferings, losses, vulnerabilities, broken promises, or more generally, the realisation that human existence in the world is intrinsically and inextricably fragile to the core. (ibid., 20)

The knight of faith refuses the temptations of resentment and alienation from the world that Hall associates with resignation. However, it is clear in *Fear and Trembling* that "the alternatives to faith, that is, resignation from, or refusal of, the human are essential elements *within* faith" (ibid., 27). In what sense, then, does the knight of faith refuse resignation if resignation is *part* of faith? How does Hall propose we solve the paradox of resignation?

Hall attempts to resolve the paradox by making what he admits is a "highly unorthodox" (ibid, 12) claim. He submits that the knight of faith does not make the movement of resignation at all. "[E]xistential faith," as Hall calls it, "is not a completion of resignation but must be radically distinguished from it, [...] faith is not simply a matter of adding a second step to the first step of world-denial, [...] [and] the knight of infinite resignation fails not because he does not go far enough but because he goes in the wrong direction completely" (ibid., 35). Resignation is the antithesis of faith, full stop. Resignation is an attempt to refuse the vulnerability that characterizes a fully human life, a life in which where one permits oneself to become existentially attached to finitude and to take risks involved in such attachment. Faith, on the other hand, is a refusal of such resignation. In this way, "Kierkegaardian worldly faith, the 'yes-to-the-world' is a refusal of refusal; it is an affirmation via dialectical double negation" (ibid., 39).

Hall's reading raises an obvious question. If the knight of faith does not make the movement of resignation, "then how can we make sense of the claim that resignation and refusal are necessary elements *within faith*?" (ibid., 35; cf., ibid., 26). Hall's answer, paradoxically, is that resignation is indeed present in faith but "*present as absent*" (ibid., 4), a suggestion, he acknowledges, which "may sound at first a bit strange" (ibid., 6). The idea is that "a positive relational reality can include within itself what it also excludes" (ibid., 5) in the way that a negation includes within itself the proposition

it negates. We overcome the paradox of faith, then, when we see that resignation and refusal do indeed factor in faith but as possibilities, not actualized, but *annulled*. Hall summarizes: "My reading of this paradox has it that resignation and refusal are structural elements within faith insofar as existential faith would be impossible if resignation and refusal were not real, albeit excluded, existential possibilities. Or, as I would like to put it, faith includes resignation and refusal within itself as annulled possibilities" (ibid., 35).

In this role as a negated possibility, resignation factors in the movement of faith as a condition of faith's existential significance, for it is a condition of the movement's being properly *free*. For faith's attachment to the finite to have significance, it must be made freely; in order to attach to the finite freely, one needs to have the possibility of refusing the finite; and in order to have the possibility of refusing the finite, the faithful person needs to relate to the knight of resignation's resentful, invulnerable, brand of religious detachment as a *real* but negated possibility.[161] Though faith refuses resignation's refusal of finitude, for Hall, resignation remains 'within' faith in the sense that resignation's refusal of the finite must continually lay before the faithful mind's eye as "a real existential possibility" (ibid., 37) if our faithful acceptance of the finite is to be genuinely free. "[T]he human includes within itself the possibility of sinking into the monstrous and the possibility of desiring to rise to the divine. Faith includes these possibilities, however, precisely by saying 'no' to them, for this 'no' *ipso facto* acknowledges their reality as ever-present, peculiarly human possibilities – as ever-present human threats" (Hall 2000, 35). Since resignation's refusal of the finite is itself a kind of negation, Hall concludes that Kierkegaardian faith, being a refusal of this refusal, is a "dialectical double-negation" (Hall 2000, 39).

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[161] Hall illustrates with the story of Abraham:

> My claim is that the existential import of Abraham's embrace of Isaac, or more generally the full import of the faithful embrace of the world, comes in the concrete, existential recognition of the fact that we have the power to do otherwise. It is this power to do otherwise that is a permanent possibility *within* faith, a possibility faith must continually annul. Faith requires that the faithful knight continually say 'no' to what is within his power to say 'yes' to; yet the awareness of this requirement to say no to resignation and refusal is dependent on the awareness of the possibility of a 'yes'. The knight of infinite resignation says 'no' to human existence, says 'yes' to the temptation to refuse it, to turn away from its hurts, its fragility; he says 'yes' to the temptation to disown it, to give it up. Yet recognizing, or say, coming to terms with, this real existential possibility of resignation and refusal is absolutely necessary for faith to be vested with its full personal existential significance. / Abraham realized via an existential confrontation, that is, a confrontation in fear and trembling, that it was possible for him to give up all that was dear to him. He found out, with God's help, that he could do it, that he could raise the knife, and that he had the resources, the freedom, the power, to resign, to give up his son. And this he realized even though he never stopped believing that God would be good to his promises. And further he realized that the possibility of a loss is a permanent element within the human life – that the gift of Isaac would have to be continually received. (Hall 2000, 37-38)

5.7.4.3. Critiquing Hall

I find Hall's reading difficult to accept. Clever as it is to interpret resignation as 'present as absent' in the life of faith, the proposal comes to the idea that the knight of faith never genuinely makes the movement of resignation at all, and de Silentio has been quite clear that he does (FT, 38, 39-40, 46). There is, however, a deeper problem with Hall's reading than this. If my reading of Kierkegaard has been correct, Hall's analysis fails exactly on the point that he is most concerned to respect: it fails to account for faith's resolute embrace of finitude.

In Chapter Two, we saw that the 'antitheses' of faith that Kierkegaard wants to dispel are to be understood not as fully intelligible but false doctrines, but as *illusions*. As Conant explained, one of the reasons these illusions need to be uprooted through indirect communication is that a direct attack presupposes that the doctrines have some intelligible content which such a direct attack would presume to negate. We have seen that, in the *Postscript*, this indirect communication involves Kierkegaard using Climacus to argue for a doctrinal account of faith which, we ultimately see, can neither be argued for, nor considered a doctrine. Part of the illusion that needed to be dispelled here is the illusion that the subjective truth of faith should be understood as a moment within a more encompassing objective view of truth as speculation and natural history. There is room for objective truth within the more foundational, subjective, truth of faith, but not *vice versa*. [162] A closely related part of the illusion is the idea that faith's subjective conception of truth can be understood by contrast with the objective conception of truth. Since Christianity needs to be understood as an all-encompassing world of meaning rather than as just one 'view' of truth amongst others. Therefore, Christianity's subjective understanding truth can't be understood *by contrast to* the account of truth as 'objectivity.' This is to say: the idea of a purely objective perspective upon truth that can be understood independently from faith is not an intelligible idea that needs to be directly negated; it is an illusion that needs to be indirectly dispelled. Kierkegaard's Christian is above all concerned to avoid Williams' moral-psychological temptation to think 'one thought too many,' and to grasp a commitment that is essential to his being in clear relief against alternative possible commitments.

In *Fear and Trembling*, Kierkegaard's indirect communication involves using de Silentio to argue for faith, which he does by contrasting faith with the supposedly faithless mode of being represented by the knight of resignation. But if, as we see in the *Postscript*, faith cannot be understood by contrast to some supposedly faithless point of view, then the mode of life supposedly represented

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[162] Recall: "Objectivity is believed to be superior to subjectivity, but it is just the opposite. That is to say, an objectivity that is within a corresponding subjectivity is the finale" (PV, 185).

by the knight of resignation is as much a mere illusion of a mode of life as the purely objective view of truth is a mere illusion of truth. This means, however, that *pace* Hall, the 'dialectic' of *Fear and Trembling* cannot function by bringing us to regard the mode of life represented by the knight of resignation as "a real existential possibility" (ibid., 37) that is continually negated by faith. Far to the contrary, becoming at home faith is precisely *not* a matter of relating to "resignation and refusal [as] real, albeit excluded, existential possibilities" (Hall p. 35); it is a matter of coming to relating them as mere *illusions* of a possibility that contain no content at all for us to negate. Kierkegaard would find it far too Hegelian, I think, to describe faith as a "dialectical double-negation" (Hall 2000, 39).

My difficulty with Hall's reading can also be expressed as a difficulty with its conception of faith's freedom. Hall's speculative reading attributes to the knight of faith the voluntarist view of free will that involves what Ferreira called "an explicit acknowledgment of a variety of options" (Ferreira 1997, 219, cf., 228). Hall's claim has been that resignation must be "a permanent possibility *within* faith, a possibility faith must continually annul" (ibid., 37) because this continual consideration and negation of this alternative to faith is necessary for the choice of faith to be appropriately informed, free, and significant. By analogy, it would seem that, for Hall, one could only be free in one's commitment to one's wife if one were lucidly aware of what it would be like to violate that commitment. Indeed, marriage is just the example that Hall uses to make his point. For Hall, Judge William is *unfree* in his existential relation to his marriage just because his marriage forms the existential horizon of his life beyond which he cannot so much as imagine himself. Here is Hall:

> In his defence of marriage as the epitome of the ethical life, Judge William shows how the covenant of marriage involves a duty. It requires of the husband and wife a mutual choice and responsibility of and to one another […] But for William, once this ethical choice is made, there is no going back [....] While divorce may be a conceptual possibility for the Judge, it is no[t] [...] an existential possibility for him [.…] The lesson here is that an ethical existence needs a further qualification. In terms of marriage, the qualification is the existential possibility of divorce. Only when we are existentially aware of the possibility that every choice that we make in time can be repudiated at some future time does the choice become fully one's own; only then do I realize the necessity of continually choosing and hence of the continual possibility of repudiating that choice. (Hall 2000, 129)

For the judge, divorce may be a 'conceptual' possibility, but it is not an 'existential' possibility, and for this reason, Hall reads Kierkegaard as saying that the Judge's commitment to his wife isn't free. The idea is that, for the judge, the possibility of divorce is so abstract that he cannot genuinely think

himself into this possibility. He can say the words – 'I might divorce' – but he cannot *himself* relate to the subject of the first personal pronoun in this utterance. On the reading I have offered, this is a genuine achievement on the judge's part. For Hall, it is his failure.

As a reading of Kierkegaard's assessment of Judge William, I think this analysis is on this thin ice. First, it involves the same mistaken contrastive account of one's particular faithful commitments to the finite things one loves that we have already seen. In *Fear and Trembling*, we saw this error in the attempt to grasp the life of faith in contrast to the life of infinite resignation. In the *Postscript*, we saw it in the attempt to grasp truth as subjectivity by contrast to truth as objectivity. Second, the view of faithful marriage that Hall uses to illustrate his account of faith comes uncomfortably close to the feckless 'civil arrangement' that Judge William described in the critique of the reflective aesthete. Recall, the person in such a marriage "thinks that for a time one can well enough endure living together, but it would keep open a way of escape so as to be able to choose if a happier choice might offer itself" EO II: p. 23). Hall's hero tries to remain alive to the possibility of a life outside his marriage. He does so not because he wants to take up such a life if it proves better than the one he has, but because he worries, neurotically, that allowing the notion of such possibilities to fade into dead options would mean his settling into a naive, immature, and unfree commitment to the life he has. But, by Kierkegaard's lights, the preoccupation with alternative possible lives is pernicious, whatever its motivations. The problem, as we know, is that such preoccupation prevents the meaning of one's actual life from taking on an eternally valid significance expressive of one's love for God. "The eternal, which (as has been shown) is properly a part of every marriage is not really present here; for a common-sense calculation is always temporal" (EO, II: p. 28). As we saw, a genuine marriage "has an entirely different conception of time" (EO, II: p. 144), one wherein one allows one's love of one's wife to become an essential feature of the particular Christian one is, and as an essential aspect of the meaning of one's Christian life, past, present and future. From this perspective, the possibility of divorce is no longer, for one, a live option at all. From this perspective, freedom is the freedom we find in fully giving ourselves to a commitment, and in the exercise of continually repeating the meaning of that commitment, remembering it anew, over time.

There are also more intuitive and *prima facie* problems with the view of freedom that Hall is attributing to in Kierkegaard. Again, to operate with his example of marriage, Hall's claim has been that one's marriage is not significantly free if one relates to the possibility of divorce as a merely conceptual possibility, as opposed to relating to it as an existential possibility. But just how lucid and

concrete must the Judge's understanding of divorce be in order for it to more than a merely abstract possibility, and for his marriage to be adequately free? Is a vivid imagining enough? Surely Judge William would have an even better understanding of the option of divorce if he actually tried it out, and perhaps remarried his former wife thereafter. Or consider the choice that contemporary couples sometimes make between particular kinds of marriage. If I am to be freely and significantly committed to a traditional, monogamous marriage, just how concretely do I need to understand the possibility of an 'open marriage'? Is it enough to have the occasional fantasy about women other than my wife? Am I required actually to try out the new open-marriage fad? And what about my commitment to the dictum 'Thou shalt not kill'? Clearly, we off on the wrong track here. The following warning bears repeating:

> Would it not be best to stop with faith, and is it not shocking that everyone wants to go further? Where will it all end when in our age, as declared in so many ways, one does not want to stop with love? In worldly shrewdness, in petty calculation, in paltriness and meanness, in everything that can make man's divine origin doubtful. (FT, 37)

Faith's freedom does not require a lucid understanding of alternatives. We will only think that it does if we confuse the freedom of faith with the freedom of voluntarism, and if we forget the warning that de Silentio is offering us here.

Hall's is not only an illusion of faith's freedom. It is an illusion that corrupts exactly that element of resolute self-identification with the things of finite that is missing in Mooney's account, and which Hall is most concern to defend. Indeed, we can summarize our worry about Hall with the words that Hall uses to summarize his worry about Mooney: "[He] seems to agree that existential faith [...] is a real embrace of the world, an existential embrace of our humanness. But as he develops his notion [...] of existential faith, we can't help but wonder if the embrace he envisions is robust enough" (Hall 2000, 29).

Can we do better? Can we avoid both the stoical solution to the paradox of resignation that we find in Mooney and the textually shaky and moral-psychologically fraught solution offered by Hall? I think we can.

5.7.4.4. An Alternative Proposal: Repeated Resignation

Contra Hall, an account of faith needs to grant that the knight of faith is continually making the movement of resignation. In doing so, he has achieved a kind of religious detachment from the finite. However, we need also to grant that resignation, or detachment, as manifested in the knight

of faith, is importantly different from all-too Platonist sort of detachment that we see in the knight of resignation. How can we do so? The answer is straightforwardly suggested by the logic of repetition that we already found in our discussion of what it means to repeat the meaning of 'Isaac,' 'ethics' and related words.

We've seen that becoming a knight of resignation means overcoming our attraction to the utilitarian reasoning of those 'slaves to the finite' who would 'becom[e] a new creature' and abandon their identity-conferring love when that love turns out to be something that one can no longer reasonably hope to have as a part of one's outward, temporal life. In this action, the knight of resignation *resigns* the utilitarian concept of finite human reason, along with his concrete hopes for the finite thing he loves. However, this knight remains entrenched in the Hegelian-recollective concept of human reason, and this prevents him from seeing how he could remain the same person if he were to abandon the eternally valid meaning of his life. Given the examples of repetition we have already adduced, the most straightforward reading of the paradox is this: the knight of faith has undergone this initial process of what we might call *faithless resignation,* and has realized that it constitutes an ultimately intolerable *illusion* of resignation or, to return to less technical language, of religious detachment. Therefore, he makes the movement into faith and, when he does, 'resignation' undergoes a transformative repetition and is purged of its illusory characteristics. Just as 'ethics' and 'Isaac' can be remembered anew in faith, so too can 'resignation.' And resignation *must* be remembered anew. Abraham's life would cease to make acceptable sense if he tried to simply forget the practice of religious detachment, just as his life would cease to make acceptable sense if he tried simply to forget his life with Isaac.[163]

The knight of resignation cannot foresee how he could possibly find himself in a future life wherein 'he' is changed in this fundamental way. His situation is not unlike that of the recollecting

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[163] There are differences between these cases. As I have read the story, if Isaac were to die, the repeated, resurrected, Isaac would not be *essential* to Abraham's being. However, since detachment, or resignation, is surely essential to any life of faith, and since we have been told as much, a repeated resignation would permit resignation to continue to play that essential role. Unlike the essential, unforeseeable change, in the meaning of 'Isaac,' the essential, unforeseeable change in the meaning 'resignation' would not occasion a change in the meaning of 'Abraham.' In other words, as I understand it (following Dreyfus) part of the renewal of 'Isaac' is that Isaac would no longer be part of the eternally valid meaning of Abraham's life. My disagreement with Hall rests on my own conviction that detachment, as resignation, needs to remain an essential part of Abraham's life even after it is transformed in faith.

Let us not lose sight of the similarities in these differences. The newly remembered meaning of 'resignation' like that of 'Isaac,' would register with us as *the same* as that with which we were already familiar, so that the self's narrative integrity is to be sustained in the necessary way. The knight of faith can look back to find himself in the knight of resignation that he formerly was, just as an Abraham after the sacrifice could look back and find himself in the pre-sacrificial father of Isaac.

metaphysician in Wittgenstein, the character who comes to see that his insistence upon viewing the meaning of his words in a certain way has led to unlivable tensions in his life with language. He cannot foresee how his words could retain the meaning that they currently have and yet be remembered anew and purged of the problematic illusion, and so he suffers with that tension. My suggestion is that the knight of faith overcomes the recollective view of human reason and, in faith, is open to even possibilities unforeseeable to him. Since he has undergone and is continually undergoing, resignation, he is as committed to the integral continuity of the self as the knight of resignation. He has no desire to make like the butterfly and "so completely forget that it was a butterfly that it may become a fish" (FT, 43). He grants that "only the lower natures forget themselves and become something new" (ibid.). If this so, however, how can he possibly be a knight of faith who, we are told, has overcome the limits of resignation in such a way that "the whole earthly figure he presents is a *new creation* by virtue of the absurd" (FT, 40)? In the same way that a resurrected Isaac would, paradoxically, be both "a new Isaac" and "the one sacrificed" (FT, 36). The paradox mirrors structurally the paradox that we have found in Wittgenstein and also in the Incarnation: somehow, from the perspective of faith that eludes de Silentio, the unforeseeably new meaning registers with us as the expression of a meaning that already was. The formula for a solution here can be gleaned directly from the analogous cases of repetition we have already considered. In repetition, something can lose what we take to be one of its essential, internal properties – it can become something hitherto unimaginable – and yet it can remain the same.

What, then, does infinite resignation become when it is repeated in faith? It becomes not the resignation of utilitarian reason, which the knight of resignation already resigns, but the resignation of recollective reason, which he does not. This permits a view of detachment that allows the knight of faith to identify resolutely in terms of the finite things he loves and, at the same time, to be open to the possibility of a renewing rebirth should his life with those things expire. As Dreyfus puts it, the freedom of faith is not a freedom to be born again only once, into Christianity, but a freedom "to be born again *and again*" (Dreyfus 2012, 106). One can be reborn over the course of Christian life when the finite hopes upon which one's identity is predicated come to naught. We can agree with Hall: Kierkegaardian Christian faith is a matter of accepting the vulnerability of human finitude. As I (following Dreyfus) read Kierkegaard, part of accepting such vulnerability is permitting oneself to identify in terms of vulnerable worldly objects of love. The aspect of faith that is lost in both Mooney and in Hall is this: faith is the adventure of permitting ourselves to identify so resolutely with such objects of love that the very idea of living on without them is, for us, the idea of an

unthinkable, impossible, abstraction. But if this is what faith involves, then the loss of what we love would constitute a kind of death, and the possibility of life on the far side of such death would constitute our rebirth into a world of meaning that remains to be revealed. When resignation is remembered as *faithful* resignation, its detachment consists not in a Platonist or stoical refusal to identify in terms of the finite things we love. That would indulge our desire for self-sufficiency and invulnerability. Instead, faithfully renewed, resignation consists in a willingness to love to the point that loss would mean existential death and recovery world mean rebirth. In this picture, faithful detachment – a faithful resignation– coincides with a kind of faithful attachment.

What does this suggest about Wittgenstein? It allows us to understand the possibility of something losing what we take to be an essential property, and yet remaining the same. Repetition involves the revelation of meanings unthinkable in advance, which nevertheless strike us as the meanings that were already present in our words. Such meanings belong to new grammars, grammars that were not already available. However, the possibility of such grammars does not require us to postulate their existence on the far side of sense, for we have seen that they can be accounted for as grammars that come into being in and through the creative communion between pre-reflective body and the real order of meaning that governs the body's expressive deeds.

I have done all I will do to explain repetition and its realism, and to show that such realism can be found in Kierkegaard. I now need to return to the task of showing that it can be found in Wittgenstein. We, therefore, return to the *Tractatus* where we will first see signs of such realism in the *Tractatus'* own ethic of self-transformation.

> You must bear in mind that the language-game is so to say something unpredictable. I mean: it is not based on grounds. [....] It is there-like our life. (OC, §559)

> It is true. Man *is* the microcosm: I am my world. (NB, 84)

6. Repetition, Realism, and Self-Remembrance in the Tractarian Ethic

6.1. Introduction

It should be clear that part of what places certain structures of mind and world beyond the reach of the sayable is their necessity – their status as conditions for the possibility of meaningful experience.[164] But logic is not the only necessary condition for the possibility of meaningful experience, and so it is not the only feature of reality that can be 'shown but not said.' Just as "[l]ogic is transcendental" (T, 6.13), "[e]thics is transcendental" (T, 6.421). "Ethics does not treat of the world. Ethics must be a condition of the world, like logic" (NB, 77). Like logic, "[i]t must lie outside the world" (T, 6.41) and, like logic, "ethics cannot be expressed" (T, 6.421). "Hence it is impossible for there to be propositions of ethics. Propositions can express nothing that is higher. It is clear that ethics cannot be put into words" (T, 6.42-6.421).[165] What view of ethics is on offer here? Dennis McManus comments on the notorious difficulty of the question:

> The evidence upon which any commentator can draw in trying to make sense of Wittgenstein's comments on ethics is spare. These comments are few and far between; this is one of the reasons why they are so puzzling – they seem to come out of nowhere – and they are easy for commentators to disregard. As a result of this insubstantial basis, any reading of Wittgenstein's remarks on ethics will be speculative; and anyone unwilling to entertain such a reading will simply have to suspend judgment on what these remarks mean. (McManus 2006, 177; cf., Edwards 1982, 240)

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[164] Recall that we should not be mislead by the Kantian language in play here. See footnote 69, above.
[165] I am here deviating from the Pears-McGuiness translation and citing the Ogden translation.

We need to permit ourselves this measure of speculation.[166] To refuse to do so would not only be to close ourselves off to the *Tractatus'* account of ethics; it would also be to close ourselves off to the meaning of the *Tractatus* quite generally since, as Wittgenstein wrote in his letter to von Ficker, the point of the book is ethical.

We are naturally uneasy with speculation. To some extent, we can temper our disquiet by keeping in mind the specific genre of philosophy that we are dealing with. The *Tractatus* is a work of indirect communication whose point has to be shown rather than said. It is in the nature of such a work that its interpretation will involve a measure of conjecture that would be unacceptable when dealing with ordinary prose. All the same, it must be admitted that speculation is an uncomfortable business and that all the usual hazards of that business remain hazards for a reading of the early ethic. What James C. Edwards says about his account of the later work can be also said for the account of the early work that I will offer here. "The picture we now draw in Wittgenstein's margins will certainly get some things wrong: a faulty line here, too garish a colour there. Nevertheless, they must be drawn, in spite of their inadequacies, for we need images of that world beyond the page toward which [Wittgenstein's] remarks point and in which the real discovery in philosophy has been made" (Edwards 1982, 204).

I will aim to expand upon existing resolute readings of the Tractarian ethic, especially those that we find in the writings of Conant and Kremer. However, I go beyond these readings in my contention that Wittgenstein's views echo central themes that we find in Kierkegaard's Christian account of the self and self-remembrance, especially as it is represented in *Fear and Trembling*. Since there is so little textual evidence to draw upon, the merits of my reading will consist primarily in its power to clarify the notoriously amorphous discussion of ethics in the *Tractatus*, and in its capacity to stand as an attractive alternative to at least one familiar orthodox interpretation of these matters.

Orthodox and resolute readers alike have argued that Wittgenstein's ethical aim is to facilitate a form of spiritual self-transformation in his reader (Cavell 1984, 217, 218; Conant 1993, 197; Conant 2005a, 46; McGuinness 1966, 317; Edwards 1982, 69). The question is: what does this self-transformation involve? On the familiar orthodox interpretation that I want to resist, "the *Tractatus* [...] can be seen as the place where, for good or for ill, the Socratic-Platonic conception of human excellence comes to fruition" (Edwards 1982, 71-72). From this perspective, the *Tractatus* aims to help its reader to eschew his natural sense of self-identification with the human body and, with it, his natural interest in the things of finitude. By grasping the true, disincarnate nature of the

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[166] I do not mean 'speculation' in the pejorative, Kierkegaardian, sense of the word.

self, we also grasp that ethical salvation lies in an attitude of indifference toward the temporal world. So understood, the *Tractatus* is meant to awaken, in us, a dualistic understanding of the self whose historical predecessor is the self of the *Phaedo*. Correspondingly, it is meant to inspire a version of the metaphysically-loaded, dualistic, interpretation of religious detachment. To use our other object of comparison, on this reading the *Tractatus* is meant to inspire something akin to the movement of resignation – the movement whereby we 'die to the world' – without urging us to take the further step of being reborn into the world by making the movement of faith.

In this chapter, I offer a very different reading of the Tractarian ethical point, and one that aligns it much more closely with the ethical lessons of *Fear and Trembling*. I contend that the disembodied conception of the self, along with the corresponding conception of religious detachment, are two aspects of an illusion of self and world that the book means for us to overcome. Like *Fear and Trembling*, the *Tractatus* invites us to remember, rather than repudiate, the essential role of the body in selfhood, and it means for us to remember, rather than repudiate, the body's dispositions of care and concern for finitude. What's more, as in Kierkegaard, my contention will be that the structure of remembrance here will be repetitional. The text will facilitate a renewed, repeated, understanding what it means to be a self by facilitating a repeated understanding of what it means to be an 'embodied' speaker of language. This will involve reminding us of the easily overlooked, non-empirical, meaning of 'the body,' and also reminding us of the associated 'embodied' but non-emprical understanding of both ethical and logical norms. The consequence of such a reading will be that it permits us to regard the *Tractatus* as rich with promise for the kind of realism we have already found in Kierkegaard.

Similar to Kierkegaard's view, Wittgenstein's early vision of self-transformation will serve us as an example, or model, of repetition and its realism. Part of this repetition, however, will be a repetition in the meaning of 'ethics' and in the meaning of 'logic.' The movement will be from a 'theoretical' and 'disembodied' understanding of each to a more practical and embodied understanding. In reading Kierkegaard, my claim was that once this first 'repetition' has been made, with the movement from a speculative to a resolute understanding of Christianity, the Christian becomes a potential witness to yet further repetitions in his understanding of meaning. Toward the end of this chapter, I make the same speculation about the transformed ethical self in the *Tractatus*. To support this speculation, I turn to the later work in Chapters Seven and Eight.

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A word is in order about the role that Christianity will play in this reading of Wittgenstein. For Kierkegaard, Christianity is the answer to the question of what it means to be a self. When I suggest that the themes that arise in Wittgenstein's discussion of the self can be usefully compared with the themes that arise in Kierkegaard's, am I suggesting that Wittgenstein is also trying to remind us of the truth in Christianity? Cavell has an imagined critic raise the worry about his own comparison between these two thinkers:

> [T]he similarity between Wittgenstein and Kierkegaard is hallucinatory. They are simply different, so why try to deny it? Kierkegaard is important because he describes our lives and depicts salvation, whereas Wittgenstein speaks about words, and if about our lives, then about the commonest portions of our everyday life. [...] Moreover, Kierkegaard writes about Christianity, saying over and over that his one thought is that Christianity is inwardness, that truth is subjectivity, that the enemy of truth is objectivity, scientific knowledge, and that since we have chosen the latter we have lost our souls and are damned. Wittgenstein has nothing to say about such matters, and moreover thinks there is nothing wrong with science. He merely says that it is not philosophy, that philosophy's problems are not solved by science. Such a position may be an advance over positivism's servility to science, but is it still nowhere near to making us servants of God. (Cavell 1984, 220-21)

If my argument to this point in this dissertation is correct, Wittgenstein is much more concerned about the subjectivity of truth, and about the spiritual condition of his interlocutor, than Cavell's imagined critic realizes. If the argument of the remaining chapters is correct, his project is much more Christian than the critic realizes as well. This is not necessarily to say that Wittgenstein wants to remind us of the truth of Christianity. Wittgenstein's effort is to remind us of what it means to be a self, but it is not for me to judge whether that effort is ultimately identical with an effort to remind us of what it means to be Christian. I argue only that Wittgenstein's vision of the self and self-remembrance lines up with Kierkegaard's, and therefore with Kierkegaard's view of Christianity, along a number of important axes.

6.2. The Tractarian Self: Recollection or Resolution?

Though any account of the Tractarian ethic will be admittedly speculative, we are not completely out at sea. For assistance, we can draw upon Wittgenstein's comments about ethics in works surrounding the *Tractatus*, especially his pre-*Tractatus Notebooks 1914-1916* (Wittgenstein 1961), his

recorded conversations with Friedrich Waismann (WVC), and his 1929 *Lecture on Ethics*.[167] Dennis McManus describes a further hermeneutic aid that is often invoked by readers approaching this difficult aspect of Wittgenstein's thought: "Our best hope of tying the *Tractatus'* discussion of ethics into the body of the book must lie in the parallel that Wittgenstein suggests between the ethical and the logical" (McManus 2006, 179). Even if this is our best hope, it must be said that orthodox readers who have employed this hermeneutic strategy have not been able to offer a satisfying account of what the early ethic involves. Conant's assessment of the orthodox secondary literature on this front pulls no punches. He notes that, after spelling out how the saying/showing distinction pertains to logic, the orthodox commentator often adds: "Ethical 'propositions', too, involve some sort of violation of the conditions for the possibility of what can be said" (Conant 2005a, 60). Conant continues:

> [N]o one, to my knowledge, has ever begun to spell out how such a view, applied to ethics, is really supposed to work (that is, how the above schema is supposed to be filled in) [...]. What most commentators on early Wittgenstein on ethics do is wave at such discussions about early Wittgenstein on logic and then say, essentially: 'and it works the same way for ethics, too.' But they do not tell us how to transpose the story about 'logic' onto 'ethics.' In other words, no one, to my knowledge, has yet furnished even the beginning of an outline of what it would mean to say of a proposition (such as A is good) that it tries to say something about an ethical feature of reality (for example, about what it is for something to be good) which cannot be said but which – through the determinate manner in which it fails to say it – nonetheless, manages to 'show' or 'convey' something determinately ethical. (Conant 2005a, 60-61)

As it has traditionally been used, the ethics-logic analogy is crucial, but it is only so informative. A new approach to the Tractarian ethic is worth a try.

Two general features of a new approach are those that have guided this dissertation so far. First, we can read the early Wittgenstein as a student of Kierkegaard, and see if we can't find, in the

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[167] The pre-*Tractatus Notebooks* of 1916-1917 are standardly used in interpreting the *Tractatus*. Kevin Cahill speaks to the utility of our other two main sources: "I accord great weight […] to the *Lecture on Ethics* and to Friedrich Waismann's recorded conversations in my discussion of the ethical point of the *Tractatus*. It certainly seems as though the view of ethics that Wittgenstein is elucidating in these places is useful for understanding the one that he held in 1918" (Cahill 2011, 7). McManus also draws heavily upon these same two sources, in addition to *Notebooks* (McManus 2006, 175). As I have done, however, he acknowledges that even with the help of these sources, his account remains conjectural. What he says about his reading also goes for the reading that I offer in this chapter: "My own reading is certainly speculative but, in its defence, it presents Wittgenstein's concerns as continuous with his more general philosophical and ethical concerns (for which, by contrast, much evidence is available), and helps illuminate these more general concerns (as Wittgenstein's own comments on the ethical 'point' of the *Tractatus* would seem to demand)" (McManus 2006, 177-78).

early ethic, a Kierkegaardian ethical lesson. This chapter aims to show that the scatter of dots that is the early ethic can indeed be connected in such a way that they form a Kierkegaardian ethical picture. Second, we can take a strong resolute approach to the text, and read it as being in continuity with Wittgenstein's later philosophical views. The aim of Chapters Seven and Eight will be to suggest that a study of the later work does indeed flesh out and support the Kierkegaardian ethical vision that I sketch in the present chapter. To these two hermeneutic strategies, I now want to add a third and more specific strategy for reading the early ethic in particular. I submit that we can approach the ethics of the *Tractatus* not through the familiar analogy between logic and ethics, but from another direction, and with the aid of a different analogy. This third hermeneutic strategy will lead us into our study here.

Just as there is a structural analogy between logic and ethics, there is a structural analogy between ethics and the self. This means that we have more than just a two-way analogy between logic and ethics to work with when trying to understand the ethics of the *Tractatus*. We have, in fact, a three-way analogy between logic, ethics, and the self. This being the case, Wittgenstein's more obscure remarks about ethics can be illuminated not only by his more developed remarks about logic but also by his parallel remarks about the nature of the self. It is with the self, then, that I would like to begin. In Section 2 of the chapter, I consider the recollective illusion of the self with which the *Tractatus* tempts us and I highlight, as I go, the resolute alternative that I will defend in Sections 3 through 5. As I read the text, all of these illusions can be seen as aspects of the particular, fundamental, recollective illusion that Wittgenstein calls "the self of solipsism" (T, 5.64).

6.2.1. The Self of Solipsism?

Wittgenstein writes: "I am my world. (The microcosm)" (T, 5.63). In the *Notebooks,* the point comes out with more conviction. "It is true. Man *is* the microcosm: I am my world" (NB, 84). If the self is the microcosm, the world is the macrocosm, and the parallel between the two indicates that what we know about the Tractarian world will illuminate the nature of the Tractarian self. How so? On my resolute reading, the lesson will be this: the self is not metaphysically transcendent to the body just as logic is not metaphysically transcendent to language. An orthodox reading, however, yields the opposite result and suggests that the self is metaphysically transcendent to the body indeed. This is how the orthodox *Tractatus* leaves its reader to find in its pages a modern version of the Platonist's metaphysical dualism and its associated brand of religious detachment.

What do we know about the Tractarian 'world'? We have seen that Wittgenstein speaks of 'the world' in two different ways. In the opening two remarks of the *Tractatus*, he uses the expression to designate the totality of existing facts (T, 1-1.1). He uses the expression in a second sense when he speaks of the false impression that we can "station ourselves with propositions somewhere outside logic, that is to say, outside the world" (T, 4.12). In this second case, he is using 'the world' in the same sense that he invokes in the *Lecture on Ethics* when he writes: "the miracle of the existence of the world, though it is not any proposition *in* language, is the existence of language itself" (PO, 43-44). Here 'the world' refers not to the totality of existing facts but to the whole order of expressible propositions comprised by the temporal practice of language and made possible by logic.

Now, like logic, the "philosophical self" (T, 5.641) is a 'limit of the world,' and lies beyond the reach of empirical investigation.

> [T]here really is a sense in which philosophy can talk about the self in a non-psychological way. What brings the self into philosophy is the fact that 'the world is my world.' The philosophical self is not the human being, not the human body, or the human soul, with which psychology deals, but rather the metaphysical subject, the limit of the world – not a part of it. (T, 5.641)

The self is a limit of the world in the transcendental sense. In the pre-Tractarian *Notebooks,* we read that "the subject is not a part of the world but a presupposition of its existence" (NB, 79). The idea then resounds in the *Tractatus*: "The subject does not belong to the world: rather, it is a limit of the world. Where *in* the world is a metaphysical subject to be found?" (T, 5.632-5.633). The answer is that the subject is no more to be found *in* the world than the eye is to be found in the visual field whose contents the eye can see. "[Y]ou do not *see* the eye. And nothing *in the visual field* allows you to infer that it is seen by an eye" (T, 5.633).

One analogy with which to approach this liminal self, then, is the analogy of the eye in its relation to its visual field. But the notion that the self is a 'limit' of the world suggests another analogy to aid us here: the liminal self stands to temporal practice of language in something like the way that logic stands to the temporal practice of language. What follows from the analogy? The transcendental necessity of the philosophical self places it with logic (and ethics), beyond the world in the realm of things that can be shown in the very possibility of linguistic life, but not described with the conceptual resources of the *Tractatus*' picture theory of meaning. Here we see an insight that Wittgenstein associates with a kernel of truth in solipsism.

We cannot think what we cannot think; so what we cannot think we cannot *say* either. / This remark provides the key to the problem, how much truth there is in solipsism. For what the solipsist *means* is quite correct; only it cannot be *said*, but makes itself manifest. The world is *my* world: this is manifest in the fact that the limits of language (of that language which alone I understand [*der sprache, die allein ich verstehe*]) mean the limits of my world. (T, 5.61-5.62)

Since "[t]he world and my life are one" (T, 5.621), "at death the world does not alter, but comes to an end" (T, 6.431). Readers disagree about whether these remarks ought to be read as the endorsement of solipsism that they seem to be. To take a small sampling of orthodox authors, Peter Hacker (1997, Ch. 4), G. E. M. Anscombe (1959, Ch. 13,167), Norman Malcolm (1986, 63-83), and David Stern (1995, Ch. 3) have all argued for some variety of a solipsistic reading. Orthodox readers Max Black (1964 p. 308), Jakko Hintikka (1958), H.O. Mounce (1997), and Cashmir Lewy (1967) have argued that the apparent solipsism of the *Tractatus* is a chimera that the book means to expose as such. The resolute reader Michael Kremer has also argued that the apparent solipsism in the text is a typical Tractarian red herring (2004). With Kremer, I will argue that, most fundamentally, the ethical point of the *Tractatus* consists in its effort to help us overcome the allure of solipsism, just as the point of Kierkegaard's pseudonymous books is to provide a riposte to recollective and recreative anti-realism. As elsewhere, however, it is useful to begin with the orthodox reading that takes this apparent solipsism for a doctrine that the *Tractatus* means for us to accept.

Hacker, for instance, regards the early Wittgenstein as a genuine advocate of "Transcendental Solipsism" (Hacker 1997, 99), a view akin to Kant's transcendental idealism, and which results in a similar "empirical realism" (ibid., 104). As for the hesitation we might be inclined to hear in Wittgenstein's words that the solipsist is only "quite correct" [*ganz richtig*] (T, 5.62), Hacker submits that what we hear is not hesitation about the truth of solipsism, but hesitation about expressing that truth in language because, strictly speaking, it cannot be expressed in language at all.[168] What the solipsist means 'is quite correct' in the now-familiar, paradoxical sense that his proposition pictures something that can't be *pictured*. Indeed, the thesis that the self is a metaphysical limit and condition of the world runs aground on the same shoal as did the thesis that cast logic in the parallel role. From the perspective of the picture theory of meaning, if this apparent solipsism cannot intelligibly be denied – if I cannot imagine what the world would be like if were it *not* 'my' world – then neither can the claim that it *is* my world be intelligibly asserted. "Here it can be seen

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[168] "Apparently what someone means or intends by a remark can be grasped even though the sentence uttered is strictly speaking nonsense. (Thus Wittgenstein claims to understand what the solipsist means.)" (Hacker 1997, 26, cf., 91).

that solipsism, when its implications are followed out strictly, coincides with pure realism. The self of solipsism shrinks to a point without extension, and there remains the reality coordinated with it" (T, 5.64). Even still, for Hacker, solipsism remains a truth that can be shown but not said.

Notice what would follow if Hacker were correct. If solipsism were the truth, logic would be a structure *of* the recollecting Tractarian subject. The whole of logic would be immanently folded up within the subject just as, according to Climacus, philosophical truth is immanently folded up within the recollecting subject of Platonism. In this case, there would be no more genuine realism in the Tractarian picture than there was in the recollective picture surveyed by Kierkegaard. Given the parallels between logic, ethics, and the self, the same recollective anti-realism that would trouble a solipsistic understanding of logic would also trouble a solipsistic understanding of ethics and the liminal "philosophical self" (T, 5.641). This is just what we see in the sort of orthodoxy the appeal of which I want to explore and resist.

6.2.2. A Disembodied Self?

In apparently solipsistic tones, Wittgenstein writes that "[t]he world and my life are one" (T, 5.621). He is speaking of the life of the *philosophical* self, not the life of the empirical self that is one fact in the world amongst others. "Physiological life is of course not 'Life.' And neither is psychological life. Life is the world" (NB, 77) in the above-mentioned sense of world-as-language.

Now, how are we to understand the relation between the liminal self and our actual, embodied, temporal existence? Is the attempt to speak about the self an attempt to speak about a *purely* eternal soul of the sort that Plato describes in the *Phaedo*? Is the Tractarian self a timeless, changeless, totality which we could only grasp, as such, if we could indeed occupy this self's supposedly timeless perspective, out beyond the world? In this case, we would grasp the self as the same kind of purely eternal reality that we think we see in logic when we try to grasp logic from this same sublime perspective, and try to view the world *sub specie aeterni* (T, 6.45). Some orthodox readers have indeed been inclined to a view of this sort, and the reason is not far to see. The *Tractatus* can seem to draw a strict distinction between the self and the body, leaving us saddled with something like Plato's dualism. We read:

> If I wrote a book called *The World as I found it*, I should have to include a report on my body, and should have to say which parts were subordinate to my will, and which were not, etc., this being a method of isolating the subject, or rather of showing that in an important sense there is no subject; for it alone could not be mentioned in that book. (T, 5.631)

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Our method of isolating the subject is to isolate the seat of free, willful, control. The suggestion is that the self is manifest in the activity of the free will. Fair enough. The self can seem to be something close to a Platonic-metaphysical soul, however, because Wittgenstein has just seemed to suggest that the free will is nowhere manifest in the world and, in particular, nowhere manifest in the activities of the human body. A draft version of the above-quoted T, 5.631 can seem to confirm the suspicion that we are dealing here with the modern descendent of Plato's dualistic self:

> The philosophical I is not the human being, not the human body or the human soul with its psychological properties, but the metaphysical subject, the boundary (not a part) of the world. The human body, however, my body in particular, is part of the world among others, among animals, plants, stones, etc., etc. / Whoever realizes this will not want to pro-cure a pre-emanate place for his own body. (NB, 82)

Is the idea here that the free will of the self cannot express itself in the actions of the body any more that it can express itself in any other thing? Again, Wittgenstein can certainly seem to suggest as much. He writes: "I cannot bend the happenings of the world to my will: I am completely powerless. I can only make myself independent of the world – and so in a certain sense master it – by renouncing any influence on happenings" (NB, 72).

The fatalism that seems to be on offer here finds further support elsewhere. Wittgenstein seems to endorse exactly the view of moral responsibility that we would expect if he thought that the self's free will could find no expression in the body and, more generally, in the temporal world. He seems to deny that we are morally praiseworthy or blameworthy for anything we actually do. "A stone, the body of a beast, the body of a man, my body, all stand on the same level. That is why what happens, whether it comes from a stone or from my body is neither good nor bad" (NB, 84). Notwithstanding this apparent fatalism, we are not to dispense with all talk about moral praise and blame, for we are not to dispense with the idea of free will and responsibility altogether. The point, it seems, is that the free will – the defining feature of the liminal subject – can find no expression *in* the world. "What really is the situation of the human will?" (NB, 76), Wittgenstein asks. His answer: "What I will call 'will' first and foremost is the bearer of good and evil" (NB, 76). "As the subject is not a part of the world but a presumption of its existence, so good and evil are predicates of the subject, not properties in the world" (NB, 79). In addition to being either good or evil, "the willing subject would have to be happy or unhappy, and happiness and unhappiness could not be part of the world" (NB, 79), of course, because the willing subject is not a part of the world either.

In what does the good or evil quality of the will, and its happiness or unhappiness, consist? What could characterize an ethically good or evil will, or a state of happiness or unhappiness, for a subject that has no influence *in* the world? Whatever the ethical life involves in detail, it begins with an event of spiritual self-transformation. In this moment, the self comes to understand its true liminal nature and comes to regard the world from the perspective of that new self-understanding.

6.2.3. A Pelagian View of Salvation?

In his preparatory notes for the *Tractatus*, the 1916-1917 *Notebooks*, Wittgenstein asks himself: "What do I know about God and the purpose of life?" (NB, 72). He replies:

> I know that the world exists. / That I am placed in it like my eye in its visual field. / That something about it is problematic, which we call its meaning [*Sinn*]. / That this meaning does not lie in it, but outside it. / That life is the world. / That my will penetrates the world. / That my will is good or evil. / Therefore that good and evil and are somehow connected with the meaning of the world. / The meaning of life, i.e., the meaning of the world, we can call God. / And connect with this the comparison of God to a father. / To pray is to think about the meaning of life. / I cannot bend the happenings of the world to my will: I am completely powerless. / I can only make myself independent of the world – and so in a certain sense master it – by renouncing any influence on happenings. (NB, 72-73)

Let us go carefully here. The crucial points are these: 1) my life and the world are, in some sense, one, 2) the *meaning* of my life and world is God, 3) God (the meaning of my life and world) lies outside the world, 4) my will penetrates [*durchdringt*] the world, 5) the will is powerless to control the happenings of the world but has the power to recognize that powerlessness, and to master the world through that recognition, and 6) the operations of the will in this regard are in some way either good or evil. How so? The good and happy person aligns his own will with the will of God (the meaning of the world) and, presumably, the evil and unhappy person does not:

> In order to live happily I must be in agreement with the world. And that is what 'being happy' *means*. / I am then, so to speak, in agreement with that alien will upon which I appear dependent. That is to say: 'I am doing the will of God.' (NB, 75)

How does this orientation of the human will toward God amount to a kind of self-transformation? The connection comes into view when we recall that Wittgenstein sometimes speaks about the self, or one's own life, as 'the world.' The *Tractatus* explains the sense in which this is so. I am 'my world' in the sense that my experience of the world is determined by the ethical character of my will. Since

the 'philosophical subject' is characterized by one's free will, it follows that the ethical transformation of the world that Wittgenstein describes at T, 6.43 is also a transformation of one's life and one's self:

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

Since a man is his world (T, 5.63, 5.621), this fundamental transformation of the world constitutes a fundamental transformation of the man. Let us take care to note, however, what we have just been told: this transformation of the self involves a transformation of the limits of the world quite generally, where this would have to include not only the self but also logic and ethics. Put differently, to undergo the ethical transformation of the self is to be transformed not only in one's understanding of the self but also in one's understanding of the world's other liminal structures.

This is a familiar idea. In Plato, we know, the essential truth of the self was a soul metaphysically severed from the body and from time. We saw that this understanding of the self was paired with the more general conception of philosophical truth as being an order of Forms, or Ideas, essentially remote from time as well. By contrast, we saw that when Christ reveals the essential dignity of the visible, temporal, body in our concept of the self, He also reveals the essential dignity of all visible, temporal, creation. No longer is the truth of the self a soul metaphysically transcendent to the fleshly body, and no longer is the truth of things a Platonic Idea metaphysically transcendent to the fleshly particulars in which the Idea is instantiated. The same notion that the truth about the self mirrors the truth of things more generally can be seen in the Wittgensteinian suggestion that the self is the microcosm of the world (T, 5.63; NB, 84). Our question is: how should the parallel between self and world be understood? Is Platonism the proper object of comparison? Is Kierkegaard's Christianity?

If we begin with the recollective, orthodox, reading of Tractarian logic, the proper object of comparison will appear to be Plato. From the recollective point of view, the parallel between logic and the self would suggest that we can willfully recollect our way into a state of full and complete knowledge of the self, just as we could, on this reading, recollect our way into a full and complete knowledge logic. Similarly, given the parallel between logic and ethics, the recollective reading would suggest that the self can wilfully recollect its way into exhaustive knowledge of the ethical good, and

become happy, all on its own power. We have seen that "[t]he meaning of life, i.e., the meaning of the world, we can call God" (NB,72). If this is so, then our knowledge[169] of the ethical good turns out to be our knowledge of God. Here it can be seen that, if we begin with the recollective understanding of logic, and then consider the parallel to the cases of the self and ethics in its light, Tractarian ethics looks very Pelagian indeed. It would come to the view that we can achieve a complete and final knowledge of God (of ethical truth), of the self we truly are, and of ethical salvation all on our own willful-recollective resources.

This Pelagian view of ethical self-transformation can also seem to be the unequivocal upshot of certain passages in the *Notebooks*. Consider the way that Wittgenstein was inclined to speak about the moment of ethical insight, which he described as the moment when we recognize our apparent impotence to affect the world through the use of our free will. He wrote: "I can only *make myself* independent of the world – and so in a certain sense master it – by renouncing any influence on happenings" (NB, 72, emphasis added), "I can *make myself* independent of my fate" (NB, 74, emphasis added) or, once more, "There are two godheads: The world and my independent I" (NB,74). The *Tractatus* seems to urge us to repudiate worldly identification with the body, to help us ascend to the solipsist's extensionless point of view outside the world (T, 5.64), to identify ourselves with that other-worldly self – the world's sustaining ground and origin – and, thereby, to secure all the salvation we need with nothing more than our own recollecting will. In short, the *Tractatus* can easily be read as just another document of that same desire we found in Sartre: the desire to be God.

Edwards represents this Pelagian take on Tractarian self-transformation well. He writes that young Wittgenstein's picture of the self and its ethic was marred by a "Faustian self-assertion of intellect and will" (Edwards 1982, 241). The animating myth of the *Tractatus*, Edwards writes, is the myth that "[s]alvation is achieved through heroic ascent to a godlike self-consciousness. [...] Only from the perspective of that higher place is it possible for me to will the good, thus, to make the world a happy one. *Das Mystiche* makes itself felt only when the ascent is completed; only, in other words, when one has become a god: the 'independent I'" (Edwards 1982, 68-69). Indeed, with respect to this Pelagian take on ethical self-transformation, Edwards regards the *Tractatus* as a footnote to Plato. His summation of Tractarian self-knowledge, and ethical knowledge, is exactly what we would expect if we begin from the orthodox-recollective account of logical knowledge and interpret the parallel cases of the self and ethics in its light:

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[169] I am using the term 'knowledge' loosely here. Our relation to God will not be an epistemic relation.

Wittgenstein's infatuation with the heroic image is not philosophically anomalous. Ever since the Socratic-Platonic answer to the question of human being became definitive for Western self-consciousness, heroic ascent from error and illusion by dint of intellectual effort has been the norm. One way or another, Western philosophy has continually re-enacted the heroic ascent out of the cave [...] [T]he *Tractatus* can be seen as the culminating effort in the heroic struggle [....] Thought is the medium for the heroic self's ascent, the ladder he must climb; but this ladder finally brings him to a place where what he sees first and foremost is himself. That is, he sees that the sense of life resides in him, in his mysterious (even mystical) power to change his attitude toward the world. / So the outcome of the *Tractatus* [...] is narcissistic: the self is the maker of meaning. We escape from the shadows of the cave only to find, not some reality which gives our lives meaning, but only ourselves: heroic will. (Edwards 1982, 71-72)

In our discussion of Sartre's stoical ethics we saw Thomas Anderson point out that there are cases where the subject does not, in fact, have any such 'mysterious (even mystical) power to change his attitude toward the world, at least not in a way at will be fully satisfying to him. Though the recollecting will of the orthodox *Tractarian* self would be importantly different from the recreating will of the existentialist, the two have at least this untenable premise in common: they both regard the unaided human will as the mechanism of self-knowledge and the means by which we can set to rights the conceptual and existential tensions that trouble us.

6.2.4. A Manichean View of Evil?

The above sketch of ethical self-transformation compels us to recognize a distinction. When we speak of what is 'ethical,' we can use the word in either a wide or a narrow sense. If we mean it in the wide sense, 'the ethical' encompasses both the state of being good and the state of being evil, these being two different ethical states that might characterize the subjective condition of a human will. Corresponding to this wide meaning of 'ethics,' we might also speak in a wide sense about 'the meaning' of a person's life. Understood in a wide sense, 'the meaning' of a person's life could be either good or evil. In the wide sense, any orientation of the will, either good or evil, is an 'ethical' orientation. What about the narrow sense of 'ethics'? We use the word 'ethical' in the narrow sense when we say that it isn't ethical to lie, to steal, to covet something to which we have no right, and so on. In the narrow sense, the will is only ethical if it is ethically *good*. Correspondingly, we can speak in a narrow sense about the meaning of a life. In the narrow sense, the only genuine meaning in life is

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the ethically good meaning. We use the expression in the narrow sense when we speak colloquially about 'the meaning of life' (NB, 72-73).

"Ethics is transcendental" (T, 6.421). As it occurs in this proposition, is the term 'ethics' meant in the wide sense or in the narrow sense? If Wittgenstein is using the term in the wide sense, he is suggesting that both the good man and the evil man can have a genuine experience of *the world*, in the sense of that term that refers the order of intelligible experience that is made possible by logic, ethics, and the self. If he is using the term in the narrow sense, then only the good person can have a genuine experience of the world. In this case, though the evil person would certainly have a kind of linguistic experience, what he experiences would not be the *world* in the full sense of the term. He would be, somehow, cut off from the reality of things. Might he be the solipsist of the orthodox reading, who views the world as his own narcissistic reflection?

Kremer's non-solipsistic reading is intriguing in this connection (Kremer 2004). For Kremer, the Tractarian move from the unethical point of view to the ethical point of view involves a move from the anti-realism of solipsism to realism announced at T, 5.64: "solipsism, when its implications are followed out strictly, coincides with pure realism" (see Kremer 2004, 77). We can notice, now, that that ethical task of working through the ambiguity around the question of solipsism is mirrored in the task of working through the claim that 'ethics is transcendental.' If we are inclined to the unethical anti-realism of solipsism, the wide reading of the claim leaves us to that temptation, and permits us to conclude that this unethical, solipsistic, point of view is indeed a point of view on what we genuinely mean by 'the world.' The narrow reading of the claim that "ethics is transcendental" (T, 6.421) points in a very different direction, and coheres with Kremer's suggestion that the Tractarian ethical point of view is one from which we see that the solipsist's analysis of 'the world' fails to capture what we mean by the term. From the ethically good perspective, we see that the solipsist's point of view is merely the illusion of a point of view and that the world, as the solipsist understands it, is merely an illusion of the world.

I want to support Kremer's thesis, but reframe it as follows: in the *Tractatus*, we come to understand that we can only have a genuine experience of the world if we assign a narrow sense to 'ethics' in the claim that "[e]thics must be a condition of the world, like logic" (NB, 77), and recognize that the 'wide' sense of 'ethics,' which presumes the genuine possibility of evil (which in turn involves the anti-realism of the solipsist), was only ever a kind of Manichean illusion. What is more, it is a Manichean illusion that misunderstands the *freedom* at issue in the general choice between good and evil along the same, inappropriately voluntarist, lines that troubled Ronald L.

Hall's contrastive account of the choice of the faithful life over faithless resignation, and the choice of marriage over divorce. On the reading of the *Tractatus* that I am proposing, we come to see that only an ethically *good* understanding of the world is an experience of *the world*, in the genuine sense of the term – the sense in which the world is actually, genuinely, something other than the self and the order of meanings that can be remembered through our own willful recollective (or recreative) efforts. However, it must be granted that the early ethics certainly does leave its reader to think that the world *can* be understood in both ethical and unethical terms. To see this, we can consider the explanation of the sense in which 'ethics' is transcendental that we find in the *Notebooks*. In an entry of 21 July 1916, Wittgenstein asks himself the relevant question.

> [C]an we conceive a being that isn't capable of Will at all, but only of Idea (or seeing for example)? In some sense this seems impossible. But if it were possible then there could also be a world without ethics. (NB, 77)

Three days later, on 24 July, Wittgenstein settles the question: "Ethics must be a condition of the world, like logic" (NB,77) and, on the 30th, he confirms his answer: "Ethics is transcendental" (NB, 79). What could be Wittgenstein's reasoning here?

Kremer helps our thinking on this front when he offers that there are, in the *Tractatus*, "strong analogies between linguistic meaning and what might be called 'existential' meaning, meaning in a broader sense of significance for life" (Kremer 2001, 57, n. 24). Where logic is a condition for the possibility of significant language, ethics is a condition for the possibility of a significant life.

> It is not merely a linguistic accident that we use the same word, 'meaning,' in speaking of both language and life [....] [L]inguistic meaning in the *Tractatus* as well as in Wittgenstein's later works, can be equated roughly with 'use.'[170] This applies equally to 'meaning' in the broader 'existential' sense of significance. (Kremer 2001, 56)

The meaning of a life, like the meaning of a word, is bound up with our sense that what is meaningful has some significant *use*, some significant *purpose*.[171] Ethics provides the sense of purpose

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[170] The equation is only rough, I take it, because, strictly speaking, for Wittgenstein meaning is constituted, not by word use, by the rules that regulate such use (PG, 184).

[171] In this connection, Kremer highlights the role of Occam's razor in the *Tractatus*, and offers that the principle describes our capacities to find sense in life no less than it describes our capacities to find sense in language:

> Occam's razor signifies that 'if a sign is not necessary then it is meaningless;' 'signs which serve no purpose are logically meaningless.' (T, 3.328, 5.47321). Wittgenstein told his friend David Pinsent that he had 'felt ashamed of never daring to kill himself: he put it that he had had 'a hint that he was *de trop* in this world" – that is, that he was superfluous and so did not deserve to live. My reading allows us to express what he was saying to

that lends meaning to life in something like the way that logic lends meaning to language. Since both are transcendental, 'the world,' for Wittgenstein, is essentially structured by vectors of both linguistic and existential significance. Where ethics is the condition for the possibility of a meaningful life, logic is the condition for the possibility of meaningful speech, and the interweaving of these two dimensions of sense constitutes the full tapestry of intelligible experience that is the Tractarian world of language.

How do these two liminal conditions of the world intersect to give rise to intelligible experience? Why is that that, for Wittgenstein, there can be no world that is pure idea (NB, 77)? Why must the very possibility of the world be characterized by will and, what comes along with will, ethics? Wittgenstein has almost nothing to say on the point, so here our speculations will need to be bold, but two possibilities come easily to mind. One assigns 'ethics' a wide meaning, and aligns Wittgenstein with Sartre; the other assigns 'ethics' it a narrow meaning, and aligns Wittgenstein with Kierkegaard.

For Sartre, we saw that all intelligible experience is structured by a purpose-driven interpretive/conceptual scheme. The meaning of things is determined by our fundamental project, for the fundamental project is that in relation to which things show up for us in their relevance to that project, either as aids or obstacles. Though there were serious problems in Sartre's analysis, he was rightly signalling us to an intimate connection between the possibility of intelligible experience and *value*. The conceptual distinctions we draw and, so, our very perceptions of the world, are determined by the value of those conceptual distinctions as tools for helping us navigate the world toward the achievement of our life goals. In Sartre, this truism gets lost in a Luciferian confusion because it is tied to an untenable account of human freedom,[172] but a truism misunderstood is still a truism. When it comes to 'grammatical' or 'logical' truths that express the rules, or concepts, by which we know the world, what we consider true is intimately bound up with what we consider good, that is, conducive to the interests of human life. "Concepts [...] are the expression of our interest and direct our interest" (PI, §570). This truism is familiar from other quarters as well. It is a premise of evolutionary psychology, for example. It is true that, for Wittgenstein, "Darwin's theory has no more to do with philosophy than any other hypothesis in natural science" (T, 4.1122), but he

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Pinsent as the thought that his life was meaningless. Suicide would be a simple application of Occam's razor to himself. (Kremer 2001, 56)

Sense-finding involves the discernment of purpose for our lives as much for our words.

[172] As we've seen, the self becomes the measure of the good and evil and all of us, whatever our particular fundamental projects, are supposedly trying to achieve *the* fundamental project that Sartre thought we all inevitably shared: the solipsistic desire to be God.

can still share, with the Darwinian, the premise that there is a non-accidental relation between our considering certain logical propositions true and the fact that the concepts expressed by those propositions serve the interests of human life. Wittgenstein would only insist, against the Darwinian, that we are dealing with an *internal* relation here, not an external one. To note a third place where we see the internal relation between the good and the logically true, it is central to Wittgenstein's own philosophical method. Our acceptance of a given rendering what we mean by our words is internally related to our recognition that that rendering serves a therapeutic good: it helps us to overcome confusions tied up in an understanding of grammar that formerly enchanted us. Once more, the point is this: there could be no intelligible experience of the world at all for a creature who did not conceptualize the world in terms of a given logic, and there is a self-evident, internal relation between the logical (or grammatical) propositions we consider true and the value of our so considering them.

On the wide reading of 'ethics,' ethics is transcendental in the sense that any intelligible experience of the world presupposes a conceptual scheme that organizes the world into significant categories. Any such conceptual scheme is motivated by our purposes, and our purposes always have some ethical valance; they register somewhere on the scales of good and evil. This understanding of the transcendental role of ethics requires us to acknowledge the 'ethical possibility' of a curious, determinately *unethical* kind of ethical meaning, just as the orthodox reading of the transcendental role of logic requires us to acknowledge a determinately *illogical* kind of logical possibility. This would have us believe that evil is a genuine ethical possibility that the self can choose, so that the ethical life can be grasped in relief against an unethical order of things that we can grasp, namely, as things we *cannot* do, given our commitment to the ethical life.

With Conant's notion of 'substantial nonsense' in mind, I have called this the 'Manichaean' aspect of the orthodox way of thinking about the transcendental status of ethics. Recall, for Conant, the orthodox reader embraces a 'substantial' conception of philosophical nonsense. He does so when he implicitly treats illogical uses of words as if they expressed a genuine sense, and he does this when he presumes that what is said by such nonsense can be intelligibly negated by 'Carnapian' philosophical claims that *that* (what is said) 'cannot' be said, given the rules of logic. To recognize a Manichean tendency in the orthodox reading is to say that a similarly substantial conception of evil is at work when we try to treat unethical uses of the will as if they manifest a kind of ethical sense, which we do when we presume that such unethical uses of the will can be intelligibly negated by ethical claims that *those* uses of the will *cannot* be permitted, given the rules of ethics. Even if we

chose the genuine ethical good, the voluntarist model of choice that is being presupposed here would corrupt our ongoing commitment to the good in the same way that, in Hall's depiction of marriage, the voluntarist model of choice corrupts the married man's ongoing commitment to his wife.

The narrow reading of 'ethics,' in the claim that 'ethics is transcendental,' is a resolute reading, and it corresponds to a resolute, ongoing choice of the ethical good. A resolute understanding of the ethical limits of the world will require that we overcome our temptations to view those limits in relief against a paradoxically unethical ethical world – a world delimited by unethical aims, amongst them the solipsist's aim of assimilating the possibilities of sense to the possibilities available to his own recollecting will. Being at home in one's self, being at home in logic, and being at home in ethics, will all involve a full resistance to our inclinations to live as if outside these different liminal features of linguistic experience. The Manichean notion of evil functions, in the *Tractatus*, as a for-us-necessary illusion that will unravel into meaninglessness by the time we have made our way through the text. So far, we have seen that the *Tractatus* leaves us on our own to undergo this self-transformation. Before we consider from closer up what the resolute truth involves, let's chart the course that the *Tractatus* means for us to chart, and first venture farther into the illusion. Here we need to see that, like the other-worldly soul we find in the *Phaedo* and *Fear and Trembling*, the other-worldly soul of the orthodox *Tractatus* is enamoured of a correspondingly other-worldly illusion of religious detachment.

6.2.5. A Dualistic Stoicism?

In his 1929 *Lecture on Ethics*, Wittgenstein describes th**e** experience of 'absolute value' as "the experience of feeling absolutely safe. I mean the state of mind in which one is inclined to say, 'I am safe, nothing can injure me whatever happens'" (PO, 41). This experience of absolute safety resists intelligible articulation, however, and for familiar reasons: so far as the picture theory of meaning is concerned, one can only intelligibly say that one is safe if one can also say what it would be like to meet with harm. But when we say that we are *absolutely* safe, we are saying that our safety is necessary – we are saying that harm could never befall us – and, by the lights of the picture theory, the necessity of the self's safety is as inexpressible as any other necessity. Wittgenstein explains:

> We all know what it means in ordinary life to be safe. I am safe in my room, when I cannot be run over by an omnibus. I am safe if I have had whooping cough and cannot therefore get it again. To be safe essentially means that it is physically impossible that certain things

should happen to me and therefore its nonsense to say that I am safe *whatever* happens. (PO, 42)

These remarks need to be taken seriously. Like the Platonic ethical self, the Tractarian ethical self achieves a sense of spiritual 'detachment' from the facts of the world (see Kremer 2004, 68; McGuiness 1966, 320). The question is the same as that which we had about resignation in *Fear and Trembling's* depiction of faith: How should this detachment be understood?

According to the orthodox interpretation that I am considering here, this state of spiritual detachment can easily look like a modern descendent of that metaphysical detachment whose paradigm is Socrates in the *Phaedo*, and which is tied to a metaphysical dualism of soul and body. From this perspective, the ethical task is to grasp the self as a disembodied locus of freedom, metaphysically set apart from the temporal world, and to live a life in keeping with this true nature of who we are. When the liminal self is conceived in these dualistic terms, the ethical transformation of the self can only be a change in one's inner life, since this transformation is one that the self freely chooses to undergo, and the story so far has been that the free will can find no expression in one's outward behaviour.[173] We've encountered this view that the will is incapable of exerting any influence on the facts of the world in the *Notebooks* (NB, 72), but it can also be found in the *Tractatus*. There we read:

> The world is independent of my will (T, 6.373). / Even if all that we wish for were to happen, still this would only be a favor granted by fate, so to speak: for there is no logical connection between the will and the world, which would guarantee it, and the supposed physical connexion is surely not something that we could will. (T, 6. 374)

If this is the ontological condition of the will, the Tractarian ethical task could only be what the *Notebooks* said it was, namely, to " make myself independent of the world – and so in a certain sense master it – by renouncing any influence on happenings" (NB, 72). Like Schopenhauer's serene metaphysical subject "free from, and foreign to, all willing and needs, in the quiet comprehension of the Ideas" (Schopenhauer 1966, I: 477-80), the self of the *Tractatus* seems metaphysically foreign to

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[173] Michael Kremer offers a tidy summary of the orthodox interpretation I have in mind:

> On a standard reading of the *Tractatus'* account of the will, the will as a subject of ethical appraisal is unable to affect the world; the facts are independent of it. All that it can affect is the 'limits' of the world, by taking up an attitude to the world as a whole, for example of acceptance or rejection. Within this realm the will is absolutely free. [...] What happens in the world is indifferent to me because I recognize that fundamentally it has nothing to do with *me*. – I cannot affect it, but neither can it affect me, nothing can happen to me. The resulting view of the human person is a perfect image of that radical disharmony of the self which St. Paul describes – what I will does not in any way have to be reflected in my actions. On this view I become a spectator to my own life and the only question is what attitude I will take to this life (and to the world). (Kremer 2001, 59)

the temporal world and shorn from any sense of personal identity existentially rooted in the body, in the historically conditioned meanings of its language, or in the particular needs and hopes and blessings of the historical, flesh and blood person. Offering us a recent statement of this reading, Lee Braver comments:

> We achieve this perspective when we stop identifying ourselves with that bit of dying flesh and rise above the vicissitudes of fortune to see the world from outside, *sub specie aeterni* (T, 6.45, NB, 83), and our empirical self just as another piece of the world whose fate is no more or less important than anything else. We identify instead with a world-soul (NB, 49, 85) which, in one sense, is transcendent in virtue of the fact that it is not an item within the world, or in space and time at all (NB p. 74, 86). In another sense, the soul is the world in that the transcendent seer is completely absorbed into and exhausted by its seeing of the spectacle of the world. (Braver 2012b, 43)

The resulting ethics seems to be a dualistic brand of the Socratic view that "the good man cannot be harmed, either in life or in death" (Apology, 41 c-d) by the vicissitudes of the world. This Wittgenstein shares with the Socrates of the *Apology* the presumption that our happiness and our personal identity ought to depend upon that which is under our control, and he seems to believe that we have no such control over our bodies, their actions, or anything else in the world. He seems to share with the Socrates of the *Phaedo* the inclination to support this attitude of detachment with a doctrine of the other-worldly soul, the soul metaphysically transcendent to time and body, so that neither happiness nor personal identity, nor the ethical condition of the will, can depend upon how things go in the temporal realm.

What *can* harm the subject, the lesson seems to be, is only the ethical harm that can come to the soul. The self can forget its other-worldly, disembodied, and transcendental status and, thereby, it can fall into the illusion that it can be harmed by the slings and arrows of time against which stoicism, like Platonism, seeks to immunize us. When we have made this error, our attitude toward the world naturally becomes one of fear rather than stoic imperturbability and, most fundamentally, fear of death. Hence, "[f]ear in the face of death is the best sign of a false, i.e., a bad life" (NB, 75). Taking these thoughts to their conclusion, Wittgenstein holds that suicide is "the elementary sin" (NB, 91). "If suicide is allowed then everything is allowed. If anything is not allowed then suicide is not allowed" (NB, 91). Suicide emerges as the most fundamental of all sins because it is the expression par excellence of the illusion that one's happiness is dependent upon those worldly states of affairs, the experience of which the suicide puts to an end (see Braver 2012b, 41). As Braver

points out, if suicide is the paramount sin, the ethical ideal is an extreme state of spiritual detachment or, to use Kierkegaard's word, resignation. "Instead of trying to change external circumstances we should resign ourselves to whatever occurs, which alters how we live in the world as a whole rather than any particular features of it – shifting the melody of our lives into a different key, rather than altering the notes, so to speak" (Braver 2012b, 56-57).[174]

We found elements of Platonism in Kierkegaard's faithless movement of resignation, and it is not far to see such elements in orthodox Tractarian resignation as well. In both cases, religious detachment consists in resigning the world, and in neither is there any genuine sense in which we 'get the world back.' Further, in both cases, there is a kind of "transfiguration" (FT, 16) of the self whereby we come to identify as a purely eternal soul, rather than as an ensouled body, complete with the body's natural hopes and passions. There is a 'transfiguration' of the self here, in so far as the self is stripped of all flesh and reduced to its eternally valid love of God, but no real *transformation*. Finally, in neither *Fear and Trembling* nor the in orthodox *Tractatus* does resignation leave room for that linguistic freedom and responsibility that we found in Abraham, in the *Point of View* and, as I have anticipated, in the later Wittgenstein: the freedom to facilitate a genuine renewal of the world as we know it through a renewal of grammar. Any such freedom is threatened by the Tractarian recollective idea that the rules of logic unambiguously determine their own application, depriving us of that distinctly linguistic freedom and responsibility. Braver refers to this apparent doctrine of the *Tractatus* as 'logical stoicism': "Logical Stoicism […] relieves the logician of the burden and responsibility of making up her mind – similar to Boethius fatalist resignation"(Braver 2012b, 63). Although this Pelagian self has the 'freedom' to secure its own salvation, it does so not by using the radical recreative will, *a la* Sartre, but by willfully recollecting the truth about itself and its ethical condition. But again, there is really no linguistic freedom here, since the comparison between logic and ethics suggests that our thinking about the self and its ethics, like our thinking about logic, is determined to run a pre-determined and changeless course along the lines of rigid, recollective, rails, "laid to infinity" (PI, §218). Again, there can be no such freedom for a self whose free will is incapable of expressing itself in the temporal domain through the body and, in particular, though the embodied practice of writing and speech that Kierkegaard describes in the *Point of View*.

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[174] See also, McGuinness:

> To accept [the world] is to detach oneself from all particular parts of the actual world: to reject it is to set one's heart on particular possibilities – to be distressed, for example, by what happens to a particular human being, to render oneself liable to fear and hope, particular the fear of death. (McGuiness 1966, 320)

Braver captures the sort of soul-body dualism with which this view of the Tractarian ethic is bound up, and which also dovetails naturally with the book's gestures in the direction of solipsism. The Tractarian philosophical self "is not an item within the world, or in space and time at all" (Braver 2012b, 43). We arrive naturally at this impression, I've suggested, because the *Tractatus* picture seems to reserve for us a kind of freedom completely remote from the temporal order of things. Braver has signalled us to the way in which many orthodox scholars have made sense of this difficult view and which I have been showcasing here. On this reading, the philosophical self that wields this freedom is something essentially, metaphysically, separate from its body and from the rest of the material world, so that we are incapable of influencing that world through our actions. One 'makes oneself independent of the world,' not by changing one's actions, for our actions are part of the world beyond the reach of our free control and, hence, are not *ours* to change. Instead, one makes oneself independent of the world by emptying the will of all desires for specific states of affairs. The case of the supposedly contentless logical proposition, which is compatible with every state of affairs, is thus paralleled in the case of the supposedly contentless proposition about the desires of the Tractarian will, the will that wants nothing from the world, for it is satisfied however the world may be.[175] With the liminal self, as with liminal logic, our desire for invulnerability can be satisfied, but only at the cost of emptiness.

There is no need to deny that the *Tractatus* can be read this way, for it is in keeping with a doubly-reflected work of indirect communication that it should lend itself to different possible readings and that a reading appropriate for some might not be appropriate – and might even be positively unethical – for others. We have seen that de Silentio continually stresses a sense in which he has a certain respect for the knight of resignation who, confined the established conventions so ethical grammar, can do no more than resign Isaac when God calls for the sacrifice and take refuge in an other-worldly kind of faith. Similarly, though the *Tractatus* urges a certain kind of reader to eschew its own version of the peace and rest and pain of resignation, it need not be read as *categorically* impugning such faithless resignation. A mythology of unfreedom and indifference to the world may be suitable for some readers. By the same token, some readers will find little more in this ethics than a world-weary pessimism, an untenable denial of human freedom that *is* actually effective

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[175] "Just as a tautology's lack of content about the way things are lets logic shine through, so emptying the will of all preferences for how things should be allows us to [...] change, not in actions but in attitude, [making] our world a happy one without altering its contents in any way [....] The logical tautology 'it is either raining or not raining' gives no information about the weather, and the happy man has no preference come rain or shine" (Braver 2012b, 43).

in the world, and a metaphysical misunderstanding of the religious virtue of detachment. The self that is emerging from this orthodox reading is close kin to the disembodied soul of the *Phaedo*, the knight of infinite resignation, and that caricature Christian that Nietzsche found so repugnant. We are dealing here with the soul that lacks a sufficiently healthy attachment to temporal, earthy, existence.

Earlier I submitted that our temptation to solipsism was at work in our temptation toward the illusory, wide, reading of the claim that 'ethics is transcendental' We can also, of course, feel our temptation to solipsism at work in the illusion of a disembodied self. To think we grasp the truth of solipsism is, after all, to think that we can grasp ourselves as a transcendental structure fully remote from time and space. In the orthodox reading we are considering, such a self is so remote from its body, its earthly concerns, and the temporal practice of language and ethics that the self is unable to bring its will to bear in any of these domains. If this fatalism is not disconcerting enough, Brian McGuiness points out one of its further disquieting implications: it seems to entail that we bear no responsibility for our own wretched behaviour. On the picture we are exploring, is not our acting ethically or unethically just another state of affairs to which we ought to be indifferent?

> It would be paradoxical indeed if the *Tractatus* was meant to imply that in the expanded mystical state all distinctions between good and evil vanished, that the happy man was exempt from all law and might do whatever he would, even the most atrocious crimes, without affecting his happiness. Yet theoretically, this might appear to be its implication. If what happens is indifferent my actions too are indifferent and whatever I try to do will be equally acceptable – will be part of the problem set, to which as correct attitude of acceptance will be the solution. (McGuiness 1966, 325)

Again, this might be an appealing picture to some. It is a forgiving picture, not least because it alleviates us of whatever guilt we might feel for our failures to act as we ought to have acted on particular occasions. For others, it will be read as a convenient piece of self-deception. The aspects of the resolute reading that I am highlighting are meant to be noticed by the second sort of reader. However much we might like to deny it, our free will does have a bearing on how things go in the world, and our actions are the rightful object of ethical praise and blame.

On the orthodox account, the self is an otherworldly and ultimately solipsistic spirit of resignation. It tries to deny the incarnation of the liminal philosophical self – the free will – *in* the human body, and it accordingly tries to deny the freedom and responsibility that the self, therefore, bears for its actions. What we have here is a bad-faith strategy for managing one's past sins, and for

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excusing in advance the sins one has yet to commit. It is, as Kremer submits, yet another form of the self-deceptive and Pelagian desire to supply *ourselves* with an ethical justification for our lives, in this case by way of the fiction that we are justified *however* we act.[176] To see the resolute alternative, we need now take stock of the complicated interplay between ethics and logic that the resolute picture involves.

6.2.6. Departmentalism?

There is a sense in which ethics and logic are two distinct normative domains, for we can distinguish between logical norms like *modus ponens* and ethical norms like 'thou shalt not lie.' In this connection, we also saw Kremer draw a helpful distinction between 'existential meaning' and 'linguistic meaning.' The first concerned our sense of purpose in living our lives; the second concerned our sense of purpose in using particular words. Though this suggestion of a strict distinction between logic and ethics is a useful starting point, Bertrand Russell's recollection of Wittgenstein's late-night visits suggests that it can also be misleading. Russell writes the following of Wittgenstein's midnightly struggles with logic and sin:

> He used to come to see me every evening at midnight, and pace up and down the room like a wild beast for three hours in agitated silence. Once I said to him: 'Are you thinking about logic, or about your sins?' 'Both', he replied, and continued his pacing. I did not like to suggest it was time for bed, for it seemed probable both to him and to me that on leaving me he would commit suicide. (Russell 1998, 330)

A strict divide between logic and ethics is limited, for it suggests that our relationship with logic is not an ethical matter, in the way that Wittgenstein evidently thinks it is. When we ask if we are living a resolute life with language, or when we ask if we are escaping into recollective or recreative fantasies, our questions are as ethical as they are logical. They are logical because they have to do with whether or not we are committed and singular, or wavering and differentiated, in our understanding of the rules that regulate our use of words. They are ethical because our success or failure along this axis or resolution-irresolution is a kind of ethical failure. For Wittgenstein, ethics and logic are both tightly interwoven and ubiquitous in the fabric of a properly human life.[177]

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[176] "We can be tempted by the vision of the 6.4's out of a desire to justify ourselves. By separating ourselves from our actions we can maintain the purity of ourselves no matter what our bodies do. Thus, we avoid responsibility for our lives, since the only thing we are responsible for is the choice of attitudes which is purely 'up to us.' We can think that we can make ourselves happy by simply deciding to 'live happy!' as Wittgenstein exhorts himself in the *Notebooks*. But this 'solution' to our problems, however tempting, is in bad faith" (Kremer 2001, 59-60).

[177] Conant puts the point nicely:

We can highlight two specific ways in which any strict bifurcation between logic and ethics can lead to a poor understanding of both. First, a strict distinction can be misleading because questions about ethical matters like what it means to be 'happy,' or to 'do the will of God,' are questions about language; they are questions about the meaning of ethical words.[178] On our strong resolute reading of Wittgenstein, if questions about ethics are questions about the meaning of ethical words, then they are questions about logic, or grammar, in the later-Wittgensteinian sense. There is a sense in which logic is a specialized language-game – we study its norms in logic classes. But in the more encompassing sense of 'logic', "everything descriptive of a language-game is part of logic" (OC, §56, cf., OC, §82, §628), and ethics is a 'language-game' as much as anything else. In this broad sense of 'logic,' to study the norms of ethics is to engage in a particular kind of logical, or grammatical investigation.

By the same token, there is a sense in which ethics is a specialized language-game – we study its norms in classes on normative ethics. But, for a resolute reader, there is also a sense in which ethics is at work everywhere in logic. This brings us to our second more specific reason to be wary of a strict logic/ethics divide, which follows from my earlier explication of the claim that 'ethics is transcendental.' My earlier claim was that there could be no logical parsing of the world at all if we did not view the world in light of certain life interests and purposes, where these purposes always have an ethical value. But if an ethical orientation is at work in *every* logical parsing of the world, there is a level of analysis at which the bifurcation between logic and ethics cannot hold. This is the level of analysis at which we see that ethics is the light in virtue of which there can be, for us, any experience of a logically structured world at all and which is, therefore, everywhere present in any logically structured experience of the world. As I am reading him, Wittgenstein, like Murdoch and Plato before her, is urging us to see "the Good as the source of light which reveals to us all things as they really are" (Murdoch 1997, 357), and to see that "[t]he authority of morals is the authority of truth, that is of reality" (ibid., 374). Since our intuition of the therapeutic good governs the remembrances of logic that we come to find intelligible, "the apprehension of good is the

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> [A]s logic (or later: grammar) pervades all our thinking, so, too, ethics pervades all our living, and each impinges upon the other, so that, just as forms of logical and philosophical unclarity (and dishonesty) are sources of ethical blindness (and evasion), so, too, forms of ethical unclarity (and dishonesty) are sources of logical and philosophical blindness (and evasion); hence a willingness to subject one's thinking to certain forms of logical clarification is a condition of winning clarity in one's relation to oneself and one's life, and a willingness to subject one's self and one's life to certain forms of ethical scrutiny is a condition of winning one's way to clarity in one's relation to the logic and philosophical problems that genuinely trouble one" (Conant 2005a, 40).

[178] This came out clearly in an earlier quotation. Recall: "In order to live happily I must be in agreement with the world. And that is what 'being happy' *means*. / I am then, so to speak, in agreement with that alien will upon which I appear dependent. That is to say: 'I am doing the will of God.'" (NB, 75)

apprehension of the individual and the real, [so that the] good partakes of the infinite elusive character of reality" (ibid., 334). The consequence is that ethics is not merely a matter of following specific moral rules. More fundamentally, ethics is a matter of moral vision, where this involves our willingness logically to parse the world in ways conducive to the therapeutic good. In Wittgenstein, as in Murdoch, "[a]ll just vision [...] is a moral matter. The same virtues, in the end the same virtue (love), are required throughout, and fantasy (self) can prevent us from seeing a blade of grass just as it can prevent us from seeing another person" (ibid., 357).[179]

To recognize the pervasive and mutually interpenetrating character of logic and ethics is to recognize the problem with what Conant calls the "*departmental conception* of logic and ethics (or *departmentalism* for short) – that is, [...] the idea that the terms 'logic' and 'ethics,' as they occur in [Wittgenstein's] writings, are to be understood as naming self-standing 'departments' or 'areas' of philosophy, each characterized by its own proprietary subject matter" (Conant 2005a, 40-41). Conant argues that one of the great shortcomings of the orthodox interpretation is that it tends to presuppose departmentalism (ibid., 40), but this is not universally so. We have just been considering a standard orthodox reading according to which the ethical point of the *Tractatus* does include a lesson about the ethically upright understanding of one's relationship with logical rules, no less than it includes an ethically upright relationship with ethical rules, just as Conant suggests. On that orthodox reading, part of ethics is to see the truth in 'logical stoicism' and to accept that one is fully without freedom in the domain of logic. The difference between the resolute reading and the orthodox reading is not necessarily that the one goes in for departmentalism and the other avoids it. Depending on which resolute and orthodox readings one has in mind, the difference can also consist in the way these two readings see departmentalism as needing to be overcome.

We resist departmentalism about ethics, then, because our ethical questions about the self, God, and so on, belong to logic, in the broad sense of 'logic' that I described a moment ago. We also resist departmentalism because our questions about logic are also questions about ethics, since some conception of the good illuminates our understanding of logic at every turn. Finally, since a

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[179] James C. Edwards reads the ethics of Wittgenstein's later work in just this way, also drawing the comparison between Wittgenstein and Murdoch (see Edwards 1982, 237-40). Placing Wittgenstein alongside Murdoch and highlighting her concept of love, he submits:

> [W]e can [...] see the full justice of calling Wittgenstein's notion of the sound human understanding an *ethical* vision. Indeed, we can [...] even trace some connections between that vision and one of the streams of ethical reflection in the West, an ethical tradition that has fallen on hard times in the last century or so. We may call it, somewhat simply, an ethic of love; it contrasts with the ethic of principle that has dominated moral philosophy since Kant. (Edwards 1982, 237)

In keeping with the resolute approach, I am suggesting that the ethic that Edwards finds only in the later work is already present in the *Tractatus*.

genuine understanding of what we mean by 'ethics' and by 'logic' is determined by the self's free and autonomous engagement with the indirect communications of the *Tractatus*, our understanding of both is internally bound up with the liminal self. I will return to this last point later on. For the moment, let me summarize what I have said so far.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

On the recollective picture we have been considering, both ethics and logic are recollection-theoretic structures of a solipsistic subject, who is the ground and self-sustaining origin of the world. From the resolute perspective, the trouble with such an orthodox account is that it features an irresolute misunderstanding of both logical and ethical norms, and of the human subject defined, as it is, by its capacity for free will. The orthodox account alienates the human soul from the human body, deprives us of any freedom that is actually effective in temporal world, deprives us of responsibility for our actions, and ultimately undermines our commitment to ordinary ethical rules like 'thou shalt not lie.' By denying the effective reality of human freedom, this picture licences an extreme brand of religious detachment from the temporal world. Our task is to accept the world because we can do nothing to change it. Part of this powerlessness is logical in nature. "Logical stoicism" (Braver 2012b, 63), as Braver calls it, would deprive us of any freedom in the choice of rules, or in their or application, for it presents logic as an unambiguously-guiding system of rules "laid to infinity" (PI, §218). On this orthodox reading, the point of the *Tractatus* is to help us cast off our identification with our bodies, our temporal hopes, our belief in free will, in moral responsibility, in everyday ethical norms, as so many self-deceptive fictions. In this way, we see how the ethical teaching of this orthodox reading does indeed involve an ethical teaching about the relationship we bear, not only to ethics but to logic and the self (and its freedom) as well. This more general dimension of the Tractarian ethical point comes out most clearly in the *Lecture on Ethics* where Wittgenstein goes on to express his ethical insight as an insight into the contingency of the world.

6.2.7. Ethics and the Contingency of the World

In his *Lecture on Ethics,* Wittgenstein tries to explain, from another direction, what he means by "absolute or ethical value" (PO, 41). What he says takes us by surprise:

> I believe the best way of describing it is to say that when I have it *I wonder at the existence of the world.* And then I am inclined to use such phrases as 'How extraordinary that anything should exist' or 'How extraordinary that the world should exist.' (PO, 41)

<p style="text-align:center">385</p>

He goes on to clarify that, when we wonder at the existence of the world, we are wondering at the miracle of the existence of *language*, or *thought*.[180]

> And I will now describe the experience of wondering at the existence of the world by saying: it is the experience of seeing the world as a miracle. Now I am tempted to say that the right expression in language for the miracle of the existence of the world, though it is not any proposition *in* language, is the existence of language itself. (PO, 43-44)

Thus, we find that the experience of wondering at the existence of the world is the experience of wondering at the fact that there is intelligible experience – that there is language – at all. Evidently, wonderment at the existence of the world involves appreciating that the world of all actual and non-actual possibilities, the world as the totality of possibilities that might present themselves to linguistic experience is, in some sense of the word, 'contingent' (see Edwards 1982, 206); it need not have been and, presumably, it need not always be.

The sense of 'contingency' at play here is not the natural-scientific sense of the word that we attach to everyday empirical facts. In other words, wonderment at the existence of the world is not a matter of recognizing that a naturalistic chain of cause and effect brought the world into being, and recognizing that that causal chain need not have occurred. Our wonderment is at the distinctly *miraculous* existence of the world, and this is a matter of religious, rather than scientific, insight. It is, Wittgenstein submits, "exactly what people were referring to when they said that God had created the world" (PO, 42), and such people were not referring to the *cause* of anything. "If the believer in God looks around & asks 'Where does everything I see come from?' 'Where does all that come from?,' what he hankers after is *not* a (causal) explanation" (CVR, 96-9). Religious wonderment regards the world as a miracle, and to regard something as a miracle is to regard it as being in principle beyond the reach of natural-scientific explanation.[181] The explanation of our linguistic

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[180] We can use these terms interchangeably. Wittgenstein explains: "Now it is becoming clear why I thought that thinking and language were the same. For thinking is a kind of language. For a thought too is, of course, a logical picture of a proposition, and therefore it just is a kind of proposition" (NB, 82).

[181] Wittgenstein illustrates by having us consider what it means to regard as miraculous, not the totality of the world, but a particular fact within the world:

> Let me first consider, again, our first experience of wondering at the existence of the world and let me describe it in a slightly different way; we all know what in ordinary life would be called miracle. It obviously is simply an event the like of which we have never seen. Now suppose such an event happened. Take the case that one of you suddenly grew a lion's head and began to roar. Certainly that would be as extraordinary a thing as I can imagine. Now whenever we should have recovered from our surprise, what I would suggest would be to fetch a doctor and have the case scientifically investigated and if it were not for hurting him I would have him vivisected. And now where would the miracle have got to? For it is clear that when we look at it in this way everything miraculous has disappeared; unless what we mean by this term is merely that a fact has not yet been explained by science which again means that we have hitherto failed to group this fact with others in a scientific

world that we are after here is "Ethical" (PO, 44) in the exalted sense captured by Wittgenstein's capitalization of the word. The explanans we need is not something *in* the linguistic world the existence of which we want to explain. It is nothing other than the tripartite liminal structure without which we would have no intelligible experience of things at all – the structure comprised of the self (the human free will), logic, and ethics that are the world's unsayable conditions of possibility. [182]

Again, we are not dealing here with the world as the totality of actually existing facts (T, 1.1), but the totality of intelligible propositions and states of affairs that constitute the temporal phenomenon of language. Given this understanding of 'the world,' it is not difficult to see that wondering at the existence of the world should turn out to be nonsense, at least from the perspective of the picture theory of meaning that limits the domain of the expressible to what we can express with bipolar propositions. Wittgenstein explains:

> To say 'I wonder at such and such being the case' only has sense if I can imagine it not to be the case. In this sense one can wonder at the existence of, say, a house when one sees it and has not visited it for a long time and has imagined that it had been pulled down in the meantime. But it is nonsense to say that I wonder at the existence of the world, because I cannot imagine it not existing. I could of course wonder at the world round me being as it is. If for instance I had this experience while looking into the blue sky, I could wonder at the sky being blue as opposed to the case when it's clouded. But that's not what I mean. I am wondering at the sky being whatever it is. One might be tempted to say that what I am wondering at is a tautology, namely at the sky being blue or not blue. But then it's just nonsense to say that one is wondering at a tautology. (PO, 41-42)

When we wonder at the being of the world – the world with the logical structure that is actually manifest in the temporal practice of language – we are appreciating that it is, in some sense of the word, *contingent*. But this is a paradox, for the effort to express this contingency seems to implicate us in the incoherent attempt to imagine what 'the world' would be like if the world did not exist, or if it existed but lacked structures that delimit and condition our understanding of things.

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system. This shows that it is absurd to say 'Science has proved that there are no miracles.' The truth is the scientific way of looking at a fact is not the way to look at it as a miracle. (PO, 43)

[182] We can agree with Cooper:

The incomprehensible is that 'contact between language and reality.' This is indeed something which, as Wittgenstein puts it, cannot be 'expressed by language' since it belongs to 'the essence of the world,' to the preconditions of our being able to say anything. Hence, our 'feeling of helplessness' when we make the attempt to describe it. (Cooper 1997, 115)

What is going on here? I submit that we are discovering that the question of alternative grammars is essential to Wittgenstein's ethical vision. We saw at the end of Chapter Four that Wittgenstein takes the problem seriously, but also challenges us to grapple with the question of how it can be expressed. The contingency of our grammar could be grasped as neither an empirical contingency nor as a metaphysical contingency, for both ways of accounting for it presuppose that we can peer past the limits our linguistic world, and catch a glimpse of how that world would be if it were not structured by our grammar, or logic. I proposed that the possibility of alternative grammars can be thought of as neither an empirical nor a metaphysical possibility, but as a *revealed* possibility. My suggestion now is that Wittgenstein is hinting at the same idea when he tells us that our wonderment at the existence of the world is "exactly what people were referring to when they said that God had created the world" (PO, 42). Such people were trying to express the idea that the world as we know it in language, and as structured by the logic that is manifest in our temporal linguistic practices, need not have been, and need not always be. Our linguistic world is a *created* world. As such, it could have been created differently, and it might yet be created differently in some time to come. In the *Lecture on Ethics's* reference to creation, Wittgenstein suggests, from another direction, what I read him to be suggesting in his earlier reference to revelation: to understand the contingency of grammar, we need to avail ourselves of theological concepts that have no currency in either the scientistic naturalism or the speculative metaphysics of our day.

Wittgenstein addresses the naturalistic impulse when he rejects any attempt to sanitize our wonderment at the existence of the world by analyzing it into a sense of wonderment at a merely empirical state of affairs. He anticipates this temptation:

> You will say: Well, if certain experiences constantly tempt us to attribute a quality to them which we call absolute or ethical value and importance, this simply shows that by these words we *don't* mean nonsense, that after all what we mean by saying that an experience has absolute value is just a fact like other facts and that all it comes to is that we have not yet succeeded in finding the correct logical analysis of what we mean by our ethical and religious expressions. Now, when this is urged against me I at once see clearly, as it were in a flash of light, not only that no description that I can think of would describe what I mean by absolute value, but that I would reject every significant description that anybody could possibly suggest, *ab initio*, on the ground of its significance. That is to say: I see now that these nonsensical expressions were not nonsensical because I have not yet found the correct expressions, but that their nonsensicality was their very essence. (PO, 44)

Wittgenstein is not suggesting that we ought to simply discard the significance of wonderment at the existence of the world, perhaps as part of an illusion that we are meant to recognize as such en route to some purely scientistic naturalism. That Wittgenstein is not recommending *that*, is also clear from the Lecture's concluding remark. Referring to his above effort to put this kind of wonder into words, he closes with the following reflection:

> [A]ll I wanted to do was to go beyond the world and that is to say beyond significant language. My whole tendency and I believe the tendency of all men who ever tried to write or talk about Ethics or religion was to run against the boundaries of language. This running against the walls of our cage is perfectly, absolutely hopeless. […] But it is a document of a tendency in the human mind which I personally cannot help respecting deeply and I would not for my life ridicule it. (PO, 44)

I said a moment ago that, from a resolute perspective, a speculative metaphysical account of the contingency of our language is as troubled as a scientistic naturalistic account. How would a speculative metaphysician interpret the notion that God created the temporal world complete with its immanent logical structure, that he could have created it differently, and that he might create it differently at any moment? We have already seen: it would be to imagine that we were ourselves God, and had various differently logically structured worlds before our mind's eye as options for our creative choice. But this way of thinking about the notion of alternative grammars is not open to us. Rather, I submit, when we speak about the notion of alternative grammars – grammars for a form of intelligible experience other than our own and which God could have created or could still create – could only be intelligible to us as an awareness of the essential inadequacy of any actual grammar we might use and, what comes to the same thing, an acceptance of our own ineradicable intellectual indigence. An awareness of *this*, in the end, is what our openness to the possibility of newly revealed grammars involves. From this perspective, the much-discussed notion of a language in principle untranslatable into any human language turns out to be God's own language, and its logic turns out to be the logic of His mind. For finite intellects, belief in God turns out to be a commitment to the idea of such a mind, and this commitment is expressed as our awareness that the rules manifest in our temporal linguistic practices *essentially* come up short of fully capturing the reality of the things we use them to describe. [183]

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[183] Here, as elsewhere, I am suggesting that the views that Edwards finds in the later Wittgenstein can already be found in the early ethic:

> [H]umility marks Wittgenstein's ideal response to things, a response that, recognizing the essential mystery of the world, acknowledges that mystery; it does not seek to deny or to control it. This sensibility is constantly

"The meaning of life, i.e., the meaning of the world, we can call God" (NB, 72) and recall, Ethics is the effort to bring one's own will into alignment with God's will. Hence, our attempt to express 'what is higher' in propositions (T, 6.42) has turned out to involve an attempt to express in propositions the mystical reality of God. At the same time, for the orthodox reader, the effort to 'view' the mystical reality of God involves an effort to ascend to just the perspective we have explored: God's own perspective, from which we could *view* the whole of ethically and logically structured creation as a contingent bounded whole against other possible forms of linguistic experience that God might have created or might still create.

> *How* things are in the world is a matter of complete indifference for what is higher. God does not reveal himself *in* the world. (T, 6.432) / It is not *how* things are in the world that is mystical, but *that* it exists. (T, 6.44) /To view the world *sub specie aeterni* is to view it as a whole – a limited whole. [*Die Anschauung der Welt sub specie aeterni ist ihre Anshauung als – begrenztes – Ganzes.*] / Feeling the world as a limited whole – it is this that is mystical. [*Das Gefühl der Welt als begrenztes Ganzes ist das Mystische.*] (T, 6.45)
>
> There is indeed the inexpressible. This *shows* itself; it is the mystical. (T, 6.522)[184]

For a resolute reader, Wittgenstein introduces a distinction here that the orthodox reading does not take seriously enough. To appreciate the mystical is to *feel* the world as a limited whole, as opposed to *viewing* it as such, *sub specie aeterni*. [185] For the resolute reader, the trouble with the orthodox reading is that it can only appreciate the contingency of the world in a misfiring effort to *view* it as such, that is, as a misfiring attempt to think of the world's contingency on the model of a contingent empirical fact. By invoking the notions of riddle and revelation, the resolute account that I have offered suffers no such shortcoming. By permitting us to see past the temptation to regard the contingency

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aware of the insufficiency of any particular conception; it feels the inexhaustible depth of every reality, and gives itself over to that work of patient attention which begins to reveal those depths. And this form of life is more than just the fallibilism of the pragmatist, however difficult the two may be to distinguish in practice. For the sound human understanding, the acknowledgement of the world's mystery is not just to say, 'Of course, my best judgement is the matter may turn out to be mistaken.' Rather, it is the consciousness that one's – anyone's – best judgement actually *is* insufficient to the realities at hand. [....] The distance of the sound human understanding from its assertions is moral, not epistemological. (Edwards 1982, 242)

[184] Ogden Translation.

[185] The distinction is not taken seriously enough, for example, by Edwards. We can see his oversight if we consider an early quoted-remark in its surrounding context:

[As] a result of reading the *Tractatus* my ordinary self-understanding is replaced with another. I come to see that I am not just one part of the world among others; I am the world's necessary limit, the eye which views it and without the view of which the world is not. On the ladder of the *Tractatus* I rise above the ordinary human self-consciousness and achieve a view of the world *sub specie aeternitatis*. Only from the perspective of that higher place is it possible for me to will the good, thus to make the world a happy one. *Das Mystiche* makes itself felt only when the ascent is completed; only, in other words, when one had become a god: the 'independent I' (NB, 74) who has come to see the world as a limited whole. (Edwards 1982, 69)

of our linguistic world in either empirical or metaphysical terms, it allows to come partway toward a sense of what Wittgenstein might mean when he distinguishes *feeling* that the world is contingent from *viewing* it as such.

This proposal of mine only took us partway toward an answer to the question of alternative grammars because it was not clear what the intentional attitude toward an object of revelation involves. To clarify that issue, we turned to Kierkegaard, who we read with some help from William James. In this reading, I argued that Kierkegaard offers us an essentially embodied understanding of the self and the self's relationship with truth. I argued that this embodied relationship with truth can help us to appreciate the sense in which revealed truth does not involve the metaphysical sort of saying-showing distinction that tries to gesture at something determinately present on the far side of sense. Embodied intentionality can help us make sense of this issue because it reminds us of the familiar fact that possibilities of sense *can come into being* through the body's pre-reflective responses to the order of meaning that calls those responses forth. The idea was that the body itself can be restructured over time as it incorporates into itself the rules of different normative domains and thereby comes to manifest its understanding of those rules in the form of masterful, pre-reflective, action. The body is, even in this humble way, remembered anew, and invested with new powers of pre-reflective expression. And it is through these new powers that the expert at home in a given normative domain becomes receptive to revealed possibilities of sense that reflection will later acknowledge explicitly.

Our question is: can this Kierkegaardian way of accounting for revelation (and hence repetition) with the notion of embodied intentionality shed further light on the idea of revealed grammars, alternative to our own, *in Wittgenstein*? In other words, when we read Wittgenstein through a Kierkegaardian lens, can we see a similar role for the body that might resolve the problem of alternative grammars in the way that, I argued, we can see it resolve itself in Kierkegaard? Minimally, we will see that, for resolute readers, the self is not fully disembodied thing that it is on the recollective reading we have considered. Before we come to that proposal, however, we should set the stage by showing the inadequacies of the recollective reading.

6.3. Troubles for the Recollective Reading of the Tractarian Ethic
6.3.1. Ethics and Necessity

We have already noted how a strict separation of logic from ethics can be misleading. In the *Lecture on Ethics*, however, we see how the parallel between the two is also helpful. The most obvious aspect

of the parallel between logic and ethics is brought out by Michael Hymers when he notes that both logic and ethics are normative (Hymers 2010, 47). Where logic is the order of rules by which we judge good reasoning, ethics is the order of rules by which we judge moral agents and their actions as being virtuous or vicious, right or wrong. In the *Lecture on Ethics*, Wittgenstein compares ethical rules to the rules of tennis. As an example of an ethical rule, Wittgenstein chooses, unsurprisingly, 'one ought not to lie' (PO, 39).

A second part of the parallel is that ethical truths, like logical truths, are *necessary*, or "absolute" (PO, 38). The ethical 'sense' of the world cannot be expressed in truths that we consider merely contingent, or 'accidental,' at least not in the empirical sense of these words that Wittgenstein has in mind. One's following the rules of tennis is of only *relative* value; there is value in following the rules of tennis only relative to one's goal of playing tennis (PO, 39). There is *absolute* value, however, in following the rules of ethics. Wittgenstein illustrates:

> Supposing that I could play tennis and one of you saw me playing and said 'Well, you play pretty badly,' and suppose I answered 'I know, I'm playing badly but I don't really want to play any better,' all the other man could say would be 'Ah then that's all right.' But suppose I had told one of you a preposterous lie and he came up to me and said 'You're behaving like a beast' and then I were to say 'I know I behave badly, but then I don't want to behave any better,' could he then say 'Ah, then that's all right'? Certainly not; he would say 'Well you ought to want to behave better.' Here you have an absolute judgment of value, whereas the first instance was of a relative judgement. (PO, 38-39)

What, exactly, is the difference between these two cases?

> The essence of the difference seems to be obviously this: Every judgment of relative value is a mere statement of facts and can therefore be put in such a form that it loses all the appearances of a judgment of value: Instead of saying 'This is the right way to Grantchester,' I could equally well have said, 'This is the right way you have to go if you want to get to Grantchester in the shortest time. [...] [A]lthough all judgements of relative value can be shown to be mere statements of facts, no statement of fact can ever be or imply a judgement of absolute value. (PO, 39)

To see how judgments of relative value are statements of fact we need only return to the logic of the bipolar proposition, which mediates our relation to all *facts*. Judgements of relative value pertain to rules that I regard as empirically contingent, rules that I grasp as rules that I go by *for now*, given my current desires, but which I would abandon in the event that my desires change, and I abandon the

practice to which those rules pertain. I can understand the rules of tennis *as* rules that I might abandon, namely under the condition that I abandon my interest in playing tennis.

We have seen cases like this already. Kierkegaard's man, mislead into the 'marriage of common sense,' regards the rules of marriage as rules that to which he is committed 'for now,' but which he could abandon in time. Bernard Williams' rule-utilitarian regards the rule 'a man ought to rescue his wife when she is drowning' as a rule that he would abandon in the event that more good could be done by abandoning it and adopting a different rule. Both characters regard the rules that govern their ethical lives as being contingent in the empirical sense. Both, therefore, fail to capture the sense in which those rules are absolute, or necessary. Wittgenstein is making the same point about a properly resolute commitment to ethical rules. I can't both genuinely understand a rule of ethics and relate to it as a rule from which I might intelligibly prescind, for instance, on the condition that I lose interest in playing the 'game' of ethics. A rule of ethics that I could simply drop in this way would be merely *accidental*, and could, therefore, have no genuine ethical value, for ethical value is absolute, or necessary, or liminal value. It frames our entire sense of what is possible for us and, in this sense, it lies outside the world of language that comprises all such possibilities.

> The meaning [*Sinn*] of the world must lie outside the world. In the world everything is as it is, as 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. (T, 6.41)

How do these considerations help unseat the recollective account of the Tractarian ethic that we have surveyed? Consider the passage just quoted. When this is read in light of the lecture, it seems far from recommending anything like the recollective reading's fatalism and indifference to everyday ethical norms like 'do not lie.' Since the lecture takes everyday ethical norms with great seriousness, we read the above passage not as enjoining us to be indifferent to everyday ethical rules, but to treat them as absolutely necessary. Once we appreciate this, in turn, it is very difficult to read the *Tractatus* as asking us to repudiate our everyday beliefs in a temporally effective freedom of the will and in its ethical responsibility.

This reading is not *forced* by the text. One might speculate that the notions of such freedom and responsibility are what Wittgenstein really wanted the most attentive members of his audience to cast off as so many red herrings. The claim, then, would be that Wittgenstein was attempting to *show*

those elect members of the audience that our understanding of those ethical rules, like our understanding of logic, ultimately reveals our status as a disembodied, time-transcendent soul, deprived of any such freedom and responsibility. Those most attentive audience members would come to see that it was the everyday ethical norms, the freedom, and the responsibility of the ordinary ethical perspective that were illusions that ought to overcome, but which the less attentive members of the audience are left to enjoy. Once more, it may well be that Wittgenstein wanted to leave this interpretation open, and a resolute and Kierkegaardian reading should acknowledge that it *can* be found in the early work. Further, a resolute and Kierkegaardian reading should admit that there can be multiple reasons for leaving such interpretation available to us. As I earlier conceded, such a reading might be genuinely necessary for the person unable to bear the burden of freedom and to grapple with whatever guilt he may feel for having abused it. In this case, the interpretation is there to be taken up by those who need it. On the other hand, as I already submitted, for other readers the interpretation will be there as a temptation that they are meant to resist so that the truth of human freedom and responsibility can be accepted freely, autonomously, and with all the significance required for the use of that freedom to be taken with sufficient seriousness.

Available though it is, I personally find the reading that sees Wittgenstein as having us abandon our belief in freedom unacceptable. In the *Lecture on Ethics*, and also in his personal life, Wittgenstein himself takes ordinary ethical laws far too seriously for this reading to go through. The resolute reading I am describing here is, once again, addressed to others who are willing to place their bets on this interpretation as well.

6.3.2. Ethics and Justification

Climacus already described the above error of trying to paraphrase absolute, necessary truths as truths about contingent matters of fact. He objected to every attempt to account for the truth of Christianity in merely empirical, or natural-historical terms, for every such account fails to leave room for the *certainty* of faith; the grammatical 'fact' that an article of faith lies beyond doubt. Climacus also showed us that we go equally wrong when we try to remedy this defect, and account for the certainty of faith's necessary truths by trying to support them as we are wont to do in philosophy: with an overly strong, speculative-metaphysical, form of *a priori* justification. With examples from Kierkegaard and Bernard Williams, we saw how a desire for justification misfires in the context of romantic love, and we saw that Kierkegaard takes it to misfire in an analogous way when it comes to our love of God. For Williams and Kierkegaard, the kind of certainty we need is

not the kind that can be supported in terms of evidence more epistemically secure than the article of faith that the evidence is adduced to support. Wittgenstein speaks to the same point in a 1930 comment about his disagreement with Moritz Schlick about the nature of the ethical good.

> Schlick says that in theological ethics there used to be two conceptions of the essence of the good: according to the shallower interpretation the good is good because it is what God wants; according to the profounder interpretation God wants the good because it is good. I think the first interpretation is the profounder one: what God commands, that is good. For it cuts off the way to any explanation 'why' it is good, while the second interpretation is the shallow, rationalist one, which proceeds 'as if' you could give reasons for what is good. / The first conception says clearly that the essence of the good has nothing to do with the facts and hence cannot be explained by any proposition. If there is any proposition expressing precisely what I think, it is the proposition 'What God commands, that is good.' (WVC, 115)

The question at issue is familiar from Socrates in the *Euthyphro*: is the Good good because God loves it, or does God love the Good because it is (independently of his loving it) good? If the latter is true, then we could give an explanation, or justification, for why God loves the good, namely by citing the reasons he has for loving it. The trouble here is that we could only offer this explanation from the perspective of one who does not *already* view the world in ethical terms. From this perspective, we view the ethical life as one way of viewing the world amongst others, against which it can be weighed up as having greater or lesser utilitarian-consequentialist value, or as being uniquely in keeping with the categorical imperative, and as being more or less justified than some relevant alternative. To overcome this temptation is to overcome the temptation to *doubt* the ethical limits of our lives, and this requires also overcoming our temptation epistemically to justify or explain them. As we saw in Chapter Two, doubt, justification, and explanation are all of a piece.

In the course of these same conversations with Waismann, Wittgenstein reinforces the point at issue when he rejects any attempt to formulate a *theory* of ethics, including a Humeian-naturalistic theory that would try to explain the ethical in terms of certain contingent beliefs and desires.

> Is value a particular state of mind? Or a form attaching to some data or other of consciousness? I would reply that whatever I was told I would reject, and not because that explanation was false, but because it was an *explanation*. / If I were told anything that was a

theory, I would say, No, no! That does not interest me. Even if this theory were true, it would not interest me – it would not be the exact thing I was looking for. (WVC, 116)[186]

The trouble with the above-surveyed orthodox account of ethics comes into view when we consider how we would have to read these passages if we begin from the orthodox account of logic and work out the parallel between logic and ethics. The orthodox reader would have to consider the *Tractatus*'s ethical point as one that we could only grasp from 'outside' the ethical perspective on the world. Where the illusion that we can grasp logic as the content of a bipolar proposition involved trying to grasp logic in relief against an illogical world, the parallel illusion would involve trying grasp the ethical life as if it were as an object of 'relative value,' as something that we choose to value (if indeed we choose to value it at all) after some process of reasoning that weighs it off against the considered alternative of vice. In both cases, we confuse a necessary normative structure for a contingent one, even while we insist that we are trying to do justice to the necessity of the rules at issue. If we take the parallel between logic and ethics seriously, and if we begin with the orthodox reading of the Tractarian account of logic, we will read Wittgenstein's account of ethics as being marred by all the irresolution and moral-psychological infidelity that mars the orthodox Wittgenstein's relationship with logic.

One reason to be uneasy with the orthodox reading is this: if the account of logic is our guide to an account of ethics, then the orthodox reading would suggest that Wittgenstein's answer to the Euthyphro question would be the opposite of the answer he gives to Schlick. His view would not be that, properly understood, an epistemic justification, or a causal explanation, of ethical truth is unavailable; his position would be that one *is* available, but that it can be shown, but not said. It seems to me that this both fails to take the remark to Schlick sufficiently seriously and attributes to the *Tractatus* an unsavoury moral psychology. Where William's man allows himself to entertain the possibility of letting his wife drown, and where Hall's 'faithful' Husband allows himself to entertain the possibility of divorcing his wife, the irresolute Wittgenstein allows himself to entertain the possibility of doing what is ethically wrong.

What are we to make of the Tractarian ethical point if we are resolute readers, and, again, we begin from the parallel between logic and ethics? I have already made my proposal: If we are

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[186] The same point comes out in Wittgenstein's critique of Hamlet's dictum: 'Nothing is either good or bad but thinking makes it so:'

> What Hamlet says seem to imply that good and bad, though not qualities of the world outside us, are attributes of our states of mind. But what I mean is that a state of mind, so far as we mean by that a fact which we can describe, is in no ethical sense good or bad. (PO, 40)

resolute readers, we need to conclude that the *un*ethical perspective, like the illogical perspective, is no intelligible perspective on the world at all. And if this is the case, we can provide no epistemic or causal-explanatory account of *why* we have the ethical commitments we have. We can give no such account of ethics, because any such account presupposes that we can enter imaginatively into the unethical point of view, reckon with it as a genuine possibility, and negate it. And the attempt to do this is the attempt to think 'one thought too many.'

6.3.3. Ethics and Eternal Life

The recollective reading has suggested that the Tractarian self is something like a disembodied soul, incapable of expressing its free will through its action. This view of the self goes hand in hand with the idea we have just described: the idea that our ethical principles can be epistemically justified, but in a way that requires us to grasp them from a perspective outside our ethical world, in relation to possibilities that lie beyond the bounds of sense. However, we see a very different and much more Kierkegaardian point of view when the *Tractatus* suggests that a proper understanding of ethics is not to be expressed in our ability to offer epistemic justifications for our ethical commitments, but in our non-epistemic and presumably embodied *actions*. Indeed, we misunderstand the normative force of ethical rules if we try to justify them, for example, in consequentialist terms.

> When an ethical law of the form, 'Thou shalt ...' is laid down, one's first thought is, 'And what if I do not do it?' It is clear, however, that ethics has nothing to do with punishment and reward in the usual sense of the terms. So our question about the *consequences* of an action must be unimportant. – At least those consequences should not be events. For there must be something right about the question we posed. There must indeed be some kind of ethical reward and ethical punishment, but they reside in the action itself. / (And it is also clear that the reward must be something pleasant and the punishment something unpleasant.) (T, 6.422)

A consequentialist justification presupposes that one can imagine the world from a perspective outside the relevant ethical commitment, as if the commitment were predicated on the merely relative value of the desired end to which an ethical life is the means. From this perspective, one could consider the expected consequential value of the ethical life, weigh it up against the expected consequential value of the *un*ethical life, calculate that the good consequences of being ethical outweigh the good consequences of being vicious, and opt for the former sort of life. But, once again, this whole way of relating to ethical rules is just as confused as the parallel way of relating to

logical rules. Both logical norms and ethical norms are *limits* of the world and, as such, they both lay 'outside the world' of things that we could both understand and conceptualize as empirically contingent. But this is exactly how we do regard ethical norms when we think about our commitment to them as being contingent upon the good consequences of that commitment.

How do these findings trouble the recollective picture of the disembodied Tractarian soul and its extreme brand of detachment from the world? Wittgenstein's account of the sense in which the ethical purpose of life lies 'outside' the world (T, 6.41) speaks strongly against any account of the ethical good as something metaphysically transcendent to time, and in favour of a resolute reading. Since we know that Wittgenstein rejects consequentialism in ethics, the goal of ethical life should not be thought of merely as something lying 'outside the world' in the sense of an afterlife to-come. Such a concept of ethical reward would make ethical action in *this* life merely contingently, consequentially, valuable. But we have seen that the rewards of ethical action "reside in the action itself" and that the "question about the *consequences* of an action must be unimportant" (T, 6.422).

Furthermore, it is unclear how such a consequentialist conception of life's purpose could possibly satisfy us. If the meaning of life were understood in consequentialist terms of a reward in the afterlife, the question of the meaning of life would arise just as viciously with respect to our afterlife as it does with respect to our actual life. More carefully, if the value of our actual lives is supposed to lie in its consequences – in the reward of a blessed afterlife – then, by parity of reasoning, the value of the afterlife should lie in *its* consequences. But from this perspective, it would seem that the afterlife too would only be meaningful if it were a means to some further goal – some after-after-life – beyond itself. And if, like the lives that come before it, the after-after-life were not intrinsically meaningful, we would then have to look for its meaning, once more, in consequences to which *it* is only externally related: in an after-after-after-life. Here we are obviously off on the wrong track, and *en route* to an endless regress.

> Not only is there no guarantee of the temporal immortality of the human soul, that is to say, of its eternal survival after death, but, in any case, this assumption completely fails to accomplish the purpose for which it has always been intended. Or is some riddle solved by my surviving forever? Is not this eternal life itself as much of a riddle as our present life? The solution of the riddle of life in space and time lies *outside* space and time. (T, 6.4312)

The position on offer here suggests a vast difference between the "philosophical self" (T, 5.641) of the *Tractatus* and the self that Socrates describes at the end of the *Phaedo*. From what we have seen in the *Tractatus*, the philosophical self seems *not* to be a purely non-corporal soul. The ethical aim of a

fully non-corporal soul would indeed be to eschew the corruptions of worldly time and body and to enter the everlasting temporality of an immortal afterlife. Importantly, Wittgenstein is not denying the connection between everyday ethical rectitude and the promise of eternal life. Instead, to use Cullman's terms, Wittgenstein is urging us to see that eternal life is found not in *immortality* – not in the everlasting afterlife of the disembodied soul – but in a kind of timelessness, of which we are capable even here and now, *in* time, and as the embodied subjects we already are. "If we take eternity to mean not infinite temporal duration but timelessness, then eternal life belongs to those who live in the present" (T, 6.4311). What does this mean, concretely? Minimally, it means that we live out our ethical norms from within their limits and without trying to justify or explain them from somewhere out beyond their scope. It also means, I think, that the resolute Wittgenstein makes a decisive break from the Pelagian understanding of ethical salvation that emerged in the orthodox reading that we earlier saw Edwards articulate.

6.3.4. Ethics and Pelagius

For Kierkegaard, we saw that one fundamental difference between the Christian-repetitional remembrance of the self and the Platonic-recollective remembrance of the self was that, on the Christian picture, the remembered self is fundamentally *new*; it needs to be revealed. In repetition, the notion of self 're-membrance' incorporates the idea that the different aspects, or 'members,' of the self are knit together into a harmonious synthesis in which they didn't stand prior to the act of remembrance. This is what we are saying when we stress that, for repetition, remembered meaning needs to be revealed, rather than recollected. This aspect of repetition was connected to its anti-Pelagian conception of self-knowledge and salvation. If the truth of the self is not already within us, it cannot be recollected at will.

Edwards' recollective and Pelagian reading of Tractarian self-knowledge and salvation presumes that the truth about the self *is* already within us, but this is difficult to square with what we have seen about Tractarian self-transformation (T, 6.43). We have been told that ethical self-transformation is not the discovery of a truth about the self that was already written into the structure of our intellectual world, simply awaiting recollection. Far to the contrary, it involved a transformation of the self so profound as to constitute a transformation in the very limits of our world. The new self, in other words, was not already immanent within the limits of the old self's world and, hence, *pace* Edwards, it could not have been laying about amongst the truths that the old self could willfully recollect.

How should we think about the truth of the new self? We do not want to describe it as lying *beyond* the limits of the former self's world, for this to involve the troubled metaphysical understanding of the saying/showing distinction. Instead, we should say that the new self had, for us, no being at all before the moment of its revelation. The same goes for the idea of the new ethical world into which we are reborn. Each individual comes into their world on his own, and in his own particular way, and that world has no being at all until this work of appropriation occurred. Here too, in the imagery with which Wittgenstein illustrates the process of ethical self-transformation, we see a major fault in the recollective reading of the Tractarian ethic. In the *Tractatus*, our understanding of the self, along with our understanding of the good into which the self is reborn, *cannot* be recollected at will. The picture, rather, is much closer to Kierkegaard's Christian picture of rebirth whereby the self, though it somehow remains itself, is reborn anew and into a new world of meaning that it was constitutionally incapable of discovering on its own.

Anti-Pelagianism characterizes the initial transformation of the self in the above way, but it also characterizes the relationship in which we stand to things even after that initial event. We have seen four ways in which a properly resolute, embodied, understanding of a truth would involve overcoming our Pelagian desire to *justify* our belief in that truth. When we note that Wittgenstein *does* seem to overcome this desire in these four ways, we see again that the recollective reading of the Tractarian ethic is troubled.

First, we saw that the Pelagian temptation can lie in the desire to justify one's life by epistemic means, but this places us outside ourselves, undermining our claim to be the person we claimed to be. This is overcome when we agree to embody the limits of logic and ethics without trying to justify them epistemically at all. We have seen Wittgenstein take this resolute route in his 1930 conversation with Schlick.

Kremer pointed to a second way in which the desire for a metaphysical justification serves the Pelagian tendency, the way that we have found in the *Tractatus*. When we insist upon an epistemic relation to the limits of language, we implicitly envision ourselves as purely disembodied souls, not responsible for our actions. From this perspective we think we are ethically justified, and our salvation secured, however we actually behave. A third and closely related kind of Pelagian ethical self-justification was supposed to go along with this: the justification we find in the idea that we are purely eternal souls, who cannot be *harmed* by anything that happens in the world. Here we achieve perfect safety without any necessary recourse to a God who saves us. We have already seen

that these two aspects of orthodox ethical self-justification are at odds with Wittgenstein's seriousness about everyday normative ethics.

A fourth form of justification concerned the idea that we can secure the sort of happiness that is supposed to consist in the above other-worldly illusion of detachment on our own intellectual power. Edwards offers this view when he writes that, for the Tractatian self, "one's happiness is within – indeed, *is* – one's own power" (Edwards 1982, 206). But Wittgenstein seems closer to Kremer's portrayal of him when he explicitly and rejects any such Pelagianism: "Man *cannot* make himself happy without more ado" (NB, 76, my emphasis). Further reason to be reticent about Edwards' heroic reading can be found in Wittgenstein's prayers of late March 1916, when he was preparing to face death on the Russian front. In the entry of 29 March, we read: "God enlighten me. God Enlighten me. God enlighten my soul!" (Quoted in Monk 1990, 137). And on the next day:

> Do your best. You cannot do more: and be cheerful. Help yourself and help others with all your strength and at the same time be cheerful [*sei heiter*]! But how much strength should one need for oneself and how much for others? It is hard to live well!! But it is good to live well. However, not my, but Thy will be done. (Quoted in Monk 1990, 137-38)

That it is empathetically *God's* will that is to be done, and not one's own will, comes out again in the entry of 29 April: "Was shot at. Thought of God. Thy will be done. God be with me" (quoted in Monk 1990, 138). Though there is a kind of detachment here, it is certainly not the detachment of the orthodox Tractarian agent who feels no responsibility for his actions in the world. And though there is an emphasis here upon 'how much strength should one need for oneself and [...] others' the strength at issue is not the Pelagian strength to maintain one's happiness and ethical rectitude on one's unaided own. Wittgenstein is evidently calling upon God to provide him with a kind of strength that he cannot simply draw up from out of himself. There is no room for such an attitude toward God on the recollective vision of Wittgenstein that we see most prominently in Edwards. My argument so far has been that this kind of strength often comes as an externalist, non-epistemic form of justification, a justification that we can have, but with which we cannot supply ourselves.

In Kierkegaard, we also saw that the resolute agent overcomes his attraction to ethical self-justification in another way: he permits himself to believe in that which can be neither justified nor even expressed in a language intelligible to his ethical pears. In being open to such belief, he was willing to endure the possibility that a riddle question might be provided with an intelligible answer in a moment of revelation. ('Could God ask for the sacrifice of Isaac? 'Could God call off the sacrifice once he has asked for it?') The revealed truth is not *created* by Abraham in Sartrean fashion,

but in and through the 'I-thou,' call and response, relationship that is the communion between Abraham and God. I argued, recall, that there is a sense in which Abraham can be said freely to participate in, or facilitate, the creation of new grammars, for the example of Abraham changes our concept of God; it changes our sense of what is possible for Him. Might some such activity to facilitate a remembrance grammar be at work in Wittgenstein? Here again, it must be remembered that we are engaged in reflections that are necessarily speculative, but some suggestion to this effect can be found in the connection we saw Wittgenstein draw between "Ethics or religion" (PO, 44) and the desire "to run against the boundaries of language." (Ibid.)

6.3.5. Ethics and Nonsense

Edwards finds an assimilation of God to self in claim that "There are two godheads: The world and my independent I" (NB, 74; Edwards 1982, 68). However, that there are two godheads can also be taken as an expression of the Christian idea that the human being, made in the image of God, partakes of the divine spirit. Incidentally, this is an idea that looms large in Leo Tolstoy's interpretation of the Gospel (see Tolstoy 2014, 23-26, 78-82), which Wittgenstein is known to have so greatly admired. In conversation with Waismann, in December of 1930, Wittgenstein indicates that his comments about the relation between the two Godheads can indeed be understood by reference to the first and second persons of the Trinity.

> **Waismann asks:** Is the existence of the world connected to what is ethical?
>
> **Wittgenstein:** Men have felt there is a connection and they have expressed it thus: God the Father created the world, the Son of God (or the Word that comes from God) is that which is ethical. That the Godhead is thought of as divided and, again, as one being indicates that there is a connection here. (WVC, 118)

What is the connection? From our resolute and Kierkegaardian point of view, the connection might be parsed as follows: Tractarian logic is something essentially embodied in language, just as the eternal logos is embodied in Jesus (see John 1: 1-17). In this connection, it would be relevant that Christ is not to be identified not with the Platonic logos of the bloodless, purely eternal, *Idea* but with the logos of the temporal, material, essentially written or spoken, *Word*. As we saw in Kierkegaard, the embodied conception of the Christian self goes hand in hand with an embodied conception of the Christian truth, including, of course, the rules of Christian ethics. We will see this return in Wittgenstein when we leave this present discussion of ethics and consider the parallel discussion of logic. For the moment, I want to note that Wittgenstein's cryptic invocation of the

Trinity can also be read as a reminder of our Kierkegaardian lessons about both the nature of philosophical remembrance and about the ethical task of the philosophical author or teacher.

For Kierkegaard, in addition to showing us that the self was a synthesis of both body and soul, Christianity opened up the possibility of radical novelty. Christ was himself the radically novel incarnation of the divine logos. Subsequently, through an embodied commitment to Christ, we are conditioned to become receptive to similarly novel revelations of truth and to facilitate their creation through our material, embodied, acts of expression. In this capacity, the philosopher-author, himself receptive to such revelations of truth, facilitates their indirect communication to his reader. The philosopher is not exactly a creator of truth here, for he works only by the grace of God. But, nevertheless, the philosophical author facilitates God's own creative activity by trusting his body to God, who moves the body toward the expression of revealed truth.

We are dealing with a creative cultural role for the philosopher that can only be spoken of in veiled terms, lest the misguided parishioner leave his Sunday sermon on the story of Abraham and Isaac and go home to murder his son. Fond of veils himself, might Wittgenstein's remark to Waismann be reminding us of these Kierkegaardian lessons? Is this what he is getting at when he says that the connection between the first and second persons of the Trinity is our key to seeing how ethics is connected to the experience of wonderment at the existence of the world? Recall Wittgenstein's conviction that this sense of wonder is "exactly what people were referring to when they said that God had created the world" (PO, 42). Might Wittgenstein be suggesting that the world-creative spirit of God the Father (the eternal logos) is not only duplicated in the creative activity of Christ the Son (the embodied word), who renews our understanding of the world through His ministry, but also duplicated in a kind of world-creative activity in which the followers of Christ might participate as part of their particular Christian-ethical task? Might this have been a sense in which Wittgenstein regarded us as made in the image of God? In keeping with his predilection for silence, Wittgenstein doesn't say much to guide us through this nexus of associations, or to either confirm or refute our speculations. We find some support, however, when we turn from these musings about Kierkegaard's possible influence on the Christian aspects of Wittgenstein's thought and consider the influence on Wittgenstein of an author who was even more impactful in this regard: Tolstoy.

As G.E.M Anscombe notes, Wittgenstein probably had Tolstoy's vision of the ethical life in mind when he was writing the *Tractatus* (Anscombe 1959, 170). This seems a fair conjecture given the profound impact that Tolstoy's *The Gospel in Brief* was having on Wittgenstein during his time at

war, when he was writing the *Tractatus*. He was reading Tolstoy's Gospel continually and, as Monk reports, the text both prompted his conversion to Christianity and stopped him from ending his own life.

> What saved him from suicide [...] was [...] exactly the kind of personal transformation, the religious conversion, he had gone to the war to find. He was, as it were, saved by the word. During his first month in Galicia, he entered a bookshop, where he could only find one book: Tolstoy's *Gospels in Brief*. The book captivated him. It become for him a kind of talisman: he carried it wherever he went and read it so often that he came to know whole passages of it by heart. He became known to his comrades as 'the man with the Gospels'. For a time he – who before the war had struck Russell as being 'more terrible with Christians' than Russell himself – became not only a believer, but an evangelist, recommending Tolstoy's Gospel to anyone in distress. 'If you are not acquainted with it', he later told Ficker, 'you can't imagine what an effect it can have upon a person.' (Monk 1994, 115-16)[187]

Given that *The Gospel in Brief* was this impactful upon the early Wittgenstein, we might reasonably look to this book to find out what connection Wittgenstein might possibly have found between God the Father who creates the world and God the son, the Word that comes from God.

Tolstoy speaks about the Son of God not merely as Jesus Himself, but as the Holy Spirit of Jesus, which God the Father has also instilled in us. "[T]here is in every man a son like the Father" (Tolstoy 2014, 34). To follow Jesus, then, is to manifest, in our temporal lives, the Word of the eternal Father that Jesus embodied so perfectly in his own life.

> It is this heavenly son of man that must be exalted, that all may believe in him and not perish but have heavenly life. Not for man's destruction, but for their good, did God implant in man this son of his, like unto Himself, he gave him that everyone should believe in Him and not perish but have eternal life. (ibid.)

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[187] Malcolm reports that it was Tolstoy's book that moved Wittgenstein to study the Gospels of the New Testament themselves (Malcolm 1989, 10). Monk's description of matters suggests that Wittgenstein apostatized after his conversion. It seems to me at least equally likely that he simply decided, in his later writings, to pass over his faith in silence. Putman is evidently open to this possibility as well:

> In the *Lectures on Religious Belief*, Wittgenstein makes it clear that he, standing outside religious language (or affecting to), cannot say that religious language is cognitive or non-cognitive; all he can say is that, from the 'outsiders' perspective, the religious man is 'using a picture.' But he adds that in saying this he is not saying that the religious man is only using a picture, or only 'expressing an attitude.' (Putnam 1994, 273)

Putman says little more to develop his suggestion here that there may be an element of realism (an element of 'cognitivism') to be found in the *Lectures on Religious Belief*. In Chapter Seven I use the Kierkegaardian concept of repetition as a way of taking up Putman's hint.

In keeping with the *Tractatus*, Tolstoy's Gospels describe how our coming to recognize the son of God within us, and our entering into the promise of eternal life, is the outcome of a self-transformation. What is more, this process self-transformation comes about by way of the distinctly spiritual side of the self, which, like Wittgenstein, Tolstoy's Christ associates with the free will. Finally, in Tolstoy, we encounter the paradox of repetition that we encountered when we discussed the issue of rebirth in Kierkegaard. What are we saying, exactly, when we speak about someone being reborn? If the post-transformation person is entirely new, then he is not the same as the person prior to the transformation and it would not be true to say that *that* prior person is reborn. On the other hand, if the person does remain the same, what do we mean when we say that he is so fundamentally changed as to be born again? Nicodemus struggles with the question after Jesus describes the paradoxical idea. Jesus says: "if man is conceived from heaven there must be something heavenly in him. You must be born again." (ibid.)

> Nicodemus did not understand this, and said: How can a man, born of the flesh and grown-up, return to his mother's womb and be conceived afresh? / And Jesus answered him: Understand what I say: I say that man is born not from the flesh but also from the spirit, and so every man is conceived of the flesh and of spirit, and therefore the Kingdom of Heaven is within him. Of the flesh he is flesh, from the flesh spirit cannot be born; spirit can only come from spirit. The spirit is the living thing within you which lives in freedom and reason; it is that of which you neither know the beginning nor the end and which every man feels within him. (ibid., 24)

As in Kierkegaard, the rebirth of the self is not a brute 'identical repetition' of the original physiological birth, but a world-transforming spiritual event whereby one's enters into the Kingdom of Heaven through a free choice to undergo a process of death and rebirth from which one emerges with the sense that one has, paradoxically, for the first time become the person one already was. As a teacher, Jesus' task was to bring about just such self-transformation. In facilitating such renewing self-transformation, in turn, Jesus renews, for us, of the meaning of the religious world in which our former sense of self was rooted.

Let us suppose Wittgenstein agreed that 'every son is like the father,' and that the son is in all of us. What might Wittgenstein then be suggesting when he says the Father is He who created the world, and that the son is ethics? Once again, our question is this: might he be suggesting, like Kierkegaard, that we human beings might somehow participate in, or facilitate, the world-creative activity of the Father, and the further creative activity of Christ? And might we think about such

world-creative activity in Wittgenstein on the model of the world-creative activity that we find in *Fear and Trembling's* example of Abraham, who stands receptive to revelations of hitherto inarticulable sense, or in Kierkegaard, as he describes himself in the *Point of View*? Is the ethical, for Wittgenstein, also somehow connected with such creative activity? I think so. After all, Wittgenstein, like Kierkegaard, is *himself* engaged in facilitating this kind of ethical self-transformation in his reader. My suggestion is that, in doing so, he is modelling an important part of the ethical task to which the reborn reader of the *Tractatus* may find himself similarly called: the task of facilitating the renewal of the world of meaning in which we live. This is, at least, one way in which we can helpfully think about the connection between ethics and the contingency of the world to which Wittgenstein so obliquely refers in his answer to Waismann's question about the issue.

This is also a way of thinking about what Wittgenstein meant when he says that agrees with Kierkegaard and Heidegger that ethics is a matter of 'running up against the limits of language.' He once again uses the second person of the Trinity to signal us to his ethical thought when he explicitly connects his own view with the notion of the Kierkegaardian paradox – the incarnate Christ Himself. He writes:

> To be sure, I can imagine what Heidegger means by being and anxiety. Man feels the urge to run up against the limits of language. Think for example of the astonishment that anything at all exists. This astonishment cannot be expressed in the form of a question, and there is also no answer whatsoever. Anything we might say is *a priori* bound to be nonsense. / Nevertheless, we do run up against the limits of language. Kierkegaard also saw that there is this running up against the limits of something and he referred to it in a fairly similar way (as a running up against a paradox). This running up against the limits of language is ethics. I think it is definitely important to put an end to all the claptrap about ethics, whether intuitive knowledge exists, whether values exist, whether the good is definable. In ethics we are always making the attempt to say something that cannot be said, something that does not and never will touch the essence of the matter. It is *a priori* certain that whatever definition of the good may be given – it will always be merely a misunderstanding to say that the essential thing, that which is really meant, corresponds to what is expressed (Moore). But the inclination, the running against something, *indicates something*. St. Augustine knew that already when he said: What, you swine, you want not to talk nonsense? Go ahead and talk nonsense, it does not matter! (WVC, 68-69; cf., 93)

Wittgenstein agrees with Moore that the good is indefinable. Whatever ethical rules we use to explicate it will always and essentially fall short of constituting a complete and exhaustive account of the good, just as we will fall short in our desire for a complete and exhaustive account of anything whatever, on my reading. When Wittgenstein elsewhere offers a more positive endorsement of the Augustinian tendency, it again seems plausible to conclude that he is subtly enjoining us to follow the examples of Abraham and Christ, to challenge our established understanding of things and, thereby, to facilitate a renewing remembrance of the world. "Don't *for heaven's sake*, be afraid of talking nonsense! But you must pay attention to your nonsense" (CV, 56). On this reading, ethics, on the part of the philosopher, becomes an effort freely to facilitate a renewing, repetitional, remembrance of meaning, the meaning of the self, and the meaning of ethics, the meaning of logic, and the meaning of any other words that trouble our need for a resolute, unified life with language.

Naturally, on this reading, the self would have to have a kind of freedom that is actually effective in the world. Most especially, the self would need to be free in the linguistic sense that allows us to participate a free renewal of logical norms through which our understanding of the linguistic world can become properly 'our own,' and which is ruled out, on the recollective reading, by what Braver called 'logical stoicism.' In this respect, the resolute reading I am proposing would also take Wittgenstein at his word when he suggested that there is a kernel of truth in solipsism.

6.3.6. Logic, Freedom, and the Truth in Solipsism

So far, I have described what Hacker calls the *Tractatus'* "metaphysical route to solipsism" (Hacker 1989, 100). On Hacker's reading, however, there is also a much quicker "linguistic" route that follows directly from (T, 5.62): the idea "that the limits of language (of that language which alone I understand) mean the limits of my world" (T, 5.62). For Hacker, this remark announces the doctrine of the logically private language that Wittgenstein goes on to critique in the *Investigations*. The limits of language, which Hacker identifies with logic (Hacker 1997, 101), mean the limits of *my* world because that language is one that only *I* can understand. In what sense? Because, according to Hacker, in order for a sign to have the full significance of a symbol, *I* need freely and autonomously to decide upon a 'method a projection' for the sign. Hacker writes:

> Anything which I can understand as language must have a content which is assigned to it by my projecting names with appropriate form on to reality. 'Things acquire "*Bedeutung*" only in relation to my will' is not only an ethical principle, but a semantic one. Propositional signs

are merely 'inscriptions'; only in relation to my will do they constitute symbols [....] From this point of view language is *my* language. (Hacker 1997, 100; cf., ibid., Ch. 4)

As H.O. Mounce paraphrases Hacker's view, "language has meaning injected into it by thought. Thus, taken in themselves, the signs of language are mere dead matter, marks and sounds. What gives them meaning is the mental act of meaning them" (Mounce 1997, 3). The logic of mind and world is fixed, but the solitary will alone determines the meaning of individual words. Since, in this sense, I am trapped within a world of words whose meanings are my own creation, I cannot use those words to refer to anything genuinely other than myself. "The content of propositions is given by *my* experience, by *my* injecting content into the forms that mirror the nature of the world" (Hacker 1997, 102).

In response to Hacker, Mounce stresses a point similar to the one that we made in our critique of Sartre's radical view of freedom. Since an understanding of language is a *precondition* of willful choice, it cannot be that the meaning of all signs is willfully chosen. By the time the use of the will enters the scene, an unchosen capacity to operate with words is already in place (see Mounce 1997, 6). This seems fair enough. My submission in Chapter Four, however, was that the later Wittgenstein *does* allow us an important and very wide latitude of freedom and responsibility in our choice and application of rules. Indeed, we saw him write that he would not call a purported use of language a matter of rule-following if the rules were unambiguously guiding, crowding out all room for choice and responsibility (PI, §222). Moreover, it is fundamental to Wittgenstein's method of indirect communication that a person is left on her own *freely* to accept the truth of the grammatical propositions that capture the meaning of her words if the person is to be resolutely attached to those meanings. From a resolute and realistic perspective, it is this point about philosophical method, and about our need for a resolute attachment to the meaning that we find in our words, that Wittgenstein is making in those passages that Hacker reads as an expression of 'transcendental solipsism:' "The world is *my* world," (T, 5.62), and "the limits of language (of that language which alone I understand) mean the limits of my world" (T, 5.62). "*I* have to judge the world, to measure things," (NB, 82; cf., Hacker 1997, 100). Is this stress upon the first person pronoun an endorsement of solipsism? It need not be read that way. In the post-*Tractatus* writings, it has the meaning I've suggested it has: it signifies that a reader's resolute remembrance of meaning comes about only when the philosophical author takes care to respect the reader's freedom and autonomy. Wittgenstein writes:

The philosopher strives to find the liberating word, that is, the word that finally permits us to grasp what up until now has intangibly weighed down our consciousness. / (It is as if one had a hair on one's tongue; one feels it but cannot grasp // seize it, and therefore cannot get rid of it.) (PO, 165)

Then, the stress upon the first person:

The philosopher delivers the word to us with which one // I// can express the things and render it harmless [….] One of the most important tasks is to express all false thought processes so characteristically that the reader says, 'Yes, that's exactly the way I meant it.' (ibid.)

The stress upon the first personal pronoun suggests the sense in which it is indeed *I* who needs freely to find myself in the philosopher's accounts of what I do and do not mean by my words.

Indeed we can only convict another person of a mistake […] if he (really) acknowledges this expression as the correct expression of his feeling. / For only if he acknowledges it as such, is it the correct expression. (Psychoanalysis). (ibid.)

Though a resolute reader can't accept that Wittgenstein is a solipsist, Hacker puts his finger on something important, and something a resolute reader should accept, when he notes that this concern for the freedom and autonomy of the individual reader is already present in Wittgenstein's earliest writings.

The importance of subjectivity comes out again in Wittgenstein's recorded conversations with Waismann. It is, presumably, the twin needs for indirect communication on the part of the philosophical author, and for resolute attachment to meaning on the part of the reader, that Wittgenstein has in mind when he writes that 'ethics cannot be taught,' in the manner of a theory, or doctrine.

What is ethical cannot be taught. If I could explain the essence of the ethical only by means of a theory, then what is ethical would be of no value whatsoever. / At the end of my lecture on ethics I spoke in the first person: I think that this is something very essential. Here there is nothing to be stated anymore; all I can do is to step forth as an individual and speak in the first person. / *For me* a theory is without value. A theory gives me nothing. (WVC, 117)[188]

Part of rejecting ethical theory, recall, is accepting the Kierkegaardian view that ethics needs to be understood from within, rather than understood from without, as we understand it when we seek to

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[188] "You cannot lead people to the good; you can only lead them to some place to other; the good lies outside the space of facts" (CV, 3).

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provide it with epistemic justifications or causal explanations. The corresponding need to engage the freedom of the interlocutor comes out when Wittgenstein stresses that, rather than argue for this view of ethics, he can only offer that this view of ethics in which he *himself* has come freely to find meaning. The same stress upon the importance of subjectivity comes out in a comment to Waismann about *one's own* tendency to ethical wonderment at the existence of the world:

> All I can say is this: I do not scoff at this tendency in man; I hold it in reverence. And here it is essential that this is not a description of sociology but that am speaking *about myself*. / The facts of the matter are of no importance for me. But what men mean when they say that 'the world is there' is something I have at heart. (WVC, 118)

The italics in these passages are Wittgenstein's. They signal us not to any genuine solipsism, but to the element of freedom and autonomy that binds us to the meaning of 'ethics' as Wittgenstein understands it, and to the meaning of any other word. I will not be resolutely bound to the rules by which I know the world – they will not be what we saw Gordon Baker call *my* rules – if I am not permitted the time and space freely to accept those rules and the application that I take them to permit. This does not entail a commitment to solipsism any more than Baker's view of linguistic rules entails a commitment to the doctrine to a logically private language. What it does entail is a notion of freedom that cannot be accommodated within the more directly adversarial philosophical model that we find in Socrates, the paradigm philosopher of recollection.

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I have tried to put pressure on the recollective account of the Tractarian ethic. In particular, I have tried to show that much of what Wittgenstein says about ethics cannot be squared with the thesis that the Tractarian self is a disembodied soul, incapable of expressing its freedom in the world. This reading, I've suggested, follows naturally from the parallel between the liminal self and liminal logic *if* one begins from a recollective orthodox metaphysical realism about logic. On such a reading, both the self and logic are metaphysically transcendent to the temporal world. As we know, however, metaphysical transcendence purposes an illusion of completeness and finality in one's views about the supposedly transcendent phenomena, an illusion that eliminates the possibility that we could be surprised by those phenomena and which, thereby, saps them of any genuinely transcendent being. If we are to find in Wittgenstein a realism akin to the realism we found in Kierkegaard, we need a distinctly embodied conception of the self and, correspondingly, an embodied conception of the liminal truths to which the self relates. There seems to me to be promise for finding such a realism in the resolute Wittgenstein because, as we will now see, resolute readers contend that we can indeed

find just such an embodied conception of the self, of ethics, and of logic. As we proceed, I develop and defend their claims.

6.4. Resolution and the Self

We saw in Chapter Four that Wittgenstein invokes a concept of revelation that encompasses the category of the essentially unforeseeable. This raised the question of how, exactly, we ought to think about our intentional relationship to unforeseeable, yet-to-be revealed, possibilities of sense. We looked to Kierkegaard for an answer here. I argued that, in Kierkegaard, a distinctly embodied, or incarnate, understanding of the self goes hand in hand with a correspondingly embodied, 'passionate,' commitment to the determinations of 'essential truth' to which the self relates. The paradigm example of such incarnate truth was, of course, Christ Himself, but more humble examples were to be found in the imitation of Christ which, for His followers, constitutes the practice of the self. One's Christian understanding of, for example, what it means to be father or a husband is expressed as one's embodied, practical, being in the world as a man resolutely devoted to his son or wife. In these examples, we see an essentially incarnate self in its practical, pre-reflective communion with the essentially incarnate grammar, or logic, that regulates the self's ethical life. Drawing on James, my suggestion was that we could look to this embodied understanding of the communion between the incarnate self and an incarnate truth for an understanding of our intentional relation to the unforeseeable possibilities of revelation. Is there a sign of any such view in Wittgenstein? The following passage is suggestive in this connection. Wittgenstein asks himself: "What inclines even me to belief in Christ's Resurrection?" (CVR, 38). His answer indicates that he is drawn to this belief by, amongst other things, the very features of Christianity that we have found in Kierkegaard's treatment of the Incarnation, but which are also captured in the symbolism of the Resurrection. I have in mind the essentially embodied understanding of the self that is, through Christianity, saved, the corresponding relationship with truth as embodied, practical, and faithful matter of *passion*, (rather than merely intellectual, theoretical, and speculative matter of contemplation), and the provision of possibilities that would be otherwise unavailable to us. Wittgenstein writes that if we

> have to make do with wisdom & speculation [i]t is as though we are in a hell, where we can only a dream & are shut out from heaven, roofed in as it were. But if I am to be REALLY redeemed, – I need *certainty* – not wisdom, dreams, speculation – and this certainty is faith. And faith is faith in what my *heart*, my *soul*, needs, not my speculative intellect. For my soul,

with its passions, as it were with its flesh & blood, must be redeemed, not my abstract mind. Perhaps one may say: Only *love* can believe the Resurrection. Or: it is *love* that believes the Resurrection. [....] [T]his can only come about if you no longer support yourself on this a earth but suspend yourself from heaven. Then *everything* is different and it is 'no wonder' if you can then do what now you cannot do. (It is true that someone who is suspended looks like someone who is standing but the interplay of forces within him is nevertheless a quite different one & hence he is able to do quite different things than can one who stands.) (CVR, 39)

We notice that the parenthetical conclusion about the faithful man echoes de Silentio's description of the knight of faith. Though he has resigned the things of finitude, he outwardly looks no different than "the worldly man who is attached to such things" (FT, 39). As we might expect from this, we will now see that the conception of the self, of philosophical truth, and of the relation between the two that we see in Kierkegaard is also there to be found in the resolute reading of Wittgenstein. This will permit us to account for the Wittgensteinian openness the possibility of alternative grammars, which we have found to be essential to the early ethical thought, with the same embodied relationship with truth that we found in Kierkegaard. In Wittgenstein, as in Kierkegaard, the possibility of revelation will be bound up with a restructuring of the body that endows us with new expressive and experiential powers.

6.4.1. The Self and the Body

In certain passages of the *Notebooks*, Wittgenstein explores a far more embodied understanding of the willing philosophical self than we have seen in the recollective *Tractatus*. Consider, for example, the following passage where Wittgenstein tells us that he is clear that the self and its will *does* find expression in the body:

> This is clear: it is impossible to will without already performing the act of the will. / The act of the will is not the cause of the action but is the action itself. [...] My will fastens onto the world somewhere, and does not fasten on to other things. / Wishing is not acting. But willing is acting. [...] The fact that I will an action consists in my performing the action, not in my doing something else which causes the action. When I move something I move. When I perform an action, I am in action. (NB, 87)

Along the same lines of thought, consider also the following musings on the idea that the character of the human spirit is somehow manifest in the human body.

> One conception: As I can infer my spirit (character, will) from my physiognomy, so I can infer the spirit (will) of each thing from *its* physiognomy. / But can I *infer* [*schleißen*] my spirit from my physiognomy? / Isn't this relationship purely empirical? / Does my body really express anything? Is it an internal expression of something? Is, e.g., an angry face angry in itself or merely because it is empirically connected with a bad temper? (NB, 84)

Might there be an *internal* relation between the self and the comportments of the body? This would be a relation that would allow us to infer the character of the will from its expression in the body, just as we can infer the character of linguistic rule from its expression in the use of words. There could be no such inference, of course, if the will were incapable of influencing action, as the story seems to have been so far. If there is such an internal relation, our thinking about the one cannot be severed from our thinking about the other, and the self and its freedom would not be metaphysically transcendent to the body. With this embodied conception of the free will in mind, Anscombe writes: "In his notebooks Wittgenstein entertained some more reasonable considerations [...] and then rejected them" (Anscombe 1959, 172). Peter Winch concurs, saying of the more grounded position on the will that occasionally surfaces in the *Notebooks* that it "is quite flatly and fundamentally at variance with the whole conception of the relation between language, thought and the world, which the *Tractatus* expresses" (Winch 1986, 121-124). Kremer, by contrast, suggests that, if we look, we will find that the *Tractatus* allows for this understanding of the free will as the immanent, animating, meaning of the human body. As he admits, the embodied conception of the will that we have just seen in the *Notebooks* "does not appear explicitly in the *Tractatus*" (Kremer 2001, 59). The challenge is to see how the *Notebooks* conception of the will might have been suppressed in order for us to arrive at it on our own. For Kremer, we come to accept this understanding of the self when we see that it "is ultimately required by the final message of the book" (ibid., 59), where we are told that the propositions of the *Tractatus*, including the apparent solipsism of the text, need to be thrown away. The self is not, after all, a transcendental ego remote from time and space.

We know that, for Kremer, "the [*Tractatus*] in fact embodies a thorough-going deconstruction of the notion of 'limits' of language, thought and world" (2004., 64, cf., 65). My suggestion has been that this talk about rejecting the notion that there are limits to language is needlessly provocative. It leaves the reader rightly worried that the veiled message of the text is a call to recreative narcissists, guided by their assumption of anti-realism to remake the world in their own self-image. As against Kremer's distaste for talk about limits, I have sided with Mulhall and read Wittgenstein as urging us to resist our temptation to confuse limits for limitations. In retaining the

language of limits, we would be retaining, amongst other things, that it is significant to speak about a liminal self that is neither a mere piece of the empirical world with no eternal soul to speak of, nor an eternal soul of the Platonic sort, metaphysically transcendent to the empirical domain. Such a self is indeed a limit of our world in the sense that the propositions that describe it cannot be supported with epistemic justifications. Also, a liminal self could not be described by *empirical* propositions (any more than it could be described by metaphysical propositions) and, accordingly, it could not be fully explained in natural-scientific terms. Since Wittgenstein associates the self with the activities of the free will, a liminal self would be characterized by a capacity for free choice that is both empirically and metaphysically inexplicable. Of the Kierkegaardian leap, Ferreira noted that "it is not compelled (either physically or rationally), yet it is not self-consciously intentional nor does it involve an explicit acknowledgment of a variety of options" (Ferreira 1998, 219). The Wittgensteinian choice of the ethical good over evil, for example, would have to be understood in similar terms.

We have seen that the free will is characterized by its condition of being either good or evil. On the resolute reading, this character of the will is not a purely eternal abstraction, but a texture of significance that is manifest in our time-bound and embodied good or evil deeds. Thus, trying to take up the 'outside' perspective on the self would involve trying to regard one's own particular temporal and embodied ethical life not from 'within' that life, but from beyond it. Such a self could 'look down upon' that life as if it were one life amongst other such lives that he might choose to live. To change the metaphor, the spectator in the scenario is the Manichean who imagines himself as a soul, metaphysically transcendent to his actual embodied life, and viewing that life in relief against some plurality of other possible lives that he might have chosen to live, some good, some evil. From such a perspective, he might ask himself which of the various possible lives, arrayed before his spectating eye, best corresponds to his soul's true nature. This is the picture of the relation between soul and body at which we arrive if we begin from the correspondence-theoretic account of the relation between logic and language that we find in the metaphysical realism of orthodoxy, and then work out the parallel between liminal logic and the liminal self. Recall, on that correspondence-theoretic account, we think that we can imagine various different temporal languages, each manifesting a grammar, or logic, alternative to our own, and ascertain which of those languages truly corresponds to the time-transcendent metaphysical reality of logic itself. So it would go *mutatis mutandis*, with Manichean speculations about which of the two general forms of temporal ethical existence – good or evil – best corresponds to the reality of the soul.

As in the metaphysical picture of the relation between logic and language, the metaphysical picture of the soul's relation to its body is characterized by an illusion of altitude. Kierkegaard has been at pains to show that one cannot both *be* the self that one is and regard that self as if from the God's-eye perspective we are trying to occupy, the view from which the self that we are could appear to us as one amongst various selves that we might have been, or still could become. Wittgenstein concurs: "That is the difference between writing about yourself and writing about external objects. You write about yourself from your own height. You don't stand on stilts or on a ladder but on your bare feet" (CV, 33). For Kierkegaard, one is not *married* in the full, resolute, sense of the word if one grasps one's married life in relief against other lives that one 'cannot' live, given that one is married, but which one 'could' live if one were not. Wittgenstein's point is similar: if one *is* the liminal self, then one fails when one tries to grasp the life of the liminal self as only *one* life that one might have lived. To think otherwise is, as Wittgenstein puts it, as if one's very being is a property that one contingently has, a self-deceptive confusion. "A man can see what he has, but not what he is. What he is can be compared to his height above sea level, which you cannot for the most part judge without more ado" (CV, 49).[189]

The self has been identified with the free will, and the free will has been characterized as being either good or evil (NB, 76, 79). Further, the suggestion has been that our condition of being either good or evil lies in our condition of either approaching or falling away from the state of our will's coincidence with the will of God (NB, 75), which is the ethical purpose and meaning of life (NB, 72-73). Assuming our parallel between logic and the liminal self, the illusion that one can 'judge oneself without more ado' would, therefore, involve the illusion that the nature of one's own free will, and the ethical character of one's own life, can be fully and explicitly known to one in the way that the logical character of one's language can be known to one on the recollective reading. Wittgenstein rejects this epistemological illusion. We are 'too close to ourselves' to have any such synoptic understanding of freedom or of our own ethical condition. The illusion that one can grasp the nature of the liminal self in this way just is the illusion that one can occupy the perspective of a disembodied soul, ultimately incapable of expressing its free will in its actions.

The question that Mulhall finds in the private language arguments of the *Investigations* is also raised by the discussion of solipsism in the *Tractatus*, and both works urge us toward the same

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[189] To the same point: "One *cannot* speak the truth; – if one has not yet conquered oneself. One *cannot* speak it – but not, because one is still not clever enough. The truth can be spoken only by someone who is already *at home* in it; not by someone who still lives in untruthfulness, & does no more than reach out towards it from within untruthfulness"(CVR, 41).

answer: "Should we cancel out the soul or the body? Perhaps we should rather aim to cancel our sense of an unbridgeable difference or division between them [...] and so between the person and her expressive, flesh-and-blood embodiment"(Mulhall 2007, 143). A resolute reading like Kremer's, which sees the *Tractatus* as trying to help us remember the body as an essential aspect of the self, need not, therefore, maintain that the book urges us to repudiate the soul. The soul remains in the idea that the freedom of the will and its ethical condition as either good or evil elude both metaphysical-speculative and empirical-naturalistic modes of description, explanation, and justification. Since the soul is given by the capacity for free will, this would mean that at least some of our choices cannot be the determined consequence of brute empirical causation any more than they can be explained in terms of recollective or recreative philosophical reflection. One such choice, presumably, would be the fundamental, self and world-altering choice of good over evil (T, 6.43). Here, perhaps, we would have a choice akin to a Kierkegaardian leap, a choice whereby we come to remember the meaning of self and world that strikes us as a *real* meaning, in the sense that it has its source outside the system of the self or social convention whose normative structure we could willfully call to mind. Here is where we would also locate the activity of the philosophical reader, whose similarly free encounter with revealed meaning is facilitated by the indirectly communicating philosophical author, who works to help his reader remember his life and world in terms of such meanings. Is there evidence of such a free will in Wittgenstein? We hope so because it is a condition of the possibility of repetitional realism.

6.4.2. The Self and the Soul

In the *Lecture on Ethics*, we saw that wonderment about the existence of the world needs to be understood not within a natural-scientific framework, but within a religious one, where we express it as the idea "that God had created the world" (PO, 42). On our assumption of a strong resolute approach, these views of 1929 speak to the view already at work in the *Tractatus*. Similarly, our strong resolute approach permits us to regard the later Wittgenstein's reflection about the genesis of freely-willed action amongst human beings as being no less scientifically inscrutable than the genesis of the world, brought about through the free creative will of God. Wittgenstein writes:

> No supposition seems to me more natural than that there is no process in the brain correlated with associating or thinking; so that it would be impossible to read off thought-processes from brain processes. [....] It is [...] perfectly possible that certain psychological

phenomena cannot be investigated physiologically, because physiologically nothing corresponds to them. (Z, §608-609)

As the above set of thoughts continues, Wittgenstein specifically identifies the activity of remembrance as one activity where freedom manifests itself:

I saw this man years ago: now I have seen him again, I recognize him, I remember his name. And why does there have to be a cause of this remembering in my nervous system? Why must something or other, whatever it may be, be stored up there *in any form?* Why must a trace have been left behind? Why should there not be a psychological regularity to which no physiological regularity corresponds? If this upsets our concepts of causality then it is high time it was upset. (Z, §610)

We can assume that what is said about remembrance here can also be said about the remembrance of meaning that Wittgenstein's philosophy is meant to facilitate. Here, as elsewhere in our linguistic lives, the activity of the free will swings free from the physiological mechanism and resists natural-scientific explanation. Just as we are not offering a casual explanation when we say that the world exists by grace of God's freely chosen act of creating it, we are not offering a causal explanation of the philosopher's creative activity when he, himself, freely undergoes an encounter with revealed sense, or when he facilitates such a creative encounter in his reader. In Chapter Two, I suggested that Wittgenstein emulates the indirect communication of the Gospels, and that he does so for the same purpose as their authors: "So that the *letter* should not be believed more strongly than is proper and the *spirit* may receive its due" (CV, 31). Presumably, this activity of the spirit involves an appeal to the free will of the subject to whom the text is addressed, but the concomitant activity of something like Kierkegaard's 'Governance' is not inaudible.

I have just said that a strong resolute reading of the above remarks on freedom permits us to speculate that the early Wittgenstein, like the later Wittgenstein, genuinely endorsed the idea of a liminal self whose free will was recalcitrant to natural-scientific, causal, explanation. Just as much, however, I have been suggesting that a strong resolute reading permits us to speculate that the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus*, like the later Wittgenstein and the Wittgenstein of the *Notebooks*, thought that the free will of this liminal self could find expression in the uses of the human body, for instance in the activity of writing books like the *Tractatus*. On such a reading, I have suggested, we might regard the relation between the liminal self and its freely chosen words and deeds on analogy with the relation between God and the world that He freely chooses to create. In the latter case, as in the former, we are entertaining the idea of a miracle, but we have already seen that

Wittgenstein did not shy from such ideas. "[A]n organism might come into being even out of something quite amorphous, as it were causelessly; and there is no reason why this should not really hold for our thoughts and hence for our talking and writing" (Z, § 608; cf. PI, § 52). What does this amount to, concretely? In part, it means that we are left understanding the character of the Wittgensteinian soul – of that aspect of us that is free, and either or good or evil – as a kind of mystery, like logic and ethics, the future possibilities of which will constitute revelations that we cannot foresee. The echoes of Kierkegaard should be clear.

We have seen how a view of logic as metaphysically transcendent to time naturally suggests a disembodied, solipsistic account of the self as a soul metaphysically transcendent to the body and its actions. What does the parallel between self and logic recommend when we begin with the essentially embodied view of the self that Kremer has just described? Naturally, we get an essentially 'embodied' view of logic. Indeed, if the argument of this chapter is correct, this transformation in our understanding of logic is the fundamental transformation that the *Tractatus* means to bring about. The transformation in our understanding of the self and ethics turns out to be subsidiary transformations, for they are transformations in the *logic* of (our thought and talk about) the self and ethics. From our Kierkegaardian and resolute perspective, when we come to see what Wittgenstein means by 'the self' we see that he is speaking about an eternal soul that transcends a temporal body in which it is nevertheless essentially immanent. So too, by analogy, do we see that an eternal logic is transcendent to, but also essentially immanent within, its temporal manifestation in language. We will now see that the resolute readers attribute to Wittgenstein an embodied conception of logic that can be read as pointing in just this sort of direction.

6.4.3. The Self and Logic

A common complaint about the resolute reading is that it takes Wittgenstein completely to reject the saying/showing distinction, a distinction which manifestly does a great deal of important work in the *Tractatus* (see Sullivan 2002, 49 n. 7; cf., Conant and Diamond 2004, 65). In their 2004 statement of their position, Conant and Diamond are at pains to correct this false impression. The resolute reader does not resist the saying/showing distinction, but only the idea that what is shown is some grand *object* that we can't describe because describing it would require us to view it from out beyond our habitation in language.[190] Kremer tells us more about what becomes of the saying/showing

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[190] "[T]he features that make a reading 'resolute' […] do not, as such, require one to give up on every possible way of drawing a distinction between saying and showing. Resolute readers are not obliged to throw away *showing* while

distinction on the resolute account. He considers the sentences in the *Tractatus* that can easily appear to cinch the case for the orthodox/metaphysical reading, T, 6.522 and T, 7:

> There are indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They *make themselves manifest.* They are what is mystical. [*Es gibt allerdings Unaussprechliches. Dies* zeigt *sich, es ist das Mystiche.*] (T, 6.522)

> What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence. (T, 7)

Do these passages unambiguously recommend an orthodox metaphysics of ineffable truths? Kremer has pointed out that they do not (Kremer 2001), especially when read in the Ogden translation – "There is indeed the inexpressible. This shows itself; it is the mystical."[191] Kremer contends that what is *shown* is not some*thing* metaphysically transcendent to language, but a texture of meaning immanent in the actual practice of language itself. What is shown is immanent in a kind of practical *knowing-how*, rather than in a misfiring and paradoxical propositional *knowing-that* (Kremer 2001, 61-62). He writes:

> It is useful to compare the saying/showing distinction to Ryle's well-known distinction between 'knowledge-how' and 'knowledge-that.' The language here may make it look as if we have two species of a common genus – 'knowledge.' But this way of thinking [...] fails to make the difference deep enough. It tempts us to reduce knowledge-how to knowledge-that – 'implicit knowledge' which could be 'made explicit' (although not all at once). / I suggest that the *Tractatus* is concerned to communicate knowledge-how. To understand this book and its author is to learn how to live. The book shows us how to live, but it does not tell us this. (Kremer 2001, 62)

Pace orthodox metaphysical realism, Kremer's reading allows that the propositions of logic do not describe a logical order of things metaphysically transcendent to language. And *pace* the metaphysical anti-realism of a philosopher like Ayre, Kremer joins strong resolute readers and rejects the idea that the logic of our language can be so fully and completely explicated as to provide us with what we saw Kuusela call 'once and for all' answers to philosophical questions. Our understanding of logical

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throwing away the idea of 'showing' as part of a *Tractatus* theory involving our supposed access to a special realm, the denizens of which are supposed to be officially unthinkable, but somehow graspable (in a way that doesn't officially count as thinkable) when 'shown'" (Conant and Diamond 2004, 66; cf., ibid., 65-67, 51-52, 52 n.18). Conant and Diamond admit, however, that they had seemed to reject the saying/showing distinction in some of their earlier writings (see Conant 2000, 196).

[191] Arguably, Kremer overstates the point when he claims that the Ogden translation "makes clear that 'the mystical' is not some realm of showable, but not sayable, quasi-facts, items that would be true if we could say them" (Kremer 2001, 61). Certainly, however, Ogden's more literal translation does not compel the metaphysical reading in the way that Pears-McGuinness translation might seem to do.

propositions is expressed, not in our ability to provide them with an ordinary, epistemic justification, but in our ability to *enact* an understanding of logical norms. In this case, an analysis of logic will not furnish us with a fully complete register of logical propositions, or a fully complete analysis of empirical claims that we could then wield in Carnapian arguments about what expressions of meaning can and cannot make sense. 'The inexpressible in speech,' *can* be construed as a determinate order of metaphysical truths that lay ineffably and determinately beyond the domain of what language can describe. But it can also be construed as a structure of significance the finds expression not in what the *Tractatus* would consider speech – epistemically justifiable fact-stating propositions – but in the way we act and live (see Kremer 2001, 61). As Alfred Nordmann comments, "T, 6.522 and 7 are artfully or systematically ambiguous – noncommittal by design" (Nordmann 2005, 54). The crucial point is about how the reader ought to relate to logic, and that point must be presented in such a way that the reader accepts it freely. He must arrive at the point not under the duress of arguments, but by resisting the illusion of a disembodied, metaphysical account of self, ethics, and logic to which the Tractarian arguments have led, and by arriving at the distinctly embodied understanding of self, ethics, and logic that is nowhere explicitly argued for in the text at all. Kremer points out here that what goes for resolute expression of logic goes equally for resolute expression of ethics. This understanding is *not* expressed in the epistemic justifications that we might offer for our logical and ethical commitments as if we stood 'outside' those commitments, and viewed them from the perspective of a disembodied Platonic soul. Rather, our understanding of logic and ethics is expressed in – embodied in – the ethical and logical practice of the essentially embodied human self. The point echoes the similar points we have found in Kierkegaard and Williams:

> Logic provides principles by which we hope ultimately to justify our language, thoughts, and reasoning. Similarly, ethics provides principles by which we hope ultimately to justify our actions and our lives. However, such principles cannot play the role of ultimate justifiers if we take them to be propositions in the ordinary sense. If we try to appeal to them as justifications through saying them, asserting them, we make them vulnerable to question and challenge, in a way that undercuts their function as ultimate justifiers. So we must remain silent, and let logic, and life, speak for itself – the justification for what we think and do 'show itself.' (Kremer 2001, 53-52)

The transformation of the self that Kremer is describing here involves *rejecting* the conception of self-transformation that we find in the solipsistic brand of orthodoxy. To summarize, there are two basic aspects to this rejection of orthodoxy. First, we overcome our aspirations epistemically to

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justify or explain the propositions that describe the liminal features of linguistic life. So long as we maintain the illusion that these propositions can be epistemically justified, so too do we maintain the illusion that they can be intelligibly doubted. If we maintain this illusion, however, we undermine the security that the sought-after justification was supposed to provide. Second, we abandon the solipsistic and disembodied conception of the self to which this preoccupation with theory is bound. As in Kierkegaard, the certainty we need is subjective, not objective, and it manifests itself not in the 'theoretical,' or 'intellectual,' capacity to provide epistemic justifications but in a practical capacity to *show* our resolute commitment to the relevant norms in the way we live. Mulhall echoes Kremer's point:

> [A] resolute reading of the *Tractatus* sees it not as intended to construct a specific philosophical account of the conditions of sense, whether that account is regarded as replacing, supplementing, or merely providing a grounding for our everyday capacities for linguistic expression and understanding; it is, rather, intended simply to deploy that everyday understanding in a philosophical context. It mobilizes a certain kind of practical knowledge, a know-how possessed by anyone capable of speech, in the service of identifying and overcoming a certain philosophical illusion – in particular, the illusion that our everyday understanding of language, and hence of the distinction between sense and nonsense, is in need of support or authority of a philosophical theory. (Mulhall 2007, 6-7)

The *Tractatus* does not mean to offer us a theory of what we mean by 'language' in general and, so, neither does it offer us a mechanism by which to determine what we mean – or if we indeed mean anything – by our particular linguistic expressions (cf., PI, §109). There is nothing in the *Tractatus* that answers to our desire for an intellectual apparatus that philosophers can impose, top-down, upon our natural linguistic competencies – our own or those of others – as if to make up for something that those competencies lack, namely, an organ for telling sense from nonsense (see Conant and Diamond 2004, 47-48).[192] Anticipating the *Investigations*, the *Tractatus* does not offer us any controversial *thesis* (cf., PI, §128); it does not tell us anything that we would not already have been able to recognize simply by grace of that natural, pre-reflective, linguistic know-how by which ordinary language users navigate the field of sense.

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[192] Oskari Kussella makes the point: "It is characteristic of resolute readings that they interpret Wittgenstein as aspiring to draw a limit to language not by reference to a technical notion of nonsense about which the *Tractatus* (paradoxically) seeks to inform its reader, but by relying on its reader's natural logical capacity" (Kussella 2008, 24, n. 22). Notice that Kussella's phrasing of the view, like Mulhall's and unlike Kremer's, does not shy from the notion that there are *limits* to language.

Given the intimate connection we have found between logic and ethics, this lesson applies to our knowledge of ethical norms as much as it applies to our knowledge of logical norms. Judge William described the 'outside perspective' on the liminal meaning of things. He construed the outsider's perspective as the vantage point from which we *observe*, rather than *live*, the meaning of our lives. We have seen a similar distinction in Wittgenstein when he urges us past the orthodox tendency to *view* the contingency of our linguistic world and to *feel* that contingency instead. I have suggested that this feeling should be interpreted as a felt openness to the possibility of alternative grammars – grammars that have yet to be revealed. The resolute reading we are finding here suggests that we can account for this openness to revelation in the same way that we saw it accounted for in our reading of Kierkegaard. In the last chapter's treatment of *Fear and Trembling*, I argued that the key to understanding our intentional relation to revealed truth is Kierkegaard's essentially embodied conception of self, of 'essential' truth, and of the relation between the two. We have been finding just such a conception of self, truth, and their relation, in the resolute Wittgenstein. It is this parallelism between *Fear and Trembling* and the *Tractatus* which suggests that Wittgenstein's concept of remembrance lends itself to the same kind of realism that we have in Kierkegaard.

We have already seen some crucial gestures in the direction of such a realism. In the transformative account of the ethical self and ethics, we have already seen the 'transgressive' moment that such realism involves – the movement beyond what were formerly the limits of self and world, and into an understanding of both that was hitherto logically and ethically unforeseeable. Further, in the insistence that the *Tractatus* does not aim to surprise us with novel theses, we hear the suggestion that the transformed meanings disclosed by the text register with us as meanings already familiar. Recall: "All propositions of our everyday language, just as they stand, are in perfect logical order (T, 5.5563, Cf., T, 4.002, Forward, 3). "[T]here can *never* be surprises in logic" (T, 6.124-6.1251). Finally, with the resolute reader's suggestion that there is, in the *Tractatus*, an essentially incarnate conception of both self (as soul and body) and language (as meaning and word), we come to the hope that Tractarian realism can be worked out in terms of an essentially embodied mode of attention – what Andrew Cross called a 'practical orientation' – to the possibility of revealed grammars, grammars alternative to our own.

All of this, once more, is only a sketch and a suggestion. The early ethic offers us nothing more. To support the view, we will need to avail ourselves of the hermeneutic gambit that characterizes our strong resolute approach, assume that what is true of the later work can already be

seen in the early work, and show that this kind of Kierkegaardian repetitional realism is present in the later work indeed. This is the task of Chapters Seven and Eight. For the nonce, I want to review how such a realism involves a remembrance, rather than a repudiation, of the logical and ethical *proposition*. I submit that a resolute reader inclined to simply reject the idea of a genuinely propositional understanding of logic falls short of the realistic promise of the *Tractatus*. This weakness in such a resolute reading will show the need, in the secondary literature, for a return to the proposition that a repetitional account of remembrance and realism can provide.

6.4.4. Remembering the Proposition?

I have contended that the notion of revelation can be invoked to defend a sense in which liminal propositions – propositions that express logical truth, ethical truth, or truths about the self – are genuine propositions.[193] They show something about the world – about a reality outside the self that is not already the intellectual possession of the reflecting subject. The philosophical self – the soul –, logic, and the ethical reality in the light of which things take on logical form, are all transcendent to the order of meanings already familiar to us and available to willful reflection. These are *transcendent* features of reality and, this being the case, it causes the least confusion to say that descriptions of these verities are genuine *propositions*. In this regard, my own resolute reading of the *Tractatus* makes a crucial concession to orthodox realists like Mounce. In making this concession, however, I take a position with which many resolute readers will be uneasy.

We've seen Kremer argue that liminal 'knowledge' – or, better, *certainty* (OC, §308) – is not a matter of knowing-that but a matter of knowing-how. Since ordinary instances of 'knowing-that' are a matter of knowing the content of bipolar propositions, Kremer frames his reading as the claim that our liminal knowledge will not be expressed by "propositions in the ordinary sense" (Kremer 2001, 53-52). This framing of the resolute reading leaves open the possibility for which I am arguing: the possibility that liminal propositions are genuine propositions even though they are not bipolar. On other occasions, however, Kremer is much more critical of calling descriptions of logic, ethics, and the self 'propositions.' On these occasions, Kremer betrays his view that propositions are *essentially* such that they can both supply epistemic justification to other propositions and can also be

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[193] To simplify matters, and in keeping with the strong resolute continuity principle, I have suggested that the early Wittgenstein had a 'broad' concept of logic. This permits us to say that, in a sense, when we speak about what we *mean* by all these terms – 'logic,' the 'self' and 'ethics' – we are speaking about the logic of our language. At this level of analysis, even propositions that express the meaning of 'the self' and 'ethics' will be a species of logical proposition. For the moment, talk of 'liminal' propositions can help us to keep the distinctions at issue clear.

epistemically justified themselves. However, as we have already seen, a proposition that can be epistemically justified is also a proposition that can be intelligibly doubted. Therefore, for the Kremer of these latter moods, if we insist upon calling the propositions of logic and ethics 'propositions' we *ipso facto* relate to them as expressions that can be intelligibly doubted, and we fail to capture the sense in which they are, for us, perfectly certain (see Kremer 2001, 52). Furthermore, for Kremer, if we say that these deep commitments can be expressed in propositions (rather than simply shown in the way we live), we erroneously suggest that, for Wittgenstein, an understanding of these truths can be directly communicated. For Kremer, the proper model for Tractarian truths of logic and ethics is the biblical notion of truth as embodied in a particular form of life, rather than truths directly argued for with propositions. Fair enough. More problematic, in my view, is Kremer's further claim that embodied truth itself cannot be a proposition of any kind at all. He writes:

> [T]he *Tractatus* is concerned to communicate a 'truth' – only not a truth in the sense of something propositional or quasi-propositional. The sense of 'truth' I have in mind here is biblical, found in passages such as these: "Show me your ways O Lord, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me ..." (Psalm 25: 4-5); "I am the way, and the truth and the life..." (John 14:6); "...whoever does the truth comes into the light..." (John 3:21). As this last example shows most dramatically, this 'truth' is not something we might be tempted to think of an expressible in a proposition. It is rather a way to be followed, a 'path' for life. However, this is not to be equated with some set of principles or commandments. It is not communicated through a linguistic act that expresses it, but through a living example. Wittgenstein aims to provide us with such an example in writing the *Tractatus* – an example that we can follow in coming to a new way of life, if we understand him. (Kremer 2001, 61)

The *Tractatus* brings us to express our relationship with the truths of ethics, the truths of logic, and the truth of who we are as particular individuals possessed of freedom and reason, in the way we live our particular understanding of logic, ethics, and the self, rather than in our capacity directly to argue for propositions about logic, ethics, and the self.

Conant concurs that this newly embodied understanding of logic and ethics is the culmination of Tractarian ethical self-transformation. For Conant, "a central aim of the [*Tractatus*] to enable [...] a transformation of its reader" (2005a, 46). How so? "[R]eaping the ethical teaching of the book [consists] not in one's having learnt something from *what it says* about matters about which one thinks one wants to learn, but rather in one's having allowed the work to transform one's conception of what it is that one really wants (from a book about philosophy or logic or ethics) –

where this, in turn, requires a transformation of one's self" (Conant 2005a, 46). What kind of transformation is at issue? As I have explicated it, part of the point is that philosophy cannot satisfy our desire for finality and closure, certainty and infallible foresight – a desire central to the broader desire to be God. Like Kremer, however, Conant goes further and seems to hold that the ethical point of the book is that we need to swear off the idea that our logical and ethics certainties are propositional. This, at any rate, seems to be what Conant is suggesting when he echoes Kremer's claim that the *Tractatus* urges us to think of our intentional relationship with logic and ethics not a propositional matter of knowing-that but merely as a practical matter of knowing-how. "[T]he ethical point of the book [lies] not in what it wants to get you to believe (that you don't already believe), but in what it wants to get you to do (that you are inclined not to do)" (ibid.).

We see the same disquiet about the notion of logical and ethical 'propositions' in Kevin Cahill's more recent resolute account of Tractarian self-transformation. He writes that

> the change in self-understanding that Wittgenstein wanted to effect in his reader is not primarily of a cognitive nature, not, that is, the sort of change we tend to associate with accepting the truth of a theory. It would be characterized primarily by how we do or do not act, not by what we do or do not know. (Cahill 2011, 81)

Certainly, we can agree that truth at issue is not the truth of a *theory*, just as the propositions at issue will not be bipolar propositions. Our worry here is that, if the truth in question is not *cognitive* in nature, it is not clear in what sense it is a genuine *truth* at all. If we are not careful, it will seem that the movement into the self is nothing more than a mere brute, non-rational, choice – a matter of that unreasoned Sartrean-existentialist action that Murdoch called "a wild leap of the will" (Murdoch 1999, 321). At best, such a recreative *Tractatus* would recommend the naive but well-intentioned "Romantic Trotskyism" (Murdoch 1997, 141) of iconoclasts who rebel against the norms of public discourse in hopes of ushering in the revolution for us all. At worst, it would recommend the more self-consciously sinister desire of the ruling philosophical class to dominate its subjects, a version of which Murdoch found in Sartre's account of our concrete relations with others. What Murdoch says about existentialism we can say about a resolute reading that would require us to repudiate the notion that there are limits to language: it looks uncomfortably close to "either optimistic romancing or else something positively Luciferian" (ibid., 358). Like these two purveyors of recreative remembrance, Wittgenstein rejects the metaphysics of recollection. However, I aim to show that Wittgenstein urges us beyond the recreative conception of remembrance at work in both of these two fantasies, no less than he urges us beyond its recollective and equally anti-realistic counterpart.

Like Murdoch, Wittgenstein is urging us past both the Trotskyian "politics of adolescence" (ibid., 141) and the Luciferian will to power. "Freedom, we find out, is not an inconsequential chucking of one's weight about, it is the disciplined overcoming of the self" (ibid., 378). The self is overcome in the sense that its recollective or recreative will is no longer regarded as the final measure of truth. On the other hand, however, I have argued that ultimately the self is not overcome but remembered anew.

What might a newly remembered self be like? It amounts to a self that only is a self at all in relation to an order of meaning that transcends it and which the self is tasked to remember. If we refuse to acknowledge a sense in which even liminal truths are propositions, we flirt with the idea that they have no aspiration to express any such reality beyond themselves. As Mounce pointed out, if the resolute reader insists upon speaking this way, it will easily seem to his orthodox opponent that he wants to read Wittgensteinian as the sort of revolutionary who, lacking any objective ethical or logical standards, "just throws himself one way" (Taylor 1982, 119) when trying to determine the meaning of his words.

This ought to be avoided if possible. In Chapter Four argued that Diamond, in fact, points to a much more sophisticated and realistic view when she draws our attention to the concept of revelation in Wittgenstein. I offered that the notion of revelation permits us to say that even logical propositions can be called *genuine* propositions because it permits us to say that the world, rather than the will, can show them up as false. Logical propositions will not be false in the manner of empirical propositions but, rather, in the manner of *illusions* that is dispelled by a revelation of sense that discloses the truth that undermines that illusion and restores us to a genuine understanding of the meaning that the illusion concealed. My suggestion has been that to wonder at the existence of the world is, in part, to wonder whether sense might dawn upon a still-meaningless use of words in a moment of grammatical revelation.

A resolute reader may well feel that attributing such a logical realism to resolute Wittgenstein places him too close to the orthodox understanding of logic, and to the illusion Wittgenstein most wanted to dispel. Arguably, however, Wittgenstein was offering a corrective to this kind of unease when he said of his *Tractatus* that "the second thing in which the value of this work consists is that it shows how little is achieved when these problems are solved" (T, Forward, 4). If a resolute reader is squeamish about expressing this realism in terms of genuinely propositional *truths*, then one might also bear in mind that one of the crucial keys to the resolute *Tractatus* – the Forward – emphasizes that the investigation is indeed concerned with "the *truth* of the thoughts that are here

communicated" (T, Forward, 4). Finally, a resolute reader might worry that the ethical parallel that my reading implies places Wittgenstein too close to the religious picture according to which God is not the *meaning*, or *essence*, or *being*, of things, but Himself a kind of super-being; a *thing* akin to other things but greater, and a tyrant who imposes His will upon us from beyond. But it is not obvious that Wittgenstein is so concerned to avoid this confusion that he would have us altogether abandon a propositional understanding of ethical reality. His comment to Schlick, rather, can be read as an intentional effort to leave the propositional interpretation open to us, as an interpretation to be, not rejected, but remembered anew: "If there is any proposition expressing precisely what I think, it is the proposition 'What God commands, that is good.'"(WVC, 115).

This chapter's passage through the Tractarian ethic has been meant to provide some *prima facie* support for this way of reading the *Tractatus*. Our study of that ethic shows us that the *Tractatus*, like Kierkegaard's texts, is meant to facilitate a self-transformational movement into an essentially unforeseeable understanding of self and world. With regard to the meaning of self and of ethics, we have seen that the *Tractatus* does mean to facilitate a revelation of sense. This has been quite clear since the new understanding of self and ethics at which we arrive requires a change in the very limits of our world. However, having parted with the departmental conception of ethics, we can see that a *logical* revelation was also at issue here. When we come into this transformed understanding of the self and ethics, we come into a transformed understanding of logic. The ethically reborn self comes to understand logic in a distinctly embodied way, just as we come to see the eternal *logos* in a distinctly embodied way when Christ comes to remind us of its incarnation in the Word. On the one hand, this is a new revelation of what we mean by 'logic.' Since what we mean by 'logic,' like what we mean by the 'self' and 'ethics,' is determined by logic itself, this new meaning we find in the world does not register with us as new at all, for "[t]here can *never* be surprises in logic" (T, 6.1251). At the same time, paradoxically, these new revelations of meaning *are,* after all, *new*. Our Kierkegaardian approach enables us to account for the newness we are dealing with here, where the encounter the new emerges as its paradoxical coincidence with the old and familiar.We are dealing,I submit with the newness of repetition rather than that of recollection, In transforming our conception of the self, and of philosophical truth in general, the *Tractatus*, like *Fear and Trembling*, moves us from a recollective to a repetitional understanding of the claim that "there can *never* be surprises in logic" (T, 6.1251). In this way, the text moves us to remember, rather than refuse or resign, the deep Platonic truth that all philosophical learning is a matter of remembrance. Once

more, "the value of this work consists is that it shows how little is achieved when these problems are solved" (T, Forward, 4).

6.5. Conclusion

We readied ourselves for the speculations of this chapter with a quote from James C. Edwards, who reminded us of the unavoidable role for speculation in any reading of Wittgenstein's ethics. I can conclude with a remark from Edwards as well for, once again, what he says of his reading goes equally well for mine.

> What reason, if any, do we have for thinking it ought to be attributed to Wittgenstein? Certainly there is no direct evidence available that would support my claims. Wittgenstein's published work contains nothing like the account I have given; in fact, I am sure that for a variety of reasons – some of which would have to do with the danger of saying what should only be shown – he would outright have rejected the idiom in which my claims are made. (Edwards 1982, 240)

How can one take seriously an interpretation that comes with such scanty textual support? My strategy, to review, is two-part. First, I have tried to show that the reading is in keeping with what we would expect on the presumption that Wittgenstein is deeply indebted to Kierkegaard. In Chapter Two, I defended the crucial assumption that resolute readers, like Conant, have already done much to defend: the view that Wittgenstein communicates indirectly. Going beyond what resolute readers have done so far, in this chapter, I have suggested that the particular truth that the *Tractatus* means indirectly to communicate is one very similar to that which is indirectly communicated by *Fear and Trembling*. Both books tempt us with a disincarnate concept of the self and of the norms that regulate our linguistic and ethical lives. Both books then urge us to resist that temptation and to arrive at an incarnate understanding of these liminal features of linguistic life. The value of this resolute reading is that it would permit us to find in the *Tractatus* the same kind of realism that we found in Kierkegaard. But the reading needs defence, and this brings me to the second way in which I mean to defend the speculations I have offered here.

My second strategy for defending this reading is to avail myself of the continuity theses that characterized the strong resolute approach to the *Tractatus* and to show that the reading is in keeping with the views of the later Wittgenstein. By the continuity thesis, if this can be shown, then these later views can be attributed to the early Wittgenstein as well. It remains to be seen, however, that the views I have ascribed to the early Wittgenstein can indeed be found in the later work. First, it is

not yet amply clear that the interplay between new and old functions, in Wittgenstein's notion of remembrance, in the way that it functions in the Kierkegaardian repetitional picture. We have seen various subtle indications that the triadic truth about the Tractarian self, logic, and ethics is 'revealed' in the sense that we saw Wittgenstein sketch and Diamond explicate in Chapter Four. To further clarify the Wittgensteinian notion of revelation, I have compared it to the notion of revelation at work in Kierkegaard's account of remembrance as repetition. The *Tractatus* moves us remember anew, or repeat, rather than repudiate, various aspects of the Tractarian self, of logic, and of ethics. However, my suggestion would benefit from further support and, as strong resolute readers, we can look for this support in the concept of remembrance that we will find, next chapter, in the later writings. Here, it will be more clear that the interplay between old and new, identity and difference, past and future, in Wittgenstein's view of remembrance has a repetitional structure. Looking back from the perspective of the later work, and with the continuity thesis in hand, it will strike us that the Tractarian movement of self-transformation does not feature a recreative repudiation of the selves we were, but a repetition whereby the former self is saved and carried forward into the future, born again. And since this is how it will be with the remembrance of what we mean by 'the self,' so too, *mutatis mutandis*, is this how it will be with the remembrance of Tractarian meaning in general, for the man is the microcosm of the world (NB, 84). The result will be that we find a compelling kind repetitional realism in the later work and one which, by the strong continuity thesis, can confirm the more tenuous proposal that I have made in the foregoing reading of the Tractarian ethic.

7. Chapter Seven: Repetitional Realism and the Question of Linguistic Revisionism

7.1. Introduction

I have been arguing that, like Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein has no truck with the recollective and metaphysical account of philosophical forgetting that we found in Plato's *Meno*. As we know, on that account, the meaning of our words can be temporarily lost to our conscious awareness but is nevertheless determinately present in memory as a hidden determination of truth that only needs to be illuminated by the light of philosophical reflection. These remembered determinations of philosophical truth are the Ideas, or Forms, or *essences* of the particular things that populate the temporal world. In the *Investigations,* Wittgenstein reminds us that this distinctly metaphysical account of essence is bound to the illusion that philosophy can provide a fixed, final, and complete analysis of what it is that we mean by our words (PI, §91-§92). Elsewhere, we learn that this Platonic illusion of essence is informed by a "craving for generality" (BB, 16-18) that is connected to philosophy's "tendency to look for something in common to all the entities we commonly subsume under a general term" (ibid.), and to "Plato's conception of properties as ingredients in things" (RFM, I-§72). The common properties in question are like "ingredients of the things which have the properties; e.g., that beauty is an ingredient of all beautiful things as alcohol is of beer and wine, and that we therefore could have pure beauty, unadulterated by anything that is beautiful" (BB, 16-17). Here we have the illusion of essence, or meaning, in Platonism that Wittgenstein wants to dispel, no less than he wants to dispel the parallel illusion of a soul unadulterated by the body. Wittgenstein's comment on Plato here is of particular interest in connection with the suggestion from William Brenner and Anthony Rudd from which we started, and which this dissertation has been an attempt to explore. Brenner and Rudd offered that "Wittgenstein's methodology can be seen as a 'demythologized' version of that practiced by Socrates in the *Meno*; he is trying to make us aware of what we have really known all along" (Rudd 2005, 155, n. 16). Our question was: just how far does the comparison of Wittgenstein to Plato go?

We have noted that, for Plato, the relation between the eternal essences and the temporal things in which those essences are manifest is mirrored in the Platonic account of the relation between the eternal soul and the temporal human body in which the soul is only contingently housed. In Plato, self stands to the world as microcosm to macrocosm. So too, I have argued, in the *Tractatus*. Further, I have argued that Wittgenstein no more fully rejects the Platonist idea of a non-naturalistic and non-temporal aspect of the self than he rejects the Platonist idea of philosophy as an effort to remember philosophical truth, including the truth about the self. Neither, as we have just seen, does Wittgenstein fully recoil from the Platonic idea that remembering philosophical truth is a matter of remembering the essence of the things that we use language to describe. "*Essence* [*Wesen*] is expressed by grammar" (PI, §371), Wittgenstein writes. How so? "Grammar tells us what kind of object anything is" (PI, §373). It is in the grammar of words that we must look for the essence of things, numbers or colours (Z, §357), pains or memories (PI, §307, cf., PI, §303-06), or anything else besides. Unlike the Platonist, our interest in essence is not a metaphysical desire to "*see right into phenomena*" (PI, §90) and to find, therein, "answer[s] to these questions [that are] to be given once and for all, and independently of any future experience" (PI, §92). But like the Platonist's investigation into essence, "our investigation is directed not towards *phenomena*, but rather, as one might say, towards the '*possibilities*' of phenomena" (PI, §90). Our most general interest, of course, is in the essence of language. "[W]e, in our investigations, are trying to understand the essence [*Wesen*] of language – its function, its structure" (PI, §92). On our conception, however, "the essence of things [is] something that already lies open to view, and that becomes *surveyable* though a process of ordering" (PI, §92). Essence is not a metaphysical "[s]omething that lies within [...]and which an analysis is supposed to unearth" (ibid.). Since the later Wittgenstein is commonly regarded as the twentieth century's arch anti-'essentialist,'[194] his evident respect for the notion of essence takes us by surprise and leaves us unsure of how it ought to be interpreted. Guided by Wittgenstein's Tractarian claim that the self stands to the world of language as microcosm to macrocosm, and bearing in mind the repetitional realism of the self that we found in the *Tractatus*, my aim in this chapter is to show that Wittgenstein's remarks on essence can be read as pointers toward a repetitional-realistic account of the essence of things in general.

Mulhall speaks to this connection when he hints that the *Investigations'* discussion of private language is the later Wittgenstein's effort to grapple with the notion of the soul (Mulhall 2007, 143).

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[194] If Richard Rorty has done the most to create this impression (see Rorty 1979), to my knowledge Stephen Mulhall has done the most to combat it (see Mulhall 2015).

If this is so, then the effort to remind us of the soul's mysterious being might be most audible in the dramatic moment of that discussion when Wittgenstein voices his resistance to the allures of behaviourism. Thinking that Wittgenstein *is* a kind of behaviourist, the interlocutor of the *Investigations* objects, and points out that one cannot reasonably deny the inner experience of pain. Wittgenstein corrects his false impression:

> 'But you will surely admit that there is a difference between pain behaviour with pain and pain-behaviour without pain.' – Admit it? What greater difference could there be? – 'And yet you again and again reach the conclusion that the sensation itself is a Nothing.' – Not at all. It's not a Something, but not a Nothing either! The conclusion was only that a Nothing would render the same service as a Something about which nothing could be said. We've only rejected the grammar which tends to force itself on us here. (PI, §304)

Wittgenstein frequently speaks about the inner mental life of the subject – one's conscious awareness, or what we ordinarily call one's *mind* – not, as one would expect, as *Geist*, but *Seele*, that is, *soul*.[195] Noting that there are religious connotations to talk about the soul that we do not normally associate with talk about the mind, Hacker's recent translation of the *Investigations* renders *Seele* as 'mind' in cases where religious connotations are not obviously present (see PI, xiv-xv). In this, Hacker overrides Anscombe's earlier decision to abide by Wittgenstein's own language and translate *Seele* as 'soul,' even in these cases where spiritual matters seem not to be at issue.

Hacker's amendment is questionable. First, the Anscombe translation is by far the more natural of the two. Second, Anscombe's translation permits us to see how the parallel between the Tractarian soul – the liminal self – and the world's liminal logic might be carried over into the later work, namely, as a parallel between the inner life, or soul, of a person and the grammatical *essence* of things or, what I will claim comes to the same thing, the meaning of words. The connection comes into view when Wittgenstein notes our natural "tendency to regard the word as something intimate, full of soul" (Wittgenstein 1980, I-§324; cf., Mulhall 2001, 173), and when he suggests that ours is a language in which the *soul* of words plays an important part (PI, §530). These, admittedly, are the barest hints of the earlier Tractarian parallel between the liminal self and the world's liminal logic, but we know that Wittgenstein communicated by the barest of hints, and this one points us in a fruitful direction of inquiry.

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[195] See PI, §188, §196, §283, §290, §295, §357, §391, §423, §454, §530, §573, §577, §585, §589, §648, §652-653, §662, §676. I have limited myself here to passages in the first half of the *Investigations*. Many more references to *Seele*, in contexts where one would ordinarily render *Geist,* can be found in Part II.

The hints suggest that Wittgenstein is no more an anti-realist about the 'inner life' of words than he is an anti-realist about the inner life of persons.[196] More specifically, the hint suggests that the Tractarian promise of an ethical self-transformation of the liminal self, which I suggested is echoed structurally in the more general promise of logical transformation, might re-emerge in the later work as an account of grammatical transformation. If so, and if I am right in my suggestion that a repetitional account of realism about logic is silently present in the early work, then we could expect such an account of realism to emerge with greater clarity in the *Investigations*. For, recall, on our strong resolute hypothesis, the later Wittgenstein attempts to say with slightly more clarity what, in his early work, he passed over in such silence that it went almost entirely unheard. Furthermore, we could expect that, along with Wittgenstein's efforts to help us remember the meaning of 'self,' 'logic,' 'ethics' and of any other words that come to cause us psycho-spiritual torment (PI, §133), he will be striving, like Kierkegaard, to help us remember the meaning of philosophical 'remembrance' itself. Just as Wittgenstein does not deny the inner reality of the soul, he does not deny that one of the soul's activities – indeed its distinctively philosophical activity (PI, §127) – is that of remembering. As he goes on to explain to his interlocutor in the discussion of private language, the task is to remember the meaning of 'remembering' aright:

> 'But you surely can't deny that, for example, in remembering, an inner process takes place.' – What gives the impression that we want to deny anything? When one says, 'Still, an inner process does take place here' – one wants to go on: 'After all, you *see* it.' And it is this inner process that one means by the word 'remembering.' – The impression that we wanted to deny something arises from our setting our face against the picture of an 'inner process.' What we deny is that the picture of an inner process gives us the correct idea of the use of the word 'remember.' Indeed, we're saying that this picture, with its ramifications, stands in the way of our seeing the use of the word as it is. (PI, §305)

We will see that Wittgenstein's realism about the meanings we remember emerges in the later work in the same way that it emerges in the *Postscript* and in *Fear and Trembling*. It appears when the text brings us to see how our conception of remembrance and our conception of ourselves can be brought into their proper harmony. Wittgenstein urges us to resist our attraction to a concept of remembrance that is suitable only for a Platonic or Tractarian soul that lies inexpressibly beyond the reach of a temporal language, and whose powers of recollection can bring us to a complete and final

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[196] I am aware that many still interpret the private language arguments as a contribution to behaviourism. Naturally, I disagree, but will not argue for the point here.

grasp of self and world. In rejecting this illusion, we are brought to a concept of remembrance that is, if not identical with Kierkegaard's concept of repetition, at least best understood on the Kierkegaardian-repetitional model. As in Kierkegaard, this renewed, repetitional (and repeated) concept of remembrance will come with a renewed understanding of the essence, or meaning, that is thereby remembered. And this, in turn, will provide us with a renewed realism. Since meaning and essence are, for Wittgenstein, a matter of grammar, we can begin by taking stock of what we know about grammar, and by taking a closer look at those aspects of the concept that will be relevant to what I will argue is Wittgenstein's grammatical realism.

7.2. 'Essence is Expressed in Grammar'

Newton Garver points out that there is an ambiguity in Wittgenstein's use of the term 'grammar,' and the same could be said for his use of the equivalent term 'logic.' On the one hand, these terms designate the phenomenon that philosophy describes: the rules of language. On the other hand, as in the popular use of 'grammar' and 'logic,' these terms designate the practice of describing those rules (Garver 1996, 157). As we know, philosophical therapy is the practice of grammar in the second sense of the word; it reminds us of our grammar in the first sense of the word, and it does so by bringing us to see that certain grammatical, or logical, propositions express the rules we go by. In expressing the meaning of words and the rules that regulate their use, grammatical propositions 'deal with measures'[197] but also express the *essence* of the phenomenon 'measured.' Mathematical phenomena will prove an informative starting point for our investigation into the nature of grammatical essence more generally.

"[I]n mathematics we are convinced of *grammatical* propositions; so the expression, the result, of our being convinced is that we *accept a rule*" (RFM, II-§26). In a mathematical proof, for example, "[t]he proposition proved by means of the proof serves as a rule – and so as a paradigm. For we *go by* the rule [....] For the mathematical proposition is to show us what it makes SENSE to say" (RFM,

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[197] Wittgenstein expands:
> The role of propositions which deal with measures and are not 'empirical propositions.' – Someone tells me: The stretch is two hundred and forty inches long. I say: 'that's twenty foot, so it's roughly seven paces' and now I have got an idea of the length. The transformation is founded on arithmetical propositions and on the proposition that 12 inches = 1 foot. / No one will ordinarily see this last proposition as an empirical proposition. It is said to express a convention. (RFM, V-§1)

Why is a proposition of grammar not an empirical proposition? For reasons already familiar:
> [T]o say of a proposition: 'This could be imagined otherwise' or 'We can imagine the opposite too,' ascribes the role of an empirical proposition to it. […] A proposition which it is supposed to be impossible to imagine as other than true has a different *function* from one for which this does not hold. (RFM, III-§6)

II-§28). The proof reminds us of how we to ought to 'go on' when we describe reality in terms of certain mathematical- grammatical rules (RFM, II-§69).[198]

Since the rules of mathematics are rules of grammar, much that we have said about other grammatical rules can be said about mathematical rules. Like the standard meter bar, a mathematical proof functions as a "norm of description" (OC, §321, §167), or a "means of representation" (PI, §50) in the sense that it enables us to describe, or 'represent' extended things in terms of the property for which it is the paradigm case. And, to be sure, if the expression of a mathematical rule can be called true, it is at least not true in the manner of an empirical proposition, or *statement*.[199] We 'Naming' something 'the standard meter' has already taken place by the time we come to making descriptive statements about meter length. It is in this sense that "naming [a standard] and describing do not stand on the *same* level: naming is a preparation for describing" (PI, §49). Statements require a comparison between the described object and the standard instantiate of the property being predicated of that object. True statements require that that comparison shows us that the object manifests the property belonging to the standard. But since, for example, the standard meter just is the paradigm by comparison to which true or false descriptions of meter length might be made, and since the standard cannot be sensibly compared with itself, we cannot truly state that *it* is a meter long (see Allen 1993, 113-32; cf., PI, §216). In the same sense in which logical propositions of *Tractatus* say nothing (T, 4.461), the grammatical propositions of the later work state nothing. The question of whether or not grammar is, for the later Wittgenstein, a real normative structure comes to this: does the fact that a grammatical proposition is not true in the manner of a statement mean that it not genuinely true of the world at all?

The anti-realist reading of grammar answers 'yes.' It regards the later Wittgenstein as having eschewed the metaphysical realism of the orthodox *Tractatus* and settled with something close to the

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[198] Wittgenstein clarifies: "What I am saying comes to this, mathematics is *normative*" (RFM, V-§42; cf., ibid., V-§46) and, as we know, the same goes for grammar – for logic – in general (PI, §81).

[199] Of the standard meter,

> one can state [*ausagen*] neither that it is 1 meter long, nor that it is not 1 meter long […]. – But this is, of course, not to ascribe any remarkable property to it, but only to mark its peculiar role in the game of measuring with a meter-rule [....] And to say 'If it does not exist, it could have no name' is to say as much and as little as: if this thing did not exist we could not use it in our language-game. – What looks as if it *had* to exist is part of the language. It is as paradigm in our game; something with which comparisons are made. And this may be an important observation; but is nonetheless an observation about our language-game – our mode of representation. (PI, §50)

As a further illustration, we are given the example of the standard exemplar for the colour sepia:

> Suppose that samples of colour were preserved in Paris like the standard meter. So we explain that 'sepia' means the colour of the standard sepia which is kept there hermetically sealed. Then it will make no sense to *state* of this sample either that it is of this colour of that it is not. (PI, §50, emphasis added)

positivistic intuition retailed in *Tractatus* as the idea that the propositions of logic are purely contentless (T, 6.1-6.111). The following, writes Hans-Johann Glock, is "a grammatical reminder: We call a proposition true or false, but not concepts, rules or explanations [of what we mean by our words]. A unit of measurement is not correct or incorrect in the way that a statement of length is" (Glock 1996, 50). Peter Hacker concurs: "Grammar is not answerable to reality in the currency of truth" (Baker and Hacker 2009, 336; cf., ibid., 19). An earlier passage about the logic of the standard can certainly seem to confirm this anti-realism. Wittgenstein writes the following of grammatical propositions:

> [T]he reason why they are not brought in question is not that they 'certainly correspond to the truth' – or something of the sort, – no, it is just that this is called 'thinking, 'speaking,' 'inferring,' 'arguing.' There is no question at all here of some correspondence between what is said and reality; rather, is logic *antecedent* to any such correspondence; in the same sense, that is, as that in which the establishment of a method of measurement is *antecedent* to the correctness or incorrectness of a statement of length. (RFM, I-§156)

Or again:

> Logical inference is a transition that is justified if it follows a particular paradigm, and whose rightness is not dependent on anything else. (RFM, V-§46)

When we grant that logical propositions are not true in the manner of statements, we are saying that they cannot be said to *correspond* to any reality. We are saying that logical propositions do not *picture* logical reality, as empirical propositions picture empirical facts, for logical propositions are not bipolar. To clarify what I will *not* want to argue here, I should note a crucial implication of this. The implication is that the "linguistic facts" (Z, §447) described by grammatical propositions are not empirical-statistical generalizations about the customary use of words. In this connection, we shall ultimately need to resist the familiar reading of Wittgenstein, often summarised in the slogan that 'meaning is use.' We shall come back to the point, but it is worth pursuing for a moment more here.

Certainly, for a large class of words, meaning can be identified with use (PI, §43), but not everything we are inclined to call an experience of word meaning will turn out to be an experience of word use. Wittgenstein asks rhetorically, "isn't it an empirical fact – that *this* word is used like this?" (OC, §306). Indeed it is, and for any given word. But this only goes to show that there is more to meaning than use. As we saw, "we are not doing natural science, nor yet natural history" (PI, II-§365) so that "if someone were to say 'So logic too is an empirical science' he would be wrong" (OC, §98). The description of meaning is not the description of *empirical* reality. This means that, for

all our familiarity with the slogan that 'meaning is use,' grammatical descriptions of meaning (of grammar) are not simply empirical propositions about the use of words. As Gordon Baker notes, the philosopher's rendering of what I mean by my words "is not simply a hypothesis which squares with my behaviour" (Baker 2006, 148), and neither is it simply a hypothesis that squares with the behaviour of my linguistic community. Such 'squaring' belongs to the empirical, correspondence-theoretical model of truth and, as we know, such a model is unsuitable for thinking about the truth of grammatical propositions.

Neither, of course, is a description of meaning a description of *metaphysical* reality. In the later Wittgenstein, as in the earlier, the movement away from metaphysics requires us to resist our temptations to express our grammatical commitments with overly strong assertions about what *cannot* obtain in grammar, the 'cannot' which leads us into the "complete darkness" (BB, 18) of metaphysics. Warnings against this temptation abound in Wittgenstein's remarks on the grammatical propositions of mathematics. Consider: "The dangerous, deceptive thing about the idea: 'The real numbers cannot be arranged in a series,' or again, 'The set of .... is not denumerable' resides in making what is a determination, formation, of a concept look like a fact of nature" (RFM, II-§3). Or again,

> 'Fractions cannot be arranged in an order of magnitude.' – First and foremost, this sounds extremely interesting and remarkable. It sounds interesting in a quite different way from, say, a proposition of the differential calculus. The difference, I think, resides in the fact that *such* a proposition is easily associated with an application to physics, whereas *this* proposition belongs simply and solely to mathematics, seems to concern as it were the natural history of mathematical objects themselves. / One would like to say of it e.g.: it introduces us to the mysteries of the mathematical world. *This* is the aspect against which I want to give a warning. / When it looks as if ..., we should look out. (RFM, II- §10)

Is it obvious from any of this that grammatical propositions are not genuine propositions? I think not. We remain where we found ourselves a moment ago: we know that, if grammatical propositions make a claim to truth – if they are genuine propositions –, it is not the truth of a bipolar proposition. Neither, I think, is a realistic account of grammar ruled out when we look closer at the notion of essence that Wittgenstein speaks of in his crucial claim that "*Essence* is expressed in grammar" (PI, §371).

7.2.1. Essence and Existence

We've seen that, in reminding us of the meaning of our words, philosophy is not in the business of making statements. One way to put this point is this: statements register with us as informative claims – claims that tell us something we didn't already know – where grammatical propositions register with us as *reminders* of truisms already familiar. The point can also be put a second way: the grammatical proposition expresses the *essence* of what we mean by our words, rather than a claim that any particular state of affairs actually *exists*. To put the point in yet another way: the grammatical proposition expresses *internal* rather than *external* relations and is, for this reason, in some sense *timeless*, or *non-temporal*. For example, "'White is lighter than black.' This expression […] is non-temporal and it [...] expresses the existence of an internal relation" (RFM, I-§104). In *On Certainty,* where the province of grammar expands to include apparently empirical claims,[200] the trouble with construing grammatical propositions as a species of empirical proposition is again expressed as the idea that grammatical truths are 'non-temporal.' Wittgenstein asks: "Now, might not 'I *know*, I am not just surmising, that here is my hand' be conceived as a proposition of grammar? Hence, *not* temporally?" (OC, §57). Once more, in the *Remarks on Colour,* we see again that a proposition that expresses an internal, logical relation expresses a non-temporal truth.

> A language-game: Report whether a certain body is lighter or darker than another. – But now there is a related one: State the relationship between the lightness of certain shades of colour. […] The form of the propositions in both language-games is the same: 'X is lighter than Y.' But in the first it is an external relation and the proposition is temporal, in the second it is an internal relation and the proposition is timeless. (Wittgenstein 1977, I-§1)

> A natural history of colour would have to report of their occurrence in nature, not in their essence. Its propositions would have to be temporal ones. (Wittgenstein 1977, III-§135)

'White is lighter than black' looks as though it asserts a kind of necessary fact about the metaphysics of colour, but something here is amiss. The comparison between these apparently metaphysical statements and obviously non-metaphysical statements like 'the standard meter is one meter long' suggests two general features of the Wittgensteinian alternative to this idea that essence is a curious, metaphysical, kind of *existence*.

First, as we know, rather than being statements about what exists, philosophy's grammatical descriptions of the rules of language – of the meanings of words – are expressions of *essence* (PI,

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[200] This reading of *On Certainty's* hinge propositions is controversial. Danielle Moyal–Sharrock is perhaps the most forceful proponent of the view that hinge propositions are propositions of grammar, not the empirical propositions they appear to be (see Moyal-Sharrock 2004, 48, 86-87). I endorse this reading in what follows.

§371). Here, once again, the example of mathematical propositions is helpful. "We regard the calculation as demonstrating an *internal property* (a property of the *essence*) of the structures" (RFM, I-§99), the grammatical structures, that is, at work in a mathematical proposition. Surely, these meaning structures *look* as though they exist, but we have seen that Wittgenstein attaches the notion of 'existence' to what can be expressed by informative statements, and grammatical explications of the rules that have always already been at work in our normative practices do not register with us as informative. "What looks as if it *had* to exist is part of the language" (PI, §50).

The distinction between an expression of the *existence* of certain particular things, and an expression of their *essence* comes out also in the grammar of theology, which Wittgenstein hints at in his pregnant remark: "Grammar tells us what kind of object anything is (Theology as grammar)" (PI, §373). [201] We find an elaboration of the thought in *Culture and Value*:

> God's essence is said to guarantee his existence – what this really means is that what is here at issue is not the existence of something. / Couldn't one actually say equally well that the essence of color guarantees its existence? As opposed, say, to white elephants. Because all that really means is: I cannot explain what 'color' is, what the word color means, except with the help of a color sample. So in this case there is no such thing as explaining 'what it *would* be like if colors *were* to exist.' (CV, 82)

If it is the essence of God to exist, then there is no *saying* – no *stating* – what it would be like *if* God were to exist, for saying *that* presupposes that we could also make sense of what it would be like for God not to exist. To fully understand the idea of God is to find the notion of His nonexistence unintelligible. To speak of God is to speak of something that exists necessarily, in the grammatical sense of 'necessity.' What we find, then, is that even in the exceptional case of God where essence *does* involve existence, it remains the case that essence does not *exist* in the usual sense of 'exist.' Grammatical expressions of essence are not descriptions of contingent, empirical, facts, nor descriptions of metaphysical facts which, once more, model themselves on empirical claims and fancy themselves bipolar.

We should not be misled by the example of God, which is, as we just noted, a unique case where essence and existence (possibility and actuality, eternity and time) grammatically coincide. In

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[201] Elsewhere Wittgenstein expands:

> Luther said that theology is the grammar of the word 'God.' I interpret this to mean that an investigation of the word would be a grammatical one. For example, people might dispute about how many arms God had, and someone might enter the dispute by denying that one could talk about the arms of God. This would throw light on the use of the word. What is ridiculous or blasphemous also shows the grammar of the word. (Wittgenstein 2001a, 32)

the ordinary case, in Wittgenstein as in the tradition, existence is a matter of the actuality of phenomena, where essence is a matter of possibility. And, as in the tradition, we have seen that "our investigation is directed not towards phenomena, but rather, as one might say, towards the *'possibilities'* of phenomena" (PI, §90). In Wittgenstein's handling, however, "[w]hat that means is that we call to mind the kinds of statement that we make about phenomena;" this is why "[o]ur inquiry is […] a grammatical one" (ibid.)

Let us now turn to the second general feature of the Wittgensteinian alternative to the metaphysical picture. In our metaphysical moods, we misunderstood the sense in which these formulations express something *timeless*. Rules are not to be construed as an atemporal essence of the kind we see in Plato, for the meanings we describe are immanent in the spatial, corporeal, and historical practice of language. But it mustn't be forgotten that, in describing the rules of language, we are not offering empirical descriptions of linguistic practice. As Wittgenstein puts it:

> We're talking about the spatial and temporal phenomenon of language, not about some non-spatial, temporal non-entity. [Only it is possible to be interested in a phenomenon in a variety of ways.] But we talk about it as we do about the pieces in chess when we are stating the rules for their moves, not describing their physical properties. (PI, §108)

What, then, are these expressions of essence? What are we saying when we say that grammatical propositions express something *non-temporal*? As I've interpreted the claim, it means that the non-temporal rules of language are somehow immanent in their temporal expression, that is, in the use of meaningful words and deeds. But if we say this, have we not forfeited the idea they *transcend* that temporal expression? And if we forfeit this idea, have we not started down the garden path to some kind of psychologism, so that logic becomes a matter of how human beings happen think or speak, and so that reason is threatened by all the illusions of skepticism and relativism that Wittgenstein, following Frege, wants to dispel (see RFM, I-§132-52)? Wittgenstein acknowledges our worry about his position but suggests that the worry will dissipate if we bear in mind his above point about the two modes of interest we can take in language, and remember that we are talking about the non-temporal rules of language, not its temporal, physical, properties.

> It is not only our agreement in definitions, but also, (odd as it may sound) agreement in judgments that is required for communication by means of language. This seems to abolish logic, but it does not do so. – It is one thing to describe the methods of measurement, and another to obtain and state the results of measurement. (PI, §242)

We have already established what philosophical descriptions of the rules of language are *not*: they are not descriptions of certain empirical facts – neither psychological facts about human brains nor sociological-linguistic facts about patterns in language use. We also know this much about what they *are*: they are descriptions of the essential, non-temporal, meaning structures that we need already to have understood before we can grasp anything about the temporal processes of, for example, brain activity or linguistic parlance. Having turned from the *Tractatus*, our challenge is to determine what the later Wittgenstein thinks about this distinction between the temporal and the non-temporal, essence and existence, rule and the rule's expression in the linguistic practice that it regulates. We want to do so without falling into the empiricist tendencies of psychologism and conventionalism, which would render grammar purely, metaphysically, immanent in (purely reducible to) temporal phenomena. At the same time, we need to avoid the metaphysical tendencies of Plato and the recollective *Tractatus*, which would swing to the opposite extreme and render grammar an immutable metaphysical structure, eternal in a way that leaves it utterly untouched by time, and purely, metaphysically, transcendent to our temporal linguistic dealings. To work these ideas out, we need to look more deeply at the notions of truth and propositionality in grammar.

7.2.2. Essence and Propositionality

We've seen that part of what is being conveyed by the notion of non-temporality is that, unlike statements, grammatical propositions have that characteristic that Wittgenstein highlights in his reflections on philosophical method: they are uninformative truisms that register with us as things we both already understood and which, indeed, are so uncontroversial as to be indisputable. "Whom do we tell 'White is lighter than black'? What information does it give?" (RFM, I-§105).

> Here one needs to remember that the propositions of logic are so constructed as to have no application as *information* in practice. So it could very well be said that they were not propositions at all; […] for the mere ring of a sentence is not enough to give these connections of signs any meaning. (RFM, I-§20)

Two distinct questions arise here. First, is Wittgenstein claiming that grammatical propositions are not genuine propositions? Second, is he saying that grammatical propositions are not genuinely meaningful? Setting aside the second question for the moment, let us consider the first.

True to the anti-realist line we saw in Hacker and Glock's reading of the later work, Marie McGinn (1989, 128) and Danielle Moyal-Sharrock (2004, 40) argue that the grammatical propositions of mathematics are mere *sentences* without genuine propositional content. As against this

reading, Martin Kusch points out, that "Wittgenstein seems entirely comfortable with speaking of mathematical 'propositions' rather than 'sentences' – and even when stressing their uses as rules" (Kusch 2016, 124). Moreover, as Kusch goes on to note, "throughout the 1930s and 40s Wittgenstein talks repeatedly of the *truth* of mathematical propositions, and without any obvious hesitation or reluctance" (ibid).[202] Noting that mathematical propositions don't function to convey information, Wittgenstein concluded: "So it could very well be said that they were not propositions at all" (RFM, I-§20). But note: this is the expression of a *possibility*; it is not the expression of an opinion that we are being asked to embrace. The point goes equally well for non-mathematical propositions of grammar. We *might* conclude that the propositions of grammar are not genuinely propositional. We will do so, namely, if we insist upon the anti-realist analysis of grammar that we see in readers like Hacker, Glock, McGinn and Moyal-Sharrock. But, so far, nothing foists that anti-realism upon us. Kusch says the following about the passages where we are told that the propositions of mathematics are not *true*: "the important thing to note is that this claim only speaks against a *correspondence-theoretical* rendering of the truth of mathematical propositions" (Kusch 2016, 125), namely, the kind of truth that is appropriate to bipolar propositions. For all we have seen so far, the same can be said of those passages where Wittgenstein would seem to deny that truth can be a property of grammatical propositions more generally.

As we know, part of the epistemic profile of a grammatical proposition is that it cannot be doubted. On my reading, the fact that such a proposition cannot be doubted – the fact that it is *certain* – does not mean that it cannot be in error. It means, rather, that we cannot imagine in advance what its being in error would be like, for the proposition expresses an internal property of its object, in the way that Abraham's faith that Isaac will be spared expresses an internal property of Abraham himself.[203] This is important, I have argued, for it allows that a grammatical proposition

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[202] Kusch points us to the following passages:

> The proven mathematical proposition has, in its grammar, a preponderance towards truth. (2000: 113, 106)

> [T]he proposition '25 × 25 =625' may be true in two senses. If I calculate a weight with it […] First, when used as a prediction of what something will weigh […] In another sense, […] if calculation shows this […] (LFM, 41)

> What a proof proves is that the proposition is true. (2000: 123, 66r)

> The truth of the proposition that 4 + 1 is 5 is thus, as it were, overdetermined…in that the one declares the result of the operation to be the criterion of the execution of the operation. (2000: 164, 48-49)

[203] Perhaps a brief reminder of my argument on this point will be helpful. Only if one is committed to recollection will one say that one's inability to imagine the conditions under which we would consider such a proposition false means that the propositions *cannot* be false. Such a view presupposes the kind of essentialism that Wittgenstein rejects. We see that we are not driven to it once we see what Diamond pointed out in Chapter Four, and what so few scholars have been

can be, in a sense, *false*, despite its certainty. This means that it can possess either of the two truth values and can, therefore, be considered a proposition (PI, §136), even though we cannot clearly describe the conditions under which the belief would be false. In *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein grants the point unambiguously: "Really 'The proposition is either true or false' only means that it must be possible to decide for or against it. But this does not say what the ground for such a decision is like" (OC, §200). My suggestion is that this is a position he held from the time of *Tractatus*.

From this perspective, the *certainty* of given belief – the fact that a doubt about that belief is unintelligible – does not mean that the belief lacks propositional content. Consider: "'Nothing is so certain as that I possess consciousness.' […] This certainty is like a mighty force whose point of application does not move, and so no work is accomplished by it" (Z, §402). As in the field of mathematical propositions, when we assert our certainty that we are conscious, we are not expressing knowledge about a piece of information and, as in the field of mathematical propositions, Wittgenstein acknowledges that we *might,* therefore*,* conclude that such a proposition is not a genuine proposition at all. But, once again, he stops short of actually recommending that conclusion. "'I have consciousness' – that is a statement about which no doubt is possible.' Why should that not say the same as: 'I have consciousness' is not a proposition'?" (Z, §401). As elsewhere, this is not the expression of conviction, but a question, and a question posed by the philosopher who once wrote: "I should not like my writing to spare other people the trouble of thinking. But if possible, to stimulate someone to thoughts of his own" (PI, 4; cf., OC, §387).

7.2.3. Essence and Intelligibility

A moment ago, we set aside the question of whether Wittgenstein is saying that grammatical propositions are *meaningless*. Resolute readers occasionally give us the impression that, in their view, Wittgenstein is indeed saying grammatical propositions are no more intelligible than they are propositional (Conant 1998; Read 2010). Such readers leave us to believe, that is, that the later Wittgenstein gives up on his early distinction between nonsense [*Unsinn*] and senselessness [*Sinnlosingkeit*]. Recall that nonsense belonged to metaphysical propositions and other ill-formed pieces of language, while senselessness belonged to logical propositions which are well-formed and intelligible but, being purely analytic formalisms, say nothing about the world (T, 4.461-4.4611). The

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inclined to take seriously: Wittgenstein employs a concept of revelation that accounts for our orientation toward this particular kind of error, namely, cases of error where the very possibility of a mistake seems to be ruled out by logic (cf., OC, §67-68).

later Wittgenstein is said, then, to disregard the distinction between metaphysical propositions and propositions of logic, and to consign both to the dustbin of nonsense [*Unsinn*]. The idea here is that the use of informative propositions – statements, empirical claims – should be thought of as paradigmatic for all intelligible language-use. Grammatical propositions, once they have done their therapeutic work, are ultimately meant to be discarded as so much empty noise.[204]

We may be hearing something of this tendency in Kremer, I think, when he writes that, for Wittgenstein, "we must remain silent, and let logic, and life, speak for itself" (Kremer 2001, 53-52). Is Kremer's suggestion that there is nothing either propositional or non-propositional for a grammatical 'proposition' to express? When he writes that our logical knowledge is expressed in our logical know-how, is he suggesting that that know-how could not itself be formulated as specific rules, much as one could formulate rules for how one might ride a bicycle or swing a golf club? I am not sure. In any case, Coliva is surely right: some resolute readers leave us to believe that, in their view, Wittgenstein denies not only that there are limits to language that can be expressed in propositions – a position that is already too radical by my lights – but also, and much more radically, that he denies that we can express such limits *in language* at all.

If the later Wittgenstein indeed believed that grammatical propositions are not genuinely *meaningful* in any sense of the word, it would immediately follow that they are not meaningful *propositions*. The question of whether grammatical propositions should be given an anti-realist (that is, non-propositional) analysis or a realist (propositional) analysis does not even arise if grammatical propositions are simply gibberish. The trouble is this: if this particular aspect of some resolute readings is not a subtle bit of indirection (and I suspect that it is), it can only be based on a flagrant disregard of passages where Wittgenstein explicitly rejects the idea that all meaningful uses of language are statements, empirical claims.

Indeed, as we have noted, the later vision of philosophy is conceived as the business of reminding us of the meaning of our words, meanings which we already 'know,' not in the manner of informative empirical claims, but in the manner of truisms that lack a clear oppositional sense. But Wittgenstein would only discard grammatical remarks as fully nonsensical if he thought that the only

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[204] Annalisa Coliva summarizes this state of the debate:

> After the rise of so-called therapeutic or resolute readings of the *Tractatus*, it has become commonplace to admit only of one notion of nonsense and to take '*sinnlos*' and '*unsinning*' as in fact interchangeable. [...] [M]any of what in the *Tractatus* were considered *unsinnig* combinations of signs, *viz.* philosophical propositions such as 'Every effect has a cause,' were later considered as grammatical. That would point in the direction of equating grammatical propositions with nonsensical ones. (Coliva 2010, 88-89)

intelligible language-game was that of information-giving. This is not Wittgenstein's view. One use of language that can't be understood on the model of giving information, for example, is the way we use language – in philosophy, for example – to come clear about what we ourselves mean by our words. Wittgenstein is explicit on this: "I make a plan not merely so as to make myself understood but also in order to get clear about the matter myself. (I.e. language is not merely a means of communication)" (Z, §329). There is a *use* for such language, albeit not the use of conveying information. Wittgenstein was gesturing at the same point when we saw him describe the difference between the use of temporal, informative, propositions, and the use of non-temporal, philosophical propositions as a difference between *language*-games.[205]

The resolute reader publicly opposed to the idea that there is a sense to grammatical propositions is either forgetting or affecting to forget a point that Wittgenstein is frequently concerned to stress: language is not always used to communicate in Wittgenstein's technical sense of *informing* someone of something that they don't already know. Wittgenstein draws our attention, for example, to poetry: "Do not forget that a poem, even though it is composed in the language of information, is not used in the language-game of giving information" (Z, §160). When we remember that "philosophy ought really to be written as poetic composition" (CV, 24), we can see that grammatical remarks, though they are not pieces of information, need no more to be regarded as nonsensical than the propositions of poetry.

If the argument of this dissertation is correct, for Wittgenstein, some of our most important beliefs are expressed as certainties of grammar. In the cases that most concern Wittgenstein, our understanding of such certainties is blocked by an illusion so that, unlike pieces of information, they cannot be communicated to us directly. But we will only be forced into the paradox of saying that these most important certainties cannot find intelligible linguistic expression *at all* if we insist that all language has to be understood on the model everyday communication. "The paradox disappears only if we 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" (PI, §109).[206]

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[205] Recall: "A language-game: Report whether a certain body is lighter of darker than another. – But now there is a related one: State the relationship between the lightness of certain shades of colour. […] The form of the propositions in both language-games is the same: 'X is lighter than Y.' But in the first it is an external relation and the proposition is temporal, in the second it is an internal relation and the proposition is timeless" (Wittgenstein 1977, I-§1).

[206] Recall the earlier-quoted passage: "It is not only agreements in definitions, but also (odd as it may sound) agreement in judgements that is required for communication by means of language" (PI, §242). Noting that uses of genuine language are not always met with the easy agreement of others, and hence, do so seem to be in the business conveying

By and large, then, we can agree with Coliva. The utterance of a grammatical proposition is not a move *within* the language game of making informative claims. Nevertheless, grammatical propositions are meaningful because "they can have a point – in fact a *use* – which is either that of *instructing* someone about the use of a word, or about the rules of one of our epistemic practices; or of *reminding* someone – perhaps a philosopher – of their proper nature and role, against a tendency to take them for other than what they are" (Coliva 2010, 88-89). To Coliva's assessment, we need only add that, in the cases of linguistic confusion that Wittgenstein is most concerned to rectify, these 'instructions,' as 'reminders,' will only be communicated properly if they are communicated indirectly.

By the same token, by and large, we can agree with Kremer's point about the necessity of silence. That is to say, we can agree with Kremer if he only means that the insights that Wittgenstein wants to communicate must be communicated indirectly by exposing the illusions that block their reception and allowing those insights to dawn autonomously over the other person in a moment of grammatical revelation. But this does not require that a person convinced of ethical truths cannot express those truths in language, or speak about them directly to others who have already become convinced of them by properly indirect means. Jesus, after all, spoke in parables to the people, but plainly to the apostles.

7.2.4. Essence, Certainty, and Unassailability

Recall: "'Nothing is so certain as that I possess consciousness.' […] This certainty is like a mighty force whose point of application does not move, and so no work is accomplished by it"(Z, §402). How are we to understand this certainty? Is it the certainty of a kind of *grammatical*, or logical, proposition? It seems to be, for the proposition is unshakably certain and, "[t]o accept a proposition as unshakably certain […] means to use it as a grammatical rule: this removes uncertainty from it" (RFM, II-§40). On the same point:

> What relation has [the mathematical statement] to […] empirical propositions? The
> mathematical proposition has the dignity of a rule. / *So* much is true about saying that
> mathematics is logic: its movement is within the rules of language. And this gives it is

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information, Jonathan Lear raises the pertinent question: "But what if language isn't to be a means of communication? As far as I can determine, the *Investigations* does not consider this question" (Lear 1984, 230). We have just seen that Wittgenstein does consider the question and that he agrees with Lear: not all language is a means of communication (Lear 1984, 230).

peculiar solidity, its unassailable position, set apart. / (Mathematics deposited amongst the standard measures). (RFM, I-§164)

'I possess consciousness' and '2×2=4' are different kinds of proposition, but Wittgenstein would seem to regard the *certainty* they share as marking them out as equally grammatical.

Corresponding to the epistemological language that our 'knowledge' of grammatical structures is certain, we find the ontological language that those structures are, in some sense, *unassailable*, or *necessary*. In this connection we find yet another sense in which these structures are not 'temporal'.

'The 100 apples in this box consist of 50 and 50' – here the non-temporal character of 'consist' is important. For it doesn't mean that *now,* or only for a time, they consist of 50 and 50. / For what is the characteristic mark of 'internal properties'? That they persist always, unalterably, in the whole of what they constitute; as it were independently of any outside happenings. […] – Or again, I should like to say that they are not subject to wind and weather like physical things; rather, they are unassailable, like shadows. / When we say: 'This proposition follows from that one' here again, 'to follow' is being used non-temporally. (And this shows that the proposition does not express the result of an experiment.) / Compare 'White is lighter than black'. This expression too is non-temporal and it too expresses the existence of an *internal* relation. (RFM, I-§101-104)

It is their being a species of logical proposition that endows mathematical propositions with truth that is not just more certain than (i.e., different by degree from) their empirical counterparts, but a truth that is Wittgenstein would like to say, unassailable. Why might this be the expression of something that Wittgenstein would only *like* to say? Presumably, his trepidation concerns the metaphysical hazards that surround the use of the logical 'cannot,' for to claim that a logical truth is unassailable just is to say that it 'cannot' be false. I don't want to suggest that Wittgenstein will back away from the idea that grammar is unassailable, but to suggest that the idea needs to be handled with care, and can easily lead us astray. What is this unassailability, or necessity, if it is not the expression of the sort of metaphysical necessity that Wittgenstein opposes? In Chapter Four, I argued that the anti-realist, neo-positivist, answer to this question that we find in 'Carnapian' readings Wittgenstein is unsatisfying. Before coming back around to my own positive, realist, proposal, I want to buttress those earlier objections to the anti-realist approach, and situate my own view as close kin to the grammatical realism we find in Stanley Cavell's account of grammar.

7.2.5. Grammatical Anti-realism, Revisited

Writing in collaboration with Gordon Baker,[207] Hacker exemplifies the anti-realist reading. He writes:

> *Rules are human creations* [....] They are the product of social coordination and normative pressure at particular times and places [....] Of course, some such rules have the appearance of sempiternality that transcends human existence (rules of inference, laws of thought). But this is deceptive. Such rules are, despite appearances to the contrary, human creations – although, of course, not necessarily the creation of any one human being. They are made, not found. They are not answerable to reality in the currency of truth (as are empirical propositions). (Baker and Hacker 2009, 66)

In Chapter Three, I described the view of logic that we find in Viennese logical positivists like A.J. Ayer as a strange brew of both recreative and recollective illusions. The recreative tendency lay in the quite sweepingly general thesis that the rules of language were chosen or sustained by us, on the grounds of their pragmatic value (Ayer 2001, 78) but that "[i]t is perfectly conceivable that we should have employed different linguistic conventions from those which we actually do employ" (Ayer 2001, 80-81). Momentarily we will see that Hacker wants to distance Wittgenstein from Ayer's very general way of putting the point, and this is undoubtedly a welcome amendment, since it is too ambitious to assume, as Ayer seems to do, that *all* the rules of grammar can be sustained or abandoned basis of any such pragmatic considerations. Still, the fact that Hacker is comfortable saying that Wittgenstein's rules of grammar are 'human creations' should give us pause. This manner of speaking places Wittgenstein too close for comfort to the recreative tendency that replaced traditional recollective metaphysics amongst Vienna positivists like Ayer.

In one passage that sits ill with Hacker's above recounting of grammatical rules, Wittgenstein goes out of his way to *avoid* the conclusion that Hacker finds him espousing, namely the conclusion that our grammatical systems can be said, generally, to have their origin in *us*. Wittgenstein writes: "We have a colour system as we have a number system. Do the systems reside in *our* nature or in the nature of things? How are we to put it? – *Not* in the nature of numbers or colours" (Z, §357). To be sure, this remark leaves us to draw the kind of positivistic conclusion to which Hacker is disposed. Bernard Williams read the remark in just this light when he interpreted it as meaning that "our talk about numbers has been determined by our decisions" (Williams 1981, 163), our decisions, namely,

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[207] Baker would later break off his collaboration with Hacker and rescind the earlier, "Hackerian' elements of his interpretation. Representative essays of the later Baker are collected in Baker 2006. I use the above statement from Baker and Hacker as a representation of Hacker's view and will refer to it as such.

to recognize certain 'assertability conditions' for the meaningful use of words (ibid., 162). But these conclusions go beyond anything that Wittgenstein has actually said. Indeed, once more, they say something that Wittgenstein has carefully *avoided* saying. On the face of it, he is suggesting that something important would be left out by saying *either* that the rules of language are created by human beings *or* that they are discovered as an aspect of the fully pre-existing and determinate 'nature' of things.

Our greater worry about Hacker's reading concerns not the uncomfortable proximity in which he places Wittgenstein to the recreative tendency of the Vienna positivists, but the proximity in which he places Wittgenstein to their countervailing recollective tendency. In Ayer, we saw such a tendency in the idea that, once we have exercised our sweeping latitude in choosing the rules of language, the analytic truths that follow from those rules are absolutely fixed. On the reading that I have offered, if our relationship to grammar were, in general, to be understood in such a way, then we could indeed say, with Hacker and the early Baker, that grammar's "*[r]ules are human creations*" (Baker and Hacker 2009, 66). The Carnapian view of grammar imposes upon our natural understanding of grammatical rules a quite unnatural, humanly contrived, metaphysical conception of such rules – one that reads into the notion of a rule our desire for metaphysical certainty. Before considering passages in Wittgenstein that trouble such a reading, it will be instructive to consider two passages that could be taken to recommend it. The first is a comment on the grammar of negation:

> There cannot be any debate about whether these or other rules are the right ones for the word 'not' (I mean, whether they accord with its meaning). For without these rules the word has as yet no meaning; and if we change the rules, it now has another meaning (or none), and in that case we may as well change the word too. (PI, §549)

The second passage clarifies the meaning of this first one. As we now well know, since the rules of grammar are not 'true of' a grammar metaphysically transcendent to their temporal expression in language, there is a sense in which the rules we follow when using a word cannot be wrong; namely, the correspondence-theoretic sense that pertains to empirical propositions. The rules of language, manifested in our temporal linguistic practices and formulated in our grammatical propositions, cannot be inadequate to the grammatical essences of the things themselves in anything like the way that the rules of cookery can be inadequate to the dishes we hope to create by following those rules.

> You cook badly if you are guided in your cooking by rules other than the right ones; but if you follow other rules than those of chess you are playing another game; and if you follow

grammatical rules other than such and such ones, that does not mean that you say something wrong, no, you are speaking of something else. (PG, I- §133; cf., Z, §320, PI, §497)

The point of both of the above passages follows straightforwardly from the dictum that the meaning of a word is given by the rules that regulate its use. *If* we do not regard the rules that regulate the new use of a word as the same rules that guided its use beforehand, then we will not regard the word as having the meaning it had. In this case, we will have started speaking about something else. But notice that this does not say anything about *when* we ought to say that the rules of language have changed; it does not say, more pointedly, that the rules have changed when a word's *use* has changed, even if that use departs from its historical use radically, and in ways that could not have been foreseen. This, of course, is exactly the kind of situation we encounter in the repetitional view of meaning-remembrance that I am attributing to Wittgenstein. Let us be clear: in repetition, the rules *are* changed, for repetition involves the incursion into language of genuinely *new* determinations of grammar, to wit, determinations of grammar that permit unforeseeably new ways of going on with words. However, as we know, in repetition, the element of change and novelty is evanescent. We are left feeling that the new rules are the same as the old, and our impression of radical difference is eclipsed by a more overwhelming impression of identity.

If Hacker is right, there is little room for repetition in the later Wittgenstein's picture. Consider Hacker's characteristically 'Carnapian' description of Wittgenstein's position on the unassailability of grammar.

> Though unassailable, so-called necessary truths are not immutable – we can, other things being equal, change them if we so please (with provisos concerning logic […] and appropriate qualifications when it comes to expressions that are so deeply embedded in our form of life as to be unalterable by us). But if we change them, we also change the meanings of their constituent expressions – here Carnap was right. If we abandon the proposition that red is a colour, we thereby change the meanings of 'red' and 'colour'; if we drop the law of double negation, we change the meaning of negation. (Hacker 2005, 22)

Apart from the Promethean tones at work in the idea that it is *we* who change the rules of language, this passage seems fairly innocuous.[208] We agree: for Wittgenstein, the meanings of words can

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[208] Again, this is not to say that *we* cannot change the rules of grammar. We clearly can, but these are not the cases of grammatical change that concern Wittgenstein (PI, §132). As I understand Wittgenstein, in the cases we are concerned with, the relevant change in grammar is brought off by the reader to whom the new understanding of grammar is indirectly offered, and only if it is revealed to him as the understanding of grammar (of essence) uniquely illuminated by the therapeutic Good, or what Kierkegaard would call 'Governance.'

change. The more troubling, and anti-realistic, aspect of Hacker's interpretation of grammar comes with his evident assumption that any *essential* change in meaning would *ipso facto* be so drastic as to constitute a wholesale, Kuhn-style, change of subject, rather than revelation about the self-same essence that the former grammar of our temporal language only imperfectly expressed. Hacker does not describe the changed meanings as meanings *unforeseeable* to us, but this is, I think, what he must be getting at when he describes the changed meaning of a word as a meaning that we would explain differently than we explain the meaning at work in the word's earlier use.

> If someone admits that others use 'W' in accord with a certain rule, but insists upon using 'W' in accord with a different explanation of its meaning […], that does not mean that he is saying something wrong. It means that he is introducing a new use and speaking of something different. (Hacker 1996, 271 n.)

If we came to say that red is not a colour, we could no longer explain the meaning of the word 'colour' by pointing to the red patch on a colour wheel and saying, '*That* →, for example, is a colour.' Hacker's view seems to be that, in such a case, we would necessarily have changed the meaning of, for example, 'colour,' and changed it so radically that we would have changed the subject altogether. Is this so obvious? Is *white* a colour? If it is, would Wittgenstein insist that our current concept of colour would have fallen into total disuse if we came to say it wasn't? Our upcoming discussion of secondary sense will provide us with a more concrete reason to feel uneasy with the position that Hacker seems to be attributing to Wittgenstein here. For the moment, we can reiterate the worry about this anti-realistic line: Hacker's Wittgenstein seems to know in advance, and with Carnapian analytic certainty, that since what we mean by 'colour' entails that red is a colour, if we came to say that red is not a colour, we would simply have changed the meaning of the word 'colour' in the way that would have changed the meaning of 'W' in the above example. Our question is whether, for Wittgenstein, the future intelligible application of a rule – the 'end result' of following the rule properly – can always be read off from our present understanding of the rule in any such way. Oskari Kussella's comment on the Hacker view seems fair: "According to Hacker's interpretation […] the end result, or what will be agreed upon, is already known in advance" (Kussella 2008, 248). But "Wittgenstein […], unlike Hacker, […] does not suggest in any way that the outcome is already decided" (ibid.). True to Kussella's view, it is worth noting that Wittgenstein has pronounced reservations about describing the qualitative difference between the empirical truth of an 'experiential,' proposition, and the grammatical truth of a mathematical proposition, in the way that philosophers like Carnap and Ayer described it: as a matter of the latter being true *by definition*:

> In a most crude way – the crudest way possible – if I wanted to give the roughest hint to someone of the difference between an experiential proposition and a mathematical proposition which looks exactly like it, I'd say that we can always affix to the mathematical proposition a formula like '*by definition.*' / 'The number of so-and-so's is equal to the number of so-and-so's': experiential or mathematical. One can affix to the mathematical proposition 'by definition.' This effects a categorical change. If you forget this, you get an entirely wrong impression of the whole procedure. / The 'by definition' always refers to a picture lying in the archives there. (LFM, 111-12)

And that picture is misleading. What might be troublesome about this positivistic way of understanding unassailability? One problem, presumably, is the one we saw in Chapter Four: in its opposition to metaphysics, positivism itself makes a metaphysical misuse of the logical 'cannot.' The self-described metaphysician explicitly thinks that the certainties of logic are grounded in something like a super-empirical logical structure of the world. The positivist explicitly rejects this metaphysics when he claims that logical certainty is grounded in nothing more than human decisions to countenance certain linguistic conventions. Impliclty, however, the positivist ends up falling into a metaphysics of his own, a post-Kantian metaphysics that is, in the end, only nominally different from the pre-Kantian sort of metaphysics that the positivist officially abjures. The attempt to reduce logic to a system of forever unimpeachable *definitions* implicitly presupposes both a metaphysical, other-worldly conception of the philosophizing subject and a metaphysical, otherwordly conception of the logic that regulates his life with language. Presuming that, by 'definition,' Wittgenstein had in mind the strict and fully explicable linguistic conventions of the sort we find in Carnap, it is not clear how Hacker would try to square the above passage with his Carnapian account of grammar.

We know, of course, that the *Tractatus* gives voice to the positivist's particular form of the anti-realistic temptation. It was retailed in the dictum that "[a]ll theories that make a proposition of logic appear to have content are false (T, 6.111). We also know that the Tractarian dictum that the propositions of logic show something that they cannot say can easily be read as giving voice to our opposing temptation to a metaphysical realism about logic. On my reading of resolution, we should avoid both temptations. We should take Wittgenstein at his word in the letter he wrote to von Ficker, accept that the point of the *Tractatus* is not described in the pages of the book, and conclude that that point is captured by neither orthodox metaphysical realism nor positivist anti-realism which, after all, *do* appear in the book. I have granted that these same temptations appear when reading the later work, but my claim is that, here too, they are there to be overcome. The question

has been: how should we parse the *silent* message of the text? My claim has been that resolute readers risk misrepresenting that message when their language leaves us to suspect, as Mounce fairly did, that they view it as a call to the recreative and anti-realistic illusion that there are no limits to language and "that man is the measure of all things" (Mounce 2005, 105). Indeed, such a view is not a corrective to the aspect of recreative anti-realism that lies in the positivistic Carnapian approach, but a recreative anti-realism of the much more virulent strain that Murdoch traced from Sartre back to Nietzsche, Kant, and Milton's Lucifer in *Paradise Lost*.

This discussion of the later work has returned us to the conclusion that, in previous chapters, I have drawn from the principles of the *Tractatus*: Grammatical truths are unassailable and certain neither in the manner of metaphysical claims about verities transcendent to time nor in the manner of invulnerable and contentless 'definitions' that we 'create' and which, once created, are forever fixed in their truth. This is not to deny that grammatical truths are, in a sense, necessary – that is, unassailable, – or certain. We are only saying that we misunderstand the necessity and certainty of a grammatical truth if we relate to that truth as a bit of penal code that prohibits us from doing certain things that we try to imagine, in thought, and negate as things that determinately *cannot* be done. In what sense is our knowledge of these truths *certain*? And are they genuine *truths* at all? When we say that grammatical propositions attempt to express something necessary, or unassailable, are we saying that the necessity in question belongs, in any sense, to the world beyond the human representational scheme? Though we will see that his reading of Wittgenstein is less than fully satisfying on this front, it seems to me that Stanley Cavell is one reader who indeed wants to venture an affirmative answer here and to say that descriptions of grammar have an *ontological* significance: they describe a *real* normative structure.

7.2.6. Cavell on Essence

Where I have been speaking of remembrance, Cavell speaks of *retrieval*: "when Wittgenstein says '*Essence* is expressed by grammar' (PI, §65), he is not denying the importance, or significance, of the concept of essence, but retrieving it. The need for essence is satisfied by grammar, if we see our real need" (Cavell 2000, 34). Agreed, but how so? Cavell never quite clearly says, but he would demure at the suggestion that our real need can be satisfied by anything like Hacker's Carnapian anti-realism. For Cavell's Wittgenstein, "[i]n 'learning a language' you learn not merely what the names of things are, but what a name is; not merely what the form of expression is for expressing a wish, but what expressing a wish is; not merely what the word for 'father' is, but what a father is; not merely what

the word 'love' is, but what love is" (Cavell 2000, 28). This way of reading Wittgenstein is undoubtedly inspired by Cavell's teacher, John Austin, whose 'linguistic phenomenology' comes close to the sort of view that Cavell has just expressed. For Austin, as for Cavell, "[w]hen we examine what we should say when, what words we should use in what situations, we are looking again not merely at words (or 'meanings' whatever they may be) but also at the realities we use words to talk about. We are using a sharpened awareness of words to sharpen our perception of, though not as final arbiter of, phenomena" (Austin 1956/1957, 8).

Like anti-realist readings of Wittgenstein, for Cavell, grammatical propositions express the 'criteria' that regulate the meaningful use or words. Unlike anti-realist readings, for Cavell, there is no meaningful distinction be drawn between expressing criteria that govern our use of words and expressing the essence of the things that we use those words to talk about.[209] Put differently, for Cavell's Wittgenstein, talk about the essence of things cannot be given a purely 'deflationary' analysis – it does not register a merely quaint and misleading desire to speak in what Carnap called the 'material mode' about what are, in truth, *merely* facts about language. For Cavell, if I understand him, our descriptions of grammar are attempts to express something *substantive*. They express something about our concepts, but they also do more than that: they express the very *being* of the things that we use those concepts to describe. In expressing the essence of things, descriptions of grammar aspire to tell us more than merely what we *say* about something; they aspire to tell us what something *is*.[210]

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[209] Nicholas Gier makes the same suggestion in his *Wittgenstein and Phenomenology* (Gier 1981, 91-134).

[210] Though the debt to Austin is evident in Cavell's reading, it is not primarily the example of Austin that Cavell uses to guide us in our approach to Wittgenstein, but Heidegger. As Cavell puts it, for both Wittgenstein and Heidegger, the conventions of culture and language not only express an agreement *between* human beings who, sharing those conventions, are moved to parse the world in similar ways. Our shared conventions also express our shared sense of what those things objectively are. In this sense, while expressing an agreement between persons, our shared conventions also express what we take to be an agreement between the norms of our shared language and the structure of our shared reality. Here is Cavell:

> However opposite in other respects Wittgenstein's intellectual taste is from Heidegger's, in linking the comprehension of the objective and the cultural they are closer together than each is to any other major philosopher of their age. For Wittgenstein's idea of a criterion – if the account of *The Claim of Reason* is right, as far as it goes – is as if a pivot between the necessity of the relation among human beings Wittgenstein calls "agreements in form of life" (PI, §241) and the necessity in the relation between grammar and world that Wittgenstein characterizes as telling what kind of object anything is (PI, §373), where this telling expresses essence (PI, §375) and is accomplished by a process he calls 'asking for our criteria.' If for example, you know what in the life of everyday language counts as – what are criteria for – arriving at an opinion, and for holding firmly to an opinion, and for suddenly wavering in your opinion, and trying to change someone's (perhaps a friend's or an enemy's) opinion of someone or something (of a friend, an enemy, an opinion), and for having no or a low opinion of something, and for being opinionated, and being indifferent to opinion (that of the public or that of a private group), and similar things then you understand what an opinion *is*. (Cavell 1989, 49-50)

The suggestion that Wittgenstein might be usefully compared to Heidegger has been fruitfully taking up by Mulhall, in his comparative study of the *Investigations*, *Being and Time,* and *Fear and Trembling* (Mulhall 2001).

Here, of course, we are far from Hacker's Wittgenstein. Referring to the above-quoted passage from Austin, Hacker adds: "If Wittgenstein is right, then Austin's methodological remark is misguided" (Hacker 1997, 206, n.18) and so, for Hacker, the Austinian element in Cavell's reading of Wittgenstein must be misguided as well. For Hacker, a Wittgensteinian "conceptual investigation will *not* produce insights into the nature of the world" (Hacker 1997, 206).

In his recent assessment of this debate, Andrew Inkpin concludes that the sort of reading we see from Hacker wins out decisively over the sort proposed by Cavell:

> Wittgenstein explicitly and unequivocally claims in PI §383 to be 'analysing not a phenomena (e.g., thinking), but a concept (e.g., that of thinking), and so the application of a word.' Although the tenability of this distinction might be challenged – isn't the investigation of language simultaneously an investigation of phenomena, as Austin would later claim? – Wittgenstein's self-understanding is clear: the object of his descriptive study is language, not phenomena as such. (Inkpin 2016, 168)

I think Inkpin is right when he suggests that the distinction can be challenged, but from all we have seen so far, it is not obvious to me that Wittgenstein himself is not inviting us to challenge it. But let us be precise. First of all, it oversimplifies matters to say, with Inkpin, that a realistic understanding of grammar implies that a grammatical investigation is an investigation into *phenomena.* Indeed*,* as we have seen, "our investigation is directed not towards *phenomena*, but rather, as one might say, towards the *'possibilities'* of phenomena" (PI, §90). The real question is this: Might this investigation into these possibilities of phenomena be an investigation into the very *being* of things? Inkpin is right that grammatical investigations inquire into the structure of concepts, but this too is no death blow to the realistic reading. The question is whether we can give a realistic analysis of concepts, of logic (grammar), of *meaning.* A long and venerable tradition of philosophy and theology would grant that we can and, I am suggesting, all that we have seen so far permits us to read Wittgenstein as a philosopher trying to effect a renewing remembrance – a 'retrieval, as Cavell called it, – of that tradition. Finally, it is true, as Inkpin notes, that we can only describe concepts, or meanings, by way of describing the uses of words in which meanings are manifest. On the Kierkegaardian reading I'm offering, the use of a word is the best 'picture' of its meaning, just as "[t]he human body is the best picture of the human soul" (PI, II-§25). But this does not mean that the meaning is reducible to word-use, any more than it means that the soul is reducible to the body. It means, rather, that if the normative order of meaning, grammar, concepts, is a real non-temporal texture of significance, transcendent to its temporal embodiment in language, it will at the same time have to be immanent

within language, and that our descriptions of it will need to 'go through' descriptions of the uses of meaningful words and deeds.

But what of those passages where Wittgenstein seems to be rejecting any such realism? What about his objection, for example, to "making what is a determination, formation, of a concept look like a fact of nature" (RFM, II-§3). We also considered his warning that a mathematical grammatical

> proposition is easily associated with an application to physics, whereas this proposition belongs simply and solely to mathematics, seems to concern as it were the natural history of mathematical objects themselves. / One would like to say of it e.g.: it introduces us to the mysteries of the mathematical world. This is the aspect against which I want to give a warning. / When it looks as if ..., we should look out. (RFM, II- §12)

I have argued that remarks like these do not cinch the case for Hacker against Cavell. Wittgenstein is saying something very specific here when he speaks about the illusion that mathematical propositions express something about the mathematical *world*; he has in mind the world modelled on the example of the empirical propositions of physics and natural history. This leaves open what was suggested by Kusch's reminder that Wittgenstein does not hesitate to speak of mathematical propositions as *propositions*. It leaves open that he might regard these and other grammatical propositions as saying something about 'the world' in a sense of that term that does not model itself on the example of the *empirical* world. These passages do not drive us to deny that grammatical expressions of essence are expressions of being. We are driven only to conclude that, as we have already seen, 'being,' as the word applies to essence, does not designate a kind of existence.

Even a passage like the following, which might at first seem like a 'smoking gun' that proves the case for Hacker, allows that an investigation into the essence of language (logic, grammar, meaning, concepts) is, at the same time, an inquiry into being of the things that we use language to speak about:

> The word 'being' has been used for a sublimed ethereal kind of existence [....] One is tempted to pronounce a sentence like 'red is' when one is looking attentively at the colour; that is, in the same situation as that in which one observes the existence of a thing (or a leaflike insect, for example). (RFM, I-§72)

Wittgenstein goes on to explain that the use of the word 'existence' here is a simile (ibid.), and a misleading one at that: "it is not the property of an object that is ever 'essential,' but rather the mark of a concept" (RFM, I-§73). Does this mean that expressions of essence are without ontological significance, that they make no claim to truth, that they are *not* expressions of being? The remark

immediately preceding this claim about the relation between grammar and essence tells us quite unambiguously that any such bifurcation between a study of language and a study of the world is out of order. We are asked to consider the relation between imagination itself and the meaning of 'imagination':

> 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 the description of some kind of process. The first question also asks for the clarification of a word; but it makes us expect the wrong kind of answer. (PI, §370, emphasis added)

As far as I can see, nothing precludes the following interpretation of what Wittgenstein is up to here: To expect the wrong kind of answer would *not* to be to expect an answer that expresses something about a grammatical reality transcendent to the conventional use of words. To expect the wrong kind of answer would be to expect that any such expression of the world would have the logical form of a distinctly *bipolar* proposition.

What can we conclude? First, to Cavell's credit, we can say that his realist reading of grammar is, after all, not ruled out; perhaps it can be saved. Against Cavell, however, it can be said that he has not done enough to tell us how his realistic reading of grammar ought concretely to be worked out. More critically, the little that Cavell *has* said on this matter might well feed the impression that we saw articulated by Mounce: the impression that the resolute Wittgenstein, which Cavell's reading of the *Investigations* has done much to inspire, harbours within itself an unhealthy anti-realist tendency. How so? Hasn't Cavell's aim been to cast Wittgenstein's conception of grammar in a realistic light?

Notwithstanding the echoes of Austin that we hear in Cavell's proposed reading of Wittgenstein, Cavell's suggestion is this: to understand this aspect of Wittgenstein's thought, the proper object of comparison is not Carnap, but the philosopher that Carnap famously took to task: Martin Heidegger.[211] Cavell acknowledges that "[s]ome readers of Wittgenstein and some of Heidegger will [...] find the proposal of a connection here to be forced, even somewhat offensive."[212]

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[211] See note 210, above.
[212] The quotation continues:

Cavell doesn't explain the disquiet he has in mind. However, we saw H. O. Mounce express one cause for concern when he worried that resolute readers like Cavell place Wittgenstein perilously close to "Nietzscheans, Deconstructionalists, Neo-Pragmatists and Heideggerians, [who] all argue, though in various ways, that objective order is a delusion and that man is the measure of all things" (Mounce 2005, 104).

Mounce's concern would be most common amongst readers of Wittgenstein who associate the name of Heidegger with a familiar, voluntarist, reading of *Being and Time*. In that early book, Heidegger betrays his own debts to Kierkegaard and offers us his own account of "resoluteness," [*Entschlossenheit*] (Heidegger 1962, 343), the state of the human being who has, through an act of "resolution" (Heidegger 1962, 343) becomes at home in an 'authentic' understanding of self and world. On the voluntarist reading, Heidegger's 'resolution' is the mechanism by which the Pelagian human will saves itself from the experience of 'anxiety' that we undergo when we come to find the 'levelled-down,' 'everyday,' understanding of self and world meaningless. We overcome this sense of anxiety through a resolute 'decision' to chose the meaning of our own being and, thereby, the meaning of things quite generally. On this voluntarist reading of Heideggerian resolution, we determine the being (the grammar) of things in the Luciferian way that Murdoch has associated with Sartre and existentialism. Joseph P. Fell raises the relevant question in his comparative study of Heidegger and Sartre. How, Fell asks, are we to understand *Being and Time's* description of the self's capacity to overcome its sense of meaninglessness and anxiety through an act of resolute self-choice?

> In other words, we want to know [...] to what extent [*Being and Time*] is liable to a Sartrean or 'existentialist' interpretation in which man must supply to 'existence' an 'essence' that it lacks [....] Is this subjectivism and voluntarism all over again? And is Heidegger here really very far from the position of Sartre and Existentialism? [....] And if the particular meanings of innerwordly beings are conditioned by historical decision, does not the 'phenomenon' of phenomenology lose its relative independence and become 'subjectivized'? Does the spectre of idealism still haunt [*Being and Time*]? Does the spectre of nihilism haunt [*Being and Time*]? (Fell 1979, 99, 104)

I think it is worth wondering why. The proposal would, for example, be pointless apart from an interest in Wittgenstein's proposal that "grammar tells what kind of object anything is" (PI, §373) together with the conviction that grammar, through its schematism in criteria, is given in the ordinary" (Cavell 1989, 46).

In other words, the comparison to Heidegger is motivated by a desire to understand the connection between the human representational scheme and the human needs that determine its structure, and the objective world that we know in terms of that scheme.

Fell compelling argues that "the answer to this question is not unambiguous" (Fell 1979, 99; cf., Fell 1979, Ch. 2; Braver 2014, 89-90), but the voluntarist reading of Heidegger has found a wide reception and Murdoch, for one, has the impression that the Luciferian tendency runs even deeper in Heidegger than it does in Sartre. In what couldn't be her most charitable moment, she submits that "[p]ossibly Heidegger is Lucifer in person" (Murdoch 1997, 358).

We need not go so far as *that*. However, in the absence of a greater and clearer distance between Heidegger and Sartre, Cavell's reader might naturally feel uneasy with his attempts to draw Wittgenstein closer to Heidegger. Thus, while defending Cavell's generally realistic approach to grammar, we can appreciate why the comparison of Wittgenstein with Heidegger might make a reader like Mounce uneasy. When readers impressed by Cavell then advance what they call a 'resolute' reading of Wittgenstein, and when they fail unambiguously to distinguish the Wittgensteinian kind of resolution from the kind so often found in Heidegger, they leave us to worry that this Cavellian Wittgenstein is even farther from realism than his Hackerian antipode. Hacker's Wittgenstein claims that "[r]ules are human creations" (Baker and Hacker 2009, 66) and, despite the Promethean element of the view, this might seem to be no pernicious form of anti-realism. Since Hacker does not think that propositions about rules are propositions about reality, he can claim that rules are human creations without claiming that reality –*being* – is, *ipso facto*, a human creation as well. Since Cavell's Wittgenstein *does* find an intimate connection between rule and reality, if one presumes that he adopts the supposedly Luciferian elements that many have found in Heidegger, this Wittgenstein will seem to claim that *being itself* is a human creation and, in this way, one will arrive at an even more anti-realistic reading of Wittgenstein than Hacker's. To this first reason for concern about Cavell's reading, we can add a second, more general one: Cavell has simply said too little about the question that I have been so concerned to address: if Wittgenstein is a realist about meaning, what, exactly, does 'realism' mean here?[213]

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[213] I do not mean to suggest that Cavell's compassion to Heidegger cannot be made to work. First, sympathetic readings of *Being and Time*, such as Mulhall's 2001 comparison between the book, the *Investigations*, and *Fear and Trembling*, show little trace of the voluntarism that many have found in *Being and Time*. Thus, in Mulhall's hands, the comparison between the *Investigations* and *Being and Time* seems to me eminently helpful. Second, Cavell does not always compare Wittgenstein to the Heidegger of *Being and Time*. On one occasion, he clarifies: "I am proposing [...] here a connection between Wittgenstein's idea of philosophy's leaving everything as it is and Heidegger's 'letting-lie-before-us' (as in his elaboration of a saying of Parmenides in the last chapters of *What is Called Thinking?*)" (Cavell 1989, 46). It may be that, in this text, Heidegger has overcome the voluntarism that is arguably present in *Being and Time*. My concern about the comparison to Heidegger, then, is not that it cannot be made to work – I think Mulhall makes it work indeed. My claim is only that unless it is couched within a sympathetic study of Heidegger, like Mulhall's, one is left unclear about how the person proposing this comparison understands Heidegger, and about what aspects of Heidegger one is reading into Wittgenstein. Since Cavell doesn't provide such context and, given the odour of voluntarism that still lingers around the

What is clear is this: Cavell needs to say more about the structure of the later Wittgenstein's realism, and Cavell's comparison of the later Wittgenstein to Heidegger risks casting grammar in an even more anti-realistic light than Hacker's comparison of Wittgenstein to Carnap. There is promise for a grammatical realism in Cavell's view that descriptions of grammar express the being of things that we know in grammar's terms. But how might Cavell's reading be developed so as to avoid the air of anti-realism that some will be inclined to read into Cavell's comparison of Wittgenstein to Heidegger?

Amongst the strategies that I used in the last chapter to approach a realistic understanding of the *Tractatus* were the following two. First, I was guided by Wittgenstein's analogy between self and world. Second, I was guided by the assumption that Wittgenstein's ethical project bears deep debts to Kierkegaard. In the next two subsections, I sketch an account of how these two strategies might be applied to the reflections in the later philosophy that are occupying us here.

7.2.7. Soul and Body, Meaning and Word

In a striking remark, Wittgenstein suggests that our inclination to confuse grammatical truth with empirical truth has two sources. The first source is our need for a *realistic* understanding of grammar. The second is our impression that any such understanding requires an empirical construal of grammatical truth – a construal according to which grammatical truth can be verified by experiment. Once again, the point comes out as a comment on the grammatical propositions of mathematics:

> The concept of calculation as an experiment tends to strike us as the only *realistic* one. / Everything else, we think, is moonshine. In an experiment we have something tangible [….] / It looks like obscurantism to say that calculation is not an experiment. And in the same way so does the statement that mathematics does not *treat* of signs, or that pain is not a form of behaviour. But only because people believe that one is asserting the existence of an intangible, i.e., shadowy, object side by side with what we all can grasp. Whereas we are only pointing to different modes of employments of words. (RFM, II-§76)

From what we have seen so far, it should be clear that I don't think we are forced to an anti-realistic reading by the claim, here, that in doing philosophy, "we are only pointing to different modes of employments of words" (RFM, II-§76). I have already granted that our access to the time and language transcendent aspect of grammar is the description of grammar's immanent, temporal,

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name of Heidegger, Cavell hazardously leaves his readers to worry that the *Investigations* is a clandestine celebration of the anti-realist, Promethean will.

manifestation in the use of words. On our reading, the 'only' at work in the claim that we are only pointing to uses of words is meant to suggest that the reality at issue is not to be understood as an empirical or metaphysical sort of reality, a 'shadowy, object side by side with what we all can grasp.'

An empirical construal of grammar is offered by psychologism (RFM, I-§158). On the psychologistic reading, the mathematician would hypothesize that people will give their assent to his proof, the verification of the proof would consist in their actually giving that assent, and mathematics would become the naturalistic, non-normative, description of psychological 'laws of thought.' Wittgenstein is pointing out that we are inclined to go in for this empiricist misunderstanding of mathematics because it seems to us that it offers the only realistic thinking of mathematics that we can have. The only alternative to this realism, we are inclined to think, would posit a suspicious metaphysical reality of mathematical essences and, in the analogous case, a strange, disembodied, spiritual reality of our pains. To resist the idea that the propositions of mathematics, and propositions about the inner life, are empirical propositions offends our sense of realism. Why? Because we think that any non-empirical construal of these phenomena would have to make of them a strange, other-worldly, kind of reality that is not immanent within the reality that we can all grasp but, somehow, *side by side* with it. But, Wittgenstein seems to be suggesting, rationalist metaphysics and empiricist naturalism do not exhaust the conceptual possibilities for realism. It is not the case that our only access to reality is the bipolar proposition or something that tries to be one.

Given Wittgenstein's analogy between the inner reality of pain and the reality of logic, his ripost to the behaviourist who denies the reality of the inner life suggests a parallel ripost to the conventionalist who denies the reality of a grammar. Against the behaviourist, Wittgenstein told us that the inner life is "not a Something, but not a Nothing either" (PI, §304). This is a paradox that "disappears only if we 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" (PI, §304). Anthony Rudd develops the point in a comparison between Wittgenstein's thoughts on the reality of the inner life and the reality of values:

> Pains and values may be just as real as houses, but they are not *things* like houses. The risk is that having rejected the idea that they are themselves somehow material things, we start thinking of them as like things – but disembodied and ethereal [....] Finally, if we reject this idea, we then conclude that they have no reality at all, and that all talk of them is empty (or merely emotive, or whatever). But all these moves are mistaken. If we want to understand

sensations, values, and so on, we should look to see how we use the words for them and in what circumstances of our lives. Then we will understand what reality they have. (Rudd 2003, 116)

In support of his reading, Rudd draws our attention to the following passages. The earlier suggestion that logic is *not* to be conceived as something 'side by side' with its expression in language appears again in Wittgenstein's description of how we ought *not* to conceive of the relation between the inner life of the self and the outward comportments of the body.

What does a psychologist report? – What does he observe? Isn't it the behaviour of people, in particular their utterances? But *these* are not about the behaviour. / 'I noticed that he was out of humor.' Is this a report about his behaviour or his state of mind? [...] Both; not side by side, however, but about the one via the other. (PI, II-§28-29; cf. Rudd 2003, 117)

We agree with Rudd: for Wittgenstein, "we experience the behaviour of others as expressive of mental states that transcend the behaviour that expresses them, and this transcendence is itself given in those experiences" (Rudd 2003, 120). But how, exactly, are we to understand this curious transcendence in immanence? Rudd never says. And what promise might there be in Wittgenstein's intimation of a parallel between the reality of the inner life of persons and the reality of logic? Wittgenstein is intimating that there is a *kind* of realism to be had about the essence of things that we express in grammatical propositions. He is suggesting that such a realism would construe the truth of the grammatical proposition not on the example of the empirical proposition, but on the example of propositions about the inner life of persons. On such a view, grammatical reality is a transcendence in the immanence of language akin to the transcendence in immanence that is the inner life, which Wittgenstein so often calls the 'soul,' in its relation to the body. "Not empiricism and yet realism in philosophy, that is the hardest thing" (Wittgenstein 1978, VI-§23).

On my reading, the key to understanding realism in the *Tractatus* is the analogy, in that book, between the liminal logic of language and the liminal self – the soul – of the human being. I am suggesting that the above-quoted RFM, II-§76 suggests that that same analogy might be key to understanding the realism of the later work. Let us turn, then, to considering what Wittgenstein has to say about the soul. He asks himself.

What do I believe in when I believe that that a man has a soul? What do I believe in when I believe that this substance contains two carbon rings? In both cases, there is a picture in the foreground, but the sense lies far in the background; that is, the application of the picture is not easy to survey. / *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. / The picture is there; and I do not dispute its *correctness*. But what is its application? Think of the picture of blindness as a darkness in the mind or in the head of the blind person. / While in innumerable cases we exert ourselves to find a picture, and once it is found, the application, as it were, comes about automatically, here we already have a picture which obtrudes itself on us at every turn – but does not help us out of the difficulty, which begins only now. / A picture is conjured up which seems to fix the sense unambiguously. The actual use, compared with that traced out by the picture, seems like something muddled. [...] [T]he form of expression seems to have been tailored for a god, who knows what we cannot know, [...] he sees into the consciousness of human beings. For us, however, these forms of expression are like vestments, which we may put on, but cannot do much with, since we lack the effective power that would give them point and purpose. / In our actual use of these expressions we, as it were, make detours, go by side roads. We see the straight highway before us, but of course cannot use it, because it is permanently closed. (PI, §422-426)

We can hear at least three suggestions here that are illuminating in connection with the analogy between the soul and logic.

One suggestion seems to be that we have forgotten what point and purpose our talk of the soul once served. It should be stressed that here, as in the early work, Wittgenstein has not disputed the correctness of our picturing the human being as a synthesis of body and soul (PI, §424), nor recommended that it be replaced with some behaviourist reduction of the soul to the body, perhaps on the grounds that behaviourism might preserve us from the kinds of philosophical confusion to which our talk about the eternal soul left us vulnerable. Far to the contrary, elsewhere he suggests that picture of the human being as possessed of an eternal soul may be so profoundly serviceable to the needs of human life that it can be forced upon us, just as he suggested that the same might be true about the concepts of 'God' and 'object' (CV, 86).[214] The question is only: how should this picture be understood?

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[214] "Religion teaches that the soul can exist when the body has disintegrated. Now do I understand what it teaches? – Of course I understand it – I can imagine various things in connection with it. After all, pictures of these things have even been painted. And why should such a picture be only an imperfect rendering of the idea expressed? Why should it not do the same service as the spoken doctrine? And it is the service that counts. / If the picture of thoughts in the head can force itself upon us, then why not much more that of thoughts in the mind or soul? / The human body is the best picture of the human soul" (PI, II-§23-25).

Second, and echoing the lesson we found in the resolute *Tractatus*, we lack the 'effective power' to remember that point and purpose of our talk about the soul *on our own*. Arguably, Wittgenstein, like Kierkegaard, is parting ways from the preoccupation with self-sufficiency that we see in the Socratic picture of philosophical learner where the teacher is an essentially dispensable midwife.

Third, our former, straightforward way of thinking about the human soul is no longer open to us. What view of the soul might Wittgenstein have in mind here? From our strong resolute perspective, and assuming the continuity thesis, he would have in mind that recollective illusion of the soul, metaphysically transcendent to time and body, and lost in an equally metaphysical misunderstanding of religious detachment, which he had already tried to dispel in the *Tractatus*. As we would expect from the parallel between the soul of persons and the meaning of words, shortly after the above passage from the *Investigations* that takes issue with this metaphysical illusion the soul, Wittgenstein takes issue with the parallel metaphysical illusion of meaning. We ask:

> How does it come about that this arrow → *points*? Doesn't it seem to carry within it something extraneous to itself? – 'No, not the dead line on paper; only a mental thing, the meaning, can do that.' – That is both true and false. The arrow points only in the application that a living creature makes of it. / This pointing is *not* a hocus pocus that can be performed only by the mind. (PI, §454)

Meaning is not related to the sign in which meaning is expressed as the Platonic soul is related to the human body. Meaning is not a mental thing accidentally expressed in the sign but essentially extraneous to it. *Pace* Plato, the meaning of 'beauty' is not something "unadulterated by anything that is beautiful" (BB, 16-17).

Where the Platonist's sublimated conception of the soul involved an inhuman indifference to the *body*, in Wittgenstein's handling, Plato's sublimated conception of meaning involves a correspondingly inhuman indifference to the *word*. Wittgenstein seems to have the Platonist in mind, for example, when he describes the illusory view that the linguistic, written or spoken, sign is *itself* dead, *essentially* bereft of any animating significance (PI, §432), and in need of being brought to life by something like a meaning, or a 'spirit' metaphysically transcendent to that sign (cf., PI, §36; cf., Finklestein 2000). What we have in mind here is a meaning that we imagine, not as something essentially manifest *in* the temporal use of the material sign, but as something that we can grasp independently of that use. Here we are held captive by the same picture that lies implicitly in the background of orthodox realists about Tractarian logic, the picture according to which an atemporal

logic can be held in one hand, a temporal language in the other, and the one assessed in terms of its mimetic fealty to the other.

> People say: it's not the word that counts, but its meaning, thinking of the meaning as a thing of the same kind as the word, even though different from the word. Here the word, there the meaning. The money, and the cow that one can buy with it. (PI, §120)

So too, people say: it's not the body that counts, it's the soul, thinking of the soul as the same kind of thing as the body, even though different from the body. Here the soul, there the body. This is an illusion of both the relation between soul and body and the relation between meaning and word. We saw Wittgenstein address the illusion earlier in his response to the interlocutor, who questions us when we say of a person that he is out of humour. The interlocutor asked: "Is this a report about his behaviour or his state of mind?" (PI, II-§29). Wittgenstein answered: "Both; not side by side, however, but about the one via the other" (PI, II-§29), the transcendent *via* the immanent, the non-temporal essence via its incarnation in the temporal word. But how are we to think about this difficult relation of transcendence in immanence? In my treatment of the *Tractatus*, I argued that the lesson of Wittgenstein's parallel between the liminal self and the world's liminal logic could be helpfully approached by comparing it with Kierkegaard's parallel between the essentially incarnate (embodied) self and the essentially incarnate (embodied) truth of Christianity. That lesson, I argued, was one about the repetitional structure of philosophical remembrance, and of the meanings we thereby remember. In what remains of this chapter, I want to show that this way of reading the *Tractatus* is borne out by a study of the later Wittgenstein's parallel between the souls of selves and the meanings of words. Let me review my proposal.

7.2.8. The Kierkegaardian Proposal

To understand a grammatical truth resolutely is to understand it 'from within' a commitment to that truth. To understand a grammatical truth 'from within' is to overcome our temptation to understand it as one amongst some plurality of meanings that we might assign to our words. In this regard, a resolute understanding of grammar requires a broadening of the ethical task illustrated by Kierkegaard's rendering of the story of Abraham and Isaac, *viz*. the broadening of that ethical task which, I suggested, was already called for by the *Tractatus*.

> Abraham overcomes his desire for invulnerability when he permits himself to relate to Isaac as an essential feature of who he (Abraham) is. For Wittgenstein, to do so is not to understand the essential bond between Abraham and Isaac as a *definition*. If the bond were definitional, Abraham

could look beyond the horizon of his current life, enter into the thought of having a new Isaac, and say to himself, '*that* is a person I *cannot* be.' For Abraham to be resolutely committed to being the person that he is – for him to be resolutely committed to the meaning he finds in the word 'Abraham' – is for him to be so undistracted by possible alternative interpretations of who he might yet become as to perish the thought of such alternatives altogether. In doing so, Abraham overcomes his desire for the kind of invulnerability – the kind of 'unassailability' – that he would have if he were prepared, in advance of his possible existential death, with some clear vision of who he might yet become if that death should indeed come to pass. In forfeiting this invulnerability, Abraham accepts the risk of grave suffering that the invulnerable knight of infinite resignation avoids, and which Abraham would indeed undergo if the life he loves should be taken from him.

What the resolute Abraham gains, first of all, is all the vitality of a unified existence, an existence where his existential energies find their focused and effective expression in devotion to a singular purpose for the sake of which he lives. This is what he gains by being undistracted from being the person he is by thoughts of who he might otherwise be. My claim here will be that, in Wittgenstein, resolute logical certainty and unassailability can be understood in the same way. To regard a logical rule as properly unassailable is to be *still* in living out one's commitment to it. It is to be undistracted by that plurality of different ways that one might 'go on' in one's application of that rule, the plurality that Wittgenstein describes in the rule-following considerations, and which so distracted Dummett's Wittgenstein. We will look more closely at this particular kind of linguistic instability in due course.

Secondly, a resolute Abraham gains the promise of rebirth, as a self newly united with his former life, in the event that existential death should indeed befall him. I have argued that such a devoted, resolute, form of life involves a deeply embodied understanding of that which gives one's life meaning. An embodied understanding of meaning is, as it were, the organic soil from which might emerge new revelations of the self – new essential meanings of one's life – into which one might yet be reborn. The promise of such rebirth is the faithful knight's eternal reward for resisting the allures of faithless resignation and its desire for invulnerability. Though his life is pervaded by the risk of suffering that the invulnerable man avoids, it is also pervaded by the promise of existential resurrection whereby one retains one's past self when one is born again into a hitherto unimaginable future. A resolute, embodied commitment to the self is not only the more ardent and intrinsically worthwhile way of living in the present. It is the mechanism of revelation and renewal by which one retains an intelligible relation with one's past and future.

In what sense, then, is a grammatical truth *unassailable*, or *necessary*? In the same sense in which Abraham is unassailably and necessarily the father of the living Isaac. Abraham's being necessarily, or essentially, consists in his life with the living Isaac just as, in Wittgenstein's example, "'The 100 apples in this box consist of 50 and 50'" (RFM, I-§101). In both cases, "the non-temporal character of 'consist' is important. For it doesn't mean that *now,* or only for a time" (RFM, I-§101). In what sense is our commitment to a grammatical truth *certain*? In the same sense that Abraham is certain that his life, as the father of the living Isaac, will be spared. In what sense, on this account do we arrive at what Wittgenstein called "the hardest thing" (Wittgenstein 1978, VI-§23), not metaphysical rationalism, not naturalistic empiricism, "and yet realism in philosophy" (ibid.)? In Wittgenstein, such a realism will emerge as the historical, horizontal, sense of 'transcendence' that we have found in Kierkegaardian repetition and which we have distinguished from recollection.[215] The claim is not that the temporal manifestation of grammar that is displayed in our pre-reflective linguistic practices and formulated in our grammatical propositions stands in a *vertical* relation to a purely eternal grammar that lies above and beyond time as a fixed, frozen, totality already all pre-given and laid out in the mind of a purely eternal God. The essence of things, the rules of grammar, transcend their temporal manifestation in language in the sense that the temporal manifestation of grammar is, as such, essentially unfinished, and open to being renewed through revelatory disclosures of *new* sense. These determinations of sense are not already pre-given and hidden deep within the individual mind or the conventions public language, "and which an analysis is supposed to unearth" (PI, § 92). They are, instead, determinations of sense that have yet to be created through the interplay of the soul's liminal linguistic freedom and a liminal logic that calls the soul forward into logic's own future revelations of itself. If the motto of vertical transcendence is 'Take a *deeper* look within,' "[t]he motto here is: Take a *wider* look round" (RFM, II-§2).

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[215] Mulhall does not speak of horizontal 'transcendence,' nor does he account for a turn from the vertical to the horizontal in the way I have in my reading of *Fear and Trembling*, namely, as a turn from a recollective to a repetitional account of remembrance. Mulhall has, however, inspired my thoughts on this front, especially as they enter into my reading of Wittgenstein. As Mulhall points out, when Wittgenstein's urges us to see our inquiry as turned around on the pivot of our 'real need' (PI, §108) he is urging away from the illusory need of "'state of complete exactness,' unearthing 'a single completely resolved' form that is thought of as hidden within our everyday expressions (PI, §91)" (Mulhall 2001, 93). In this, Mulhall suggests, Wittgenstein is urging us to consider the investigation into the essence of language as an investigation to be understood along a horizontal axis, rather than a vertical one:

> [S]ince our subliming of logic pictures it as hidden beneath, as needing extraction from, and as pointing beyond, the empirical or the phenomenal, we might say that the axis of reference of our examination hitherto has been vertical – penetrating beneath and pushing beyond a threshold. So, rotating our axis of reference would turn it towards the horizontal – towards a desire to stay with the surface we have hitherto wished to dig up or demolish, and attend to the logic of language as that is manifest in the empirical contexts within which our life with words is lived. (Muhall 2001, 92)

In these ways, I am claiming, Wittgenstein's teaching about what it means to bear a resolute relation to the meaning of our words mirrors Kierkegaard's teaching about what it means to bear a resolute relation to the meaning of our lives. In the *Tractatus*, it is most clear that Wittgenstein takes up Kierkegaard's conception of what it means to be resolute in relation to the self and, in particular, to the self's commitment to God, as the meaning of one's life. What is less clear in the *Tractatus*, and what comes out more clearly in the later work, is the way in which the structure of a resolute commitment to the meaning of one's life is, in Wittgenstein's ethical vision, mirrored in his view about the structure of a resolute commitment to the meaning of one's words in general. This, I suspect, is that Wittgenstein had in mind when, as a young man at work on the *Tractatus*, he wrote that man is the microcosm (NB, 84). I suspect it was also what he has in mind when, ten days before his own life came to an end, he left us the following reminder in his deathbed notebook:

> You must bear in mind that the language-game is so to say something unpredictable. I mean: it is not based on grounds. It is not reasonable (or unreasonable)./ It is there – like our life. (OC, §559)

Our questions, then, are these: How are we to understand this sense in which a grammatical proposition can be 'true to' the grammar of things it is meant to express? How are we to understand the sense in which the grammatical proposition aspires to express a *real* texture of meaning, independent of the human being? How, in short, are we to understand the reality of the grammatical truths that philosophy helps us remember? As was the case in my treatment of Kierkegaard, we need to approach the matter through an understanding of the *activity* of remembrance as it works itself out in the practice of indirect philosophical teaching and learning. In this connection, we turn to what I called, in Chapter One, the question of linguistic revisionism.

7.3. Neither Recollection nor Recreation: Revisiting the Question of Linguistic Revisionism

A kind of meaning-renewal runs through the heart of Wittgensteinian meaning-remembrance. This comes to light, for example, when Wittgenstein suggests that we need to look upon our uses of language *anew* if we want to solve our conceptual troubles. "In philosophy we must always ask: 'How must we look at this problem in order for it to become solvable?'" (Wittgenstein 1977, II-§11). Or again: "To resolve these philosophical problems one has to compare things which it has never seriously occurred to any-one to compare" (RFM, VII-§15). In tandem with this element of renewal, Wittgenstein's philosophical procedure features an element of *creativity*. Consider, in this connection,

a comment he makes to his students about how he helped resolve the tensions in their thinking about the concept of thinking. He invites them:

> [Recall] how I reacted to the question with which we started this term: 'What is thinking?' In a way I tried to change your point of view: look at it this way. We are inclined to compare some phenomena with something: I ask you to compare them with something else. The question vanished when we classified phenomena not with something happening. *We changed the concept we have.* (Wittgenstein 1988, 168, emphasis added)

A related passage reinforces our impression that this practice of assembling new comparisons provides us with a way of seeing that is in itself, in some sense, *new* as well:

> I wanted to put this picture before your eyes, and your *acceptance* of this picture consists in your being inclined to regard a given case differently; that is, compare it with this series of pictures. I have changed your *way of seeing*. (I once read somewhere that a geometrical figure, with the words, 'look at this,' serves as a proof for certain Indian Mathematicians. This looking too effects an alternation in one's way of seeing. (Z, §461; cf., PI, §144)

When we take it in conjunction with his previous comment to his students, the intimation seems to be this: changing one's way of seeing amounts to changing the concept with which one sees. The philosophical procedure of reminding us of the conceptual-grammatical rules that regulate our uses of words is concomitantly a procedure by which those rules are changed.

The tension in this odd, backward-and-forward-looking directionality of philosophical remembrance also comes out in reflections on the concept of mathematical proof hinted at above and developed at length in the *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*. Here we find a similarity between the proofs of mathematics and the 'proofs' of therapeutic philosophy. The similarity is interesting in connection with the curious logic of philosophical remembrance because Wittgenstein is especially clear that he is inclined to say that mathematical proofs function as paradigms in language that *create* new grammatical determinations, new mathematical *essences*. He writes the following about a proof that moves us to regard two shapes, H and P, as having the same number of salient features, namely by directing our attention to those features and away from others which, had we attended to *them*, might have resulted in our thinking that the figures do not have the same number of salient features at all.

> I might [...] say as a result of the proof: 'From now on an H and a P are called 'the same in number.' / Or: 'The proof doesn't explore the essence of the two figures, but it does express what I am going to count as belonging to the essence of the figures from now on. – I deposit

what belongs to the essence among the paradigms of language. / The mathematician creates *essence*. (RFM, §I-§33)

The tension in the notion of remembrance as renewal is faintly audible here when Wittgenstein introduces the reflection as something he *might* say, shying away from actually saying it. Elsewhere, the tension comes out as one between a picture of mathematics as a practice of following rules already in place, and a picture of mathematics as the creation of new rules.

> *So* much is true about saying that mathematics is logic: its movement is within the rules of our language. – And this gives it its peculiar solidity, its unassailable position, set apart. / (Mathematics deposited among the standard measures). / What then, – does it just twist and turn about without these rules? – It forms ever new rules: it is always building new roads for traffic; by extending the network of the old ones [....] The mathematician is an inventor, not a discoverer. (RFM, I-§164-165, §167)

Why would we think that mathematics can only twist and turn within the conceptual constraints of the established grammatical order? Presumably, because our recollective presumptions about the nature of philosophy make us think that the established grammatical rules rigidly fix the meaning and intelligible application of the relevant mathematical terms. Of course, according to one fundamental line of Wittgenstein's thought, we cannot *but* 'twist and turn about within these rules' without taking language on holiday, away from the contexts in which they have their intelligible use. The corrective to this idea – which Wittgenstein immediately supplies – comes from a second and equally fundamental aspect of his thought that is everywhere at work in the discussion of rule-following, family resemblance, and secondary sense: old meanings can be extended in novel ways, without yet becoming meanings *altogether* new, and also without degrading into nonsense. Evidently, the work of the mathematician consists in inventing such conceptual extensions. But there is a multi-layered tension here.

If the mathematician finds that the old, familiar rules can be extended in novel directions, isn't he simply finding that old, familiar rules *always* already permitted the new uses to which the mathematician puts them? But if this is so, in what sense is the mathematician an *inventor* who creates *new* rules? It would seem, rather, that he *is* a discoverer, not an 'inventor' at all, for it would seem that he has found uses of words that the old rules already permitted but had gone unnoticed, and dimensions of meaning that were *hidden*, in some sense of the word, in the rules of language with which he was always acquainted. The question is, in what sense were these possibilities of application 'hidden' in our former familiarity with language given that these rules are also, in some

sense, *new* creations that come into being through his own creative activity? Put differently, in what sense does the mathematician only help us *remember* rules already familiar? On the one hand, Wittgenstein's mathematician sounds like the recollective realist of Platonism or the orthodox *Tractatus* (who ultimately turns out to be an *anti*-realist)*,* unearthing the pre-giving mathematical properties of things laying latent in his philosophical subconscious. On the other hand, he sounds like the re-creative anti-realist, regarding even the exalted truths of mathematics as merely human creations.

We will come back to the worry that Wittgenstein may be lapsing into recreation here. For the moment, let us establish that the recollective reading has to be mistaken. Wittgenstein does *not* want to say that the unforeseen possibilities of sense disclosed by the mathematical proof "had to be really – in a mysterious sense – already *present"* (RFM, I-§122). Wittgenstein does not want to endorse anything like the Socratic picture of the human speaker as a special kind of language-using machine that *possesses* certain possibilities of expression in the way that a machine possesses certain possibilities of movement. These would be possibilities of expression rigidly fixed in advance by the rules of grammar in the way that the machine's possibilities of movement are fixed in advance by the physical laws that govern the machine.

> When does one have the thought: the possible movements of a machine are already there in it in some mysterious way? – Well, when one is doing philosophy. And what leads us into thinking that? The way we talk about machines. We saw, for example, that a machine *has* (*possesses*) [*besäße*] such-and-such possibilities of movement; we speak of the ideally rigid machine which can only move in such-and-such a way. (RFM, I-§125; cf., PI, §193)

When we bear in mind that our reminders of these rules are, after all, *reminders*, we can come to appreciate the remark immediately following the passage just quoted as a reflection on the status of the philosophical memory as that logical space wherein the mathematician – or the philosopher – urges us to look for the possibilities of sense.

> 'But I don't mean that what I do now (in grasping a sense) determines the future use *causally* and as a matter of experience, but that in a queer way, the use [of words] itself is in some sense present.' But of course it is, 'in some sense'! (And don't we also say: 'the events of the years that are past are present to me?'). Really, the only thing wrong with what you say is the expression 'in a queer way.' The rest is correct. (RFM, I-§126; cf., PI, §194)

In what sense, then, is my grammatical past – the rules I have always been going by and to which I am committed – still with me and awaiting remembrance if not in this queer manner of an

intellectual possession, already written into the eternal memory of the Socratic-metaphysical soul? The *Investigations* offers us the following object of comparison, but, once more, it tells us less about how we are to understand the sense in which these objects of remembrance are 'there' (where?) to be remembered than about how we are *not* to understand the matter.

> I want to remember a tune, and it escapes me; suddenly I say, 'Now I know it,' and I sing it. What was it like suddenly to know it? Surely it can't have occurred to me *in its entirety* in that moment! – Perhaps you will say: 'It's a particular feeling, as if it were now *there'* – but *is* it now there? Suppose I then begin to sing it and get stuck? (PI, §184)

The rule consists in its possible applications – in the possibilities of expression that the rule does and does not permit. Accordingly, the question of whether, and how, those possibilities are 'pre-given' amounts to the question of whether, and how, the rule itself is pre-given. Once more, what is clear is that the rule and its possibilities of application are *not* pre-given as forever fixed furnishings of the Socratic-metaphysical memory and that, accordingly, the remembrance of the rule is not recollection.

Another way to frame our question about the curious 'pre-givenness' of rules is as a question about the sense in which rules do and do not *compel* us in the way we go on to follow them. From what we have seen so far, it is quite clear that rules do not compel us as mechanisms rigidly fixed in the mind. Why not? Because, the suggestion has been, rules can be changed in and through the acts of remembrance that philosophy incites. Since the rule consists of the possibilities of expression that the rule allows for, our question about the strange pre-givenness of the rule in our grammatical past coincides exactly with a parallel question about the strange way in which that rule determines our grammatical future. In what sense, if any, is grammar *there,* awaiting its proper remembrance and determining its future applications? Here we can return to the analogy between the reality of grammar and the reality of the inner life. Wittgenstein intimates that our grammatical future, like our grammatical past and like an inner experience of suffering, is "not a Something, but not a Nothing either!"(PI, §304; cf., PI, 253)

> Why do I always speak of being compelled by a rule; why not of the fact that I can choose to follow it? For that is equally important. / But I don't want to say, either, that the rule compels me to act like this; but that it makes it possible for me to hold by it and compel me. [.…] My question really was: 'How can one hold by a rule?' And the picture that might occur to someone here is that of a short handrail, by means of which I am to let myself be guided

further than the fail reaches. (But there *is* nothing there; but there isn't *nothing* there!) (RFM, V-§46)

As Wittgenstein develops his characterization of the mathematician as the grammatical innovator, that characterization is presented again and again as a *temptation*; as a position that he would only *like* to embrace: "One would like to say: the proof changes the grammar of our language, changes our concepts. It makes new connexions. (It does not establish that they are there; they do not exist until it makes them.)" (RFM, II-§35). The same issue, and the same uneasy temptation, is in play when we are invited to ask ourselves the following question about a proof that will determine whether a given number will occur in the infinite expansion of π:

> What if someone were to reply to this question: 'So far there is no such thing as an answer to this question'? / So, e.g., the poet might reply when asked whether the hero of his poem has a sister or not – when, that is, he has not yet decided anything about it. / The question – *I want to say* – changes its status, when it becomes decidable. For a connection is made then, which formerly *was not there*. [...] / I want to say: it looks as if a ground for the decision were already there; and it has yet to be invented. (RFM, IV-§9; first emphasis added)

Again with trepidation: "*I should like to say*: the proof shows me a new connection, and hence it also gives me a new concept" (RFM, IV-§45; emphasis added). And once again:

> Now, ought I to say that whoever teaches us to count etc. gives us new concepts; and so also does whoever uses such concepts to teach us pure mathematics? / Is a new conceptual connection a new concept? And does mathematics create conceptual connections? / The word 'concept' is far too vague. / Mathematics teaches us to work in concepts in a new way. And hence it can be said to change the way we work with concepts. (RFM, V-§39)

Clearly, the idea that the mathematician invents new grammatical determinations is not a notion with which Wittgenstein is fully comfortable. This is unsurprising given the clear affinity between mathematics and philosophy, as two kinds of grammatical investigation, and the characterization of philosophy as the remembrance of grammatical truth, as opposed to the progressive pursuit of novelty and change. "And yet there is something in saying that a mathematical proof creates a new concept" (RFM, II-§42). What is this *something*? Why is Wittgenstein uneasy with it? And how it supposed to hang coherently together with the insistence that philosophy is not in the business of contriving new discoveries and inventions (PI, §126)?

7.3.1. Baker's Wittgenstein

Perhaps more than any other major commentator, Gordon Baker has highlighted the creative element in the practice of Wittgensteinian philosophical therapy. As for Fredrich Waismann, for Baker's Wittgenstein, philosophy "requires intellectual creativity, especially skill in expressing ideas picturesquely. The philosopher, one might say, is more of an inventor than a discoverer. His work must be anything but pedestrian if it is to be effective" (Baker 2006, 149). Charting close to Waismann indeed, for Baker's Wittgenstein, the "[c]larification of meaning is inventive and imaginative. It involves exposing unconscious pictures and in winning acceptance of new ones, or displaying unnoticed patterns (perhaps by employing new concepts like 'language-game' or 'family-resemblance'), or stipulating sharp meanings for certain expressions [....], This activity is essentially open-ended" (Baker 2006, 192-93). As against the Carnapian's claim that Wittgenstein cleaved intransigently to uses of words 'officially' already in place, Baker counters: "Wittgenstein made (created) distinctions to dissolve internal conflicts rather than discovering ready-made ambiguities meeting the criteria imposed by lexicographers for differentiating senses of words" (Baker 2006, 194). As against the idea that Wittgenstein only wants to remind us of how we have used words in the past and to enforce that use in the future, Baker offers that "[h]e exercised his freedom to legislate (stipulate) distinctions, and he left us the freedom to accept or reject them" (Baker 2006, 194).

As we saw in Chapter Four, for Baker, this rightful exercise of linguistic freedom on the part of the Wittgensteinian philosopher is replicated in the philosopher's respect for the linguistic freedom of his partner in the therapeutic exchange. Far from forcing his interlocutor to adhere to some pre-set grammatical code that regulates in exactly the same way for one and all, Baker's Wittgenstein is above all concerned to protect the autonomy of the interlocutor, leaving him the freedom to find his *own* way with words. In this respect, we saw, Baker reads Wittgenstein as having taken the same lessons from psychoanalysis as Waismann.[216]

In these aspects of his view, Baker offers a welcome corrective to the recollective element that we see in the Carnapian approach, which leaves little room for the kind of creativity and

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[216] "On this conception, every philosophical problem is *someone's* problem. Hence, one needs to isolate the sources, however, idiosyncratic, of the confusions of this individual patient, perhaps by calling to his attention certain pictures or similes that may have led *him* astray. Correct diagnosis depends on eliciting a confession from him […]; and the cure must be to help him to reorient his thinking – with his full cooperation. (In these respects there would be an analogy with the procedures of psychoanalysis.) In aiming at therapy, Wittgenstein might be concerned with treatment of a particular patient rather than with a kind of campaign to improve public health. The *Investigations* might be, as it were, a set of case histories of a general practitioner, not the execution of a campaign for ridding the world of smallpox" (Baker 2006, 132; cf., Baker 2006, Ch. 8-10).

freedom that Baker describes. Further, this stress upon creativity and linguistic freedom *could* be read as a step in the direction of the kind of repetitional realism that I have associated with the world-creative ethical task of the Wittgensteinian philosopher. Our worry about Baker is that it is not clear how he interprets this crucial role of freedom and autonomy in the Wittgensteinian philosophical picture. As we will presently see, Baker suggests that Wittgenstein's view of linguistic freedom can be compared to Nietzsche's. This suggestion leaves us worried that Baker's approach makes the mistake of reading Wittgenstein as swinging from the anti-realistic extreme of recollection and adopting the even more anti-realistic extreme of recreation.

On the recreative reading that we want to resist, freedom is important because a commitment to a given understanding of meaning is only significant for us if we see that it has its *sole* source in our own unaided, freely-choosing, will. From this perspective, philosophical freedom does not involve *recognizing* that a new expression of meaning is a fulfillment of meanings already familiar to us, for such a view implies our efforts in remembrance are constrained and rationally motivated by our fidelity to those already familiar meanings. Such a view implies that, in the repetitional sense, the new determination of sense is *true to* what we meant till now. This would limit our desire for the freedom of absolute self-sufficiency that permits us to sever ourselves from our linguistic past and begin again by simply *deciding* to accept some new grammar. In my view, of course, freedom in the remembrance of meaning is also crucial, but not, *contra* Sartre, because a resolute, significant commitment to some understanding of meaning requires that one be able to regard that commitment to as having its sole source in one's own unaided human will. Rather, on the repetitional view, freedom is required because a resolute commitment to meaning comes about when that meaning is thrust upon one in a moment of revelation, and only the free individual is receptive to such revelations. We have seen that this is an experience where one's free will, informed by an honest and historical understanding of meanings past, is solicited by meaning itself and provided with a new understanding of things that one could *not* have arrived at on one's own. Where does Baker's Wittgenstein line up along these axes of recreation and recollection?

As I anticipated a moment ago, some cause for concern emerges when Baker moves from his suggestion that Wittgenstein's method can be helpfully compared with Freud's and, changing the object of comparison, adds that it also "has some real affinities with the methods exhibited in the work of Nietzsche" (Baker 2006, 219 n. 43). Baker does not tell us what these supposed affinities are. However, the epigraph to his book on Wittgenstein's method, a quotation from *Beyond Good and Evil*, is suggestive: "Perhaps! – But who is willing to concern himself with such dangerous perhaps?"

(Baker 2006, Epigraph). If we are dismayed about the Promethean spirit and its tendency to rear its face in philosophy, we might be equally dismayed to learn that this remark occurs in the context of an encomium for Nietzsche's overman, the precursor to Sartre's existentialist hero and the 19ᵗʰ century's paradigm Prometheus.[217]

Of particular relevance here is Nietzsche's account of how one restores a fragmented life-narrative to a livably intelligible unity. We've seen how Sartre was occasionally inclined to deal with the issue. He suggested that one could overcome the distress one feels at being imprisoned, for example, by simply rewriting the meaning of one's life, abandoning one's former desire not to be imprisoned, and thereby eliminating the condition for the possibility of experiencing one's imprisonment as an obstacle to one's desires. The intelligible unity of one's life was restored, here, by abandoning that part of one's past that set one at odds with one's present. Thomas Anderson made the right retort when he pointed out that, very often, we simply lack any such radical freedom of the will. What we take to be the meaning of our lives – what we take to be, for us, a life of value – like what we take to be the meaning of our words, is historically conditioned and cannot generally be reworked with a brute movement of the will.

Kierkegaard concurred with Anderson: the self requires a sense of historical continuity, but this sense of historical continuity cannot, in general, be achieved or sustained at will by rewriting the meaning of one's past so as to align it with one's present and one's future. At least sometimes, all the interpretations of our past that we can create on our own power fail to restore our life to a meaningful whole, because they simply strike us as unconvincing, dishonest, incredible. At issue here was a basic fact about the logic of belief that goes overlooked in every voluntarist, or subjectivist, account of doxastic commitment: we can choose to be open or closed to empirical evidence, we can choose to be open or closed to revelation, and we choose to *say* or not say, whatever our heart desires. We do not choose, however, what we find *believable* or, more fundamentally*,* what we find *intelligible*. On the reading I have given of Kierkegaard, and on the reading I am giving of

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[217] The passage captures the overman's affinity for indirect communication, which he certainly does share with Wittgenstein. More troublingly, though, the passage captures the overman's contempt for the idea of a truth to which the human being is answerable.

> For all the value that the true, the truthful, and the selfless may deserve, it would still be possible that a higher and still more fundamental value may be possible that a higher and more fundamental value for life might have to be ascribed to deception, selfishness, and lust. It might even be possible that what constitutes the value of these good and revered things is precisely that they are insidiously related, tied to, and involved with these wicked, seemingly opposite things – perhaps even one with them in essence. Perhaps! / But who is willing to concern himself with such dangerous perhaps? For that, one really has to wait for the advent of a new species of philosopher, such as have somehow another and converse taste and propensity from those we have known so far – philosophers of the dangerous 'maybe' in every sense. / And in all seriousness, I see such philosophers coming up. (Nietzsche 1966, I-§2)

Wittgenstein, *belief* is not a matter of choice, and where we think it is, we are deceiving ourselves.[218] To say this is not to invoke a metaphysical concept of the limits of language and to say that, for us, certain thoughts lies beyond those limits. It is, instead, to recognize that the limits of language are limits of what a self-consciously historical speaker of language can say *with honesty*. "When you bump up against the limits of your honesty it is as though your thoughts get into a whirlpool, an infinite regress: You can *say* what you like, it takes you no further" (CV, 8).

What, then, if a person finds simply incredible all the interpretations of his fragmented life with language that he can willfully conjure up? Kierkegaard explored one option with his characterization of the reflective aesthete, in *Either / Or:* If we insist upon our self-sufficiency, we might simply give up our hope of living a unified narrative. The faithless reflective aesthete took a path of this kind. He knew that he could not achieve the newly unifying remembrance of his fragmented past through the use of the recreative will alone. Realizing this, he settled for recreating the meaning of his experiences in way that would permit him to forget them if need be. The result of such forgetting, however, was that his life was one of narrative disintegration and despair. The faithless knight of resignation preserved his self-sufficiency in the opposite way. He did not forget his past love of the princess when that love proved unjustifiable in his present circumstances. Instead, he chose to forget his present circumstances and take refuge in a metaphysical remembrance of that past. He entered into a fantasy life of restful suffering, where he mournfully enjoyed the princess in the form of a bloodless Platonic Idea. We saw the alternative to these two options in the knight of faith. This knight abandons the preoccupation with self-sufficiency. He has faith that a *Gestalt* shift in the order of meaning will reveal a genuinely convincing interpretation of his life, reuniting his present with his past and indicating some onward course into an intelligible future of value.

I have suggested that Wittgenstein sides with Kierkegaard, against Sartre, on this issue of our doxastic freedom to unify our lives into a credible narrative. Baker's comparison of Wittgenstein to Nietzsche should make us uneasy because it suggests that Wittgenstein sides against Kierkegaard with Sartre's forerunner, Nietzsche. Nietzsche holds a view very close to the same fantastical view of our power to restore our own life's narrative unity that we also have in Sartre. When Nietzsche's hero Zarathustra speaks about "redemption" (Nietzsche 2006, 109), he is appropriating the term into his own atheistic vision of the self, and expressing a proto-Sartrean view of how the unaided

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[218] In Chapter Three, we saw Pojman put it this way: "Believing seems more like falling than jumping, catching a cold than catching a ball, getting drunk than taking a drink, blushing than smiling, getting a headache than giving one to someone else" (Pojman 1985, 41; cf., Williams 1970, Heil 1983).

human will is supposed to manage when the understanding of things that formerly provided him with his bearings in the world has come to naught. Where Sartre considers the collapse of the 'fundamental projects' that characterize particular human lives, Nietzsche considers the collapse of whole cultural worldviews and, in particular, that collapse of worldview that he famously called 'the death of God.' In that prescient passage from *The Gay Science,* Nietzsche's 'madman' diagnoses this condition of a people unmoored from its linguistic past, and prescribes its Promethean antidote:

> 'Whither is God?' he cried; 'I will tell you. *We have killed him* – you and I. All of us are his murderers. But how did we do this? How could we drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What were we doing when we unchained this earth from its sun? Whither is it moving now? Whither are we moving? Away from all suns? Are we not plunging continually? Backward, sideward, forward, in all directions? Is there still any up or down? Are we not straying as through an infinite nothing? Do we not feel the breath of empty space? Has it not become colder? Is not night continually closing in on us? Do we not need to light lanterns in the morning? Do we hear nothing as yet of the noise of the gravediggers who are burying God? Do we smell nothing as yet of the divine decomposition? Gods, too, decompose. God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. / How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it? There has never been a greater deed; and whoever is born after us-for the sake of this deed he will belong to a higher history than all history hitherto.' (Nietzsche 1974, §125)

As in the Sartrean picture, a person or culture in this condition is alienated from its past and without a guide for forward motion in the present and future. To overcome this condition, "we ourselves [must] become gods" (ibid.) and this, for Nietzsche's 'overman' means that we need to "will backward" (Nietzsche 2006, 111, 112) and, thereby, unite the scattered fragments of the past, present, and future into newly recreated order. In doing this, the overman also recreates the world for the rest of us lesser men, who are not equal to this great Promethean task. The overman Zarathustra describes this mission to 'redeem' his world:

> I walk among human beings as among the fragments of the future; that future that I see. /
> And all my creating and striving amounts to this, that I create and piece together into one,

what is now fragment and riddle and grisly accident [….] To redeem those who are the past and to recreate all 'it was' into 'thus I willed it!' – only that would I call redemption! / Will – thus the liberator and joy bringer is called […] 'It was': thus is called the will's gnashing of teeth and loneliest misery. Impotent against that which has been – it is an a grey spectator of everything past. / The will that cannot will backward; that it cannot break time and time's greed – that is the will's loneliest misery. (ibid., 111)

And what of the illusions of sense that we are supposed thereby to overcome? Once more, through an act of the unaided human will, Nietzsche's overman "knows how to *forget* – he is strong enough; hence everything *must* turn out for the best" (Nietzsche 1989, 225). This is textbook recreative anti-realism.

It may be that Baker did not have these elements of Nietzsche in mind when he suggested that Wittgenstein can be fruitfully compared with Nietzsche. However, in the absence of further clarification, Baker's comparison of Wittgenstein with Nietzsche can be as misleading as Cavell's comparison of Wittgenstein with Heidegger. It encourages what Hacker called the 'deconstructionist" (Hacker 2000, 359) or "post-modernist interpretation" (Hacker 2000, 360) of Wittgenstein. Or again, plainly, it places Wittgenstein perilously close to "Nietzscheans, Deconstructionalists, Neo-Pragmatists and Heideggerians, [who] all argue, though in various ways, that objective order is a delusion and that man is the measure of all things" (Mounce 2005, 104). By his ambiguous use of Nietzsche as an object of comparison, Baker runs the same risk that Cavell ran with his ambiguous use of Heidegger: he leaves us to worry that his interpretation has taken Wittgenstein from the anti-realist extreme of recollection and placed him at the opposite but even more anti-realist extreme of recreation.

There is, of course, also a second key part of the difficulty with Baker's reading. It is not clear how Baker takes the creative and revisionary element in Wittgenstein's philosophy to hang together with Wittgenstein's insistence that philosophy is a practice of *remembrance* (PI, §127), that it has nothing to do with reforming language (PI, §124, §126, §132-133), and that it is concerned with "what is possible *before* all new discoveries and inventions" (PI, §126). To the same point, what does Baker make of Wittgenstein's pronounced aversion to "the progressive civilization of Europe and America" (CV, 7)?[219] As we saw Wittgenstein put it in the *Remarks*, he is not concerned with

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[219] Recall the relevant passage from Chapter Two:
It is all one to me whether or not the typical western scientist understands or appreciates my work, since he will not in any case understand the spirit in which I write. Our civilization is characterised by the word 'progress.' Progress is its form rather than making progress one of its features. Typically it constructs. It is occupied with

constructing anything, but with the paradoxical (and, I am arguing, *repetitional*) task of *returning* us to the place we already are. He wrote:

> I am not interested in constructing a building, so much as in having a perspicuous view of the foundations of all buildings. / So I am not aiming at the same target that the scientists and my way of thinking is different from theirs [….] I might say: if the place I want to get to could only be reached by way of a ladder, I would give up trying to get there. For the place I really have to get to is a place I must already be at now./ Anything that I might reach by climbing a ladder does not interest me./ One movement links thoughts with one another in a series, the other keeps aiming at the same spot. / One is constructive and picks up one stone after another, the other keeps taking hold of the same thing. (CV, 7)

A 1946 remark features a yet more despondent reflection on the endless march of progress when it is described as a potential march toward our demise. "It isn't absurd," we're told, "to believe that the age of science and technology is the beginning of the end for humanity; that the idea of great progress is a delusion, along with the idea that truth will ultimately be known; that there is nothing good or desirable about scientific knowledge and that mankind, in seeking it, is falling into a trap. It is by no means obvious that this is not how things are" (CV, 56).[220] The crucial statement of Baker's later interpretation is a volume on the aspects of Wittgenstein's philosophy that go neglected in his own earlier, and Hacker's current, Carnapian approach (Baker 2006). In all the essays in this volume, Baker never tries to square his stress upon the creative and revisionary element of that method with Wittgenstein's veritable repugnance for what he regarded as the myopically forward-thinking "civilization of Europe and America" (CV, 7), and his instance that philosophy is a non-revisionary, non-inventive, matter of meaning-remembrance.

> building an ever more complicated structure. And even clarity is sought only as a means to this end, not as an end in itself. For me on the contrary, clarity, perspicuity, are valuable in themselves. (CV, 7)

[220] Even more emphatically, Wittgenstein wonders if the value of the atomic bomb might finally consist in its capacity to break our insouciant trust in the value of scientistic progressivism.

> The hysterical fear over the atom bomb now being experienced, or at any rate expressed, by the public almost suggests that at least something really salutary has been invented. The fright at least gives the impression of a really effective bitter medicine. I can't help thinking: if this didn't have something good about it the *philistines* wouldn't be making an outcry. But perhaps this too is a childish idea. Because really all I can mean is that the bomb offers a prospect of the end, the destruction of an evil, – our disgusting soapy water science. And certainly that's not an unpleasant thought, but who can say what would come *after* this destruction? The people now making speeches against producing the bomb are undoubtedly the *scum* of the intellectuals, but even that does not prove beyond question that what they abominate is to be welcomed. (CV, 48-49)

7.3.2. Reframing the Question of Linguistic Revisionism

I surveyed the question of revisionism in the introduction. In this subsection, I revisit the question, reframing it as a matter of remembrance and bringing it into connection with the key ideas that I have put in place since then. In this section, then, many ideas will be familiar, but they will be re-contextualized so that their interrelations become maximally clear. The hope is that any cost I incur for being repetitious will be worth the clarity that I hope the repetition provides.

The upshot of the last two subsections is that there is a tension between the revisionary and non-revisionary tendencies in Wittgenstein's thought. Impressed by the latter trend, 'Carnapian' readers like the early Baker and Hacker place Wittgenstein too close to the recollective conception of remembrance that he abjures. Impressed by the former tendency, resolute readers join the later Baker and place Wittgenstein too close to the recreative tendency to which Wittgenstein is equally opposed.[221] Rudd puts it tension as follows:

> The former tendency has sometimes led would-be disciples of [Wittgenstein's] into a kind of neo-essentialism, an insistence that an utterance that uses a concept outside of its usual context can be simply dismissed as meaningless. But this presupposes that language-games are always fixed, that what is to count as context is always straightforwardly determinate. Wittgenstein's countervailing insistence on the fluidity of (many of) our language-games, their lack of clear and fixed boundaries, undermines any attempt to dismiss claims like those made by Moore or the skeptic with a dogmatic appeal to common usage. (Rudd 2005, 148-49)

We have already seen the 'neo-essentialism' Rudd speaks of in our discussion of Carnapian readers like Hacker and the early Baker. We have seen the opposing view in the later Baker's reading of the *Investigations,* and also in resolute readers of the *Tractatus* who would have us repudiate the notion that there are limits to language, and who chide their orthodox opponents for thinking that grammar is 'inviolable.' This opposing view suggests that 'the true Wittgenstein' is the one who highlights the 'open texture' of language, its allowances for rules that run on in unforeseeable ways, and the creative function the philosopher who 'invents' and draws our attention to such novel

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[221] As we saw Rudd put it in the *Introduction:*
> There is in fact a tension here that runs throughout Wittgenstein's later work. On the one hand he wishes to insist that utterances have meaning only in context, and to combat the errors which arise from confusing different contexts, different language games. On the other, he insists on the flexibility of language, the lack of sharp boundaries between language-games, the ways in which the meaning of an expression can develop and alter in unpredictable ways as it is used creatively in new contexts, yet without simply becoming something entirely different and new. (Rudd 2005, 148-49)

interpretations of grammar. My claim has been that readers on both sides of this scholarly divide have presented Wittgenstein in ways that risk selling him short, and, indeed, in ways that risk selling him into a variety of anti-realism.

When Hacker and the early Baker describe rules as human creations which, once created, permit no *unforeseeably* intelligible application, they risk aligning Wittgenstein with the partly recreative, partly recollective anti-realism of Viennese positivism. When, in their more incautious moments, resolute readers retort that, for Wittgenstein, there are no limits to language, and when they label their orthodox opponents 'inviolability' readers, they risk suggesting that Wittgenstein is positively *for* the business of violating grammar in the way that orthodox readers take Wittgenstein to reject. In this, the opponents of orthodoxy risk presenting Wittgenstein as a giddy revolutionary, and aligning him with either the recreative anti-realism that Lukács called "the politics of adolescence" (quoted in Murdoch 1997, 141) or the more Luciferian brand of recreative anti-realism into which this youthful "Romantic Trotskyism" (Murdoch 1997, 141) so often matures, and a version of whom readers like Robert Adams find in Kierkegaard's knight of faith. By misrepresenting the structure of Wittgensteinian remembrance, both the orthodox reader and the resolute reader speak about Wittgenstein in ways that risk selling him badly short of his promise.

In his 1982 reflection on this issue, Jonathan Lear notes that the early Baker and Hacker were well aware of the tension at issue and that they concluded that there were simply "two conflicting strains in Wittgenstein, one revisionary, one non-revisionary" (Lear 1982, 382). Though Crispin Wright is perhaps not quite so pessimistic as Baker and Hacker about the prospect of resolving the tension, in the introductory chapter, we saw him note that the conflict is a serious one indeed. After remarking that Wittgenstein *says*, in his general remarks on the nature of philosophy, "that he will 'assemble reminders' and call our attention to well-known facts" (Wright 1980, 262), Wright noted that "it is difficult to reconcile Wittgenstein's pronouncements about the kind of thing which he thinks he ought to be doing with what he actually seems to do" (ibid.). Indeed, as we saw Wright say, this issue "constitute[s] one of the so far least well understood aspect of [Wittgenstein's] thought" (ibid.)[222]

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[222] The whole of the passage from Wright may be worth repeating, for it reminds us of just how underdeveloped the literature was, at this point in 1980 when Wright was commentating on it:

> At the time I write this, the complaint is justified that the great volume of commentary on the *Investigations* has so far done very little to clarify either how we should interpret the general remarks on philosophy so as to have our understanding enhanced of Wittgenstein's treatment of specific questions, or conversely. (What are the 'well-known facts' arranged in the course of the Private Language discussion?) Wittgenstein's later views on

Lear himself urges us to resist Baker and Hacker's conclusion that Wittgenstein had simply gotten himself into a tangle here. It is not the case, for Lear, that Wittgenstein was confusedly offering us, on the one hand, a vision of meaning that allows for creative re-routings of grammatical rules that can lead beyond the well-worn conventions of established language-use and, on the other hand, a contradictory vision of philosophical method that prohibits any such creativity. His caution is, to my mind, surely worth taking:

> The arguments about meaning and about the nature of philosophy are each pursued with such vigor and care that, if they are in conflict, they are in obvious conflict: one would expect Wittgenstein to have noticed and to have made some effort to resolve the tension. There is no evidence of such an effort; indeed, the *Investigations* reads as though he intended both themes to be taken together as forming a coherent whole. One might also be tempted to treat Wittgenstein's remarks about the non-revisionary nature of philosophy as among the less fortunate dark utterances of the master. To dismiss so lightly thoughts which a great philosopher evidently regarded as important is, I think, to exercise bad judgement: [...] it prevents as correct understanding of Wittgenstein's later philosophy. (Lear 1982, 382)

Our sympathies lie with Lear. But Rudd's earlier-quoted comment, and the ongoing feud between orthodox and resolute readers, reminds us of how little we have achieved in the 35 years since Baker and Hacker, Wright, and Lear, grappled with this problem. We have yet to settle the tension between the revisionary and non-revisionary directions in Wittgenstein's thought. I now want to offer a possible way forward that will take us not only beyond this old stalemate but also beyond the new stalemate at which we find the debate between orthodox and resolute readers.

My proposal is this: the debate about how to understand the tension between the revisionary and non-revisionary aspects of Wittgenstein's method can be helpfully reframed as a debate about Wittgenstein's concept of remembrance. Confusion about the structure of Wittgensteinian remembrance lies at the core of this confusion about the role of linguistic revisionism in his philosophy, and clarity about the former issue will bring clarity to the latter. Further, my claim is that this same confusion about the structure of Wittgensteinian remembrance lies at the heart of the feud between the orthodox and resolute readers. Resolute readers have left themselves to be read as though they regard the hidden message of the *Tractatus* as an invitation to accept what I have been calling an anti-realistic, recreative, concept of remembrance. From this, the orthodox reader rightly

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philosophy constitute[s] one of the so far least well understood aspect of [Wittgenstein's] thought. (Wright 1980, 262)

recoils, but he then makes the error of saddling Wittgenstein with the equally anti-realistic, recollective, view of remembrance. When it comes to orthodox readings of the *Tractatus*, such recollection takes a more Kantian form of remembering the ahistorical structures of mind and world. When it comes to orthodox readings of the later work, such recollection takes a more Hegelian form and involves simply calling to mind the historically conditioned conventions of language. The fundamental issue in both the early and later work is that we need to reconcile two apparently contradictory aspects of Wittgenstein's thought. The first is the manifestly revisionary, creative, and future-orientated aspects of Wittgenstein's philosophy, which resolute readers celebrate when they stress Wittgenstein's philosophical creativity and decry the idea that there are any limits to language. The second is the explicitly non-revisionary, conservative, and past-oriented characterization of his philosophy, which orthodox readers highlight when they stress Wittgenstein's disinterest in "new discoveries and inventions" (PI, §126) and urge fidelity to the understandings of meaning already in place. How might such a reconciliation go?

As I have framed it, the debate between orthodox and resolute readers is a continuation of the older debate about how to understand Wittgenstein's aversion to linguistic revisionism (PI, §132-33). On my reading, the debate between resolute and orthodox readers is also the continuation of the older debate about whether Wittgenstein is fundamentally a 'conservative' or, rather, a 'progressive' thinker.[223] This terminology is not entirely apt, for we have seen that there is recreative,

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[223] Ernest Gellner voices the conservative reading. He claims that Wittgenstein espouses a 'populist' vindication of established linguistic practices according to which "our conceptual customs are valid precisely because they are parts of a cultural custom. It is not merely the case that no other validation is available: no other validation is either possible *or* necessary. The very pursuit of such an extra-cultural validation is *the* error of thought" (Gellner 1998, 77). As Cressida Heyes explains, Gellner's idea is related to the sense in which a given understanding of grammar cannot be justified (Heyes 2003, 4). If the understanding of grammar that we find in one linguistic community – one 'one form of life' – cannot be justified, then neither can that understanding of grammar be said to be epistemically superior to any other. It seems to follow that a given linguistic community's understanding of grammar stands beyond the pale of rational criticism. What then, is the job of philosophy? To simply effect a rote, recollective, remembrance of the grammatical norms at work in whatever form of life we have. The flip side of the idea that grammar cannot be justified is a simple brand of linguistic conservatism according to which a community's take on grammar cannot be criticized.

J.C. Nyíri seconds Gellner's reading, explicitly construing Wittgenstein's as a politically conservative philosophy. Once more, Wittgenstein is s to hold that a "form of life, mode of thought and behaviour […] cannot actually be criticized" because all "criticism presupposes a form of life, a language, that is, a tradition of agreements" (Nyíri 1982, 58-59, quoted in Cerbone 2003). "[T]he given form of life is the ultimate givenness" (ibid.). David Bloor concurs with Nyíri and Gellner: "Wittgenstein's texts show how, time and again, he develops the characteristic themes of conservative thinkers" (Bloor 1983, 161, quoted in Cerbone 2003).

The conservative reading has come under attack from philosophers who find, in Wittgenstein, resources for thinking about the possibility of grammatical critique and, hence, a practice of philosophy that does not involve any such conservatism. David Cerbone (2003), Andrew Lugg (1985) and Joachim Schulte (1983) have all pointed out that Wittgenstein allows for change *within* a given language game and, they offer, this leaves room for a form of grammatical critique. From all that I have seen, the secondary literature has yet to produce anything like the study of Wittgenstein's concept of remembrance that I have tried to offer here. I'm suggesting here that attention to this concept of remembrance could prove as helpful for navigating this debate between 'conservative' and 'progressive' interpreters of

progressive element in logical positivism, and this gets carried over in Hacker's orthodox view that the rules of grammar are human creations. The conservative element is to be found, not in the recreative aspect of this 'Carnapian' approach to Wittgenstein but in its recollective aspect; the aspect which, in positivism, regards the intelligible application of rules as fixed by human logical foresight. In broad strokes, however, the same issues that surround the question of whether Wittgenstein is a progressive thinker or a conservative thinker also surround the question of whether we should go with the resolute or orthodox reading. And here too, I am suggesting, the fundamental question that we need to address, and the question that has on my review of the literature received curiously little attention, is the question of how Wittgenstein thinks about the structure of remembrance.

I have contended that, if we can understand Wittgensteinian remembrance as a Kierkegaardian-Christian matter of repetition, the tension between orthodox and resolute reader might resolve itself into a realism agreeable to both camps. Orthodox readers will have a resolute Wittgenstein that has no truck with the recreative tendency that Mounce finds in the resolute reading. Resolute readers will have a Wittgenstein whose ethical task is not to escape our time-bound, mutable linguistic world into a recollective-metaphysical illusion of stasis and certainty, but to renew that linguistic world through the creative deployment of linguistic freedom. World-renewal is not carried out by a recreative human will that simply uproots itself from the past grammars that have led us into confusion and decided, volutaristically, to adopt new grammars in their stead. World-renewal comes about when revelations of new meaning dawn upon us from outside the self and permit us to see how those past grammars can be renewed and restored to life in the present.

To read the later Wittgenstein in the Kierkegaardian way I am recommending is to hear the two above opposing voices in his texts – the two voices at work in the debate between revisionism and anti-revisionism, progressivism and conservatism, recreation and recollection – as voices in a drama of Wittgenstein's creation, neither one of which speaks for Wittgenstein himself. The cacophony of these voices creates a methodologically crucial tension in the reader. It is meant to heighten our sense of despair with both of these alternatives and, thereby, to ready us for the revelatory moment when both are expelled by an incoming understanding of remembrance as repetition. Wittgenstein himself withdraws from the text, leaving us to grapple with the tension and,

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Wittgenstein as it proves for navigating the debate about whether Wittgenstein's method is 'revisionary' or 'non-revisionary,' and the debate between resolute and orthodox readers of both the early and later work. Indeed, as should be clear, one way in which attention to the concept of remembrance sheds light on these issues is that it permits us to see that there is really only *one* debate at issue here.

ultimately, to reject both of the apparent options as being predicated upon equally confused, self-aggrandizing illusions of the self. The lesson will turn out to be the lesson of *Fear and Trembling* and of the *Tractatus*: We are not Gods, and the meaning of words is nowhere already given – neither in our individual minds nor in public linguistic conventions – and simply awaiting our willful recollection. Neither is the meaning of our words created by the philosopher and imposed upon the world in a Luciferian act of rule-transgression. Such a view leaves no room for one's sensitivity to the history of meaning to ready one for future revelations of sense, and such a view leaves no room for the idea that these revelations register with us as expressions of the same meaning with which we were always conversant.

I have not yet argued that Wittgenstein *does* regard new disclosures of sense as the fulfilled expression of the same meanings that they renew. Nor have I yet argued that the proper model for thinking about the interplay between new and old in Wittgenstein's thought is Kierkegaardian repetition. That will be the task of the next section. My claim for the moment is only this: *if*, in the later Wittgenstein, the new meanings whose creation is facilitated by the philosopher strike us as acceptable because they strike us as the fulfilled expression of what we *always* meant by our words, then the recreative model of meaning-remembrance is as bad a fit as the recollective model. If our acceptance of the new meaning requires that we experience that meaning as the same as the old, then there is a measure of truth in grammar that runs deeper than the ahistorical recreative will. The measure of truth will be what Wittgenstein called "the limits of your honesty" (CV, 8), which finds expression in our sense that certain radically new expressions of grammar simply *do*, and others simply do not, capture the historical sense of what we have always meant by our words.

Like both *Fear and Trembling* and the *Tractatus*, the realistic understanding of remembrance that lies between the two anti-realistic extremes of recollection and recreation is not "nakedly exposed, [but], clothed from the heart" (CV, 54). I have argued that we arrive at the truth of *Fear and Trembling* by rejecting both the recollective tendencies of the faithless knight of resignation and the purely transgressive, recreative tendencies that Kierkegaard leaves us to find in his knight of faith. I have argued that this method of *Fear and Trembling* is repeated in the *Tractatus,* where the ethical task is to reject the metaphysical realism with which the text tempts us, but also to reject the recreative anti-realism with which it tempts us as well. This anti-realism can be found in both the positivistic form (the rules of logic are purely contentless) and in the more extreme, proto-existentialist form. This latter form is, of course, the one that we find in the writings of incautious resolutists who speak as if, for the reader clued in to the secret message of the book, there are no limits to language at all,

and that Tractarian philosopher is as free as a demonic knight of faith. In the later Wittgenstein's work too, the aim is for us to feel the appeal of these twin temptations as deeply as we must in order, ultimately, to recognize both as unlivably shallow illusions of the self and the self's relationship with meaning. The result will be that we make our way out from between them and into the silent truth of a repetitional concept of remembrance, an appropriately realistic understanding of the meaning that we thereby remember, and an appropriately finite understanding of the remembering human subject and its capacity for linguistic freedom.

7.4. The Case for Repetitional Realism

Wittgenstein never guides us by the hand toward his positive, repetitional view of remembrance. However, I now want to show that a repetitional analysis is strongly recommended by three areas of his thought: 1) his remarks on psychoanalysis, 2) his remarks on secondary sense and, 3) his remarks on the 'arbitrariness' of grammar. More carefully, my claim will be that Wittgenstein's reflections on these topics suggest that a repetitional account of his concept of remembrance is truer to his intentions than any variety of recreation, the other alternative to recollection that we have considered.

7.4.1. Remarks on Psychoanalysis

Wittgenstein once told Rush Rhees that, before 1914, he had considered psychology "a waste of time" (LC, 41). "Then," Wittgenstein continued, "some years later I happened to read something by Freud and I sat up in surprise. Here was someone who had something to say" (ibid.). Rhees reports that Wittgenstein had this insight shortly after 1919 and, so, presumably before the publication of the *Tractatus* in 1921. "And for the rest of his life," Rhees adds, "Freud was one of the few authors he thought worth reading. He would speak of himself [...] as 'a disciple of Freud' and 'a follower of Freud'" (ibid.). Since Wittgenstein was a vocal critic of psychoanalysis (LC, 41-52; cf., Malcolm 1984, 39, 100-101), we may be taken aback to learn of this apparent affinity for its inventor (LC, 41). Certainly, Wittgenstein rejects much about Freud's own understanding of psychoanalysis, for instance, Freud's belief that he is offering scientific, causal explanations of his patient's neuroses (LC, 43-44). However, three salient similarities between Freudian psychoanalysis Wittgenstein's therapeutic philosophy are worth noting.

First, like a philosophical investigation, psychoanalysis has its salubrious effect by allowing us to understand and overcome a present psycho-spiritual problem in light of memories brought to

light by the analysis. The effectiveness of Freud's method, we learn, has to do with our need to understand our lives in light of past events that lend them meaning. If, as we saw Malcolm report in Chapter One, "Wittgenstein once observed in lecture that there is a similarity between his conception of philosophy [...] and the Socratic doctrine that knowledge is reminiscence" (Malcolm 1984, 44), perhaps Wittgenstein observed the same similarity between his therapeutic practice and Freud's. Second, though Freud himself did not fully appreciate this (LC, 42), the mark that the analyst has hit upon the right rendering of a memory is that the patient is *freely* inclined to accept it as correct. Third, the correctness of a Freudian dream analysis is not a matter of the analyst's proposition corresponding to some already pre-given piece of data warehoused in our neurons, the Freudian unconscious, or the memory of the eternal Socratic soul. It is not an *identical repetition* of an original memory, which would involve the simple reactivation of stored data upon the mental event of 'calling it up.' But it is a kind of repetition all the same. Our question is: what does Wittgenstein have in mind by 'repetition'? All three of the above similarities between Wittgenstein and Freud come out in the following remark.

> Freud in his analysis provides explanations which many people are inclined to accept. He emphasizes that people are *dis*-inclined to accept them. But if the explanation is one which people are disinclined to accept, it is highly probable that it is also one which they are *inclined* to accept. And this is what Freud had actually brought out. Take Freud's view that anxiety is always a repetition[224] in some way of the anxiety we felt at birth. He does not establish this by reference to evidence – for he could not do so. But it is an idea which has a marked attraction. It has the attraction which mythological explanations have, explanations which say that this is all a repetition of something that has happened before. And when people do accept or adopt this, then certain things seem much clearer and easier for them. So it is with the notion of the unconscious also. Freud does claim to have evidence in memories brought to light in analysis.[225] But at a certain stage it is not clear how far such memories are due to the analyst. In any case, do they show that the anxiety was necessarily a repetition of the original anxiety? (LC, 43)

We can take the question mark as intentionally pregnant. For all Wittgenstein has said, we are left to answer 'yes,' so long as 'repetition' is not understood as the identical kind of repetition that Kierkegaard has critiqued. For Wittgenstein, Freudian repetition cannot be brought about by simple

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[224] In these recorded conversations Wittgenstein was speaking in English and would have used the English word.
[225] Hence Freud's aforementioned mistaken assimilation of his methods to the methods of natural science.

reflection upon a piece of data whose meaning is entirely unconditioned by the act of reflection itself. For Wittgenstein, Freudian repetition cannot be facilitated by the therapist who works only to facilitate an identical repetition of the past.

There is then, an element of renewal in the psychoanalytic practice of remembrance and one, I have suggested, that sheds light upon the element of renewal in Wittgenstein's own therapeutic practice of philosophy. The question is: how is this element of renewal to be understood? Is it a matter of *recreation*? And should we read Wittgenstein as suggesting that the creative element in his own philosophy is similarly a matter of recreation? No. From what Wittgenstein says here and elsewhere, we will see that it is both more plausible and more illuminating for us to take the Kierkegaardian connotations of this reference to 'repetition' seriously, and surmise that Wittgenstein is using the term in the sense that Kierkegaard has wanted to communicate. To make our way to the point, we need to distinguish two aspects of a recreative view of philosophical remembrance. We can do so by comparing recreation to repetition.

As we know, Kierkegaard uses the method of indirect communication to facilitate his reader's remembrance because that method safeguards the reader's freedom, namely, his free willingness to undergo an experience of revelation. This is important because a genuine, resolute, understanding of the revealed truth can only come about through such an experience. We saw that Kierkegaard's efforts to communicate a truth to his reader indirectly are an attempt to communicate that truth in the same way that that truth was communicated to him, by 'Governance.' More strictly, the philosopher's effort in indirect communication is an effort to heighten the reader's awareness of the despair endemic in his illusion-ridden world, and to thereby ready the reader for a revelation of sense that dissipates those illusions and eliminates that despair. The point to remember is this: in the Kierkegaardian picture, the nature of the philosophy teacher's encounter with truth is replicated in the learner's encounter with truth, as facilitated by the teacher.

Now, a recreative account of meaning-remembrance also features this isomorphism between the philosopher's experience of meaning and his student's experience of meaning.[226] On the recreative picture, however, we find a jaundiced interpretation of both the philosopher's free encounter with new meaning and his respect for the freedom of his interlocutor to undergo a similar encounter. On the recreative picture, the philosopher creates meaning in ways indifferent to, and unguided by, a historical sense of what we have always meant in the past. Correspondingly, in a

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[226] This will take different forms depending upon whether the learner is an elect, philosophical sort of student or, on the other hand, a more humble, unphilosophical sort. To focus on the problem with recreation that concerns me, we can attend to the philosophical sort of learner alone.

work of recreative philosophy, the philosophical sort of learner will see that the philosopher-teacher has created meaning from out of himself in this way, and will take up the task of doing so as well.[227] The appeal of these created meanings lies not in their rational fidelity to our linguistic past – to our honest sense of what we mean and have always meant by our words – but in the intrinsic value that the creator finds in *his* having created them (see Taylor 1982, 118-119). Wittgenstein's comments on Freud show little trace of such a view.

Consider the discussion of Freudian 'repetition' that we see in *Culture and Value*. Wittgenstein describes the way the psychoanalyst might move his patient to come to terms with the fragments, not of a disordered linguistic past, but of a disordered dreamscape. The psychoanalyst's re-presentation of the dream fragments in a manageable order reminds us of the philosopher's re-presentation of the grammar of a word whose meaning has become lost in illusion and requires renewal. The analyst offers an interpretation of the dream whereby its meaning is *completely*, changed.The reinterpreted meaning differs esentially from the meaning at play in the patient's original, fragmented, dream description. At the same time, the patient find, in the analyst's interpretation, *the same meaning* that he had also found in the dream, but had been unable to express.

> In Freudian analysis a dream is dismantled, as it were. It loses its original sense *completely*. You might think of it as performed on the stage, with a plot that is sometimes fairly incomprehensible but also in part quite comprehensible, or at least apparently so, & as though this plot were then torn into little pieces & each part given a completely different meaning. You could also think of it like this: a picture is drawn on a big sheet of paper & the sheet is then folded in such a way that pieces which do not belong together at all in the original picture collide in appearance & and a new picture, which may make sense or may not, is formed (this would be the manifest dream, the first picture the 'latent dream thought'). / Now, I could imagine that someone, who sees the unfolded picture, might exclaim, 'Yes, that is the solution, that is what I dreamed, but without gaps & distortions.' It would then be this acknowledgement that make this solution the solution. Just as, if you are searching for a word while writing & then say: '*That's* it, *that* says what I wanted to say!' – Your acknowledgement stamps the word as having been found, i.e., the one you were looking for. (In this case it might really be said: only when you have found it, do you know what you were looking for [...]). (CVR, 78)

Having been presented with the analyst's re-presentation of the dream, the patient finds himself compelled to remember the original dream content in the light of its re-representation. Strikingly, this acknowledgment *makes* the solution the solution, but, as we saw in the last chapter, this need not be read as a statement of subjectivism. As I have read Wittgenstein, the claim is only this: a *properly resolute* understanding of what one always meant can only come about freely. The learner's autonomy is a precondition of his resolute commitment to the *completely new* meaning, and only the learner resolutely committed to the new meaning is able to regard that meaning as the true expression of what he had *always* been trying to express. To be clear: what moves the interlocutor to accept the therapeutic suggestion about what he might have meant by his words is not *merely* the fact that he has freely chosen to accept that suggestion. If that were all that is at issue, the fact that *we* have freely chosen to remember the meaning of the dream in the terms suggested by the analysit's would be enough to secure our sense that that remembrance of the dream is 'correct.' This is the recreative prejudice that we are invited to resist. In this recreative scenario, "I have no criterion of correctness. One would like to say: whatever is going to seem correct to me is correct. And that only means that here we can't talk about 'correct'" (PI, §258). In the recreative scenario, I have no genuine sense that the rendering of meaning that I am provided is *true to* what I have always meant, and no such sense is required in order to bring about my resolute commitment to that new rendering. The recreative scenario, however, does not seem to be the one that Wittgenstein has described. In Wittgenstein, human linguistic freedom is not a blunt instrument that forcibly grafts a new sense upon a word, replacing the sense it had. Correspondingly, in Wittgenstein, resolution is not achieved by a solitary, ahistorical human being who commits himself to using words with meanings that lack all intelligible connection to the sense that animated their erstwhile use. To all appearances, linguistic freedom, in Wittgenstein, is not a solitary freedom to project one's will outward upon the world. To all appearances, Wittgensteinian linguistic freedom is freedom for communion with a movement of meaning and truth in the history grammar, whose provisions of sense enter one's linguistic life from the outside.

Far from the Socratic learner, the patient does not know what he was looking for until he has found it, and so his finding the analyst's suggestion *correct* is not a matter of that suggestion corresponding to a pre-given metaphysical memory of the dream's meaning. But this picture of memory is also not the vaguely Sartrean freedom in meaning-creation that Dummett found in Wittgenstein, for nothing here suggests that what we can and cannot acknowledge as a faithful re-presentation of what we mean is simply up to us. To the contrary, to exclaim, upon the encounter

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with meaning, '*That's* it, *that* says what I wanted to say!' is to acknowledge that there *was* something one already *meant*, and that that something is captured by the words that the analyst offers.

This same crucial phenomenon of the learner's ability to see the relevant rational connections comes out again elsewhere in the reflections on psychoanalysis. Wittgenstein writes:

> When Freud speaks of certain images – say the image of a hat – as symbols, or when he says the image 'means' so and so, he is speaking of an interpretation; and of what the dreamer can be brought to accept as an interpretation [….] When a dream is interpreted we might say that it is fitted into a context in which it ceases to be puzzling. In a sense the dreamer re-dreams his dream in surroundings such that its aspect changes [….] [A]nd the result is that we say: 'Ah, now I see why it is like that, how it all comes to be arranged in that way, and what these various bits are …' and so on.' (LC, 45-46)

Notice that what we are dealing with here is *meaning*, the meaning of a dream. Our question is: might what Wittgenstein is saying here about the relation between the psychoanalyst and the meaning of his patient's dreams shed useful light on the relation between the Wittgensteinian philosopher and the meaning of his interlocutor's words? Might the Wittgensteinian philosopher rectify our broken relationship with a word by urging us to 're-mean' the word in surroundings such that its aspect changes'? Wittgenstein's description of himself as a disciple of Freud suggests as much, but we also just saw direct textual evidence to this point. After describing the dreamer who says, of the analyst's representation of the dream content, "Yes, that is the solution, that is what I dreamed, but without gaps & distortions" (CVR, 78). Wittgenstein immediately went on to draw the comparison to linguistic meaning: "It would then be this acknowledgement that makes this solution the solution. Just as, if you are searching for a word while writing & then say: '*That's* it, *that* says what I wanted to say!" (CVR, 78).

Further evidence that Wittgenstein regarded the remembrance of dream meaning as importantly akin to the remembrance of word meaning can also be found in Part Two of the *Investigations*. There, Wittgenstein seems to endorse something close to the Freudian account of what it means to remember the meaning of a dream. What is more, immediately following this Freudian reflection, he urges us to consider, in light of that reflection, whether the mind 'gives meaning' to words. The Freudian reflection is the following:

> People who on waking tell us certain incidents (that they have been in such-and-such places, and so forth). Then we teach them the expression 'I dreamt,' which is followed by the narrative. Afterwards I sometimes ask them, 'Did you dream anything last night?' and am

answered Yes or No, sometimes with a dream narrative, sometimes not. That is the language-game. [....] / Now must I make an assumption about whether these people are deceived by their memories or not, whether they really had such images while they slept, or whether it merely seems so to them on waking? And what sense does this question have? – And what interest?! Do we ever ask ourselves this when someone is telling us his dream? And if not – is it because we are sure that his memory won't have deceived him? (And suppose it were a man with an exceptionally bad memory. –) / Does this mean that it is nonsense ever to raise the question of whether dreams really take place during sleep, or are a memory phenomenon of the awakened? It will depend on how the question is used. (PI, II-§52-53)

It will depend, I take it, on what the questioner means by 'really,' and 'memory.' Is he using the question to ask if the events of the dream 'really take place during sleep' in the recollective sense of having some fully determinate being, pre-given in dream-consciousness, entirely indifferent to the words with which the dreamer recounts those events upon awakening, and which his waking memory need only *unearth* (cf., PI, §91-§92)? If so, we are making a misleading assumption about the meaning of dream phenomena and about the nature of their remembrance. When it comes to dreams, the remembrance of meaning is not an act of recollection, and the meaning we thereby remember is neither an immutable Platonic essence warehoused in the metaphysician's soul, nor a piece of code stored in the naturalist's neurons (Z, §608-610). The meaning is not indifferent, in its essential nature, to the temporal uses of words through which that meaning unfolds into articulate sense.

The question, again, is this: if we reject the recollective picture of memory and meaning, are we thereby driven to the recreative alternative? Must we conclude that dreams do not 'really take place in sleep, and are merely the 'memory phenomena' of the awakened? Wittgenstein has carefully *avoided* saying that about dream-meaning and, in the immediately following remark, he carefully avoids saying that about the remembrance of word-meaning as well. He has a recreative interlocutor express our recreative temptation: "'It seems that the mind can give a word meaning' – isn't this as if I were to say 'It seems that the carbon atoms in benzene lie at the corners of a hexagon'? But this is no seeming; it is a picture" (PI, II-§54). Within its proper range of application, the picture that the mind can give a word meaning is as useful as the picture that places the carbon atoms of benzene in the corners of the hexagon. Of course, the mind *can* sometimes give a word meaning. We can create new words, for example, perhaps because our new creation might serve some useful function (PI,

§132-33). But Wittgenstein is interested in helping us to remember the meaning of words that *already* have a place in our linguistic life. As I have argued, they play so important a role in our life that our confusions about their meaning can't be solved by simply abandoning their use, or even by reforming, or revising it in the recreative sense (PI, §132-33). For Wittgenstein, I am offering, the ruptures in our life with language – the places where we find that we cannot go on according to the meanings that formerly animated our words (cf., PI, §132-33) – need to be remedied not by brute and easy language reform, but by a patient hope for repetitional remembrance.

Let us assume that the reflections on the remembrance of dream-meaning that introduce the above short passage about word-meaning, PI II-§54, resound with the same thoughts about the nature of dream-remembrance that we saw Wittgenstein express earlier in his comments on the methods of Freud. On this assumption, PI II-§54 should be read as indicating – indirectly to be sure – that the recreative picture of meaning-making can be as misleading as the picture of benzene. Our picture of the benzene molecule would mislead us if, looking at benzene in a microscope, we expected to find its components arranged as they are in our picture and, not finding them, we assumed that they *must* be so arranged, somewhere hidden deep within the molecule. Here we would be extending the picture beyond its proper range of application.[228] Similarly, we can overextend our use of the picture of the mind as a power that invests words with a meaning that they don't already have. We do so when we rightly reject the recollective picture of meaning-remembrance and its impoverished account of our linguistic freedom (logical stoicism), swing to the equally incoherent recreative picture of meaning remembrance, and conclude that a free, autonomous, and resolute relationship with meaning can *only* be established by an activity of the human mind that invests words with a sense that they intrinsically lack. Most often, words are already freighted with a historical sense that determines what meaning we can honestly find in them and, in these cases, the human mind does *not* give them meaning in anything like the recreative way. In such cases, our linguistic "freedom is not an inconsequential chucking of one's weight about" (Murdoch 1997, 378),

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[228] In the *Tractatus*, of course, Wittgenstein explored the same misguided temptation to overextend the application of a picture when he suggested that all genuine propositions were *empirical* propositions. Here "[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" (PI, §115). More concretely:

> A simile that has been absorbed into the forms of our language produces a false appearance which disquiets us. 'But *this* isn't how it is!' – we say. 'Yet *this* is how it *has to be*!' / '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. / *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (T, 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, §112-14).

and the human speaker is not the "giddy empty will" (Murdoch 1997, 328) that we have found in Sartre's existentialism and Dummett's Wittgenstein. Again, the recreative anti-realist overlooks this grounded, motivated, character of our linguistic freedom, when he overlooks the meaning that *already* animates the words whose meaning he wants to recreate.

> 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)

I will later argue that we ought to reject both the alternatives on offer here. The notion that the living breath of words – the meaning – is 'within' the use suggests that meaning is 'hidden' in a way that Wittgenstein rejects (PI, §435, §126; cf., PI, §102). Neither, however, is meaning identical with use, as I have anticipated and as we will presently see more clearly. A genuine understanding of meaning lies between these twin temptations. The point for the moment is only this: If we begin from the above false impression – "Every sign by *itself* seems dead" (PI, §432) – then it will seem that a human mind is required to inspire every sign with the life that it lacks. But, even if we experience *some* signs as merely dead marks or sounds (consider the signs of a foreign language), we do not experience *every* sign in this way, and so we do not experience every sign as a lifeless body that only comes to be animated with a sense when one is projected into it by a human mind. Rather than being already bound up in our experience of the word, such a sense would *first* be present in the human mind and only later be associated with the word to which we assign it. This, I think, is what Wittgenstein meant in that earlier-quoted remark where he rejected the idea that meaning is *extraneous* to the word itself. Here we should look again at that remark:

> How does it come about that this arrow → *points*? Doesn't it seem to carry within it something extraneous to itself [*außerhalb seiner selbst*]? – 'No, not the dead line on paper; only a mental thing, the meaning, can do that.' – That is both true and false. The arrow points only in the application that a living creature makes of it. / This pointing is *not* a hocus pocus that can be performed only by the mind. (PI, §454)

Just as, to be sure, our dreams can be already freighted with a meaning, so too can our words. In such cases, the recreative anti-realist engages in the sort of self-deception that chooses simply to ignore that meaning and impose upon words an ahistorical meaning entirely of his own making. Once we have felt the despair that attends such strategies and have rejected them, we recognize that the possibilities of meaning-remembrance are limited by our natural and inveterate sense that some uses of words can honestly register with us as being intelligibly continuous with the meaning that those words already had, and some do not. If we take the honest route, we relate to our words in the

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way that the dreamer in Wittgenstein's discussion of Freud related to his dreams. In this case, a renewing remembrance of those words will involve our being brought to see that we can be faithful to that historical sense and, at the same time, it will involve our being brought to see that *that* meaning can be fruitfully renewed. In such a case, the remembrance of the meaning will not be a recreative matter of our simply projecting upon our words a meaning that they inherently lack.

If indeed Wittgenstein has carefully avoided both the recollective and recreative pictures of dream-remembrance, what view of meaning and remembrance might he be getting at? The Kierkegaardian notion of remembrance as repetition naturally suggests itself. It will also be our best model for understanding the concept of remembrance at play in Wittgenstein's reflections on secondary sense.

7.4.2. Remarks on Secondary Sense

The *primary* use of the term is that which we make, for example, when teaching the term to a child. It is also the use mastered by everyone who has learned the term. The secondary use of a term is, in a sense, radically divergent from the rules that regulate its *primary* use but which also, and paradoxically, is fully in keeping with those rules. For example, one would be using the words 'lean' and 'fat' in a secondary sense if one used them to describe Tuesday and Wednesday, respectively (PI, II-§274-278). One would be making a secondary use of the word 'yellow' if one described the vowel *e* as being yellow (PI, II- §278). What is interesting about the secondary uses of a term is that they do *not* involve using a familiar term with an altogether new meaning. The secondary use invokes *the very same meaning* as that which is at work in the term's primary use (PI, II-§275).

The notion of secondary sense is meant to illustrate the phenomenon of *experiencing* the meaning of a word (PI, II-§271-73). The crucial implication is this: experiencing the meaning of a word is irreducible to experiencing its customary *use*. Why? Because one can have an experience of 'meaning the same' as what one customarily means by a word – say 'fat' or 'lean' – even when one deviates widely from the word's customary use.

> Given the two concepts 'fat' and 'lean,' would you be inclined to say that Wednesday was fat and Tuesday lean, or the other way round? (I am strongly inclined toward the former.) Now have 'fat' and 'lean' some different meaning here from the usual one? – They have a different use. – So ought I really to have used two different words? Certainly not. – I want to use *these* words (with their familiar meanings) *here*. – I am saying nothing about the cause of this

phenomenon now. They might be associations from my childhood. But that is a hypothesis.

Whatever the explanation – the inclination is there. (PI, II-§274)

The psychological associations that a word might conjure up are a causal matter of external relations, and we are interested in internal relations constitutive of meaning. The point is that the meaning of a word can be such that an *individual* (the 'single individual'?) can find even radical deviations from the ordinary, primary, conventional use of that word to be intelligible extensions of *that* ordinary meaning.

For Wittgenstein, the meaning of an expression is individuated by the rules that regulate its use. It follows that there is a sense in which the secondary use of an expression is in accord with *the same rules* that govern its primary use. When we find ourselves able to cotton on to a secondary use of an expression, it strikes us that the rules at work in the primary use allow for even the unlikely, secondary use of the term. The paradox is that this experienced identity of meaning is a paradoxical identity in difference, for the rules that constitute the secondary sense are manifestly different from those that constitute the primary sense. We are dealing here, after all, with a dramatically new use of a term and, therefore, a *new, secondary,* sense. Meaning is old, but also new, the same, but also different.

When Wittgenstein says that the secondary use of the word expresses the *same* sense as its primary use, part of what he means is that the secondary use is not a *metaphor* (PI, II-§278). He explains: "The secondary meaning is not a 'metaphorical' meaning. If I say, 'For me the vowel *e* is yellow,' I do not mean: 'yellow' in a metaphorical meaning – for I could not express what I want to say in any other way than by means of the concept of yellow" (PI, II-§278). It is characteristic of a metaphorical use of a term that, when asked what we mean by the term, we can drop the metaphor and express ourselves with a paraphrase that says what we mean in a non-figurative way. Therefore, if we encounter a case where our use of a 'metaphor' is *essential* and hence irreplaceable by paraphrase, we are not really dealing with *metaphor* at all, but with an article of secondary sense. Speaking to the same point, Wittgenstein tells us that, if he were asked what he means when he describes days of the week as being either fat or lean, he "could only explain the meanings in the usual way" (PI, II- §275). What does this mean? It means that Wittgenstein could only remind his interlocutor of the primary use of the terms, and simply say that he finds *the same* meaning at work in the very different, secondary, use. Elucidating the point, Diamond offers that Wittgenstein might clarify his view that Wednesday is fat by rephrasing it as the view that Wednesday is corpulent (Diamond 1991, 228). As Diamond notes, "if I recognize that there is no question of giving you an

explanation of how I meant the words, differently from the 'perfectly ordinary one,' I may say that the words mean what they always mean" (Diamond 1991, 228).

Notice how the phenomenon of secondary sense sits awkwardly with Hacker's Carnapian reading. As we saw earlier, Hacker seems to suggest that we will have effected a complete, Kuhnian, change in the meaning of a word if we use it in ways that are currently inexpressible given the grammar of the term. He writes, for example, that "[i]f we abandon the proposition that red is a colour, we thereby change the meanings of 'red' and 'colour'" (Hacker 2005, 22). The suggestion was that such a change in our manner of speaking would not threaten the unassailability of the grammatical truth 'Everything red is coloured' since, by saying of something that it is red but not coloured, we will have simply changed the meaning of terms and ceased speaking of what we formerly meant by 'red' or 'coloured.' Hacker's example of redness and being coloured seems unproblematic at first, but difficulties arise when we consider the very similar cases of meaning change in secondary sense. When we attribute fatness to *Wednesday* – a temporal duration without extension – are we not running up against the established grammatical conventions that currently regulate our use of word 'fat' every bit as much as we would be running up the established grammatical conventions that regulate our use of the word 'red' if we attribute redness to something non-coloured like, for example, a sound? Hacker's Carnapian analysis suggests that, in such cases, the drastic change in word use would constitute a complete, Kuhn-style, change in word meaning. But secondary sense shows us that the meaning can remain the same despite just such a drastic change in the conventional use of a word. Diamond returns us to our now-familiar refrain: "when we talk about meaning, we do not always mean use" (Diamond 1991, 240). Sometimes we mean that which we experience as being the same between two uses that are obviously and radically different.

For Hacker, conceptually unforeseeable changes in the use of a word like those described above would constitute a complete change in the word's meaning. Why? Because, for Hacker, meaning *is* use in the ordinary cases of language use that concern us (see Hacker 2005, 118-21).[229]

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[229] Hacker does not, of course, claim that *every* change in use constitutes a change in meaning (Hacker 2005, 120; cf., PI, I- §549-70) but he seems to hold, minimally, this: if a change in use is significant enough that we could not, from our current grammatical perspective, anticipate how that future use could be in keeping with what we currently take to be the meaning of our words, then we can say in advance that that apparently deviant future use of the expression would constitute a total change in its meaning. More carefully, Hacker's view seems clearly to be that if we cannot imagine, in advance, explaining the meaning of a word in a certain way, then our coming to so explain it would mark a complete change of meaning. What does Hacker have to say about the way in which the second part of the *Investigations* complicates this apparent assimilation of meaning to use? From what I have seen, he says very little about the matter. It may be worth mentioning, in this connection, that he thinks little enough of the second part of the *Investigation* to claim, in his new translation, that it should not be considered 'Part II' of the *Investigations*, as Anscombe had considered it, but as a relativity unpolished collection of remarks better entitled 'Philosophy of Psychology – A Fragment' (see PI, xxiii).

Hacker gives little credence to this way in which, by the second part of the *Investigations*, Wittgenstein undercuts our temptation to identify meaning with use. The upshot of the discussion of secondary sense is that we cannot always glean the future application of a rule from our existing uses of words, including the words we use when explaining the meaning of those words. When Wittgenstein makes the point in dialogue with his interlocutor, the interlocutor might as well be Hacker:

> 'But if you want to remain in accord with the rules you must go on this way.' – Not at all, I call this 'accord.' – 'Then you have changed the meaning of the word 'accord,' or the meaning of the rule.' – No; – who says what 'change' and 'remaining the same' mean here? (RFM, I-§113)

Of course, we are not denying Hacker's claim that meaning is, *in some sense*, new. We are only insisting that the meaning is also, in some sense, *familiar*. Hacker's account not only leaves us without an answer to the question of how we ought to think about this strange coincidence of the old in the new; it doesn't raise the question at all.

Let us clarify this phenomenon. We saw a moment ago that, in a sense, one could only explain the secondary sense of a word by simply repeating the same kind of explanations that one would give for the word when it is used in the primary way. Notice, however, that this does not mean that *every* explanation that we could give for primary sense could also be given for the secondary sense. If one makes a secondary use of the word 'fat,' applying the word to Wednesday, one surely couldn't explain what one means by referring the Wednesday's Body Mass Index, its high risk of various forms of morbidity, and so on. Even if we can only explain the secondary sense of a word by drawing upon certain inferential relations that characterize the primary use, that does not mean that we could draw upon *all* those inferential relations since, of course, certain crucial inferential relations no longer obtain. In the primary sense of the word 'colour,' what lacks colour cannot be red just as, in the primary sense of the word 'fat,' what lacks extension cannot be fat. But when it comes to Wednesday, what lacks extension can be fat indeed and, it bears repeating, *not in a metaphorical sense*. Again, not all the explanations of the primary sense will help to explain the secondary sense, but all the explanations that *can* explain the secondary sense will be drawn from the broader stock of explanations that we can give for its primary-sense precursor. All we can do is step forward and say that what we mean *here* is, strange as it may sound, *the same* as what we mean *there*. In a crucial sense, then, the explanations we give for the secondary sense *will* differ from the

explanations we give for the primary sense, and this is only to be expected given the marked difference in use.

Two final illustrations from Wittgenstein's discussion of religious belief further clarify this curious interplay between new and old meaning that we see in the phenomenon of secondary sense. Both examples concern the meaning of certain 'linguistic pictures' in terms of which the religious believer might find himself *driven* to express himself. The first picture is at work in the words of a friend who might say to us, as we are about to embark on a long and dangerous journey, 'we might see one another after death.' Wittgenstein explains the point in dialogue with Cashmir Lewy, who evidently feels that this is a mere metaphor for expressing a point about one's attitude toward the other, and a point that might have been paraphrased as such. Wittgenstein demurs:

> **Wittgenstein:** Suppose someone, before going to China, when he might never see me again, said to me: 'We might see one another after death' – would I necessarily say that I don't understand him? I might say [want to say] simply, 'Yes, I *understand* him entirely.'
>
> **Lewy:** 'In this case you might only mean that he expressed a certain attitude.'
>
> **Wittgenstein:** I would say 'No, it isn't the same as saying 'I'm very fond of you'' – and it may not be the same as saying anything else. It says what it says. Why should you be able to substitute anything else? / Suppose I say: 'The man used a picture.' (LC, 70-71)

As in the above cases of secondary sense, Wittgenstein would resist any effort to paraphrase his friend's use of this linguistic picture, perhaps in emotivist fashion, as an expression of one or another sentiment, or attitude (see Putnam 1992, 152-53). More precisely, the suggestion seems to be this: the meaning of the picture might be such that it cannot be paraphrased at all. In our earlier examples, we can only explain the secondary sense by highlighting certain features of the primary sense. Similarly, in the present example, it might be that one can only explain one's use of a religious linguistic picture by highlighting different aspects of the picture itself, rather than by stepping outside the picture and explaining its meaning in non-religious terms.

What is the secondary sense at work in Wittgenstein's example? Minimally, the speaker in the example invokes a secondary sense of the first-person pronoun, or of his own proper name. Whatever else I might mean when I say that *I* might see you after death, I do not imagine the referent of the first-person pronoun to be a mere physical replica – an *identical* repetition – of the flesh and blood person I currently am. We are dealing, I think, with something like the attitude that Abraham has toward the for-him-still unintelligible notion of his own future self, the self he would be after the potential sacrifice of his son: a self reborn into a new life with a resurrected Isaac. If this

is so, then Wittgenstein is revisiting, here, a concept that we earlier found at the heart of the Tractarian ethic: the concept of rebirth. To that earlier discussion, the present discussion of secondary sense permits us to add the following crucial point: talk of any such rebirth cannot be called *metaphorical*. Why not? We have already seen: because one would fail to communicate the sense of what one wanted to say if one subjected it to any easy, clarifying, paraphrase. Wittgenstein can only leave Lewy to see, or fail to see, the relevant similarity for himself. Whatever one tries to say to clarify one's own capacity to see the relevant similarity would fail to communicate that connection to one's interlocutor, for it would be a connection that can only be understood if it is resolutely understood, and it could only be resolutely understood if the other is left to see it on his own, in a moment when the relevant similarity is revealed to *him*.

We see one case of this gentle approach to the interlocutor when Wittgenstein describes how he might approach a person who he suspects of veering into metaphysical nonsense. Wittgenstein would compare his interlocutor's use of words to an analogous but patently absurd use of words. But, crucially, he could not bring the other to see the relevant similarity by any standard means of argumentation.

> By talking this out, I may attract the man's attention to the nearness of what he does to [the patently absurd case]. If it doesn't do, I can say, 'Well, if this is no use, then that is all I can do.' If he says, 'There isn't an analogy,' then that is that. (Wittgenstein 1976, 21-22)

We saw another example of this approach to the other in the last chapter when Wittgenstein explained the *Lecture on Ethics* to Waismann. His aim, he said, was to bring his reader to the point where one could come to find sense in a conception of ethics which, entirely prescinding from philosophical theory, overcomes all desires to offer natural-scientific explanations and epistemic justifications of ethical truths. But can one force a person steeped in a theory-ridden, naturalistic, and epistemic understanding of the word 'ethics' to agree that this essentially atheoretical, non-naturalistic, and non-epistemic ethic actually expresses *the same* as what *he* means by the word? Wittgenstein thought not. As he put it: "Here there is nothing to be stated anymore; all I can do is to step forth as an individual and speak in the first person. / *For me* a theory is without value. A theory gives me nothing" (WVC, 117). Notice that even here, in this quite straightforward declaration of what ethics is not, Wittgenstein is not deviating from that method of indirect communication that is so essential in a repetitional understanding of realism. First, Wittgenstein is not presuming to do what Kierkegaard called the work of 'Governance' and to tell his reader positively what ethics *is*. All we have been told here is what ethics is *not*; the reader is then left alone with Governance, which

might bring him the rest of his way toward a positive revelation of sense. Second, even the insight into what ethics is not cannot be forced upon the interlocutor. Why not? Because his receptivity to the insight depends upon his willingness to see a similarity between his confused conception of ethics and more patent cases of confusion. "If he says, 'There isn't an analogy,' then that is that. […]" (Wittgenstein 1976, 21-22). If indirectly, he does come to see the analogy, then he might cast off his illusion. And if he can do that, then he might also achieve the resolute, embodied, understanding of grammatical truth that is, on my reading, the positive ethical truth that Wittgenstein wanted to convey, and which is so essential to his realism.

Turning to the second religious picture, Wittgenstein has us consider the saying, "'God's eye sees everything'" (LC, 71). When one speaks of 'God's seeing eye,' one would not, presumably, mean what we mean when we speak of eyes that have eyebrows. We should not assume that the speaker is using a metaphor, for it may be that the person is unable to paraphrase what he says into some other words. If, as Wittgenstein puts it, the person refuses an interlocutor's request for a paraphrase, he can rightfully insist that "[t]he whole *weight* may be in the picture" (LC, 72). Here, once more, it seems to me that we are dealing with a case of secondary sense: a person simply steps forward and submits that, when he speaks of the seeing eye of God, he means the same as what he means when he speaks of 'seeing' and 'eyes' in the primary sense. This is the case, crucially, even though his use of the terms will differ radically from their primary use, and even though his explanation of the term will not be able to draw upon all the inferential connections that one can draw upon when explaining that primary sense. Wittgenstein explains:

> Are eyebrows going to be talked of, in connection with the Eye of God? 'He could just as well have said so and so.' – He couldn't just as well have said something else. / If I say he used a picture, I don't want to say anything he himself wouldn't say./ I want to say that he draws these conclusions./ Isn't it as important as anything else, what picture he does use? / Of certain pictures we say that they might just as well be replaced by another – e.g., we could, under certain circumstances, have one projection of an ellipse drawn instead of another. / [He *may* say]: 'I would have been prepared to use another picture, it would have had the same effect. ...' / [On the other hand – L. McN.] [t]he whole *weight* may be in the picture [....] (LC, 71-72)

If a cynic about truth, and about a Kierkegaardian faith in 'Governance,' were especially motivated, he could force a recreative reading upon the last-quoted passage, and one could also force such a reading upon Wittgenstein's earlier comments about Freud. The person who says, of the

psychoanalyst's essentially different rendering of the meaning of his dream "'*That's* it, *that* says what I wanted to say!' (CVR, 78) does not seem to me to be *deciding*, voluntaristically, to see the new rendering of meaning as the same as the old. He seems, instead, to be seeing a connection that is there independently of his willing it to be there. However, we have already seen one infamous reading of Wittgenstein that would permit a recreative analysis of this language: Micheal Dummett's. On Dummett's account, Wittgenstein thought that what we consider 'the same,' in matters of concept use, is *whatever we want* to be the same, and, for reasons we have seen, one might reasonably worry that resolute Wittgenstein is Dummett's Wittgenstein, but hiding behind a veil of silence. If the resolute reader is a "Jacobin," (Read and Deans 2011, 149; cf., Goldfarb 2011), and if his enemies are the "Girondin" (ibid.) "language police"(Read 2010, 71) who argue for the 'inviolability' of grammatical rules (Crary 2000a, 2007) and for fidelity to our linguistic past,[230] the resolute reader can easily appear to be a 'transgressive,' ahistorical, deracinated, and revolutionary champion of brute rule *violation,* akin to the reflective aesthete, and the knight of faith as he is interpreted by readers like Robert Adams and Alisdair Macintyre. So far we have seen that the secondary sense strikes us as the same as the primary sense, but more needs to be said to show that the reason it so strikes us is not merely a brute matter of our *willing* that this is so, but a matter of our genuine sensitivity to the history of grammar. We can find such support, I think, in Wittgenstein's suggestion that the capacity to discern identity in difference here requires an element of expertise, and involves an encounter with a felt, imperious, authority other than one's own recreative will.

7.4.2.1. Secondary Sense and Expertise

In my treatment of Kierkegaard, I suggested that the above, demonic, way of reading the knight of faith was difficult to square with Kierkegaard's stress upon the fact that Abraham knows full well what the third-personal rules of ethics do and do not permit. This, as we saw, was why Abraham's killing Isaac would constitute a noble sacrifice rather than a sin. I argued that the best way to make of this was to consider Abraham as an ethical expert in whom the rules of ethics have such a deeply embodied resonance that they function, in him, as the site and soil of new grammatical revelations of those same rules. By grace of his practical mastery of ethical rules, Abraham is attuned to new revelations of ethical grammar that are not violations of the old, but its fulfillment. As a model of Christian selfhood, I argued that Abraham should no more be read as *violating* the rules of ethics

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[230] As we saw Read put it, resolute readers "refuse the right of the would-be language police […] to stop them from using words in novel ways, introducing technical distinctions that go beyond the language of the layman, and so on"(Read 2010, 71).

than Christ should be regarded as violating the Judaic orthodoxy that he renews, and no more than the New Testament should be regarded as a violation of the Old. Might the notion of expertise be helpful for making sense of this capacity to discern similarity in difference in the case of secondary sense? I think so.

Of the primary and secondary meaning of a word, Wittgenstein writes: "Only someone for whom the word has the former meaning uses it in the latter" (PI, II-§276). Developing the point, Mulhall makes an observation that we quickly make for ourselves when reading a great novelist, a master of words and their history: "Only those who are sufficiently at home with the primary sense of words to be capable of seeing their potential for secondary employment are capable of certain ranges of human experience" (Mulhall 2001, 168). The depth at which one understands the primary sense of words effectively determines the field of secondary uses to which one will be able to put that word, and the field of experiences that those perceptions of secondary sense open up for one. The element of expertise indicated here suggests that Wittgenstein does *not* believe that a person's capacity to discern secondary sense is predicated upon a brute recreative will to force a relation of identity where none is independently discernible and rationally motivated. If one's capacity to discern secondary sense turns upon one's familiarity with primary sense then, presumably, this is because one's sensitivity to the primary sense, not one's brute recreative will, determines one's capacity to see the relevant similarity. And indeed, Wittgenstein says directly what this invocation of expertise implies: that the connection one perceives in grammar is not just willed, but forced upon one by a felt imperious authority other than the self. The new grammatical possibility disclosed by a mathematical proof, for example, leaves us with the feeling that we *cannot but* regard the new way of going on as being the same as the old.

> A proposition may describe a picture and this picture may be variously anchored in our ways of looking at things, and so in our way of living and acting [….] / The effect of the proof is, I believe, that we plunge into the new rule. / Hitherto we have calculated according to such and such a rule; now someone shows us the proof that it can also be done in another way, and we switch to the other technique – not because we tell ourselves that it will work this way too, but because we feel the new technique as identical with the old one, because we *have* to give it the same sense, because we *recognize* [*anerkennt*] it as the same just as we recognize this colour as green. / That is to say: realizing [*einsehen*] mathematical relations has a role similar to that of realizing identity. / It might almost be said to be a more complicated kind of identity. (RFM, III-§42, emphasis added).

If we *recognize* that the meaning is the same, and if we *have* to do so, then the freedom of Wittgensteinian remembrance is far from indifferent to the historical sense of our words, and the linguistic freedom at work in remembrance is far from the historically unhinged freedom of the recreative will. What 'complicated kind of identity' are we dealing with here? The repetitional model of identity in difference recommends itself as a plausible answer.

Let us not forget the tension at work in Wittgenstein's thinking of remembrance: if I am compelled to say that I am going by the same rule in both cases, in what sense have I plunged into a *new* rule? And if the rule is not new, in what sense is it old, if not in the sense of a meaning written into memory and unchanged by the act of remembrance itself? Better than Carnap, Heidegger, and Nietzsche, Kierkegaard is the object of comparison that best sheds light on the question of what Wittgensteinian remembrance involves. Kierkegaard's repetitional realism permits us to see the sense in which the interplay between identity and difference, old and new, that is involved in the Wittgensteinian therapeutic resolution of philosophical problems is a movement toward genuine grammatical truth.

> You must say something new and yet it must all be old./ In fact you must confine yourself to saying old things – and *all the same* it must be something new! / Different interpretations must correspond to different applications. / A poet too has constantly to ask himself: 'but is what I am writing really true?' – and this does not necessarily mean: 'is this how it happens in reality?' / Yes, you have got to assemble bits of old material. But into a new building. – (CV, 40)

Notice the explicit reference here to *truth*. Seeing truth in poetry requires us to "see something that throws new light on the facts" (CV, 39) and, as we know, "philosophy ought really to be written as poetic composition" (CV, 24). Philosophy, as the remembrance of grammar is also the remembrance of a kind of *truth*, and a truth that is not up to us, but one that is, in a sense not incompatible with our linguistic freedom, *forced* upon us (RFM, III-§42, emphasis added) by the way in which a new revelation of meaning uniquely captures what we want and, we feel, *always* wanted to express by our words.

7.4.2.2. Remembering Depth

The cynical reader might protest. He might submit that there is an important distinction to be drawn here between the philosopher himself and the interlocutor to whom the philosopher's therapy is addressed. Might it be that the Wittgensteinian philosopher is a solitary Promethean who knowingly

creates grammar from out of himself, who is knowingly indifferent to the historical sense of the relevant words, and who adopts his created grammars at will? Such a philosopher would then be a master of non-rational persuasion, who dupes his interlocutor into accepting some account of the meaning of a word which, in fact, he himself (the Wittgensteinian philosopher) cannot regard as bearing any intelligible connection to that word's historical use. Perhaps, the committed cynic might insist, when the interlocutor exclaims, '*That's* it, *that* says what I wanted to say!' (CVR, 78), he does not perceive any genuine historical continuity between new and old at all. Perhaps, rather, he finds the new interpretation of his words appealing as a result of his susceptibility to various forms of non-rational persuasion, the ease with which he might forget his former life with words, and his inattention to the various machinations that might be used to convince him that the rules that always regulated his use of words in fact always permitted the new use, without actually permitting him to see any intelligible connection between new and old. We can imagine, for example, that he has fallen under the sway of an anti-historical political ideology of the kind of that George Orwell described in *1984*. Might the Wittgensteinian philosopher be the Ingsoc party official who successfully recreates meaning by playing upon his interlocutor's susceptibility to propaganda, a media complicit in the brute repetition of recreated meanings, and the calculated suppression of the meanings words formerly had? Such suppression could be deployed softly, through a climate of thought-stultifying political correctness that frowned upon historical uses of certain words that are now deemed contrary to the reigning political agenda. All such techniques could be used to bring an unphilosophical person 'freely' to accept what is, even for him, a historically unintelligible use of words, but to do so in a way that he does not notice the despair into which he has fallen, having had the narrative integrity of his linguistic life subverted.[231] Concerned that we were drifting again toward

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[231] To take a non-fictional example, Nietzsche sometimes seems like an advocate for such a ruling class of philosophical tyrants. In Nietzsche, however, the mechanism that will loosen the everyday European's attachments to his particular linguistic and cultural history is none of the above-mentioned techniques, but the clash of cultures (Nietzsche 2003, 5: 200), the decline of nationalism (Nietzsche 2003, 8: 256) and, altogether, "the process of the assimilation of all Europeans" (Nietzsche 2003, 8: 242). These processes "will on average create a levelling and mediocritizing of man – a useful, industrious, highly serviceable and able herd animal man" (Nietzsche 2003, 8: 242) but they will also "[give] rise to exceptional men of the most dangerous and enticing quality" (ibid.). Nietzsche elaborates:

> The total impression produced by such future Europeans will probably be that of multifarious, garrulous, weak-willed and highly employable workers who *need* a master, a commander, as they need their daily bread; while, therefore, the democratization of Europe will lead to the production of a type prepared for *slavery* in the subtlest sense: in individual and exceptional cases the *strong* man will be found to turn out stronger and richer than has perhaps ever happened before – thanks to the unprejudiced nature of his schooling, thanks to the tremendous multiplicity of practice, art, and mask. What I mean to say is that the democratization of Europe is at the same time an involuntary arrangement for the breeding of *tyrants* – in every sense of that word, including the most spiritual. (Nietzsche 2003, 8: 242)

these dangers in 1998, Susan Haack raised a question that is perhaps even more pertinent today: "Have we forgotten already that in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* it was *thoughtcrim*e to believe that two plus two is four if the party rules otherwise? This is no trivial verbal quibble, but a matter, epistemologically, of the integrity of inquiry and, politically, of freedom of thought" (Haack 1998, 132).

Just as the *Tractatus* left its reader ample room to be taken in by a Promethean illusion of its ethic, so too does the later work leave us to indulge a Promethean vision of the philosopher's role in culture. The ethical will is free, and Wittgenstein us leaves to commit our sins. Nothing coerces this reading, however. To the contrary, everything that Wittgenstein has in common with Kierkegaard and Christianity recommends against it, and the voluntarist picture of meaning creation on the part of the philosopher being presupposed here is hard to square with what we will see Wittgenstein say about the 'non-arbitrariness' of grammar. Most importantly, the idea that the meaning of a word should be contrived by a class of calculating central planners (philosophical or otherwise), and then imposed upon the practice of language was an idea that Wittgenstein held in the same contempt with which he held the spirit of Western-scientific progressivism to which, in Wittgenstein's view, such an artificial, top-down, attempt at language regulation belonged. In his intellectual autobiography, Rudolph Carnap supplies a relevant anecdote:

> I sometimes had the impression that the deliberately rational and unemotional attitude of the scientist and likewise any ideas which had the flavour of 'enlightenment' were repugnant to Wittgenstein. At our very first meeting with Wittgenstein, [in 1927] Schlick unfortunately mentioned that I was interested in the problem of an international language like Esperanto.

Laurence Lampert unpacks what Nietzsche seems to have in mind when he speaks about 'a type prepared for *slavery* in the subtlest sense', "*subtlest* implying that these slaves take themselves to be free or even the first truly free population at the end of a whole history of slavery, [...] wage slaves in part, primarily, however, slaves to the modern idea of progress" (Lampert 2001, 247-48). For all Nietzsche's evident enthusiasm about the global rule of his future philosophers, we might fairly balk at his claim that such rule would be worth the cost incurred by the slave class. Deprived of the sense of history, identity and direction formerly provided by their particular national and cultural narratives, and without the philosopher's intellectual ability to navigate the new field of opposing belief systems, the ordinary man withdraws into the sort of docility that renders him so easily ruled. As we know, Nietzsche regards Christianity as exactly the sort of a pusillanimous withdrawal from finitude that Kierkegaard says it is not. Naturally, then, Nietzsche suggests that the clash of countervailing cultures might go hand in hand with a return to 'Christianity' amongst the slaves who need recourse to the familiar myth in order to re-establish stability amidst the chaos.

> The man of an era of dissolution which mixes the races together and who therefore contains within him the inheritance of a diversified descent, that is to say contrary and often not merely contrary drives and values which struggle with one another and rarely leave one another in peace – such a man of late cultures and broken lights will, on average, be a rather weak man: his fundamental desire is that the war which he *is* should come to an end; happiness appears to him, in accord with a sedative (for example Epicurean or Christian) medicine and mode of thought, pre-eminently as the happiness of repose, of tranquility, and satiety, and unity at last attained, at a Sabbath of Sabbaths. (Nietzsche 2003, 5: 200)

As I had expected, Wittgenstein was definitely opposed to this idea. But I was surprised by the vehemence of his emotions. A language which had not 'grown organically' seemed to him not only useless but despicable. (Quoted in K. T. Farm (editor) 1967, 35)

A 1946 remark not only confirms Carnap's portrayal of Wittgenstein's feelings about a purely contrived language; it also shows us that the feeling ran deep enough in Wittgenstein not to have changed over the course of nearly two decades:

Esperanto: the feeling of disgust we get if we utter an *invented* word with invented derivative syllables. The word is cold, lacking in associations, and yet it plays at being 'language.' (CV, 52)

What might contrast with the kind of 'inorganic' linguistic artifice that Wittgenstein found so repugnant? Presumably, Wittgenstein has in mind a use of words that evolves organically out of our sensitivity to the history of meaning, that history of meaning which it is philosophy's task to help us remember (PI, §127). If this is so, we can appreciate why Wittgenstein would be opposed to a recreative philosophy that tries to solve the problems of philosophy by simply *inventing* news rules for the use of words word at will and insisting, in the manner of Dummet's Wittgenstein, that the new rules constitute 'the same' meaning as the old. I have argued that such an illusion of philosophy is just what Wittgenstein had in mind when he insisted that it is not "our task to reform language" (PI, §132), to impose upon speech an "improvement in our terminology designed to prevent misunderstandings in practice" (ibid.). Once more, we are not interested in "new discoveries and inventions" (PI, §126) and "[w]e don't want to refine or complete the system of rules for the use of our words in unheard-of ways" (PI, §133). If "philosophy ought really to be written as poetic composition" (CV, 24), then the order of meaning that the philosopher strives creatively to remember is a work of art. And if this is so, the recreative philosopher sins against an ideal that is as much aesthetic as ethical.[232] He tries to patch up the ruptures in the narrative unity of our life with particular words by rewriting their meaning as rules that do not honestly ring true to the history of word use. "One uses straw to try to stuff the cracks which show in the work of art's organic unity, but to quiet one's conscience one uses the *best* straw" (CVR, 5-6). One sees some of best straw, perhaps. in the clever arguments of Dummet's recreative Wittgenstein. This Wittgenstein rightly argued that our perceptions of similarity and difference in rule-following are not coerced by a time-transcendent metaphysical logic that deprives us of our freedom to accept its norms and, in this way, imposes its constraints upon us 'from without.' This Wittgenstein wrongly concluded that the

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[232] "(Ethics and aesthetics are one and the same.)" (T, 6.421)

linguistic freedom we are left with is that illusion of freedom at work in every doxastic voluntarism, including a Wittgensteinian voluntarism where our beliefs about similarity and difference of meaning are simply up to us. Once more: "Your thoughts get in a whirlpool when you bump up against the limit of your honesty. You can *say* what you wish, it will take you no further" (CV, 8).

In connection with this important point about Wittgenstein's deference to the organic evolution of language, it is instructive to consider the way in which his movement from the vertical to the horizontal conception of transcendence renews, rather than repudiates, our notion of the "depth of the essence" (RFM, I-§74). The depth of the essence will be construed no longer in terms of a frozen metaphysical truth, severed from the temporal order of time and change and nowhere manifest in the material particulars of the world. Far to the contrary, the depth of the essence will now concern its status as a living meaning – a meaning essentially manifest in temporal particulars and capable of the growth and change characteristic of that same movement of repetitional remembrance that seems to be at work in the reflections on Freud. What I want to highlight, in this connection, is Wittgenstein's use of agrarian metaphors to portray the philosopher, not as a technician who invents essence (meaning) and imposes it upon linguistic practice, but as a kind of steward of meaning who facilities its own organic development over time. Consider the imagery in the following depiction of what it means to overcome a philosophical problem:

> Getting hold of the difficulty *deep down* is what is hard. [*Die Schwierigkeit* tief *fassen, is das Schwere*]. / Because if it is grasped near the surface it simply remains the difficulty it was. It has to be pulled out by the roots; that involves our beginning to think about these things in a new way. The change is as decisive as, for example, that from the alchemical to the chemical way of thinking. The new way of thinking is what is so hard to establish. / Once the new way of thinking is established, the old problems vanish; indeed they become hard to recapture. For they go with our way of expressing ourselves and, if we clothe ourselves in a new form of expression, the old problems are discarded along with the old garment. (CV, 48)

We descend into the depths of meaning "to find the liberating word" (PO, 165), and our success means our "beginning to think about […] things in a new way" (CV, 48) Elsewhere, these journeyings down into the depths of words is depicted as a descent into 'chaos,' and one that issues, as we now know, in concepts that are in some sense *new*:

> When you are philosophizing you have to descend into primeval chaos and feel at home there. (CV, 65)

> You must go right down to the original sources [*Quellen*] so as to see them all side by side, both the neglected and the preferred. (CV, 61)

> One keeps forgetting to go right down to the foundations. One doesn't put the question marks deep down enough. / The labour pains at the birth of new concepts. (CV, 62)

The attitude of the philosopher who seeks to renew language in this way is not a muscular subjectivistism that actively imposes meaning upon words, but that of a reticent withdrawal that plays the relatively passive role of facilitating language's own organic development. This becomes most clear when Wittgenstein's discussion of 'depth' is couched in agricultural imagery and connected to connotations of care, patience, and deference to something other than the human will in concept formation. Evidentially, Wittgenstein finds these notions germane to "the birth of new concepts" (CV, 62) in philosophy just as they are germane to the growth of new life in agriculture:

> Virtually in the same way as there is a difference between deep and shallow sleep, there are thoughts which occur deep down and thoughts which bustle about on the surface. / You cannot draw the seed up out of the earth. All you can do is give it warmth and moisture and light; then it must grow. (You mustn't even touch it unless you use care). (CV, 42)

> Thinking too has a time for ploughing and a time for gathering the harvest. (CV, 28)

When our interest in the "depth of the essence" (RFM, I-§74) is here associated with warmth, moisture, growth, and change we are far from the metaphysical conception of essence that Wittgenstein presented as his own in the *Tractatus*, and which he explicitly critiques in the *Investigations* (PI, §97). In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein tells us, that illusion of essence took the form of a bad faith in "the crystalline purity of logic" (PI, §107), a faith that leads us into barren territory, inhospitable to all the life mutability, change, growth, and movement that we are finding in the later work. Kierkegaard represented the metaphysical-recollective relationship with meaning manifested by the knights of infinite resignation as a wavering in their walk "that shows that they are aliens in the world" (FT, 41), and which contrasted with the Christian-repetitional relationship with meaning manifested in the knight of faith, whose "gait is as steady as a postman's" (FT, 39). Wittgenstein, too, associates the frozen, recollective, conception of meaning with an incapacity for the forward motion of walking. In recollection, "[w]e have got into 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!" (PI, §107). We are deprived of our footing in language when we allow grammar's past to ossify into a dead dogma that provides us with

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no traction in the present and, so, no forward motion into the future. We are invited to look upon our grammatical past as the rough ground where traction is possible, and as the nutritive soil in which the seeds of our grammatical future might grow. The crucial point is this: as in Kierkegaard, we recover our footing in language not through any purely active invention of meanings that resolve philosophical problems (our own or those of others), but through a more complex posture of activity and passivity whereby we facilitate meaning's own organic and autonomous development. The movement away from recollection is not a movement toward recreation, but a movement toward repetition.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

In discussing Wittgenstein's remarks on Freud and secondary sense, I have been highlighting three aspects of his account of meaning transformation. All three suggest that this transformation can be happily understood as matter of Kierkegaardian repetition.

First, I have highlighted the paradoxical interplay of old and new, past and future, identity and difference that characterizes the Wittgensteinian dawning of new sense. Although the new meaning is, *essentially* different from the old meaning, it nevertheless registers with us as the expression of what we had always meant. Second, I have been stressing the imperious *authority* with which the saving revelation of sense imposes itself upon us and dispels the illusion of sense that formerly troubled us. Let us recall the nature of this authority. As I argued in Chapters Three and Five, Wittgenstein is dealing with concepts that run deep enough in us that they cannot be simply abandoned or revised away, but these are also concepts that have become unlivable and require renewal. This, I think, is part of what Wittgenstein is getting at when he says that the cases that concern here do not call for a reform, or a revision of meaning, but a remembrance of it (see PI, §132). Our deep need for these concepts and the confusion about them that has come to disrupt their healthy functioning on our linguistic life creates a state of tension. This tension in the reader is what the indirectly communicating author works to heighten, for it is, as it were, the state of darkness over which new revelations of sense can spontaneously dawn. Now, when these revelations of sense disclose themselves to us, they do so with a kind of authority, for they uniquely relieve us of the tension, restore our needed concept to its healthy working role, and restore us to that period of our linguistic history when it played that role, and from which we had become estranged.[233] As I

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[233] From what I said in the last chapter, I should be clear that I don't think Wittgenstein himself adheres to the doctrine of election by grace, but neither do I think he would categorically rebuke others for doing so. In any case, what he says about a believer's relation to this doctrine nicely captures the sense in which a renewal of grammar that restores us to a

explained it, the authority of revealed grammatical truth has to do with this sense in which it uniquely rectifies these conceptual and spiritual ailments, and with the related sense in which our acceptance of that truth is, while subject to the authority of grammar, genuinely free. Let me review my claim.

It is as clear in Wittgenstein as it is in Kierkegaard that our act of accepting a new, liberating, understanding of meaning is an act of the freely choosing human will, but I stressed that we cannot understand this use of the will in voluntarist terms. One reason for this is that our acceptance of the new meaning cannot be understood as a matter of what I called 'retrospective negation.' It is not a matter of our regarding the troubled understanding of sense alongside the saving alternative as two genuinely intelligible options, and choosing the latter. Rather, when the saving alternative is revealed, it completely eclipses the old, which is expunged from thought as what James would call a 'dead hypothesis,' and as what Wittgenstein and Kierkegaard call an 'illusion.' The newly revealed grammar imposes itself upon us with a felt authority because it restores us to a harmonious relationship with an erstwhile use of words that we find necessary, and because no other rendering of the grammar of those words strikes us plausible, least of all the *former* grammar of those words, which has come cause us strife. We are, in a non-metaphysical sense, *forced* to accept revealed grammar, for no other rendering of the meaning of our words strikes us as being true to what we have always meant.

Now, in my analysis of Kierkegaard, we saw a second reason why the voluntarist model of free choice was inapplicable in the context of grammatical revelation, and this second reason was yet another that calls us to analyze the experience of revelation in realistic terms. This was our finding that revelations of sense cannot be willfully created or brought to mind, for the plain reason that we do not know what to will. Kierkegaard's Christian amendment to the mythology of Platonic recollection involved a simple acceptance of the everywhere obvious but easily overlooked sense in which we are fundamentally dependent upon a power beyond the reach of the unaided human will.[234]

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needed concept is true not in the manner of an empirical proposition, but in the manner of a concept the use of which satisfies a deep human need.

> Election by grace: It is only permissible to write like this out of the most frightful suffering – & then it means something quite different. But for this reason it is not permissible for anyone to cite it as truth, unless he himself says it in torment. – It simply isn't a theory. – Or as one might also say: if this is truth, it is not the truth it appears at first glance to express. It's less a theory than a sigh, or a cry. (CVR, 34-35)

[234] If the reading I have offered is correct, this sense in which the sustaining renewal of our linguistic world is dependent upon a power beyond the human will is at least part of what Wittgenstein had in mind with his apparent gesture at a kind of foundationalism:

> The aspects of things that are most important for us are hidden [*verborgen*] because of their simplicity and familiarity. (One is unable to notice something – because it is always before one's eyes.) The real foundation of

We come to the discussion of the arbitrariness of grammar because it is here that we most clearly see that the human being is not the sole creative source of the new determinations grammar by which his life with language is renewed.

7.4.3. Remarks on the Arbitrariness of Grammar

In part, the idea that 'grammar is arbitrary' means that the concepts (the rules, the meanings) in terms of which we parse the world are not foisted upon us as a matter of metaphysical necessity; our use of those concepts cannot be set upon the sort of epistemic justification that would deliver any such inviolable metaphysical conclusion. But we have seen that the claim is even stronger than this. The trouble is not only with epistemic justifications that seek to establish necessary truths. The trouble is with epistemic justifications in general, including those that seek to establish contingent empirical truths. One such non-metaphysical, but still epistemic, kind of justification would try to show that the logic of our language corresponds to the logic of the world in the way that we can show that an empirical proposition corresponds to the fact it describes. From this perspective, logical propositions would state contingent facts about the empirical world. Of course, we have established that this approach is a non-starter, for it treats the propositions of logic as bi-polar propositions. "Grammar is not accountable to any reality" (PG, 184) if the imagined relation between grammar and reality "is constructed on the model of justifying a sentence by pointing to what verifies it" (Z, §311; cf., PG, 186). It is this correspondence-theoretical model of truth and justification that Wittgenstein is rejecting when he writes: "It is grammatical rules that determine meaning (constitute it) and so they themselves are not answerable to any meaning and to that extent are arbitrary" (PG, 184; cf., PI, §371-374, §497, §520; PI, II-§365-67). [235]

The thesis that grammar is arbitrary is also directed against the idea that grammar can be given a *pragmatic* justification. This is easy to overlook because, in Wittgenstein, there is clearly a kind of internal connection between our finding that a therapeutic philosopher's rendering of grammar truly captures the meaning of our words and its therapeutic effect of resolving the conceptual troubles that ail us. All the same, Wittgenstein cautions us against the temptation to read him as a

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> their inquiry does 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. (PI, §129)

[235] Recall:

> One is tempted to justify the rules of grammar by sentences like 'But there really are four primary colours'. And the saying that the rules of grammar are arbitrary is directed against the possibility of this justification, which is constructed on the model of justifying a sentence by pointing to what verifies it. (Z, §311; cf., PG, 186)

pragmatist. "I am trying to say something that sounds like pragmatism" (OC,§ 422), he admits, but he then immediately indicates that this is a misinterpretation: "Here I am being thwarted by a kind of *Weltanschauung*" (ibid.; cf., PI, §466-71). Why can't grammar be given a pragmatic justification, exactly? Our clearest account of the matter comes when Wittgenstein contrasts the rules of grammar with rules of prudence where, in the latter case, a pragmatic justification *can* be given. He illustrates by contrasting the rules of grammar that determine the meaning of the word 'chess' with the prudential rules of cookery. An earlier-quoted remark, taken in its surrounding context, speaks to the point:

> Why don't I call the rules of cookery arbitrary, and why am I tempted to call the rules of grammar arbitrary? Because 'cookery' is defined by the end of cookery, and I don't think of the concept 'language' as defined by the end of language. You cook badly if you are guided in your cooking by rules other than the right ones; but if you follow other rules than those of chess you are playing another game; and if you follow grammatical rules other than such and such ones, that does not mean that you say something wrong, no, you are speaking of something else. (PG, I- §133; cf., Z, §320, PI, §497)

The aims of cookery can be conceptually severed from the particular rules that we might adopt in order to satisfy those aims. I can fry an egg in the conventional way, warming butter in a pan, cracking the egg into the butter, and so on. But if, flouting convention, I fry an egg with a blow torch, it will not follow that what I will have produced is not, in the end, a fried egg. One can, conceptually, hold the ends of cookery in one hand, the rules we follow in order to meet those ends in the other, and intelligibly ask whether the rules are helping us to bring about our ends effectively. Here we have a context in which we *can* say either that the rules we are following are the 'right' rules or, alternatively, that they ought to be exchanged for others. Prudential rules can be epistemically justified and, therefore, Wittgenstein is not tempted to say that these rules are 'arbitrary.'

Things are different when we come to asking (confusedly) if we should abide by or revise the rules of grammar so as to speak about the world, or some aspect of the world, in the most pragmatically useful way. The idea, once again, would be that we might elect to countenance different rules to regulate our thought and talk about a certain phenomenon – chess, redness, language, love, persons, or whatever – and that we might do so on the pragmatic grounds of how such a revision might better enable us to describe the phenomenon in question. To take Wittgenstein's example, the pragmatists would have it that we could choose to determine the meaning of 'language' by considering the ends which we want our talk about 'language' to serve, and

then deciding that 'language' will mean whatever best serves those ends. A pragmatist Wittgenstein would have asked himself whether our rules for the use of the term 'language' should be revised in order to allow for the intelligible thought and talk about a logically private language, and he would have decided against the idea. But notice, this kind of pragmatism presupposes that we make clear sense of various different ways of meaning 'language,' so that we can then decide which of those meanings best suits our pragmatic ends. Is this conceptual situation intelligible? Can we, for example, even make sense of the idea of a logically private language, so as then to decide if talk about such a thing would be *useful*? Surely not. When, therefore, the later Wittgenstein is tempted to say that the rules of grammar are arbitrary, he is expressing the same view that we have seen in the early work about the rules of logic and ethics: such rules cannot be epistemically justified either by showing their correspondence to a grammar metaphysically transcendent to language, or by showing their pragmatic utility.

Notice, now, that Wittgenstein is only "*tempted* to call the rules of grammar arbitrary" (PG, I-§133). Why this weak expression of the view? Might he be reticent here because the slogan that 'grammar is arbitrary' easily encourages the sort of anti-realism we have found in Hacker? If, on account of the fact that grammar cannot be given an epistemic justification, we conclude that the grammar we use is arbitrary, do we not suggest that the grammar we use if mere matter of voluntarist choice? From here it is a short step to that recreative aspect of Hacker's Carnapian view, his view that "*[r]ules are human creations* [....] They are made, not found. They are not answerable to reality in the currency of truth" (Baker and Hacker 2009, 66). I now want to argue that, for the later Wittgenstein, the slogan that 'grammar is arbitrary' does indeed lead in this recreative direction. It does so for reasons that will be familiar from our reading of the *Tractatus* in Chapter Four: the slogan presupposes the same confused understanding of our intentional relationship with alternative grammars that is presupposed by the recollective metaphysician who would argue that the grammar of our language is *not* arbitrary because it corresponds to a grammar metaphysically transcendent to language. Both views presuppose that the grammar of our language can be set in relief against the relevant alternatives.

Let us review. We are moved to say that grammar is arbitrary because we cannot provide any of the above kinds of epistemic justification for using the grammar that we have. This gives us the impression that we could adopt other grammars if we wished. However, our inability to imagine our way into any such alternative grammars leaves us with the sense that our grammar *isn't* arbitrary after all. Our impression that grammar is arbitrary seems to fade into incoherence, along with our

impression that there could be grammars other than our own, when we find ourselves unable to imagine what it would be like to know the world in terms of any other grammar than the one we have. Wittgenstein is well aware of this tension, and he marks that awareness in moments when he describes the arbitrariness of grammar not as a thesis to be adopted, but as a conceptual challenge that we ought to work through on our own. In the following passage, for example, the arbitrariness of grammar is certainly not being asserted as an unproblematic thesis that we ought simply to accept: "Consider: 'The only correlate in language to an objective necessity is an arbitrary rule. It is the only thing which one can milk out of this objective necessity into a proposition'" (PI, §372). Or again:

> ['D]oes what is, and what is not, called (logically) possible depend wholly on our grammar – that is, on what it permits?' – But surely that is arbitrary! – Is it arbitrary? – It is not every sentence-like formation that we know how to do something with, not every technique that has a use in our life. (PI, II-§521)

> Compare a concept with a style of painting. For is even our style of painting arbitrary? Can we choose one at pleasure? (The Egyptian, for instance.) (PI, II-§367)

We cannot always just choose one at pleasure, and neither can we always choose at pleasure the concepts by which we know things. Our concepts determine our sense of what something is, and that being the case, we cannot imagine things in a world unregulated by the grammar by which we know them. This was the difference between the rules of grammar and the rules of cookery.

We are being torn here between two ways of thinking about grammar, both of which we need ultimately to reject. When we are tempted by the allure of recollective metaphysics, we are inclined to say that the grammar of our language is not arbitrary, for we think that we can imagine the world stripped bare of the temporal language by which we know it, catch a glimpse of its own timeless logical structure, and ascertain that the grammar of our temporal language truly corresponds to that time-and-language transcendent logic of the world. When we reject this temptation to transcendent metaphysics, we see that no grammar can be given an epistemic justification, and we assume, erroneously, that it can have no justification at all. We are then tempted to draw the gleeful, recreative, conclusion that the grammar by which we know the world is 'arbitrary,' that we can swap out the grammar by which we actually know the world and exchange it for an equally unjustified alternative grammar at will. Wittgenstein's intimation has been that both the recollective position and the recreative position is confused, and for the same reason: both presuppose that the grammar of our language can be set up before our mind's eye as one possibility amongst others. Both presuppose that grammatical propositions are bipolar.

To make my claim here more specific, I'd like to specify three senses in which grammar is *not* arbitrary. The first two will be familiar from the discussion of Chapter Four. The third brings us to the essential idea of this chapter: linguistic meanings stand in an essential, non-arbitrary, relation to the temporal words and deeds in which they are embodied.

7.4.3.1. Grammar's Non-Arbitrariness: The Choice and Application of Rules

First, grammar is not arbitrary in the sense that we don't always choose our concepts. At least some concepts cannot be simply dropped from language at will. Certainly, some concepts are arbitrary in this sense. We could drop the concept of meter length, in this way, for we can easily imagine a world in which we go on without it. We have seen, however, that not all concepts are arbitrary in this way. The law of non-contradiction, perhaps, is a case in point. Accordingly, it would be far too general to say that grammar is 'arbitrary' even in this first sense of the word. In his later work, Wittgenstein speaks of the 'deep need' for certain conventions (RFM, I-§74) and he anticipates the thought in the *Tractatus* when he writes that "logic is not a field in which *we* express what we wish with the help of signs, but rather one in which the nature of the absolutely necessary sign speaks for itself" (T, 6.1124). There may be necessary signs that code for concepts that force themselves upon us, rules for navigating the world that we cannot live without.

Second, grammar is not arbitrary in the application we make of the concepts we have chosen; we cannot simply decide which applications of our concepts we will find intelligible. Consider the grammar of the concept 'normal':

> 'Look on this tumor as a perfectly normal part of the body!' Can one do that, to order? Do I have the power to decide at will to have, or not to have an ideal conception of my body? […] / We may say: people can only regard this tumor as a natural part of their body if their whole feeling for the body changes […]. Otherwise the best they can do is put up with it. (CV, 20)

There is no suggestion in the second remark that we will be able to simply *will* ourselves into a new grammatical perspective in this way. The meanings of words – the concepts that words express – cannot be adjusted at will while remaining the meanings that they are. Of course, I want to allow that Wittgenstein *does* acknowledge the possibility of alternative grammars – grammars inexpressibly different from our own that would renew our existing concepts in unforeseeable ways, and disclose applications of those concepts that we currently find unintelligible. I think we should even allow that such a grammar might lack the law of non-contradiction. My claim is only that we cannot conjure up such grammars at will. Our relationship to these renewing revelations of sense is fundamentally

passive, for they have no determination within the field of grammatical propositions that currently frame thought. The following passage speaks to this passivity:

> What does it mean when we say, 'I can't imagine the opposite of this' or 'What would it be like if it were otherwise?' – For example, when someone has said that my mental images are private; or that only I myself can know when I am feeling pain; and so forth. (PI, §251)

In short, what does it mean to say that I can't imagine the opposite of a grammatical, or logical, truth? "Of course, here 'I can't imagine the opposite' doesn't mean: my powers of imagination are unequal to the task" (ibid.). I am not saying that my powers of imagination are unequal to the task because that would suggest that if I simply trained my powers of imagination, those powers alone might enable me to do what I so far fail to do. Unlike the movement of resignation, and like the movement of faith, the movement into a revelation of new grammar is not one that "I venture to make when it is demanded and can discipline myself to make" (FT, 48). I cannot simply *will* myself to think a still unthinkable grammatical truth.

I have just mentioned two senses in which the grammar is not arbitrary. I now want to describe the third, which brings us to what have been calling the essential 'embodiment,' or 'incarnation,' of meaning in words.

7.4.3.2. Grammar's Non-Arbitrariness: The Embodiment of Meaning

In his notebooks for the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein explored a temptation to say that his natural tendency to identify himself with his physical body was merely arbitrary. This was connected to his temptation to say that the actions that emanated from 'his' physical body were neither good nor bad. Since the Tractarian metaphysical self (the self in which resolute Wittgenstein pretended to believe) was a soul utterly detached from its body, and incapable of influencing the world through that body's motions, it was no more morally responsible for those motions than it was for the motions of any other material thing. Recall the view:

> The philosophical I is not the human being, not the human body or the human soul with its psychological properties, but the metaphysical subject, the boundary (not a part) of the world. The human body, however, my body in particular, is part of the world among others, among animals, plants, stones, etc., etc. / Whoever realizes this will not want to procure a pre-eminent place for his own body. (NB, 82)

A stone, the body of a beast, the body of a man, my body, all stand on the same level. That is why what happens, whether it comes from a stone or from my body is neither good nor bad. (NB, 84)

From the perspective of this metaphysical soul, the self's natural inclination to identify with a particular human body is, as I would like to put it, utterly *arbitrary*. The human body that we feel to be our own is, in fact, only one amongst various possible bodies, animate and inanimate, with which one could identify with equal right, to wit, none at all. None, as we saw, bears any *internal* relation to the will of the philosophical self. None is essentially involved in the expression of that capacity for free will – that capacity for good and evil – that *I* am. None, Wittgenstein put it, has a *physiognomy* that is the particular manifestation of my soul in the world, internally, rather than merely externally, related to the soul that I am. As microcosm to macrocosm, this view of the soul and its relation to the human body goes hand in hand with a more general view about the 'soul' – the meaning, the essence – of worldly things in general, and of their relation to the temporal particulars in which they are embodied. Recall, again, the crucial moment in the *Notebooks* when Wittgenstein calls this mythology of the self into question.

One conception: As I can infer my spirit (character, will) from my physiognomy [*Physiognomie*], so I can infer the spirit (will) of each thing from *its* physiognomy. / But can I *infer* [*schleißen*] my spirit from my physiognomy? / Isn't this relationship purely empirical? / Does my body really express anything? Is it an internal expression of something? / Is, e.g., an angry face angry in itself or merely because it is empirically connected with a bad temper? (NB, 84)

Following Kremer, I argued that this is exactly the view of the soul's relation to the body that the *Tractatus* ultimately urges us to accept. This is to say, my sense that a particular human body – my body – is essentially implicated in my efforts of self-expression is *not* merely arbitrary. Far from it, the relation between body and soul is indeed an internal relation: the particular physiognomy of my willing body-in-action is essentially expressive of the self that I am. The human soul is not some depersonalized determination of Platonic eternity that would be what it is regardless of whether it is incarnated in my body, some other body, or in no body at all. Hence, as Wittgenstein puts in *On Certainty*, "If someone says 'I have a body,' he can be asked 'Who is speaking here with this mouth?'"(OC, §244). I do not stand in an external relation to my body in the way I stand to a mere possession from which I am ontologically distinct, and which I call 'my own' only from the perspective of a spirit who could intelligibly *disown* it, and come to haunt another body instead. As I

am putting it here, in the resolute Tractarian picture, our sense that the soul of a person is uniquely expressed in a very particular human body is not *arbitrary.*

At the end of Chapter Four, I brought the Tractarian analogy between self and world into dialogue with the resolute reader's view that logic is shown in our embodied practical know-how. I defended the view that logic – what the *Tractatus* called the unalterable reality of 'logical form' – is essentially embodied in the flesh of language, just as the soul is essentially embodied in the active, flesh and blood, human physiognomy. Since, as I argued, the internal properties of "[o]bjects[236] are just what constitute this unalterable form" (T, 2.023), it follows that the *essence* of particular objects, which is constituted by their internal, logical, properties, is essentially incarnate in temporal particulars. Now, do we see anything like this parallel emerge in the later work? We do, especially when we bear in mind that talking about the essence of the object is, on my reading, another way of talking about the meaning of the corresponding word.

The *Notebooks* discussion of the physiognomy of the human body resounds in the *Investigations'* discussion of the physiognomy of words. In a pregnant parenthetical remark, Wittgenstein notes the connection without elaborating: "(Meaning – a physiognomy)" (PI, §568). In his recent translation of the *Investigations*, Hacker tells us that Wittgenstein wrote this as a reminder to himself to add in two further remarks that develop the point, both of which Hacker supplies. The first: "In the use of a word we see a physiognomy" (PI, §259). The second: "The concept is not only a technique, but also a physiognomy" (ibid.). The human soul is expressed in the physiognomy of the willing-acting human body in motion; the meaning of a word is expressed in the physiognomy of the written, or spoken linguistic sign-in-use. A related reflection on the issue reads as a reminder of that Tractarian mystical wonderment at the very possibility of our linguistic world. In the recollective illusion of the *Tractatus*, wondering at the possibility of our linguistic world involved a Promethean attempt to grasp logic as a system of 'rules-as-rails' (PI, §218). When it guides us away from recollection, the *Investigations* guides us away from this Promethean illusion of logic.

> 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.) / From this you can see how much there is to the physiognomy of what we call 'following a rule' in everyday life. (PI, §234-35)

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[236] That is, their logical possibilities for combination with other objects into states of affairs (T, 2.033).

Now, just as we feel than the soul of a particular person is not arbitrarily incarnate in that person's particular physiognomy, neither, normally, do we feel that the 'soul' of a particular word – its meaning, its grammar – is arbitrarily incarnate in the particular uses of words in which that meaning is expressed. "There might also be a language in whose use the 'soul' of the words played no part. In which, for example, we had no objection to replacing one word by a new, arbitrarily invented one" (PI, §530). This, however, is not *our* language, for, as we have already seen in the discussion of secondary sense, one can find that one needs to use a very specific concatenation of written or spoken *words* in order to express one's thought, and one can feel that any attempt to paraphrase that thought by any other words would fail to capture the sense that specifically *those* words capture.

> We speak of understanding a sentence in the sense in which it can be replaced by another which says the same; but also in the sense in which it cannot be replaced by any other. [....] / In the one case, the thought in the sentence is what is common to different sentences; in the other, something that is expressed only by these words in these positions. (Understanding a poem.) (PI, §531)

Our understanding of meaning is, therefore, unlike the Platonist's grasping of a purely eternal idea, shorn of all the temporal flesh of words and, so, readily grasped in the sublime medium of purely eternal thought (PI, § 102) regardless of whether we express what we mean in *these* words, *those* words, or in no words at all. Just as a person's non-temporal soul does not stand in a merely arbitrary relation to his temporal body, we often have the sense that the non-temporal meaning of a word does not stand in a merely arbitrary relation to the temporal word itself, nor to the temporal particulars that we use that word to describe. One might say, for example, "'I feel as if the name 'Schubert' fitted Schubert's works and Schubert's face'" (PI, II-§27). Such a person feels that the word 'Schubert' has become the shape and sound embodiment of the meaning that animates the word's use, just as the physiognomy of a person – his body in motion as gait, characteristic gestures, facial expressions, and tones of voice – can register with us as "an internal expression of something" (NB, 84), namely the soul of the person himself.

Wittgenstein develops the thought by sharpening his parallel between the body and the word. "[T]he human body is the best picture of the human soul" (PI, II-§25) and, we learn, "[t]he face is the soul of the body" (CV, 23). The suggestion, I take it, is that a person's soul is more plainly manifest in the characteristic expressions of his face than it is in the rest of his physiognomy. We do not regard the person himself as standing in a merely contingent, external relation to his body, and least of all do we regard the person himself as standing in a merely contingent, external relation to

his face. So too, *mutatis mutandis*, in the case of words. "Though [...] every word can have a different character in different contexts, at the same time there is a single character it always has – a face. It looks at us, after all" (PI, II -§38). The physiognomy of a human body is essentially enchanted by the human soul that animates the body's motions. So, too, the physiognomy of a given word can be essentially enchanted by the meaning that animates the word's use.

Wittgenstein was trying to capture this idea of an essentially incarnate meaning in that earlier quoted remark where he has us imagine the hypothetical community of speakers – let us call them Platonists – who speak a "language in whose use the 'soul' of the words played no part. In which, for example, we had no objection to replacing one word by a new, arbitrarily invented one" (PI, §530).

> The familiar face of a word, the feeling that it has assimilated its meaning into itself, that it is a likeness of its meaning – there could be human beings to whom all this was alien. (They would not have an attachment to their words.) – And how are these feelings manifested among us? – By the way we choose and value words. (PI, II-§294) [237]

With regard to the self, the Platonic spirit of religious detachment involves an indifference to the body. With regard to the broader linguistic world, it would involve an indifference to the temporal things in which the essences are expressed: not only the particular worldly phenomena, but the words that we use to speak about them. The Platonist would feel no such attachment to the particular words with which he customarily expresses certain thoughts. He would feel that the thought, the *meaning*, is the important thing, that the words he uses to express it are irrelevant. He might believe, for example, that we have a purely intellectual, contemplative, relationship with the meaning, and that that relationship will remain the pristine, changeless, unadulterated thing that it is regardless of what words we use to express the meaning in speech. Once more: "People say: it's not the word that counts, but its meaning, thinking of the meaning as a thing of the same kind as the

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[237] Mulhall offers that we feel the relevant kind of attachment when we dislike the paraphrasing of a cherished text. Here we feel that the original *words* are essential to the meaning:

> [T]he specific form of attachment to our words that is manifest in the way we choose and value words is also evident in the aesthetic role certain texts can play in our lives. This attachment comes out not just in those contexts when a word strikes us as the living embodiment of its meaning; it is also evident in many of our everyday practices of using language when experiences of meaning are not at stake. For example, we have a practice of hanging texts on the wall, as if a certain form of words were an embodiment of their meaning: that is, we treat them with the respect we have for the sentiment they express […], and we find them to be a fully apt expression of their meaning. We might not accord such honorific to another form of words which attempted to convey the same sentiment: to understand the text fully, we might feel, is to appreciate that it could not be replaced by any other – only those words in that order will do. (Mulhall 1990, 44)

word, even though different from the word. Here the word, there the meaning. The money, and the cow that one can buy with it" (PI, §120). Wittgenstein thinks they are mistaken.

The phenomenon we are grappling with here is subtle enough that we should flesh it out with further examples. We are finding a third sense in which grammar is *not* arbitrary: very often, our experience of language is a testament to the fact that grammar is not arbitrarily related to the temporal uses of words in which grammar (meaning) finds it embodied expression. Why am I stressing this point? Because it shows us a sense in which an honest relationship with language is not voluntarist, or subjectivist. I need to establish this point to support my claim that the remembrance in Wittgenstein does not admit of a recreative analysis. Again: it is not only the case that we cannot simply decide to drop certain concepts, and that we cannot simply decide which applications of concepts we will find intelligible. The point, we are now finding, is that the limits of our honesty are also the limits of which material uses of words – which concatenations of shape and sound – we can genuinely find expressive of certain meanings. The authority of grammar over our linguistic lives is the authority with which meaning can forcibly *demand* that it be expressed in the use of particular words. By the same token, meaning can forcibly *refuse* our attempt to express it in uses of words that strike us as dishonest, contrived, or unnatural.

Consider, for example, the unnaturalness, and even dishonesty, we can feel if a friend decides to use a new nickname and would like us to play along. Or consider cases where, for the sake of politeness, we are urged to speak of 'loving' someone we do not love, to or endure such disingenuous uses of the word when others express their feelings for us. We might try to tell ourselves that 'love' does not mean *the same thing* in this new context. To the extent that we are Platonists about meaning, lacking genuine attachment to our words, we might find this an acceptable way of mollifying our deeper sense that we are lying or tolerating the lies that others tell us. If we are honest, however, we will admit that we are not Platonists and that this kind of strategy for assuaging a guilty linguistic conscience is self-deceptive.

To take a different example, imagine that, for whatever reason, we are asked to adopt some neologism and use it in place of the word that we ordinarily used for the same purpose. "Suppose I had agreed on a code with someone; 'tower' means bank. I tell him 'Now go to the tower!' – he understands me and acts accordingly, but he feels the word 'tower' to be strange in this use; it has not yet 'absorbed' the meaning" (PI, II-§263). In time, of course, the new application could 'take.' However, if it takes by way of brute causal association, rather than by our ability to see that what we have always meant by the word 'tower' can be *naturally* projected into this new use, we will have been

forcibly severed from our linguistic history with the word. It bears repeating that it is precisely this kind of brute attempt at language reform that Wittgenstein rejects as a means of rectifying philosophical puzzlement.[238] When Wittgenstein works to facilitate a renewing encounter with "the liberating word" (PO, 165), he is appealing not merely to our abstract sense of which *concepts* we must, or can, or cannot apply in this or that unforeseeably new way. He is appealing to our concrete, embodied sense that we must, or can, or cannot honestly utter certain *words* if we want to express what we mean.

We should take care to note the various forms of the phenomenon we are dealing with here. We saw its most extreme form when considering secondary sense, where one feels that only *one* use of words will capture what one means. Here, no paraphrase will do. In less extreme cases, we might feel that any number of different linguistic formulations would do for the expression of a thought, but that *some*, at least, certainly will not. Consider:

> Can I say 'bububu' and mean 'If it doesn't rain, I shall go for a walk'? – It is only in a language that I can mean something by something. This shows clearly that the grammar of 'to mean' does not resemble that of the expression 'to imagine' and the like.' (PI, §35)

The point is not that one cannot stipulate that 'bububu' will mean 'If it doesn't rain, I shall go for a walk' – certainly one can. The point is that such stipulation is not in itself sufficient for us to actually have the *experience* of meaning 'If it doesn't rain, I shall go for a walk' when we utter 'bububu' (see PI, §35). Much practical and historical stage-setting needs to be in place before any experience of meaning can attend the use of a given word, and – this is the important point for the moment – where that stage-setting is not in place, we cannot bring about the experience of meaning by any brute act of the unaided human will. In such a case, if we decide to mouth the word 'bububu' and say that we mean 'If it doesn't rain, I shall go for a walk' we will be doing only that: mouthing words that fail to give satisfying expression to what we say we mean.

In a later remark, Wittgenstein returns to this line of thought and makes the suggestion that I have sketched. He suggests that his reservation about the thesis of the arbitrariness of grammar is not only a reservation about the idea that we can arbitrarily extend the use of certain concepts, and also not only a reservation about the idea that we can or drop or adopt certain concepts as we wish. The observation is also that we find a non-arbitrary relation between the use of certain concepts and

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[238] "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 [....]We don't want to refine or complete the system of rules for the use of our words in unheard-of ways" (PI, §132-133).

the use of the words that ordinarily express those concepts. The thought before the dash is a thought about which we ought to have suspicions.

> I utter a sentence 'The weather is fine;' but the words are, after all, arbitrary signs – so let's put 'a b c d' in their place. But now, when I read this, I can't connect it, without more ado, with the above sense. I am not used, I might say, to saying 'a' instead of 'the' and 'b' instead of 'weather,' and so on. But I don't mean by this that I am not used to making an immediate association between the word 'the' and 'a'; rather, that I am not used to using 'a' *in the place* of 'the' – and therefore in the sense of 'the.' (I don't know this language.) / (I am not used to using Fahrenheit measures of temperature. That's why such a specification of temperature 'says' nothing to me.) (PI, §508)

It is not, to repeat, that we fail to make certain *associations* between 'a' and 'the.' Associations, imaginings, would be only externally, contingently, causally related to the relevant words. Wittgenstein is interested in internal, grammatical, relations between a word that we may or may not experience as carrying *the same meaning* as another. Once more: grammar is not arbitrary, in part, because concepts do not bear a merely contingent relation to their material embodiment in the words in which those concepts are, and have historically been, expressed. If we find this odd, we have become alienated (perhaps by skeptical philosophy) from something most familiar. We might say the following, with Wittgenstein's interlocutor, and Wittgenstein would challenge us as he challenges him:

> 'Isn't it peculiar that, without the institution of language and all its surroundings, I shouldn't be able to think that it will soon stop raining?' – Do you want to say that it is strange that you should be unable to say these words to yourself and mean them without those surroundings? (PI, §540)

If so, Wittgenstein reminds us that we could hardly make head or tail of someone who felt that there was such a contingent relation between words and their meaning that we could simply express those meanings with sounds chosen at random, as opposed to with the words that expressed those meanings in our language. Such a person would speak that aforementioned "language in whose use the 'soul' of words played no part" (PI, §530).

> Suppose someone were to point to the sky and come out with a number of unintelligible words. When we ask him what he means, he explains that the words mean 'Thank heaven it'll soon stop raining.' He even explains to us what the individual words mean. – I am assuming that he will, as it were, suddenly come to himself and say that the sentence was

complete nonsense, but that when he uttered it, it had seemed to him like a sentence in a language he knew (perhaps even like a familiar quotation). (PI, §540)

These excursuses on the non-arbitrariness of grammar go to show Wittgenstein's sensitivity to the limits of the human will and, in particular, to the will's capacity to find sense in unfamiliar uses of certain words. The upshot, for my present purposes, is that the movement of remembrance whereby we come to find sense in newly revealed grammars, and the unforeseeable uses of words they licence, is not a brute movement of the recreative will. Our better model for interpreting the matter is as a matter of Kierkegaardian repetition. This past section (7.4.3.2), however, will serve a greater purpose than this. It will be the embodiment of meaning as I have described it here that helps us to understand the use of the body in the acts of expression that bring us into contact with revealed meaning. As I explain in the next chapter, those embodied acts of expression are acts by which a felt desire to express ourselves in certain words surges us within us and results in a normatively appropriate *practical* and pre-reflective use of words or deeds without any mediating, theoretical act of interpretation.

7.5. Conclusion

Jonathan Lear offers that "if there is a 'problem about language' that haunts [Wittgenstein] throughout the *Investigations*, it is the indissoluble, necessary tension that exists between first and third-person perspectives" (Lear 1982, 224). Agreed. Wittgenstein awakens the first-person point of view in his reader – he awakens our *subjectivity* – when he highlights the possibility of grammar's creative renewal (family resemblance, secondary sense, etc), gestures at the philosopher's linguistic freedom to facilitate that renewal in his discussion of Freud's methods, and when he echoes those methods in his richly creative philosophical practice. In these aspects of his writing, we are inclined to see an invitation to view the philosopher as a recreative revolutionary, and his enterprise as a celebration of historically unhinged freedom and individuality carried out in the name of 'progress.' Kierkegaard wanted to expose the psychological dangers of any such philosophical program with his study of the reflective aesthete. Kierkegaard would readily agree with the quotation from Nestroy that Wittgenstein chose as a motto for his *Investigations*: "The trouble about progress is that it always looks much greater than it really is" (PI, 1)

Orthodox readers like Mounce and Hacker rightly recoil from the Promethean champion of the first-person point of view – the subjectivist's point of view – that they see in the resolute Wittgenstein. They do so, however, at the risk of eliminating the essential first-person perspective

(the essential role of subjectivity) altogether, and letting Wittgenstein's philosophy ossify into a purely 'third-personal,' or purely 'objective' linguistic conservatism, informed by purely objective, 'levelled-down' interpretation of what it means to respect the conventions of 'ordinary language.' Here our need for honesty in philosophy, and for fidelity to our grammatical past, is unhinged, not from history, but from the essential finitude of the human being, which precludes us from saying, in advance, what such honesty and fidelity will look like, going forward.

How is the *Investigations* meant to work upon these twin illusions of a purely first-personal recreative progressivism and a purely third-personal recollective conservatism? It works upon us in the same way that *Either / Or* works upon us when it draws us into recreative anti-realism of the reflective aesthete, only then to draw us into the equally unlivable Hegelian-recollective anti-realism of Judge William. To take a different example, the *Investigations* works upon us as *Fear and Trembling* works upon us. As we've seen, *Fear and Trembling* draws us into the recollective anti-realism that locks the knight of resignation into a static understanding of his past. At the same time, the text draws us into the recreative anti-realism that we think see in the knight of faith when we regard his forward motion into the future as the kind of bald, ahistorical, indifference to the past that Kierkegaard is so careful to criticize in his treatment of the reflective aesthete. And the *Investigations* works upon us in the way that the *Tractatus* works upon us when it draws us into it various recollective illusions, then moves us to flirt with the recreative Promethianism that some orthodox readers fear that they see in the resolute approach. The tension between the recollective and recreative readings of the later work fulfills its methodological purpose when it drives us away from both these illusions of remembrance and into the understanding of remembrance as repetition. The mutually unacceptable accounts of remembrance explored by Wittgenstein function, methodologically, like the mutually unacceptable accounts of remembrance explored by Kierkegaard's different pseudonyms and literary characters. Do we arrive at kind of modified conservatism? Do we arrive at a kind of modified progressivism? Wittgenstein held the preoccupation with 'progress' in contempt, and any effort to call his philosophical program 'progressive' would ring as false as false can be. Rather, if we need a name, we could call it a 'repetitional conservatism' or, perhaps, a 'conservatism of the first-person.'

As she so often does, Iris Murdoch unwittingly captures Wittgenstein's account. She reminds us that for the first and third-personal perspectives on meaning to find their proper harmony is for us to enter into a realistic relationship with meaning itself. Here, the ethical task involves an effort to find a first-personal significance in the third-personal norms of ordinary language, and that effort

begins by attending to the way those norms come to life in the context of one's own history with words, the way they transform that history, and the way they are transformed by it in turn.

> There are two senses of 'knowing what a word means', one connected with ordinary language and the other very much less so. Knowledge of a value concept is something to be understood, as it were, in depth, and not in terms of switching on to some given impersonal network [….] We do not simply, through being rational and knowing ordinary language, 'know' the meaning of all necessary moral words. We may have to learn the meaning; and since we are human historical individuals the movement of understanding is onward into increasing privacy, in the direction of the ideal limit, and not back towards a genesis in the rulings of an impersonal public language. (Murdoch 1997, 322)

Murdoch's paradigms here are the words of our moral vocabulary. As the passage continues, however, she suggests an extension of this view beyond the field morals, outward into a post-Platonic Christian realism. Such a view would look for the reality of things neither in a purely public, third-personal order of linguistic convention nor in a moment of a purely private, first-personal insight into a fully inexpressible truth. For Murdoch, the realism that lies between these extremes is connected with the moment in our tradition when Plato's abstract and purely eternal universals become concrete and essentially embodied in the temporal particulars of the world.

> None of what I am saying is particularly new: similar things have been said by philosophers from Plato onward; and appear as commonplaces of the Christian ethic, whose centre is an individual. To come nearer home in the Platonic tradition, the present dispute is reminiscent of the old arguments about abstract and concrete universals. And if someone at this point were to say, well, why stop at moral concepts, why not claim that all universals are concrete, I would reply, why not indeed? Why not consider red as an ideal end point, a concept infinitely to be learned, as an individual object of love? (Murdoch 1997, 322-23)

On my reading, Wittgenstein would have us extend our realistic attitude toward the grammar of morals outward into grammar in general in just the way that Murdoch suggests. My suggestion has been that, for Wittgenstein, we achieve such a realism about meaning when we resist our recollective and recreative temptations and accept a repetitional understanding of the remembrance of meaning. But a problem remains. Since a repetitional concept of remembering meaning, and hence a repetitional concept of realism, involves facilitating the revelation of grammars alternative to our own, it returns us to the problem of alternative grammars.

In my dealing with the ethics of the *Tractatus*, I argued that a solution for the problem of alternative grammars lies in Wittgenstein's essentially embodied understanding of the self, of logic, and of the intentional relationship between the two. In Chapter Eight I conclude by arguing that such a solution to the problem of alternative grammars is indeed more readily apparent in the later work. Once more, by the continuity thesis, showing this will *ipso facto* support my claim that the ethical point the *Tractatus* is not merely to facilitate, in its reader, an openness to the possibility of revelation, but to do so by reminding its reader of the soul's essential incarnation in the body, and logic's essential incarnation in the word.

If someone says 'I have a body,' he can be asked 'Who is speaking here with this mouth?' (OC, §244)

I really do think with my pen, because my head often knows nothing about what my hand is writing. (CV, 17)

8. Repetitional Realism and the Question of Alternative Grammars

8.1. Introduction

The interpretation of Wittgensteinian remembrance as repetition presses us to revisit the question of alternative grammars. I have been arguing that Wittgenstein's philosophy is meant to awaken us to the possibility grammars other than our own. But how are we understand our relation to these alternative grammars? At the end of Chapter Four, I argued that Wittgenstein's notion of revelation takes us partway to an answer here. The possibility of alternative grammars can be regarded as the possibility of an encounter with revealed truth, rather than a truth of natural science, natural history, or metaphysics. This category of revelation only got us so far, however, because it was not clear how we were to understand our intentional relation to possibilities of revelation. In my reading of the *Tractatus*, I suggested that we could approach this question by mediating upon Wittgenstein's parallel between the microcosm of the self and the macrocosm of the broader linguistic world. The comparison suggested that our ethical openness to world-renewing transformations of logic can be understood by analogy with the world-renewing transformation of the self that characterizes our acceptance of that ethic. That same general approach that we took to the problem of alternative grammars in the *Tractatus* is also useful seeing how that problem arises again in the pages of *On Certainty*, the set of notes that Wittgenstein wrote in the eighteen months leading up to his death. Our interest in this chapter concerns the later work as a whole, but it is with *On Certainty* that we can begin.

8.2. Microcosm and Macrocosm in *On Certainty*

In the *Tractatus,* the liminal self is characterized by its ethical outlook on the world. This outlook on the world is expressed in our freely willed commitment to the relevant ethical beliefs. From within this commitment, the self cannot envision a world in which it lacks that commitment; the idea of

such a world is incoherent. Though the relevant ethical beliefs lie silently in the background of *On Certainty*, the notion of a liminal self whose very being is defined by a commitment to certain beliefs lies right before our eyes (cf., PI, §129). The beliefs in question are those that readers of *On Certainty* sometimes called 'hinge propositions.' Commitment to a 'hinge' is not a matter of recognizing that it is true in the manner of an ordinary empirical judgement. Instead, it is like our commitment to logic and grammar in the earlier texts. It involves a commitment to beliefs that are a *precondition* of empirical judgements.

> That is to say, the *questions* that we raise and our *doubts* depend upon the fact that some propositions are exempt from doubt, are as it were like hinges on which those turn. / That is to say, it belongs to the logic of our scientific investigations that certain things are *in deed* not doubted [....] If I want the door to turn, the hinges must stay put. (OC, §341-343) [239]

The *Tractatus* discusses the propositions of logic and explains that such propositions cannot be doubted because "we could not say what an illogical world would look like" (T, 3.031). I have argued that the same can be said of Tractarian ethical propositions. The attempt to doubt the logical and ethical propositions that express the limits of our linguistic world is incoherent because it attempts to grasp what supposedly lies on the far side of those limits. With Frege, Wittgenstein thought that any such attempt made for "'a hitherto unknown kind of insanity'" (RFM, I-§151). Echoing this way of putting the point, the Wittgenstein of *On Certainty* often describes hinge propositions as being indubitable because doubting them would amount to *madness*. We are given the following examples:

> I, L. W., believe, am sure, that my friend hasn't sawdust in his body or in his head, even though I have no direct evidence of my senses to the contrary [....] To have doubts about it would seem to me madness. (OC, §281)

> N. N. cannot be mistaken about his having flown from America to England a few days ago. Only if he is mad can he take anything else to be possible. (OC, §674)

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[239] So far as I can tell, John Cook was the first to introduce the term 'hinge proposition' into the literature (Cook 1985, 2). Cook's terminology presumed that the metaphor of the 'hinge,' as it is used in this passage and elsewhere (see OC, §655), captures the nature of what are, by all accounts, Wittgenstein's main interest in *On Certainty*: the kind of propositions about whose truth G. E. Moore claims to be certain in his famous 'Proof of an External World' (Moore 1993b) and 'A Defense of Common Sense' (Moore 1993a). Some have elected to use the term 'Moore-type proposition' (see McGinn 1989, 102) or 'Moorean proposition' (see Child 2011, 196; Hamilton 2014, xv, 79) to refer to these linguistic formulations. I have sided with Danielle Moyal-Sharrock (2004), Duncan Pritchard (2000) and others, and maintained Cook's term.

If my friend were to imagine one day that he had been living for a long time past in such and such a place, etc. etc., I should not call this a mistake, but rather a mental disturbance, perhaps a transient one. (OC, §71)

If [G. E.] Moore were to pronounce the opposite of those propositions which he declares certain, we should not just not share his opinion: we should regard him as demented. (OC, §155)

These liminal propositions of *On Certainty* are not only reminiscent of Tractarian liminal propositions in the measure that neither can be intelligibly doubted. We also hear echoes of the *Tractatus* when we learn that an individual's commitment to an order of hinge commitments is said to constitute his *life*. "My *life* consists in my being content to accept many things" (OC, §344). For example, "[m]y life shows that I know or am certain that there is a chair over there, or a door, and so on" (OC, §7). Hinge beliefs are beliefs to which we are so deeply committed that doubting them would leave us destabilized, the bedrock of our *life* having been shaken. Can we doubt, for example, the identity of our closest friends without, as Wittgenstein puts it, being brought to "stand before the abyss" (OC, §370)?

But what could make me doubt whether this person here is N.N, whom I have known for years? Here a doubt would seem to drag everything with it and plunge it into chaos. / That is to say: If I were contradicted on all sides and told that this person's name was not what I had always known it was, then in that case the foundation of all judging would be taken away from me. (OC, §613-§614)

To take another example, could one doubt that one knows one's own first name?

When I ask 'Do I know or do I only believe that I am called …?' […] not only do I   never have the slightest doubt that I am called that, but that there is no judgment that I could be certain of if I started doubting about that. (OC, §490)

There is no suggestion here that one couldn't come to consider false the beliefs that one currently finds indubitably true. The suggestion is that any such change in the beliefs by which one is hinged to the world would amount to a fundamental change in one's *life*, and that such a change would involve one's coming to find intelligible that which one formerly found to be mere madness. I submit that, here, as elsewhere, it is helpful to consider Wittgenstein as a student of Kierkegaard. When we consider the possibility of coming to regard a hinge propostion as false, we are considering a possibility that is as unintelligible, for us, as is the possibility of life without Isaac, for Abraham.

We are reckoning with scenarios which, if we came to understand them, would mean that we had, in a sense, become a new person.[240]

A third point of contact with the *Tractatus* comes into view when we recall that one's life, in that early book, was said to be constitutive of one's *world*. "Physiological life is of course not 'Life.' And neither is psychological life. Life is the world (NB, 77). "The world and my life are one" (T, 5.621); "I am my world" (T, 5.63), in the sense that my world is determined, most fundamentally, by *my* freely enacted ethical and logical commitments, and by how those commitments are manifest in my resolute or irresolute relationship with logical and ethical norms. From this tight connection between one's life, one's self, and one's world, it followed that the ethical transformation of one's world that Wittgenstein described at T, 6.43 is also an ethical transformation of the self. Of course, the transformation here did not involve a change in the empirical facts, but a change in the *limits* of the world, both ethical and logical.[241]

As I have put it, this fundamental transformation amounts to a transformation in one's ethical *perspective, or outlook,* on the world, but we know that we need to be wary of ocular metaphors when dealing with Wittgenstein. To be reborn into an ethical understanding of the world was not, strictly speaking, to *view* the limits of the world in a new way, but to overcome that irresolute tendency to view them in any way at all. The resolute person has come to incorporate those limits into his embodied existence so that they manifest themselves as the animating significance of all his words and deeds. Since they are written into the body of the resolute agent, logic and ethics are, strictly speaking, too close to him to be viewed and must, therefore, be *felt* (T, 6.45). As I argued in Chapter Six, for Wittgenstein, the metaphor of vision is often reserved for speaking about our relationship with empirical, bipolar, propositions and metaphysical propositions that are understood on the empirical model. Bipolar propositions can be 'viewed' in the sense that they can be fixed

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[240] With Marie McGinn (1989, 113-14), Avrum Stroll (1994, 150) and Frederick Stoutland (1998, 205), I am claiming that hinges cannot be doubted since an attempt to doubt them would be tantamount to our having fallen into a kind of madness (OC, §281, §155, §71). D.Z. Phillips has challenged this view, pointing out that, at times, Wittgenstein seems to consider "Water will freeze when placed over a gas flame" (OC, §338) as a hinge proposition, but then goes on to indicate that we can learn that this proposition is mistaken without being destabilized in this fundamental way (OC, §613) (Phillips 2003, 155). Is this is a problem for my reading? I think not. Wittgenstein is simply changing his mind here, and concluding that this belief is not a hinge; it does not belong in the category of what Michael Williams calls "Moorean common sense" (Williams 2004b, 264).

[241] Recall:

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

upon as objects of thought in relief against their oppositional sense. The truth of a liminal proposition cannot 'viewed' in this way. Liminal propositions describe not something *in* the world – not something that we can 'see' – but the limits of the world that make all such 'seeing' possible. All that said, Wittgenstein does not *always* insist upon rejecting ocular metaphors when speaking about the truths of philosophy, and neither need we. So long as we bear in mind that our talk about our 'view' of logic and ethics can't be cashed out as a relation to a system of bipolar propositions, we can express philosophy's ethical task as Wittgenstein does: "Working in philosophy is really more a working on oneself. On one's interpretation. On one's way of *seeing* things" (CV, 16, emphasis added).

In *On Certainty,* we see a tense interplay between, on the one hand, Wittgenstein's discomfort with ocular metaphors as a means of describing our relation to the liminal propositions of that text – hinge propositions – and, on the other hand, a clear willingness to use such metaphors. On the one hand, as we will see in greater detail later, hinges constitute the certainties that lie at the very foundation of our linguistic practice, and, we are told, "it is not a kind of *seeing* on our part; it is our *acting* [*Handeln*], which lies at the bottom of the language-game" (OC, §204). On the other hand, the hinges to which we are committed are said to constitutes our world-*picture* (OC, §93-94, emphasis added; cf., §146-147, §162, §233, §262).[242]

> Think of chemical investigations. Lavoisier makes experiments with substances in his laboratory and how he concludes that this and that take place when there is burning. He does not say that it might happen otherwise at another time. He has got hold of a definite world-picture – not of course one that he invented: he learned it as a child. I say world-picture and not hypothesis; because it is the matter-of-course foundation of his research and as such also goes unmentioned. (OC, §167)

Or consider the world-picture of the tribesman who, unlike Moore, believes that the world began with his birth:

> [W]hy should not a king be brought up in the belief that the world began with him? And if Moore and this king were to meet and discuss, could Moore really prove his belief to be the right one? I do not say that Moore could not convert the king to his view, but it would be a conversion of a special kind; the king would be brought to look at the world in a different way. (OC, §92)

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[242] Andy Hamilton makes the point using his terminology of 'Moorean propositions' where I use the term 'hinge propositions': "Moorean propositions make up a *world-picture* – a body of often unspoken an unanalysed beliefs that forms the basis of an individual's or society's belief-system" (Hamilton 2014, 94; cf., Child 2011, 196; Coliva 2010, 179).

To take a third example, consider Catholicism:

> Catholics believe that Jesus only has a human mother [….] Catholics believe as well that in Certain circumstances a wafer completely changes its nature, and at the same time that all evidence proves the contrary. And so if Moore said 'I know that this is wine and not blood', Catholics would contradict him. (OC, §239)[243]

As against these three world-pictures, Wittgenstein often casts Moore as the proponent of a fourth, what we might call the world picture of 'Secular Modernity' or, perhaps, the world-picture of "the progressive civilization of Europe and America" (CV, 7). Though Wittgenstein presents himself as sharing this world-picture with Moore (OC, §239), it is also clear that he is trying to shake us from our assumption of its incontrovertible correctness. The last-quoted remark is followed by this one:

> What is the belief that all human beings have parents based on? On experience. And how can I base this sure belief on my experience. Well, I base it not only on the fact that I have known the parents of certain people but on everything that I have learnt about the sexual life of human beings and their anatomy and physiology: also I have heard and seen of animals. But then is that really a proof? (OC, §240)

It is not. All the same, like the propositions that would distinguish the world-pictures of the good and evil man in the *Tractatus*, the hinges to which I am committed constitute both my life and my world. "'That I regard [a hinge] proposition as certainly true also characterizes my interpretation of experience'" (OC, §145), so that the truth of this proposition is essential to the world as *I* understand it. As I argued in Chapter Six (Sect. 6.3.6.), the early Wittgenstein does indeed acknowledge a kernel of truth in the solipsist's dictum: "The world is *my* world" (T, 5.61). The kernel of truth here was not the solipsist's anti-realism but, far to the contrary, that aspect of solipsism which, when properly understood, leads us beyond solipsism and into "pure realism" (T, 5.64). As I argued, 'pure realism' requires a resolute commitment to the norms of logic (and ethics) by which we know the real, and a resolute relationship with those norms can only come through a free and responsible appropriation of those norms. In the early work, "*I* have to judge the world, to measure things," (NB, 82; cf., Hacker 1997, 100), in order for my relationship with the world to be realistic in the resolute sense. The epistemological side of this insight is, to put it in Kierkegaard's language, this: my *certainty* about the logical and ethical norms which I measure things needs to be not

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[243]Notice that the belief in transubstantiation is a belief of a kind that most interests us: a belief that there is identity in radical difference. For the believer, the body of Jesus is *really* present in the Eucharistic wafer, the blood of Jesus is really present in the wine. This is to say, expressions of this belief are not mere metaphors that could intelligibly be paraphrased away.

'objective,' but 'subjective.' The Wittgenstein of *On Certainty* uses the Kierkegaardian language himself in describing our commitment to the hinges of our world-picture. When I enact a commitment to a given hinge proposition, "I act with *complete* certainty. But this certainty is my own" (OC, §174).

I have been keen to avoid claiming that Wittgenstein offers us a Christian ethic. One reason for my reticence on this point is that I want to avoid an argument about how much an ethic has to have in common with Christianity in order to be considered 'Christian.' Our study of the early ethic, however, does put us in place to say the following: Wittgenstein's is a non-naturalistic ethic, its centre is the love of God, and its pictorial expression is the relation between the first and second persons of the Christian Trinity (WVC, 118). If it is too strong to conclude that Wittgenstein's project, like Kierkegaard's, is most fundamentally an effort to remind us of the truth in Christianity, it would also be too strong to conclude that it is not. That such a conclusion would be too strong is, I think, especially evident when we consider the religious, and specifically Christian, significance that one can find in the discussion of hinge propositions.

While most of the hinges discussed in *On Certainty* are not specifically religious in character, the little Wittgenstein does about religious belief in that text runs so clearly parallel to what he says about non-religious hinges that, in Michael Kober's estimation, "the casual remarks on religion in *On Certainty* are of systematic importance: Wittgenstein's peculiar account of religion improves our understanding of epistemic certainty" (Kober 2005, 225). That there should be a parallel between religious world-pictures and non-religious world-pictures is no surprise. Duncan Pritchard points out that Cardinal John Henry Newman's lectures on religious belief (see Newman 1985) were "a major influence on Wittgenstein's *On Certainty*" (Pritchard 2000, 132). In his historical study of the genesis of *On Certainty*, Wolfgang Kienzler draws a yet stronger conclusion. Not only is it true that "Wittgenstein read and admired the work of John Henry Newman. Evidence suggests that from 1946 until 1951 Newman's *Grammar of Assent* was probably the single most important external stimulus for Wittgenstein's thought" (Kienzler 2006, 1).

Andy Hamilton points out that Newman's reflections on religious belief set out from reflections on examples of beliefs very similar to the banal truisms of which Moore claimed to be certain in his famous 'A Defense of Common Sense'[244] and which were of great interest to

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[244]"I begin […] with my list of truisms, every one of which (in my opinion) I know, with certainty, to be true. The propositions to be included in this list are the following: / There exists at present a living human body, which is *my* body. This body was born at a certain time in the past, and has existed continuously ever since, though not without undergoing changes; it was, for instance, much smaller when it was born, and for some time afterwards, than it is now. Ever since it

Wittgenstein in *On Certainty* (see OC, §234, OC, §93). These are beliefs that are, for us, certain, but not epistemically justified. Newman writes:

> [We] hold with an unqualified assent, that the earth […] is a globe; that all its regions see the sun by turns; that there are vast tracts on it of land and water; that there are really existing cities on definite sites, which go by the names of London, Florence, and Madrid […] [We] scorn the idea that we had no parents though we have no memory of our birth […] that we are able to live without food, though we have never tried; that a world of men did not live before our time, or that that world has had no history; that there has been no rise and fall of states, no great men, no wars, no revolution, no art, no science, no literature, no religion.
>
> [….] On all these truths we have an immediate and unhesitating hold […] Assent on reasonings not demonstrative is too widely recognized an act to be irrational […] None of us can think or act without the acceptance of truths, not intuitive, not demonstrated, yet sovereign. (Newman 2013, 117-19, quoted in Hamilton 2014, 79-80)

Newman observed that the above truisms are legitimate and known with certainty despite their lack of epistemic support. He regarded this as a vindication of religious beliefs, which he took to have the same status (see Pritchard 2000, 132-34). As Pritchard explains, for Newman, "basic religious beliefs cannot be considered irrational because of their lack of epistemic buttress when […] most of our basic beliefs lack such epistemic support" (Pritchard 2000, 133-34). We will see in greater detail later that the non-religious hinges of *On Certainty* look much like Newman's truisms. When it is suggested, in the opening remark of *On Certainty*, that the study of these non-religious hinges should be considered in connection with "a curious remark by H. Newman" (OC, §1), we naturally wonder if Wittgenstein's project might have been close to Newman's, just as we naturally wonder of his project was close to Kierkegaard's.

There is one more important point of continuity between *On Certainty* and the *Tractatus* with which I want to set the stage for this concluding chapter. As I understand them, the hinges of *On Certainty*, like the logical and ethical propositions of the *Tractatus*, are a species of *logical* proposition.[245] This reading of *On Certainty's* hinge propositions is controversial but is supported by at least one clear line of thought in the text. Wittgenstein explores it when he writes, of hinges, the following: "I am inclined to believe that not everything that has the form of an empirical proposition

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was born, it has either been in contact with or not far from the surface of the earth; and, at every moment since it was born, there have also existed many other things, having shape and size in three dimensions." (Moore 1993a, 107)

[245] Recall that the ethical propositions of the *Tractatus* can be understood at two different levels of analysis. At one level, they can be contrasted with the propositions of logic. At the other, they are themselves a species of a logical proposition.

is one" (OC, §308). Our answer to the question of whether these apparently empirical hinge propositions are in fact propositions of logic, or grammar, will be determined by their epistemic profile: "If 'I know etc.' is conceived as a grammatical proposition […] 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'" (OC, §58). Hinge propositions do indeed lay beyond the reach of skeptical doubt in this way. (On my reading, they do *not* lay beyond the reach of that mystical riddle questioning that engages us, for example, when we wonder at the existence of the world.) It follows that they are indeed propositions of grammar, not the empirical propositions they appear to be.[246]

What are they then? They are expressions of what we mean by our words. Wittgenstein floats the suggestion in his comment about how a person ought to interpret a philosopher like Moore who, in broad daylight and without any apparent reason to doubt the existence of his hand, utters the words 'I know that this is my hand.' Such a person "might say that these words were nonsense. True, he might also say "Of course I know – how could I not know?" – but then he would possibly be taking the sentence 'this is my hand as an *explanation* of the words 'my hand'" (OC, §412). Or again, consider what Wittgenstein says about the hinge propositions 'A is a physical object' and, 'There are physical objects':[247]

> 'A is a physical object' is a piece of instruction which we give only to someone who doesn't yet understand either what 'A' means, or what 'physical object' means. Thus, it is instruction about the use of words, and 'physical object' is a logical concept. (Like colour, quantity, …)
> And that is why no such proposition as: 'There are physical objects' can be formulated. (OC, §36)

Naturally, on my realist reading, the phrasing of the last sentence is misleading. When Wittgenstein writes that there can be no such proposition as 'There are physical objects,' he is using the term 'proposition' in the specifically bipolar sense of the term, and this is true of other hinges as well. If the argument of the preceding chapters is correct, the Wittgenstein of *On Certainty* is leaving us to

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[246]As I noted in the last chapter, Danielle Moyal-Sharrock has done the most to show that hinge propositions are not empirical propositions, but propositions of grammar (see Moyal-Sharrock 2004, 48, 86-87).

[247] Michael Williams has argued that 'There are physical objects' is not a hinge proposition because, in his view, hinge propositions express contingent empirical truths, while 'There are physical objects' expresses "a precondition for the very possibility of thought" (Williams 2004b, 264), "all rational beings need share it" (ibid., 263; cf., Williams 2004a, 87). For Williams, "Moorean common sense is the home of genuine hinge propositions. That they need not be universally subscribed to and that they are subject to change are facts testifying to their genuineness" (ibid., 264). Recognizing that his is a non-standard reading, Williams cautions that "[n]ot every proposition that commentators have thought to be a hinge is one" (ibid., 259). Andy Hamilton has recently sided with Williams on this issue (Hamilton 2014, 257-58, 142), but the Williams view remains unconventional. I side with Moyal-Sharrock (2004, 89-92), Annalisa Coliva (2010, 6, 138-43), and most other commentators and maintain that 'there are physical objects' is indeed a hinge proposition. It should be clear that I also disagree with Williams' claim that hinges are empirical propositions.

conclude that, while hinges are logical propositions, they are also genuine propositions in the non-bipolar sense that he has also left us to find in the logical propositions of the *Tractatus* and in the grammatical propositions of the *Investigations*-era texts. Hinges are claims about *the world* and, as such, might be either true or false.[248] As he just put it: "'That I regard this proposition as certainly true also characterizes my interpretation of experience'" (OC, §145). Elsewhere he takes particular care to emphasize this point that hinges make a claim to *truth*. When it comes to hinges,

> [t]he *truth* of my statements is the test of my *understanding* of these statements. / That is to say: if I make certain false statements, it becomes uncertain whether I understand them. / What counts as an adequate test of a statement belongs to logic. It belongs to the description

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[248] Like many interpreters of the later Wittgenstein, Moyal-Sharrock believes that Wittgenstein always identified propositionality with bipolarity and, hence, always countenanced a strict division between genuine, bipolar, propositions and non-genuine logical propositions. Accordingly, since she regards hinges as logical propositions, she, implausibly, in my view, denies that hinges are genuine propositions (Moyal-Sharrock 2004, Ch. 2). Michael Williams rightly recognizes that hinges are genuine propositions but, wrongly in my view, concludes that they must, therefore, be empirical propositions (Williams 2004b, 264). Coming closer to my own view, Annalisa Coliva grants that hinges are not bipolar and concludes, therefore, that they are not empirical propositions, while mainlining that they are *genuine* propositions all the same (Coliva 2010, 156-57). Though "they express rules, they do express propositions, but propositions that aren't subject to verification and control, that is, propositions which aren't empirical but normative" (Coliva 2010, 157). Though Coliva grants that "their certainty is of a 'grammatical' (or even 'logical') nature (provided 'logic' and 'grammar' are taken for synonyms)"(Coliva 2010, 11), she stops short of saying, with Moyal-Sharrock and I, that hinges are grammatical propositions, preferring to say that they are "normative *propositions*"(Coliva 2010, 11). The trouble with her account is that she says very little to elucidate the sense in which hinges, as 'normative propositions,' make a genuine claim about the world. What does 'truth,' or 'proposition' mean here if we are dealing with neither logical/grammatical, or empirical truth?

Andy Hamilton's summation of the view is similarly obscure. He approvingly quotes Moyal-Sharrock's claim that hinges "function as unjustifiable rules of grammar" (Moyal-Sharrock 2004, 10; quoted in Hamilton 2014, 101), he argues that the use of a hinge is a "grammatical use" (ibid., 27), and he suggests that hinge certainty is grammatical certainty (ibid., 93). Elsewhere, however, he writes that hinges "are not 'rules of grammar'" (ibid., 5, cf., ibid., 44, 86) because, as he submits without argument, "they do not generally have the meaning-constituting role of grammatical propositions" (ibid., 96, 118). By and large, one gets the sense that Hamilton is inclined to agree with Coliva: he is inclined to say that hinges are neither grammatical propositions, nor empirical propositions. "They appear to be empirical, but turn out not to be – neither in the metaphysical sense of 'factual' or 'contingent,' nor in the epistemic sense of 'liable to be supported by evidence'" (ibid., 88, cf., ibid., 4). At the same time, and again in agreement with Coliva, he wants to reject Moyal-Sharrock's non-propositional reading (see Hamilton 2014, 109-13). Summarizing his view, he writes: "The safest and most accurate interpretation is that Moore's sentences [i.e., hinges – L. McN.] look like propositions [...] but are neither true nor false and cannot be compared to the facts. They have a use, and are still somehow propositions; they are neither senseless nor nonsensical" (ibid., 118). The obscurity of Hamilton's view of hinges comes out on the very next page when he backs away from his above claim that hinges 'are neither true nor false,' and also tries to drive a wedge between his claim that hinges 'are still somehow propositions' and the idea that they are *genuine* propositions. "Concerning Wittgenstein's view," he writes, "my conclusion is that one should not push him on whether Moorean propositions are true, or genuine propositions" (ibid., 119). I grant to Coliva and to Hamilton: hinges are not empirical propositions, but are 'somehow' propositions all the same. We cannot plausibly deny, as Moyal-Sharrock would have us do, that my certainty that my name is L. McN., or that I have two hands, is certainty about the world. I grant to Moyal-Sharrock, however, that hinges are grammatical propositions – a position about which Wittgenstein is relatively clear. If the argument of this dissertation is correct, repetitional realism provides us a way of accepting that hinges are both *grammatical* propositions and *genuine* propositions, clarifying this muddy issue that continues to trouble readers of *On Certainty*.

of the language-game. / The *truth* of certain empirical propositions belongs to our frame of reference. (OC, §80-83)

Namely, those 'empirical' propositions that are empirical in form only, and which are actually propositions of grammar. In the case of hinges, as in the case of other logical propositions, to doubt the proposition is to misunderstand its *meaning,* which is to say we are dealing here with propositions of logic. But it remains the case that we are dealing with genuine propositions.

There is a deep continuity here with the *Tractatus*. Both books leave us to conclude that their logical propositions are indeed *propositions,* but neither tells us what 'proposition' means when it comes to logic. Further, in *On Certainty,* as in the *Tractatus,* our clue toward an answer lies in the parallel between the limits of the world and the limits of the self. How so? We have seen that the Wittgenstein of *On Certainty* countenances something like the Tractarian liminal self, and also seems to leave room for something like Tractarian self-transformation, a kind of "conversion" (OC, §92) whereby one would be reborn into a new world-picture. But where, in *On Certainty*, is the promised analogy between the self, as microcosm, and the macrocosm that is the broader world of linguistic experience? It is here, in what might be *On Certainty's* the most arresting remark: "You must bear in mind that the language-game is so to say something unpredictable. I mean: it is not based on grounds. It not reasonable (or unreasonable). / It is there – like our life" (OC, §559). Just as the self can undergo unforeseeable transformations, so too, the suggestion seems to be, can the broader linguistic world.

8.3. Riddles Great and Small

As I have presented it, the Tractarian ethical life involves a practiced openness to the possibility of a logic – a form of intelligible experience – radically, essentially, and unthinkably different from our own. I've suggested that Wittgenstein worked to illuminate the possibility that the structure of intelligible experience could undergo just such a profound transformation. He did so by offering us an analogy – the more tractable example of ethical self-transformation – and leaving us to view the broader and deeper, world-linguistic, kind of transformation in its light. I am suggesting that one can see a similar effort at play in *On Certainty* and that, once one does see this connection to the *Tractatus*, we can appreciate how *On Certainty's* hints at the phenomenon of self-transformation, like those we see in the *Tractatus*, illuminate all the various depths of significance that are bound up in the question of alternative grammars with which we need to grapple in this chapter. At the very least, taking these

hints seriously helps us to see our way past what other scholars have regarded as certain deep confusions in Wittgenstein's last notes.

For example, taking the parallel seriously might help resolve the impression, still held by many of *On Certainty's* readers, that Wittgenstein was simply running roughshod, in that text, over important distinctions.[249] One distinction he has been accused of overlooking is the obvious one between the hinges that make up the different particular world-pictures that might set apart different cultures, and the hinges that make up that deeper world-picture that all human beings have in common. Micheal Kober draws attention to the distinction I have in mind. He writes that "[i]n order to cope with the intuition that certainties like 'this is a hand' are different from certainties like 'the earth is round'" we should acknowledge "a distinction between primitive and elaborated language-games" (Kober 1996, 422). 'Primitive language-games,' for Kober, are those that manifest a commitment to those banalities that make up a world-picture that all of us share, and within which are nested the particular world-pictures that set us apart. Here we find beliefs that are common across cultures, and which are everywhere manifest in human dealings: a belief in objects, in the necessity of food and shelter, the importance of love and family, the wrongness of betrayal, and so on. Kober's 'elaborated language-games' are those predicated upon more sophisticated beliefs – beliefs like 'the earth is round,' – that define these more particular world-pictures that set us apart. We can agree with what Kober says about his distinction between primitive and elaborated language-games: "Unfortunately this distinction can hardly be detected within Wittgenstein's writings" (Kober 1996, 422). Peter Strawson concurs, highlighting a place in *On Certainty* even for hinges that express the world-pictures, not of whole cultures, but of particular *persons* like, for example, Abraham's 'hinge' belief that Isaac will not need to die.

> Part, though not the whole, of the explanation of what may seem cloudy or unsatisfying in Wittgenstein's treatment in *On Certainty* is that he is fighting on more than one front. He is not concerned only with the common framework of human belief systems at large. He is also concerned to indicate what a realistic picture of *individual* belief-systems is like; and in such a picture room must be found for, as it were, local and idiosyncratic propositions (like

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[249] John Cook voices a familiar impression when we writes the following about Wittgenstein's treatment of *On Certainty's* central theme, the 'hinge proposition':

> [I]t seems to me that Wittgenstein was constantly changing direction, like a man lost in a maze. He takes up one sort of example and now another; he puts to himself one sort of question and now another, and he does not always see how they differ [….] [A]t different times he seems to treat very different kinds of examples as hinge propositions and […] what he says about one sort of example does not seem to fit his other examples. (Cook 1985, 85-86)

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'My name is Ludwig Wittgenstein') as elements in someone's belief-system which are, for him, neither grounded nor up for question. But, obviously, no such proposition as that forms part of the common framework of human belief-systems at large. (Strawson 1985, 25-26)

I suspect that Wittgenstein knows exactly what he is doing here. He is leaving us to perceive a similarity between the transformation of the self that takes place *within* the broader, human form of life when we are reborn into a new world-picture, and the deeper potential transformation of the broader linguistic world. He is inviting us to see that both would involve a fundamental transformation of the limits of the world so that, despite their radical differences, these two kinds of transformation are, nevertheless, in a crucial respect, the same. In the later work, then, as in the *Tractatus*, we find a suggested parallel between the possibility of transformations of the liminal self and transformations of the world's liminal logic. Assuming that the lessons of the *Tractatus* still apply here in *On Certainty*, the idea would be that the self can be transformed by its movement into an ethical world-picture that is defined, in part, by the ethically re-born self's openness to the possibility of transformations in the liminal logic of language. These would include even the kind of deep transformations the imagining of which would require not a shift from one personal or cultural world-picture to another, but a shift in the deep structure of intelligible experience. As we saw in Chapter Four, the question of alternative grammars covers our openness to all these various possibilities of grammatical revelation.

When we discussed these radical changes in the structure of intelligible experience in Chapter Four, I granted to Barry Stroud that they would involve correspondingly radical changes in the body of the experiencing agent. These changes would run much deeper than those that we see, for example, in the expert athlete who has acquired a body constituted by pre-reflective powers of expression unknown to his earlier, novice, self, and which locates him in a world of meaning unthinkable for that novice. However, my submission is that we can approach an understanding of the sort of deep logical transformation at issue here on analogy with these more humble transformations of the body. If I am right that the notion of bodily transformation is our key to understanding the possible revelation of new grammars in general, then our openness to the idea of a grammar essentially and inextricably untranslatable for us is the idea of grammar that we could never understand from the perspective of the embodied human beings we are. It is the grammar of a language that we would only understand if we came to have radically different bodies.

Cora Diamond has grappled with the distinction between the two general kinds of logical transformation at issue here. In her terminology, the first kind of transformation presents us with the solution to an 'ordinary riddle'; it provides us with a grammar with which to think something formerly unthinkable for us. Such a transformation might bring a person to solve the riddle of how Wednesday can be fat, for example. In Diamond's analysis, when we are provided with the grammar that solves these ordinary riddles, we can go on to use that grammar to describe the world in straightforward ways. After we come to see the (secondary) sense in which Wednesday can be rightly called fat, we can go on to describe it as such. Of an ordinary riddle, Diamond writes:

> [w]e might say that it has a 'promissory meaning': its meaning has to come to it from without. Any proposition incorporating a riddle-phrase before we have the solution may be thought of as having such a meaning; and getting the solution then turns the phrase into something which can be used as a description. (Diamond 1991, 281)

Things are different when we come to grappling with what Diamond calls a *great* riddle. Here no grammar that we could ever be provided in the course of our natural life could resolve the riddle (in the way that mystery can be resolved around the notion of a fat Wednesday), and the riddle phrase could never be used in a straightforward description of the world. When it comes to great riddles, we need to say that they have only promissory meaning because, in the course of our natural, human form of life, the promise of resolution will always remain unfulfilled. She writes:

> If we are able to make statements about something, but they have 'promissory meaning' *only,* and anything else is taken to be ruled out, we have something which cannot be referred to by an ordinary description [….] This is a grammatical characterization of a special sort. It is not merely a matter of using the term 'grammar' for something different in kind, which would stand to what Wittgenstein usually refers to as 'grammar' roughly as 'question' used of a riddle stands to 'question' used of an ordinary question. It is the 'grammar' of a 'language' in which we could talk about what makes language possible. (Diamond 1991, 282)

The notion of the great riddle captures our sense that the logic that makes language possible lies unfathomably deeper than anything that we could ever describe with the grammar of the finite language we have. What does this mean, though? Of course, Diamond cannot be urging us to return to the doctrine of a logic vertically transcendent to its temporal manifestation in language. Rather, I think, the notion of a grammar in which we could speak about what makes language possible is the notion of grammar's horizontally transcendent reality. We are trying to speak, here, about that non-temporal aspect of grammar that we aspire to express in grammatical propositions but which, we

know, will forever elude us so long as we are the finite speakers we are. If I am right in reading Diamond this way, then to appreciate the great riddle is to appreciate the possibility that Davidson wanted to dismiss: the possibility of a grammar *essentially* untranslatable for us. If, however, my reading of Wittgenstein has been correct to this point, the great riddle of an essentially untranslatable grammar should not be *contrasted* with ordinary riddles in the way that Diamond has contrasted them. Why not? Because to appreciate the significance of the great riddle is not to appreciate something *other* than the significance of the ordinary riddle, it is to appreciate that *no* riddle, not even an ordinary riddle, is ever fully solved for a finite speaker of language. Put differently; an essentially untranslatable grammar *just is* the time and language transcendent aspect of the temporal grammar that we have. It is that which is never fully expressed in the conventions of a finite language or in the grammatical propositions that describe those conventions. It is the notion of a *new* grammar, a grammar that we could only understand from the perspective of new bodies.

I suspect that Wittgenstein's thought here approaches eschatological matters that I am not competent to address. In what follows, I will concern myself mostly with ordinary riddles, and the ordinary kind of alternative grammars, with which we need to be provided in order to see their solutions. I can simply offer that the embodied intentionality that permits us to understand our relation to alternative grammars of this humble sort can also permit us to understand our intentional relation to alternative grammars in the deeper case, *mutatis mutandi.*

As in the *Tractatus*, in *On Certainty,* the parallel between self and world suggests a parallel between transformations of the liminal self and transformations, both great and small, of the world's liminal logic. This, in turn, further confirms that the repetitional model of self-transformation can shed light on the transformations of (revelations of) new logics to which the ethically transformed Tractarian self is open. However, this parallel only took us so far when we were reading the *Tractatus*, and it only takes us so far here.

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Our temptation was to assume that the possibilities of alternative grammars had already to be given, in which case our intentional relationship with them would involve an irresolute desire to cast a glance beyond the limits of our linguistic life and to grasp what, we confusedly think, already lies determinately on the far side of those limits.

I argued that this metaphysical misunderstanding of the saying-showing distinction is rooted in the recollective conception of remembering, and of the remembering philosophical self. It does so because it presupposes that all genuine possibilities need to be pre-given in the philosophizing

mind and, therefore, accessible to human foresight. I argued that this confusion lies deep in the Platonic conception of self and world. When we conceive of the remembering self as an essentially disembodied, purely eternal, soul, striving to remember a similarly disembodied order of purely eternal truths, we naturally overlook the possibility of a distinctly embodied intentional relation with truth, and we arrive at the Platonic view that that relation is always a cerebral, reflective, matter of philosophical contemplation. In the language of Kierkegaard, we arrive at the idea that all truth needs to be *represented*, as opposed to *lived*. In the language of the *Tractatus*, we arrive at the idea that all truth needs to be *viewed* as the content of a bipolar proposition, rather than *felt* as the promise of revelation. As I put it, a disembodied conception of the remembering subject, on the one hand, and the truth he strives to remember, on the other, goes hand in hand with an equally disembodied conception of the intentional relationship between the two.

We first saw the antidote to this recollective picture in Kierkegaard. There, an essentially embodied understanding of the eternal truth – the incarnate Christ Himself – went hand in hand with an essentially embodied understanding of the human self, whose eternal soul finds expression in his resolute, embodied, practical, commitment to following Christ's example. On the Platonic picture, a disembodied conception of the remembering self and of the remembered truth goes hand in hand with a disembodied conception of the intentional relation between the two. So, too, on the Kierkegaardian-Christian picture, the embodied conception of the remembering self and remembered truth goes hand in hand with an embodied conception of their intentional relation.

As I explained it in my treatment of *Fear and Trembling*, the embodied conception forgoes the desire to grasp all future disclosers of truth in advance of their revelation and recognizes that revealed truth can come into being through the body's pre-reflective responses to the meaning-laden world. Grammatical truth, like the soul, is not pre-given in a metaphysical eternity, but incarnate in the mutable things of time, and itself partakes of that mutability. Gone, from this perspective, is the idea that all truth should be foreseeable, for we have done away with the idea that all truth is already pre-given in the self. From this perspective, new revelations of truth emerge out of the corporal, pre-reflective, communion between the words and deeds of embodied persons and the equally embodied meanings that structure the world around them. In this communion, the 'linguistic freedom' of the subject finds expression in a receptivity to genuinely new revelations of grammar, freely provided to it by a real order of meaning, immanent in, but also transcendent to, the temporal world.

In reading the *Tractatus*, I argued that certain key components of this concept of revelation could be found in that early text. The suggestion was highly speculative, however, and we saw, in the *Tractatus*, nothing like the account of embodied intentionality that we saw in our reading of Kierkegaard. This being the case, it was premature to conclude that the early Wittgenstein can account for the possibility of alternative grammars in the way that Kierkegaard can. That suggestion would be defective if the early Wittgenstein did not have the embodied conception of intentionality required for making sense of such grammars, and of the transformations of self and world with which they are bound up. This being the case, it was incumbent upon me to show that the *later* Wittgenstein has this concept of embodied intentionality so as then to conclude, by the continuity thesis, that that conceptual resource is silently present in the *Tractatus'* more subtle gestures at the significance of the body. I now turn to showing that this is indeed the case.

8.4. Platonism and Vertigo

In Chapter Four (Sect. 4.4.1.), we considered Wittgenstein's latter-day critique of the idea that 'sense has to be perfectly determinate' for language to be possible. We are inclined to say: "An indeterminate sense [*unbestimmter Sinn*] – that would really not be a sense *at all—*" (PI, §98-99). The presumption is, in fact, the recollective illusion of sense that Kierkegaard finds in Plato and Kant: the illusion that our practical use of language is predicated upon a more theoretical grasping of certain unambiguously-guiding linguistic rules. From the resolute perspective, this was the idea that Wittgenstein described and indirectly dismantled in the *Tractatus*. However, perhaps because the message of the *Tractatus* fell on deaf ears, Wittgenstein aims to unseat this recollective illusion by a slightly more direct attack on the Platonist in the *Investigations'* treatment of rule-following.

The Platonist's notion of a fully determinate sense is the notion of a rule that can't be interpreted in multiple ways, thereby licensing different and mutually exclusive applications.[250] When one is in a Platonist frame of mind, "[w]hat one wishes to say is: 'Every sign is capable of interpretation; but the *meaning* mustn't be capable of interpretation. It is the last interpretation" (BB, 34). By countenancing the idea of meaning as a rule that *cannot* be interpreted in multiple ways, the recollective doctrines of Plato and the orthodox *Tractatus* can be regarded as one, distinctly

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[250] The rule-following considerations have generated a massive literature that cannot be done justice here. The account of the rule-following that I offer here owes much to David H. Finkelstein's 'Wittgenstein on Rules and Platonism' (2000), Mulhall's *On Being in the World* (1990), and two oft-quotes articles by John McDowell, 'Non-Cognitivism and Rule Following' (McDowell 1998, Ch. 10) and 'Wittgenstein on Following a Rule' (McDowell 1998, Ch. 11). All of these ways of reading the rule-following considerations are either implicitly or explicitly critiques of Saul Kripke's famous interpretation of the issue (Kripke 1982).

contemplative, way of trying to rectify a certain kind of linguistic vertigo that can overcome us and destabilize our ordinary, easy habitation in language. We can be struck by such instability when, perhaps after reading Wittgenstein's rule-following considerations, we are struck by all the different possible ways we can interpret the uses of words that have made up our linguistic past. Any past use of a linguistic sign can be interpreted in multiple different ways, each of which would find a different rule in our historical use of the sign, and each of which would, therefore, recommend 'going on' to apply the rule in different, mutually exclusive ways.

> A rule stands there like a signpost. – Does it leave no doubt about the way I have to go? Does it show which direction I am to take when I have passed it, whether along the road or the footpath or cross-country? But where does it say which way I am to follow it; whether in the direction of its finger or (for example) in the opposite one? – And if there were not a single signpost, but a sequence of signposts or chalk marks on the ground – is there only one way of interpreting them? (PI, §85)

There isn't, and our realizing this can inspire that unsettling sense of linguistic instability that I spoke of a moment ago.

How might we recover our footing? It might occur to us that the ambiguity left open by a rule that seems to permit multiple interpretations might be eliminated if we provided a second rule that told us how to interpret the first (PI, §86). Imagine, for example, that we come across a signpost as we are walking in the wooded trail of a provincial park. The word 'washrooms' is printed on a plaque of wood that has been made in the shape of an arrow. It occurs to the park officials that unlikely as it may be, there is the remote possibility that someone walking the trail might be unfamiliar with the arrow symbol. The town citizenry has become increasingly litigious and, concerned to avoid the accusation that the trails are not accessible to all possible users, the park officials station a second sign informing everyone that the arrow symbol signifies the direction indicated by its pointed end. This second sign would be a rule that provides a kind of explanation of the first. But would this eliminate all ambiguity? "Can we not now imagine further rules to explain *this* one?" (PI, §86). And can we not now imagine further anomalous trail users who need such further clarification? Suppose the arrow plaque is sharpened at one end but is otherwise rectangular. Strictly speaking, there are five points on such a sign. Mightn't there be a trail-user who wonders which point is being referred to by the second sign? To take a different example:

> Suppose I give this explanation: 'I take 'Moses' to mean the man, if there was such a man, who led the Israelites out of Egypt, whatever he was called then and whatever he may or

may not have done besides.' – But similar doubts to those about the name 'Moses' are possible about the words of this explanation (what are you calling 'Egypt,' whom the 'Israelites,' and so forth?). These questions would not even come to an end when we got down to words like 'red,' 'dark,' 'sweet.' (PI, §87)

When we do get down to words like 'red,' 'dark,' and 'sweet' it occurs to us that we might, finally, be able unambiguously to explain that we mean, perhaps, with the use of an ostensive definition, but here too our attempts are unavailing.

Suppose that a grocer has an assortment of red, green, and yellow apples, and is placing only the red apples into a basket. Our anomalous language-user from the provincial park enters the store and asks him what rule he is following when he makes his apple selection, and he tells the customer: "Put only the red apples in the basket." But, our imaginary language-user now asks, how is one to interpret what the grocer means when he says the word 'red'? Aren't there as many ways to interpret the word as there are to interpret the sign pointing to the park washrooms? A bit bewildered, the grocer thinks not. He tries to make the meaning of the word perfectly clear by pointing to a red apple and saying that, by 'red,' he means *this* → colour. Doesn't this gesture provide a fully unambiguous explanation of the rule that governs his use of 'red'? Hasn't the grocer expressed the rule he has been going by in a manner that does not itself need to be interpreted, and which is not, therefore, vulnerable to misinterpretation? No. Every ostensive definition of a word can be interpreted in multiple ways, with each interpretation recommending different future uses of the word (PI, §33). No two things are perfectly identical or perfectly different, after all, and an ostensive definition does not tell us precisely *how* similar two things must be for them to be considered the same in some relevant respect. Is *this* → apple similar enough in colour to the apple that features in the grocer's ostensive definition for the two of them to be considered apples of *the same* colour?[251]

In desperation, our grocer might now try to give an unambiguously guiding rule for the application of the fundamental ground-concept that we have been grappling with in our discussion of Kierkegaard's Abraham and Isaac, and in Wittgenstein's treatment of secondary sense. I have in mind the concept that undergirds our use of all concepts, the concept of *identity*, the concept of *the same*. Even if we cannot say precisely what makes two instances of 'red' the same in colour, surely,

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[251]The possibility of even deeper confusion arises if we imagine that the anomalous language-learner does not already know the meaning of the word 'colour.' An ostensive definition does not, on its own, tell us what aspect of the object pointed at is the one relevant to the definition. How does the language user know that, when the grocer says 'I mean *that* → colour,' he is not pointing at the apple's shape, or number (see PI, § 29)?

our grocer thinks, we can give a strict rule for defining when one instance of red is the same colour *as itself.* He says to himself:

> But isn't at least the same *the same?* / 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. (PI, §215)

This is a misleading prejudice. Mightn't someone regard anything at all as being different from itself from moment to moment and, hence, as failing to be any singular thing that endures over the course of time? Couldn't one arrive in this way at the idea that there really are no real similarities in nature? Surely one could. This way lies the familiar idea that reality is an unstructured, amorphous, unity of 'Being,' and that philosophy can take us no farther than some kind of nominalism.

Guided by our Platonic presumption that grasping meaning has to be a matter of grasping an unambiguously guiding rule, it is here where the grocer might be inclined to presume that the ambiguity *can't* actually be in the rules of language but, rather, in the learner's *understanding* of the rules (PI, §100-101).

> A logician will perhaps think: The same is the same – how a person satisfies himself of it is a psychological question. (High is high – it is a matter of psychology that one sometimes sees, and sometimes hears it.) / What is the criterion for the sameness of two images? – What is the criterion of the redness of an image? For me, when its someone else's image: what he says and does. – For myself, when it's my image: nothing. And what goes for 'red' also goes for 'same.' (PI, §377)

When we come down to saying that something is the same as itself, we see that we operate with no specific criterion of identity at all. At this fundamental level of analysis, we find the hopelessness of our wish to render ourselves fully explicit in speech and to provide a Platonic metaphysical explanation of why we go on with words as we do. That is, we see that, ultimately, we can offer no *final* interpretation of our rule-following activity that completely explains how the rule, as we understand it, ought to be applied going forward. The notion that the meaning of a word is not just *an* interpretation, "but the *last* interpretation" (BB, 34) is a will-o-wisp that comes to nothing in the end. Here, again, our feeling of linguistic vertigo might return. Having hoped for the Platonic explanation that our grocer has been unable to give, our anomalous language-user believes that he has failed to see what the grocer means when he says 'Put only the red apples in the basket.' Dejected, the customer might say to himself:

'But then how does an explanation help me to understand, if, after all, it is not the final one? In that case the explanation is never completed; so I still don't understand what he means, and never shall!' – As though an explanation, as it were, hung in the air unless supported by another one. (PI, §87) [252]

Where has the anomalous language-user gone wrong?

There are, of course, everyday cases of misunderstanding, and these can be rectified by reflection upon the various ways of interpreting linguistic behaviour, and by explaining which interpretation was meant (ibid.). There are also deeper, philosophical, cases of linguistic confusion where we see that our familiar routes of rule-following have led us down a dead end. Here too we can be thrown outside our ordinary habitation in language and into an awareness of new ways in which our rule-following behaviour might be interpreted. We can also, of course, be led outside our habitation in language by a yearning for an otherworldly, metaphysical, certainty about how we can and cannot go on with words. We have just seen a case of this kind in the discussion of the anomalous language user. In these moods, we want to grasp the rules we go by as rules that permit only one kind of application, precluding all the others that we might find conceivable, even if highly unnatural.

Notice crucially, how the kind of irresoluteness that we see in the scenario of the anomalous language user is both similar to and different from the kind of irresoluteness that was most clearly on display in the *Tractatus*. The metaphysical temptation there was to think that we could grasp an illogical world, a world, for example, wherein *modus ponens* does not command our rational allegiance. This is a world that is strictly inconceivably for us; "we could not say what an illogical world would look like" (T, 3.031), being the linguistic creatures that we are. The later Wittgenstein explores our temptation to fall away from our natural ways of following linguistic rules, and to fall into a vertiginous awareness of how many different ways those rules can be interpreted. Here, in the later work, the 'falling' at issue involves more than just the *Tractatus'* unthinkable desire to grasp the logically structured world by contrast to an unthinkable world that lacks that logical structure. The later Wittgenstein is operating with the embodied understanding of logic that was only silently

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[252] Cavell describes this sort of neurosis nicely:

> We begin to feel, or ought to, terrified that maybe language (and understanding and knowledge) rests upon very shaky foundations – a thin net over an abyss. (No doubt that is part of the reason philosophers offer absolute 'explanations' for it). Suppose [a] child doesn't grasp what *we* mean? Suppose he doesn't respond differently to a shout and a song, so that what we 'call' disapproval encourages him? Is it an accident that this doesn't normally happen? (Cavell 2000, 29)

present in the *Tractatus*, and he is exploring an expanded sort of linguistic vertigo that includes our sense that we are falling away from a logic of this distinctly embodied kind.

In other words, the *Tractatus* attempts to assuage the instability we face when we try to understand our logical commitments by contrast to logical commitments *inconceivably* different from our own. The later work is not only concerned with this instability we feel when distracted by the illusion of inconceivable logics located on the far side of sense; it is also concerned with the danger – this one much closer to home – of being destabilized by the illusion of logics that are conceivable but *unnatural*. Into this latter category would fall a grammatical rule that would have us follow a pointing finger in the direction from the tip to the wrist, or which might move our anomalous language user to classify a pink apple as a red one. As in the *Tractatus*, we will now see that Wittgenstein is urging resolution, and that resolution lies in overcoming our temptation to lose ourselves in the preoccupation with illusions of possibility. In the later work, however, the nature of an illusion has emerged in a form that it only silently had in the *Tractatus*. It is no longer just the idea 'going on in language' in ways that we find fully inconceivable (though it is also that). Now the category of an illusion includes ways of going on that are abstractly conceivable but *alien* to our embodied nature as speakers of a language. As embodied speakers, our understanding of logic is not merely an understanding of an abstractly conceivable system of different 'ways of going on,' but an understanding of 'ways of going on' that what we find *corporally* compelling, or *natural*. Where irresolution, in the early work, is most clearly a matter of losing oneself in a preoccupation with possibilities that we find unthinkable, in the later work the concept of irresolution is expanded to include cases of losing oneself in a preoccupation with possibilities that one finds thinkable but *viscerally* deluded.[253] We've noted Wittgenstein's allergy to any philosophy that would seek to regulate the practice of language by imposing upon it artificial rules, *viz.,* rules that lack an 'organic' genesis in our natural and historical linguistic sense. The aversion to linguistic artifice and the deference to our natural linguistic sense that we saw in those earlier comments about the nature of philosophy and philosophical method are at play again, here, in Wittgenstein's view of rule-following.

The state of linguistic vertigo that we have fallen into here is not our natural linguistic state. Ordinarily, we do not feel that there is any skeptical 'gap' between our past and future ways of going on with a given word and, so, no gap that we must bridge by coming up with a correct *interpretation* of the rule we had been going by. Ordinarily, there is no *doubt* about how we ought to 'go on' that

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[253] Of course, there is a sense in which this in kind of irresolution is present in the *Tractatus*. We see it in the person who tries to grasp the world from the unethical perspective. My point here is only that the narrowly logical investigations of the *Tractatus* don't explore this kind of irresolution in the way that the grammatical investigations of the later work do.

needs addressing, and no explanation for our ways with words that needs to be provided, even if such needs are abstractly conceivable.

> [A]n explanation may indeed rest on another one that has been given, but none stands in need of another – unless *we* require it to avoid a misunderstanding. One might say: an explanation serves to remove or to prevent a misunderstanding — one, that is, that would arise if not for the explanation, but not every misunderstanding that I can imagine. / It may easily look as if every doubt merely *revealed* a gap in the foundations; so that secure understanding is possible only if we first doubt everything that *can* be doubted, and then remove all these doubts. / The signpost is in order – if, under normal circumstances, it fulfills its purpose. (PI, §87; cf., Finkelstein 2000, 68)

Recall Ronald L. Hall's analysis of Kierkegaardian marriage. He argued that, for Kierkegaard, for one to 'go on' according to the rules of married life freely and significantly, one had to be lucidly aware of the existential possibility of breaking with those rules and, for example, enjoying the existential adventure of divorce. My argument was that, for Kierkegaard, any such outside perspective on one's married life separates one's self from one's marriage, and undermines its proper role as an identity-determining commitment. This commitment is partly constitutive of who one is as an individual, a commitment written into the semantic content of one's own name, and into the active sinews of one's corporal being. In Chapter Six, I argued that the Tractarian self has a resolute and identity-conferring relationship with the ethical good and, at the beginning of this chapter, I suggested that the later Wittgenstein has a similarly resolute commitment to the world-picture given by the hinges that constitute the normative structure of his life. Since the self's relationship with ethics, in the *Tractatus*, and world-picture, in *On Certainty*, ran parallel to the self's relationship with logic in general, I suggested that the self has a similarly resolute relationship to the meaning of its words very generally. We are now seeing the later Wittgenstein's development of this thought in the *Investigations* discussion of rule-following.

Ordinarily, for Wittgenstein, one's relationship with the rules that regulate one's use of words is the very opposite of the relationship in which Hall's man stands to the rules that regulate his married life. Like Hall's depiction of the man's relationship to what it means for him to be married, the destabilized language-user in Wittgenstein's examples grasps the meaning of his words as one interpretation amongst others that lie before his mind's eye. Wittgenstein's claim about our ordinary, stable, habitation in our sense of what we mean by particular words runs parallel to what, in my argument against Hall, Kierkegaard was telling us about the resolutely married man's stable

habitation within his self-defining marriage. One does not ordinarily relate to the grammatical proposition that expresses the rule at work in one's use of a given word as a bipolar proposition, grasped in relief against some alternative grammatical proposition that expresses some anomalous interpretation of the rule, and which recommends some anomalous way of going on.

How *does* one ordinarily relate to a grammatical truth? We will now see that Wittgenstein charts a course very close to Kierkegaard. In Kierkegaard, 1) an embodied conception of the self, and 2) an embodied conception of the truth, went together with 3) an embodied, lived, pre-reflective understanding of the intentional relation between the two. So too, I will now argue, is this the case in Wittgenstein. Furthermore, I will argue, in Wittgenstein, as in Kierkegaard, this embodied conception of the relation between incarnate self and incarnate meaning can be regarded as the aspect of Wittgenstein's philosophy that provides room, in his account, for an openness to the possibilities of revelation that are occluded from purely contemplative, Platonic, and dualistic point of view.

8.5. Practical Intentionality and the Embodiment of Meaning

In a moment of linguistic instability, a gap opens up between our linguistic past and our linguistic future. We feel that we have lost touch with the meaning of our words, and we are no longer clear about how intelligibly to carry on with those words going forward. As we have seen, in such cases, we might consider the meaning of our words as one interpretation of their past use amongst some plurality of others. We might then try to mend the rift in our linguistic life by imposing upon that past use one or another of those interpretations. We have seen the way the Platonist tries to make his selection. He tries to determine which of those interpretations of his rule-following activity tells him *exactly* how that activity ought to 'go on.' But, we have found, if our understanding of meaning were a matter of coming up with any such an unambiguously-guiding rule, the practice of language would never get started. The same ambiguity that characterizes a first interpretation of the rule at work in that behaviour would also characterize the second interpretation, the interpretation that is supposed to eliminate the ambiguity of the first, and so on for any interpretation at all. "Every interpretation hangs in the air with what it interprets, and cannot give it any support" (PI, §198).

Now, in Wittgenstein's view, the problem here is not merely with the Platonist's idea that language is only possible if it can be set upon the foundation of a *final* interpretation of our rule-following behaviour. For Wittgenstein, the problem with Platonism lies deeper down, in the same place that it lies for Kierkegaard: in the Platonist's more basic assumption that our intentional

relationship with meaning is what I have been variously calling *theoretical*, *contemplative*, *intellectual*, or *reflective*. In Wittgenstein's handling, this deep confusion is the idea that an understanding of meaning always involves a certain *interpretation* of the rule-governed activity in which the meaning is manifest.

> That there is a misunderstanding here is shown by the mere fact that in this chain of reasoning we place one interpretation behind another, as if each one contented us at least for a moment, until we thought of yet another lying behind it. For what we thereby show is that there is a way of grasping a rule which is *not* an interpretation, but which, from case to case of application, is exhibited in what we call 'following the rule' and 'going against it.' (PI, §201)

So far, Wittgenstein has described our desire for explicit rules as a desire for an *explanation* of why we have 'gone on' in language as we have till now, and of how we ought to go on in the future. His effort has been to draw us away from the reflective and theoretical orientation toward language that is at work in this desire for explanation, to draw us toward the practical and pre-reflective bedrock of linguistic practice. This comes out more perspicuously when he frames the reflective and theoretical orientation as a desire epistemically to *justify* our ways of going on with words, and frames the pre-reflective and practical orientation as a willingness to do without such justification.

> 'How am I able to follow a rule?' – If this is not a question about causes, then it is about the justification for my acting in *this* way in complying with the rule. /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.' (PI, §217)

With grammatical commitments in general, as with ethical commitments in particular, epistemic reasons peter out. The other person might fail to see why I carry on as I do with a concept. He might fail to see why I consider *this* (perhaps anomalous) secondary use of a word as an instance of going on according to *the same* rules that I have been applying all along when using it with its primary sense. If so, "there is nothing to be stated anymore; all I can do is to step forth as an individual and speak in the first person" (WVC, 117). To accept that reasons peter out, at this point, is to accept that the fundamental concept of *sameness* – identity – that is at work in the use of all our concepts is not a rigidly guiding rule and that, instead, what is of "greatest importance is that a dispute hardly ever arises between people about whether the colour of this object is the same as the colour of that…, etc. This peaceful agreement is the characteristic surrounding the use of the word 'same'" (RFM, VI-§21). As for our sense of vertigo, and our metaphysical desire to render ourselves unambiguously explicit in speech, Wittgenstein offers the following palliative: "To use a word

without justification is not to use with without right" (PI, §289). At this level of analysis, we discover that our capacity to carry on with one another in language is not predicated upon our grasping the Platonist's unambiguously-guiding rule nor, Wittgenstein has suggested, is it a reflective matter of *interpreting* what rule a language-user is going by at all. It is, our "agreement in definitions, but also (odd as it may sound), agreement in judgments that is required for communication by means of language" (PI, §241). But we should not over-intellectualize the notion of 'judgment' in play here. "This is agreement not in opinions, but rather in form of life" (PI, §241-242).

A form of life is that with which we become acquainted when we learn to use a word and that of which we need to be reminded when we are in danger of losing our competence in its use, as we are when we are in the grips of philosophical confusion.[254] What I want especially to highlight about this intricate tapestry of meaning is the foundational role that Wittgenstein finds in it for a practical, pre-reflective, form of action that subtends the higher-order epistemic business of forming and holding what he called, a moment ago, *opinions* (PI, §241). As Wittgenstein is often inclined to put the point, when the language-game of justifying propositions comes to an end, what we have is a capacity to *act*, in word or in deed, in grammatically appropriate ways. Here "[t]he difficulty is to realize the groundlessness of our believing" (OC, §166). The earlier-quoted passage from *On Certainty*, gives a key statement of the view: "Giving grounds [...]-justifying the evidence, comes to an end; – But the end is not certain propositions' striking us immediately as true, i.e. it is not a kind of *seeing* on our part; it is our *acting* [*Handeln*], which lies at the bottom of the language-game" (OC, §204). Corresponding to this sense in which these enacted commitments are beyond justification, we have seen that *On Certainty* makes clear that there is a sense in which they are beyond doubt as well. For example:

> When a child learns a language it learns at the same time what is to be investigated and what not. When it learns that a cupboard is the room, it isn't taught to doubt whether what it sees later on is still a cupboard or only a kind of stage set. / Just as in writing we learn a particular

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[254] One can hardly improve upon Stanley Cavell's frequently-quoted description of the concept:

> We learn and teach words in certain contexts, and then we are expected, and expect others, to be able to project them into further contexts. Nothing insures that this projection will take place… just as nothing insures that we will make, and understand, the same projections. That on the whole we do is a matter of our sharing routes of interest and feeling, modes of response, senses of humor and of significance and of fulfillment, for what is outrageous, of what is similar to what else, what a rebuke, what forgiveness, of when an utterance is an assertion, when an appeal, when an explanation – all the whirl of organism Wittgenstein calls 'forms of life.' Human speech and activity, sanity and community, rest upon nothing more, but nothing less, than this. It is a vision as simple as it is difficult, and as difficult as it is (and because it is) terrifying. (Cavell 2002, 52)

basic from of letter and then vary it later, so we learn first the stability of thing as the norm, which is then subject to alternations. (OC, §472-73)

The theme at issue here resounds throughout *On Certainty*. "Doubting and undoubting behaviour. There is the first only if there is the second" (OC, §354). Before there is doubt, there is certainty; before there is any reflective question of what a word means, how it should be interpreted, and any resultant sense of linguistic vertigo, there is a grasp of meaning that is manifest in what I trustingly, *in deed, do* in response to the normative demands presented me in different linguistic situations – what I do without the security of justifications. "Doubt itself rests only on what is beyond doubt" (OC, §519).

We have seen that hinge propositions express the certainties that lie beyond doubt, and upon which rest the higher-order epistemic language-games of justifying, or 'giving grounds,' for beliefs (OC, §204, §202, §192), holding beliefs that are thus justified (OC, §166; cf., §559), and making judgments (OC, §614-618, §149-150, §124; cf., PI, §242). We must stress, now, the crucial role of the *deed*, or the *action*, in that earlier-quoted characterization of hinges:

[T]he questions that we raise and our doubts depend on the fact that some propositions are exempt from doubt, are as it were like hinges on which those turn. / That is to say, it belongs to the logic of our scientific investigations that certain things are *in deed* [*in der Tat*] not doubted. / If we want the door to turn, the hinges must stay put. (OC, §341-343)

Wittgenstein describes this enacted grammatical certainty "as something animal" (OC, §359), as a matter of "instinct" (Z, §391) and as something "pre-linguistic" (OC, §541). On one occasion, he contrasts this 'instinctual' form of grammatical understanding with the evidently more cerebral business of *consideration*: "I really want to say that scruples in thinking begin with (have their roots in) instinct. Or again: a language-game does not have its origin in *consideration*. Consideration is part of a language-game" (Z, §391), while *certainty* belongs to the foundation upon which the language-game rests.

This talk of *instincts* is unfortunate. It might easily be taken to suggest that these very basic forms of behaviour are the brute causal effects of environmental stimuli upon the language-user. The trouble with this reading is that it would set Wittgenstein against his own methodological claim to be simply describing language rather than explaining it (PI, §214) and, in particular, his insistence that he is not interested in causal/scientific considerations (PI, §109, II-§365; cf., Rhees 2003, 95). The suggestion, I have been claiming, is that our higher-order language-games are rooted not in mere causation, but in the body's normative sensitivities to meaning, its susceptibility to being

solicited by a meaningfully structured world. With receptivity to meaning written directly into our pre-reflective dispositions, we are brought to respond to that world immediately, without the meditation of the intellectualizing, interpreting, mind.

That Wittgenstein thinks of these primitive behavioural responses that undergird language as forms of *normative* response comes out when he describes them as constituting a primitive form of the *language-game*: "The origin and the primitive form of the language-game is a reaction; only from this can more complicated forms develop. Language – I want to say – is a refinement, 'in the beginning was the deed'" (CV, 31). Elsewhere, as Rush Rhees points out (Rhees 2003, 95) the fact that these primitive behaviours are not mere *causes* of language emerges when Wittgenstein describes them as constitutive of a *logic* for primitive people:

> I want to regard man here as an animal; as a primitive being to which one grants instinct but not ratiocination. As a creature in a primitive state. Any logic good enough for a primitive means of communication needs no apology from us. Language did not emerge from some kind of ratiocination. (OC, §475)

The idea, to repeat, is that these actions are a matter of receptivity and response to normative considerations – to contextures of meaning in the world – and are not a matter of what we normally mean by 'cause and effect'. They can be called 'linguistic' reactions in the broad sense of 'linguistic' that Wittgenstein has in mind when he speaks of a primitive form of the *language* game. In this sense, the domain of 'language' is best thought of as the domain of *the normative*. Though they may not involve the use of *words*, our actions at this level of the language game are not the deterministic effects of casual impingements upon our sensory system, but the pre-reflective expression of something close to (if not identical with) what Tolstoy called the *spirit*, "the living thing within you which lives in freedom and reason" (Tolstoy 2014, 24).

We are witnessing, here, the later Wittgenstein's effort to more clearly articulate the point that he was so careful to pass over in his earlier Tractarian silence. He is highlighting the fundamental role of the body's pre-reflective logical know-how. We have here the free and intelligent but unthinking response of an essentially incarnate human being to the call of a logic essentially incarnate in the flesh of things and signs. What we do *not* have here, on the side of logic, is anything like the Tractarian illusion of unambiguously guiding set of rules, metaphysically transcendent to all the vulnerabilities and vagaries of time. Nor do we have a plurality of mutually exclusive interpretations between which a language user must voluntaristically choose before he can 'go on' with words at any given choice point. What we do *not* have here, on the side of the subject, is

a calculating intellect who hobbles along in logic, perhaps neurotically or perhaps resentfully, but in any case irresolutely stalled in his forward motion by a preoccupation with things he 'cannot' do, given the limits of his linguistic world. Nor do we have, on the side of the subject, a calculating intellect distracted by illusions of what he 'can' do in the above, voluntarist, sense that presupposes a historically unhinged Sartrean-Dummettian view of our linguistic freedom. The language-using subject is not intellect destabilized by a plethora of mutually exclusive ways of interpreting the world, and hopelessly motivated to recover his stability through the very kind of reflective, intellectual, activity that caused that destabilization in the first place: the activity of *interpretation* which, the Platonist hopes, will ultimately issue in a final interpretation that cannot be gainsaid.

As we will see more clearly in a moment, our enacted grammatical certainty *can* find expression in an activity that involves no use of what we ordinarily call 'language.' However, this activity can also find expression in just such ordinary language use; it can involve uses of words that give articulate expression to the certainties in question. This is unsurprising, "[f]or our *language-game* is behaviour" (Z, §545) and "[w]ords are deeds" (CV, 46; PI, §546). It is because words are deeds that Wittgenstein describes his efforts to move us toward new and helpful ways of using words as follows: "I don't try to make you *believe* something you don't believe, but to *do* something you won't do" (quoted in Conant 1991a, 156, n. 122). What is important in such uses of language is that the activity involved manifests a person's *immediate* relation to a certain kind of logical commitment, rather than commitment mediated by the sort of reflective machinations sought, for example, by the Platonist.

Rather than our relationship with grammar being mediated by third-personal justifications, and threatened by the skeptic's vertiginous doubt, Wittgenstein describes it as an immediate relation and as a matter of *trust [Verlassenheit, trauen]* (OC, §509, §600, §672). So understood, our relationship with grammar is shown in bodily reactions that characterize the way we are called upon by, and immediately responsive to, the meaning-laden world, either in the immediate utterance of certain words or in norm-responsive but non-linguistic uses of the body. When the reaction is linguistic, it is still an immediate reaction in the relevant sense since it involves neither consideration of any past experience that might be invoked to justify one's response, nor any consideration of possible experiences that might verify the truth of what one might immediately say.

> What can I rely on? / I really want to say that a language-game is only possible if one trusts something. / If I say, 'Of course I know that's a towel' I am making an *utterance [Äusserung]*. I have no thought of a verification. For me it is an immediate [*unmittlebare*] utterance. / I don't

think of past or future [….] / It is just like directly taking hold of something, as I take hold of my towel without having doubts. / And yet this direct taking-hold corresponds to a *sureness*, not to a knowing. / But don't I take hold of a thing's name like that, too? (OC, §508-§511)

I do. It is in this connection that Wittgenstein offers the notion of 'certainty' as that apprehension of meaning that he elsewhere describes as a species of trust (OC, §308). It is this certainty that characterizes our shared, enacted, 'agreement in judgments' described, in the *Investigations*, as the foundation of the language-game (PI, §241-242). In *On Certainty*, this foundational certainty is described as a shared absence of doubt that is manifest, for instance, as our unhesitating use words.

[T]he fact that I use the word 'hand' and all the other words in my sentence without a second thought, indeed that I should stand before the abyss if I wanted so much as to try to doubt their meanings—shows me that absence of doubt belongs to the essence of the language-game, that the question, 'How do I know …' drags out the language-game, or else does away with it. (OC, §370)[255]

Our understanding of grammar's normative demands expresses itself not in merely abstract considerations of how we can and cannot go on with language. In an abstract and wholly unnatural sense, we *could* follow a pointing hand in the direction from the fingertip to the wrist. If we were Platonists and lacked both a natural attachment to our usual use of the sign, and a natural aversion to using the sign in any such alien way, we might be destabilized by this abstract 'could.' When, however, we recall our usual experience of words as standing in an essential, non-arbitrary, relation to the grammar that animates the word's customary use, we can feel the authority of grammar in the familiar, very *corporal* desire to utter certain words in response to the features of the world that immediately call them forth. Consider, for example, words of love and hate. Wittgenstein illustrates: "I'd like to say, the words, 'Oh if only he'd come!' are charged with my longing. And words can be wrung from us – like a cry [….] (Words are also deeds.)" (PI, §546). Conversely, consider our equally corporal aversion to using words in ways that feel as though they separate the soul of the word from its body. Here, too, we might imagine our sense of discomfort at being asked to utter an undeserved apology or a false asseveration of love. If meaning were the fully disembodied thing that it is for the Platonist, we could utter whatever words we wanted, so long as we kept the right meaning *in mind*.

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[255] I disagree, then, with Moyal-Sharrock's distinction between *the deed*, as the expressive medium of grammatical commitment, and the expressive medium of *the word,* which she associates with epistemic language-games (Moyal-Sharrock 2004, 47).

One aim of Chapter Seven was to show that, for Wittgenstein, our attachment to particular words runs deeper than this.

In Chapter Seven, I argued that the connection between the meaning of a word and the word itself is no more arbitrary than the connection between the soul of person and his body. The claim, recall, was that we ordinarily find it necessary to use certain words in order to express their historically associated sense. When asked to use an 'inorganic' paraphrase or synonym, we often feel that the ersatz term simply fails to give honest expression to the meaning we intend. As I put it, there is an essential, internal relation between the 'soul,' or meaning, of a word and the word itself, in which that meaning is 'embodied.' If there were no such connection, we would feel no dishonesty and no failure of expression when we try to articulate a familiar sense by using an unfamiliar word, or when we try to use a familiar word to express an unfamiliar sense. I now want to suggest that this way in which grammar is not 'arbitrary' – this sense in which logic (grammar, meaning) is essentially incarnate in its customarily associated word or deed – is vital to the picture that Wittgenstein is presently painting of our fundamentally pre-reflective, practical, relationship with meaning. I conclude this section by laying out the view that I will go on to defend in what remains of this final chapter.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

Imagine that our intentional relationship with meaning was always a reflective, theoretical matter of calculating with some plurality of possible rule-interpretations and then deciding to 'go-on' according to one or another of those interpretations. In this case, the pre-reflective foundation of language that Wittgenstein is describing would be experientially alien to us. This is so in at least two ways, one concerning the way we relate to the world that calls upon us for a meaningful response, another concerning the way we relate to the response itself. On the first point, rather than immediately responding to a situation with normatively appropriate words or deeds, we would need to stop and choose between the various ways in which the situation might be interpreted. Only after such a moment of contemplation could one produce the appropriate response. On the second point, rather than feeling a need *immediately* to respond to (our interpretation of) the situation with the utterance of certain particular words or deeds, we would feel, first and foremost, a cold desire to express a certain abstract Idea, which we would then choose to clothe in certain words. Our choice of words would be quite arbitrary; any words would do so long as they were deemed synonymous with the words usually used for the relevant expressive purpose.

Once we appreciate that meanings are essentially incarnate in the temporal flesh of words and things, this Platonist mythology strikes us as both unnecessary and unnatural. To appreciate the embodiment of meaning is to understand, in part, that at the bottom of the language game, we *don't* find a calculating intellect. We *don't* find a subject who 1) looks the world, 2) makes a reflective decision about how to interpret the experiential input, 3) reflectively scans its inventory of Ideas for a normatively appropriate output, and 4) makes an arbitrary choice about how to express that output in words. Instead, on the side of the world, we find ourselves facing an order of things already saturated with meaning and needing no (reflective) interpretation. We find, in other words, a world in which meaning is already embodied in things without *our* needing to inject meaning into them. On the side of the language-using subject, we find no intellectual grasping of Ideas, which then need to be arbitrarily paired up with words and expressed. Far from that, here, at the pre-reflective foundation of language-game, we find the non-arbitrary relation between meaning and word that we found, last chapter, in the corporal impulse to express ourselves in the utterance of certain very specific linguistic terms.

In short, one phenomenological attestation to the essential connection between meaning and the words and things in which meaning is embodied is this: our experience of an already meaningful world that does not need any reflective interpretation. Another phenomenological attestation to this essential embodiment of meaning in word and thing is our experience of being able to respond to that already meaningful world with words *immediately*, without any intervening process of reflection whereby we grasp, in one moment, a disembodied meaning and then, in the next moment, decide how to express that meaning in words. It is only because certain words themselves can be essentially tied up with their significance that those *words* can be immediately forced from us by a world that calls out for the expression of the sense they carry. Only once we appreciate this direct, internal, relation between the meaning and its embodiment in the word – only once we appreciate that no arbitrary and reflective choice needs to be made in order pair up the one with the other – only then can we fully appreciate that foundational linguistic behaviour should involve an immediate and pre-reflective interplay between the world that calls upon the body for immediate response and the body that provides it.

Why have I taken such pains here to stress that the essential embodiment of meaning is so vital to the pre-reflective use of language? I have done so because we need to appreciate this connection in order to see how the embodiment of meaning that Wittgenstein has does so much to illuminate is a condition of the possibility of revelation and, hence, of repetitional realism. I have

argued that our pre-reflective, practical, relationship with logic is our key to understanding our intentional relation to still-inexpressible possibilities of revealed meaning. And I have argued that to understand our pre-reflective, practical, relationship with logic is to understand that we are not Platonic souls who stand in an arbitrary relation to our bodies, and whose linguistic freedom is expressed in the reflective contemplation of Ideas that we arbitrarily choose to express in certain words. We are, instead, incarnate souls, essentially related to our bodies, and whose linguistic freedom is expressed at the level of our body's impulse to respond to the embodiments of meaning that it encounters in the world with pre-reflective expressions of word and deed that are also, themselves, embodied manifestations of sense. It is at this level of analysis that grammatical revelations enter language.

We are returned here to the point that we saw already in Kierkegaard. An essentially embodied understanding of the soul, on the one hand, and an essentially embodied understanding of meaning, on the other, goes hand in hand with an essentially embodied understanding of the intentional relation between the two. Kierkegaard put the point as a comment on his own experience of writing: "The pen moves briskly across the paper. I feel that what I am writing is all my own. And then, long afterward, I profoundly understand what I wrote and see that I received help" (POV, 221). Wittgenstein felt similarly: "I really do think with my pen" he wrote, "because my head often knows nothing about what my hand is writing" (CV, 17e). "And words can be wrung from us – like a cry" (PI, §546). The crucial question of this chapter is this: Can this practical, embodied, intentionality that we are finding in Wittgenstein be regarded as playing the same crucial role in Wittgenstein's account as, I argued, it can be regarded as playing in Kierkegaard's? Can it be considered as the conduit through which we can be provided with revelations of grammars alternative to our own? I submit that it can. I want to suggest that, like Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein himself was indeed indirectly hinting that the body could play this conceptual role in his ethical vision. Two considerations support this claim. The first is Wittgenstein's depiction of our embodied, or practical, intentional relation with the souls of other persons. The second is his depiction of practical intentionality as the mechanism by which we move from a state of philosophical confusion to a state of clarity.

8.6. Practical Intentionality and the Souls of Persons

In keeping with the 'broad' conception of 'linguistic' that we are articulating here, it is important to remember that Wittgenstein uses the term 'language-game' to encompass not only those forms of

immediate reactions that make up a primitive form of the language-game, but also material objects like the standard meter. As he tells us about the material colour samples that we might use to teach a child the meaning of colour words, "It is most natural, and causes least confusion, to reckon the samples among the instruments of language" (PI, §16). The samples are part of grammar, for they function as grammatical rules that regulate the use of colour terms in the same way that the standard meter-bar functions as a rule in the game of measuring in meter-lengths (PI, §50). As Wittgenstein says, the meter bar, like the colour sample, functions as a *means of representation* (PI, §50) and, in that respect, "is part of our language" (PI, §50). "It is a paradigm in our language game; something with which comparison is made" (PI, §50). So too, our immediate and unthinking responses to the demands of meaning lay at the foundation of our higher-order linguistic practices in the sense that they become a kind of paradigm of what it means to be *certain* of something.

We are given the following example of the way our use of the concept of a person's *being sure that another is in pain* is based upon a form of primitive reaction that manifests this particular kind of certainty, and then functions as a paradigm example of what we mean by 'being sure that another is in pain':

> [I]t is a primitive reaction to tend, to treat, the part that hurts when someone else is in pain; and not merely when oneself is […]. But what is the word 'primitive' meant to say here? Presumably that this sort of behaviour is *pre-linguistic*: that a language-game is based *on it,* that it is the prototype of a way of thinking and not the result of thought. (Z, §540-541)

> Being sure that someone is in pain, doubting whether he is, and so on, are so many natural, instinctive, kinds of behaviour towards other human beings, and our language is merely an auxiliary to, and further extension of, this relation. Our language-game is an extension of primitive behaviour. (For our *language-game* is behaviour) (Instinct) (Z, §545)

'Language,' in the sense of those higher-order language-games that factor in our form of life, is *based* upon these more basic kinds of primitive reaction. They are based upon such reactions not in the causal sense of something that gets language going and then plays no more part in linguistic practice. The idea, instead, is that these primitive reactions remain in our more developed language-games as 'paradigms' or 'prototype' examples of what we mean when we use certain concepts and which, as such, play the normative role of regulating the proper use of words. Embodied manifestations of certainty are not only our most basic form of normative/ linguistic response; they also remain parts of language as paradigms that govern further normative practices.

When we encounter a person in pain and respond immediately, unthinkingly, to his needs, we cannot be described as *knowing* that he is in pain. As we know, to say that one *knows* a proposition is only intelligible where it would make sense to doubt that proposition and, in Wittgenstein's view, there are contexts in which it can be as unintelligible to doubt our belief in the happenings of another person's inner life as it can be to doubt a grammatical proposition. In the latter case, our certainty finds expression in the idea that it is unintelligible to *state*, or *say*, the truth that the grammatical proposition expresses, for example, the grammatical truth that the standard meter is one meter long. Recall, "one can state [*ausagen*] neither that it is 1 meter long, nor that it is not 1 meter long" (PI, §50), because statements are by their nature informative, and anyone who understands the meaning of 'meter' cannot be *informed* to learn that the standard meter is one meter in length. So too, if we are sitting in the presence of a sick man, it would be senseless to doubt that we are, perhaps by raising the question whether he might be a mere automaton (cf., OC, §281). "I know there is a sick man lying here? Nonsense! I am sitting at his bedside, I am looking attentively into his face. – So I don't know, then, that there is a sick man lying here? Neither the question nor the assertion makes sense" (OC, §10). Like in the above example of the man in pain, we dealing here with a state of being *certain* about the suffering of another human being and, as we know, "[k]nowledge' and 'certainty' belong to different categories" (OC, §308). Knowledge can find expression in epistemic justifications that we give for the propositions we know, namely, justifications that answer the intelligible doubts that we can raise about those propositions. *Certainty*, on the other hand, is expressed in a pre-reflective form of action which is supported by no such justification, because it knows no such doubt, and which issues from us immediately upon encounter with the determinations of meaning in the world that solicit those actions from us.

Now, recall that Wittgenstein acknowledges no clear distinction between the phenomena of the inner life and the phenomena of the soul. Accordingly, in the *Investigations,* he describes our pre-reflective expressions of certainty about the inner life of a suffering human being as a pre-reflective expression of our more general certainty that we are dealing with another human soul, rather than with a mere automaton. Where, in *On Certainty,* he is reluctant to call our certainty a matter of *knowledge*, here he is reluctant to call it a matter of *belief*.[256]

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[256] Wittgenstein is not always uneasy with calling the kind of certainty at issue here a matter of belief. Recall:

> It strikes me that a religious belief could only be something like a passionate commitment to a system of reference. Hence, although it's *belief,* it's really a way of living, or a way of assessing life. It's passionately seizing hold of this interpretation. (CV, 64)

Or again:

'I believe that he is suffering.' – Do I also *believe* that he isn't an automaton? / Only reluctantly could I use the words in both contexts. / (Or is it like *this*: I believe that he is suffering, but am I certain that he is not an automaton? Nonsense!) / Suppose I say of a friend: 'He isn't an automaton. 'What information is conveyed by this, and to whom would it be information? To a human being who meets him in ordinary circumstances? What information *could* it give him? (At the very most, that this man always behaves like a *human being*, and not occasionally like a machine.) / 'I believe that he is not an automaton,' just like that, so far makes no sense. / My attitude towards him is an attitude towards a soul, I am not of the *opinion* that he has a soul. (PI, II-§19-22)

We have just been returned to our guiding parallel between the liminal self of man and the liminal logic of the linguistic world. In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein considered the parallel from the first-person perspective of one aware of his own soul, his own capacity for happiness and unhappiness, good and evil, and the mystical reality of his own free will. What we did not see in the *Tractatus* is any consideration of what it means to encounter a human soul from the third-person perspective, in the encounter with *another* human being that Wittgenstein is currently exploring in the *Investigations*. The suggestion is that, ordinarily, we have no doubt about the inner, human, significance of a person's outward actions; about whether the sound he makes is a cry of pain, an expression of relief, about whether his action is a wave hello, a rebuke, or whatever.

In our encounter with the incarnate souls of persons, as in our encounter with the incarnate souls of words, the outward physiognomy registers with us as already saturated with significance so naturally and imperiously compelling that we could rightly dismiss anyone inclined to doubt it as one still lost in Platonic delusions of dualism and detachment. Put differently, there is no question here about what the meaning of a person's action is, and so no question arises about how that action should be properly *interpreted*. The Platonist is inclined, implicitly or explicitly, to distrust both the pre-reflective judgements of the body (PI, §241-242), and the inexplicit, uncodified, but still fully authoritative textures of significance that are incarnate in the world around us – for example in the actions of others – and which solicit our immediate responses. With these presumptions in place, one would be driven to insist that any genuine encounter with sense, here, *has* to involve some meditating, reflective act of interpretation. Only a person who made such Platonic assumptions

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Christianity is not based on a historical truth, but presents us with a (historical) narrative & says: now believe! But not believe this report with the belief that is appropriate to a historical report, – but rather: believe, through thick & thin & you can do this only as the outcome of a life. *Here you have a message! – don't treat it as you would another historical message!* Make a *quite different* place for it in your life. (CVR, 37)

would feel that a significant doubt about meaning was in the air here and that a reflective act of interpretation is required to quell that doubt and invest the action of the other person with a meaning that it doesn't already have. Even if a philosopher denies that he has any temptation to Plato's dualistic account of the relation between soul and body, meaning and temporal particular, he is nevertheless operating within a fundamentally Platonic prejudice if he thinks that the self's fundamental intentional relation with meaning is anything so cerebral as an interpretation. Such a point of view implicitly denies the embodied nature of the self, of meaning, and of the intentional relation between the two.

Stephen Mulhall helpfully points to Donald Davidson's interpretational theory of meaning and action as a contemporary example of the kind confusion that Wittgenstein wants to unseat, and which I have been describing as an implicit Platonism (see Davidson 2001). For Davidson

> [a] theory of interpretation, like a theory of action, allows us to redescribe certain events in a revealing way. Just as a theory of action can answer the question of what an agent is doing when he has raised his arm by redescribing the act as one of trying to catch his friend's attention, so a method of interpretation can lead to redescribing the utterance of certain sounds as an act of saying that snow is white. (Davidson 2001, 161)

Pace Davidson, Mullhall points out that, in ordinary linguistic exchange with other speakers, we only rarely find ourselves *theorizing,* or, equivalently for Davidson, *interpreting* anything. Thus, as Mulhall puts it, one "difficulty with [Davidson's] suggestion is its flagrant implausibility; it is as if every time I enter into conversation with another English speaker, I have to hold before me the possibility that he is an alien" (Mulhall 1990, 103). The idea that we need to engage in the reflective, theoretical, activity of interpreting the actions of others before we can understand those actions does not take seriously enough the pre-established, and specifically pre-reflective and pre-interpretational harmony that binds all humans beings by virtue of our shared form of life, and which binds even more intimately human beings who share a language and culture. For Mulhall, when Davidson suggests that this business of 'radical interpretation' must 'begin at home' (Davidson 2001, 125, 129),

> Davidson implies that what we really hear when we listen to another speaker (even an English speaker) is a sequences of sound-patterns. Once this assumption is made, it follows that radical interpretation must begin at home, for clearly a process of systematic redescription is needed to effect the transition from sound-patterns to utterances with a specific meaning. (Mulhall 1990, 104)

The problem with Davidson's theory is not that we *never* need to engage in interpretation in order to find meaning in the words and deeds of others – obviously, we sometimes do. The problem is that Davidson's theory "gives the impression of approaching paranoia because it simply lacks any grounds which might justify the generality he claims for it" (Mulhall 1990, 103).[257]

Though Davidson would surely claim no allegiance with Platonism, a Platonic prejudice for the contemplative, or theoretical, understanding of our intentional relation with meaning has inveigled its way into his theory of human language and action. This is the prejudice that Wittgenstein is rejecting when he stresses that we relate to others, not as aliens in need of interpretation, but as souls, like ourselves with whom we stand in a pre-established, pre-reflective, and fundamentally corporal relation of understanding.

How does all of this suggest that, for Wittgenstein, embodied intentionality is important for understanding our relationship with revealed possibilities of sense – with grammars alternative to our own? I have argued in my treatment of the *Tractatus* that a soul – the liminal self – is, for Wittgenstein, *essentially* something capable of undergoing a self and world renewing, transformational, rebirth. A self is, *qua* self, something that can be reborn into a hitherto unforeseeable world of ethical meaning. We saw that the Tractarian self is its free will, that an essential use of the free will is the choice between good and evil, and that the choice between good and evil is a choice to be reborn, or not to be reborn, into a new world of ethical significance. Here we have an analogy to the issue we want to understand: the self's openness to being 'reborn' into alternative grammars.

Further, in my treatment of the *Tractatus*, I argued that the crucial analogy between the souls of persons and the souls of words has the following implication: the meanings of words can undergo a repetitional transformation, no less than the liminal self of persons. My claim, again, was that being reborn into ethics is being reborn into a standing openness to the possibility of grammatical revelations. We will now see that, for Wittgenstein, to treat a person as an embodied soul is to respond to that person on the level of embodied intentionality. What does this suggest?

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[257] Mulhall summarizes the Davidsonian position and its troubles:

> In order to say anything philosophically instructive about language, we must assume that when a human being speaks to us, we hear sound-patterns; when he acts we see bare movement. The world we really perceive is radically devoid of any human significance, until we use our interpretative theorizing to organize this primitive data into units of human meaning – words, actions, gestures. Within this generally alien world, we are alienated in particular from language and from human behaviour as a whole, for the significance and the humanity we find in those phenomena of our everyday life are a result of our reading our concepts into the data we directly apprehend. Every language is at root a foreign tongue, every person an alien; a world which requires radical interpretation from its residents is a world in which they can never be at home. (Mulhall 1990, 105)

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First, since, as I argued in my treatment of the *Tractatus*, a human soul is something essentially capable of undergoing a fundamental process of repetitional renewal, this suggests that a practical intentional relation with another person is necessary for grasping that person as a creature capable of undergoing just such a repetitional rebirth. We see, in short, that Wittgenstein portrays our relation to the souls of others, which I've argued includes their essentially related possibilities for repetitional rebirth, in the same corporal, embodied way that Kierkegaard portrays Abraham's relationship with Isaac and Isaac's possible resurrection.

Second, derivatively, this suggests that our relationship to the souls of words and *their* possibilities of repetition is similarly bound up with the practical intentional relationship with the souls of words. If we take the analogy between words and persons seriously, the suggestion is exactly that which we found in Kierkegaard: an openness to a word's possibilities for repetition (that is, an attunement to the soul of words), goes through the embodied intentional relationship with words that we have already seen Wittgenstein describe.

Notice that this embodied openness to alternative grammars is not just a return to the same kind of vertiginous preoccupation with alternative possibilities that destabilized the anomalous language user that we considered earlier. To be readily receptive to the dawning of alternative grammars is not to be preoccupied by them and left destabilized and irresolute in one's actual understanding of things. The irresolute Platonist is lost in vertigo because he never inhabits grammar at all. Rather, he is distracted by alternative grammars already available to his recollecting mind. However conceivable all of these possibilities may be, all of them might strike him as unnatural, and viscerally unacceptable. In this case, he will not only find himself without the new revelations of grammar that he may need to rectify his puzzlement and restore his connection to that aspect of his linguistic past; he will find himself without the spiritual resources he needs if he is to be provided with those new grammars.

The resolute agent suffers no vertigo because he is so deeply and resolutely committed to the grammar he knows that the alternatives to which he is receptive are not already before his mind's eye, but can emerge spontaneously in and through his enacted, expert, devotion to that grammar. What we have here is a picture of the immanent grammar of our temporal language in its relation to that toward which it aspires, and of which it is only the ever-unfinished, temporal, imperfect expression: the time-transcendent reality of grammar itself. Here, our relationship with the transcendent reality of grammar is to be understood not by *contrast* – that is, in clear conceptual relief against – the temporal expression of that grammar in language. Rather, it is to be understood as that

which might reveal itself to a speaker who has a resolute understanding of grammar. Such a speaker has incorporated into his own body the grammar of the things and words that make up his linguistic world. Thereby, he has himself become a body through whom new revelations of sense might dawn, and by whom 'Governance' might renew the linguistic world. Is grammar, on this account, transcendent to time or immanent to time? "Both; not side by side, however, but the one via the other" (PI, II-§28-29).[258]

Notice also that logic, here, retains all the authority that Wittgenstein was speaking of in the *Tractatus*. Here, as in the *Tractatus*, "[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 sign speaks for itself" (T, 6.1124). Here, however, Wittgenstein has said more clearly what he said silently in the *Tractatus*: both the speaking subject and the logic which, through him, speaks, are incarnate in the temporal flesh of particular bodies. When we see this, we see that the possibilities of human linguistic freedom, on the one side of the intentional relation, and of logic, on the other, inherent all the dynamism and unpredictably of temporal existence. Gone is the illusion that we can speak on behalf of the practice of language and presume to specify in advance what its rules will and will not permit. "Our rules leave loop-holes open, and then the practice has to speak for itself" (OC, §139).

8.7. Practical Intentionality and the Experience of Clarity

I have already argued that Wittgenstein has the conceptual resources he needs to account for our intentional relationship with the possibility of alternative grammars. But more can be said to strengthen my claim that Wittgenstein himself regards the embodied thinking of self, word, and their intentional relation as playing an important role in our relationship with alternative grammars. We can see a second reason to think that he does when we remember that these new revelations of grammar are what lend clarity to our linguistic lives when they resolve the problems that beset the old grammars that they renew. When we see, as we will now, that Wittgenstein connects similarly clarifying experiences with practical action, it suggests that practical action might also be the conduit through which we encounter novel determinations of sense.

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[258] Recall the passage in context:

> What does a psychologist report? – What does he observe? Isn't it the behaviour of people, in particular their utterances? But *these* are not about the behaviour. / 'I noticed that he was out of humor.' Is this a report about his behaviour or his state of mind? [...] Both; not side by side, however, but about the one via the other. (PI, II-§28-29; cf. Rudd 2003, 117)

We can begin by taking a deeper look at the thought in play by looking again at an already-quoted passage, the passage where Wittgenstein captures the essential embodiment of meaning in words by comparing the word with the human face.

> The familiar face of a word, the feeling that it has assimilated its meaning into itself, that it is a likeness of its meaning – there could be human beings to whom all this was alien. (They would not have an attachment to their words.) – And how are these feelings manifested among us? – By the way we choose and value words. (PI, §294)

The subsequent remark reminds us of the person in the last Chapter's discussion of Freudian dream analysis, who exclaims that a *creation* of new meaning through the act of writing uniquely captures what one *already* wanted to say: "'*That's* it, *that* says what I wanted to say!'" (CVR, 78)

> How do I find the 'right' word? How do I choose among words? It is indeed sometimes as if I were comparing them by fine differences of smell: *That* is too ……., *that* is too ……, — *this* is the right one.—But I don't always have to judge, explain; often I might only say, 'It simply isn't right yet.' I am dissatisfied, I go on looking. At last a word comes: '*That's* it!' *Sometimes* I can say why. This is simply what searching, that is what finding, is like here. (PI, II-§295)

This passage reminds us, first, of a crucial point about the relationship between a finite, embodied, speaker of language and a logic equally embodied in the materiality of words: this relationship is not one in which the speaker can grasp logic as a fully explicated code of rules that tells us with crystalline clarity why certain uses of words make sense and others do not. Second, and more importantly, the passage suggests the aforementioned role for the pre-reflective body as the mechanism by which a lack of clarity in our linguistic life comes into its clarifying resolution. The person in the example lacks the words with which to give articulate form to what he wants to say. His clarity comes not through a merely cerebral recollection of *concepts*, but by his giving in to a corporeally felt need to utter certain *words*. His experience of that clarity is not first accomplished in thought and then externalized. Instead, it comes about when he actually speaks, or writes, and thereby avails himself not of a liberating Platonic Idea, but of "the liberating word" (PO, 165). This, I think, is the lesson Wittgenstein goes on to give when he takes issue with William James' comments on the experience of searching for and finding a word that is 'on the tip of one's tongue.' James reminds us of the phenomenon:

> You know how it is when you try to recollect a forgotten name. Usually you help the recall by working for it, by mentally running over the places, persons, and things with which the word was connected. But sometimes this effort fails: you feel then as if the harder you tried

the less hope there would be, as though the name were jammed, and pressure in its direction only kept it all the more from rising. And then the opposite expedient often succeeds. Give up the effort entirely; think of something altogether different, and in half an hour the lost name comes sauntering into your mind, as Emerson says, as carelessly as if it had never been invited. Some hidden process was started in you by the effort, which went on after the effort ceased, and made the result come as if it came spontaneously. A certain music teacher, says Dr. Starbuck, says to her pupils after the thing to be done has been clearly pointed out, and unsuccessfully attempted: 'Stop trying and it will do itself!' (James 2002, 227-28)

Wittgenstein takes up the view that James is grappling with three remarks after the above-quoted PI, II-§285. Evidently, he thought that James was onto something helpful but also, evidently, he thought that the notion of 'recollection' that James is invoking here comes too close to the Platonist sense of the word.

In Wittgenstein's critique, James is drawn in by the illusion that the actual *action* of expressing the sought-after word is the mere outward display of a memory that was, at first, already determinately given, but somewhere "hidden in the medium of the understanding" (PI, §102). What goes overlooked here is how the actual act of expression is required to give determinate, clarifying, shape to what, prior to expression, is so inarticulate that we cannot really consider it an intelligible *experience* of anything. What goes overlooked, in other words, is that even here, in the mundane business of remembering a familiar word, the activity of remembrance involves no identical repetition, no recollection, of what we remember. Wittgenstein writes:

'The word is on the tip of my tongue.' What is going on in my mind at this moment? That is not the point at all. Whatever went on was not what was meant by that expression. What is of more interest is what went on in my behaviour [....] On this, James is really trying to say: 'What a remarkable experience! The word is not there yet, and yet, in a certain sense, it is – or something is there, which *cannot* grow into anything but this word.' —— But this is not an experience at all. *Interpreted* as an experience, it does indeed look odd. As does an intention, interpreted as an accompaniment of action [....] The words 'It's on the tip of my tongue' are no more the expression of an experience than 'Now I know how to go on!' [....] Silent, 'inner' speech is not a half-hidden phenomenon, seen, as it were, through a veil. It is not hidden *at all.* (PI, §298-299, §301)

We have already seen that Wittgenstein has no problem with talk about an *experience* of meaning. Not only is there such a thing but, if my discussion of secondary sense is correct, the concept of

experiencing meaning is essential to understanding the capacity of the 'single individual' to discern sense that has, as yet, no third-personal representation in the established, conventional, use of words. Wittgenstein's claim here, I think, is only this: in cases where a felt need for linguistic clarity gives way and delivers us over to an experience of meaning, that experience cannot be severed from the actual expressive uses of the body whereby meaning takes articulate form in written or spoken words.

There are cases where this is obvious – cases where the 'experience' is clearly too nebulous, too inarticulate, to be called an 'experience' at all before it has found its incarnation in the expressive deed. In other cases, it can seem – to the recollective anti-realist, for example – that the clarifying meaning we seek was already determinately given, and certainly, this is the case when it comes to searching for a word on the tip of one's tongue. But even here, Wittgenstein seems to be suggesting, the meaning we ultimately find in the expressive act is not identical with anything pre-given and determinately *there*, but hidden, in consciousness beforehand. Even here, before the actual activity of expression, the intention to bring some unclear aspect of our linguistic life to light is too inarticulate to be called an 'experience' in the full sense of the word. That, after all, is why we feel such a need to express it.

The search for conceptual clarity is, of course, the search untaken by the Wittgensteinian philosopher and his interlocutor. My submission is that this search often culminates in a revelation of new grammars that resolve our state of confusion by renewing the meaning of the relevant words. There are differences between the remembrance of meaning that occurs in this philosophical case and the remembrance of meaning that occurs, for example, when one remembers a word on the tip of one's tongue. When, for example, a forgotten name comes to mind, we are not thereafter inclined to use it in way radically different from the way it has always been used, but this is the case when it comes to the repetitional remembrances of sense that most interest me. Evidently, we need to admit that there are different varieties of remembrance, even within the category of repetition. This is no place to tease out these different varieties. I only want to draw attention to the similarities between these different cases. For Wittgenstein, it seems to be the pre-reflective body that brings us from a state of confusion into a state of articulate clarity, at least this seems to be the case when it comes to the mundane business of searching for a name of the tip of one's tongue. If this is so, it is not a far step to conclude that it is also the pre-reflective body that delivers us into clarity in cases where we are provided with unforeseeably new revelations of grammar. In this case, it could be said that the site of new creation is the bodily communion between the essentially embodied soul and the

essentially embodied grammar that draws the soul forth into new revelations of that grammer itself. In this way, the philosopher facilitates the creation of new grammars not by actively drumming them up in thought and projecting them upon the world, but by engaging in *acts* of expression – in writing and speaking, for example – and allowing those new determinations of sense spontaneously to be drawn from him in the course of that action.

In the last chapter, I speculated that Wittgenstein might have been hinting at some such connection in his comment to Waisman, when he associated ethics with the second person of the trinity, Christ the Son, who is the embodiment of the Father who created the world (WVC, 118). Is there any other indication that Wittgenstein himself thought that an essentially embodied grammar, not a crystalline metaphysical logic, is that essential common feature between the language of incarnate human speakers and the incarnate essences that make up the temporal world, and which permits the one to picture the other (cf., T, 2.16-2.161)?[259] Did Wittgenstein think that the philosopher's creative activity was not brute act of the will, but something essentially situated in a relation of communion between the incarnate soul of persons and the incarnate grammar of a language that calls the body forth toward the creative expression of new grammars, and new worlds to be known in their terms? Perhaps we can hear some such suggestion in that above-quoted passage that so intentionally stresses that the originally world-creative Word of the Father is no bloodless Platonic Idea.

> The origin and the primitive form of the language-game is a reaction; only from this can more complicated forms develop. Language – I want to say – is a refinement, 'in the beginning was the deed.' (CV, 31)

8.8. Conclusion

The metaphysical illusion of essence and its hiddenness is tied up with an illusion of *depth* (PI, §89, §111). Mulhall associates this illusion with what I have been calling the 'vertical' conception of transcendence (Mulhall 2001, 92). Again following Mulhall, I have read Wittgenstein as urging us to overcome this conception of transcendence and to replace it with a 'horizontal' conception.

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[259] For all that the resolute Wittgenstein rejects in the orthodox *Tractatus*, he can maintain that one (not *the*) crucial function of language is to picture the world, as language does with bipolar propositions. Resolute Wittgenstein can maintain, furthermore, the Tractarian view that "[i]f a fact is to be a picture, it must have something in common with what it depicts. There must be something identical in a picture and what it depicts, to enable the one to be a picture of the other at all" (T, 2.16-2.161). What is this common feature? Not the metaphysical transcendence that the Platonic soul has in common with the eternal ideas, but the transcendence in immanence that an essentially embodied human soul shares with the essences of things that are essentially expressed in worldly words and things.

However, we saw in the last chapter that Wittgenstein does not fully repudiate the notion of depth, and I want to conclude by developing this claim.

Just as Wittgenstein does not unambiguously urge us to reject the idea that meaning, or essence, is hidden (PI, §129), it is not obvious that he would urge us to stifle our desire to express a realistic understanding of essence with the language of depth. He writes:

> I say [...]: If you talk about *essence* –, you are merely noting a convention. But here one would like to retort: there is no greater difference than that between a proposition about the depth of the essence and one about – a mere convention. But what if I reply: to the *depth* we see in the essence there corresponds the *deep* need for the convention. (RFM, I-§74)

Treacherous though the language of 'vertical transcendence' can be, it is not obvious that we are being asked to do away with it altogether. Perhaps for entirely contingent and historical reasons – perhaps it is because our historical sense of ourselves remains inextricably tied to Plato – our realistic impulse might naturally and even irresistibly (PI, §299) move us say that the essence of a thing lies unfathomably *deeper* than anything that can be fully and completely articulated with the meagre conventions of our temporal language. On the reading that I have offered, it is our deep *need* for certain 'conventions' that moves us to remember them anew rather than repudiate them. In this sense of 'necessity,' the depth of the essence lies in the corresponding convention's necessarily inexhaustible, unfathomable, potential for repetitional renewal, just as Abraham's need of Isaac leaves his open to the possibility of Isaac's resurrection. Where our need for a concept (a convention, a grammar) runs deep – where the concept cannot be simply forgotten however much torment it may cause us – there we are all but forced to find a correspondingly deep potential for the concept's repetition.

The last chapter's discussion of 'depth' betrays a need, in Wittgenstein, to remember rather than repudiate the concept of depth as a register in which to express the realistic spirit. Put differently, Wittgenstein can acknowledge our 'deep need' for the convention of expressing the realistic impulse with the vertical concept of 'depth' no less than he can acknowledge our deep need for the convention of using the concepts of 'God' and 'Object' (CV, 86). Though it risks blurring the important distinction between horizontal and vertical transcendence that I have done so much to distinguish, it may well risk dishonesty to say that we can simply 'get over' the appeal of the vertical picture in this critical aspect of our linguistic lives. If so, the value in the horizontal picture of transcendence is not that it can *replace* the vertical picture, but that it permits us to reframe, renew, and preserve it. From this perspective, Wittgenstein's realism will ultimately resist the attempts I

have made so far to characterize it in contrastive terms, as a realism of horizontal transcendence to be conceptualized as if in relief against a realism of vertical transcendence, and as a realism to be described in the language of width, as opposed to the language depth. We saw that Climacus' account of the Christian truth of subjectivity ultimately turns out to resist his attempts to frame that truth by contrast to the purely objective conception of truth, and we saw that de Silentio's account of the knight of faith ultimately resists his attempt to characterize that knight by contrast to the knight of resignation. Similarly, the contrastive conception of grammatical truth might ultimately resists our attempt to characterize it as a matter of horizontal transcendence as opposed to the illusion of vertical transcendence. If we are sufficiently attached to our notion of the real as that which lies deep beneath the temporal surfaces of language, then we will take Wittgenstein's realism as leading us through our temptation to say that "nothing is hidden" (PI, §435) and into a renewed understanding of what 'hiddenness' and 'depth' might mean.

From this renewed perspective, when we speak about "the *depth* we see in the essence" (RFM, I-§74), our talk will take on a distinctly temporal and historical sense. We will not be speaking about some pre-given determination of being, metaphysically transcendent to the temporal things of the world, and to the temporal uses of words, in which the essence is embodied. On this reading, the meaning, or essence, of a word will stand to the use of a word itself as the Tractarian soul stands to the uses of the human body in which the soul is expressed: as something non-temporal which, as such, transcends the temporal phenomenon in which it is nevertheless essentially immanent. The non-temporal meaning of a word is transcendent to its temporal use in the sense that, through a resolute embodied, practical, understanding of the meaning of our words, we come to feel that meaning promises an essentially unforeseeable fulfilment that remains to be revealed. The deep promise of a word is the deep potential of its meaning to be renewed. Thereby, *we* are renewed in our understanding of the particular bit of our linguistic past that is constituted by our history with that word. Since a renewed understanding of our past charts out a renewed understanding of our life's direction into the future, such renewal of our linguistic past is a renewal of our present and future as well.

Let us set aside, for a moment, the question of how this Kierkegaardian-Christian process of repetition works with respect to words in general and recall how it works with respect to the self. The promise of our still-to-be-revealed future is not the promise of a future life as a disembodied soul frozen into the timeless landscape of a Platonic heaven. It is the promise, rather, of a new earth, an earth as it might be known from the perspective of a still unimaginable form of embodiment. At

this juncture, the realism I am describing has touched upon issues of eschatology that I am not competent to address, and I have tried to pass over these issues here. My aim has been to use the kind of realism that I have found in Kierkegaard's repetitional account of self and self-remembrance as a model with which to approach the kind of realism that we can see, not only in Wittgenstein's own view of the self and self-remembrance in the *Tractatus*, but in his view of language more generally, and not only in the early work, but in the later work as well. For this purpose, I have argued, we can set aside the mysteries of self-transformation as they arise in eschatology and attend to their more humble manifestations in, for example, Kierkegaard's depiction of the self's rebirth into a newly, resolutely, embodied life of faith, the similar rendering of rebirth that we see in the *Tractatus*, and in the examples of 'new embodiment' that William James found in the expert of a normative domain – the expert who comes to encode the rules of that domain his newly acquired expert body, the body structured by possibilities of expression of which the former, novice, body was incapable. These are the crucial insights we have assembled about the microcosm of the self and, in particular, about the relation between the self's temporal body and the self's eternal soul.

What do these insights suggest about the macrocosm of the temporal world that Wittgenstein called *language* and, in particular, about the relation between the 'body' of language – the temporal use of spoken and written words – and non-temporal 'soul' of language constituted by the order of essences (meanings, grammatical rules) that are essentially manifest in that use? The suggestion has been this: through our ongoing embodied commitment to meanings (grammars) by which we know the world, we come to feel that those meanings (grammars) themselves could find a wholly new, as-yet-unimaginable embodiment in a new temporal use of words. The promise of a renewed earth – an earth to be known from the perspective a renewed embodiment of the soul – is mirrored in the promise of renewed words, whose meanings are embodied in renewed use.

"Being unable – when we indulge in philosophical thought – to help saying something or other, being irresistibly inclined to say it – does not mean being forced into an assumption, or having an immediate insight into, or knowledge or, a state of affairs" (PI, §299). It can mean, rather, that we are 'forced' into the use of a concept, or linguistic 'picture,' of something that we are trying to express. My suggestion here is that, notwithstanding the danger of our talk about the *depth* of the essence, Wittgenstein would no more presume to force our abandonment of vertical pictures in this context than he would presume to force our abandonment of vertical pictures when we speak about the 'inner life' of a human being. Here, once again, what Edwards says of the later Wittgenstein could, I think, be said of Wittgenstein *tout court*:

In Wittgenstein's later philosophy, as with poetry, the intention is to [...] shake us out of the confidence we lend to our philosophical notion of literal representation [....] No longer is there an easy confidence in one's perceptions or self-perceptions; one is always looking for the hidden, manifold significances: the skull beneath the skin. Seeing is accomplished only by seeing through; literalness is replaced with depth, with oblique reflection. (Edwards 1982, 214-15)

For Edwards, Wittgenstein, like Murdoch, invites us to practice a distinctly loving use of attention. "From the perspective of loving attention, no story is ever over; no depths are ever fully plumbed. The world and its beings are a miracle, never to be comprehended, with depths never to be exhausted" (Edwards 1982, 236). In Wittgenstein, as in Murdoch, such loving attention, "lets us see, not beyond the familiar and the mundane but endlessly *into* it" (ibid., 237). For both figures, "love is the central concept in morals because it names that capacity to go ever deeper in attention, to find more and more reality to wonder at in whatever individual one confronts. Love is constantly seeing through, not just seeing" (ibid., 238).

This is certainty intriguing, but Edwards leaves us unsure, first, of how his suggestion could possibly be squared with all of Wittgenstein's later-day aversion to talk of hiddenness and depth with regard to meaning. Second, Edwards does little to tell us how we ought to conceptualize the notion of 'transcendence,' or 'realism' that he is evidently invoking here. My effort in this dissertation can be framed, not only as an effort to show that what Edwards says here about the later work can also be said about the earlier work but also as an effort to offer the Kierkegaardian concept of remembrance as repetition as a way of coming to terms with the above two questions that Edwards leaves unanswered.

In Murdoch, our insight into the depth of things in general – the depth of the world – is facilitated by our insight into the depth of a person, which is itself nowhere more clear than in relations of love. Love, we learn, it is the work of the imagination and the route between two extremes. The first is neurotic (Sartrean) fantasy, which invents its own meanings out of fear for losing its individuality in the impersonal order of convention. The second is dead, stultifying devotion to convention which, rightly recoiling from Sartrean narcissism, forfeits the needs of individuality altogether. Drawn in by neither fantasy nor convention, love is the foundation of genuine freedom, a genuine encounter with the real, and the essence of both art and morals.

Art and morals are […] one. Their essence is the same. The essence of both of them is love. Love is the perception of individuals. Love is the extremely difficult realization that

something other than oneself is real. Love, and so art and morals, is the discovery of reality. What stuns us into a realisation of our supersensible destiny is not, as Kant imagined, the formlessness of nature, but rather its unutterable particularity; and most particular and individual of all natural things is the mind of man. […] Here is the true sense of that exhilaration of freedom which attends art and which has its more rarely achieved counterpart in morals. It is the apprehension of something else, something particular, as existing outside us. [...] Fantasy, the enemy of art, is the enemy of true imagination: Love, an exercise of the imagination. This was what Shelly meant when he said that egotism was the great enemy of poetry. This is so whether we are writing it or reading it. The exercise of overcoming one's self, of the expulsion of fantasy and convention […] is indeed exhilarating. It is also, if we perform it properly which we hardly ever do, painful. […] The tragic freedom implied by love is this: that we all have an indefinitely extended capacity to imagine the being of others. Tragic because there is no prefabricated harmony, and others are, to an extent we never cease discovering, different from ourselves. [...] Freedom is exercised in the confrontation by each other, in the context of an infinitely extensible work of imaginative understanding of two irreducibly dissimilar individuals. Love is the imaginative recognition of, that is respect for, this otherness. (Murdoch 1997, 215-16)

So long as other persons are not rendered objects under the subjugation of the Sartrean 'look,' they present us with what Wittgenstein might call a 'paradigm case' of reality's unfathomable depths – reality's withdrawal from our attempts completely to know it – which is perhaps easier to overlook in the case of inanimate things.

There is […] something in the serious attempt to look compassionately at human beings which automatically suggests that 'there is more than this'. The 'there is more than this' […] must remain a very tiny spark of insight, something with, as it were, a metaphysical position but no metaphysical form. But it seems to me that this spark is real, and that great art is evidence of its reality. (ibid, 359-60)

Once more, though, this freedom and its realism is quite general, for something like the same spark can be found in loving attention to individuals quite generally, "to individuals, human individuals, or individual realities of other kinds" (ibid., 329). In all cases, the encounter with the individual involves the exercise of freedom not wildly to create meaning, nor wildly to accept or reject convention, but a form of loving attention to the authority of the real. Here the real is the imperious power that breaks and renews – dismembers and remembers – us in our relationship with language. "The idea of

patient, loving regard, directed upon a person, a thing, a situation, presents the will not as unimpeded movement but as something very much like 'obedience'" (ibid., 331). This is obedience to the Good, which moves us – and our understanding of words – toward a clearer vision of the reality of individuals. "[R]eality [is] that which is revealed to the patient eye of love" (ibid., 332) and this, recall, is why, for Murdoch, "the apprehension of good is the apprehension of the individual and the real, [and so that the] good partakes of the infinite elusive character of reality" (ibid., 334).

Edwards is more right about Wittgenstein than he knew when he made this comparison between Wittgenstein and Murdoch. Not only the later Wittgenstein but the early Wittgenstein, too, was telling us indirectly what Murdoch says outright: the practice of loving, realistic attention to the inner depths of the self has something important to teach us about realism in general.

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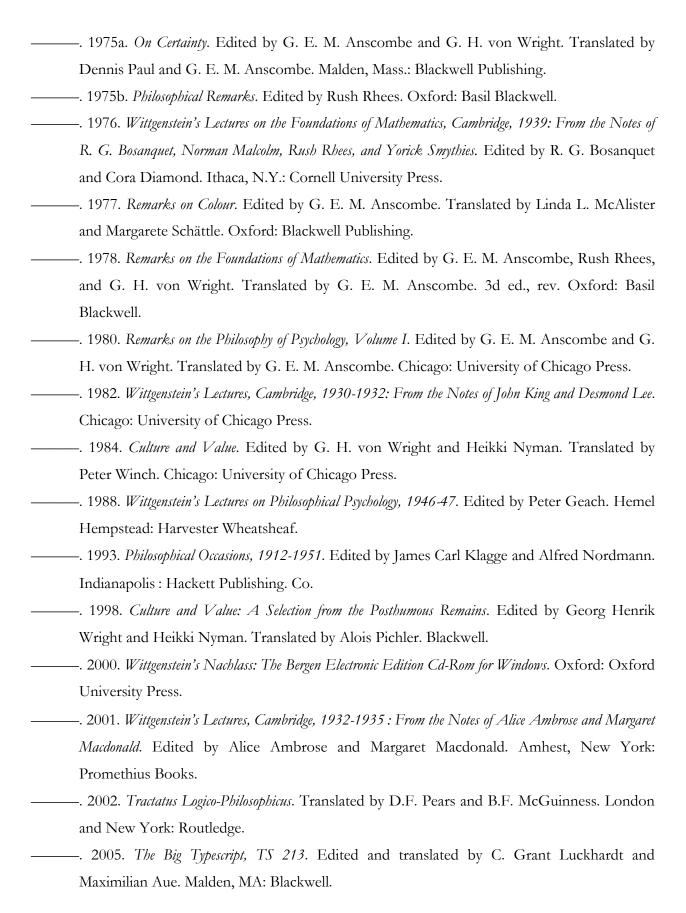
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