WITTGENSTEIN ON LANGUAGE, REALITY AND RELIGION

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LANGUAGE, REALITY AND RELIGION

IN THE PHILOSOPHY

OF

LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN

by

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ii

ABSTRACT

The philosophical work of Ludwig Wittgenstein
divides into two periods. His earlier philosophy is found
in the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus and his later philo-
sophy is most clearly presented in the Philosophical
Investigations. In this dissertation I present an inter-
pretation of these two works which demonstrates a funda-
mental continuity between them concerning the essential
relationship of language and reality. The origins of my
argument lie in a recent discussion of the question of
the nature of religious belief which has been called
'Wittgensteinian Fideism'. The 'Fideists' offer an
interpretation of Wittgenstein's later philosophy which
asserts that language constitutes an epistemologically
prior framework which forms a linguistic community's view
of reality. In this sense language and its grammar are
said to be autonomous from reality and construct an
essentially formless world.

I argue against this interpretation of
Wittgenstein's later work by showing that in both periods
of his life he taught that language and its structural
principles are one with reality and that this unity is
established in human nature. Wittgenstein argues that

language is an objective order of facts in the real world,
and that the human production of linguistic facts shows
the essential unity of all language as well as the essential
unity of language and reality. The assumption that human
beings are the source of linguistic facts also enables
Wittgenstein to argue for an ethical-religious view of
man's place in the world. By means of this interpretation
of Wittgenstein's works I am able to refute the epistemo-
logical approach to Wittgenstein's later work as well as
to offer an alternative view of the implications of his
philosophy for understanding religion.

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> I am my beloved's
> and my beloved is mine.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The philosophical work of Ludwig Wittgenstein can
be divided into two periods. The first period culminated
with the writing of the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus,[1]
which was completed in 1918 when Wittgenstein was 29 years
old. After seven years of philosophical thinking he had
written a work which, he thought, provided a definitive
and final solution to philosophical problems.[2] Following
this effort, Wittgenstein did various things; for example,
he became a grammar school teacher, a gardener, and he
worked on the plans for and building of his sister's man-
sion in Vienna.[3] Though he was in contact with various

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[1]Ludwig Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico-Philosophi-
cus, trans. D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness (New York:
Humanities Press, 1961). (Note: hereafter references to
this work will be to "Tractatus". References to specific
remarks in the text will be to the number Wittgenstein has
given the remark. He uses seven cardinal numbers and the
first six are followed by remarks which are numbered with a
decimal notation. For example, remark number 4 is followed
by remark number 4.001, 4.002, etc. The only exception is
the preface. References to the preface will be to page
number.) The Pears-McGuinness translation is used through-
out except in instances where I have modified the trans-
lation, which will be noted.

[2]Tractatus, p. 5.

[3]G. H. von Wright, "A Biographical Sketch", in
Norman Malcolm, Ludwig Wittgenstein, A Memoir (Oxford:
University Press, 1958), pp. 10-12.

philosophers during eleven years after the Tractatus was
finished, it was not until 1929 that he returned to Cam-
bridge to begin the second period of his philosophical work.

During the next 22 years, until his death in 1951,
Wittgenstein lectured and wrote on a variety of topics in
philosophy. It is generally acknowledged, however, that
the work which most significantly contains the fruits of
his later philosophy is the Philosophical Investigations.[4]
The P.I., as all of the writings of this period of his life,
was published only after his death. It is my task in this
essay to present an interpretation of these two works of
Wittgenstein which demonstrates a fundamental continuity
between them concerning the relationship of language and
reality.

When the relationship of language and reality is
discussed in philosophy it is frequently in terms of the
concepts of meaning, sense, truth and falsity. It might
be said that words have meaning and sentences make sense
if they correspond in some way to how things may be in
reality. If things are as presented by the sentence,

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[4]Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations,
trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (New York: Humanities Press,
1953). (Note: hereafter references to this work will be
to "P.I.". References to specific remarks in the text will
be to the paragraph numbers of Part I, of which there are
693; page numbers will be given for references to Part II
and to marginal remarks.) Modifications of this transla-
tion will be noted.

then the sentence is true. The purpose of pursuing the question of whether language corresponds to reality is to see in what way human beings are able to communicate with each other about the world as it is. Though this is an important task for philosophy, the attempt to solve this problem is often given impetus by the desire to prove that language either can or cannot represent what may be called metaphysical entities, e.g. God, angels, Being, the Good, etc. Because of the discussion of metaphysics the relationship of language and reality is often presented in conjunction with the concept of the limits of language. In this context it might be said that language which is within the limits makes sense and can be either true or false, but language which transgresses the limits is nonsense and therefore is neither true nor false.

The origins of my argument presented here lie in an interest in a recent discussion of the question of the relationship of language and reality as it is applied to religious belief. The problem has surfaced whenever it is asked: does Wittgenstein's philosophy show that the language used to express religious beliefs is nonsense and therefore neither true nor false? One answer to this question has been given by some interpreters of Wittgenstein's later work. They argue that Wittgenstein shows that the language of religious belief makes sense,

but yet is <u>not</u> true <u>or</u> false. These philosophers have

been called 'Wittgensteinian Fideists',[5] for they argue

that Wittgenstein's philosophy provides a way to understand

the role of religious beliefs in the lives of adherents

which demonstrates their sense while proving that the

question of truth is not relevant. The 'Fideists' say

the religious beliefs make sense because they are believed.

The kind of sense they have, however, is not in terms of

a correspondence to some possible occurrence in the world.

These beliefs are not dependent upon reality for their

sense. Rather, the 'Wittgensteinian Fideists' say that

the real and unreal is determined by the beliefs of a

religious community, and the questions of truth must be

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[5]The term "Wittgensteinian Fideism" was coined by
Kai Nielsen in his article "Wittgensteinian Fideism",
<u>Philosophy</u> 42 (1967), 191-209, which has produced substan-
tial secondary literature. In this dissertation I will
present an alternative interpretation of Wittgenstein's
philosophy from that which is used by the 'Fideists'.
Consequently I will not pursue the debate concerning the
correctness of their view of religion. Rather, I will
present the thought of three key representatives of this
philosophy of religious belief, and demonstrate the
particular way in which they use Wittgenstein's thought.
The three philosophers are Norman Malcolm, Peter Winch and
D. Z. Phillips. In order to clarify their philosophical
position I also make reference to the interpretations of
Wittgenstein's works given by David Pears, <u>Wittgenstein</u>,
(London: Fontana/Collins, 1971) and P. M. S. Hacker,
<u>Insight and Illusion</u>, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).
These two commentators on Wittgenstein's works have not
formulated a philosophy of religious belief, but their
interpretations of Wittgenstein support the thought of
the 'Wittgensteinian Fideists'.

asked in the context of the fundamental beliefs through
which reality is viewed by the believers. These philoso-
phers are called 'Fideists' because they hold that religious
beliefs constitute an epistemologically prior framework
within which all questions of truth and falsity are raised,
and that framework itself cannot be questioned. This
peculiar kind of fideism does not hold only that faith is
needed to understand the beliefs, but also that faith forms
the world in which a person lives and which he seeks to
understand.

It is sometimes said that in the Tractatus
Wittgenstein argued that reality is prior to language in
the sense that language must be structured according to
the way reality is structured in order for it to make sense
and be either true or false. In returning to philosophy
he is said to have radically changed his view of this rela-
tionship and to have argued that language is prior to
reality and structures our view of it. It is this interpre-
tation which has found its way into the 'Fideistic' view
of religious belief. This interpretation of the change
from the Tractatus to the P.I. is given, for example, by
David Pears. He says that Wittgenstein ". . . abandoned
the idea that the structure of reality determines the
structure of language, and suggested that it is really the
other way round: our language determines our view of

reality, because we see things through it."[6] A language,
according to this view, is structured and formed, and those
who use this language see reality as the language forms it.
For those who use a different form of language, reality is
formed differently. In this sense the forms and structures
of language are independent of reality. Though I will
discuss this more fully in my analysis of Wittgenstein's
two major works, here I think it can be said that the forms
and structures of language are its logic or grammar. In
the epistemological interpretation of Wittgenstein's later
work offered by the 'Fideists' it is said that the grammar
of language is autonomous from reality and how reality is
structured depends upon language.

P. M. S. Hacker has continued this interpretation
of the change from the Tractatus to the P.I. and interprets
Wittgenstein's later work in terms of an epistemological
priority of the forms of language to reality. He says the
change from the Tractatus to the P.I. can be understood in
the following way:

> . . . the theory of the structure of language as the
> mirror of the structure of reality is turned on its
> head. In this way the theory of pictoriality is
> loosened until it has the flexibility and optional
> character of the net of a form of world-description....
> Just as the most general laws of a scientific theory
> are not falsifiable by experience, so, too, certain
> general assertions in non-scientific parlance appear
> to be about the world, but are in fact merely 'about

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[6]Pears, op. cit., p. 13.

the net and not about what the net describes'. They
are a priori, yet they only reflect our form of
representation, the conceptual connections which give
sense to the sentences by means of which we describe
the world. . . . . Our form of representation, the
way we look at reality, is part of our history. It
changes as we change, and it can be altered; but not
by arguments whose legitimacy is guaranteed by an
alternative structure of concepts. One cannot prove
one form of representation to be more 'correct' than
another. "A reason can only be given within a game",
Wittgenstein remarks, "The chain of reasons comes to
an end at the limits of the game."[7]

We are continually tempted to take our grammar as a
projection of reality, instead of taking our conception
of the structure of reality to be a projection of our
grammar. For we are driven to justify our grammar by
reference to putative facts about the world. . . .
It is against the conception of this sort of justifi-
cation, which is analogous to the idea of justifying
a sentence by pointing to what verified it, that the
claim that grammar is arbitrary is directed. The
relevant sense in which grammar is arbitrary is the
doctrine of the autonomy of grammar.[8]

Hacker says that according to Wittgenstein's later

work, the grammar of language is arbitrary because it has

grown out of the contingencies of human history. It is

autonomous from reality in the sense that it provides the

pattern which structures reality for the linguistic commun-

ity. Also the different linguistic communities which have

had different histories are governed by grammars which are

autonomous from each other and cannot be said to conflict

or to be more or less correct representations of reality.

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[7]Hacker, op. cit., pp. 146-147.

[8]Ibid., p. 160.

This interpretation of Wittgenstein's P.I. has been applied to the concept of religious belief by the 'Fideists' with similar results. A religious belief is said to be expressed in propositions which reflect the cultural history of a human community. These beliefs are autonomous from reality in the sense that they form the community's view of what is real and unreal. The beliefs are not themselves either true or false, but determine the context in which the questions of truth can even be raised. Thirdly, these beliefs are autonomous from other ways of viewing reality and there can be no conflict or contradiction between these fundamentally different linguistic representations of the world.

The philosophical 'picture' which this epistemology presents is that of human beings in distinct societies functioning with an indigenous form of language through which they see the world. Implicit in this view of Wittgenstein's later work is the assumption that he made a distinction between "reality" and "human beings". By assuming that somehow human beings are radically distinct from the world, the 'Fideists' have not understood how Wittgenstein solves the problem of the relationship of language and reality. In this essay I will demonstrate that Wittgenstein did not change his views of the relationship of language and reality when he moved from the

Tractarian philosophy to that of the P.I. In both periods
he taught that language and its structural principles,
i.e. its logic or grammar, are embedded in human nature,
and that human uses of language are objective facts in the
real world. Rather than argue that either reality or
language is prior to the other and determines the structure
of the other, Wittgenstein argues that neither is prior to
the other, and that both are co-original to the human
beings who use the facts of language in the world to
communicate.

In Part I of this work I will present the thought
of the 'Wittgensteinian Fideists' in detail and show in
what way they have argued for a concept of religious belief
which is dependent upon the epistemological view of the
autonomy of the forms and structures of language. In
Part II I will present the philosophy of Wittgenstein as
found in the Tractatus and the P.I. concerning the rela-
tionship of language and reality. I will demonstrate that
the 'Fideist' epistemological approach to Wittgenstein's
philosophy has resulted in a misunderstanding of
Wittgenstein as well as a misunderstanding of the way in
which his philosophy can be applied to questions of
religious belief.

There is a double aim in my presentation of
Wittgenstein's philosophy (Part II). On the one hand I

will argue for a very limited view of the concept of the autonomy of grammar as it refers to the function of the propositions in which we express the logic or grammar of language. I do not think that Wittgenstein ever considered these propositions to have the kind of epistemological relevance as they are said to have by the 'Fideists'. My interpretation of the autonomy of language is based upon Wittgenstein's insistence that his philosophy speaks of language as factual. In the Tractatus he repeats the statement that pictures, propositions, and language as a whole are facts. (2.141, 3.14, 3.142) In the P.I., he explicitly says that language is a spatial, temporal phenomenon (108), and that it has its place in the natural, objective life of human beings.(244) I argue that by considering language as an objective order of facts in the real world Wittgenstein tries to show that language is real, and that human beings must be in agreement with language and reality as the basis for their ability to make sense.

This second aim of my presentation of Wittgenstein's philosophy will lead, I believe, to an alternative under-standing of his view of religion. The continuity between the earlier and later works of Wittgenstein will be demon-strated in Part II, but here I will make some preliminary observations to clarify what I understand by the autonomy

of language.

In the earlier period of his philosophical work, Wittgenstein proceeded on the assumption that "logic must take care of itself."[9] The logic of language finds expression in a particular kind of proposition called 'logical proposition'. These propositions, such as "Either it is raining or it is not raining," or "All widows are women," are properly formed sentences, but they have the peculiar property of not depending upon states of the world for their truth. They are true for all possible occurrences, but they cannot be verified or falsified by experience. Their role in language is not to describe anything. Rather it is, Wittgenstein argued, to reveal the logical properties of language and the world. A logical proposition, then, is neither true nor false, because it is not an assertion of some matter of fact which may not be the case. For this reason Wittgenstein could say in the Tractatus that logic, which these propositions show, is not dependent upon how things are in the world.(5.551)

Logic is not only independent of how the world

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[9]This statement opens the surviving notebook from 1914. Ludwig Wittgenstein, Notebooks, 1914-1916, G. H. von Wright and G. E. M. Anscombe (eds.), trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1961), p. 2. (Note: hereafter specific references to this work will be to "Notebooks".) See also Tractatus, 5.473 where Wittgenstein repeats this statement.

happens to be structured. Wittgenstein also argues that
it makes no sense for a human being to try to change the
logical laws of language, for any change in language must
function by means of language, and so the change will
presuppose the logical laws themselves. These laws, then,
are the condition for the possibility of human language and
independent of human manipulation. Max Black refers to
Wittgenstein's argument for the autonomy of logic in the
following remark:

> 'Logic must take care of itself' (5.473a). Logic, as
> Wittgenstein conceives it, is not amenable to human
> control or manipulation; it would be the height of
> absurdity to speak of our making logical propositions
> come true.[10]

The autonomy of language in the Tractatus cuts both
ways: it is in some sense independent of the world and
independent of human activity. The question Wittgenstein
tries to answer, as I will show in Chapter IV, is this:
How do human beings know the logic of language and the
world so that they may be able to construct sentences which
make sense and thereby communicate? If logic and language
is independent of human beings and the world, in what
sense is it related to human beings and the world? I will
show that according to Wittgenstein the independence of
language is not a disengagement from either the world or

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[10]Max Black, A Companion to Wittgenstein's Tractatus,
(Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1964), p. 272.

human beings: rather, he argues for a view of language as
essentially one with reality and one with human beings who
use the facts of language to represent other facts in the
world.

In Wittgenstein's later work he continued to hold
the position that language and its logic, or grammar, are
autonomous, and in a certain sense independent of how
things are in the world and independent of human manipula-
tion. One the one hand he develops a view of what he calls
grammatical propositions which parallels his earlier dis-
cussion of logical propositions. Grammatical propositions,
he says, show us how our language works. Their purpose is
to exhibit the proper way we function with the words they
contain. In this context he continues to affirm his
earlier thought that these propositions cannot be asserted,
and are neither true nor false. That they cannot be
asserted and are independent of how the world is structured
shows that they are like logical propositions. However,
Wittgenstein believed that the grammatical propositions
appear to be assertions of matters of fact, and this
appearance can lead a person to misunderstand their proper
function in language. This is what Hacker refers to when
he says, ". . . we are driven to justify our grammar by

reference to putative facts about the world."[11]

If a person tries to assert the truth of a grammatical proposition, Wittgenstein shows that this is a temptation to speak metaphysically. Since the use of a grammatical proposition simply shows how words function, it is not used as an assertion about the world. It is characteristic of assertions about the world that they can be either true or false and still make sense. If a person negates an empirical assertion he still produces a meaningful statement. However, it is characteristic of grammatical propositions that they cannot be negated and make sense. This is a key way Wittgenstein distinguishes a grammatical proposition from an empirical proposition.

If a person treats a grammatical proposition as an empirical proposition, it seems that he is asserting a necessary matter of fact. For example, the proposition, "Every rod has a length" is a grammatical proposition which reveals the logic of 'rod' and 'length'. This proposition is obviously not an assertion and it does not usually cause philosophical problems. The proposition, "Sensations are private", however, does lead to philosophical problems if one tries to use it as an assertion of a matter of fact. Wittgenstein argues that the use of these two propositions

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[11]Hacker, op. cit., p. 160.

is similar. Neither are used to assert necessary matters of fact. Both are used to show the logic of the words they contain. The latter is different only in that it may be confused for an empirical proposition which may be either true or false. Since "Sensations are private" cannot be false and make sense, it appears to be a metaphysical statement about the necessary state of the privacy of human sensation. Wittgenstein says grammatical propositions do not have a relation of correspondence with the world, and therefore are not open to any kind of confirmation by experience. Because they are neither true nor false, they are not dependent upon how the world is. It is in this sense that grammar is autonomous from reality. However, in Wittgenstein's works there are no epistemological implications to this view of autonomy. It is a philosophical position which directly parallels the Tractatus, and it is widely accepted that in his first book Wittgenstein did not consider the logic of language to form a human being's view of reality.

The parallel between the Tractatus and the P.I. on the autonomy of logic/grammar also extends to Wittgenstein's view of the independence of grammar from human manipulation. It is acknowledged by the 'Fideists' that Wittgenstein argues that an individual human being is dependent upon others for the training needed in order to use language.

This is one sense in which language is independent of the individual. However the 'Fideists' also argue that a society's language has been formed by the contingencies of culture and history such that different historical situations have given rise to different forms of language, and that humanity is divided into autonomous cultural-linguistic groups without a common ground for mutual understanding.

One can find support in Wittgenstein's writings for the contention that language has changed over time. He says in the P.I.: ". . . new types of language, new language-games, as we may say, come into existence, and others become obsolete and get forgotten. (We can get a rough picture of this from the changes in mathematics.)"(23) Though Wittgenstein recognizes change in language as an empirical fact of human history I do not think that it has the epistemological implications given to it by the 'Fideists'. This acknowledgement can be seen as a reflection of Wittgenstein's view of the radical contingency of language and the world.[12] This does not conflict with an

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[12]Robert J. Fogelin has clearly articulated what I think is a correct statement about Wittgenstein's philosophical view of the accidental character of the world. In his book, Wittgenstein, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976), he writes: "At every stage of his career, Wittgenstein was committed to the radical contingency of the world as it is presented to us. In the Tractarian period, the distribution of atomic facts in logical space was wholly brute and inexplicable. Yet the logical space

interpretation of his later work which shows that he
considered language to be autonomous from human manipulation
and to have a kind of unity which reflects a unity among
human beings.

Wittgenstein considered it a contingent fact that
human beings are as they are. Therefore it is a contingent
fact that our language is as it is. However, according to
Wittgenstein that things are the way they are forms a
boundary which prevents human beings from uttering any
array of sounds and thereby say something. For example he
asks in the P.I., "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."(p. 18n)
Wittgenstein holds the view that human beings use language
and that a person can construct new languages and invent
new rules of sentence construction and word meaning once
he has mastered the use of language. Language,
Wittgenstein tries to show in the P.I. (and in Part II I
will try to show that this is central to the argument of
the Tractatus also) lies behind all changes in language.

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in which these atomic facts were embedded formed a coherent
and internally related system. With the loss of this
underlying crystalline structure, we are left with only
the brute and inexplicable system of facts in the world....
I don't think Wittgenstein ever defends this standpoint;
instead, he attempts to think through its consequences."
P. 135.

As he said in <u>Zettel</u>:[13]

> 325. How did I arrive at the concept 'sentence' or
> 'language'? Surely only through the languages that I
> have learnt. --But they seem to me in a certain sense
> to have led beyond themselves, for I am now able to
> construct new language, e.g. to invent words.--So such
> construction also belongs to the concept of language.

Wittgenstein agrees that human beings can construct
and invent language, but only if language is already given
can this be a real possibility. When he pushes his argu-
ment to the point where one might posit two groups of human
beings which have radically autonomous languages from each
other such that intertranslation is impossible, he says
that we could not even call the other a language:

> 207. Let us imagine that the people in that country
> carried on the usual human activities and in the course
> of them employed, apparently, an articulate language.
> If we watch their behaviour we find it intelligible,
> it seems 'logical'. But when we try to learn their
> language we find it impossible to do so. For there
> is no regular connexion between what they say, the
> sounds they make, and their actions; but still these
> sounds are not superfluous, for if we gag one of the
> people, it has the same consequences as with us; with-
> out the sounds their actions fall into confusion--as I
> feel like putting it. Are we to say that these people
> have a language: orders, reports, and the rest?
> There is not enough regularity for us to call it
> "language".

Wittgenstein does not overlook the fact that even given the
mastery of a foreign language a person who visits the
country for which it is the mother tongue may not be

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[13]Ludwig Wittgenstein, <u>Zettel</u>, G. E. M. Anscombe and
G. H. von Wright (eds.), trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Berkeley
and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970).

able to understand the people there. He says, "We cannot
find our feet with them."(P.I., p. 223) We can understand
what they say, but we cannot in some sense understand them.
Though people may be complete enigmas to each other,
Wittgenstein thinks this difference should be contrasted
with that between human beings and other species of life:
"If a lion could talk, we could not understand him."
(P.I., p. 223) Though human beings are not as a matter of
course transparent to each other, Wittgenstein does think
that there is a kind of unity of the race. He says:

> 206. . . . . Suppose you came as an explorer into
> an unknown country with a language quite strange to
> you. In what circumstances would you say that the
> people there gave orders, understood them, obeyed
> them, rebelled against them, and so on? The common
> behaviour of mankind is the system of reference by
> means of which we interpret an unknown language.

In this essay I argue that it is an aim of the philosophy
of both periods of Wittgenstein's life to show a unity and
autonomy of language based upon an essential relationship
of language and reality. I demonstrate that his philo-
sophical study of language leads to a particular view of
human nature which is quite different from the epistemo-
logical views of the 'Fideists'.

PART I

WITTGENSTEINIAN FIDEISM

INTRODUCTION

What affronts many opponents of those who use
Wittgenstein's later philosophy in the study of religion
is the contention that the claims of a religious tradition
cannot be judged or evaluated as reasonable or true from
outside. The 'fideistic' element in this approach to
religion is the claim that religious beliefs can be under-
stood and evaluated only from within the tradition which
gives expression to the beliefs, and that there is no
independent standpoint from which one can judge the claims
of the tradition or the tradition itself as either true
or reasonable. For example, Norman Malcolm says in regard
to Anselm's ontological argument: ". . . I suspect that
the argument can be thoroughly understood only by one
who has a view of that human 'form of life' that gives rise
to the idea of an infinitely great being, who views it
from <u>inside</u> not just from the outside and who has, there-
fore, at least some inclination to <u>partake</u> in that

religious form of life."[1] The response of those who are
not sympathetic with this distinction between "inside" and
"outside" in terms of one's ability to understand and eval-
uate public claims of religious traditions has been to
assert that truth claims are essential to the Judaeo-
Christian traditions, and that Wittgenstein's later
philosophy cannot be correct if it can be used to deny this
fact.

In this chapter I will present that aspect of the
interpretation of religion offered by the 'Fideists'
which supports the autonomous position regarding the truth
of religious claims. I will show that the 'Fideists' have
used Wittgenstein's distinction between grammatical and
empirical statements to support their conclusions, but
that these conclusions rest upon the very mistake
Wittgenstein continually warned against: confusing gram-
matical propositions for empirical propositions. This
confusion arises when one attempts to assert a grammatical
proposition. As I will discuss later in this chapter,
Wittgenstein believed that the grammar of grammatical
propositions prevents their use as assertions of matters
of fact, and that their use is to show the way words

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[1] Norman Malcolm, "Anselm's Ontological Argument",
in Alvin Plantinga, ed., The Ontological Argument (Garden
City, N. Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1965), p. 159.

function. They are used to show the grammar of a word's
usage. Wittgenstein shows that if one tries to assert
such a proposition as if it were about some matter of
fact which may or may not be the case, metaphysics results.
This distinction is used by Wittgenstein as a methodo-
logical tool for discovering the sources of the temptation
to speak metaphysically. That a grammatical proposition
can have the look of an assertion but actually only
reflects the grammar of the words it contains can make it
seem as if Wittgenstein did not think the underlying rules
of our language are tied to how the world actually works.
The doctrine of the autonomy of grammar seems to posit
an independence of language and its structure from reality.
This, however, is a confusion of Wittgenstein's purposes.
In his philosophy this distinction is not grounded on a
metaphysical thesis concerning the relationship between
language and reality, but is used to discover the sources
of philosophical problems and to solve those problems.
The 'Fideists', though, have made this tool into a
metaphysical thesis concerning language, meaning and
truth.

There is an initial difficulty in completing the
task of this chapter. Those who use Wittgenstein's later
work in order to present an epistemological approach to
the interpretation of religion have not given a complete

philosophy of language, nor a complete interpretation of Wittgenstein's later philosophy. Consequently there are many points of interpretation about which one cannot be conclusive because of the inherent vagueness in their view of language and their views of Wittgenstein's thought. Frequently Wittgenstein is quoted as if his pronouncements are self-evident. That he often gives such pronouncements as if they are self-evident is not justification for others to do the same. He has a philosophy out of which these sayings arise, and if they mean anything it should be possible to discover it by seeing the place of these sayings in the whole of his work. Without a complete interpretation of Wittgenstein to appeal to, one can only work with the way the 'Fideists' have applied his philosophy. I believe that I can show that the 'Fideists' are using his grammatical-empirical distinction, and that they have at times fallen into the illusions which result from confusing grammatical propositions for empirical ones.

It has been recognized by Donald Evans[2] that the 'fideistic' approach to religion uses the grammatical-empirical distinction. He notes that in using this

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[2]Donald Evans, "Faith and Belief", _Religious Studies_, 10 (1974), pp. 1-19, and 199-212.

distinction the 'Wittgensteinian Fideists' think that
they can legitimately deny the relevance of what he calls
the 'ontological claims' of religious statements. It is
not my purpose to criticize Evans' description of this
distinction, for he does not claim to be a Wittgensteinian.
I wish only to take a brief look at his argument because
he correctly shows that by using this distinction the
'Wittgensteinian Fideists' have denied the possibility of
judging the truth or falsity of religious claims. I do
not think that Evans has grasped the significance of this
distinction, and I will refer to his mistake in the
appropriate place in this chapter and try to correct it.

Evans says that a grammatical statement ". . . sets
forth what is to count as 'real' rather than 'unreal'.
It thus sets forth what is an intelligible and an unintel-
ligible use of these words within an area of discourse."[3]
The use of a grammatical proposition, Evans indicates,
is to define the way certain words function within ordinary
discourse. They are not themselves part of the discourse,
but are defining or limiting propositions. Therefore,
their use is to show how words function, not to assert
some state of affairs. They show or manifest the logic
of the area of discourse which they define. As an example,

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[3]Ibid., p. 14.

Evans says that 'God is good' is a grammatical statement
while 'God's will is for me to be a missionary' is a non-
grammatical statement which asserts some matter of fact
which may be either true or false. The non-grammatical
statement, he says, functions within the area of discourse
defined by the grammatical statement.[4] What Evans rejects
is the claim that grammatical statements cannot be judged
to be either true or false on the ground that they do
not refer to what is extra-linguistic, but function only
as defining concepts for the regulation of a specific
area of discourse. The implication of this claim is that
the Judaeo-Christian religions are simply linguistic
activities which make no claims about extra-linguistic
reality -- i.e. ontological claims:

> But however illuminating the grammatical-non-grammatical
> distinction may be in distinguishing between fundamental
> Christian faith and particular Christian beliefs, it
> seems to me that fundamental Christian faith involves
> not only grammar but also ontology; otherwise what
> Christian language is about is strictly limited to
> human language and experience.[5]

In order to refute the autonomous position regarding
grammatical statements Evans distinguishes between what he
considers to be different · kinds of grammatical statements.
There are some, he thinks, which are strictly true by

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[4]Ibid., p. 15.

[5]Ibid., p. 16.

virtue of human conventions, and others which are true

because the facts are as the grammatical propositions

assert them to be:

> My notion of ontology here is obscure, but it may be
> slightly clarified if we follow Wittgenstein's sugges-
> tion that we compare the following grammatical state-
> ments: 'Sensations are private' and 'One plays patience
> by oneself'. It seems to me that 'sensations are pri-
> vate' is true because sensations are private, not be-
> cause human language or other human convention so
> decrees. But 'one plays patience by oneself' is true
> because human language and convention say so. To be-
> lieve that other human beings have private sensations
> is to have an ontological conviction as well as to
> accept a grammatical statement. . . . To have re-
> ligious faith is not only to accept the grammar of
> religious language but also to have an ontological
> conviction concerning the reality of God.[6]

Evans' account of the 'fideistic' approach to the

Christian religion concludes that it is an incorrect

account which denies the relevance of ontological truth

claims. If the 'fideistic' account were true, Evans

thinks religion would simply be a form of morality, because

the actual reference of the language would be the human

activities and experience in which the language functions.

Evans argues that if there is no reference to the indepen-

dent reality of God but only the use of the word 'God',

then one could say 'loving God' means nothing more than

'loving one's neighbor unconditionally'. Christianity,

according to Evans, says that one cannot love God unless

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[6]Ibid., p. 16.

he loves his neighbor unconditionally. "The difference between these two grammatical statements is the difference between two rival accounts of religion. In one, religion is reduced to morality; in the other religion necessarily includes morality."[7]

Evans is typical in raising the objection that the account of religious belief offered by the 'Fideists' denies what believers and non-believers agree to be an essential aspect of many religious claims: that they are either true or false. Those who are believers in the Judaeo-Christian traditions say they believe in God, and do not think they are simply acting out a language-game which has no reference to something independent of these activities.

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[7]Ibid., p. 149.

CHAPTER I

NORMAN MALCOLM ON THE ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

One of the sources of the 'fideistic' account of
religious belief comes from an article by Norman Malcolm
in which he gives an interpretation of Anselm's ontological
argument based on Wittgenstein's grammatical-empirical
distinction. That a supposed demonstration of the correct-
ness of the ontological argument would support a fideism
in religion is a paradoxical result, to say the least.
What Malcolm has done, I think, is to take away with his
left hand what he gives with his right. On the one hand
he gives the existence of God:

> What Anselm did was to give a demonstration that the
> proposition "God necessarily exists" is entailed by
> the proposition "God is a being a greater than which
> cannot be conceived". . . . But once one has grasped
> Anselm's proof of the necessary existence of a being
> a greater than which cannot be conceived, no question
> remains as to whether it exists or not, just as
> Euclid's demonstration of the existence of an infinity
> of prime numbers leaves no question on that issue.[1]

On the other hand, Malcolm takes this necessary existence
away. Malcolm thinks he has successfully stalled any
question of whether or not God exists by proving his

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[1]Op. cit., p. 149.

necessary existence, so he turns away from the question
of truth to the question of meaning: ". . . one wants to
know how it can have any _meaning_ for anyone. Why is it
that human beings have even _formed_ the concept of an
infinite being, a being a greater than which cannot be
conceived? . . . I am sure there cannot be a deep under-
standing of that concept without an understanding of the
phenomena of human life that give rise to it."[2]

Malcolm thinks the conception of God arises out
of phenomena of human life, though this concept is of
such a nature that it is able to establish its own truth.
But does Malcolm's distinction between meaning and truth
avoid the consequence that the ontological argument is
simply "a piece of logic",[3] without reference to the
actual existence of the eternal God? In Anselm's presen-
tation of the argument, Anselm thinks it proves the
actual, eternal existence of a being a greater than which
cannot be conceived. Anselm realizes that this conception
must first be given. It is for this reason that Anselm
says that he will not answer the fool, but the Catholic.[4]

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[2]_Ibid._, pp. 157-158.

[3]_Ibid._, p. 159.

[4]Saint Anselm, _Basic Writings_, trans. S. N. Deane,
(LaSalle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Co., 1968),
p. 153.

The Catholic has this conception through his faith, and once this conception is given, Anselm thinks the existence of this being can be deduced. If this conception exists in the understanding, then that which is conceived exists in actuality. As Malcolm points out, according to Anselm the kind of existence this being has is given in the concept: 'A being a greater than which cannot be conceived' is an eternal being which is not dependent on any other being for its existence, but has its existence in itself. This being cannot be conceived to be nonexistent, for that would be to say that it had conditional or contingent existence, which would be a contradiction in the concept of this being.[5] However, Malcolm differs from Anselm in that he does not think the argument proves the actual, eternal existence of God, but that it only shows the impossibility of denying this existence. To deny that God exists is to contradict oneself in the use of the word 'God'. From this conclusion Malcolm turns to the question of the origins and meaning of this concept and reveals the 'fideistic' side of his thought.

Malcolm asserts that this concept has risen out of certain phenomena of human life. The phenomenon which

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[5]See Anselm, Proslogium II-V, ibid., pp. 7-11; and Malcolm, op. cit., pp. 141-147.

he discusses is that of unbearable guilt. Malcolm says
that human beings use the grammatical propositions
concerning 'God' in ways that will posit an infinite mercy
to balance the infinite guilt which they feel. Therefore,
he assumes that the concept emerges out of the historical
and psychological life of people and functions as an
antidote to these emotions. "I wish only to say that
there is that human phenomenon of an unbearably heavy
conscience and that it is importantly connected with the
genesis of the concept of God, that is, with the formation
of the 'grammar' of the word 'God.'"[6] It is this turn from
the question of truth to the question of meaning which
affronts many students of religion. This turn is based
on the explicit assumption that the 'grammar' of religious
language refers to or arises out of purely human phenomena
without a basis in any other reality. If this is true,
then it cannot be necessarily true that the concepts,
which originate in human needs seeking fulfillment, refer
to and prove that that which fulfills these needs exists.
It seems as though one could say that it is a contingent
fact that (some) human beings feel infinite guilt, and
if no human beings felt infinite guilt, then the concept
of a being who rids them of that guilt is no longer

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[6]Malcolm, ibid., p. 159.

needed. If such a situation arises, the word 'God' will no longer be used, and will have no meaning.

In order to assess Malcolm's approach to the ontological argument it is necessary to understand Wittgenstein's concept of grammatical statements. I will make some initial observations here, but the philosophy of grammatical statements will be discussed more fully in Chapter V. Wittgenstein makes the distinction between those propositions which assert a matter of fact and those which show the logic or grammar of our language. The former are called empirical propositions and the latter grammatical propositions. The former have the logical quality of making sense even if they are negated. To negate an empirical proposition is always possible, and the proposition will still make sense. A grammatical proposition is not used as an assertion. It is not used to present a possible situation which may or may not be the case, and so it cannot be significantly negated. It is not used to say "maybe it is this way", or "I think this is the case". Wittgenstein often applies this distinction in order to discover how one might make the mistake of misusing a grammatical proposition as an empirical proposition. He says the temptation to do this results in metaphysics: "The essential thing about metaphysics: it obliterates the distinction between

factual and conceptual investigations."[7] Because a
grammatical proposition cannot be significantly negated,
and if it is considered to be an empirical proposition,
it looks as though the proposition asserts what may be
called a necessary state of affairs, or a matter of fact
which cannot not be the case.

This is the mistake that Evans makes when he says:
"It seems to me that 'Sensations are private' is true
because sensations really are private."[8] The full refu-
tation of Evans' claim requires an analysis of
Wittgenstein's private language argument, which I will try
to give in Chapter V, but it can be said that according
to Wittgenstein the phrase, "Sensations are private" is
not used as an assertion of some matter of fact which may
be either true or false. To attempt to use it as such is
to confuse a grammatical with an empirical proposition.
If it is asserted as an empirical proposition, it appears
to be one which is universally and necessarily true.
What such an assertion says is this: "It cannot be true
that sensations are not private." This is the mark of a
metaphysical proposition. What Wittgenstein shows is

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[7] Zettel, op. cit., #458.

[8] Evans, op. cit., p. 16.

is that far from being an assertion about sensations,
"Sensations are private" reflects the grammar of our use
of the word 'sensation'. It shows how the word functions
in our linguistic usage. To say that "sensations are
private" is true or necessarily true would be like saying,
"every rod has a length" is true because it really is true
that every rod has a length. Where one thinks he is saying
something about sensations or rods, he is only producing
propositions which show the way we use the word 'sensation'
and the word 'rod'. Wittgenstein shows that what results
from the negation of a grammatical proposition is nonsense.
It makes no sense to say, "Not every rod has a length".
If a proposition cannot be negated and still make sense,
then it is nonsense to assert the proposition. What
Wittgenstein shows is that grammatical propositions can
be neither asserted, denied, nor doubted, as if they were
empirical propositions about some extra-linguistic matter
of fact. Grammatical propositions have meaning, then,
only if they are recognized as reflections of our linguistic
practices and used to show how those practices proceed.

It is not clear that Malcolm has noticed that his
presentation of the ontological argument does not prove
the existence of God, but only proves that if the propo-
sition 'God exists' is used as a grammatical proposition
it cannot be negated and still make sense. Malcolm is

using Wittgenstein's grammatical-empirical distinction,
but has fallen into the confusion of treating a grammatical
proposition as an empirical one. Malcolm shows that he
is using this distinction when he says, ". . . Anselm's
unusual phrase, 'a being a greater than which cannot be
conceived,' /is used/ to make it explicit that the sentence
'God is the greatest of all beings' expresses a logically
necessary truth and not a mere matter of fact. . . ."[9]
The difference between a proposition which expresses a
mere matter of fact and one which expresses a logically
necessary truth is that if the latter is negated it
becomes self-contradictory. For this reason Malcolm says
". . . that when the concept of God is correctly understood
one sees that one cannot 'reject the subject.' 'There is
no God' is seen to be a necessarily false statement."[10]
Malcolm also calls logically necessary statements 'a priori
statements': "The a priori proposition 'God necessarily
exists' entails the proposition 'God exists,' if and only
if the latter also is understood as an a priori propo-
sition. . . ."[11] According to Malcolm, then, 'God exists'

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[9] Malcolm, op. cit., p. 142.

[10] Ibid., p. 148.

[11] Ibid., p. 147.

is a logically necessary and a priori proposition which
cannot be significantly negated. This is what
Wittgenstein in his later work called a grammatical
proposition.

That 'God does not exist' is nonsense is the sense
in which Malcolm thinks that Anselm's argument proves the
existence of the eternal God.[12] However, what Malcolm has
done is equate the following two sentences: "'God exists'
is an a priori, logically necessary proposition" and
"God necessarily exists". This has been pointed out by
Alvin Plantinga:

> To say 'God necessarily exists,' then, is to say the
> same as "'God exists' is a necessary proposition."
> This interpretation receives confirmation from the
> following sentence: "The a priori proposition 'God
> necessarily exists' entails the proposition 'God
> exists,' if and only if the latter also is understood
> as an a priori proposition: in which case the two
> propositions are equivalent" (p. 147). Taking
> "logically necessary" and "a priori" as synonyms here,
> this passage seems to mean that "God necessarily
> exists" is equivalent to "'God exists' is necessary."
> I am assuming further that for Malcolm a proposition
> is logically necessary if and only if its contradictory
> is self-contradictory.[13]

What Malcolm has done, though this is not pursued by
Plantinga, is to confuse the two senses in which he himself
is using 'necessary'. On the one hand he is making

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[12]Ibid., p. 147.

[13]Alvin Plantinga, "A Valid Ontological Argument?",
in Plantinga, ed., op. cit., pp. 162-163.

an observation on the Judaeo-Christian belief in an
eternal God: it may be said that Jews and Christians
believe that God is the creator of all things and that he
is everywhere always wholly present and active, creating
and saving his creation. On the other hand, Malcolm is
making an observation on the grammatical status of the
propositions in which these beliefs are expressed. He
says that in the Judaeo-Christian religions the proposi-
tions in which the beliefs are expressed function as
a priori, logically necessary propositions. Malcolm fails
to distinguish between the necessity which is said to be
God's nature and the necessity of the grammatical proposi-
tions by which Christians express their fundamental
beliefs about God's nature. That is, "'God necessarily
exists' is a a priori and logically necessary proposition"
is not equivalent to "God necessarily exists" except
insofar as the latter is not used as an assertion about
the nature of God's existence but is used as a grammatical
proposition with which one shows how the word "God" func-
tions in the Judaeo-Christian religions. If this is the
case, then the former statement only tells us how the
latter statement functions -- it functions as a grammatical
proposition. But if it is used as a grammatical propo-
sition, on Wittgenstein's principles it cannot be asserted,
negated, or, therefore, doubted.

Malcolm, however, believes that though the two propositions are equivalent, the latter proposition is used as an assertion of the necessary existence of God. By doing this, he confuses a grammatical proposition with an empirical proposition which asserts some empirical matter of fact. This matter of fact, he says, is not like any other which may or may not be the case, so it is a necessary existential proposition. Therefore Malcolm has created the grammatical illusion that 'God exists' is used in such a way as to assert a necessary, a priori matter of fact:

> . . . the view that logical necessity merely reflects the use of words cannot possibly have the implication that every existential proposition must be contingent. That view requires us to look at the use of words and not manufacture a priori theses about it. In the Ninetieth Psalm it is said: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." Here is expressed the idea of the necessary existence and eternity of God, an idea that is essential to the Jewish and Christian religions. In those complex systems of thought, those "language-games," God has the status of a necessary being.[14]

That the Judaeo-Christian concept of God is as Malcolm says is not doubted here. However, if one argues that 'God necessarily exists' is a necessary proposition, then on Wittgenstein's principles, one must see it as a grammatical proposition which can be used to demonstrate

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[14]Malcolm, op. cit., pp. 152-153.

the grammar of the word 'God'. If it is used as a
grammatical proposition, then the one who uses it is not
asserting some state of affairs, but showing the way the
word functions. In Wittgenstein's later work, he argues
that the sense of a proposition is the use to which it is
put. To use "God exists" as a grammatical proposition
means that in the particular context of this use the
negation of the proposition is nonsense. For example,
if someone has not mastered the use of the word 'God',
that is, if a person does not yet have the concept clear,
he may say: "I hope God does not forget what I told Him
yesterday." Another might clear up this confusion by
saying, "You don't have to worry about that. God does
not change, He necessarily exists, and therefore He cannot
forget what you told Him." In this latter sentence one
could say that 'God cannot forget,' 'God cannot change,'
and 'God necessarily exists' function as grammatical
propositions. The person is using them to show the other
that it is a misuse of the word 'God' to suppose that
God can forget.

However, can the proposition 'God exists' be
used in any context as an assertion of the existence of
a particular being such that the assertion may be either
true or false? Are there situations in which it is
appropriate to ask whether or not there is such a being?

I think Wittgenstein has indicated a way to approach this
question which does not categorize all statements about
the existence of God as grammatical propositions. It is
obvious that the grammar of the word 'God' poses a problem
concerning the use of empirical procedures for establishing
the existence or non-existence of such a being.
Wittgenstein indicates that there are no such procedures,[15]
and according to his later work this fact contributes to
the grammar of the word and helps our understanding of
its use.(P.I., 353) Wittgenstein says, "If the question
arises as to the existence of a god or God, it plays an
entirely different role to that of the existence of any
person or object I ever heard of. One said, had to say,
that one believed in the existence. . . ."(LC, p. 59)
Wittgenstein does not in this instance seem to say that
the proposition about the existence of God is used
exclusively as a grammatical proposition. He seems to
recognize that it is also used in sentences in which
negation is possible. However, he also says that these
sentences must be phrased in terms of belief. He indicates
that it is a proper use to say, "I believe that there is
no God." "In one sense, I understand all he says--the

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[15]Ludwig Wittgenstein, Lectures and Conversations on
Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief, Cyril Barrett
(ed.) (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California
Press, 1972), p. 56. (Note: hereafter referred to as "LC".)

English words 'God', 'separate', etc. I understand. I

could say: 'I don't believe in this,'. . . ."(LC, p. 55)

Wittgenstein says that the use of an expression of belief

is a grammatically necessary aspect of any use of phrases

which express the existence of God.

As a grammatical proposition, Wittgenstein's

philosophy supports Malcolm's contention that it cannot

be negated and still make sense. However this is because

the proposition is not an assertion of the existence of

God but simply one which is used to clarify the correct

use of the words. It is a central aspect of Wittgenstein's

later work that one cannot say in an a priori fashion that

one use is the only use of a sentence, nor that one use

is more fundamental than another. Another use of 'God

exists' seems to be an assertion of a belief in that

existence. In this context the negation would be, "I do

not believe that God exists," or "I believe that God does

not exist." In neither of the two cases presented here

does Wittgenstein's philosophy support Malcolm's contention

that 'God exists' is a necessary existential proposition.

On the one hand it is not an existential proposition at

all. On the other hand it is not merely an existential

proposition. It is an assertion of the belief in God's

existence.

Wittgenstein says in the context in which he

discusses the grammar of 'God exists' that he cannot
contradict a person who believes in the existence of
God.(LC, p. 55) His argument, it seems to me, is this:
since the grammar of the assertion of God's existence
requires the context of the assertion of belief, a contra-
diction would be, "You do not believe that God exists."
In this way there would be a contradiction concerning the
matter of fact of another's belief. One might also say,
"I do not believe that God exists," but this would not
contradict another's assertion of belief. If both argue
by saying, "God exists," and "God does not exist," there
is only an apparent contradiction arising from the failure
to recognize that the existence of God is something that
can only be believed and not in any other way asserted.

This analysis of Wittgenstein's approach to the
question of the existence of God shows that his later
philosophy has a much more limited use than indicated by
Malcolm. It does not allow that philosophy can establish
the existence of God by an analysis of the grammar of the
use of the word 'God', yet it does not avoid showing that
in the context of propositions of belief the actual
existence of God is asserted or denied. In this way
Wittgenstein does not argue that truth claims are irrele-
vant to the Judaeo-Christian traditions, but he does
think the grammar of these claims concerning the existence

of God reveals that proof or evidence is irrelevant to
establishing the truth of these claims and it is for
this reason people say that they are believed.

At this point it seems to me that there are two
ways to approach the question of truth in religious
beliefs based upon Wittgenstein's thought. The first is
to investigate the grammar of the language used by the
Judaeo-Christian religions and see if there are assertions
made which may be either true or false. If there are
such, then perhaps not all expressions of religious
beliefs have to be used as grammatical propositions. It
is in this sense that Wittgenstein's philosophy requires
one to look at the actual use of the language and not
manufacture a priori theses concerning it. On the other
hand, there is the need to investigate just what kind of
relation Wittgenstein sees between grammatical proposi-
tions and extra-linguistic reality if it is not one of
correspondence. Since one cannot significantly say that
a grammatical proposition is true or false, does
Wittgenstein's philosophy approach the question, "Why
just these grammatical propositions instead of others?"

These questions will not be pursued at this point.
After the presentation of my interpretation of
Wittgenstein's philosophy I will return to the question
of truth in religion as it might be seen in light of his

work. At this point it is important to note that
Wittgenstein's later philosophy is more limited than the
'fideistic' interpretation shows it to be. His use of
the grammatical/empirical distinction is for the purpose
of attacking what he calls 'grammatical illusions' which
result from asserting grammatical propositions. To think
that by it he establishes the justification of anything
which might be uttered is a gross misunderstanding.

CHAPTER II

PETER WINCH'S PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

Another source of the 'fideistic' account of
religious language is found in the writings of Peter Winch,
especially his monograph, The Idea of a Social Science[1]
and his article, "Understanding a Primitive Society".[2]
In this chapter I will present that aspect of Winch's
thought which is important for the 'fideistic' interpre-
tation. Winch has most forcefully presented that position
which claims autonomy for religious language based on the
thesis that reality is formed by our language, and it is
only through our language that we have access to the real.
He argues that since religious language is a given, one
can only evaluate its claims from within the religious
traditions themselves, for only there does one know what
the claims mean. Winch, then, sets the question of
meaning before the question of truth, and argues for the
autonomy of religious language both from reality and

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[1]Peter Winch, The Idea of a Social Science (New
York: Humanities Press, 1958).

[2]Peter Winch, "Understanding a Primitive Society",
in Bryan R. Wilson (ed.), Rationality (New York: Harper
Torchbooks, 1970), pp. 78-111.

from other language forms. These two elements in Winch's
thought are relevant for this essay: his argument for the
priority of the forms of language over the forms of
reality and his argument for the mutual autonomy of
differing areas of discourse. In this chapter, I will
present Winch's position on these two issues, and give
an initial criticism from the standpoint of Wittgenstein's
later work.

Winch begins his monograph with a discussion of
the task of philosophy. He says that philosophy is con-
cerned with the general questions about the nature of
reality.[3] However, he says such questions need to be
regarded as questions about the relation of man's mind to
reality, that is, the question of whether or not, or to
what extent, human beings know the real: "We have to
ask whether the mind of man can have any contact with
reality at all. . . ."[4] Therefore, ". . . the philoso-
pher's concern. . . is designed to throw light on the
question how far reality is intelligible. . . ."[5] The
move from the question of the nature of reality to the
question of the intelligibility of reality leads Winch to

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[3]<u>Idea</u>, p. 8.

[4]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 9.

[5]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 11.

say that ultimately the philosopher's question is,

". . . how language is connected with reality. . . ."[6]

The linguistic turn in Winch's description of critical

philosophy reaches its conclusion when he makes the

following statement:

> We cannot say. . . that the problems of philosophy
> arise out of language rather than out of the world,
> because in discussing language philosophically we are
> in fact discussing what counts as belonging to the
> world. Our idea of what belongs to the realm of
> reality is given for us in the language that we use.
> The concepts we have settle for us the form of the
> experience we have of the world. It may be worth
> reminding ourselves of the truism that when we speak
> of the world we are speaking of what we in fact mean
> by the expression 'the world': there is no way of
> getting outside the concepts in terms of which we think
> of the world. . . . The world is for us what is
> presented through those concepts. That is not to say
> that our concepts may not change; but when they do,
> that means that our concept of the world has changed
> too.[7]

On the basis of this metaphysical thesis concerning the

relation of language and reality -- that reality is

formed by the concepts we have and that our concepts

determine what is real and unreal or what form reality

has -- on this basis Winch says that philosophy is actually

epistemology. Philosophy has the purpose of contributing

to our understanding of what the concept of understanding

anything at all means.

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[6]Ibid., p. 12.

[7]Ibid., p. 15.

With this epistemological framework for his
philosophy, Winch is able to say that a proposition may
be true or false only within a certain linguistic setting.
The mode of language forms a view of what is real and a
proposition, governed by the rules of the mode of language,
is thereby able to assert something. What is the relation
between the fundamental rules of the language and reality?
Winch says that these rules determine what is real.
Therefore, within a particular area of discourse which
determines what is to count as real or unreal, one can
utter propositions which may be true or false. Winch
nowhere gives an argument to justify this metaphysical
claim. The upshot of his argument is that there are no
grounds independent of particular linguistic contexts for
saying one set of rules is a better guide to the real than
another set of rules. I call this thesis of Winch's
metaphysical, because the claim, "the concepts we have
settle for us the form of the experience we have of the
world," does not function within a particular area of
discourse, but seems to be a claim which has universal
applicability to all language and experience. Therefore
it seems to be an *a priori* proposition about the nature
of the relation of language and reality, and not a
particular assertion within language. This claim cannot
then be justified or substantiated, and so it cannot itself

be either true or false.

With this metaphysical assumption about the rela-
tion of language and reality Winch reviews Wittgenstein's
private language argument. His conclusion is that
Wittgenstein shows us that it is inconceivable that an
individual could be the source of language either for
himself or for a society. That is, language is something
which essentially belongs to a community of human beings,
and cannot be the private possession of an individual.
Winch correctly shows that the private language argument
must be understood as directed toward the question of the
ultimate origin of language, and that Wittgenstein's
argument shows the impossibility of language having its
source in the actions or intentions of a single being.
The concept of language and the concept of rule belong to
each other, and Wittgenstein shows that the concept of
rule cannot be thought of as indigenous to an individual.

However, Winch uses the private language argument
to justify his metaphysical claim about the autonomy of
language from reality. He does this by asking the ques-
tion about the first use of language or the first use of
a rule. There are philosophers who argue that there must
have been some human being who was the first to use a
symbol, and Winch responds to them by saying that this is
analogous to saying that there must have been a first

person to play tug-of-war.[8] Therefore, he says, "The

supposition that language was <u>invented</u> by any individual

is quite nonsensical."[9] If no one person invented

language, what is the historical origin of language?

Winch accepts this question and in so doing turns away

from a logical problem to an empirical hypothesis of the

emergence of language:

> We can imagine practices gradually growing up amongst
> early men none of which could count as the invention
> of language; and yet once these practices had reached
> a certain degree of sophistication -- it would be a
> misunderstanding to ask <u>what</u> degree precisely -- one
> can say of such people that they have a language.[10]

What this hypothesis adds to Winch's argument is

his contention that since language has emerged out of the

history and experience of human beings, its meaning is

dependent upon the nature of these regular practices,

<u>rather</u> <u>than</u> dependent upon the nature of reality.[11]

Though there cannot be a private language invented by an

isolated individual, Winch says that there are languages

which have meaning only in the particular contexts of

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[8]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 37.

[9]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 37.

[10]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 37.

[11]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 100.

social life of groups of people. It is within these
practices that the question of truth or falsity can arise,
and the practices themselves are not open to such an
evaluation. The latter cannot be the case, Winch argues,
because language is indigenous to social life, and there
cannot be an extra-linguistic standpoint from which one
might evaluate a mode of social life as a whole, for such
an evaluation only makes sense from within some particular
mode of social life.[12] He says:

> . . . the point around which the main argument of this
> monograph revolves: that the criteria of logic are
> not a direct gift of God, but arise out of, and are
> only intelligible in the context of, ways of living
> or modes of social life. It follows that one cannot
> apply criteria of logic to modes of social life as
> such.[13]

Therefore, one can say that Winch's main point is that
language has originated out of practices of pre-linguistic
beings, and that what one might call logic are the rules
which govern these linguistic practices. These rules
determine the meaning of the linguistic activities.
According to Winch a philosophical study of language shows
how different uses of language offer different

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[12] _Ibid._, p. 44.

[13] _Ibid._, p. 100.

understandings of the nature of reality.[14] The question,
'How is reality, really?' is nonsense according to Winch
because he thinks that how reality is is determined by the
rules governing language. One must look at the various
uses of language in order to see the variety of the
views of the real. There is no one form of language which
has better access to the real than any other, for all are
indigenous to the historical development of the language
of peoples. Therefore Winch says: ". . . science is one
such mode and religion is another; and each has criteria
of intelligibility peculiar to itself."[15]

This last conclusion leads to the second aspect
of Winch's theory of language. Winch thinks not only that
language is autonomous from reality, but that there are
various forms of language independent of each other which
are governed by different rules and criteria. Each of
these in some way determines a different view of what is
real or unreal. This philosophical position is closely
connected with the first part of his theory: "For connec-
ted with the realization that intelligibility takes many
and varied forms is the realization that reality has no

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[14]Ibid., p. 19.

[15]Ibid., p. 100.

key."[16] If reality has no key, and if there are different

views of what is real, then it makes no sense to say that

one view of the real is any more correct than any other

view of the real. In fact 'correct or incorrect' simply

do not have any meaning in such a sentence, and of course

neither does the word 'real'.

At this point Winch offers an interpretation of

the nature of a philosophical enquiry. Since reality has

no key, it cannot be the business of philosophy to evaluate

which view of reality is more adequate for there cannot

be any standards of adequacy. Philosophy can only try to

show what the particular views of the real are and perhaps

offer some comparisons and contrasts where these may be

possible:

> This has to do with the peculiar sense in which
> philosophy is uncommitted enquiry. . . . . /It is
> the very nature of society/ to consist in different
> and competing ways of life, each offering a different
> account of the intelligibility of things. To take
> an uncommitted view of such competing conceptions is
> peculiarly the task of philosophy; it is not its
> business to award prizes to science, religion, or
> anything else. In Wittgenstein's words, "Philosophy
> leaves everything as it was."[17]

Though Winch thinks philosophy leaves everything

as it is, the basis for this methodological thesis lies

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[16]Ibid., p. 102.

[17]Ibid., pp. 102 and 103.

in his metaphysics of language, a quite different basis
than that of Wittgenstein. However, I will show in
Chapter V that many interpreters of Wittgenstein's later
works do not think that he was able to avoid metaphysics
as he thought he could, but that he based his thought on
what might be called a presupposed metaphysics, one that
is made explicit in an analysis such as Winch's.

In his monograph, The Idea of a Social Science,
Winch in many ways sets the program for the 'Wittgensteinian
Fideists'. It is the application of his metaphysical
interpretation of Wittgenstein's later philosophy which
provides the basis for the 'fideistic' interpretation of
religion. Winch himself applies his ideas to religion
(in a sense) in his article, "Understanding a Primitive
Society". In this article Winch disagrees with
Evans-Pritchard that science as practiced in the modern
West could be said to have a more correct view of reality
than the practices of other modes of social life. He
takes up this argument in terms of Evans-Pritchard's
attempt to understand the magical practices of the Azande
people in Africa.

In this article, Winch presents his theory that
there are many different forms of language which belong
to human social life, and that these forms of language
form a human being's perception of reality. Consequently

Evans-Pritchard's attempt to elevate the scientific view
of the world over the primitive practices of the Azande
is said to be nonsense, for they are simply different
views of reality, and it makes no sense to posit an
independent standard by which such an evaluation could be
made. Winch realizes that this theory may look as though
it leads to what he calls an "extreme Protagorean rela-
tivism",[18] and it is this which he tries to avoid. It
seems that a Protagorean relativism is one which posits
an individual as the measure of all things, and that what
is is what it seems to be to an individual. Though Winch
avoids this form of relativism, he does not seem to mind
a lesser form of relativism which posits social groups as
the measure of all things, and that what is is what it
seems to be to groups of people. On the latter basis,
Winch can say that agreement with reality or checking the
independently real is not a peculiarly scientific enter-
prise, but that many linguistic practices entail such a
reference to reality. However, he says that what is real,
that is, what is to be checked or agreed with, is not to
be determined outside the language as it is used: "Reality
is not what gives language sense. What is real and what
is unreal shows itself in the sense that language has.

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[18]"Understanding. . .", op. cit., p. 81.

Further, both the distinction between the real and the
unreal and the concept of agreement with reality themselves
belong to our language."[19] Applied to the Judaeo-
Christian traditions, Winch says that individual religious
believers do check what they say against that which is
independent of themselves. That is, their ideas of God
can be said to agree or disagree with the reality of God.
However, what Winch means by this is that an individual
cannot make up an idea of God and say it is the correct
one. (This would be an instance of extreme Protagorean
relativism.) However Winch approves of a relativism
which falls under the guise of the later thought of
Wittgenstein:

> God's reality is certainly independent of what any man
> may care to think, but what that reality amounts to
> can only be seen from the religious tradition in which
> the concept of God is used. . . . . The point is
> that it is within the religious use of language that
> the conception of God's reality has its place, though,
> I repeat, this does not mean that it is at the mercy
> of what anyone cares to say; if this were so, God
> would have no reality.[20]

Winch argues that God would have no reality if anyone
could make up what he thought God's reality might be.
God's reality is given, or shown, in the use of language
of a human society. Thus Winch avoids a personal

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[19] Ibid., p. 82.

[20] Ibid., p. 82.

subjectivism only to embrace a social relativism. This, of course, is based upon his interpretation of the private language argument joined to his metaphysical thesis of the autonomy of a language from reality and from other language forms.

Winch realizes that his account of language, truth and reality might lead to the conclusion that it is logically impossible for people of different cultures to understand each other. This would vitiate the whole enterprise of anthropology as well as go against the fact that people of differing cultures actually do come to understand each other, though sometimes they do not. That is, the mutual understanding of different peoples seems to be a contingent fact, and the position that they logically cannot understand each other seems to be a necessary, metaphysical position which is clearly untrue. Winch says that the possibility of understanding between different peoples must rest upon what he calls "limiting notions".[21] Such notions, he says, are those which are associated with fundamental and universal aspects of human life: birth, death, copulation and a sense of the significance of human life. These are facts of human life

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[21]Ibid., p. 107.

which make certain beings human at all.[22] With this idea
of limiting notions, Winch thinks that differing cultures
may be able to find footholds with each other and begin
to understand what each other is about.

Another, perhaps deeper, idea which Winch touches
upon is that in any culture there must be some idea of
following rules, adhering to norms, correct or incorrect
ways of doing things. These notions, as Winch points out,
seem to be fundamental to what one may call language and
human practices. Winch, then, at the close of his dis-
cussion, does think that there may be some common humanity
which might serve as a basis for understanding. However,
this idea is not pursued at any length, and it is not
related to his previous arguments for essentially pluralis-
tic views of what is real. The idea of a common humanity,
I think, is essential to Wittgenstein's later work, and
it is basic to his attempt to show the nature of language
and its relation to reality. Winch does not pursue how
these two ideas might fit together, and so his relativism
is not significantly modified by his use of this claim.

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[22]Ibid., p. 108.

CHAPTER III

D. Z. PHILLIPS' PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF

The third and last person whose works I will
discuss has perhaps more than any other philosopher applied
Wittgenstein's later philosophy to the study of religion.
D. Z. Phillips' works show an application of the ideas of
Malcolm and Winch as well as a broad use of Wittgenstein's
grammatical/empirical distinction. Phillips has perhaps
most thoroughly grasped the nature of the distinction
between these two types of propositions, and has used it
in presenting his 'fideistic' interpretation of religious
belief. In this chapter, I will briefly show Phillips'
dependence on Malcolm and Winch, and then I will demonstrate
how Phillips has used Wittgenstein's philosophy of
grammatical propositions. I will show that though
Phillips has grasped that aspect of these propositions
which entails human commitment, he has actually made the
distinction so absolute that it recalls the analytical/
synthetic distinction between propositions used by the
positivists. By adhering to an absolute distinction
between these two types of propositions, Phillips makes
what for Wittgenstein was a methodological tool into a

59

preconceived idea by which he is led to say what
religious believers must be saying if they are saying
anything. Rather than looking at what they are saying,
his philosophy ends up giving interpretations of Christian
doctrines.

Phillips' philosophy of religion is in many ways
a continuation and application of the thoughts of
Malcolm and Winch. Phillips says that "A necessary
prolegomenon to the philosophy of religion. . . is to show
the diversity of criteria of rationality; to show that the
distinction between the real and the unreal does not come
to the same thing in every context."[1] In Winch's works,
Phillips finds the substance of such a prolegomenon. He
uses Winch's argument in the Idea of a Social Science
that the criteria of rationality, reality and truth arise
out of human modes of social life and govern it, and are
not something to be investigated as if they were governed
by some other criteria. ". . . criteria of logic are not
a direct gift of God, but arise out of, and are only
intelligible in the context of, ways of living or modes
of social life. It follows that one cannot apply criteria

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[1]D. Z. Phillips, Faith and Philosophical Enquiry
(New York: Schocken Books, 1971), p. 17.

of logic to modes of social life as such."[2] In this

sense, different modes of social life are governed by

different criteria, and these criteria are indigenous to

the modes of social life as such, and, therefore, no

criteria exist which govern all others. To seek for such

is to indulge in what Phillips calls the philosophical

craving for generality[3] -- the desire to find some over-

arching reality by which one can judge all things.

However, Phillips does not recognize that his prolegomenon

is itself an overarching theory of language which serves

as his justification.

Winch's second contribution to Phillips' theory

is his belief that the philosophical study of language is

the proper way of pursuing philosophy because language

determines what is to count as belonging to the world:

"Our idea of what belongs to the realm of reality is given

for us in the language that we use."[4] This doctrine leads

Phillips to conclude that many philosophers fall into

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[2]Winch, Idea of a Social Science, op. cit.,
p. 100. Quoted by D. Z. Phillips in The Concept of Prayer
(New York: Schocken Books, 1966), p. 24.

[3]Phillips, Faith and Philosophical Enquiry, op.
cit., p. 87.

[4]Winch, Idea of a Social Science, op. cit., p. 15.
Quoted by Phillips in Faith and Philosophical Enquiry,
op. cit., p. 143.

confusion because they do not recognize that people who

have different modes of social life are not in competition

about the most true or accurate view of the real, because

their view of the real is not interpretations of some

constant and common reality, but rather, their language

and social life determines what is real for them:

> . . . religious concepts are not interpretations of
> phenomena. Philosophers speak as if one had some
> constant factors called 'the phenomena', of which
> religion and humanism are competing interpretations.
> But what are these phenomena? Religious language is
> not an interpretation of how things are, but deter-
> mines how things are for the believer. The saint and
> the atheist do not interpret the same world in
> different ways. They see different worlds.[5]

Obviously this is itself a metaphysical thesis concerning

the relationship between language and human life and

their relation to reality. Though an overarching reality

is denied indirectly by positing the radical constructionist

account of language, it is still a denial based on a

metaphysical thesis. It is in this light that Phillips

quotes Winch: "Reality is not what gives language sense.

What is real and what is unreal shows itself in the sense

that language has."[6]

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[5]Phillips, Faith and Philosophical Enquiry, op.
cit., p. 132.

[6]Quoted by Phillips in The Concept of Prayer, op.
cit., p. 9, as taken by him from, Peter Winch, "Under-
standing a Primitive Society", in American Philosophical
Quarterly, I (1964), p. 309.

Winch's third contribution to Phillips' account

of religious belief is the argument that language is

essentially communal, and that an individual cannot be

the source of linguistic use and meaning. This, as was

seen above, is the result of Winch's study of Wittgenstein's

private language argument. Phillips stresses in many ways

that religious beliefs are not made up or created by any

individuals, but that they are given to individuals

through their upbringing and education. ". . . whatever

/religious beliefs7 they created would precisely be their

creation, and you would have a curious reversal of the

emphasis needed in religion, where the believer does not

want to say that he measures these pictures and finds

that they are all right or finds that they are wanting."[7]

If religious beliefs were made up, then the beliefs would

be dependent upon those who make them up. For example,

the belief in God would be transformed into a construc-

tion of someone and by that very fact it would not be of

a God who is independent of the believer: "/God's7 reality

is independent of any given believer, but its independence

is not the independence of a separate biography. It is

independent of the believer in that the believer measures

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[7]Phillips, _Faith and Philosophical Enquiry_, _op._
cit., pp. 117-8.

his life against it."[8] Phillips, then, stresses the

independence of God as the criterion given by and for the

religious tradition by which the believer judges himself

and understands his world, and therefore it cannot be the

construct of an individual. However, it is not indepen-

dent of the religious tradition, for it is the governing

concept which determines what the tradition is.

> The . . . objection which is sometimes made against
> the way I have argued is that it denies the objective
> reality of God. The term 'objective reality' is a
> hazy one. The objector may be suggesting that the
> believer creates his belief, or decides that it should
> be the kind of thing it is. This is obviously not
> the case. The believer is taught religious beliefs.
> He does not create a tradition, but is born into one.
> He cannot say whatever he likes about God, since
> there are criteria which determine what it makes
> sense to say.[9]

One might summarize Phillips' use of Winch in this

way: religions are as a matter of fact modes of social

life. Every mode of social life is a linguistic activity.

Every mode of social life has criteria which have emerged

from the social life and govern what is to count as true

or false, real or unreal, rational or irrational. These

criteria are the foundations of the modes of social life.

They cannot be justified or judged either from within

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[8]D. Z. Phillips, Death and Immortality (London:
Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1970), p. 55.

[9]Phillips, Faith and Philosophical Enquiry, op.
cit., p. 59.

the social life they govern, because they would not then
be the criteria. Nor can they be judged by criteria which
govern any other mode of social life, as if there were
a hierarchy of social modes of existence, some of which
are more fundamental than others, and which can serve as
the criteria for judging other criteria. These linguistic
activities are what they are. They determine what is
understood to be the world or reality. Individuals are
given these criteria by those who teach them, and in this
way they are given their world, and cannot be said to
determine their worlds or create their criteria.

With this prologomenon set by Winch, Phillips is
able to use Malcolm's discussion of the ontological
argument as the means for determining what are the criteria
which govern the Christian religion. Malcolm has shown
that in the Judaeo-Christian traditions God is not thought
of as a contingent being which just happens to exist or
who may or may not exist. To think of God in such ways
would be to transform the conception of God's existence
from eternal, necessary existence to temporal, matter of
fact existence. For this reason one cannot say, "If there
is a God. . .", because this changes the concept of God
into one of a being who has temporal existence. Phillips
stresses that the concept of an eternal God must be main-
tained if one is to understand religious belief and avoid

confusions.

> Hepburn and Hick are obsessed by God's <u>real</u> existence,
> and, for them, this seems to mean existing as human
> beings do, or perhaps as the moon and the stars exist.
> Positivism and empiricism have had an obvious influ-
> ence on their thinking. There is no attempt by them
> to discuss the difference between believing in a God
> who may or may not exist, and believing in an eternal
> God. It is no exaggeration to say that the very
> possibility of understanding what religion is about
> depends on this distinction being drawn.[10]

The second aspect of Malcolm's thought which

Phillips has adopted is Malcolm's claim to have arrived at

this concept of God not from a metaphysical deduction,

but from a description of the tradition in which this

concept functions: "Malcolm has illustrated how one must

take account of how the concept of God is used before one

can understand what is meant by the eternity of God."[11]

This second contribution of Malcolm's parallels Winch's

discussion, for it is part of the 'fideistic' doctrine

that criteria of a mode of discourse are part and parcel

of that mode of social life in which the discourse takes

place, and are not dependent on anything outside the

social life.

With this background to Phillips' philosophy of

religion, I will now try to show how the distinction between

the eternal and the temporal serves as the guiding criterion

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[10]<u>Ibid</u>., pp. 126-7.

[11]Phillips, <u>Concept of Prayer</u>, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 24.

by which he distinguishes between true religious belief
and superstition, and between a correct account of reli-
gion and philosophical confusion.[12] Though Phillips uses
Malcolm's discussion of the meaning of an eternal God in
Christianity, he does not think that the concept of God
is the only concept which has the characteristic of
eternity. For Phillips, the idea of an eternal God is
one, though perhaps the most important one, of a set of
beliefs which are not hypotheses about some state of the
world. "In speaking of religion as turning away from the
temporal towards the eternal I am not putting forward any
kind of epistemological thesis. On the contrary, I am
referring to the way in which the concept of the eternal
does play a role in very many human relationships."[13]
It is characteristic of Phillips' account of religion that
these beliefs are held absolutely, and thereby function
as the criteria which govern the religious believer's life
and thought. Because they are held absolutely, they are
not judged by any other criteria, and therefore have an
independence and life of their own: "The absolute beliefs

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[12]For an extended analysis of Phillips' use of
the concept of true religion in his philosophy, see Alan
Keightley, Wittgenstein, Grammar and God (London: Epworth
Press, 1976), pp. 61-92.

[13]Phillips, Faith and Philosophical Enquiry, op.
cit., p. 21.

are the criteria, not the objects of assessment. To
construe these beliefs as hypotheses which may or may not
be true is to falsify their character."[14] Though
Phillips does not distinguish between these two ideas --
the content of a religious belief as a belief in an
eternal God and the absolute way a belief is held which
makes it a religious belief -- it is actually the latter
which he is concerned to elucidate. Once he has shown
that religious belief is in an eternal God, and that such
a belief cannot be an empirical belief in something which
may or may not be the case, Phillips moves to a larger
discussion of religious beliefs as absolute beliefs which
are not beliefs in that which may or may not be the case.
In his discussion of prayer, death and immortality, and
the Last Judgment, he argues that if these concepts are
to mean anything, they _must_ be concerned with the role of
the eternal in the believer's life, and not fall under
criteria which govern our assessment of empirical matters
of fact.

It is this quality of religious beliefs as absolute
beliefs which reveals Phillips' 'fideism'. As criteria
and standards of judgment, these beliefs stand independent
of any attempt to assess them. They govern that which

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[14]_Ibid._, p. 90.

falls under them, but they do not refer to anything outside
of the language they regulate. They are the objects of
belief and do not stand proxy for something other than
themselves. Therefore one cannot ask whether they are
true or false, because this would radically alter their
status as absolute truths. For example, in speaking of
the Last Judgment, Phillips says:

> In his life, this picture of the Last Judgment means
> nothing at all, whereas it used to once. Now, what
> has happened here, I suggest, is that the attention
> of the individual has been won over either by a rival
> secular picture, or, of course, by worldliness,
> etc. . . . . Interestingly enough, when you say that
> the notion of literal truth is reintroduced, I suggest
> that it is reintroduced in this way: that when the
> old force of the picture is lost, the new force it
> has is that of a literal picture, which, as far as I
> can see, is simply a matter of superstition.[15]

If a person ceases believing in the Last Judgment, what
has happened, according to Phillips, is that he ceases
using the picture of the Last Judgment as a guide to his
life, and has begun to judge it as false. This judgment
makes the belief in the Last Judgment into some kind of
empirical hypothesis about some future event which may or
may not happen, and the unbeliever says he does not
believe it will occur. Thus the change in attitude to the
belief is from absolute adherence which constitutes the
belief as eternal to the disbelief in some hypothetical

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[15]Ibid, p. 116.

occurrence. If one believes in the Last Judgment as if
it were some future event which may or may not happen --
though the believer is sure it will happen -- then the
belief is classified as superstition by Phillips.
According to Phillips, superstition consists in accepting
or rejecting a religious belief as if it were about some
matters of fact.

In order to understand Phillips' discussion of the
eternal nature of the content, and manner of holding,
religious beliefs, it may be helpful to look at
Wittgenstein's thoughts on paradigmatic samples. Phillips
calls these religious beliefs "pictures" following
Wittgenstein's discussion in Lectures and Conversations.
He has correctly seen that Wittgenstein's discussion of
religious belief as pictures is related to his discussion
of paradigms found in the Philosophical Investigations.

Wittgenstein says that there is one thing about
which one cannot say either that it is or it is not one
meter long; this is the standard meter in Paris. This
bar cannot, in a sense, be measured, because it is the
standard by which all measurement takes place. One is
almost tempted to say that it does not have a length, for
it determines the length of all extended things. If a
person belongs to a culture which does not use precise
measurements of length, and does not concern itself over

standards for such measurements, then that person will not

see any point to the standard meter. It will not function

in his life and will not guide any of his actions nor the

actions of his culture. Standard lengths will not tie

into anything that takes place in that culture. This

parallels what Phillips says about belief in an eternal

God: "Discovering that belief in God is meaningful is

not like establishing that something is the case within

a universe of discourse with which we are already

familiar. On the contrary, it is to discover that there

is a universe of discourse we had been unaware of."[16]

To discover that there are such things as standard meters

would be to discover that there are forms of life which

one had been unaware of.

The parallel between Phillips' discussions of

religious beliefs and Wittgenstein's thoughts about the

standard samples is direct. Religious beliefs, says

Phillips, are paradigmatic pictures which determine how

a believer sees the world, and they guide his actions and

judgments. They are the unchanging criteria and standards

for all relative judgments by which the believer makes his

way through the vicissitudes of life. They are not sub-

ject to other criteria, because they are the criteria for

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[16]Ibid., p. 19.

a mode of social life. Not to use the paradigmatic
beliefs would be parallel to not living in a society
which uses standard meters. "The believers wish to claim
that it isn't they who measure the pictures, since in a
sense, the pictures measure them; they are the measure
in terms of which they judge themselves. They do not judge
the picture."[17]

In speaking of religious beliefs as paradigmatic
pictures which regulate the religious person's life, one
might think that Phillips thinks the pictures are repre-
sentations of something which may or may not be true, and
so his analysis of religious belief is not strictly
'fideistic'. However, Phillips' account of pictures is
not that of a representation of something. He says the
pictures are themselves the objects of beliefs:
"Wittgenstein stressed in his lectures that the whole
weight may be in the picture. The picture is not a
picturesque way of saying something else. It says what
it says, and when the picture dies something dies with it,
and there can be no substitute for that which dies with
the picture."[18] Religious beliefs are absolute and the
content of the beliefs is eternal because one either is

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[17]Ibid., p. 118.

[18]Ibid., p. 119.

subject to the picture or he is not. The difference

between those who believe in the paradigmatic pictures

and those who do not is as radical as the difference

between a person who lives in a society which does not

use precise measurements and one who does. The two cannot

even contradict each other, for they belong to different

worlds of discourse and judge by different standards:

> So the difference between a man who does and a man
> who does not believe in God is like the difference
> between a man who does and a man who does not believe
> in a picture. But what does believing in a picture
> amount to? Is it like believing in a hypothesis?
> Certainly not. As Wittgenstein says, 'The whole
> weight may be in the picture.' . . . . What, then,
> are we to say of those who do not use the picture,
> who do not believe in it? Do they contradict those
> who do? Wittgenstein shows that they do not.[19]

Before going any further with Phillips' account

of religious belief, it may be helpful to see what it

amounts to at this point. The guiding distinction in

his thought is between the eternal and the temporal. The

temporal is the characteristic quality of all matter of

fact propositions and judgments. The temporal can be

classified as that about which propositions, which may be

either true or false, speak. In traditional philosophy

these propositions have been called synthetic or empirical

propositions. They present possible occurrences, and are

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[19]_Ibid._, p. 89.

marked by their hypothetical character. People who
utter empirical propositions assume that what they say
may be either true or false. The weight of the proposi-
tion in many ways depends upon how things stand about
which the proposition speaks. According to Phillips,
religious beliefs which have this hypothetical character-
istic are really superstitions, and so do not exhibit
true religious belief. Philosophers who question the
meaningfulness or truth of religious beliefs fail to
realize that by the nature of their questions they falsify
that about which they ask, and transform absolute beliefs
into hypotheses.

In Phillips' philosophy, the eternal is a
characteristic of the kind of beliefs religious beliefs
are. They are not hypotheses, and so they are not
thought to be about matters of fact which may be either
true or false. In fact, for Phillips, religious beliefs
are not propositions about anything. The propositions,
beliefs or pictures are themselves the objects of
religious belief, and do not represent anything other
than themselves. This is their role as criteria and
paradigms. They do not refer, but regulate. This is not
to elevate religion over any other mode of social life,
for according to the Winchian approach to human linguistic
activities, every mode of social life is governed by

such criteria and paradigms. According to Phillips
religious beliefs have two distinctions. First, they
govern the totality of a person's life and thought:
"Religion is not everything in the universe, but it does
not follow that for that reason religion does not say
anything about the world as a whole."[20] The other dis-
tinction is that they are in the forefront of a person's
mind in such a way that they regulate by being attended
to in one's daily life: "Believing in the picture means
. . . putting one's trust in it, sacrificing for it,
letting it regulate one's life, and so on. Not believing
in the picture means that the picture plays no part in
one's thinking."[21]

In this account of Phillips' philosophical approach
to religious belief, one can see that a radical distinc-
tion is being made between two kinds of propositions:
the paradigmatic ones and the matter of fact propositions
which these paradigms regulate. The former are held as
necessarily true, and are made into eternal truths by
being believed absolutely. The latter may be either true
or false, for they are hypotheses. As Donald Evans
points out, "God is good" is a grammatical statement,

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[20]Ibid., pp. 126-7.

[21]Ibid., p. 89.

while "God has called me to be a missionary" is a hypo-
thesis which may or may not be true. The question Evans
raised concerns the truth of the former kinds of proposi-
tions. Evans asked whether or not God exists or whether
or not God is good, etc.[22] Phillips rejects this type
of questioning, but, as I will try to show, his criterion
is based on an account of Wittgenstein's grammatical/
empirical distinction which is not true to Wittgenstein's
thought and his account of religious belief re-interprets
doctrines which he says he will leave as they are and
only elucidate.

Phillips correctly sees that Wittgenstein's later
philosophy enlarges what might be called the class of
logical propositions. Prior to Wittgenstein's later
work, philosophers often worked with a distinction between
analytical and synthetic propositions. The former are
thought of as necessary, logical truths which are true
solely by virtue of the combination and definition of
their terms. For example, the proposition, "Only women
can be widows" is an analytic proposition. On the other
hand, there are empirical, synthetic propositions.
"Jane is a widow" asserts some particular matter of fact
which may be either true or false. In order to determine

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[22]See above pp.

its truth, one must investigate the relevant evidence

concerning that about which the proposition speaks. To

confuse these two types of propositions is the beginning

of philosophical problems, for one may try to discover

how it can be that there is some necessary matter of fact.

Necessary statements, though they seem to have the same

grammatical structure as empirical statements, have their

sense strictly from the combination of words, and they

show how words mean, not how things stand in the world.

They are tautologies. They are also analytical, because

what they mean can be discovered solely by analysis of

their terms.

One use of this distinction has been to deny the

possibility of metaphysics. Metaphysics tries to assert

the existence of matters of fact which cannot not be the

case. These are necessary facts. This has been said to

be the result of confusing analytical with empirical

propositions. A. J. Ayer is one philosopher who has

applied this distinction against metaphysical and theo-

logical language. In his book, Language, Truth and Logic,

Ayer says:

> We may accordingly define a metaphysical sentence as
> a sentence which purports to express a genuine
> proposition, but does, in fact, express neither a
> tautology nor an empirical hypothesis. And as tau-
> tologies and empirical hypotheses form the entire

class of significant propositions, we are justified in
concluding that all metaphysical assertions are non-
sensical.[23]

Since God is not thought of as a being which is part of
the factual world, propositions concerning God seem to be
specimens of metaphysical propositions: "For to say that
'God exists' is to make a metaphysical utterance which
cannot be either true or false. And by the same criterion,
no sentence which purports to describe the nature of a
transcendent god can possess any literal significance."[24]
By 'literal significance', Ayer means that religious
propositions have the form of empirical assertions but
are not genuine hypotheses which can be either verified
or falsified.

The difference between Phillips' account of reli-
gious belief and Ayer's account is that the former follows
Wittgenstein in recognizing that the grammar which governs
linguistic practices can be clarified by propositions
which form a class of propositions which contains the
subclass of analytical propositions, but which is not
co-extensive with analytical propositions. This class of
propositions contains what has been called here

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[23]A. J. Ayer, Language, Truth and Logic (New York:
Dover Publications, Inc., 1946), p. 41.

[24]Ibid., p. 115.

"paradigmatic pictures or samples". These are propo-

sitions which regulate linguistic practices. However,

Wittgenstein thought that it also contained empirical

propositions which seemingly cannot be significantly

denied, such as "The earth existed before my birth."[25]

Phillips uses Wittgenstein's considerations to enlarge

the class of necessary propositions. Religious beliefs,

according to Phillips' account cannot be reduced to

empirical hypotheses or indirect statements about human

emotions or attitudes. He says they are absolute beliefs

which function as the criteria for a mode of social life:

> . . . we have been concerned to emphasize that these
> religious beliefs are not conjectures, or hypotheses,
> with insufficient evidence for them. The beliefs are
> not empirical propositions. Once this is said, many
> philosophers assume that the beliefs must be human
> attitudes, values conferred, as it were, by individu-
> als on to the world about them. But this does not
> follow and is in fact untrue. It is important to
> recognize that these pictures have a life of their own,
> a possibility of sustaining those who adhere to them.[26]

Though Phillips recognizes that Wittgenstein's

later philosophy opens the range of meaningful proposition

beyond the dichotomy of analytic-synthetic, his own

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[25]Ludwig Wittgenstein, On Certainty, G. E. M.
Anscombe and G. H. von Wright (eds.), trans. Denis Paul
and G. E. M. Anscombe (New York: Harper & Row, 1972),
#209 and #401.

[26]Phillips, Faith and Philosophical Enquiry, op.
cit., p. 117.

dichotomy between true religious belief and superstition, absolute beliefs and hypotheses, is actually a reversion to the old dichotomy. All Phillips has done is argue that religious beliefs are not assertions, but are meaningful because they govern a mode of social life and are adherred to absolutely. Any attempt by believers or by non-believers to question the truth of these propositions is categorized by Phillips as a turn to superstition. For example, Phillips and Ayer arrive at the same conclusion concerning atheism and agnosticism. Ayer says that religious beliefs are pseudo-metaphysical assertions which are meaningless. The atheist grants their meaning yet denies their truth. The agnostic grants their meaning yet doubts their truth. According to Ayer, the believer, atheist and agnostic are all confused.[27] Phillips argues that religious beliefs do not refer to anything, but are paradigms regulating people's lives. Consequently to deny them is to make them into empirical hypotheses which makes them into meaningless proposi-tions, and to doubt them does the same. According to Phillips, the most an atheist can say is that he cannot see anything in the religious mode of life, and that the beliefs do not function to guide his life. The agnostic

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[27]Ayer, op. cit., pp. 115-6.

can only say that he doubts whether there is anything to
religion.[28] One can only use other paradigms to regulate
one's life. One cannot assert or deny the truth of para-
digms. Ayer says believers, atheists and agnostics are
all confused. Phillips says that if believers, atheists
or agnostics think beliefs are assertions which may be
true or false, they are all superstitious and confused
about the nature of true religious belief.

I think that a more proper Wittgensteinian response
to Phillips' account would be to ask if there may be some
third possibility. The philosophical idea of an excluded
middle, the _must_ which says that it must be either this
way or that way, has been attacked by Wittgenstein, and
Phillips' use of such an either/or seems particularly
opposite to the spirit of Wittgenstein's later work. This
can be seen in the dialectical way Wittgenstein investi-
gates how some empirical propositions can function in ways
that place them beyond doubt, without losing their status
as empirical propositions. In particular cases one must
look to see if they are open to doubt or not, and not
determine beforehand whether or not doubt is legitimate.
The most Wittgenstein will say is that some empirical

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[28]Phillips, The Concept of Prayer, op. cit.,
pp. 19-20.

propositions are beyond doubt in a particular use of language.[29]

Phillips' account of what he thinks is true religious belief also gives him a criterion by which he determines what the content of religious beliefs must be. By arguing that religious beliefs are paradigmatic pictures which have no reference to matters of fact which may be true or false, he does not take into account the various ways in which these beliefs are used in a particular tradition. For example, Phillips ignores the fact that many religious beliefs are expressed in historical propositions which are used to assert the occurrence of certain events. In the Judaeo-Christian tradition, for example, the Exodus, the Davidic Kingship, the Exile, the birth, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus are believed to be historical events. As historical events they may or may not have occurred. Though an analysis of the uses of these beliefs might indicate that they function not merely as historical propositions, I do not think it is correct to say that they have no referential purpose as representations of certain matters of fact. These are historical propositions which have the grammatical status of hypotheses which may be true or false, though they are believed to

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[29]Wittgenstein, On Certainty, op. cit., #519.

be true. I think that one could also argue that the con-
cepts of death and immortality, prayer, God, forgiveness
and love are not independent of the beliefs in the
historical events upon which the Judaeo-Christian tradi-
tions are based.

If this is correct, Phillips' distinction between
true religion and superstition, between absolute beliefs
as paradigmatic, non-referential pictures and hypotheses
which may be either true or false, is not consistent with
the grammar of the religious beliefs he studies. I think
one could say that for a believer, the statement 'God is
good' could be used either as a grammatical proposition
or a statement of a belief in something which may or may
not be true, depending upon the situation in which it is
used; but that in either case it is _justified_ by refer-
ence to the beliefs in the historical events surrounding
the Exodus and the death/resurrection of Jesus. If they
did occur, then the belief that God is good is a belief
in something that is true and if they did not occur then
this belief, though it may be true, is not true in the
sense that the believer thinks it is true. This shows
that Phillips' philosophy does not simply elucidate the
grammar of religious belief and leave everything as it is,
but forces a preconceived idea on what religious believers
say. This is also against the spirit of Wittgenstein's

later work.

Phillips thinks that he can make a sharp distinction between those beliefs which are paradigmatic and those beliefs which may be true or false. According to Wittgenstein's later work, whether or not a sentence is a grammatical or a paradigmatic proposition depends upon the situation in which it is used. I have said that propositions which express beliefs in God, prayer, love and forgiveness are not independent of certain historical propositions. Whether one proposition is used as a paradigmatic belief or not cannot be determined without investigating the use. It may be that for some believers the accounts of the Exodus function in such a way as to govern what is said about God, and for others, in certain situations, it may be beliefs in the qualities of God that determine how they view the Exodus. These may even fluctuate for a given person as he speaks of these things in different situations to different kinds of people, for example in teaching young children the beliefs, in arguments with unbelievers, in meditation and prayer.

Finally, there is the problem which dominates this dissertation: the relationship between language and reality. Phillips works with the Winchian account of the origin and nature of language which posits a metaphysical thesis that language constructs reality, and that what is

real and what is unreal is formed by the language. The

criteria which are embedded in the language and govern it

have no relationship to that which is extra-linguistic,

and so language is thought of as self-enclosed systems.

In the following two chapters I will try to show the kind

of relationship for which Wittgenstein argued. I will

begin with a study of the _Tractatus_ and with that as a

background, I will present the thoughts of the _Philosophical_

Investigations. I believe that a correct account of the

relationship between language and reality in Wittgenstein's

philosophy will not only offer a basis for correcting

the 'fideistic' account of religious belief, but will also

offer positive elements for understanding religion.

PART II

WITTGENSTEIN'S PHILOSOPHY

INTRODUCTION

Wittgenstein's first book, Tractatus Logico-

Philosophicus, plays a very small role in the 'fideistic'

interpretation of religious belief and of the Philosophical

Investigations. In recent years there has been a growing

awareness that the Tractatus should not be considered as

radically separate from the later work as perhaps it was

once thought to be.[1] There have been recent attempts to

show various types of similarities between the two books,

and to affirm that in the two periods of his philosophical

activity, there was only one Wittgenstein.[2] Though this

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[1]An example of the earlier interpretation which
saw only discontinuity between the two periods of
Wittgenstein's philosophical life is Justus Hartnack,
Wittgenstein and Modern Philosophy (Garden City, N.Y.:
Doubleday Anchor Books, 1962). He writes that ". . .
Wittgenstein. . . produced two entirely distinct and ori-
ginal philosophical works of genius."(p. 8) Again he says,
"No unbroken line leads from the Tractatus to the
Philosophical Investigations; there is no logical sequence
between the two books, but rather a logical gap."(p. 62)

[2]Some of the various writings on continuities
between Wittgenstein's two periods are David Pears,
Wittgenstein, op. cit.; Albert W. Levi, "Wittgenstein as
Dialectician", in K. T. Fann (ed.), Ludwig Wittgenstein
The Man and His Philosophy (N.Y.: Dell Delta Books, 1967),

86

effort has been a growing part of Wittgensteinian scholar-
ship, the fruits of this effort have not been significantly
applied to the study of religion. The reason for this,
I believe, is that there has not been a clear presentation
of the continuity of Wittgenstein's thought on the question
of the relationship of language and reality. Though the
Tractatus obviously does not support the kind of pluralism
and 'fideism' some find supported by the P.I., there has
been little attempt to see how the apparent absolutism
in Wittgenstein's earlier views of the relationship of
language and reality may be reflected in his later
arguments.[3]

The Tractatus is an argument for an essential
relationship between language and reality (4.03) which
concludes with a few very enigmatic assertions concerning
the transcendental and absolute character of logic,
religion and ethics. There has been continuing scholarly

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pp. 366-379; Dennis O'Brien, "The Unity of Wittgenstein's
Thought", in Fann, ibid, pp. 380-404; and Anthony Kenny,
Wittgenstein (London: Penguin, 1973).

[3]Stephen Toulmin has discussed the 'change' in
Wittgenstein's philosophy and its support for an absolute
ethics. His conclusion is that Wittgenstein held per-
sonally to such an ethics, but in his later life produced
a philosophy which could not support it. See Stephen
Toulmin, "Ludwig Wittgenstein", Encounter, 32 (1969),
p. 70; and Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin, Wittgenstein's
Vienna (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973), p. 235.

study attempting to discover the relationship between these

closing remarks and the main argument of the text.

The 'fideists' have often used these remarks in their

presentation of the nature of religious belief,[4] but as

of yet, the solution to the difficult matter concerning

the philosophical support for these remarks has not been

given.[5] I think that an accurate view of Wittgenstein's

arguments concerning the relationship of language and

reality will open up a correct philosophical view of

Wittgenstein's earlier philosophy of religion and ethics.

With this as a background, I think one may see a similar

philosophy in the P.I. That is, I think a proper inter-

pretation of the Tractatus regarding the relationship of

language and reality will provide the proper background

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[4]For example, see D. Z. Phillips, Faith and Philo-
sophical Enquiry, op. cit., p. 55, where he uses
Wittgenstein's comments on the mystical as part of his
discussion of true religion.

[5]The two most notable attempts are B. F. McGuinness,
"The Mysticism of the Tractatus", Philosophical Review,
75 (1966), pp. 305-28; and Eddy Zemach, "Wittgenstein's
Philosophy of the Mystical", Review of Metaphysics, 18
(1964), pp. 38-57. These two authors have found direct
parallels between the statements in the body of the text
which concern language and the world and the concluding
statements concerning ethics, but they have not shown how
Wittgenstein is able to argue for the correctness of these
parallels. Janik and Toulmin in their book attempt to
justify their historical method by saying that the connec-
tion between the ethical remarks and the philosophy of
language cannot be established from the text itself. See
Janik and Toulmin, op. cit., p. 168.

for understanding Wittgenstein's later discussion of this relationship. By viewing his earlier remarks concerning religion and ethics in the context of the philosophical view of the language-reality relationship, one can understand his later views on religion and ethics by seeing the implications from his later philosophy of the language-reality relationship. Wittgenstein has very little to say about religion and ethics in his later work, but I think his views can be found through a study of his philosophy of the relationship of language and reality.

Chapter IV of this essay is a presentation of the philosophy of the Tractatus directed toward a study of the P.I. to be given in Chapter V. Consequently, only those aspects of the Tractatus which enable one to understand his argument concerning the relationship of language and reality and its implications for understanding his closing remarks on ethics and religion will be presented. With this presentation I think I have a correct standpoint for interpreting the P.I. Wittgenstein himself indicates in the preface to this later work that he believed it could be seen in the correct light only against the background of his earlier book.[6]

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[6]P.I., p. x.

CHAPTER IV

TRACTATUS LOGICO-PHILOSOPHICUS

A. The Method of the Tractatus

Wittgenstein opens the Tractatus with propositions
concerning the nature of the world, facts and objects.
These initial statements form the ontology of the book,
and seem to function as the ground for all that he has to
say about language. However, a close reading of the text
and a review of the surviving notebooks from which
Wittgenstein drew his material for the final form of the
Tractatus[1] reveal the linguistic base of his ontology.
Though a reading of the text should follow Wittgenstein's
own construction, an exposition of the text can certainly
be made which follows Wittgenstein's order of thought.[2]
In this chapter I will offer an argument which reconstructs
the text of the Tractatus in order to show in what way

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[1]Notebooks, op. cit.

[2]One philosopher who follows the written order of
the text is Robert J. Fogelin, Wittgenstein, op. cit.,
though he recognizes that a case can be made for the order
which this essay presents, c.f. his page 3. Anthony Kenny
op. cit., p. 72, argues that the logical reading of the
text will begin with the nature of the proposition rather
than with the statements concerning the world.

90

Wittgenstein argues for the essential relationship between language and reality. I think this form of presentation, which begins not with the ontology but with the philosophy of language from which this ontology derives does not alter Wittgenstein's thoughts. As Wittgenstein says in the Notebook from 1916: "My work has extended from the foundations of logic to the nature of the world."[3]

Wittgenstein says in his Notebooks that his ". . . whole task consists in explaining the nature of propositions."[4] The kind of explanation he gives is a deduction of the conditions which must hold if human beings are to be able to use things (e.g. sounds, objects) to function as signs in communicating with each other about the world. Wittgenstein presents his argument with assertions about the world, moves through a study of the general nature of representation to the nature of thought and propositions. He concludes with comments concerning the nature of human life in the world.

It has been pointed out that Wittgenstein's philosophy found in the Tractatus has roots in the Kantian

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[3]Notebooks, p. 79.

[4]Ibid., p. 39.

tradition of critical philosophy.[5] Viewing the book as

a transcendental deduction of the necessary conditions

of language reveals this connection. Though this tradi-

tion will not be discussed in this essay, the distinction

between 'transcendental' and 'transcendent' will be

clarified for the purposes of this presentation.

Wittgenstein does not use the word 'transcendent' in the

Tractatus, though he does use the word 'transcendental'.

At this point I will give a basic definitional distinction

between the two words which will help clarify

Wittgenstein's argument concerning the transcendental

nature of logic, ethics and aesthetics when this point

is reached in the body of my argument. It is important

to discuss the difference in the meaning of these two

words here because the method of the Tractatus should be

seen as a transcendental deduction in the traditional

sense of this term.

In the tradition of critical philosophy, a method

of enquiry which is called a 'transcendental deduction'

is one which sets forth the 'conditions for the possibility

of' whatever is under consideration. This method is

generally used in epistemological enquiries in which the

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[5]This interpretation is given by Erick Stenius,
Wittgenstein's Tractatus (Oxford: Blackwell, 1960); and
by David Pears, op. cit.

conditions for the possibility of knowing the real are

deduced. In the preface to the Tractatus, Wittgenstein

says that rather than seek the conditions for thought,

he will investigate the conditions for the possibility

of the expressions of thought, i.e. propositions.[6] When

Wittgenstein says that he only wants to justify the

vagueness of ordinary language,[7] it can be said that he

only wants to present those conditions which justify the

sense of ordinary propositions. That these conditions

are said to be transcendental means that they lie at the

basis or ground of language, and support and make possible

meaningful propositions. Consequently Wittgenstein did

not doubt that ordinary propositions can function in

such a way that communication is achieved.(5.5563) What

he asks is, what makes this communication possible? One

might compare him to Kant who says: "My place is the

fruitful bathos of experience; and the word 'transcen-

dental' . . . does not signify something passing beyond

all experience but something that indeed precedes it a

priori, but that is intended simply to make knowledge of

experience possible."[8] Kant's sense of 'transcendental'

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[6]Tractatus, p. 3.

[7]Notebooks, p. 70.

[8]Immanuel Kant, Prolegomena to any Future Metaphy-
sics, trans. with intro. by Lewis W. Beck (N.Y.: Liberal
Arts Press, 1951), p. 122n.

is said by L. W. Beck to mean, "lying at the base of experience".[9]

Wittgenstein's meaning of 'transcendental' follows this Kantian sense, and his philosophy is a deduction of that which lies at the basis of language. He speaks of his book not as a transcendental deduction, but as setting the limits of language.[10] However, I will show below that this is another way of saying that it shows the necessary conditions of language, for when these conditions are not met, sense is not achieved, and in this way the limits of language are transgressed. When the transcendental conditions have been set forth, Wittgenstein will have reached the endpoint of his deduction, and the limits of language will have been drawn.

The word 'transcendental' is to be contrasted to the word 'transcendent'. The latter word is used to signify that which passes all experience, to use Kant's phrase,[11] or it is used to signify that which is non-sense,[12] to use Wittgenstein's terminology. Perhaps one could say that the word 'transcendent' more properly

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[9] Ibid., p. xviiin.

[10] Tractatus, p. 3.

[11] Kant, Prolegomena, op. cit., p. 122n.

[12] Tractatus, p. 3.

speaking signifies the metaphysical. It is well known

that one goal of the Tractatus is to demonstrate that

metaphysical language is nonsense. Nonsense, according

to the Tractatus, is a proposition which seems to repre-

sent something, but which does not meet the necessary

conditions for representation. Though Wittgenstein does

not use the word 'transcendent' in the Tractatus, I think

it is consistent with his thought to say that if the

transcendent is that which metaphysical propositions

attempt to represent, nothing is represented and these

propositions are nonsense. Wittgenstein does make refer-

ence to that which ". . . must lie outside the world,"

(6.41) and to the "unsayable."(4.115) I will try to show

that in each of these cases he should be understood to

be speaking about the ground or limits of language and

the world, i.e. the transcendental.

Wittgenstein makes allusion to the transcendental

tradition of critical philosophy when he says that the

purpose of his book is to set the limits of language:

> Thus the aim of the book is to set a limit to thought,
> or rather--not to thought, but to the expression of
> thoughts: for in order to be able to set 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). It will therefore only
> be in language that the limit can be set, and what lies[13]
> on the other side of the limit will simply be nonsense.

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[13]Ibid., p. 3.

That which lies beyond the limit of what can be represented
by language is 'transcendent', and the limit of language
and thought is the 'transcendental'.[14] The endpoint of
Wittgenstein's deduction, then, will be the 'transcen-
dental' ground for language and world. He speaks of the
limits of language and the world in terms of the meta-
physical subject,(5.632) logic,(6.113) ethics and aesthe-
tics,(6.421) and the will.(6.43) Because these are spoken
of as limits and transcendental, they sould be understood
as the grounds and conditions for the possibility of
language and the world, and not as some additional things
either in the world or outside the world. Wittgenstein
makes this point when he says that logic, which is
transcendental, pervades the world.(5.61) It would be a
misinterpretation to equate the word 'transcendental'
with the word 'transcendent', but rather the former should
be thought of as something which grounds and pervades the
world. It refers to something that lies at the base of
experience, and so is immanent in every experience, not

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[14]Wittgenstein also argues that the propositions
which attempt to represent the transcendental are nonsense.
The transcendental makes language possible, and so lan-
guage cannot represent it.(4.12) Propositions which
attempt to represent the formal features of language and
reality are called pseudo-propositions and nonsense.(4.1272)
It is for this reason that Wittgenstein concludes the
Tractatus with the assertion that the book is nonsense.
(6.54)

something transcendent of the world or experience.

As I will show below, this sense of the word
'transcendental' is the basis for Wittgenstein's distinc-
tion between what a proposition says and what it shows.
It is the transcendental conditions of language which
manifest themselves in everyday propositions. These
conditions cannot be represented, that is, said, because
they make saying possible. That a proposition says
something shows the transcendental conditions of this
saying. Wittgenstein argues, I will show, that the
conditions and limits of language, life and world,
which he calls logic, ethics and aesthetics, are mani-
fested in ordinary human speech and action.[15]

In order to set forth these conditions,
Wittgenstein's argument proceeds in a transcendental or
a priori manner. He begins with the concept of propo-
sition and deduces what must be the conditions for someone
to construct a sign to represent something. This is a
conceptual investigation, because it is not concerned with
the physical conditions of the brain or the materials
used for the sign, but in what it means for human beings

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[15]Erik Stenius makes the incorrect identification
of ethics with the transcendent, rather than with the
transcendental. See op. cit., p. 222. Such an interpre-
tation places ethics outside every possible experience
rather than at the base of every experience.

to be able to recognize from some factual materials that something is being said. Wittgenstein begins his deduction with the concept of proposition. The conditions which he deduces are also concepts. That is, when he discusses the words, e.g. 'world', 'fact', 'name', 'proposition', he does not intend for his reader to imagine examples of these, but rather to acknowledge that whatever example one may find, it will meet the conditions which are set forth in the Tractatus. In this way the argument which Wittgenstein presents presupposes that for which he is arguing: language and reality are essentially related. He assumes that he can deduce from the concepts which he discusses those conditions on which every object, name or fact is grounded.

The a priori character of the Tractatus is given support, Wittgenstein thinks, by common human experience. He thinks that everyone who attempts to describe reality presupposes that language and reality are essentially related and that their descriptions are either true or false. If they are related, then one does not have to do an empirical investigation in order to discover something about language and reality. What one discovers empirically will not tell one how language is able to represent reality, but only present numerous examples of accomplished speech. In this way Wittgenstein distinguishes his work

from science. Science cannot discover the necessary

conditions for some sounds or marks to be language. One

must already know this for science to begin. It is this

knowledge that one has prior to experience and science

that Wittgenstein deduces in the Tractatus. He expresses

this in various ways (see also 3.23, 4.221, 5.5562-3,

6.124):

> 5.555   Clearly we have some concept of ele-
> mentary propositions quite apart from
> their particular logical forms.
>   But when there is a system by which we
> can create symbols, the system is what is
> important for logic and not the individual
> symbols.
>   And anyway, is it really possible that
> in logic I should have to deal with forms
> that I can invent? What I have to deal
> with must be that which makes it possible
> for me to invent them.

Wittgenstein's philosophy deals with that which

makes logic, language and science possible. To find the

conditions for saying something, Wittgenstein thinks that

one must argue for the essential relationship between the

basic units of language and the basic units of reality.

(4.03) He says that at the ground of language human

beings represent the possible occurrence of atomic facts[16]

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[16]I use the words 'atomic fact' rather than the
current Pears and McGuinness translation of 'state of
affairs' because it seems more in keeping with the thrust
of Wittgenstein's thought, which is to argue for the rela-
tionship of the basic atoms of language and reality. The
concept of analysis seems to function in this argument
in the sense of taking propositions apart until one finds
the ultimate components.

by elementary propositions. He defines elementary propositions as the basic units of language and atomic facts as the basic units of the world. They are the endpoints of analysis.

> 4.21   The simplest kind of proposition, an elementary proposition, asserts the existence of an atomic fact.

> 4.221   It is obvious that the analysis of propositions must bring us to elementary propositions which consist of names in immediate combination.

Wittgenstein thinks that the essential connection between language and reality is to be found in the representational relationship of atomic facts and elementary propositions. Since description is possible and statements can be made which are either true or false, as attested by common human experience, there must be elementary propositions representing atomic facts.

In the presentation of his argument, Wittgenstein begins with what may be called an endpoint of his deduction. A deduction seems to imply a descent from something which is given and accepted to that which lies beneath it. Wittgenstein says his book is like a ladder(6.54) which one climbs up, rather than down. He begins by presenting a discussion of world, facts and objects and builds on this discussion to argue for a complete presentation of the necessary conditions for propositions. The

concept of proposition is explained by means of the
concepts of object and fact, and the concept of language
is used in a strictly parallel way to the concept of
world. Wittgenstein says that propositions are facts.
What he says about facts he also says about propositions.
Language is defined as the totality of propositions,(4.001)
and the world is defined as the totality of facts.(1.1)
He says that facts are the basic units into which the
world divides, not things,(1.1-1.2) and that propositions
are the basic units of sense, not names.(3.142) Just as
facts are the combination of objects,(2.01) propositions
are combinations of names.(4.22) The parallels are between
elementary proposition and atomic fact, fact and propo-
sition, name and object, language and world. Names are
the simple objects of the elementary-propositional-atomic-
facts. The question of the Tractatus is what is the
ground common to both language and world which enables the
two to be strictly isomorphic.

In order to answer this question Wittgenstein
uses what has been called the picture theory of language.
The purpose of this theory of language is to show how it
is possible for human beings to use some facts as the
means of representing other facts, that is, for proposi-
tions to make sense.

B. Form as the Ground of Language and Reality

1. Pictures

Wittgenstein says that a proposition is a picture of reality as we think it to ourselves.(4.01) In the theory of depiction, he tries to answer the question: what are the necessary conditions for one fact to be used to represent another fact? The concept of picture which he discusses has one aspect which is essential to his argument. He argues that what we represent by a picture does not have to occur in reality. The pictures we make present the possibility that what is depicted may or may not be the case. (E.g. see 4.06-4.061.) This may be understood as the difference between a picture and a photograph. A photograph can be thought of as a depiction of what has occurred. A picture or a model (a painting or an architect's sketch) can be said to depict something whether or not what it depicts is, was or will ever be the case. In order to know if what someone represents by a picture is the case, Wittgenstein says that it must be compared with reality.(2.223)

According to the Tractatus a picture must be a fact in order to be able to depict a possible factual occurrence. Therefore, in order to construct a picture one must combine some things, and this combination of

things will be a fact just as all combinations of objects

are said to be facts.(2.14-2.141) The possibility of

objects combining into a fact or the elements of a picture

being combined into the picture-fact is called form in

the Tractatus: "Form is the possibility of structure."

(2.033) The concept of form is at the heart of

Wittgenstein's philosophy, and it is that by which he

demonstrates the nature of language and the nature of the

human being who constructs language. The two aspects

of the concept of form are possibility and structure.[17]

Possibility means 'is able', 'can', 'has the potential'.

Structure means a determinate combination .(2.032) In

the Tractatus Wittgenstein uses the concept of form to

mean that each object has determinate capabilities of

combining with other objects to produce a fact. A fact

is a structure of objects. Every structure that is

produced is an actualization of some combinations which are

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[17]Though Max Black, op. cit., (cf. pp. 65-66),
recognizes that an actual fact has structure and form, he
confuses the issue in making the parallel contrasts be-
tween form-structure and possibility-actuality. This
confuses the issue, because Wittgenstein argues that an
actuality has form and content. The content is that
which is structured, and the structure is the actualized
possibility of this combination of objects. One might
speak of a fact as being 'informed' by the possibilities
for combination which this fact actualizes. The actuality,
then, has form and content whereas the possibility is only
the form or structural principle of that which may or may
not be the case.

possible for the objects in the structure. The structure

that is produced has a form. The form of the structure

is that possibility which is realized in the actualiza-

tion of this structure. Yet, one could say that the

objects which are combined each have certain possibili-

ties for coming into this combination, and so they each

have form. Wittgenstein says that pictures, propositions

and reality have form.(2.171, 3.13) The possibility of

a particular structure is dependent upon the joint possi-

bilities of the objects which combine to produce it.

Therefore, Wittgenstein speaks of the form of objects

(2.012-2.0141) as well as the form of facts. Form means

in his argument determinate possibilities, in the sense

that not every object can combine in every manner: one

cannot drink a glass from water as one drinks water

from a glass.

Wittgenstein also makes a distinction between

logical form and other forms, such as the forms of space,

time and color. He says that every visual object must

have some color, every note in music some pitch, and

every spatial object some size.(2.0131) He also says

that a picture can depict any reality whose form it

has.(2.171) Though there are different types of form and

different types of depiction, Wittgenstein uses the

concept of logical form to embrace all other forms. He

says: "Every picture is also a logical one. (On the
other hand, not every picture is, for example, a spatial
one.)"(2.182) In this presentation my purpose will be
achieved by reference to Wittgenstein's concept of logical
form, which he says is the form of reality.(2.18)[18]

The concept of form when applied by Wittgenstein
to the concept of picture has a use additional to that of
making possible a structure. Wittgenstein's argument for
the nature of depiction posits an essential difference
between picture-facts (and propositions are included in
the concept of picture) and all other facts. This dif-
ference is expressed in the Tractatus as pictorial form:

> 2.151   Pictorial form is the possibility that
> things are related to one another in the
> same way as the elements of the picture.

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[18]Robert J. Fogelin, op. cit., has given an
excellent presentation of the relationship of logical form
and other forms: "Now if this particular case is to
serve as the model for a general theory of representation,
everything inessential about it must be expunged. Upon
reflection we come to the surprising conclusion that the
very spatial character of the representation, which so
impressed us to begin with, is itself inessential. We are,
after all, familiar with methods of representation that
do not exploit spatial relations representationally and
that is enough to show that a reference to space will be
out of place in a general theory. One by one all the
special features of our methods of representation will be
eliminated in this way. It now seems that if we wish to
hold on to the original idea that representation takes
place in virtue of shared forms, we are simply forced to
posit a conception of form that exploits no empirical
characteristics essentially. This, I suggest, is the task
assumed by logical forms." P. 20.

Though pictorial form marks the difference between picture-

facts and all other facts in the sense that one is the

representation of the other, Wittgenstein also argues that

it marks the essential common bond which enables the one

to be the representation of just this fact. In order to

represent something by something else, there must be

something common between the sign-fact and the fact

signified.[19] To account for this Wittgenstein says that

pictorial form is also logical form, the form of reality.

(2.18-2.181) Logical-pictorial form is the principle

which enables a human being to use a fact as the repre-

sentation of another fact. It is the common bond between

the two facts because logical form is the form of reality

and both the picture and the fact pictured are facts in

the real world.[20] It marks the difference between the

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[19]Anthony Kenny, op. cit. (cf. pp. 56-57), remarks
that when he wrote the Tractatus Wittgenstein was more
interested in pictorial form than pictorial relationship.
He says this because he thinks Wittgenstein considered
pictorial relationship to be established by empirical
means and therefore not to be an essential connection be-
tween picture and depicted. Wittgenstein expressly says
that pictorial form and pictorial relationship are one
and the same,(2.151-2.1511) and that he is arguing for an
essential connexion between language and reality.(4.03)

[20]Commentators have tended to divide Wittgenstein's
concept of picture into two aspects: pictorial form and
pictorial relationship. The latter indicates the rela-
tionship of the elements of the picture-fact and the ob-
jects they represent. The former indicates the relation-
ships of the elements of the picture with each other as

two facts because one fact is used as a picture and the

other fact is simply what it is. According to the

Tractatus, because form is the possibility of structure,

pictorial form as logical form is the possibility that

the elements of a picture can be combined to produce a

picture-fact;(2.151, 2.033) and it is also the principle

of depiction which enables a human being to use a fact

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they combine into the picture-fact. Fogelin, for example,
distinguishes between a depiction of a particular fact
and a picture which is of nothing in particular, say a
painting of a farm scene which is not a picture of just
this barn and animals. He argues that Wittgenstein is
interested only in the concept of pictorial form when
he discusses the facticity of pictures and only in
pictorial relationship when he discusses the depiction
of this fact. (Cf. op. cit., pp. 17-18.) This is in-
correct. The thrust of the argument is toward elementary
propositions as sign-facts which depict a particular
possible occurrence, and then toward generalized propo-
sitions which have no particular fact represented, but
still make sense because of the elementary propositional
base of language. According to Wittgenstein every picture
and every proposition has a true/false relationship with
extra-linguistic reality based upon the showing of logical
form which is the form of the proposition-fact and the
form of the depicted fact which may or may not be the
case. Kenny (cf. op. cit., pp. 55-56), also makes this
distinction between pictorial form and pictorial rela-
tionship without being able to find their unity. Kenny
discounts pictorial relationship as based upon an empirical
state of affairs and without philosophical interest. With
such an interpretation, the concept of picture is destroyed,
because depiction and the correlate true/false basis of
propositions becomes a contingent rather than a necessary
characteristic of language.

to represent another fact.[21] This argument can be seen

in the following series of propositions from the Tractatus:

> 2.16   If a fact is to be a picture, it must
> have something in common with what it
> depicts.

> 2.161   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.

> 2.17   What a picture must have in common with
> reality, in order to be able to depict
> it--correctly or incorrectly--in the way
> it does, is its pictorial form.

> 2.18   What any picture, of whatever form,
> must have in common with reality, in order
> to be able to depict it--correctly or
> incorrectly--in any way at all, is logical
> form, i.e. the form of reality.

> 2.181   Pictorial form is logical form, so
> pictures are called logical pictures.[22]

Because form is the possibility of structure,

(2.033) it follows that a picture and the fact depicted,

which share the same logical form, have the same structure.

When a human being makes a picture, he constructs a fact

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[21]Fogelin recognizes that Wittgenstein's statement
that pictures and propositions are facts is at the heart
of the Tractarian philosophy. This assertion places
logical form at the base of the language-reality relation-
ship. However, because Fogelin refers to language without
recognizing the role of the being who produces language,
he ends up with an interpretation of the Tractatus which
omits the ground of this relationship, which is the non-
empirical subject. (Cf. op. cit., pp. 20-21, 29.)

[22]2.181, my translation.

by combining elements and the form which is the possibility of the picture-fact is also the possibility that the objects which the elements of the picture represent are structured in the same way. And since logical form is the form of reality and pictures are real, a human being can produce pictures to depict any reality, that is, any possible combination of objects.

According to the Tractatus it is logical form which is the essential connection between language and reality. By making a picture conditioned by logical-pictorial form, a human being produces a sign-fact which, Wittgenstein says, reaches right out to reality and touches it.(2.151-2.15121) What touches are the elements of the picture and the objects they represent. How logical-pictorial form enables this to happen is what I will now show.

2. Propositions

Wittgenstein makes the connection between pictures and propositions by saying that thoughts are pictures which we make of facts:

2.1   We make pictures of facts for ourselves.[23]

3   A logical picture of facts is a thought.

In this way Wittgenstein ties what he has said about pictures to thoughts, including their facticity. Thoughts

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[23]My translation.

are logical pictures constructed by human beings. They

are elements combined into a structure, the possibility

of which is logical form. Wittgenstein then says that

propositions are the expressions of thoughts which can

be perceived by the senses.(3.1) In the argument of the

Tractatus thoughts are explained by means of the concept

of picture, and propositions are the expressions of

thoughts, and so the three form parallel concepts. They

are all facts; they are all conditioned by logical form;

they are all constructed by human beings; and they all

represent possible combinations of objects.

> 3.02   A thought contains the possibility of
> the situation of which it is the thought.
> What is thinkable is possible too.

Just as a human being depicts a possible structure of

objects by means of a logical picture, whether or not

the objects which the elements of the picture represent

occur in this particular combination, so too a thought

can be of any possible situation. Thought is not bound,

according to this theory, to how things are presently

structured, but only to the possibilities of structure

which the objects contain.[24]

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[24]Wittgenstein emphasizes that a proposition makes
sense independently of the occurrence of that which it
represents (e.g. 4.061, 4.064). This is the basis of
Wittgenstein's philosophy of negation and truth and
falsity. See Kenny, op. cit., p. 67.

Wittgenstein makes the transition from thoughts to propositions by defining a proposition as the perceptible expression of a thought.(3.1) The sounds or marks or any other observable matters of fact which humans use as signs are said to be projections of possible situations.(3.11) Wittgenstein thinks that human beings say things like "Jones is in the hall." These marks are the sensible (i.e. visible) expression of a thought. The thought is a picture which one makes of this situation. The marks and the thought-picture are composed of different elements (one may be composed of ink on paper and the other perhaps of brain activity), yet Wittgenstein argues that they must have the same logical structure for the one to be the expression of the other. Also they must have this structure in common with Jones in the hall, whether he is in the hall or not. The key point in this argument is that neither the ink marks nor the brain activity is dependent upon Jones' presence in the hall. For this reason Wittgenstein says that a proposition does not include what is projected, though it does include its possibility, i.e. form.(3.13)

Wittgenstein makes a distinction between the content and the form of the sense of a proposition. The sense of a proposition is the fact one represents by it. For example, the sense of the proposition given above is

Jones in the hall. The content of this sense is the

structured set of objects which constitutes this fact.

The form of this sense is the possibility of this struc-

ture which is actualized if it is the case that these

objects combine into this fact, that is, if Jones is in

the hall. If Jones is not in the hall a person can still

express a sense by means of this proposition, and the

sense will still have form and content. However, the

content will consist of objects which are not combined

in this way. Wittgenstein says that with a proposition

a human being projects a possible situation. With a

proposition a person has the possibility of expressing

the existence of the situation. Therefore, Wittgenstein

argues that with a proposition a person expresses the

form of the situation.[25] "A proposition contains the form,

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[25]In the Tractatus Wittgenstein most often speaks
of propositions doing something, e.g. representing.
However, his guiding thought is that we do something with
propositions, e.g. compare them to reality,(2.223) project
a possible situation,(3.11) express a thought,(3.12)
and most importantly, in the Tractatus Wittgenstein asserts
that we construct pictures of reality to ourselves.(2.1)
Wittgenstein's philosophy presents an understanding of
the human being who is active in the production of linguis-
tic sense. For an important comment upon the active sense
of Wittgenstein's considerations of language, see Janik
and Toulmin, op. cit., p. 183: ". . . all his discussions
of the relation between propositions and facts are given
in active, constructive terms. . . . . A Bild, or
'picture,' is for Wittgenstein something which we make,
or produce, as an artifact; just as the painter produces
an 'artistic representation' of a scene or person, so too

but not the content, of its sense."(3.13) What is
common to the proposition and the fact which a person
represents with it is the form. According to the
Tractatus, logical form is the principle by which a person
constructs a proposition and the principle which guaran-
tees that the proposition makes sense--that it may be
true, and if it is true, there is a fact which has the
same structure as the propositional fact.

A question arises from this account because the
objects which are combined to form the propositional
fact, i.e. names, are not the same objects which combine
to form the fact which the proposition represents. What
enables a person to hear certain sounds or see certain
marks and know what may be the case? This question leads
to the heart of the Tractarian argument: what are the
necessary conditions for knowing the names of objects
such that whatever structure of names one makes it will
depict a possible occurrence of a fact? It is this
question to which I will now try to give Wittgenstein's
answer.

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we ourselves construct, in language, 'propositions' having
the same forms as the facts they picture. And, again and
again, we understand Wittgenstein's aphorisms better if
we think of linguistic Bilder as 'deliberately constructed
verbal representations,' instead of misleading ourselves
by the use of the much looser English term 'pictures.'"

Wittgenstein says that a proposition is a definite structure of names.(3.14)   The names are the simple elements of the propositional fact.   These simple elements, or primitive signs,(3.201, 3.26) correspond to the simple objects of the situation one projects by means of the proposition.(3.2)   In this way the elementary proposition is used to represent the atomic fact.   For sense to be determinate, that is, for <u>this</u> particular proposition to be the projection of just <u>this</u> particular fact, the names in the proposition must be essentially related to the objects in the fact.   This relationship must be essential and it must be constituted in the knowledge of human beings who construct propositions to represent facts.[26]

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[26]If human beings construct propositions to depict facts, then the relationship of proposition-fact to pictured fact, a relationship which is internal (see Kenny, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 66), and therefore essential, must be essentially constituted in the human being who does this. Kenny fails to take seriously Wittgenstein's attempt to find this essential connection between names and objects. He says, "The connexion between a name and what it names is a matter of arbitrary convention; the correlation between the two is a matter of psychology." (P. 64)   Kenny reaches this conclusion because of Wittgenstein's response to Russell's question concerning the constituents of thought.   Wittgenstein asserts that in his philosophy thought itself is factual, and its constituents are not a concern for philosophy, but perhaps for psychology.   He says, "'. . . . But a <u>Gedanke</u> is a <u>Tatsache</u>:   what are its constituents and components, and what is their relation to those of the pictured Tatsache?'   I don't know <u>what</u> the constituents of a thought are but I know <u>that</u> it must have such constituents which correspond to the words of Language.   Again the kind of relation of the

3. Names and Objects

As stated above, according to the Tractatus,
names and objects are <u>not</u> the basic units of language and
reality. Propositions and facts are. In order to under-
stand the essential relationship between names and objects
one must understand the relationship between names and
propositions and between objects and facts. Wittgenstein
says two things about names that seem to be contradictory.
On the one hand he says that the meaning of a name is
the object for which it stands,(3.203) and that this
meaning is independent of other names and independent of
propositions.(3.26) A name is a primitive sign which

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constituents of the thought and of the pictured fact is
irrelevant. It would be a matter of psychology to find
out." (Notebooks, p. 129) According to the Tractatus
thought is as factual as propositions and pictures and
depicted facts. The aim of the Tractatus is to deduce the
consequences of the internal relationship which holds
between thoughts, pictures, propositions and the world.
(See P.I., 96 for a comment on this aim of the Tractatus.)
Wittgenstein is explicit that it is completely a matter
of convention and arbitrary what is used for a name, and
that he is after that which must be common to all the
symbols which have been constructed to name the same object:
". . . the real name of an object was what all symbols
that signified it had in common. Thus, one by one, all
kinds of composition would prove to be unessential to a
name."(3.3411) To say that Wittgenstein was not concerned
with the fundamental relation of names and objects and
that these are a matter of empirical research is to miss
the basic thrust of the argument of the Tractatus, which
is to show the nature of the human being who constructs
thoughts, pictures and propositions to depict possible
occurrences in the world other than these sign-facts.

which cannot be defined by means of other signs.
According to Wittgenstein primitive signs are directly
and solely tied to the objects which they represent. This
is a necessary ground of language according to his
argument, because it is this requirement which guaran-
tees what he calls the definiteness of sense.(3.23, 4.0312)
Because some signs are primitive, language ties into the
world and is able to represent it in such a way that
propositions are either true or false: either the situ-
ation represented is the case or it is not.(4.023) If
there were no primitive signs, one name would be defined
by another, and that sign by yet another, and language
would form a closed whole without the possibility of
representation, description or sense, because it would
not tie into the world.

On the other hand, Wittgenstein apparently
contradicts this position when he says that names only
have meaning in the context of a propositional fact.(3.3)
Propositions are defined as the basic units of sense,
and outside of a proposition names are said by Wittgenstein
to have no meaning. I think he means by this something
like the following: if one says an isolated word like
"Pipe", outside any propositional context, a definite
sense cannot be communicated. Nothing is really said.
But if one says, "I am smoking my pipe," communication

is possible. In this way Wittgenstein says that names

are essentially dependent upon propositions for their

meaning, and also that they have a meaning independently

and on their own which is the object for which they

stand. This argument leads to a vicious circle of

reasoning: one must know the meaning of a name in order

to understand a proposition in which it occurs, and one

must understand a proposition in order to know the meaning

of a name. As stated above, Wittgenstein says that

primitive signs cannot be defined by propositions. How-

ever, he does say that they may be elucidated by propo-

sitions. Wittgenstein says an elucidation is not a

definition, but simply an example of a proposition in

which the name functions. Here again, though, Wittgenstein

returns to a circle of reasoning. This is clearly exhi-

bited in the text of the Tractatus:

> 3.263   The meanings of primitive signs can be
> explained by means of elucidations. Elu-
> cidations are propositions that contain
> the primitive signs. So they can only be
> understood if the meanings of those signs
> are already known.[27]

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[27]The received interpretation of 3.263 is to break
the logical circle. Max Black, rather than seeking the
implications of this circle refers to it as 'mysterious'.
But since mystery is not a satisfactory response to a
philosophical problem, he also suggests that perhaps
Wittgenstein believed the origins of communication to be
based upon an empirical procedure which has no philosophi-
cal interest. (Op. cit., pp. 114-115.) Hido Ishiguro,

If one cannot learn the meaning of primitive signs

from within language without entering into a vicious

circle, then it seems that Wittgenstein thinks that one

must learn the meanings of these signs from without lan-

guage. Some commentators have argued that Wittgenstein

considered the connection between name and object to be

an empirical matter, either established by some empirical

procedure like ostensive definition, or however it is

established, to be some psychological event which is of

no philosophical interest.[28]

"Use and Reference of Names," in Peter Winch, ed., Studies
in the Philosophy of Wittgenstein (London: Routledge & Kegan
Paul, 1969), p. 29, says that if one does not break the
circle the remark would be unilluminating. "Surely
Wittgenstein is here claiming that when one comes to under-
stand these elucidations, one is already identifying what
the primitive signs which occur in them refer to."
Ishiguro does not see that Wittgenstein is reaching the
endpoint of his deduction and is asking for the base of
the knowledge of language. She assumes that here
Wittgenstein is speaking about the growth of language,
and that elucidations may be helpful. Hacker, on the
other hand, is willing to assert that the solution to the
puzzle is to be found in Wittgenstein's belief that osten-
sive definition underlies the origins of language, and
that 3.263 only seems paradoxical because it does not
mention the empirical procedure which grounds language
per se. See P. M. S. Hacker, op. cit., p. 49. What is
common to these efforts to grasp the point of this inten-
tional phrasing of a logical circle is the assumption that
it cannot be a logical circle.

[28]Besides the comments in his book, Hacker has
written an article in which he attempts to argue that
Wittgenstein held to some form of ostensive definition in
his earlier period of philosophy. See op. cit., pp. 49-50
and "Wittgenstein on Ostensive Definition", Inquiry, 18
(1975), 267-287. In his book Hacker says that this

An ostensive definition is a procedure by which
one person defines the meaning of a word by pointing to
the object for which it stands. If this is to be an ac-
count of the origin of the meaning of names and so the
origin of language itself,. an ostensive definition must
be able to establish the name-object relationship in an
essential way. A close look at the argument of the
Tractatus reveals that Wittgenstein undercuts this pos-
sibility as an explanation of what he thought about the
original ground of the relationship of language and
reality. In order to present this argument, I will refer
to Wittgenstein's opening remarks concerning what it
means to know an object, for to know an object is to know

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interpretation of the Tractatus may not be correct, but
he takes great pains to argue this case, and his discus-
sion of the autonomy of grammar in Wittgenstein's later
work finds much of its support from his interpretation of
the Tractatus. A correct view of the philosophical ques-
tion of the origins of language which I present here will
avoid the metaphysical conclusions concerning Wittgenstein's
later work such as one finds in Hacker. (See his Insight
and Illusion, op. cit., pp. 156 ff.) In his article and
his book, Hacker recognizes that Wittgenstein is pushing
to the termination of analysis and the endpoint of his
deduction, but believes that there was a conception of
ostensive definition which could make the essential connec-
tion between language and reality. (See "Wittgenstein on
Ostensive Definition", op. cit., pp 269-271.) It is clear
that Wittgenstein always held to the philosophical convic-
tion that language cannot explain language.(Tractatus, 4.12)
In neither of his works does Hacker refer to the fact that
what must be known of an object to know its name is its
internal properties or form. Form is not a material prop-
erty, and therefore according to the Tractarian philosophy
could not be the object of ostension.

its primitive name, and to know the primitive name is to

know the object.

Wittgenstein says that to know an object is to

know all its possible combinations with other objects.

The sum total of these possibilities constitute what the

object is. As he says:

> 2.0123   If I know an object I also know all its
> possible occurrences in atomic facts.
>   (Every one of these possibilities must
> be part of the nature of the object.)
>   A new possibility cannot be discovered
> later.

As an initial observation, it does not seem conceivable

that by pointing and uttering a sound one could indicate

all the possible combinations an object is capable of.

It does not seem possible that such a method could

necessarily avoid omitting some possibility which could

be discovered later. More importantly, Wittgenstein says

that the possibilities of combination in atomic facts

constitute the internal properties of an object, not the

material or external properties. Material properties,

according to Wittgenstein, do not belong to an object

per se, but are produced by the combination of objects:

"For it is only by means of propositions that material

properties are represented--only by the configuration of

objects that they are produced.(2.0231) What is essential

to the nature of an object and what must be known in order

to know the object are not that to which one can point.
Ostensive definition, by its very nature, cannot indicate
anything other than material properties, yet Wittgenstein
argues that to know an object one must know internal
properties. It is in this sense that Wittgenstein indi-
cates that one need not know anything about an object;
rather, he argues that one must know the possibilities
for combination, which, as shown above, constitutes the
form of the object. This knowledge cannot be gained by
a posteriori means, either linguistically or extra-
linguistically.

What Wittgenstein means by knowing an object is
clarified by his comments to the translators on proposition
2.0123 quoted above (p. 120):

> If it isn't unenglish leave "know". It is used here
> in the sense in which one says "I know this man". If
> you will put "am acquainted" for it the proposition
> must run thus: "If I am acquainted with an object,
> then I also know all its. . ." that means in the
> second occurrence there must be "know". "To know"
> means both: Kennen and wissen and "to be acquainted
> with" --I think--hasn't exactly the meaning I want,
> because it seems to me to imply somehow that one knows
> a lot about an object, while to know here just means:
> I know it but I needn't know anything about it.[29]

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[29]Ludwig Wittgenstein, Letters to C. K. Ogden,
edited by G. H. von Wright, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1973).
Max Black, by not having Wittgenstein's comments on this
remark and not seeing the importance of what it means to
know an object, says, "know (kenne): approximately in the
sense of 'be acquainted with' (though not in Russell's

In proposition 3.221 Wittgenstein makes the same point in a negative way:

> 3.221   Objects can only be _named_. Signs are their representatives. I can only speak _about_ them: I cannot _put them into words_. Propositions can only say _how_ things are, not _what_ they are.

The argument of the _Tractatus_ is directed toward demonstrating the final ground of language, and Wittgenstein clearly does not allow for an explanation which does less than this. Ostensive definition cannot be the explanation for which Wittgenstein argues, because it is in conflict with the basic argument of the book.

4. The Transcendental Knowledge of Logical Form

Wittgenstein says that to know an object is to know its internal properties. These properties are said to be ". . . all its possible occurrences in atomic facts." (2.0123) Recalling that he says form is the possibility of structure, (2.033) and that structure is the result of the combination of objects, one can conclude that according to the _Tractatus_ the internal properties constitute the form of an object. The logical form of an object is its

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sense of 'acquaintance')." _Op. cit._, p. 49. Black's interpretation seems to posit an empirical relationship with an object as the ground of language. It is this idea which Wittgenstein rejects.

possibilities of combination with other objects.

Wittgenstein says just this:

> 2.014   Objects contain the possibility of all situations.

> 2.0141   The possibility of its occurring in atomic facts is the form of an object.

Logical form, then, is the condition for the possibility of objects combining in determinate ways. The possibilities of all atomic facts and elementary propositions lie in the simple elements which contain these possibilities.

Wittgenstein's argument of how one knows the object and its name so that language and reality are essentially related leads to the conclusion that one must know the logical form which the name and object have in common. Since Wittgenstein argues against a linguistic or other *a posteriori* means for this knowledge, one can either conclude that he himself did not think this problem was very important,[30] or that he believed it was simply mysterious without further implications for his philosophy,[31] or that the knowledge of logical form is transcendental,[32] and that this conclusion is essential to grasping

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[30]Kenny, *op*. *cit*., p. 64.

[31]This conclusion is reached by Black, *op*. *cit*., p. 115.

[32]For a clarification of the word 'transcendental', see above, pp. 92-97.

the coherence of the argument of the <u>Tractatus</u>. In
sections C, D and E of this chapter I will set forth the
implications of interpreting Wittgenstein's philosophy
as it points to a transcendental judgment of the logical
form of reality as the basis of language. It is this
interpretation which will bring together the picture
theory of language, the discussion of the metaphysical
subject and Wittgenstein's remarks on ethics and the
mystical.

Before I present these implications, a few
remarks on the nature of this transcendental knowledge
are in order. On the one hand Wittgenstein speaks of a
knowledge of the logical form of objects,(2.0123-2.01231)
and he says that the possibility of an object's occur-
rence in an atomic fact must already be prejudged in it.
(2.012)[33] He says this knowledge and prejudgment <u>must</u>

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[33]The Pears-McGuinness translation of 2.012 gives
". . . the possibility of the state of affairs must be
written into the thing itself." I think the thrust of
these opening remarks of the <u>Tractatus</u> are as much about
our knowledge of objects as about the nature of the ob-
jects themselves. As to objects Wittgenstein says the
possibility of combination is contained in the objects,
(2.014) and these possibilities already lie in them.(2.0121)
As to our knowledge of these possibilities Wittgenstein
says that we must know them all if we are to know the
object.(2.0121, 2.0123, 2.01231) The logic of
Wittgenstein's argument is to posit an essential inter-
weaving of all objects with each other such that no object
exists entirely on its own.(2.0121) Thus he says, "If

be. They are necessary. This means that this knowledge
and judgment cannot be understood as a picture, thought
or proposition, for these are all facts, and as facts
they are accidental and need not be as they are. There-
fore Wittgenstein does not mean that this knowledge is
something acquired or that this judgment is an intentional
act. According to the argument of the Tractatus they are
to be understood as logically prior to any possible
thought or proposition. What Wittgenstein seems to be
saying is that human beings are able to picture reality
and to express these pictures with propositions. What
they use to picture reality and express these pictures
is completely conventional and arbitrary.(3.315, 3.3411-
3.342) That they can do this is possible because they
already know how the world can be structured, which is
determined by the logical form of objects, that is,
their possibilities of combination with each other.

By means of an argument for a judgment a priori
of logical form Wittgenstein can posit an essential unity

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all objects are given, then at the same time all possible
atomic facts are given."(2.0124) Since he argues that to
know an object is to know all its possible combinations
with other objects, he leads to the conclusion that to
know one object is to know all objects and in this way to
know all possible states of the world. It is just this
knowledge which I contend is a priori and transcendental
and which leads to a correct view of Wittgenstein's
philosophy of the human subject.

of language and reality.[34] If the possibilities of

combination are already known, then no matter what name

is chosen for the object, what Wittgenstein calls its real

name is already known. To know the object is to know its

name, and since human beings are said to know the object,

they share an essentially common language,(3.3411) and

are able to communicate with each other with the form of

reality serving as their key for mutual understanding.

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[34]Fogelin, op. cit., p. 17, makes the very percep-
tive remark that Wittgenstein's Tractatus works out the
fundamental relationships and does not stop with an
answer which generates the kind of problems they try to
solve. I believe that this remark is accurate for not
only the earlier but also the later work: "A persistent
feature of the Tractatus is Wittgenstein's alertness to
the dangers of third man arguments. His task is to work
out certain fundamental relationships, and he will fail
in this, if the fundamental notions simply generate the
very sort of problem that they are intended to solve.
This concern already comes up for the structure of states-
of-affairs: 'in a state of affairs objects fit into
each other like links in a chain'(2.03). We saw that
unless the possibility of combination pertained to the
very nature of objects, then, given the atomistic frame-
work, we would have to posit some deeper set of objects
to account for this contingency. Thus the combination
relationship between objects is an immediate relationship
depending upon nothing else. In the same way, and for the
same reasons, Wittgenstein insists upon the immediate
character of the correlation between the elements in a
picture and the objects they represent." It is surprising
that in a book that is as useful and as perceptive as
Fogelin's, he does not even raise the question of the
possibility of human beings knowing language. If there
are no third man arguments in the Tractatus, and if human
beings are able to make pictures of reality which have an
internal relationship to reality such that they are either
true or false by comparison with the facts, how is this
possible? The human being is not the third man, but in
what way is he not?

By this argument Wittgenstein posits a co-originality of
language and reality to human beings, for both are given
through the transcendental knowledge of logical form.
Human beings, according to Wittgenstein, depict the world
through the construction of propositions, and their world
is intelligible and so capable of being represented.

C. Saying and Showing

The judgment a priori of logical form is the final
point of Wittgenstein's deduction, and with this theory
of the human being's transcendental knowledge as the
ground of the relationship of language and reality, he is
able to argue for a definite view of human existence.
In order to draw out the implications of his philosophy
for understanding what it means to be a human being who
uses language to say something, one must first understand
what Wittgenstein has called the "cardinal problem of
philosophy":[35] the distinction between saying and showing.
In the preface to the Tractatus Wittgenstein says: "The
whole sense of the book might be summed up in the following

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[35]Wittgenstein made this comment in a letter to
Russell, who was asking for clarification concerning the
arguments of the Tractatus. Ludwig Wittgenstein, Letters
to Russell, Keynes and Moore, G. H. von Wright, ed. (Ithaca,
N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1974), p. 71.

words: what can be said at all can be said clearly, and
what we cannot talk about we must pass over in silence."[36]
In the book itself he says:

> 4.1212   What <u>can</u> be shown, <u>cannot</u> be said.
>
> 4.115   /Philosophy/ will signify what cannot
>   be said, by presenting clearly what can
>   be said.

According to the <u>Tractatus</u>, saying is representa-
tion. What a person represents and thereby asserts is
the sense of the proposition, thought or picture.(2.221)
Sense is that which is the case if what a person says,
thinks or pictures is true. The sense of "Jones is in
the hall" is Jones in the hall. If he is not in the hall
the proposition is false; and if he is in the hall the
proposition is true. Either way the sense of the proposi-
tion is the same. Wittgenstein's theory of saying rests
upon the principle that names represent objects by virtue
of their shared logical form. When a person produces a
sign-fact by combining elements together into a definite
structure, a possible combination of objects is represented.
Using Wittgenstein's terminology, one could say that when
the name 'a' is combined in a determinate way with the
name 'b', one produces the proposition, "aRb". ('R' is the
determinate way the names are combined.) In order for a

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[36]<u>Tractatus</u>, p. 3.

person to construct and project the sign-fact, "aRb",

he must know the logical forms of 'a' and 'b'. By producing

this sign-fact, one projects the possibility of the combi-

nation of the objects a and b into the fact aRb. This

proposition asserts this fact. That "aRb" is produced and

therefore is the case, says that aRb is the case. This

is the point of the following statement:

> 3.1432   Not: 'The complex sign "aRb" says that
> a stands to b in the relation R', but:
> That "a" stands to "b" in a certain rela-
> tion says that aRb.[37]

According to the theory of the Tractatus, the

proposition, "aRb", is a fact produced by a human being.

As a fact it has a definite structure composed of elements,

specifically the names 'a' and 'b'. Understanding the

proposition-fact means knowing the meaning of the names,

i.e. the objects which they represent, which means under-

standing how the objects may combine into structures,

and that they may combine into a structure as the names

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[37]The translators have obscured the clarity of this
remark by inserting quotation marks before and after the
second, and what Wittgenstein considers to be the correct
way of discussing the relation of picture to fact. The
first and incorrect way of discussing this posits a rela-
tion as a definite entity rather than as internal to the
combined objects and manifested through their particular
combination, i.e. that they have so combined. That a mode
of combination is an internal or formal relation means
that the multiplicity which language shares with other
facts has to do with the combined objects and not with the
relations of the combined objects.

in the proposition are combined into a structure. Under-
standing the proposition, then, means understanding
its structure, which is understanding what may be the
case if it is true, that is, the sense of the proposition.
Because the names and the objects they represent share
the same logical form, they are essentially joined such
that to know the one is to know the other. For the names
to occur in a proposition-fact means the objects have the
possibility of occurring in the extra-linguistic fact.
Constructing a proposition does not determine the occur-
rence of that which the proposition asserts, but it does
guarantee its possibility. In this way Wittgenstein
argues that a proposition contains the possibility, i.e.
the logical form, of what it says.(3.13) This, according
to the philosophy of the Tractatus, is what it means to
say something.

Wittgenstein also argues that a proposition not
only says or asserts that something is the case, but it
shows that what is said is possible:

> 4.022   A proposition shows its sense.
>   A proposition shows how things stand
>   if it is true. And it says that they
>   do stand.

Wittgenstein says that propositions contain the form of
their sense but not the content of their sense.(2.203,
3.13) If the sense of the proposition is that which a

person represents by the proposition, the proposition

contains only the form of the represented fact and not

the represented fact itself.(3.13, 3.221) However, since

names and the objects they represent share the same form,

the proposition-fact is the actualization of the logical

structure which the corresponding objects actualize if

the proposition is true. This is what Wittgenstein means

when he argues that a proposition contains the form of

its sense, which is the form of the situation the propo-

sition depicts.

Human beings, according to this philosophy,

already know the logical form of objects and their names,

and when they understand a proposition they know what is

the case if it is true.(4.021) Understanding a proposi-

tion is the necessary condition for asserting it. If one

does not understand a proposition, he does not see the

possibility of that being the case which the proposition

depicts. Saying or asserting, then, is dependent upon

understanding. Speaking of understanding, Wittgenstein

says:

> 4.024   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.)
>   One understands it, if one understands
> its constituents.[38]

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[38]My translation.

To understand a proposition is to understand that this
combination of names is possible, i.e. that this is a
structure of names rather than some kind of mixture.(3.141)
It is to understand the possibility that the situation
depicted may be the case. It is to understand the logical
form of the situation which is the possibility of the struc-
ture of the proposition-fact and the possibility of the
fact which is the case if the proposition is true.

Wittgenstein argues that a proposition says that
such-and-such is the case.(4.022) However, he also says
that a proposition shows the possibility of things ocurring
if the proposition is true. This possibility is, as
demonstrated above, the logical form of the depicted
situation. Therefore, what the proposition shows is its
logical form. In this way a proposition shows its sense.
In the Tractatus, then, Wittgenstein argues that showing
is the condition for the possibility of saying. The
manifestation of the form of that which a person represents
by a proposition is the manifestation of the condition
for the possibility of asserting that what one projects
is the case. Because understanding a proposition is
understanding the form or possibility of the logical
structure, Wittgenstein is able to conclude that a

proposition is understood independently of its truth or

falsity.[39]

The other aspect of the doctrine of showing is

found in Wittgenstein's theory that what can be shown

cannot be said.(4.1212) He says a picture cannot depict

its pictorial form,(2.172) and that propositions cannot

represent logical form. The non-representability of

logical form is stated most clearly in the following

paragraph:

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[39]It has been widely recognized that Wittgenstein's
Tractatus was influential with the philosophers who formed
the Vienna Circle and initiated the philosophy called
Logical Positivism. See Hartnack, op. cit., pp. 45-57;
and G. E. M. Anscombe, An Introduction to Wittgenstein's
Tractatus (London: Hutchinson University Library, 4th ed.,
1971), pp. 150-155. Wittgenstein's conclusion that a
proposition is understood independently of its truth or
falsity(4.061) is part of his argument that there are no
empirical grounds necessary to the origin of language.
His argument is that even elementary propositions are
understood independently of the facts, for they are either
true or false, and what they represent does not have to
be the case. At the basis of Logical Positivism is the
argument that the origin of language rests upon the
certainty afforded by ostensive definition. The immediacy
and self-evidence of the act of ostension is said to form
the ground of all meaning in language. Thus in this
argument, the elementary propositions which are the ones
used in the ostensive definitions are not understood
independently of the fact represented, because an ostensive
definition requires that the fact be present while the
person points to it and utters the elementary proposition.
This is controverted by Wittgenstein's argument that
propositions are understood independently of the occur-
rence of the facts they depict.

> 4.12   Propositions can represent the whole
> of reality, but they cannot represent what
> they must have in common with reality in
> order to be able to represent it--logical
> form.
>   In order to be able to represent
> logical form, we should have to be able
> to station ourselves with propositions
> somewhere outside logic, that is to say
> outside the world.

This paragraph supports the contention that Wittgenstein's philosophy is directed toward the final conditions for the possibility of language. For language to be possible, he argues that one must construct propositions according to the possibilities for structure which is logical form. For language to be possible at all, logical form must already be known. Therefore, the judgment a priori of logical form is the ultimate condition for the possibility of language. For this reason logical form cannot itself be represented. However, this argument reaches the conclusion that not only is it not possible to represent logical form, it is not needed, for everyone who understands a proposition already knows logical form, for it is that which is understood when one understands a proposition. According to the Tractarian theory of language, in every ordinary proposition a human being constructs, a situation is represented and logical form manifested and understood. Wittgenstein expressed this in the following paragraph:

> 4.121   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.

Wittgenstein's theory that the showing of logical
form is the condition for the possibility of saying some-
thing leads to the conclusion that in every proposition
logical form is manifested and seen. Everyone who under-
stands language knows _a priori_ logical form, manifests
it and understands its manifestations in the human produc-
tion of sign-facts. This view of the _Tractatus_ demon-
strates that it is correct to say that Wittgenstein was
not interested in any kind of re-construction of language,
but only in arguing for the legitimacy of language
itself, which is in its totality ordinary language. This
is expressed in his rejoinder to Frege in the _Tractatus_:

> 5.4733   Frege says that any legitimately con-
> structed proposition must have a sense.
> And I say that any possible proposition
> is legitimately constructed. . . .

Every possible proposition is legitimately constructed
because it is conditioned by and manifests logical form.
Logical form is hidden, one could say, because it cannot
be represented by any sign. It is not a combination of
objects and therefore it is not a fact. It is _not_

something in the world. However, this is not something

which is transcendent, and out of the world. It is

already and always known, manifested and seen for it

conditions and makes possible the construction of every

sign-fact.

D. The Autonomy of Logic

Wittgenstein's argument for showing and saying

leads to the conclusion that logical form is transcendental

and autonomous.[40] Because it is the necessary condition

for the agreement of language and reality, logical form

is not itself a particular occurrence in the world, neither

an occurrence in language nor an occurrence in extra-

linguistic reality. Yet Wittgenstein says that objects

contain logical form. This assertion is balanced by his

statement that objects are simple,(2.02) and so it is

not to be understood as a complexity in the object. He

identifies logical form with the internal properties of

an object. These properties are the possibilities for

combination which constitute the essential nature of the

object. If objects contain logical form, then the sum

total of objects determines the sum total of possible

states of the world. Consequently, logical form, in the

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[40]The autonomy of logic finds a clear and brief
description in Black, op. cit., p. 272, quoted above p. 12.

Tractarian theory, does not determine <u>how</u> objects are

combined at any particular time. How things stand in the

world is completely accidental according to Wittgenstein.

(6.41) Logical form only determines <u>what</u> possibilities

there   are, not <u>how</u> these possibilities are realized.

The logical form of the totality of objects is the limit

of possible states of the world. The totality of objects,

then, is the limit of the content and the form of the

world. The implications of this theory begin to appear

in Wittgenstein's following remark:

> 5.552   The 'experience' that we need in order
> to understand logic is not that something
> or the other is the state of things, but
> that something <u>is</u>: that, however, is <u>not</u>
> an experience. Logic is prior to every
> experience--that somthing <u>is so</u>.
>   It is prior to the question 'How?',
> not prior to the question 'What?'

Logic is not prior to the question 'What?' because

what there is, is objects, and objects contain the possi-

bilities of all situations. These possibilities are the

logical form of reality. Thus Wittgenstein says:

> 5.5561   Empirical reality is limited by the
> totality of objects. The limit also makes
> itself manifest in the totality of
> elementary propositions.

> 5.61   Logic pervades the world: the limits
> of the world are also its limits.

Since Wittgenstein argues that logical form is

essentially bound to objects and limited by what objects

there are, in order to understand his philosophy of the autonomy and transcendental nature of logic it is necessary to understand his argument for the independence of objects. It is at this point that Wittgenstein's ontology becomes important for understanding his philosophy of logical form. He says that logical form is the sum total of possibilities of an object's combinations with other objects. Objects, then, are essentially directed toward combinations with other objects. The totality of these combinatory possibilities is the essence of the object. As Wittgenstein says:

> 2.011   It is essential to things that they should be possible constituents of atomic facts.

There is a sense, though, in which Wittgenstein argues that objects are independent of how they are combined. This independence is understood in the Tractatus in terms of the possibiliteis for combination inherent in the objects. Because an object can occur in any of the combinations which are possible for it, it is not necessarily directed toward any particular combination. What is necessary is that an object must be in some combination, but not that it must be in a particular combination. This kind of independence is stated by Wittgenstein in the following paragraph:

> 2.0122   Things are independent in so far as
> they can occur in all _possible_ situations,
> but this form of independence is a form
> of connection with atomic facts, a form
> of dependence.

Logical form as the possibility of combination, though

limited by the totality of objects, is not directed

toward any particular state of the world. Rather it is

the necessary condition for every particular state of the

world. Thus Wittgenstein says:

> 2.022   It is obvious that an imagined world,
> however different it may be from the real
> one, must have _something--a form--_in
> common with it.

> 2.023   Objects are just what constitute this
> unalterable form.

Logical form is said to be unalterable because it is the

possibility of all states of the world, and not simply

this or that occurrence in the world. It is prior to all

that occurs as the condition for the possibility of every

occurrence. Objects, which contain the form of reality,

and which are independent of any particular state of the

world, contain within themselves the unchangeable conditions

for all change. Objects are, according to Wittgenstein's

theory, the substance of the world. These ideas are

expressed in the following argument:

> 2.021   Objects make up the substance of
> the world. That is why they cannot be
> composite.

2.024   Substance is what subsists indepen-
dently of what is the case.

2.025   It is form and content.

2.026   There must be objects, if the world is
to have an unalterable form.

2.027   Objects, the unalterable, and the sub-
sistent are one and the same.

2.0271   Objects are what is unalterable and
subsistent; their configuration is what
is changing and unstable.

According to this argument, objects are identified

with substance, and substance with the form and content

of the world. The form of the world is the possibilities

for all structures of the world, and the content is that

which is structured into the world. The configuration,

or how the world is structured at any particular time, is

said to be unstable and changing, but the possibilities

of these or any other structures does not change, but is

the ground of any possible world. The logical form of

the world, then, is independent of how things stand.

It is autonomous because it is the prior and necessary

condition of reality. Though what there is sets the

limits of logical form, it is independent of how things

stand. Recalling that Wittgenstein also says the

logical form of reality is pervasive of the world,(5.61)

it becomes evident that he considers logical form to be

the transcendental ground which is immanent in every

occurrence. Thus, for example, if one says "Jones is in the hall", logical form is the transcendental principle of the structure of the sign-fact. That the human being who asserts this sign-fact already knows logical form enables him to construct this fact and project the possibility of Jones' presence in the hall. Because the logical form of those objects which may combine to form the fact of Jones' presence in the hall does not determine the occurrence of the fact, the proposition is understood independently of this occurrence. However the sense is understood by means of the proposition-fact which manifests its logical structural form through its very facticity. Consequently, one can only assert a fact's occurrence if one constructs a proposition-fact according to the logical principles of its constituents. In this way Wittgenstein argues that logical form is the limit of the possibilities of language as well as the world, for a person cannot utter words in just any combination and say something. So in this sense logical form is not only autonomous from how things stand, but also autonomous from human beings who must construct their propositions conditioned by it or else fail to make sense all together. That is, they will fail to project a possible situation.

This argument for the transcendence and autonomy of logical form is the basis for Wittgenstein's discussion

of logical propositions. These propositions, he says,
are tautologies and are thereby analytic propositions which
do not say anything.(6.1-6.11) By virtue of the particu-
lar combination of names which forms this kind of propo-
sition, they do not picture any possible occurrence in
the world, and therefore they are neither true nor false.
This means that these propositions in one sense fail to
be propositions, because a proposition is a combination
of names which depicts their sense, that is, a possible
situation. Yet Wittgenstein says these propositions are
not nonsense. A nonsense proposition is one that attempts
to assert the formal properties of language and the
world.(4.1272) A logical proposition is a legitimate
combination of names. Wittgenstein argues that their
unique position in language[41] has to do with their peculiar
feature of being empty of all content and without sense,
but yet showing the formal properties of language and the
world.(6.12)

   According to Wittgenstein's theory of logical
propositions one does not look to the world to see if the
propositions are true, but only to the structure of names

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[41]In one of his earliest attempts to set forth his
philosophy, in "Notes on Logic" written in 1913,
Wittgenstein says, "A correct explanation of the logical
propositions must give them a unique position as against
all other propositions." Notebooks, op. cit., p. 93.

which are combined to form these propositions.(6.113) He

says that in contrast to all other propositions which show

the logical form of the facts they represent,(4.023) the

propositions of logic show the logical form of their

constituents without picturing any fact. The projection

is, one might say, cancelled, and without saying anything

the proposition shows logical form in a direct and pure

manner.[42] These propositions, he says, ". . . demonstrate

the logical properties of propositions by combining them

so as to form propositions which say nothing."(6.121)

That is, the purpose of constructing these propositions

is not to depict some state of the world, but to show the

logical form of language and the world. Thus he says:

"The propositions of logic describe the scaffolding of

the world, or rather they represent it. They have no

'subject-matter'."(6.124) Since Wittgenstein has already

argued that every legitimate proposition shows the logical

form of language and reality, he indicates that logical

propositions are not needed, for it is already known.

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[42]See Fogelin, op. cit., p. 79 for a clear discus-
sion of the non-representational nature of logical propo-
sitions and the doctrine of showing. Fogelin says that
because the content of the logical proposition is cancelled
out, the form becomes manifest. "In the context of
Wittgenstein's theory of a three-fold parallelism between
language and reality, it follows at once that in manifesting
formal features of its own structure language is able to
manifest formal features of the world."

(4.1213, 6.122)

The basic point of Wittgenstein's discussion of these propositions is that they are legitimate constructions; they are propositions, but ones which are neither true or false; they cannot be confirmed or disconfirmed by experience;(6.1222) and their sole function is to show logical form. What has troubled commentators about this theory of logical propositions is Wittgenstein's claim that they not only show the logical form of language but also of the world.[43] That is, Wittgenstein's example, "Either it is raining or it is not raining"(4.461) does not say anything about the facts. It seems to be directed solely to showing the logical properties of language. It is not a proposition which says something about these properties, for according to Wittgenstein's 'fundamental idea',(4.0312, 5.4) there are no 'logical objects' and so there is no representation of the logic of facts. The

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[43]Black's attempt to find a way to make plausible Wittgenstein's claim that logical propositions show the logical structure of the world misses the key aspect that they presuppose that names mean objects. Since propositions are facts themselves, their own formal structure is the formal structure of reality. Black, op. cit., pp. 331-337. The way toward a solution is described by Fogelin, op. cit., p. 79, but as is typical with Fogelin's approach, he does not see that the three-fold parallelism that he finds in the Tractatus does deny a third man argument, but still presupposes that human beings use language to represent reality, but not as a third thing between language and reality.

example above shows the logic of 'either/or' and the logic of 'rain', but it does not say anything about logic or the weather. If these propositions make no reference to the world and are neither true or false, how can Wittgenstein say they represent or describe the scaffolding of the world?(6.124)[44] The solution to this problem resides in his statement that "they presuppose that names have meaning and elementary propositions sense; and that is their connexion with the world."(6.124)

As was demonstrated above, the meaning of a name is the object it represents, and through the judgment a *priori* of logical form, human beings are said to already know the logical properties of language and the world. The problem of the way in which logical propositions show the logical form of the world as well as language only arises if one supposes that Wittgenstein does not have an argument for the essential unity of language and reality. With this argument, though, one can see certain implications of his theory of logical propositions. Because logical form is transcendental and autonomous, logical propositions, which say nothing, are necessarily true because they show the logical form of the world which is

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[44] For a correct presentation of Wittgenstein's use of 'describe' and 'represent' as applied in 6.124 to logical propositions, see Fogelin, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

said to be unalterable and necessary. These propositions

cannot be construed as assertions because an assertion

has the distinct quality of being either true or false,

confirmable or disconfirmable by experience. Therefore

the attempt to assert these propositions would seem to be

an assertion of some necessary state of the world. If

the proposition is necessarily true and yet seems to be

an assertion about the world, this confusion would

result. Wittgenstein clearly states, however, that any

state of the world is accidental,(6.41) and the only

necessity is logical necessity.(6.375) He even goes so

far, as indicated above, as to say that the existence of

necessary propositions is not a necessary part of the

facts of language.(6.122) Wittgenstein does not say such

an assertion of a necessary proposition is nonsense.

Rather he says that if this is attempted, ". . . the

logical proposition acqures all the characteristics of a

proposition of natural science and this is the sure sign

that it has been construed wrongly."(6.111) I think

Wittgenstein hesitates to call the assertion of these

propositions nonsense because his theory is directed

toward the structural properties of propositions and not

to their uses. For this reason he can call the proposi-

tions, in which formal concepts are combined in such a way

as to appear to be real concepts, pseudo-propositions and
nonsense.(4.1272) They are nonsense because of a
structural failure. There is no structural failure in
asserting logical propositions, only a misunderstanding
of their nature. In his later work, he will change his
position on these two types of proposition by showing
that it is not the structure of the sentence which deter-
mines sense or nonsense but its use. Consequently, pseudo-
propositions will be said to have sense if they are used
in appropriate circumstances, but nonsense if they have
no use. The same will be said of logical propositions.
This will be discussed in the following chapter. Here I
think it is not against the thought of the Tractatus to
say that the misunderstanding of the logic of logical
propositions results in nonsense, for the attempt to
assert them transgresses the limits of language.[45]

E.   The Human Being

1.   The Transcendental Subject

It was said at the beginning of this chapter that
Wittgenstein's philosophy of language has implications

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[45]As Wittgenstein says in the Preface to the
Tractatus, p. 3: "It will therefore only be in language
that the limit can be set, and what lies on the other side
of the limit will simply be nonsense."

for understanding human existence. By drawing on the
arguments presented above, these implications can now be
given. The most basic implication is Wittgenstein's
statement that there is no such thing as the thinking
subject.(5.631) It is this statement which I will try to
clarify first.

Wittgenstein's statement that there is no such
thing as the thinking subject is based upon his argument
for the autonomy of logical form and the judgment a priori
of this ultimate condition for the possibility of language.
He ties this argument together by means of his theory of
the facticity of pictures, propositions and thoughts.
He says that thoughts are the activity of making pictures
to ourselves, and therefore that thoughts are facts in the
world:

> 2.1 We make pictures of facts to ourselves.
>
> 2.141 A picture is a fact.
>
> 3 A logical picture of facts is a thought.

According to the philosophy of the Tractatus, when a
human being hears or sees or feels something which func-
tions as a sign, he pictures to himself the situation
the signs represent. The thought or mental picture is
itself a fact and must be conditioned by logical form if
it is to have sense and project a possible situation.(3.11-
3.13) The human being who thinks the situation by making

a picture of it to himself must recognize whatever may happen psychologically as a representation of a possible situation. Consequently the mental event must point beyond itself. The person must understand the mental picture and compare it to extra-mental reality in order to determine whether or not it is true.

The question which Wittgenstein's account of thought as picturing raises is this: how does one know how one is to compare the mental picture to reality? Wittgenstein ties pictures, thoughts and propositions together on the same plane, and in his argument thought-pictures have no priority in terms of understanding the sense of the sign-fact. The implications of this argument lead to the conclusion that he does not concern himself with the psychological elements of thought, for these are simply facts in the world.[46] On the one hand this demonstrates that the Tractatus is not an epistemology. (4.1121) Wittgenstein argues that thoughts have the same status as any form of sign-fact, and as such they must manifest logical form and be understood.

Wittgenstein's theory of the logic of depiction

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[46] For the interpretation that the psychological elements of thoughts are the endpoint of Wittgenstein's philosophy, see Kenny, op. cit., pp. 56 and 64.

provides a means for understanding what makes a mental

picture a thought such that a human being understands the

picture as a projection of a possible situation.

Thinking, he says, is projecting a possible situation.(3.11)

In order to think one must already know the logical form

of the objects. This knowledge of logical form is prior

to both the mental picture and that which is pictured.

It is that by which one understands both the picture and

the situation, and so it entails what may be called a

projection. It is, so to speak, the light which illumines

the mind and the world, as the eye and world are illumined

for sight.[47] Therefore the subject which thinks by virtue

of the knowledge of logical form is not a third thing

between language and the world, because language and

thought are in and of the world. Rather, the subject is

one with logical form as the transcendental ground of

language, thought and the world. According to this theory,

psychology and physiology cannot discover how the human

being is able to use signs to project possible situations.

Whatever a natural science can find will simply be facts,

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[47]This interpretation does present the subject who
judges logical form as a third thing, but since this
third thing is transcendental and at the basis of language
and not distinct from language-facts, Wittgenstein is able
to posit it, but then argue that it exists in the produc-
tion of the sign-fact, and not as something behind it or
between it.

and what enables a fact to represent another fact cannot
itself be a fact. In this sense the thinking subject
is not a third thing, for it is not a thing at all.
Wittgenstein follows the force of his argument when he
says the subject does not exist, in the same way he con-
cludes that logical form does not exist.(2.172, 4.12,
4.121)

In the argument of the Tractatus for the condi-
tions for the possibility of sense, Wittgenstein precludes
the facticity of the subject which know a priori logical
form. The projection of the mental pictures which human
beings make to themselves, and which is called under-
standing, is not simply the psychological event, but the
event conditioned by logical form. Therefore, Wittgenstein
argues that all there is in the world are facts.(1.1)
Whatever might be called mental events, thoughts, ideas
or concepts are also facts. However, some facts are pro-
jections of other facts. That which makes some facts as
representations of other facts has no empirical existence
and therefore is in no empirical relationship to any
facts. This is one implication which Wittgenstein intends
to show in the following discussion:

> 5.541 . . . 'A believes that p is the case'
> and 'A has the thought p', etc.
> . . . if these are considered superfi-
> cially, it looks as if the proposition p
> stood in some kind of relation to an object
> A.

5.542   It is clear, however, that 'A believes
that p', 'A has the thought p', and 'A says
p' are of the form '"p" says p': and this
does not involve a correlation of a fact
with an object, but rather the correlation
of facts by means of the correlation of
their objects.

5.5421   This shows too that there is no such
thing as the soul--the subject, etc.--as
it is conceived in the superficial
psychology of the present day.
Indeed a composite soul would no longer
be a soul.

'A has the thought p' is a correlation of the thought "p"

with the fact p by means of the correlation of their con-

stituent elements. Since there is no third thing which

correlates these two facts, there is no such thing as a

soul which exists as a factual entity in the world.

According to Wittgenstein it has no existence in the world

at all. Thus he describes this in the following way:

5.631   There is no such thing as the subject
that thinks or entertains ideas.
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.--

5.633   Where in the world is a metaphysical
subject to be found?
You will say that this is exactly like
the case of the eye and the visual field.
But really you do not see the eye.
And nothing in the visual field allows
you to infer that it is seen by an eye.

Wittgenstein has argued that propositions manifest

their sense, and that understanding a proposition is

seeing in the proposition-fact the projection of the

logical structure of another fact. The one who sees and

understands the sense of a proposition is not something

in the world. He says, <u>that</u> "p" is a fact says <u>that</u> p is

the case. One cannot produce a proposition which <u>says</u>

anything about the subject which produces the propositions.

However, that language is produced <u>shows</u> the metaphysical

subject which is the transcendental limit of language and

the world. It is this subject with which philosophy is

concerned according to Wittgenstein:

> 4.113   Philosophy sets limits to the much
>   disputed sphere of natural science.

> 4.114   It must set limits to what can be
>   thought; and, in doing so, to what cannot
>   be thought.

> 4.115   It will signify what cannot be said,
>   by presenting clearly what can be said.

> 5.641   Thus there really is a sense in which
>   philosophy can talk about the self in a
>   non-psychological way.
>   What brings the self into philosophy
>   is that 'the world is my world'.

By arguing the thinking subject out of the world,

Wittgenstein does not imply that pictures, thoughts and

propositions, by being factual can thereby be explained by

natural science. His deduction leads to the conclusion

that these facts must be conditioned by the metaphysical

subject which knows a priori logical form. In this way

he argues for a philosophical view of the subject as the

transcendental ground of an intelligible world. Since

the subject can produce propositions to depict any possible

combination of objects, the limit of language is co-

extensive with the limit of the world, and the limit is

the subject who already knows logical form. As Wittgenstein

says:

> 5.6   The limits of my language mean the
>   limits of my world.

> 5.632   The subject does not belong to the
>   world: rather, it is a limit of the world.

The thinking subject is limited by logical form which it

knows transcendentally. Logical form, which is the sum

total of possibilities for combination of objects, is

limited by what objects there are. Therefore, the subject

is one with logical form and a limit of the world. Since

it understands the structural principles of the world and

can represent the world in any of its possible states, the

subject is the intelligible light of the world. For this

reason, Wittgenstein makes the following statements:

> 5.621   The world and life are one.

> 5.63   I am my world.

Do these remarks force Wittgenstein into the

solipsist's position? He affirms that the solipsist is

trying to express something which is correct, and he

believes that his philosophy is able to substantiate that

which is correct in the solipsist's position.

> 5.62   This remark[48] 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 that the limits *of that* language (of
> that language which *alone* I understand)
> mean the limits of *my* world.[49]

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[48]In Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Proto-Tractatus*, ed. B. F.
McGuinness, T. Nyberg and G. H. von Wright, trans. D. F.
Pears and B. F. McGuinness (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ.
Press, 1971), what is now 5.62 immediately follows 5.6,
and the reference to "This remark" which provides the key
to solipsism is clearly 5.6 which equates the limits of
one's language to the limits of one's world.

[49]I translate the *der* which precedes the *Sprache*
which precedes the parentheses as "of that". It obviously
parallels the *der* in the parentheses, and in the German
text it is the *der* which is italicized, not *Sprache*. This
der which is italicized is equated to the *meiner* of 5.6.
In this way Wittgenstein's remark about solipsism is an
attempt to show how the *personal* knowledge of language is
capable of individualizing the human being. As he says in
Notebooks, p. 89: "Is not *my* world adequate for individu-
ation?" Wittgenstein's philosophy drives toward the limits
of the world and language in such a way that one could
almost think of a 'world-soul' which knows logical form.
There is a move toward a 'double-God-head' (*Notebooks*,
p. 74) in that logical form is independent of the human
thinking subject. However, this only results in a form
of idealism. The personal knowledge of logical form which
enables *me* to construct *this* sign-fact moves away from
idealism (an idealism which guarantees that human beings
share a common world and an essentially common language)
to a realism without negating the truths of solipsism.
Thus, the realism consists in the individuation of human
beings who say this and that to each other and form a
single language-group.

The solipsist cannot say what he means, according to
Wittgenstein, because the subject is not a fact which can
be depicted. However, there is a stronger attack on the
solipsist position in the Tractatus which demonstrates
that Wittgenstein was not what might be called a tra-
ditional solipsist. By traditional solipsism, I would
understand the philosophical position which contends that
the world is a construct of my mind, and therefore the
world's soul is my soul.

The proof that Wittgenstein's philosophy does not
lead to solipsism is found in his argument for the autonomy
of logical form. Though logical form is limited by
what objects there are, it is independent of how things
stand. Secondly, since logical form is contained by
objects, it is independent of the human being who judges
it. The subject becomes united with logical form in a
transcendental manner, but it is clear that in Wittgenstein's
philosophy logical form is not the construction of the meta-
physical subject, but that which the metaphysical subject
must be in harmony with in order to be a subject at all.
Logical form is not the subject, though it is the neces-
sary condition for the subject to be the transcendental
limit of language and the world. That logical form is the
form of reality by which the subject's linguistic produc-
tions are conditioned does not imply that there can be

only one subject, but establishes the objectivity of language and the world such that any and all subjects must act in harmony with the structural principles of the world for sense to be achieved.[50]

In Wittgenstein's philosophy the subject drops out of consideration in the determination of sense. One must compare the proposition with reality to determine truth or falsity. Thinking does not establish truth, nor does it create a world. Sense, according to this theory, is independent of the thinking subject and its intentionality. One can intend to say only what can be said, and one can interpret what is said only within the limits of possible propositions. The subject, then, is the limit of the world, but this also means that the subject is limited by the world and must construct languages conditioned by logical form, the form of the world.

This argument enables Wittgenstein to substantiate the solipsist's position and yet at the same time undercut it. He substantiates it by showing that the

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[50]This comment on the independence of logical form is the sense in which one can understand Wittgenstein's remarks on the double-God-head. However, the arbitrariness of the present structure of the world, which in the Notebooks Wittgenstein speaks of as fate (p. 74), is a more concrete expression of this other God-head, though one must consider that logical form is the limit of the possibilities of the world, and so manifested in this structure also.

subject is not something distinct from the world in isolation from objective reality and other subjects. Thus he says his philosophy is not only able to support the meaning of solipsism, but is consistent with pure realism as well:

> 5.64   Here it can be seen 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 co-ordinated with it.

That reality is co-ordinated with the thinking subject means that the world is my world. Yet because the I drops out of consideration in the determination of sense, the world and language have their own harmonious, objective facticity which can be shared by all who use signs to express themselves.

2.   The Transcendental Agent

As stated above, Wittgenstein's theory of the subject concerns not only thought, but also action. Wittgenstein says that human beings construct pictures and propositions from material reality in order to project a possible situation. A picture is not something which merely happens in the world but is a sign produced by an intentional being for the purpose of saying something. Saying, then, is an activity. The determination of the

truth or falsity of what is said is also an activity

according to this theory. A person must compare the sign

with the world in order to see if what is said actually

occurs. Though Wittgenstein merely alludes to the will

and to the subject as agent, I think it can be demonstrated

that his philosophy assumes that the linguistic produc-

tions of human beings should be thought of in terms of

the will, and that his philosophy demonstrates a particular

view of human freedom.

In order to set forth this theory of human free-

dom, I will again refer back to the philosophy of language

which, so to speak, shows what it means to act in the

world. On the one hand, Wittgenstein argues that the

subject constructs a proposition independently of the fact

which it represents. Since sense is independent of how

things stand, and a proposition can be either true or

false, a proposition's existence is not determined by any

facts in the world, but solely by the intentional act of

the subject. Consequently, since propositions can depict

any and all possible states of the world, the subject is

free to construct any proposition within the limits of

possible combinations of objects. The subject is limited

in its linguistic abilities only by what there is, which

is the limit of any possible world; or said differently,

the subject is limited by logical form. The limit of
the subject's possibilities for producing language,
Wittgenstein argues, are co-extensive with the limits of
the world's possibilities.(5.6) Freedom, according to
this theory, is limited by logical form. But this is not
so much a limit according to the Tractatus, as the con-
dition for the very possibility of freedom at all. To
put it in a negative way, if a human being produces names
in combinations which do not form a structured fact
because the supposed combinations are not in harmony with
the logical form of the names, nonsense results and
nothing is said. This means that logical form is not
conditioning these combinations. Sense is not manifested
and nothing is said, i.e. nothing is done linguistically.
According to Wittgenstein's theory it is only when one
constructs logical pictures that one acts linguistically,
and thereby acts in freedom.

Wittgenstein also comes at the freedom of the
subject through his argument that how things stand in the
world at any particular moment is accidental. This con-
clusion is based upon his requirement that sense must be
determinate. He says that analysis of propositions must
bring one to elementary propositions which picture atomic
facts. That the represented fact is the case or not must
be capable of determination in order for a proposition to

be true or false.(4.27)   Therefore, one must be able to

isolate the atomic fact from the occurrence of all other

facts. For sense to be determinate, then, facts must be

independent of each other. If the occurrence of facts

are independent of each other, there cannot be an inner

causality which necessitates one thing to be the case

because another is the case. Wittgenstein expresses this

in the following way:

> 1.21   Each item can be the case or not the
>   case while everything else remains the same.
>
> 2.061   Atomic facts are independent of one
>   another.
>
> 2.062   From the existence or non-existence of
>   one atomic fact it is impossible to infer
>   the existence or non-existence of another.

Logical form is said to be the necessary condition of

every state of the world, but that how things stand at

any particular time is accidental. According to the

Tractatus one must look and see how things stand, and so

cannot infer that they stand in some particular way from

any prior occurrence. Wittgenstein says that the necessary

lies in the realm of logic, not in the realm of factual

occurrences. The logic of reality is unchangeable and

all pervasive, and therefore it is necessary. How things

stand is changeable and unstable.(2.0271)[51] Thus he says:

> 6.37   There is no compulsion making one thing
> happen because another has happened.
> The only necessity there is, is logical
> necessity.[52]

> 6.375   Just as there is only _logical_
> necessity so too there is _only_ _logical_
> impossibility.[53]

Things can only combine, Wittgenstein theorizes, according

to the possibilities which constitute their form. The

logic of their combinations is necessary and unchangeable,

but what combinations they are in is accidental. This

argument is supported by the argument for the independence

of objects as discussed above. The implications of this

is that as far as human beings are able to know, the future

is open and undetermined. The human being can know that

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[51]Fogelin correctly remarks that throughout his
philosophical career, Wittgenstein was committed to the
radical contingency of the world. (Fogelin, _op._ _cit._, p.135,
quoted above, p. 16 .) This radical contingency of the
world is Wittgenstein's opening for a philosophy of human
freedom, a philosophy which, as I will argue in this
essay, is pursued in both periods of his philosophical
life. The question is what are the limits to freedom, and
in both periods, the limits of freedom are the limits of
sense, and the limits of sense are those necessary require-
ments which make freedom possible. Therefore, the radical
contingency of the world does not present a case for what
might be called an ungrounded freedom of man, but rather
for a ground which makes freedom possible at all.

[52]My translation.

[53]My translation.

such-and-such is a possibility, and that such-and-such is

the case, but not that such-and-such will occur. The

facts, then, are contingent, but according to Wittgenstein,

logic is necessary.

> 4.464   A tautology's truth is certain, a pro-
> postion's possible, a contradiction's
> impossible.

Tautologies, the propositions of logic,(6.1) are

said to be necessarily true. Their truth is necessary

because these propositions do not have content and do not

conflict with any possible situation, yet are legiti-

mately constructed. They are propositions because they

show, but do not say, the logical form of the world.

These propositions are said to be related to the world

through their names which represent objects: "They pre-

suppose that names have meaning and elementary proposi-

tions sense; and that is their connexion with the world."

(6.124) Though these propositions are necessarily true,

nothing about the contingent possibilities of the structure

of the world can be inferred from their truth. That is,

the truth of the proposition, "Either it is raining or it

is not raining" does not tell one anything about the

weather. Since this kind of proposition is the only

necessity in the world, there is nothing in the world by

which the occurrence of events can be foreknown. There-

fore, the contingency of the world is affirmed at the basis

of Wittgenstein's philosophy. However, since the future

is open, and since human beings are the source of the

occurrence of proposition-facts, this leads to the conclu-

sion that the human being is free to act in the world.

> 5.1361   We cannot infer the events of the
> future from those of the present.
>   Belief in the causal nexus is super-
> stition.

> 5.1362   The freedom of the will consists in the
> impossibility of knowing actions that
> still lie in the future.

Wittgenstein argues that the thinking subject is

an agent, and that because it is not bound to how things

stand, it has the possibility of producing propositions

which can depict the world in any of its possible states.

Since the way things are structured at any particular time

is not determined by any necessity in the facts,

Wittgenstein argues that the future is open and the agent

is free to act linguistically. The only necessary

condition for linguistic action is logical form. The

thinking subject must say something in order to do some-

thing linguistically. As the limit of the world, the

subject stands, so to speak, between the necessity of

what there is in the world and the possibilities of how

things can be structured in the world. To produce a

proposition or thought is to do something in the world.

Though the subject does not have factual existence,

Wittgenstein argues that as the transcendental ground of language it has a foothold in the world through the production of signs. In this way the subject acts in the world but is not something in the world. That a proposition is produced which makes sense shows that it is produced by the subject.(4.121)

The nature of this foothold in the world of the subject according to Wittgenstein's philosophy precludes understanding it as a relation between the subject and the world. He has argued that the world is all that is the case. He has also argued that there is no 'outside' the world.(1) The only necessity is logical necessity which is simply the formal properties of the logical propositions and the world. Outside of logical necessity, there is no other necessity. For this reason, Wittgenstein says that the world is independent of the subject's will, (6.373) and that ". . . there is no logical connection between the will and the world."(6.374) It seems to me that Wittgenstein argues against a concept of the subject which would posit it as an object of some kind which is related to the world (perhaps to this body in the world). Logical connections are internal relations between objects, and since the subject is not an object, there is no logical relation between the willing subject and the world.

If there is no connection between the will and the world,
in what sense can Wittgenstein argue that a proposition
is produced by the subject? How can the subject make
pictures to itself if there is no thinking subject?
And if there is no connection between what happens (a pic-
ture is an occurrence) and what is willed, how can the
subject be the source of the picture? If the subject
cannot determine that something will happen in the world
because of its willing, then it does not make sense to
say that the subject wills.

I think Wittgenstein agrees with this implication
of his theory. Because the world is independent of the
willing subject, he says that everything happens as it does
happen, and that there is nothing in the world which is
of greater or lesser value. Since there is no connection
between what is willed and what happens, there can be no
ethical evaluation of actions.[54] Since everything simply

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[54]Wittgenstein's argument that there can be no
ethical propositions and no ethical evaluation of actions
means that his theory of ethics has nothing to do with
the observance or non-observance of some kind of rule for
behaviour. Also, since ethics is not something, there
can be no 'knowledge' or 'intuition' in ethics. There are
no ethical truths according to this theory. However, I
will try to show in this argument that since human actions
are facts, and since these action-facts must be condi-
tioned by logical-ethical form for them to be human actions,
there emerges from Wittgenstein's philosophy a unique kind
of 'natural law' ethics, though one of a transcendental

is as it is, there can be no aesthetical evaluations.

Propositions can only say that this is how things stand.

(4.5) According to Wittgenstein it is nonsense, therefore,

to say that this is better or worse than that, just as

it is nonsense to say the "p" is more true than "q".

A proposition is either true or false. These ideas find

expression in the following remarks:

> 6.4   All propositions are of equal value.

> 6.41   . . . . In the world everything is as
> it is, and everything happens as it does
> happen: in it there is no value--and
> if there were, it would have no value.[55]

> 6.42   And so it is impossible for there to
> be propositions of ethics.
> Propositions can express nothing that
> is higher.

> 6.432   How things are in the world is a matter
> of complete indifference for what is
> higher. God does not reveal himself in
> the world.

Though Wittgenstein denies the existence of the

thinking agent, and says the world is independent of the

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kind. That is, to act ethically is to act in the real
world in harmony with its formal principles, and therefore
to be in harmony with 'nature'. What it means to be in
harmony with nature cannot be said, for the formal prin-
ciples of nature are also the formal principles of sign-
facts, and so they are the principle of saying. Though
Wittgenstein presents a philosophy which affirms a
'natural law', he also affirms that this law is manifested,
but not something to be explicated or represented in and
by language.

[55]My translation.

will, I think his philosophy provdes a deeper solution

to the problem of the nature of the subject who wills the

production of language. First of all, he has said that

the logical picture of a fact is a thought. Therefore,

he says thinking is picturing. Pictures are made and

so picturing is doing. Thinking is making pictures. For

a thought to be produced, there must be the transcendental

conditions. Thinking shows a transcendental basis for

thought and the world. These conditions are not thought

of as something which is related to what happens (the

picture-thought). Thinking and doing are not in one

realm of reality and propositions in another with a rela-

tion between them. Wittgenstein argues that there are

not two things happening in the production of proposi-

tions. To interpret his theory as if thinking were one

thing and the picture another, that willing were one

thing and the action another, is mistaken. For example,

in his Notebooks he says:

> 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. One cannot will without acting. If the will
> has to have an object in the world, the object can be
> the intended action itself. And the will does have
> to have an object. Otherwise we should have no foot-
> hold and could not know what we willed. And could
> not will different things. . . . . 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.[56]

Wittgenstein thinks his philosophy coincides with
a pure realism,(5.64) for he argues that the necessary
conditions for language and reality are not facts, though
they are contained in the objects and facts and are
shown in the occurrence of sign-facts. The picture
contains pictorial form, which is how it reaches out to
reality to depict it.(2.1511) That a sign is a sign, a
proposition a proposition, shows that it has sense, and
thereby shows that it is constructed by the thinking agent.
Therefore the transcendental is not related to reality,
for there is only reality. Thought is the logical picture
and will is the action.

With this conclusion, Wittgenstein implies that
the will is the present action, and since there is no
necessity connecting one event with another, freedom of
the will means not knowing actions which have not yet
happened.(5.1362) Also, what happens as a temporal conse-
quence of one's actions cannot be determined. A person
does one thing, and everything else happens as it does:

> 1.21 Each item can be the case or not the
> case while everything else remains the same.

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[56]Notebooks, pp. 87-88.

It is in this sense that Wittgenstein says the world is
independent of the will. The will is the present action
conditioned by the subject which knows logical form, and
there is no logical connection between the willed action
and any other fact. Wittgenstein says, therefore, that
there can be no ethical propositions because there is
simply the action. Nor can there be ethical reward or
punishment which follows from the action, because nothing
follows from anything else.(6.422)

Though Wittgenstein argues against any possibility
of ethical propositions which would guide the agent in
his actions, he does affirm what might be called a transcen-
dental ethics. He draws out the implications of such an
ethics from his philosophy of language. This ethics
concerns not the facts or what facts follow from other
facts (for he says that none do), nor does it concern
propositions and their content. It concerns the subject
as the limit of the world and language. He says:

> 6.421   It is clear that ethics cannot be put
> into words.
> Ethics is transcendental.

> 6.522   There are, indeed, things that cannot
> be put into words. They make themselves
> manifest. They are what is mystical.

Wittgenstein's ethical theory is about the transcen-
dental agent which is manifested in the present action.

He affirms that there is that which is manifested which
cannot be said. This has to do with the subject which is
the "bearer of the ethical."(6.423) He says that if there
is the ethical, it must have to do with reward and punish-
ment.(6.422) He has already argued that this reward and
punishment cannot be something which follows from the
action, so he says that it ". . . must reside in the
action itself."(6.422) This statement can be understood
in terms of his philosophy of showing. He demonstrated
that if one utters words which cannot fit together to form
a logical structure, logical form is not manifested, and
sense is not communicated. Only nonsense results from
words put together in uncombinable ways. Since in such
a case a proposition-fact is not produced, nothing is
shown. Therefore nothing is thought or understood.
Following from this, one could say that the subject has
not willed a thought and so has not done anything linguis-
tically. One might say that according to Wittgenstein
the reward for producing the proposition is sense, and
the punishment for not producing a proposition is nonsense.
In the former the subject shows itself conditioning the
thought produced and in the latter nothing is shown for
nothing is said. Therefore when nonsense occurs, the
transcendental subject as the ground of language is not

shown, for it is not doing anything as the necessary condition for sense.

However, even nonsense is a factual occurrence in the world. What is altered, then, is not the world, but the limits of the world. What occurs in the world is simply what happens, even if it is a nonsense string of words. The occurrence of nonsense can alter only the transcendental subject which is only manifested in the production of propositions which have sense. This argument is not limited to linguistic kinds of action, but applies also to other actions. Wittgenstein's argument implies that for any action to be ethical, it must be conditioned by the form of reality which the subject bears. In this sense, logical form and ethical form are one: "Ethics must be a condition of the world, like logic."[57] Thus, every action of the willing subject manifests the form of reality and the transcendental subject, for such an action is willed and is in harmony with the world. He says:

> 6.43   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

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[57]*Ibid.*, p. 77.

whole.

    The world of the happy man is a different
one from that of the unhappy man.

According to this theory the bad exercise of the

will which is punished in the action itself is the <u>failure</u>

<u>to</u> <u>act</u> <u>at</u> <u>all</u> because one fails to act conditioned by the

form of reality.[58] A human being fails to manifest the

transcendental conditions of reality in a bad exercise

of the will, and one could say the occurrence which is not

so conditioned through the willing subject does not make

sense. Yet it does happen in the world, and is a fact

of some kind. That it is not conditioned by the limit of

the world means that the world wanes and the subject has

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[58]The concept of willing in the <u>Tractatus</u>is inter-
nally related to the concept of reward and punishment.
It seems on the surface that Wittgenstein does not offer
any guidelines for good and bad behaviour, and for this
reason one can perhaps understand the hedonism in the
interpretation offered by John Moran, <u>Toward the World and</u>
<u>Wisdom of Wittgenstein's 'Tractatus'</u> (The Hague, Paris:
Mouton, 1973), pp. 41-42: "The insistence upon reward
and punishment as crucial to ethics, in itself under-
scores the atomistic, individualistic side of Wittgenstein's
wisdom. The 'usual sense' of reward and punishment seem
to involve someone doing something to someone else, an
external event applying to an isolated, but empirical
individual or group. . . . . About the closest one can
come to making straightforward sense of the proposal that
the reward lies in the action is that we should do only
what we enjoy doing. . . ." First of all, Wittgenstein's
philosophy does not argue for the atomism of individual
human beings, but if anything struggles for a way to argue
for individuation in face of the temptation to idealism.
(See above, note 47, p. 150.) The concept that reward and
punishment reside in the act itself plainly argues for a
form of resignation which puts me in harmony with the world
as it is, and not toward personal 'enjoyment'.

lost its foothold in the world and is not the action

itself. The happy man, on the other hand acts conditioned

by the transcendental, eternal forms of reality, and

therefore acts in view of the world as a whole, and as

the limit of the whole. The action is done sub specie

aeterni, and not in view of any particular facts in the

world. Thus he says:

> 6.4311   If we take eternity to mean not infi-
> nite temporal duration but timelessness,
> then eternal life belongs to those who
> live in the present.

Wittgenstein argues that it is the present action

in which the subject as the limit of the world is mani-

fested, and that the subject does not exist as something

independent of the action. To act in the present is to

produce a fact which manifests the eternal conditions of

reality, i.e. logical-ethical form. In this way

Wittgenstein argues that the subject who bears the form

of reality and is the limit of the world lives in and is

manifested in this act. In this way the world waxes

and the subject has an eternal life. Thus Wittgenstein's

philosophy imples an ethics which does not have to do with

some other-worldly activity of the subject.[59] The subject

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[59]The most usual interpretation of the ethical sub-
ject is to argue that it is radically individualistic
(Janik and Toulmin, op. cit., p. 235); and because the
ethical is 'unsayable', to argue that Wittgenstein placed

is either the agent who acts in the present or it is not

at all. It is either conditioning this action-fact in

the present moment or it is not. It either has eternal

life and is free to produce the fact or else it has no

freedom and something else just happens in the world

without the subject as the transcendental source of this

fact.

Wittgenstein's ethics concerns the world as a whole

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it outside the world (Pears, op. cit., p. 91). With an
individualistic and other-worldly interpretation of the
ethical subject, the standard interpretation of
Wittgenstein's ethics has been to see the ethical man as
pessimistic and resigned to the fates which press upon him
(Zemach, op. cit., pp. 52-53). The 'happy man' who acts
in harmony with the world is correctly said to have an
attitude of resignation as stated in McGuinness, op. cit.,
p. 317, but to end at this interpretation is to raise the
concept of 'fate' beyond the role it has in Wittgenstein's
philosophy. This philosophy is not and amor fati of
Spinoza or a pessimism of Schopenhauer. Rather,
Wittgenstein must be understood in terms of his philosophy
of language where the production of a sign-fact achieves
the showing of sense. The individual must act in the
present moment because in this moment the world finds a
particular structure which actualizes one possibility of
logical form. The human being is something in the world,
and therefore will be part of the total structure. How-
ever, Wittgenstein argues that the human being is free
to act and so faces a task set by the world.(6.4321) To
act in freedom in harmony with the world does not mean
resignation, but rather it means decision. It is the
enacting of a life which makes sense and shows the sense
which life has in the world. This is the resignation of
the Tractatus: in order to act at all and not to be
carried away by the passing moments of the changing and
unstable structures of the world, one must act in harmony
with the form of the world. This is the ethical. In
this action one is 'happy', for one is the source of
one's actions and acts in harmony with the world in which
one lives.

limited by the transcendental subject which knows <u>a priori</u>

the form of reality. Conditioning the action-fact, the

subject acts in view of the whole and thereby is one with

the whole,(5.63) and in this way the whole is the life

of the subject.(6.621) Thus freedom and eternal life is

living <u>sub specie aeterni</u>:

> 6.45   To view the world <u>sub specie aeterni</u>
> is to view it as a whole--a limited whole.
> Feeling the world as a limited whole--
> it is this that is mystical.

Since Wittgenstein argues that language cannot

speak about that which enables language to say something

at all, he concludes that one cannot speak about the will

as the bearer of the ethical. Since the ethical is tran-

scendental, Wittgenstein says that the meaning of life,

and therefore the meaning of the world, cannot be said,

but shows itself.

> 6.41   The sense of the world must lie outside
> the world.

> 6.521   The solution of the problem of life is
> seen in the vanishing of the problem.
> (Is not this the reason why those who
> have found after a long period of doubt
> that the sense of life became clear to
> them have then been unable to say what
> constituted that sense?)

Sense, according to the <u>Tractatus</u>, is the situation

represented by a proposition. It has form and content.

The content is the combination of objects and the form

is the structural principle which is the possibility of

this combination. He says the world also has sense. If

so, the sense of the world has form and content. The con-

tent of the world is how things stand. The form of the

world is logical form which is the possibility of every

state of the world. Seeing the world as a whole is to see

the logical form of the world which is necessary, eternal

and unchanging. It is logical form, and it is ethical

form, and if one may extend his terminology, it is aesthe-

tical form,(6.421) and these are one in their transcen-

dental nature. In this way Wittgenstein has argued to a

conclusion which is in harmony with the Western philo-

sophical tradition. His philosophy is about the one, true,

good and beautiful, which is the eternal and necessary

ground of human life and the world. To act in harmony

with the form of the world is to be one with it.(5.621)

The solution to the problem of life is seen in the

vanishing of the problem, because one sees the whole and

thereby sees the sense of the whole, i.e. the form of

the whole. To act in harmony with the world is freedom,

it is sense and it is happiness.

> 6.44   It is not _how_ the world is that is the
>   mystical, but _that_ it is.

Form cannot be said, but shows itself. Therefore,

Wittgenstein ends his book with the statement:

> 7   What we cannot speak about we must pass
>   over in silence.

F. Conclusion

This interpretation of Wittgenstein's <u>Tractatus</u>
binds the ethical-religious remarks with which he
concludes to his argument for the transcendental conditions
of language. The 'mysticism' which emerges from this
philosophy is a view of human life in the world.
Wittgenstein argues for what he calls an 'eternal life'
which belongs to those who freely act in the present in
harmony with the world. In the following chapter I will
use this Tractarian philosophy as a basis for interpreting
the <u>Philosophical Investigations</u>. I will demonstrate a
fundamental continuity between the two works in terms
of this ethical-religious view of human life.

CHAPTER V

PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS

Introduction

In this chapter I will engage the thought of the
'Wittgensteinian Fideists' with an investigation of the
later philosophy of Wittgenstein. This investigation
will take its questions from the problems set by those
who argue that language is autonomous from reality and it
will proceed with constant reference to the philosophy
of the Tractatus as presented in Chapter IV. In the
review of the position of the 'Fideists' in Part I of
this essay, attention was centered on two aspect of their
interpretation of Wittgenstein's later work. They
argued that Wittgenstein's philosophy supports the view
that language determines what is real and unreal and that
there are many forms of language each of which is inde-
pendent of every other form such that each determines a
unique view of reality.

    In section A of this chapter I discuss Wittgenstein's
use of the concepts of language-game, family resemblance
and grammatical proposition in order to present an
alternative interpretation of what he means by the phrase

179

'autonomy of grammar'. I contend that the concepts of
language-game and family resemblance do not have the
implication that language is divided into mutually exclu-
sive groups. Secondly I argue that Wittgenstein's use of
the phrase 'autonomy of grammar' does not imply that the
grammar of language provides an epistemologically prior
framework through which human beings view the real. I
think it can be shown that he uses this concept to
emphasize that grammatical propositions as distinct from
empirical propositions are not justified by reference to
some extra-linguistic reality because they are not used
to assert some possible occurrence, but only to demon-
strate how the words they contain are used.

In section B I discuss Wittgenstein's later
philosophy of the relationship of language and reality.
I argue that Wittgenstein carries over from his earlier
work the insight into the facticity of human linguistic
activities. In his later work Wittgenstein is not so
much concerned with epistemological questions as he is to
show what it means for human beings to use the factual
materials of the world to communicate with each other.
The facticity of the materials with which humans act
linguistically, and the facticity of these actions
themselves are illuminated by Wittgenstein's later
philosophy in such a way that their reality is seen to be

essentially one with all other factual reality. This
chapter, then, has the negative task of refuting the
'Wittgensteinian Fideists' interpretation of the P.I. and
demonstrating that their philosophy of religion is not
Wittgensteinian. It also has the positive task of
demonstrating a continuity between the Tractatus and the
P.I., and in so doing, providing a basis for presenting
the ethical-religious implications of Wittgenstein's
thought.

A. The Autonomy of Grammar

The autonomy of grammar can be approached in two
ways. There is the claim that language divides into a
multiplicity of autonomous forms. This concept of
autonomy lays emphasis on Wittgenstein's use of the
concepts of language-game and family resemblance. Briefly
stated, it is the interpretation of these concepts which
asserts that language-games are discrete atoms of language
each of which is governed by a grammar which functions
as the rules for correct linguistic use. The totality
of these language-games forms a family. The concept of
family resemblance is interpreted to mean that there is
no one language-game which functions as the essence of
language, just as there is no one use of the word 'game'
which corresponds to the essence of what game means.

Family resemblance is interpreted to mean that beyond the fact that all these language-games are instances of language, there is nothing common to them all, and their autonomy is not infringed by their being related, just as the individuality of a human being is not infringed by his being related to other human beings in a family.[1]

The second approach to the autonomy of language is the argument that grammatical propositions are arbitrary and autonomous because they cannot be justified by reference to the world. That is, grammatical propositions are those propositions which express the grammatical rules for correct linguistic use, and it is said that their truth is determined solely by reference to the use of words they govern and not by reference to any extra-linguistic facts. This implies that rules which govern and specify the way a language-game is played cannot be judged as correct or incorrect, true or false, and, therefore, language-games can only be played but not criticized. Language-games are rule-governed, but there

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[1] P. Lucier, "Le statut du langage religieux dans la philosophie de Ludwig Wittgenstein", Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses, 3 (1973), 14-28. Lucier is an example of one who interprets the concept of family resemblance to support an argument for a disrelation between language-games. His view that family relationships are at the most external leads him to assert that Wittgenstein thought language-games are autonomous from each other.

is no standpoint from which one can determine whether or
not the rules or grammar of a language-game offer a
more or less correct way of viewing reality. All one
can do is play a different language-game, but one cannot
make judgments about language-games as such.

In this section of this chapter I will begin with
a presentation of the concepts of language-game and
family resemblance in order to show how Wittgenstein
argues for a unity and wholeness of language which estab-
lishes a mutual relatedness and not a mutual autonomy to
language-games. In the second part of this section I
will present Wittgenstein's philosophy of grammatical
propositions and demonstrate that though autonomy is
the correct word to use for his thought concerning them,
it is not an autonomy from reality as interpreted by the
'Fideists', for Wittgenstein actually stresses the impor-
tance of the facts of the world on the formation of the
grammar of language.

1.   Language-games and Family Resemblances

It is perhaps one of the most obvious aspects of
Wittgenstein's later work, especially in contrast with the
Tractatus , that he says: "Instead of producing something
common to all that we call language, I am saying that
these phenomena have no one thing in common which makes

us use the same word for all. . . ."(65) Wittgenstein

describes the multiplicity, variety and differences of

linguistic activities. It is his presentation of

differences and his conclusion that there is no one thing

common to all the linguistic practices which constitutes

the essence of language which supports the 'Fideists'

idea that the different uses of language are mutually

autonomous from each other. Wittgenstein uses the concept

of language-game to bring out his philosophy of differences.

The importance of the concept of language-game in

the P.I. cannot be overstressed. It functions throughout

Wittgenstein's later work, and though he does not give a

definition of the word, its very lack of definition is

used to show that one cannot find a definition of the

word 'language', just as one cannot find a definition of

the word 'game'. That is, the word 'language-game' is

intended by Wittgenstein to help show the fact that one

cannot find an essence to language just as one cannot

find an essence to game.(66) The differences one can note

in giving examples of games is analogous to the differences

one can note in giving examples of uses of language.

This is not to say that Wittgenstein's uses of

'language-game' has no features which recur in his text.

He comes close to a definition of 'language-game', though

even here the stress is on variety and not similarity:

7.   In the practice of the use of language (2) one
party calls out the words /'Slab!', 'Beam!',
'Block!', 'Pillar!'/, the other acts on them
/i.e. brings the following appropriate object/. In
instruction in the language this process will occur: the
learner names the objects; that is, he utters the
word when the teacher points to the stone.--And
there will be this still simpler exercise: the pupil
repeats the words after the teacher----both of
these being processes resembling language. We can
also think of the whole process of using words in (2)
as one of those games by means of which children learn
their native language. I will call these games
"language-games" and will sometimes speak of a primi-
tive language as a language-game. And the processes
of naming the stones and of repeating words after
someone might also be called language-games. Think
of much of the use of words in games like ring-a-ring-
a-roses. I shall also call the whole, consisting
of language and the actions into which it is woven,
the "language-game".

Wittgenstein approaches a definition of language-

game in his emphasis on the interweaving of language and

action. By uniting language and action into one concept

he brings forth two aspects of language which are central

to his philosophical concerns: the first is that language

is to be thought of as practice, something with which

people act. The second is that the meaning of words and

sentences is not to be understood as some thing which

language represents, but rather Wittgenstein wants his

reader to think about meaning in terms of the way words

and sentences are employed in particular circumstances.

(421) Wittgenstein's philosophy of linguistic action which

finds an expression in his use of 'language-game'is not

something pursued by the 'Fideists'. I believe that it

is central to an interpretation of his philosophy for a
philosophy of religion, and will return to this notion
in section B of this chapter. It is the second aspect
of Wittgenstein's use of language-game which is found in
the 'Fideists' accounts, and which I will discuss here.
By describing uses of language, Wittgenstein is able to
show that the same words used in one context can mean some-
thing quite different from their use in another context.
For this reason he stresses that one cannot guess the
meaning of words, but rather one must look at their use
in the factual circumstances of everyday human life in
order to see how they are used with sense.(E.g. 340)

'Language-game', then, is used by Wittgenstein to
show the differences in meaning which result from the
differences in human activities. Multiplicity, differences
and variety are the mark of Wittgenstein's use of this
concept.(Esp. 23) One question which has stirred up some
controversy over the application of this term in the study
of religion is whether or not Wittgenstein's use of the
concept is such that it can apply to such broad areas of
human life as religion, science and art.[2] Wittgenstein

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[2] This has been discussed, for example, by P. Sherry
in his articles, "Truth and the 'Religious Language-Game'",
Philosophy, 47 (1972), 18-37; and "Is Religion a 'Form of
Life'", American Philosophical Quarterly, 9 (1972), 159-167;

himself is ambiguous on this point. When he explicitly

lists a variety of language-games one can see that the

term does apply to particular activities such as giving

and taking orders, telling jokes, forming and testing

hypotheses, reporting an event.(23) Wittgenstein would

call each of these language-games, but he would also

say that each of these forms a family of games, and in

particular circumstances various characteristics of e.g.

telling jokes will be evident whereas in other circum-

stances other characteristics may show themselves. That

Wittgenstein speaks of these particular language-games

as families indicates that there does not seem to be any

sharp boundaries which limit them. The problem becomes

even greater in the attempt to call religion or science

language-games.

It is generally recognized that the 'Fideists'

wish to consider religion a language-game or a form of

life. Form of life is another conceptual tool Wittgenstein

uses, and one he does not define. It is clear that by it

he indicates something like 'ways human beings live'.

Winch uses the concept of 'mode of social life' to capture

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and it has been discussed by F. G. Downing, "Games,
Families, the Public, and Religion", Philosophy, 47 (1972),
38-54.

this term.[3] It is evident that Malcolm believed that
Wittgenstein thought religion was a form of life, for he
says this explicitly.[4] In applying this concept to
religion, Malcolm says: "In those complex systems of
thought, those 'language-games,' God has the status of a
necessary being. Who can doubt that? Here we must say
with Wittgenstein, 'This language-game is played'!"[5]

It is not within the scope and purpose of this
essay to investigate whether or not Wittgenstein means
by language-game and form of life particular activities
or more general classifications of human social activi-
ties. The justification for uniting the two concepts and
applying them to particular activities is given in such
passages as this: ". . . to imagine a language means to
imagine a form of life."(19) To imagine a language is
to imagine human beings doing things linguistically.
Whether one would classify such a situation a language-game
or a form of life seems to me to be quite arbitrary. On
the other hand Wittgenstein seems to refer to a form of

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[3]Peter Winch, The Idea of a Social Science, op.
cit., pp. 41, 100.

[4]Norman Malcolm, Ludwig Wittgenstein, A Memoir,
op. cit., p. 72.

[5]Norman Malcolm, "Anselm's Ontological Argument",
op. cit., p. 153.

life as a general category of human life and language-

games as parts of those categories.(E.g. 23) And finally,

Wittgenstein seems to think of form of life as the very

general way of categorizing human life as distinct from

other forms of life.(E.g. 25, 250)

I will approach Wittgenstein's use of the concept

of form of life toward the end of this chapter, but at

this point I do not think it is inappropriate to speak of

a religion as a form of life, though it is obvious that

the application of this term in such a general way does

not help to elucidate what one might mean by a religion.

Any particular religion may exhibit a wide variety of

ways of acting and living which may not allow for any

clear determination of what would constitute its particular

form, and this could be the case without making a dis-

tinction between heresy and orthodoxy.[6] If there is a

difficulty in applying the concept to a particular reli-

gion, it is even more apparent in speaking of religion

as such as a form of life, considering the great differ-

ences in religions. At one point Wittgenstein does try

to clarify the grammar of the word 'belief' by specifying

religious belief. This seems to indicate that he would

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[6]For example, one can note the variety of theologi-
cal systems and ways of living in a single period of a
single religion, such as Medieval European Christianity.

point to a wider religious form of life in which there are distinctive language-games using the word 'belief'.[7]

What is important at this point is the use the 'Fideists' make of these concepts. It is clear that Wittgenstein uses 'games' to bring out the idea of linguistic action. By action he does not mean random and chaotic action, but rather practices. Practices entail regularity and regularity implies regulation or rule-governed activities. The 'Fideists' argue that the rules, or logical criteria, or grammar, of a social practice can be specified, and it is the description of these rules which determines what a person is doing or saying. What marks off religion from science, or science from primitive magic are the logical criteria which govern the different activities. It is the stress on the notion of rule which enables the 'Fideists' to set language-games apart from each other. Winch says, for example: "I have claimed that the analysis of meaningful behaviour must allot a central role to the notion of a rule; that all behaviour which is meaningful (therefore all specifically human behaviour) is _ipso_ _facto_ rule-governed."[8] Winch then goes on to claim that a difference in rules is what distinguishes

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[7]Wittgenstein, On Certainty, op. cit., 459.

[8]Winch, op. cit., pp. 51-52.

one kind of activity from another: "The difference
between /the monk and the anarchist/ is not that the one
follows rules and the other does not; it lies in the
diverse kinds of rules which each respectively follows."[9]

It is clear that Winch is trying to push
Wittgenstein's thought to a place beyond the particular
rules so that a general view of meaningful human action
may be seen. However, in doing so he does not bring out
the explicit emphasis, given by Wittgenstein in his use
of the concept of game as an analogy for language, that
human action is not everywhere bounded by rules.
Wittgenstein even shows that the rules themselves may be
used as instruments in games rather than that which
governs the procedures of a game.(83, 86) The strict
interpretation of the use of the concept of rule in
Wittgenstein's later thought finds expression in Phillips'
claim that as a philosopher he can discern the correct
rules governing the use of Christian language.[10] It is
this which justifies his claim to find a paradigmatic
concept of religious belief. It is also this which

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[9]Ibid., p. 52.

[10]See above, pp. 66-68 for Phillips' concept of
true religion.

justifies his claim that saint and atheist see different worlds.[11]

The claim that language-games are autonomous from each other is closely tied to the claim that the rules which govern each game has specific reference to that game alone and not to another game. This view has received some modification by Rush Rhees in his article, "Wittgenstein's Builders".[12] In this article Rhees tries to correct the mistaken notion that Wittgenstein's use of simplified primitive language-games could actually be complete languages of people. Rhees points out that for any particular use of words to have significance in some particular circumstance, it must also have use in other circumstances of a person's life. Learning to say this is intimately connected with learning to speak a language as such, and if one does not learn to speak in the variety of circumstances of human life, then it does not make sense to say that what is said in a particular circumstance is really a use of meaningful language.[13]

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[11]Phillips, Faith and Philosophical Enquiry, op. cit., p. 132.

[12]Rush Rhees, "Wittgenstein's Builders", in Fann, ed., Ludwig Wittgenstein, op. cit., pp. 251-264.

[13]Ibid., pp. 258-259.

This conclusion and clarification by Rhees is
accepted by Phillips,[14] but the only direction he takes
it is to say that the religious use of language can cover
other uses of language in the sense that a person may do
many things in his life which are not specifically
religious for religious purposes.[15] The meaning and
purpose of specific language-games may fall under a broader
category as well as the specific category: e.g. a person
may follow the rules correctly for doing a primitive
sacrificial ritual for the purpose of an anthropological
study of that primitive society.

I believe that Wittgenstein's intentions in using
language-game as a basic concept for elucidating the
concept of language must be clarified by the concept of
family resemblance. Rhees says: "It is especially
difficult when Wittgenstein speaks as though we might re-
gard the different language games as different lan-
guages. . . . And the comparison of 'game' and 'language'
fosters it, when this is meant to show what is meant by
make up a family of cases.' For the 'cases' of games are
all games themselves; and of course they do not make up

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[14]Phillips, Faith and Philosophical Enquiry, op.
cit., pp. 126-127.

[15]Ibid.

a game. Different languages would not make up a language either.'[16] In this statement Rhees implies that the concept of family is used to indicate the differences in languages, such that one cannot speak of language which then finds expression in various instances. He indicates that there. is not some overarching language but simply the many different things we call speaking, using words and sentences, writing, etc. However, Rhees also thinks that in his later work, as in his earlier work, Wittgenstein is interested in what might be called 'human language' as contrasted to an interest in the language or languages which people speak.[17] Rather than simply illuminate the idea that there are differences in language-games, I think it can be demonstrated that in the P.I. Wittgenstein also uses family resemblance to show the unity of language, which Rhees calls 'human language'.

The most notable use of family resemblance in the P.I. is its occurrence in the text as a tool for arguing against the tendency to posit some single form of language as the essence of language.(65) Wittgenstein applies this argument to various concepts, such as the concepts of game, number, description, physical object, color and

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[16]Rhees, op. cit., pp. 255-256.

[17]Ibid., p. 253.

even of proper name.(66-80) He uses the concept of family
resemblance to dispel the idea that the application of
nouns to specific items which are called by the same name
occurs because they denote some thing common to all the
specific items. Wittgenstein's use of 'family resemblance'
has been understood as an attack on the concept of
essence, and it has been the most frequently noted use of
this concept.[18] It is clear that Wittgenstein does argue
against the concept of essence. For example, Wittgenstein
investigates the concept of understanding.(138-155)
In his descriptions of particular cases in which one might
use the word 'understanding' he is able to find uses which
not only have nothing in common, but which seem to contra-
dict each other. One speaks of understanding as 'knowing
how to do something',(139-141) and one speaks of under-
standing as 'grasping in a flash'.(138-139) Ability seems
to be something gained and applied over periods of time,
where grasping in a flash seems to take place in an
instant.

In order to become clear about these different

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[18] For example see A. Ambrose, "Wittgenstein on
Universals", in Fann, op. cit., pp 346 f.; R. Fogelin,
op. cit., pp. 122-123; A. Kenny, op. cit., pp. 223-224;
and Renford Bambrough, "Universals and Family Resem-
blances", in G. Pitcher, ed., Wittgenstein, the Philoso-
phical Investigations (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday
Anchor Books, 1966), pp. 186-204.

uses of 'understanding', Wittgenstein interpolates the concept of reading.(156-178) In his attempt to describe different uses of this concept he introduces other concepts such as deriving.(162-164) Could we say that a person knows how to read if he derives the spoken words from the written ones? By the time he finishes with the concept of deriving, he seems to have ended up with various cases of deriving, but not deriving itself:

> 164. In case (162) the meaning of the word 'to derive' stood out clearly. But we told ourselves that this was only a quite special case of deriving; deriving in a quite special garb, which had to be stripped from it if we wanted to see the essence of deriving. So we stripped those particular coverings off; but then deriving itself disappeared.--In order to find the real artichoke, we divested it of its leaves. For certainly (162) was a special case of deriving; what is essential to deriving, however, was not hidden beneath the surface of this case, but this 'surface' was one case out of the family of cases of deriving. And in the same way we also use the word 'to read' for a family of cases. And in different circumstances we apply different criteria for a person's reading.

Rather than find one thing which is common to all cases of deriving, Wittgenstein says that there is no one thing which is common to all these phenomena which could be said to be the essence of deriving. This conclusion could be understood to be a denial that all the cases which might be called deriving or reading or understanding have any reason to be called by the same common name. Such a conclusion could support the claim that

family resemblance is an effective denial of the possibility
of overcoming the autonomy of differing language-games.

Though the use of family resemblance is directed
against the philosophical tendency to look for something
common to those specific things which fall under a common
or proper noun which could be denoted as the essence,
it is also evident that the many examples Wittgenstein
gives in which the essence seems to disappear are all part
of his argument that one cannot find an essence to language
as such. Family resemblance, then, is not simply used
in terms of the problem of universals, but more importantly
it is used to discuss the essence of language.

In fact, the denial of essence is part of his
general attack on the concept of language which considers
meaning to be grounded upon the name-object relation.
The attempt to denote the common thing is an attempt to
name the essence of the things referred to by the same
word. The attempt to denote the common element in all
the cases of reading becomes an attempt to specify, or
name, that thing which makes all the cases of reading to
be reading. Wittgenstein attacks this philosophical
tendency throughout the P.I. Therefore, the concept of
family resemblance is not simply an attack on the concept
of essence, but an attack on the tendency lying behind the
desire to discover the essence of things, which is a

desire to find the essence of language itself.
Wittgenstein thinks that the drive to find the essence
of language is directed toward discovering the essence
of logic, and therefore the essence of the world:
"Thought is surrounded by a halo.--Its essence, logic,
presents an order, in fact the a priori order of the
world. . . ."(97) The denial that there is a single form
of language which underlies every instance of language
is one target of his use of family resemblance.

The concept of family resemblance is not simply
a tool which destroys.(118) It is also a tool which
offers an alternative representation of language, in the
sense that Wittgenstein believes that he can enable one
to see the reality of logic and language for what it is.
Wittgenstein introduces the concept of family resemblance
at that point in his argument where the question concerning
the essence of language as such is explicitly raised. In
the opening remarks he has argued that the concept of
name cannot be used to specify the essence of language,
and remarks: "Here we come up against the great question
that lies behind all these considerations. . . . .
. . . what is common to all these activities, and what
makes them into language or parts of language. So you let
yourself off the very part of the investigation that once
gave you yourself most headache, the part about the

general form of propositions and of language."(65)

Wittgenstein's answer to the objection that he is ignoring

the great question about the essence of language is this:

"Instead of producing something common to all that we

call language, I am saying that these phenomena have no

one thing in common which makes us use the same word for

all."(65)

There are two ways of seeing Wittgenstein's use

of family resemblance. On the one hand Wittgenstein's

argument in the P.I. is able to move because of this

concept. That is, this concept has methodological

importance for the P.I. The other is to see what this

concept entails in terms of understanding what

Wittgenstein means by indeterminacy in language. In terms

of the method of the P.I., Wittgenstein begins his eluci-

dation of this concept by giving examples of specific

concepts to which family resemblance can be fruitfully

applied. He gives the examples in order to explain how

it is that language can form a unity without each case of

language sharing something common to every other case of

language. He begins with the concept of game, and says:

> 66.   Consider for example the proceedings that we
> call 'games'. I mean board-games, card-games, ball-
> games, Olympic games, and so on. What is common to
> them all?--Don't say: "There must be something
> common, or they would not be called 'games'"--but
> look and see whether there is anything common to
> all.--For if you look at them you will not see

something that is common to all, but similarities,
relationships, and a whole series of them at that.
To repeat: don't think, but look!

The emphasis Wittgenstein puts on 'look and see'
in contrast to 'think' can be misunderstood to be a form
of anti-intellectualism. It rather is an accurate reflec-
tion of Wittgenstein's method of philosophy which he says
is descriptive of the ways language actually functions.
If one thinks instead of looks, Wittgenstein indicates that
the person is tempted to elevate a particular case to the
status of paradigm for all cases. For example, he says
in his investigation of guiding: "This movement and
feeling did not contain the essence of guiding, but still
this word forces itself upon you. It is just a single
form of the phenomenon of guiding which forces the expres-
sion on us."[19](178; cf. also 173, 140) Such a conclusion
indicates not only that one cannot find the common thing
which makes us call all these cases guiding, but that
thought and language function by means of particular
examples. When we try to think of the meaning of a word,
we think of a particular use.(Cf. 73, 74) The problem of
thinking instead of looking, according to Wittgenstein,
is that we may not realize that this is simply one form
of guiding which occurs to us and not the essence of

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[19]My translation.

guiding. If we look, we will find a variety of forms of
guiding.

That thought and language function by means of
particular examples is an inportant aspect of Wittgenstein's
use of language-game. He says that if one wishes to under-
stand what language is, one must look to examples of
language. In the P.I. Wittgenstein says that he offers
examples,(133) and that this should not be thought of
as an indirect means of presenting his philosophy, but
simply that this is how language itself functions. In
terms of the example of explaining what game means as an
analogy to explaining what language means, he says:

> 71.   . . . . And this is just how one might explain
> to someone what a game is. One gives examples and
> intends them to be taken in a particular way.--I do
> not, however, mean by this that he is supposed to see
> in those examples that common thing which I -- for
> some reason -- was unable to express; but that he is
> now to employ those examples in a particular way.
> Here giving examples is not an indirect means of
> explaining--in default of a better. For any general
> definition can be misunderstood too. The point is that
> this is how we play the game. (I mean the language-
> game with the word "game".)

Wittgenstein's method is to describe examples of
linguistic use. Though he cannot find some thing common
to all that we call language, he believes the presentation
of his examples can give a picture of language as a
whole.(P. ix) By using descriptive language, Wittgenstein
restricts his investigation to the observable facts of
language. This entails an attack on the idea which

dominated the _Tractatus_ that there must be an essential

form of language underlying every production of signs.

However, Wittgenstein intends his examples to be taken in

specific ways,(108) and if one wishes to speak of under-

standing the essence of language, he is willing to use

the word as long as one means by that something which can

be grasped by an overview of the facts of language, just

as one can grasp what a game is or what guiding is by

setting out examples of their use:

> 92.   This finds expression in questions as to the
> _essence_ of language, or propositions, of thought.
> --For if we too in these investigations are trying to
> understand the essence of language--its function, its
> structure,--yet _this_ is not what those questions
> have in view. For they see in the essence, not some-
> thing that already lies open to view and that becomes
> surveyable by a rearrangement, but something that
> lies _beneath_ the surface.

The concept of family resemblance is related to

Wittgenstein's attempt to make language surveyable. If

it were not possible to survey language as such, then

there would not only be no essence in terms of some

common thing, but also no essence in terms of the multi-

plicity of similarities and relationships which forms

language into a whole. Using number as an example to

show the unity of language he says: "And we extend our

concept of number as in spinning a thread we twist fibre

on fibre. And the strength of the thread does not reside

in the fact that some one fibre runs through its whole

length, but in the overlapping of many fibres."(67)

The demonstration of the unity of language which Wittgenstein tries to show through the arrangement of examples can be indicated by looking at the way he finds analogies, similarities, and relationships between concepts. .The concept of language is elucidated by means of the concepts of game and number. Wittgenstein finds analogies for the concept of understanding in the concept of reading and for reading in the concepts of guiding and deriving. Learning how to do numbers is an example Wittgenstein uses to elucidate the concept of under-standing,(143) and together these various concepts are used to lead up to a discussion of what it means to follow a rule and obey an order.(198-242) These investigations lead up to Wittgenstein's so-called private language argument.(242ff.) In this argument Wittgenstein investigates the application and learning of the concept of pain and other sensation concepts including the concept of sensation itself. In this way the project of the P.I. assumes that language forms a whole whose strength is not found in a single form of language, but in the over-lapping of similarities and relationships. "The kinship," he says, "is just as undeniable as the difference."(76)

If family resemblance simply functions in Wittgenstein's later work for the purpose of marking the

differences between language-games, and not the similari-
ties, then Wittgenstein's task as a philosopher would be
undermined. Games form a family and numbers form a
family, and these families belong to the family of
language. Because they belong to language they can be
used to elucidate the concept of language. Just as one
can teach a child the concept of game by repeated presen-
tation of examples of games, so Wittgenstein thinks that
he can teach his philosophical reader the concept of
language by repeated examples of various forms of lan-
guage. The difficulty in reading the P.I. is to discover
the way Wittgenstein intends his examples to be taken.(71)
The statements concerning the meaning and purpose of the
book are many -- especially in the preface and the remarks
on method.(81-133) But here it is important to see
that Wittgenstein investigates the various language-
games we play with words and sentences in order to eluci-
date what it means to use words and sentences in the
activities of our lives. These different activities
all contribute to an understanding of the concept of
language.

The second aspect of Wittgenstein's use of family
resemblance is to mark the indeterminacy in language. As

shown above, the 'Fideists' hold to a strict interpre-
tation of language as a rule-governed activity, which
rules can be delineated for the purpose of marking off
different language-games. I do not wish to deny that
the P.I. allows for such descriptions of the grammatical
rules, but.that it is an important facet of Wittgenstein's
later work that in opposition to the Tractatus he did not
believe that one could draw the limits of language nor
the limits of any particular language-game in general.
One must look at a particular case of a use of language
to determine what is being said and how the language is
being used. One cannot mark off the grammar of language
or of language-games without specific reference to some
particular employment of the words and sentences. But
even this restriction needs to be modified. Wittgenstein
makes it clear that it is not humanly possible to describe
all the conditions which must be met for a person to be
saying this. Using the analogy of walking he says:
"But here we must be on our guard against thinking that
there is some totality of conditions corresponding to
the nature of each case (e.g. for a person's walking) so
that, as it were, he could not but walk if they were all
fulfilled."(183) The approach of the 'Fideists' seems to
indicate that one could describe the conditions for
playing a language-game such as religion, and if these

conditions are all met, then the person must be playing

a religious language-game. Wittgenstein said in the

Tractatus, "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. . . . The tacit conventions on

which the understanding of everyday language depends are

enormously complicated."(4.002) Echoing this same thought,

he says in Zettel, 326, "The concept of a living being

has the same indeterminacy as that of a language."

The complexity and indeterminacy of language was

justified by the Tractarian notion that underlying every

proposition were elementary propositions which had a

determinate sense. In his later work Wittgenstein has

cast off the metaphysics of simple names and objects, and

yet has maintained the indeterminacy. It is important to

see what it comes to in his later work. I will approach

this in three ways: (a) the question of the application

of general terms; (b) the question of knowing what one

means when one says something; (c) and the question of the

indeterminacy of the rules of language.

It has been recognized that Wittgenstein's philo-

sophy of family resemblance is used by him to argue

against the notion that the application of a general term

is determined by marking what is common to all the

specific items it is used for. Renford Bambrough points

out that Wittgenstein's concept of family resemblances

offers a means for understanding the use of universal

terms such as 'chair'.[20] For 'chair' to be a concept,

though there may not be something common to all the things

for which we use the word, there must be similarities

and relationships.[21] Secondly, the number of items

within the class of chair must be open and indefinite.[22]

We must be able to build or run across chairs with which

we are not familiar and still use the word correctly.

And thirdly, we must be able to use the word for this

indefinite class of things without either noting something

common to them all, and without having been given every

example of chair. We can 'go on' in our use of the

general terms after having been taught the word through

a limited number of examples.[23] This view of the applica-

tion of general terms leads to the second point.

The implications of Wittgenstein's denial of

essence yet his retention of the facts that this doctrine

was to explain leads to an inexplicable view of the

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[20] Bambrough, _ibid._, p. 196.

[21] _Ibid._, p. 200.

[22] _Ibid._

[23] _Ibid._, p. 201.

human being's ability to speak language. If there are no

boundaries for the application of general terms,

Wittgenstein could be interpreted to hold to a position

that language cannot be determinate. That is, if each

general term cannot be given sharp boundaries except

insofar as.giving sharp boundaries is itself a general

concept which finds specific application, then since

language is the family of the families of language-games,

each of which is open-ended and indeterminate, language

itself must be infinitely indeterminate. As he says:

> 23. But how many kinds of sentence are there? Say
> assertion, question, and command?--There are <u>countless</u>
> kinds: countless different kinds of use of what we
> call "symbols", "words", "sentences". And this
> multiplicity is not something fixed, given once for
> all; but new types of language, new language-games,
> as we may say, come into existence, and others
> become obsolete and get forgotten. (We can get a
> <u>rough</u> <u>picture</u> of this from the changes in mathematics.)

If language is so indeterminate, then sense must

be indeterminate, and consequently, how can one know what

one means when one plays a language-game? It was demon-

strated in Chapter IV, that in the <u>Tractatus</u> Wittgenstein

argues that the ability of a human being to produce

propositions which are able to describe any possible world

is a manifestation of the freedom and indeterminacy of

man.[24] This was balanced by the requirement that simple

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[24]See above, pp. 159-164.

signs stand for simple objects. There are commentators

who think that in his later work Wittgenstein has rejected

any kind of balance, with the implications that the

indeterminacy in language leads to an indeterminacy of

meaning and sense. Hacker says that ". . . the rejection

of that conception of a simple object found in the

Tractatus necessitated either finding an alternative

support for determinacy of sense, or dispensing with

the requirement altogether."[25] Hacker says he did the

latter, and yet does not show how Wittgenstein could

then argue that language is even possible.

Wittgenstein goes so far as to apply his concept

of family resemblance to the proper name of an individual

human being to show that there are cases in which even

this kind of specification of the meaning of a word may

not have sharp boundaries. In concluding this discussion,

however, he shows the kind of balance which he believes

enables language to have sense:

> 79.   . . . . And this can be expressed like this:
> I use the name "N" without a fixed meaning. (But
> that detracts as little from its usefulness, as it
> detracts from that of a table that it stands on four
> legs instead of three and so sometimes wobbles).
> Should it be said that I am using a word whose mean-
> ing I don't know, and so am talking nonsense?--Say
> what you choose, so long as it does not prevent you
> from seeing the facts.

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[25]P. M. S. Hacker, Insight and Illusion, op. cit.,
p. 97.

There may be a wobble in our use of language, but this is
not necessarily so. But even if it wobbles, it can still
be useful. It is the usefulness of the concepts which
determines sense in Wittgenstein's later work. Use,
employment and application mean in the P.I. this use,
this application. Wittgenstein, as it has already been
shown, argues that it is only in the particular use of
language in the factual circumstances of human life that
meaning is achieved and communication takes place. Though
one cannot get a precise overview of the totality of
conditions and rules which go to make up a particular
language-game being played at a particular time because,
". . . our grammar is lacking in this sort of perspicuity,"
(122) Wittgenstein emphasizes that human beings can
communicate in these contexts. Using the indeterminacy
in methods of application of rules, as an example of the
indeterminacy in the use of language, Wittgenstein says:

> 201. . . . . It can be seen that there is a
> misunderstanding here from the mere fact that in the
> course of our argument we give one interpretation
> after another; as if each one contented us at least
> for a moment, until we thought of yet another standing
> behind it. What this shews is that there is a way of
> grasping a rule which is not an interpretation, but
> which is exhibited in what we call "obeying the rule"
> and "going against it" in actual cases.

Though Wittgenstein has discarded his metaphysics, it is
clear that he has retained that aspect of the Tractatus
in which he argued that in the particular facts of

linguistic use sense is achieved and communication is
possible. As he said in his Notebooks: "It is clear
that I know what I mean by the vague proposition."[26] And
in the P.I. he says that in particular circumstances a
vague and indefinite proposition is exactly what is needed
and has the exact sense that one wants: "Is an indistinct
photograph a picture of a person at all? Is it even
always an advantage to replace an indistinct picture by
a sharp one? Isn't the indistinct one often exactly
what we need?"(71)

Though Wittgenstein uses family resemblance to
destroy the Tractarian notion that the vague proposition
is justified by the underlying exactness of simples
constructed according to their logical form, the answer
to the question as to what explains the ability of human
beings to communicate has not been given by saying that
in fact they do communicate. This question was answered
in the Tractatus in terms of the philosophy of the relation
of language to reality. The belief that there were simples
was a way of defending the notion that every production
of signs proceeds according to strict rules. In the P.I.
as indicated above, he abolishes the requirement that
language must function according to such rules. This is

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[26]Notebooks, p. 70.

accomplished by attacking the idea that all language is
built upon the name-object relation, and then by extending
the argument in saying that there is no one thing upon
which language is built. Such a conclusion can be inter-
preted to mean that Wittgenstein thought language formed
a family of cases, but that there is no justification for
any particular member of the family to be a member, for
there is no reality lying behind language which determines
what is or is not language. The clearest way to approach
this question is through an examination of 'grammatical
propositions', for according to the way Wittgenstein
uses this concept, these propositions are the expressions
of the rules of language, and as such, their status in
relation to reality will reveal what kind of justification
the rules of language have.

2. Grammatical Propositions

The interpretation of Wittgenstein's statements
that grammar is autonomous and arbitrary has in general
been metaphysical. It has been the interpretation that
grammar which governs all language is independent from
reality and forms one's view of reality. Phillips says
the atheist and the saint do not contradict each other,

but actually see different worlds.[27] Winch agrees and says

that each mode of social life is governed by linguistic

conventions which tell us what is real and unreal.[28]

Specht says that Wittgenstein's later philosophy is

constructionistic, and that the grammar of language con-

structs our world for us.[29] This interpretation has been

most forcefully given by P. M. S. Hacker who says:

> The collapse of the Tractatus system. . . led,
> among other things to the doctrine of the autonomy
> of grammar. Without the metaphysical underpinning
> the doctrine of the autonomy of grammar, heir to the
> doctrine of the inexpressibility of logical form,
> became the expression not of the ineffability of
> insight into the a priori structure of reality, but
> of a warning against illusions generated by the
> shadows cast by arbitrary linguistic conventions
> upon a formless world. The connection between the two
> doctrines of autonomy in Wittgenstein's later philo-
> sophy is that in the absence of metaphysical simples,
> correlated with linguistic simples by means of some
> mechanism constituting a connection between language
> and reality, the theory of limits of thought and the
> logical structure of the world becomes radically
> conventionalist, and metaphysical truths become not
> simply inexpressible, but illusory reflections of
> grammatical conventions.[30]

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[27]Phillips, op. cit., p. 132.

[28]Peter Winch, "Understanding a Primitive Society",
op. cit., p. 82.

[29]E. K. Specht, The Foundations of Wittgenstein's
Later Philosophy (Manchester: Manchester University Press,
1969), pp. 25 and 179.

[30]Hacker, Insight and Illusion, op. cit.,
pp. 178-179.

As was demonstrated in the chapter on the Tractatus,
Hacker's conviction that Wittgenstein's earlier work
rested upon a relation of language and reality constituted
by ostensive definition was not correct.[31] Without
ostensive definition, he believes that Wittgenstein argues
against all relations between language and reality and
that language is an independent construction of human
beings and forms their representation of what is real.[32]
I believe that he is correct in saying that Wittgenstein
rejects the metaphysics of simple names and simple objects,
but this only means that according to Wittgenstein there
is no metaphysics underpinning his later thoughts, not
even the metaphysics of grammar as the form of human
representation of reality. Wittgenstein's earlier argu-
ment was an attempt to find a metaphysical explanation
for his conviction that ordinary language is in perfectly
logical order; and that in the concrete particular
utterances of language which makes sense, the logical form
of reality is manifested. Thus the human being who
already knows logical form acts linguistically in harmony
with this form. Without the metaphysics, he continues to

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[31] See above, pp. 118-119.

[32] Hacker, Insight and Illusion, op. cit., p. 187.

assume that ordinary language is in perfectly logical order and that it is his task to describe this order by describing how language works.(108-109) He also continues to emphasize that it is only in the particular circumstances in which one uses language for a particular purpose that it makes sense. What must be demonstrated is the sense in which Wittgenstein thinks the logic of language is related to reality if there is no metaphysics of simples to justify and guarantee meaning.

The standard interpretations of grammatical propositions leans toward saying that grammatical propositions determine meaning,and that nothing determines the grammatical propositions. Therefore the rules of grammar which govern language and are expressed in the grammatical propositions are arbitrary and autonomous with no grounding in reality. It is this claim which will be investigated here.

At the beginning of Wittgenstein's philosophical career he remarked: "A correct explanation of the logical propositions must give them a unique position as against all other propositions."[33] This was repeated in the Tractatus(6.112) and, as shown in Chapter IV, Wittgenstein accomplished this task through his theory that logical

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[33]Notebooks, p. 93.

propositions say nothing (are senseless) but they
presuppose that names mean objects and thereby show the
logical form of the world.[34] (6.124)   In order to get a
clear view of Wittgenstein's later attempt to give logical
propositions a unique status over against all other
propositions, a brief resume of the Tractarian philosophy
will be helpful.   In the Tractatus Wittgenstein says
that the only necessity is logical necessity,(6.375) and
that this necessity is exhibited through the logical
propositions which are necessarily true.(4.461)   Because
these propositions do not represent any possible occurrence
in the world yet are legitimate constructions, there can
be no possible way of refuting or confirming them.(6.1222)
These propositions do not correspond to the world through
a picturing relation, but still the world's structural
properties are represented by the names in combination in
the tautology.   Wittgenstein is emphatic that though he
says these propositions are necessarily true, this is a
limiting statement, for in fact they are neither true nor
false because they do not picture any possible occurrence.
Thus they are said to be without content, and any theory
which attempts to give them content is false.(6.111)   Such
a theory construes these propositions as those of natural

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[34] See above pp. 142-144.

science, and thereby seems to assert a necessary truth
about the world. Wittgenstein does not say such a mistake
concerning the nature of logical propositions results in
nonsense, though I think he could have. The reason he
does not, it seems to me, is that he is convinced that
the logical propositions are legitimately constructed,
and that one's intentions in constructing them can be
clarified by an adequate theory of propositional struc-
ture, and not by distinguishing different attitudes
toward the propositions constructed. This can be shown
through a presentation of those propositions which he
said were nonsense.

There are, according to the Tractatus, proposi-
tions which have sense and are either true or false;
logical propositions which lack sense, and are neither
true nor false, but which show the logical form of lan-
guage and reality; and a third category which he calls
pseudo-propositions which are said to be nonsense.(4.1272)
These are the class of propositions which he thinks cause
the philosophical problems and which produce metaphysical
nonsense. Wittgenstein says that these pseudo-propositions
are the result of using formal concepts as proper concepts
and asserting that they are the case.(4.1272) The formal
concepts, he says, are represented by variables, and
when they are used as variables they are used with sense,

but when they are used as pictures of some possible occurrence, nonsense results. For example, one can say, "I have two objects in my drawer." The formal concept of object is used as a variable which functions according to the logical form of the objects which fall under it. That is, what may be in the drawer will be spatial-temporal-colored objects like a ball and a glove. What cannot be represented by this variable might be, for example, the musical sounds, "do" and "fa". The use of the variable shows the formal characteristics of the possible objects which it covers. Spatial extension is not the form of a musical sound, whereas pitch is.

Nonsense, according to the Tractatus, is the attempt to assert that an object has the formal property, for example, "This table has extension." The construction of this set of words is such that all that is represented is a table, for extension is a formal feature of spatial objects, and not a material property. As yet nothing has been said of the table. If one thinks that one has said something he does not understand the logic of variables and formal concepts which a priori prevents such an assertion. Wittgenstein says one can see that 1 is a number and that names mean objects from the logical form of numbers and names which are already given with language. As he says: "A formal concept is immediately

given with an object which falls under it."(4.12721) The

formal properties of language and the world are shown

but not said.(4.12-4.1212) Even the Tractatus itself falls

under the accusation of nonsense, for it is constructed

out of pseudo-propositions such as "A name means an

object. The object is its meaning."(3.203)

Metaphysics, according to the Tractatus, is the

result of the attempt to assert the propositions of logic

and the nonsense pseudo-propositions as one asserts the

propositions of natural science. Metaphysics is nonsense

because it attempts to assert the formal logical proper-

ties of language and the world which is manifested or

mirrored in the facts of ordinary language. "Propositions

cannot represent logical form: it is mirrored in them."

(4.121) "In order to be able to represent logical form,

we should have to be able to station ourselves with propo-

sitions somewhere outside logic, that is to say outside

the world."(4.12)

In his later work, it has been generally agreed

that Wittgenstein used the concept of grammatical propo-

sition to refer to two kinds of propositions. I think

there are parallels to his earlier work which will help

clarify this. On the one hand there are the propositions

which clearly represent the rules of linguistic usages

and on the other hand there are the propositions which

are disguised expressions of linguistic rules. These

latter are disguised as assertions of necessary matters

of fact. It is fairly clear that Wittgenstein did not

simply assert that these two kinds of proposition were

nonsense, but that a misuse of these two kinds would

result in nonsense. According to Wittgenstein's later

thought as distinct from his earlier, it is not the

construction of a proposition which is nonsense or sense,

but the use or lack of use which characterizes nonsense

and sense.[35] The kind of misuse which Wittgenstein

continually refers to is the confusion of grammatical

propositions with empirical propositions. This confusion

is not simply between two kinds of propositions, but

between two kinds of uses of propositions. Consequently

he says that metaphysics is characterized by the confusion

of an investigation into the grammar of language with

empirical investigations. That is, the confusion is

between the way we use grammatical propositions to inves-

tigate how language works with the way we use propositions

of matters of fact in an empirical investigation which

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[35] Hacker takes the line of thought which I present,
but Hallie does not. Hallie speaks about Wittgenstein's
philosophy of grammatical propositions as if he considered
them to be nonsense tout court. Cf. P. Hallie,
"Wittgenstein's Grammatical-Empirical Distinction", The
Journal of Philosophy, 40 (1963), p. 567.

seeks to further one's information about some subject.

Distinguishing between grammatical propositions
and empirical propositions, which Wittgenstein considers
a central task in his later work in attacking metaphysics,
is one way of delineating Wittgenstein's conception of
grammatical propositions. It is clear that in his later
work Wittgenstein used the word <u>Satz</u> to refer to a wide
variety of linguistic objects.(Cf. 23) In direct contrast
to the <u>Tractatus</u> he did not speak of <u>Sätze</u> simply in
terms of those sentences which are descriptions of some
matters of fact. However, it is also clear that at
times he did refer to such descriptive uses of sentences
as <u>Sätze</u>. For example, in paragraphs 133-137 Wittgenstein
engages the Tractarian concept of proposition as descrip-
tive proposition. Though this is not the only use of
<u>Sätze</u>, he argues that it is one with which the use of
the words true and false belongs. That is, Wittgenstein
suggests that one way of distinguishing empirical
propositions is to ask if it makes any sense to apply
the words true or false to them:

> 137. . . . a child might be taught to distinguish
> between propositions and other expressions by being
> told "Ask yourself if you can say 'is true' after it.
> If these words fit, it's a proposition." (And in
> the same way one might have said: Ask yourself if you
> can put the words "<u>This</u> is how things are." in
> front of it.)

Though it is Wittgenstein's purpose to demonstrate that the

Tractatus was mistaken in saying that descriptive

propositions constitute the whole of language, he does

bring out that one aspect of our concept of proposition

can be distinguished from the others by seeing if it makes

sense to ask whether or not the sentence is true or false.

He does not say that this is the only use of the words

true and false,(cf. 544) but it is clear that he thinks

that propositions which represent how things are can be

either true or false. This, then expresses a position that

was central to the Tractatus and it seems that Wittgenstein

continues to hold it in his later work. Wittgenstein

believes that empirical propositions can be either true

or false and so the negation of an empirical proposition

makes sense.

Distinct from empirical propositions are the gram-

matical propositions to which the words true and false do

not apply. It is this distinction which lies behind

Wittgenstein's use of the word 'autonomous' to characterize

the grammar of language. This I will try to show. In

showing this, I think it will become clear that there are

strong parallels to Wittgenstein's earlier thought on the

unique position of logical propositions and the nonsense

of pseudo-propositions.

Commentators are agreed that the concept of gram-

matical proposition covers the traditional class of

necessary or a priori propositions such as the tautologies

of the Tractatus. As in the Tractatus these propositions

give expression to the logical workings of language.[36]

Phillip Hallie, for example, says of the grammatical propo-

sition, 'Only one person can play Patience': ". . . it

lays out or helps to lay out a rule for using such words

as 'plays' in the context of the word 'Patience'. That is,

it tells you something about how the word 'Patience' is

used."[37] This kind of grammatical proposition obviously

can be used to set forth the grammar of words. Lazerowitz

says that this kind of grammatical proposition is

". . . about the literal use of terminology in a

language."[38] Hacker says they are "logically true".[39]

Such propositions express, Wittgenstein indicates, "logical

necessity"[40] and are a priori. (251) Thus Lazerowitz can

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[36] I speak of language rather than language and
world, though in the Tractatus Wittgenstein says that
logical propositions show the structure of language and
reality. I do this because it must first be discussed how
Wittgenstein argues in his later work that grammatical
propositions are related to reality.

[37] Hallie, op. cit., p. 567.

[38] Morris Lazerowitz, "Necessity and Language", in
Ambrose and Lazerowitz, eds., Ludwig Wittgenstein: Philo-
sophy and Language (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1972),
p. 234.

[39] Hacker, Insight and Illusion, op. cit., p. 154.

[40] Ludwig Wittgenstein, The Blue and Brown Books
(New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1958), p. 56. (Note: here-
after this work will be referred to as "BB".)

say: "One of his frequently cited expressions, 'rule of grammar', which he used to characterize necessary proposi- tions unquestionably lends some substance to the claim that he took one of the traditional positions about logical necessitation."[41] However, Lazerowitz recognizes that the necessity involved in these propositions has to do in some sense with the use of words. Wittgenstein is said to have used grammatical proposition ". . . to say that in some way necessary propositions are verbal."[42]

The first kind of grammatical proposition, then, is those propositions which have been called necessarily true and a priori, and Wittgenstein believed that they were true or meaningful because they gave obvious expres- sion to the rules of language. There is a second group of grammatical propositions which Wittgenstein was con- cerned to elucidate, and these are the ones which are said to be disguised grammatical propositions.[43] Though these propositions appear to assert some necessary feature of the world, Wittgenstein seems to insist that they are grammatical propositions which also are true only by

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[41]Lazerowitz, op. cit., p. 234.

[42]Ibid.

[43]Hacker, Insight and Illusion, op. cit., pp. 253- 254.

virtue of the rules of language which they represent.
These propositions parallel Wittgenstein's description
in the _Tractatus_ of the pseudo-propositions which he
said were nonsense. However, in his later work he says
they are nonsense only if one tries to use them not as
expressions of grammar but as assertions of matters of
fact. As Hacker says: "His later view was less dogmatic,
for he no longer wished to take such sentences as nonsense,
but as proper sentences, at least if one takes them
right. . . ."[44] Taking them right means taking them for
the kind of proposition for which they are able to be used.
I will clarify this.

Wittgenstein obviously wants to use the traditional
logical propositions as presentations of the grammar of
language. Thus, 'Every rod has a length', Wittgenstein
says, can be used to mean: ". . . we call something
(or _this_) 'the length of a rod'--but nothing 'the length
of a sphere.'"(251) If one does attempt to use this as
an empirical assertion, Wittgenstein is willing to call
it nonsense. For example: "'This body has extension.'
To this we might reply: 'Nonsense!'--but are inclined
to reply 'Of course!'--Why is this?"(252) Now a disguised
grammatical proposition is one which if used in one way

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[44]_Ibid._, p. 154.

is nonsense and if used in another way makes perfectly good sense.

For an example Wittgenstein uses the sentence, "Only you can know if you had that intention."(247) He takes this proposition to mean something like this: though others may know my intentions either because I tell them, or they guess them from my behaviour, or they know my daily routine, in this proposition it is asserted that they cannot know them with the certainty with which I know them. This proposition asserts, then, that I can know my intentions for certain whereas others can only surmise them. The negation of this proposition will be something like this: "I cannot know for certain what my intentions are." This, Wittgenstein says, is nonsense.(197, 247) Since the negation of this proposition is nonsense, it cannot be an assertion of some matter of fact. Wittgenstein indicates that this proposition has sense if it is used as a grammatical proposition, that is, if it is used to explain the meaning of the word 'intend'.

> 247. "Only you can know if you had that intention." One might tell someone this when one was explaining the meaning of the word "intention" to him. For then it means: that is how we use it.
> (And here "know" means that the expression of uncertainty is senseless.)

Whereas in the Tractatus Wittgenstein said of such propositions that they were nonsense by virtue of their construction, here he finds a particular context in which it can be used with sense. Thus Wittgenstein characterizes his later philosophy in this way: "What we do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use."(116) An everyday use of the above proposition can be as an explanation of the meaning of the word 'intend'. In this sense the grammatical proposition is disguised only if the person thinks it can be used as an assertion of some necessary matter of fact, that is, if one tries to use it metaphysically.

If a grammatical proposition is used as a grammatical proposition, Wittgenstein seems to indicate, then it does not have any remarkable properties over against other propositions. To say that they are necessary or a priori is to say no more than that they can be used to show that this is how the words in question function in certain contexts. Therefore grammatical propositions are themselves governed by grammar, because they too have uses and language-games are played with them. In this sense Wittgenstein's philosophy of grammatical propositions is part of his overall philosophical enterprise in his later period, which is to describe the grammar of language. He describes the grammar of grammatical

propositions by showing particular circumstances in which
they may be used with sense. Such a use is an everyday
use, and one of his purposes is to show that they are
not governed by the grammar of empirical propositions
which constitutes a family of language-games to which
belongs the use of true and false.(136-137) A grammatical
proposition which reflects a part of the grammar of
'grammatical proposition' is this: "A grammatical
proposition cannot be used as an empirical proposition
which is either true or false." A grammatical proposition
which reflects a part of the grammar of empirical proposi-
tions is this: "Only an empirical proposition can be
true or false."(Cf 136) These propositions are not
'metalinguistic',[45] but rather, in Wittgenstein's work
they can be used to show the different grammars which
govern different kinds of sentences. To say that a
grammatical proposition is necessarily true or a priori
would be misleading unless by this one says no more than
that we do not predicate 'true' and 'false' of grammatical
propositions and yet they have uses in certain language-
games.

It is clear, then, that in his later work
Wittgenstein did not think a proposition had sense or was

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[45]Ibid., p. 153.

nonsense simply because of its construction, but that the
words 'sense' and 'nonsense' are used by him to describe
correct or incorrect usages of words and sentences. A
correct use of a grammatical proposition is the language-
game of clarifying the grammar of words, of showing the
way they function in certain circumstances. An incorrect
use of a grammatical proposition is the attempt to
assert them as empirical proposition. Such an assertion
has certain characteristics which lead to the illusion
that some necessary matter of fact is being stated. This
illusion is fostered by the fact that grammatical propo-
sitions cannot be false and still make sense. For
example, if one utters the proposition, "Only you can know
if you had that intention", as an assertion of the
certainty which one person has concerning his own psycho-
logical states over against all other persons' certainty
concerning them, Wittgenstein says the proposition is
nonsense. This can be demonstrated by the fact that its
negation is nonsense: "I cannot be certain what I am
intending to do."(197) It is part of the grammar of
empirical propositions that they can be negated and make
sense, consequently this cannot be an empirical proposition.
Wittgenstein finds a use for this proposition when he
indicates that it can be used as a grammatical proposition
which says simply that we use the word intention in

such-and-such ways which excludes the expression of
uncertainty.(247)

The question which lingers here is, why do we use
the word 'intend' such that the expression of uncertainty
is nonsense. Is it because of the fact that only you can
be certain of what you intend? If so, then it is the
necessity in the facts which justifies the grammar of the
language. The alternative seems to be that nothing justi-
fies the grammar and that Wittgenstein believed that 'in-
tentions are private' is merely a reflection of grammar
which is neither true nor false, but simply how we speak
about them. It is this either/or which leads to the
conclusion that Wittgenstein held to the latter and
therefore that he taught that grammar is autonomous from
reality because nothing in reality could be said to
correspond to a grammatical proposition; rather their
truth is said to depend solely upon the rules of grammar
they express.

There is an initial comparison with the _Tractatus_
which supports the claim that when Wittgenstein rejected
the metaphysics of simples he abandoned any ground for the
justification of grammar.[46] That is, the only justification
Wittgenstein gave in the _Tractatus_ for logical propositions

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[46]_Ibid._, pp. 146-147.

was the presupposition that names mean objects. However,
it is also true that according to the Tractatus logical
propositions and pseudo-propositions do not correspond to
any possible occurrences in the world. That is,
Wittgenstein always argued that the propositions which
express the logical form of language are not propositions
which have empirical content, and to think they have
empirical content is a sure mark that the logic of logical
propositions has been misconstrued.(6.111) Thus,
Wittgenstein's later argument that grammatical proposi-
tions do not correspond to reality and cannot be justified
by any such correspondence to the facts is a position
which is pervasive of his philosophical work. To say
that these propositions are empirically empty[47] or that
the empirical world is 'formless'[48] and so cannot form the
grammar of language is to misunderstand Wittgenstein's
use of grammatical propositions in his philosophy.
Wittgenstein clearly states that he thinks the problems
of metaphysical philosophy can arise through a confusion
of grammatical propositions with empirical propositions.
Again, this is a position which he always held. His
intention in distinguishing these two different uses of

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[47]Hallie, op. cit., p. 570.

[48]Hacker, Insight and Illusion, op. cit., p. 178.

propositions is to avoid just this confusion. It is
not for the purpose of asserting that empirical reality
has no relevance to the function and structure of language,
an assertion which he himself says is false.(E.g., p. 230)
I will try to show how this is the case with his work.

First of all there is support for the position
that is taken by Hacker and Hallie and used by the
'Fideists'. For example, Wittgenstein says: "The rules
of grammar may be called 'arbitrary', if that is to mean
that the _aim_ of the grammar is nothing but that of the
language."(497) This sentence can be taken to imply that
grammar is directed inwards toward the linguistic practice
it governs and not outward toward a reality which would
correspond to it. This is given additional support by
his contrast between the rules of cooking and the rules
of language which he gives in _Zettel_:

> 320.   Why don't I call cookery rules arbitrary, and
> why am I tempted to call the rules of grammar
> arbitrary? Because 'cookery' is defined by its end,
> whereas 'speaking' is not. That is why the use of
> language is in a certain sense autonomous, as cooking
> and washing are not. 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 you say something wrong, no, you
> are speaking of something else.

Wittgenstein seems to imply that there are 'horizontal'
movements from language-game to language-game, but no
movement from language to reality as there is from wrong

ways of washing to dirty clothes. This interpretation

of only horizontal movements has its limits, though,

for as demonstrated above, Wittgenstein thinks that one

can be mistaken in the correct grammatical application of

certain sentences which is not a playing of any language-

game at all, and therefore is nonsense. A second limi-

tation is the explicit statement that he is <u>tempted</u> to

use 'arbitrary' and 'autonomous' for the specific purpose

of reminding one that grammar does not correspond to

reality in the sense that empirical propositions do. It

is not any use of arbitrary and autonomous that is in

question but this use. As demonstrated above this is

consistent with the Tractarian philosophy of logical

propositions. Consequently, to say in his later work that

grammar is autonomous is to say no more than what one could

say of logic in his earlier work. That he rejects the

metaphysics of simples does not mean that grammar is

thereby cut off from reality in his view, but since

grammar or logic continues to be thought of as autonomous

one must look elsewhere to see what kind of relation to

reality it has.

Wittgenstein makes it explicit that he uses the

concept of the autonomy of grammar to break the hold of

the picture that grammatical propositions, and thereby

grammar, can be given a justification in the way empirical

claims are justified, that is, by reference to some state

of the world. He says in <u>Zettel</u>:

> 331. One is tempted to justify 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. .

Wittgenstein uses this concept to attack a particular way

he thinks metaphysics arises. It is not used as a general

concept of the relationship of language and reality.

Rather than assert that reality is formless and

that our view of reality is formed by the grammar of our

language, Wittgenstein shows in various ways that reality

is relevant to the formation of the grammar of language.

For example, in the <u>P.I.</u> he says:

> If the formation of concepts can be explained by
> facts of nature, should we not be interested, not in
> grammar, but rather in that in nature which is the
> basis of grammar?--Our interest certainly includes the
> correspondence between concepts and very general
> facts of nature. (Such facts as mostly do not strike
> us because of their generality.) . . . . I am not
> saying: if such-and-such facts of nature were
> different people would have different concepts (in the
> sense of a hypothesis). But: if anyone believes
> that certain concepts are absolutely the correct ones,
> and that having different ones would mean not realiz-
> ing 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 con-
> cepts different from the usual ones will become
> intelligible to him.(p. 230)

Wittgenstein asserts that grammar is related to very

general facts of nature. Though he is not interested in

this relationship in order to discover how these facts

could be the cause of the formation of concepts, he does

think that nature has something to do with it.

In another example Wittgenstein shows what he

means by imagining certain very general facts of nature

to be different from what we are used to and its relation

to concepts:

> I am as a rule recognized by the appearance of my
> body. My body changes its appearance only gradually
> and comparatively little, and likewise my voice,
> characteristic habits, etc. only change slowly and
> within a narrow range. We are inclined to use
> personal names in the way we do, only as a consequence
> of these facts. This can best be seen by imagining
> unreal cases which show us what different 'geometries'
> we would be inclined to use if facts were different.
> Imagine, e.g., that all human bodies which exist looked
> alike, that on the other hand, different sets of
> characteristics seemed, as it were, to change their
> habitation among these bodies. Such a set of charac-
> teristics might be, say, mildness, together with a
> high pitched voice, and slow movements, or a choleric
> temperament, a deep voice, and jerky movements, and
> such like. Under such circumstances, although it
> would be possible to give the bodies names, we should
> perhaps be as little inclined to do so as we are to
> give names to the chairs of our dining-room set. On
> the other hand, it might be useful to give names to
> the sets of characteristics, and the use of these
> names would now roughly correspond to the personal
> names in our present language.[49]

There are two points to be noticed in this example

for the purposes of this argument. On the one hand it

gives some indication of the force of Wittgenstein's

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[49]BB, pp. 61-62.

imagined examples. It is not impossible that human beings may transmute into the kind of beings he describes and still have some continuity with what kind of being we presently are. That is, Wittgenstein held that how the world is presently structured is not the result of any necessity in the facts, and that we can imagine quite different structures. To do so, however, is to imagine quite different kinds of linguistic possibilities also. In this sense the grammar of language is as arbitrary as the present structure of reality. Wittgenstein does not say it is as arbitrary as human beings decide it to be. This view is reflected in his later view of the arbitrariness of grammar. He does not say that our use of personal names corresponds to certain facts, but only that given the facts as they are, we are inclined to use personal names as we do. Given other sets of facts about our bodily make-up we might be inclined to use personal names differently.

The second point to notice about this paragraph is that Wittgenstein clearly assumes that the way human beings are constructed is intimately related to the way human language functions. That is, the facts of human life include the facts of bodily life, and these are just as much facts of reality as any other set of facts. For example he says:

142.   It is only in normal cases that the use of a
word is clearly prescribed; we know, are in no doubt,
what to say in this or that case. The more abnormal
the case, the more doubtful it becomes what we are to
say. And if things were quite different from what
they actually are----if there were for instance no
characteristic expression of pain, of fear, of joy;
if rule became exception and exception rule; or if
both became phenomena of roughly equal frequency----
this would make our normal language-games lose their
point.---The procedure of putting a lump of cheese
on a balance and fixing the price by the turn of the
scale would lose its point if it frequently happened
for such lumps to suddenly grow or shrink for no
obvious reason. This remark will become clearer when
we discuss such things as the relation of expression
to feeling, and similar topics.

It is clear that Wittgenstein wishes to put the facts of

human nature and the facts of nature together on the same

plane. It is just as characteristic of human beings to

express pain, fear and joy in the ways they do as it is

for cheese to remain a constant size during the few

minutes in which it is on a scale. Our present language-

games depend upon such constancy, both in the nature of

human beings and the nature of other things in the world.

Continuing this thought he says: "What we have to mention

in order to explain the significance, I mean the importance,

of a concept, are often extremely general facts of nature:

such facts as are hardly even mentioned because of their

great generality."(P. 56n)

The method of Wittgenstein's later work not only

includes descriptions of very general facts of nature,

including human nature, but also the invention of

fictitious states of nature and fictitious natural his-
tories of human beings. This latter method throws light
on the formation of grammar by the contrast between how
things actually are and how we could imagine them to be
otherwise. Thus his imaginary situations may be said to
be possible and consequently in different kinds of circum-
stances where the facts of nature and human life are
different there might be different concepts.

The arbitrariness of grammar is directed against
justifying the grammar of language by reference to what
appears to be necessary facts of nature. Wittgenstein
continues the thought of the Tractatus that there are no
facts which are necessary. One can imagine the general
facts of nature, including the nature of human beings, to
be quite different from what they are. He uses this idea
in his attack on the kind of assertions made by metaphysics,
but it is not a rejection of a relationship between the
grammar of language and the way the world is structured.
Wittgenstein is emphatic that the way human beings are
structured is part of the reason why we have the concepts
we have, e.g. of personal identity, pain, joy, and fear.
It is how the world is structured and works that is part
of the reason we use e.g. our methods of measurement, such
as weighing cheese.

How reality is relevant to grammar can be shown

through an investigation of a passage which at first

sight might seem to support the metaphysical interpreta-

tion of the autonomy of grammar.(562-570) Wittgenstein

leads his argument to the kind of relation which he thinks

holds between grammar and reality. He begins by saying:

"But how can I decide what is an essential, and what an

inessential, accidental, feature of the notation? Is

there some reality lying behind the notation which shapes

its grammar?"(562) Wittgenstein introduces this question

when confronted by an apparent arbitrariness of the rules

of grammar governing two different kinds of use of a

single word. Why the same word, he asks? In pursuing

this question he uses the example of games which have

rules governing the movement of pieces and notes that

rules are given in terms of the purpose and point of the

game which is being played.[50] He concludes this discussion

with an answer to his question concerning the kind of rela-

tionship between language and reality which lies behind

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[50]Wittgenstein's analogy may seem inappropriate
since he has already said that 'speaking' does not have
an end as does washing and cooking.(Zettel, 320) I think
the point of his remark contrasting speaking with cooking
is directed against giving a general explanation of the
purpose of speaking. In particular circumstances, he
often says, language is an instrument for particular pur-
poses, and if one understands the character of these pur-
poses one can judge whether or not a particular rule is
related to them or is an arbitrary addition.

the notation:

> 569. Language is an instrument. Its concepts are
> instruments. Now perhaps one thinks that it can make
> no great difference which concepts we employ. As,
> after all, it is possible to do physics in feet and
> inches as well as in metres and centimetres; the
> difference is merely one of convenience. But even
> this is not true if, for instance, calculations in
> some system of measurement demand more time and
> trouble than it is possible for us to give them.

In another place he echoes this statement when he says:

"It is one thing to describe methods of measurement, and

another to obtain and state results of measurement. But

what we call 'measuring' is also determined by a certain

constancy in results of measurement."(242)

Methods of measurement, according to Wittgenstein,

can be seen as arbitrary systems. He invents fictitious

natural histories of human beings to bring out the pos-

sibility that the way we do it is not the absolutely

correct way. However, he modifies this in a twofold

manner. Measurement and that measured are related to

each other in such a way that if one uses a system of

measurement which could not achieve a constancy in results

because of the way the things measured change, then

another system may need to be devised. On the other hand,

if one employs a system of measurement which achieves a

constancy of results but is not compatible with the nature

of human purposes and capabilities, for example, one that

is so complicated that it cannot easily be remembered or

employed, then another system might need to be developed.
Far from arguing that grammar is autonomous from reality
in the sense that the world has nothing to say about the
structure of language and its uses, Wittgenstein indicates
that the general facts of human nature and the natural
world are relevant to the formation of language. This
relevance, though, is not one of evidence for the truth
of a grammatical proposition.

B. Language and Reality

In this section I will present the thought of
Wittgenstein's later work on the question of the rela-
tionship of language and reality with the philosophy of
the Tractatus as the background. I do not think
Wittgenstein makes any significant changes in his philo-
sophical view of human nature in his radical change in
the manner he pursues philosophy from the Tractatus to
the P.I. Therefore, the purpose of this section is to
demonstrate the parallels between the two works on the
question of the conditions for the possibility of lin-
guistic sense, which is a question of the relationship
of language and reality. As in the Tractatus, so also
in the P.I., Wittgenstein's view of what it means to be
a human being is to be found in his philosophy of what
it means to act linguistically in the world.

The central concept of the P.I., and that which
replaces the concept of proposition in the Tractatus, is
the concept of language-game. Whereas the Tractatus was
an argument which resulted in a particular conception of
human nature by means of an investigation of the condi-
tions for the possibility of constructing a fact which
says something, the P.I. can be seen as an argument for
the necessary conditions for making a move in a language-
game.

Wherever one turns in Wittgenstein's later work
one comes up against his single requirement that sense
is the use of the tools(11) or instruments(421) of
language to do something in a particular circumstance.
One could even say that Wittgenstein argues against the
possibility that a sentence could be nonsense. Rather,
he argues that there is no piece of language which can
be declared nonsense in a general way, as he declared the
'pseudo-propositions' to be nonsense in the Tractatus.
He says in his later work that if there can be a particu-
lar set of circumstances in which a human being could
use some sound, gesture, word, sentence or thing of any
kind as a move in a language-game, there it has sense, and
its sense is just that move in those circumstances. As
he says in On Certainty:

622.   But now it is also correct to use 'I know' in
the contexts which Moore mentioned, at least in
particular circumstances. (Indeed, I do not know
what 'I know that I am a human being' means. But
even that might be given a sense.) For each one of
these sentences I can imagine circumstances that turn
it into a move in one of our language-games, and by
that it loses everything that is philosophically
astonishing.

If nonsense has any meaning in his later work, it means

that this is not a move in this particular game, but it

may be a move in some other particular game. As G. E.

Moore reports from Wittgenstein's early lectures at

Cambridge, "He . . . implied that where we say 'This makes

no sense' we always mean 'This makes no sense in this

particular game."[51]

With the concept of language-game, Wittgenstein

reaffirms the central assumption of the Tractarian argu-

ment: language is an order of facts in the world. This

affirmation is also central to his later philosophy, and

its importance ranges from the philosophical method of

describing the facts of language to his argument for a

view of the human being who acts in and with these facts

in the particular moves of language-games. Thus, where

he argued in the Tractatus that sense is shown by the

construction of the particular sign-fact, in the P.I. he

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[51]G. E. Moore,"Wittgenstein's Lectures, 1930-1933",
in Philosophical Papers (New York: Macmillan, 1959),
p. 273.

says that sense is this move in this language-game. The concept of language-game means this activity of playing with these pieces of language. The concept of use means that sense is this use of a tool of language to accomplish this task in these circumstances for this purpose. Rather than the concept of intentional action in the construction of signs in the background of his argument as in the first book, in his later work it is in the forefront of his concept of language-game. Thus he introduces the use of 'aim' or 'purpose' (Zweck) in the very beginning of his book,(2, 5, 6, 8) and he says to his reader, "Look at the sentence as an instrument, and at its sense as its employment."(421) He also says: "What we call 'descriptions' are instruments for particular uses."(291) In another place he says: "But doesn't the fact that sentences have the same sense consist in their having the same use?"(20) Finally, there is Wittgenstein's statement that one use of his concept of language-game is to refer to ". . . the whole, consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven. . . ."(7)

One of Wittgenstein's purposes in restricting his philosophical discussions to the facts of linguistic use parallels the Tractatus. In his first book, he argued that pictures, thoughts and propositions are facts, and the purpose of his argument was to demonstrate that the

occurrence of mental events could not explain how these
events could picture facts independently of the occurrence
or non-occurrence of that which is pictured. This argu-
ment pushed his philosophy beyond epistemology to the
logical foundations of human life in the world. In his
later work, he reaffirms his committment to the facticity
of mental events and again argues that these facts no
more explain language than do the factual occurrences of
sounds or marks. They too need to be explained. For
this reason he says in the P.I.: "And can't it be clearly
seen here that it is absolutely inessential for the
picture to exist in his imagination rather than as a draw-
ing or model in front of him; or again as something that
he himself constructs as a model?"(141)

According to the P.I. the pictures on paper and
in the mind are on the same level in terms of what is
necessary for applying them with understanding. Both
demand a method of projection which determines them as
pictures of this. Having a picture does not determine
understanding, but understanding is correctly projecting
the picture. As in the Tractatus the question Wittgenstein
pursues in his later work is what determines the correct
application or projection of the picture-fact. In the
earlier work he said that the correct projection of the
picture was dependent upon the recognition of the logical

form of the depicted fact which the picture manifests.
The condition for this possibility, he said, is a transcen-
dental knowledge of the logical form of reality. Since
language was said to be an order of facts in the world,
this knowledge is also a transcendental knowledge of the
logical form of the facts of language. In this way
Wittgenstein argued that human beings could project
pictures, because language and reality are co-original to
them.

In the P.I. Wittgenstein once again asks about the
possibility of applying or projecting a picture-fact.
However, this is considered as only one of the instruments
of language, and his discussion of the methods of pro-
jection are related to his general investigation of the
proper use of any tool of language. What, he asks,
enables a human being to correctly apply a tool of lan-
guage such that he understands what he is doing, that is,
he is the master of this technique? He answers, in
parallel to the Tractatus, in terms of an agreement in
judgments among human beings. Since language is factual,
and the instruments and tools of language are objective
realities, the agreement in judgments is an agreement
among human beings in the ways they use the factual mater-
ials to communicate, to make moves in language-games, or
to use language and make sense. Thus he says in his

later work:

> 240.   Disputes do not break out (among mathematicians,
> say) over the question whether a rule has been obeyed
> or not. People don't come to blows over it, for
> example. That is part of the framework on which the
> workings of our language is based (for example, in
> giving descriptions).

> 241.   "So you are saying that human agreement decides
> what is true and what is false?"--It is what human
> beings say that is true and false; and they agree in
> the language they use. That is not agreement in opin-
> ions but in form of life.

> 242.   If language is to be a means of communication
> there must be agreement not only in definitions but
> also (queer as this may sound) agreement in judgments.
> This seems to abolish logic but does not do so.--It
> is one thing to describe methods of measurement, and
> another to obtain and state results of measurement.
> But what we call "measuring" is also determined by
> a certain constancy in results of measurement.

In these remarks, Wittgenstein says that an agree-

ment in the rules e.g. for counting or working out an

algebraic series, are foundational to the whole enterprise

of mathematics. If there were not the kind of agreement

which makes mathematical procedures as necessary as they

are, there would not be the kind of mathematics we have.

However, he also argues that this mathematical agreement

is no more or less necessary than the kind of agreement

which underlies the language-games of description. For

example, he says that the rules of mathematics are as

self-evident to him as it is for him to call a particular

color 'blue'.(238) Consequently, Wittgenstein's discus-

sion of the agreement which is necessary for mathematics

and description has application to the necessity for
agreements in judgments which must underlie language
per se.(242)

Having started with the facticity of language, the
argument for the agreement in judgments is directed toward
an agreement in judgments concerning factual reality.
Wittgenstein's view of language may be expressed in this
way: language is systems of material reality, or
phenomena,(108) the rules for the use of which human beings
must be in agreement. In the later work Wittgenstein
expands what he calls language beyond that of descriptive
propositions which dominates the Tractatus. Consequently,
the discussion of the relationship of language and reality
is not pursued in terms of using one set of facts to
represent another set of facts, but rather, in terms of
using facts to communicate in any way whatsoever.

The way Wittgenstein approaches the problem, then,
is in terms of the common agreement among human beings
about how to function with the things which constitute
our language. In this sense a second kind of autonomy
of language becomes apparent in the later work. The first
kind which was discussed in the previous section was
directed against a misuse of grammatical propositions.
The second is directed toward showing the objectivity of
language which a human being must share with other human

beings, and cannot construct on his own.

In the _Tractatus_ Wittgenstein argued for an autonomy of logical form in the sense that it is the form of reality the knowledge of which human beings must share. He said that though there is a complete arbitrariness in the actual.construction of language, whatever human beings use as the instruments for their depiction of facts, logical form must be the principle of their production. Therefore, he argued that logical form is independent of human beings, and that about which they must already agree for language to be possible. In the _P.I._ Wittgenstein speaks of an agreement in judgments concerning the correct use of the tools of language, but he calls this an agreement in form of life.(241) What he means by this, it seems to me, is that human beings must be given language by other human beings, and the condition for this possibility is the fact of the shared, common, natural behaviour of human beings. It must be unthinkable that a single human being could construct a language out of his own resources without presupposing prior linguistic abilities on which this language is based. If this idea of the single human being as the source of his own lin-guistic abilities is not coherent, then there is a sense in which one could say that language is autonomous and independent of the single human being, and that it must

be given to him. What enables this language to be shared,

Wittgenstein argues, is that human beings share natural

behavioural patterns, and recognizing these in pre-linguis-

tic children, adults are able to train them in the use of

language. In this sense, human beings share the human

form of life, and using language, teaching language and

learning language are natural human behavioural patterns.

The direction of Wittgenstein's thought in the

Tractatus was to find the ultimate conditions for language

which did not presuppose prior linguistic abilities.

Thus he ended his deduction with a transcendental condition.

In his later work he says that he will not pursue any

kind of deductive methods or attempt any kind of explana-

tion of the original conditions for the possibility of

language.(126, 109) Rather, his method will be to describe

the facts of language.(109) As he says: "Since every-

thing lies open to view there is nothing to explain. For

what perhaps is hidden does not interest us."[52] (126)

What Wittgenstein describes as the condition

for an agreement in judgments which does not presuppose

language is training. In the Brown Book he clarifies

what he means by his use of the word 'training'. He says:

"I am using the word 'trained' in a way strictly analogous

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[52] My translation.

to that in which we talk of an animal being trained to do
certain things."[53] Wittgenstein's concept of training
is used in such a way that no prior linguistic compe-
tence is assumed. It is such an assumption that he finds
in Augustine's account of the origins of language with
which he opens the P.I.(1) Wittgenstein says of this
account: ". . . Augustine describes the learning of
human language as if the child came into a strange country
and did not understand the language of the country; that
is, as if it already had a language, only not this one."
(32) Wittgenstein's argument against ostensive definition
as the source of language takes the same direction. He
argues that no particular ostensive definition can explain
the meaning of a word because it takes linguistic abili-
ties to give and receive a particular ostensive defini-
tion.(28-32) In his example of the training of children,
he explicitly says that they are not assumed to be able
to ask anything.(6)

It is an important aspect of the argument of the
P.I. to demonstrate that the training of children into
linguistic competence cannot be explained in terms of
such ideas as mental processes, mental mechanisms, causa-
tion or ethereal mental phenomena. The fruit of these

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[53]BB, p. 77.

attacks on attempted explanations of language is to leave
the original descriptions of training which leads to the
mastery of the technique of using language as an unex-
plained basis of language. Though it is beyond the scope
of this essay to pursue all of Wittgenstein's arguments,
this conclusion can be seen in the fact that from para-
graphs 143 to 197 Wittgenstein pursues various attempts
to explain what happens which enables a person to under-
stand the continuation of a series. In each attempt that
Wittgenstein investigates, he concludes without having
found the essence of the matter. Thus he says, "The
words 'Now I know how to go on' were correctly used when
he thought of the formula: that is, given such circum-
stances as that he had learnt algebra, had used such
formulae before."(179) Again he comes up with the same
answer in his discussion of the connection between the
act of intending and the thing intended. He says:
"Where is the connexion effected between the sense of the
expression 'Let's play a game of chess' and all the rules
of the game?--Well, in the list of rules of the game, in
the teaching of it, in the day-to-day practice of
playing."(197) The training which is basic to language
is given a full description in the following paragraph:

> 208.   . . . . But if a person has not yet got the
> concepts,I shall teach him to use the words by means
> of examples and by practice.--And when I do this I do
> not communicate less to him than I know myself.

A person who does not have a concept is one who
does not know how to use, or does not understand the use
of, a particular instrument of language.(569) Wittgenstein,
who has argued against the idea that a concept denotes an
essence, implies that having a concept is having an ability
to use a tool. The one who trains another in this ability
transmits to the other what he himself has: ability to
use the instrument like this in this situation, and like
that in that situation, and so on. Wittgenstein continues
this paragraph with a general description of such a
training:

> 208. . . . I do it, he does it after me; and I
> influence him by expressions of agreement, rejection,
> expectation, encouragement. I let him go his way,
> or hold him back; and so on. Imagine witnessing such
> teaching. None of the words would be explained by
> means of itself; there would be no logical circle.

According to Wittgenstein the concept of training
avoids the problem of requiring language to learn language.
Such a circle was the endpoint of his deduction in the
Tractatus.(3.263) By ending in such a circle of reasoning,
he was able to posit a transcendental ground for language.
In his later work he concludes with a description of
training. However, there are two aspects of his account
of training which must be discussed. On the one hand,
what results from the training? Does Wittgenstein think
of the human being as one would think of e.g. a dog: an
animal who acts out of instincts and not out of decision;

one which can be trained, but which does not understand

anything beyond the training, and therefore does not

really understand the training? Wittgenstein, it seems

to me, leads his discussion to the point where he does

posit a kind of instinctual human behaviour which makes

linguistic.training possible.(Zettel, 545) However, the

mastery which results from the training of children into

linguistic competence is said by Wittgenstein to be quite

different from that kind of mastery of tricks achieved by

animals. For example, he contrasts humans to dogs in the

following paragraphs to show this distinction:

> 649. "So if a man has not learned a language, is he
> unable to have certain memories?" Of course--he
> cannot have verbal memories, verbal wishes or fears,
> and so one. And memories etc., in language, are not
> mere threadbare representations of the real experi-
> ences; for is what is linguistic not an experience?

> 650. We say a dog is afraid his master will beat him;
> but not, he is afraid his master will beat him to-
> morrow. Why not?

One might say that the results of the training of

human beings into linguistic mastery is specifically human

behaviour as distinct from the kind of behaviour one finds

in other species of animals. This is not to say that there

are not analogies of human behaviour to be found in other

species, and Wittgenstein specifically refers to them in

order to bring out the naturalness of distinctive human

actions. For example, he says, "What is the natural

expression of an intention?--Look at a cat when it stalks
a bird; or a beast when it wants to escape. ((Connexion
with propositions about sensations.))"(647) However
natural or instinctive Wittgenstein tries to make out
human behaviour, he also tries to show what might be called
the indeterminacy of this behaviour. That is, the training
into the mastery of the technique of using language is
one that points beyond the specific examples used in the
training, and thereby enables the human being to act
linguistically on his own out of the resources of his own
linguistic competence. Wittgenstein says, therefore,
that in training human beings one does not simply teach
them to do this or that in this circumstance or that cir-
cumstance, but rather, one teaches them a whole language:
"To understand a sentence means to understand a language.
To understand a language means to be master of a technique."
(199)

   To imagine what it would be like if the training
were restrictive rather than open-ended, one could think
of a person who memorized the cardinal numbers up to, say,
678, but was not able to recognize the similarities and
patterns which recur in the series. To such a case,
Wittgenstein might reply, "But isn't it odd that among
all the diversity of mankind we do not encounter defective
humans of this sort?"(Zettel, 43) However, pursuing this

case, one can imagine that if the person were asked,

"What comes after 678?" he would respond, "I don't know,

I haven't got that far." That is, this person would see

the numbers not as a series, but as an arbitrary list which

has no internal relationships. Such a person might also

ask, "How many numbers are there?" and mean by this, "How

many numbers do I have to memorize so that I know them

all in order?" It is clear that there are limited lin-

guistic instruments, for example the gender articles in

French are in some sense arbitrary, and one must simply

learn which nouns are which gender. However, in terms

of numbers, one could say that the learner has not yet

got the concepts, because he cannot go on to use the

instrument on his own in the many language-games in which

it can function.

The kind of teaching which leads to a mastery of

the technique such that the learner becomes an independent

user of the instruments is a different kind from that

which is limited to the examples and can be used only in

these examples. Thus Wittgenstein says: "Teaching which

is not meant to apply to anything but the examples given

is different from that which 'points beyond' them."(208)

The concept of mastery is used like the concept of 'to

go on'. Both point toward the indeterminacy in the human

uses of language, and since Wittgenstein speaks of the use

of language as its sense, it points to the indeterminacy

of sense. In the _Tractatus_ Wittgenstein argued for a

determinacy of sense. He argued this for the purpose of

substantiating his conviction that in every legitimately

constructed proposition something is said. However,

though sense was said to be determinate, the possibilities

for constructing propositions which have sense were said

to be limited only by the sum total possible occurrences

of facts. Consequently, in his earlier philosophy he

argued for the freedom of human beings to construct

propositions to represent any possible world. What a

person says, so the Tractarian argument runs, is not

determined by anything, for the occurrence of any fact

is accidental, that is, independent of every other fact.

However, though the individual human being is undetermined

in what he will say with propositions, and though the

possibilities of what he will say is limited only by

logical form of reality, is he constructs a proposition

which has sense, it represents a determinate possibility.

In the _P.I._ there are definite parallels to this

argument. The mastery of the technique of using language

means that a human being is able to function linguistically

on his own in the ever new contexts of human activities.

What a human being will say is typically understood to be

in the hands of the speaker himself, except, perhaps for

that distinctive human event called a slip of the tongue,

(54) and what a human being is using his language for,

is as indeterminate as the numerous possibilities which

one could imagine for the saying of just these words.

Wittgenstein says that one must be trained into mastery,

but that once one knows how to go on, the possibilities

of sense are open-ended. This finds expression in

Wittgenstein's discussion of intending to say something:

> 637. "I know exactly what I was going to say!" And
> yet I did not say it.--And yet I don't read it off
> from some other process which took place then and
> which I remember. Nor am I interpreting that situa-
> tion and its antecedents. For I don't consider them
> and don't judge them.

> 638. . . . . "How can you be certain that for the
> space of a moment you were going to deceive him?"
> . . . . For can't the evidence be too scanty? Yes,
> when one follows it up it seems extraordinarily scanty;
> but isn't this because one is taking no account of
> the history of this evidence? Certain antecedents
> were necessary for me to have had a momentary inten-
> tion of pretending to someone else that I was unwell.

The kind of antecedents necessary for a person to have

had a momentary intention are the training in the lin-

guistic technique, the rules of this particular language-

game, and the practice one has in continually playing it.

(197) However, Wittgenstein is insistent that these

antecedents do not function in the actual play of this

language-game as if one remembered the training and

appealed to it or interpreted it. A person does not say

that he had a momentary intention on the basis of any

evidence. A person is the master of the game, and says

it out of his own competence: "But not even the whole

story was my evidence for saying 'For a moment. . . . .'"

(638)

On the other side of this discussion of a momentary

intention is Wittgenstein's insistence that the criterion

another has concerning the person's intentions is what the

person says, and this is not sufficient evidence to

determine that in fact such an intention was there. So

he says:

> 641. "My intention was no less certain as it was
> than it would have been if I had said 'Now I'll
> deceive him'."--But if you had said the words,
> would you necessarily have meant them quite seriously?
> (Thus the most explicit expression of intention is
> by itself insufficient evidence of intention.)

This aspect of the grammar of intention which shows the

kind of mastery human beings have of their language is

reflected in the grammatical proposition, "Only you can

know if you had that intention," and Wittgenstein remarks

concerning this grammatical statement, "And here 'know'

means that the expression of uncertainty is senseless."(247)

Wittgenstein does not say that another cannot know what

one is intending, but rather that it makes sense for one

to doubt what the other is intending, but not for the

person himself to doubt it. The person who intends to do

something is the master of this language-game, and plays

it out of his own competence in the many and varied

circumstances of life. Thus the human being is dependent

upon the historical antecedents of training, but once

he is the master of the language, he functions on his

own, and the play of the language-games becomes the place

where sense is achieved.

Wittgenstein goes so far as to admit that once a

person has mastered the technique of using language he

can invent new languages and new words. In this sense

language is not limited. As he says in Zettel:

> 325. How did I arrive at the concept 'sentence'
> or 'language'? Surely only through the languages
> that I have learnt.--But they seem to me in a certain
> sense to have led beyond themselves, for I am now able
> to construct new language, e.g. to invent words.
> --So such construction also belongs to the concept
> of language. But only because that is how I want to
> fix the concept.
>
> 326. The concept of a living being has the same
> indeterminacy as that of language.
>
> 327. Compare: inventing a game--inventing language--
> inventing a machine.

The mastery of the use of language in the P.I. parallels

Wittgenstein's statement in the Tractatus, "The limits

of my language means the limits of my world,"(5.6) and

the statement, "The subject does not belong to the world:

rather it is a limit of the world."(5.632) The speaker

of language is in command of its use and the range of

possible uses is indeterminate. However, the one who uses

language is limited in another sense. Wittgenstein

argues that he is limited by the necessity of training

and the requirement that sense is _this_ use of language

in _this_ particular circumstance. As in the _Tractatus_

where he argued that the subject must construct a propo-

sition conditioned by logical form, in the _P.I._ he

argues that the human being must make a move in a particu-

lar language-game, and this will be possible because he

has been trained in and participates in the distinctively

human form of life which includes using language.(23)

That this life is open-ended is an aspect of the nature

of human life, and so limited by the fact that it is

human life and no other. This argument finds expression

in the following paragraph:

> 23. But how many kinds of sentence are there? Say
> assertion, question, and command?--There are _count-
> less_ kinds: countless different kinds of use of what
> we call 'symbols', 'words', 'sentences'. And this
> multiplicity is not something fixed, given once for
> all; but new types of language, new language-games,
> as we may say, come into existence, and others
> become obsolete and get forgotten. (We can get a
> _rough picture_ of this from the changes in mathematics.)

Though Wittgenstein acknowledges the fact that new

language-games come into existence and that human beings

can construct new languages and invent new words, he

insists that this all belongs to the concept of language,

and that without language these are not possible. That

is, it is the indeterminacy and open-ended quality of the

mastery of the technique of using language which allows
for these new games, but whatever is invented will still
have to be a language and a language-game. This parallels
his conviction expressed in the Tractatus that "A propo-
sition must use old expressions to communicate a new
sense."(4.03)

Though Wittgenstein clearly argues against the idea
that his concept of training and mastery ignores the
freedom of human beings, the question remains as to what
makes the training possible such that it achieves what
Wittgenstein calls an agreement in judgments.(242) In
his description of such a training he says, "I do it, he
does it after me; and I influence him by expressions of
agreement, rejection, expectation, encouragement. I let
him go his way, or hold him back; and so on."(208) One
can question Wittgenstein's account, for it seems to beg
the question by assuming an agreement in the use of the
expressions of agreement, rejection, expectation, encour-
agement, etc. for the purpose of training. Must there not
be a prior agreement about the use of these gestures and
expressions?

The implications of ignoring Wittgenstein's answer
to these questions can be seen in Peter Winch's account
of the origins of language which he attributes to
Wittgenstein. Winch recognizes that training is necessary

for language as a rule-governed activity agreed upon by
human beings. However, he does not recognize the limits
to what human beings may be trained to do linguistically.
That is, training through a social group is said to be
necessary, but this training is said to establish the
social group's collective view of reality, and Winch
finds no criterion to limit the concept of training such
that one could argue that this training is the training
which enables one to be in the right relationship with
reality. The consequence of this omission is that accord-
ing to Winch, human life breaks into social and cultural
units isolated from each other and from reality such
that there can be no concept of language per se nor the
acknowledgement of a common humanity which shares a com-
mon world.[54]

Wittgenstein acknowledges that human beings
raised in quite different cultures can be complete enigmas
to each other. This too is a fact of human nature. How-
ever, in the P.I. Wittgenstein indicates that the differ-
ences between human beings and the difference between
human beings and dogs are not at all in the same category.
(p. 223) Thus Wittgenstein even pushes his argument to
this limiting case of a culture so different that we would

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[54]See above, pp. 52-53.

be unable to discover a means of translating their

language into ours. At this limit, he argues that we

would not be able to say that the sounds these supposed

people make is a language:

> 207. Let us imagine that the people in that country
> carried on the usual human activities and in the
> course of them employed, apparently, an articulate
> language. If we watch their behaviour we find it
> intelligible, it seems 'logical'. But when we try
> to learn their language we find it impossible to do
> so. For there is no regular connection between what
> they say, the sounds they make, and their actions;
> but still these sounds are not superfluous, for if
> we gag one of the people, it has the same consequences
> as with us; without the sounds their actions fall into
> confusion--as I feel like putting it. Are we to say
> that these people have a language: orders, reports,
> and the rest? There is not enough regularity for us
> to call it language.

Wittgenstein's solution to this difficulty of

seeing the unity of language and the unity of mankind such

that one can speak of a fundamental ground which supports

the differences of human culture is to posit a unity to

the common, natural behaviour of mankind on which the

training into the mastery of language is based.[55] For this

reason he says:

> 206. . . . . Suppose you came as an explorer into
> an unknown country with a language quite strange to
> you. In what circumstances would you say that the

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[55]In his later works Peter Winch seeks to ground
his arguments in a concept of human nature. However, these
arguments have not found their way into the 'Fideists'
discussions of religion. See Peter Winch, Ethics and
Action (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), pp. 30-89.

> people there gave orders, understood them, obeyed
> them, rebelled against them, and so on? The
> common behaviour of mankind is the system of reference
> by means of which we interpret an unknown language.[56]

It appears that according to Wittgenstein a necessary
condition for successful training is what he calls human
behaviour. The gestures and expressions which he says
attend the training of human children have, he thinks,
something natural about them which is shared by the pre-
linguistic children and the teachers. It is in this
requirement for the possibility of a shared language
which, I think, Wittgenstein finds the solution to the
argument put forth by the 'Fideists' for a disjunctive
relation between language and reality. It is here that
Wittgenstein argues for a co-originality of language and
reality such that to use the facts of language to make
moves in language-games is to be in the right relation to
reality, and this simply means to be participating in the
objective facts of the real world. Thus, natural human
behaviour becomes in the P.I. the ground of human agreement
in judgments and the factual truth upon which all language
is grounded. Thus he says in distinguishing human children

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[56]John W. Cook has offered an interpretation of
Wittgenstein's later philosophy of language based on the
concept of human behaviour. See John W. Cook, "Human
Beings" in Peter Winch, ed., Studies in Wittgenstein
(New York: Humanities Press, 1969), 117-151. See esp.
pp. 147-149.

from such animals as dogs:

> 249. Are we perhaps over-hasty in our assumption
> that the smile of an unweaned infant is not a pre-
> tence?--And on what experience is our assumption
> based? (Lying is a language-game that needs to be
> learned like any other one.)

> 250, Why can't a dog simulate pain? Is he too
> honest? Could one teach a dog to simulate pain?
> Perhaps it is possible to teach him to howl on
> particular occasions as if he were in pain, even
> when he is not. But the surroundings which are
> necessary for this behaviour to be real simulation
> are missing.

In this example, Wittgenstein appeals to a basic
fact that the behaviour of unweaned infants is in some
sense spontaneous and natural. Since the infant is with-
out linguistic abilities one cannot say it pretends, fakes,
or simulates. It cannot lie, because lying is a language-
game to be learned. In this example Wittgenstein reaffirms
the philosophical maxim that truth is the judge of the
false. The child can smile and recognize a smile before
it learns these concepts and is able to use them to
simulate. The dog, however, cannot learn the concepts,
nor therefore, simulate. Real simulation is that which
a human being does out of his mastery of language. He
goes on, on his own, to play language-games. The
language-games he plays, according to Wittgenstein, are
to be understood as extensions and developments of natural
human behaviour, such that using language is itself
natural human behaviour.(Zettel, 545) Thus he says:

25.   It is sometimes said that animals do not talk
because they lack the mental capacity. And this
means: they do not think, and that is why they do not
talk. But--they simply do not talk. Or to put it
better: they do not use language---if we except the
most primitive forms of language.---Commanding,
questioning, recounting, chatting, are as much a part
of our natural history as walking, eating, drinking,
playing.

In the P.I. Wittgenstein seems to posit a natural,

common human behaviour as the ground of even the possibility

of training human children into linguistic competence.

One might say, according to Wittgenstein, if there were

no characteristic human behaviour, there would be no pos-

sibility of training children, because there would be no

natural expressions of agreement, encouragement, rejection,

disappointment, etc., and without such a natural agreement,

the pre-linguistic children and their teachers could not

get the training off the ground in the first place.

Wittgenstein's descriptive attempt to posit a

final condition for the possibility of language results

in his conviction that there is common human behaviour that

is primitive, in the sense of primary, and natural, in the

sense of instinctive. This interpretation finds confirma-

tion in the following example from Zettel:

540.   It is a help here to remember that it is a
primitive reaction to tend, to treat, the part that
hurts when someone else is in pain; and not merely
when oneself is--and so to pay attention to other
people's pain-behaviour, as one does not pay attention
to one's own pain-behaviour.

541.   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.

545.   . . . . 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).

With this as his basis, he is able to argue that human

beings share pre-linguistic behavioural patterns upon

which the training is based, and the training results in

an extension of this behaviour such that every language-

game that human beings play is natural behaviour for

human beings. The agreement in judgments which Wittgenstein

says is a requirement for language is grounded upon this

natural human behaviour.

Wittgenstein's attempt to substantiate this claim

concerning the natural pre-linguistic behaviour of human

beings as the basic pre-supposition of language provides

him with a means for arguing for the unity of language and

reality. The unity is established, according to his view,

in the facticity and objectivity of human behaviour, which

is proto-linguistic. Language, he indicates, is an exten-

sion of these facts of human life and a continuation or

development of them. Language is itself behaviour which

is natural to humans. Thus as in the Tractatus where he

says the co-originality of language and reality must be

based on the transcendental judgment of the logical form

of the facts of language and reality, in the P.I. he

says there must be an agreement in judgments and that this

is based on the facts of human behaviour which includes

the activities of using tools and instruments to achieve

sense.

One method Wittgenstein uses to substantiate this

argument is to demonstrate that it does not make sense to

posit the origin of a language in the resources of a

single, autonomous being who has no prior linguistic

abilities. In order to get at this idea of a language of

an autonomous being, Wittgenstein asks:

> 243.   . . . . But would a language be thinkable,
> in which one could write down or give vocal expression
> to his inner experiences--his feelings, moods, and
> the rest--for his private use?   . . . . The words of
> this language are to refer to what can be known only
> to the speaker; to his immediate, private, sensations.
> So another person cannot understand this language.[57]

Wittgenstein's procedure is initially to examine the

description itself and see if it makes sense. Does it

make sense to say, "Only I can know my immediate private

sensations"? According to Wittgenstein's later philosophy,

it does not make sense to pronounce upon a sentence in

isolation from some particular circumstance and purpose

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[57]My translation.

whether or not it makes sense, because the sense is the use and so far one has not given this sentence a use. As a part of the description of the private language,(243) one has to ask what kind of sentence this is, for what purpose it is used. In this situation, it seems to function as a descriptive sentence. That is, one could use Wittgenstein's technique described in 137 and put before the sentence, "This is how things are: Only I can know my immediate private sensations." However, if it is an empirical, descriptive proposition, one can also say, 'is true' or 'is false' after it and it will still make sense.(137)

Wittgenstein uses this latter test. The sentence, "Only I can know whether I am really in pain; another person can only surmise it," is in fact false, if used as an empirical proposition concerning the knowledge other people have of my pains, for, Wittgenstein says, ". . . other people very often know when I am in pain."(246) That is, it is a proper and correct use of the word 'know' to say, "I know your husband has a headache, and I am sorry to bother him, but I must speak to him now." However, there is another use of the word 'know' which means that

one is certain.[58] If the description of the private

language intends to make the general assertion that it is

the case that other people cannot know that I am in pain

with the certainty that I know it, Wittgenstein says

that it is nonsense. Though he does not deny that one

could imagine circumstances in which this proposition

could be used, perhaps as a joke, (246) the attempt to use

it as a general assertion of the fact that one can be

certain that one is in pain is what is nonsense. Again

he uses the test of negating the assertion to see if it

still makes sense. The negation of this proposition is:

"I cannot be certain I am in pain" used as a general

assertion of a human being's lack of awareness of his

own sensations.

It was demonstrated above that Wittgenstein's later

philosophy contains arguments which seek to show that

propositions which cannot be negated and still make sense

are not a priori or necessary assertions of matters of

fact, but grammatical propositions. In this context, he

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[58]John W. Cook has properly noted that Wittgenstein
is not discussing just any concept of knowledge whatever,
but the concept of certainty. In this context, then, the
negation of "Only I can be certain that I have a pain" is
"I can doubt whether I have a pain" or "I cannot be certain
that I have a pain." See John W. Cook, "Wittgenstein on
Privacy", in Pitcher, ed., Wittgenstein, The Philosophical
Investigations (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor
Books, 1966), p. 290.

argues that the proposition, "Only I can know I am in pain"

does not assert anything about the facts of pain, but

rather can be used to exhibit the grammar of our use of

the concept of awareness of pain. So he says, "The truth

is: it makes sense to say about other people that they

doubt whether I am in pain; but not to say it about

myself."(246) Using a parallel proposition concerning our

knowledge of our intentions, he says:

> 247. "Only you can know if you had that intention."
> One might tell someone this when one was explaining
> the meaning of the word "intention" to him. For then
> it means: that is how we use it. (And here "know"
> means that the expression of uncertainty is senseless.)

In this paragraph Wittgenstein shows that this is a

grammatical proposition both because it cannot be negated

and have sense, but also that it can be used to exhibit

or clarify the way we use the words, i.e. their grammar.

It is important to notice what conclusions

Wittgenstein reaches in this short series of paragraphs.

(246-252) Though he argues that one cannot sensibly

assert as a necessary truth concerning some matter of

fact that sensations are private, he affirms that we do

speak of doubting other's sensations, and that we do not

speak of doubting our own sensations. He does not deny

that the proposition, "Sensations are private," reveals

the grammar of our sensation talk. What he argues is that

taken as a necessary truth, it obscures the other aspects

of the grammar of our talk about the sensations of others. "Sensations are private" shows only one aspect of sensation talk, and does not describe the essence of the knowledge of sensations. To assert this proposition as a necessary truth is to foster an illusion about the nature of the human being which falsifies the reality of the grammar of sensations. That this is one aspect of the grammar is revealed by the fact that we teach children to restrain their expressions of sensations, moods and feelings in certain situations.

The kind of illusion the assertion of the grammatical proposition creates is what Wittgenstein calls a 'grammatical illusion'.(110) This kind of proposition, which when asserted as a necessary truth, conjures up a picture of the essence of sensations. Rather than a metaphysical assertion of an essence, Wittgenstein shows that this proposition does have everyday uses which are not philosophically interesting. Thus he says:

> 104.   We predicate of the thing what lies in the method of representing it. Impressed by the possibility of a comparison, we think we are perceiving a state of affairs of the highest generality.

> 115.   A picture held us captive. And we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably.

> 116.   When philosophers use a word. . . and try to grasp the essence of the thing, one must always ask oneself: is the word ever actually used in this way in the language-game which is its original home?

What we do is to bring words back from their
metaphysical to their everyday use.

The illusion which the picture of the privacy of
sensations creates is that of an autonomous being who has
direct access to his own feelings; who is cut off from
others because they cannot know what is going on _in_ him;
and who originates a language out of his own resources
in which the words refer to these private sensations. No
one else can understand this language, and so there is no
possibility of translating it and establishing communica-
tion with others about sensations. Though Wittgenstein
argues that this description is nonsense, he allows the
verbal description to stand, and investigates whether
it makes sense to say one can originate a language in these
circumstances. There are two aspects of this discussion
which will be developed here. On the one hand, Wittgenstein
argues that it takes language to invent language. On the
other hand, he argues against the idea that language is
a construction which has only a contingent relationship
with the facts of human behaviour. That is, this being
is said to have no natural expressions for sensations,
but only sensations.(256) In this hypothetical case, the
language is not based on the natural functions of human
bodily life and is not thought of as an extension and
manifestation of that life. Rather, the words of this

language are simply arbitrary sounds or marks which the
being in question is said to associate with the sensation
of which he is aware. Since the sensation has no natural
expression, one can only imagine that it is just there as
a factual occurrence.

Beginning with the first aspect of this argument,
Wittgenstein asks whether it makes sense to say that a
being intends to do something such that this activity is
an original intention which functions as the foundation
for future actions. In the depicted situation, the
language originates with a kind of ostensive definition(258)
which is achieved when the being performs the action of
attending to the occurrence of the sensation while making
a mark. This establishes the mark as the name of the
sensations. Earlier in the P.I. Wittgenstein argued that
a person who is receiving an ostensive definition from
another can be thought to misunderstand it in every case.(28)
Without prior linguistic abilities, such that the particu-
lar context in which the ostension takes place is recog-
nized and the two are playing the same game, it is not
possible to conceive of ostensive definition as the sole
source of language, or conceive of one isolated act of
ostension as self-evident. Consequently, Wittgenstein
suggests that there is a whole series of actions through
which the training is achieved, not one action. He says

in _Zettel_:

> 567.   How could human behaviour be described? Surely
> only by sketching the actions of a variety of humans,
> as they are all mixed up together. What determines
> our judgments, our concepts and reactions, is not
> what one man is doing now, an individual action, but
> the whole hurly-burly of human actions, the background
> against which we see any action.

However, could one think of the situation in which one

gives oneself an ostensive definition? In such a case

there would not be the question of possibly misunderstand-

ing what the other was intending, but rather, one would

only have to understand what oneself is intending by this

action. Certainly I cannot doubt what I myself am intend-

ing to do.

Wittgenstein agrees that it is nonsense to suppose

that one can doubt what he is intending to do.(197, 247)

However, this does not explain the connection between the

intention and the thing intended, but only marks the

grammar of the use of the word 'intend'.(197) That is,

to say that one cannot doubt one's own intentions does

not assert the priority of intention in establishing a

language-game. He says:

> 197.   . . . . Don't I know, then, which game I want
> to play until I have played it? or are all the rules
> contained in my act of intending? Is it experience
> that tells me that this sort of game is the usual
> consequence of such an act of intending? so is it
> impossible for me to be certain what I am intending
> to do? And if that is nonsense--what kind of super-
> strong connexion exists between the act of intending
> and the thing intended?-----Where is the connexion

> effected between the sense of the expression "Let's
> play a game of chess" and all the rules of the game?
> --Well, in the list of rules of the game, in the
> teaching of it, in the day-to-day practice of playing.

In this paragraph Wittgenstein indicates that there are

different kinds of acts of intending, and the question

is, what is it that makes this act of intending the

source of just this action of playing this game? How

do I know that by intending in this way I thereby get

that game? It is nonsense to think that one must wait

upon the act itself and infer from what happens that such

an intention leads to such a game, for that separates

the human being from his intentions which is nonsense.

Human beings are the source of their intentions, and do

not infer them from anything. However, Wittgenstein does

argue that there must be a connection between the intention

and the thing intended, for if there were no game of

chess, one could not intend to play it. Therefore, he

argues that the connection is established through the

rules of the game, the training and the practice. He

asks:

> 204.   As things are I can, for example, invent a game
> that is never played by anyone.--But would the following
> be possible too: mankind has never played any games;
> once, however, someone invented a game--which no one
> ever played?

Wittgenstein argues that it is not conceivable

that one could invent a game in a world that knows of no

games. In order to do so, the one who begins will have
to establish that this is a rule which will be followed
in the practice of the game. Wittgenstein asks if it is
possible to establish a rule in a world that knows of no
rules. If this is a rule, then it must have a particular
application. If it has a particular application such that
this application establishes just this game, one can ask
how it is possible to intend just this application of the
rule and no other. Wittgenstein, in many and various ways,
argues that a rule is not self-evident such that it
determines its own application; and he argues that meaning
or intending a particular application gets one no further,
for each application or method of projection can itself
find various methods of projection. Consequently <u>this</u>
application of <u>this</u> rule presupposes the language-games
of making rules, following them, etc., and is not something
that one could imagine to have happened in only one case.
He says:

> 199. . . . . It is not possible that there should
> have been only one occasion on which someone obeyed
> a rule. It is not possible that there should have
> been only one occasion on which a report was made,
> an order given or understood; and so on.--To obey a
> rule, to make a report, to give an order, to play a
> game of chess, are <u>customs</u> (uses, institutions).

Wittgenstein argues that the description of an
autonomous being making a mark to name a sensation begs
the question of the origin of language, because it assumes

that the being in question already knows how to function

with rules and therefore already knows how to use the

concept of name, rule, sensation, pain etc. The language-

games of naming things and the language-games in which

we use the word 'sensation' are rule-governed activities,

and the description of the private language assumes the

abilities needed to play not only these games, but to

play at all. Thus he says in another place, "For neither

the expression 'to intend the definition in such-and-such

a way' nor the expression 'to interpret the definition in

such-and-such a way' stands for a process which accompanies

the giving and hearing of the definition."(34) If there

is a characteristic experience which establishes that this

act of intention produces just this connection, then,

Wittgenstein asks, is there a characteristic experience

". . . of pointing to a piece in a game as a piece in a

game?"(35) By this reductio argument, Wittgenstein shows

that the mere act of making a mark and attending to the

sensation cannot be an original source of language,

because there is nothing which guarantees that this act

of intention is that of naming a sensation or establishing

a rule, so he says, "But in the present case I have no

criterion of correctness."(258)

The force of Wittgenstein's discussion of ostensive

definition is to subtract the concept of experience from

the concept of the meaning of a word. The experience of
attending to an occurrence as one makes a mark cannot
determine that one is thereby naming something, for one
needs to establish that this kind of attending is just
the kind which results in naming. In the imagined case
one would have to attend to the attending to establish
this connection. If the meaning of an action is determined
by attending, and attending is itself an action, then
there is no end to the regress. So Wittgenstein says,
"One would like to say: whatever is going to seem right
to me is right. And that only means that here we can't
talk about 'right'."(258; see also 201)

In the Tractatus Wittgenstein solved the problem
of the correctness of the association of name and object
by the argument for the transcendental judgment of the
logical form of the name and object. The unity of logical
form guaranteed that this name represents this object.
However logical form was said to be independent of the
subject. In this way Wittgenstein argued that human beings
share a common language with a common reference. In the
private language, the mark and the sensation are completely
dependent upon the subject for their correct association,
and there is no possibility either of sharing the meaning
of the word, nor establishing the correct use of the word,
for there is nothing but the mark and the sensation,

which are independent occurrences without an essential
unity.

What Wittgenstein argues against in this presen-
tation is what one could call a third man argument. This
autonomous being is the third thing which associates the
two other things to each other. There is nothing essential
about this connection, and the relationship is dependent
completely upon the intentionality of the being itself.
In the Tractatus Wittgenstein also argued against just
such a picture of the human being and his language. He
said that the thinking subject does not exist as some
third entity between the facts of language and the facts
which language depicts. Rather, he argued that proposi-
tions as facts which say something depend upon the unity
of the human being and the construction of the proposition-
fact.

In the P.I. Wittgenstein tries to show that the
human being's relationship to his language is not to be
pictured as a third thing between words and things by
arguing that there must be what one might call personal
involvement in the use of language.[59] He imagines a case

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[59]David Pole argues that for Wittgenstein the
concept of correct use is a public phenomenon which rejects
the need for what I have called personal involvement.
He says, "Broadly it is argued that so long as a man uses
a word rightly whenever need arises, and responds rightly

which is like the ordinary language-game of using the
word 'pain', but which differs from it in one essential
respect. He says, "Imagine a person whose memory could
not retain what the word 'pain' meant -- so that he
constantly called different things by that name -- but
nevertheless used the word in agreement with the usual
symptoms and presuppositions of pain!"(271) Is correct
public use of a word enough for a person to mean or
intend something with it, or must there be what one might
call personal involvement in the use? That is, must one
not only use the word correctly, but know that he is
using the word correctly (that is, have personally
mastered its use, and not merely think about the fact that
he is using it correctly)?

Wittgenstein responds to this question in the
following way: "Here I should like to say: a wheel
that can be turned though nothing else moves with it, is
not part of the mechanism."(272) That is, the mechanism,
the human being, moves with the correct use of language,
and to posit correct uses without the movement of a human

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to its use by other people, the occurrence of non-occurrence
of such inward events as we have been speaking -- an inward
act of understanding -- is immaterial." (p. 20) Again
he says, "In general Wittgenstein presents in terms far
too negative the part that intentional and psychological
factors play in language." (p. 90) David Pole, The Later
Philosophy of Wittgenstein (University of London: The
Athlone Press, 1958)

being is not to posit a human use of language. To posit

human behaviour which seems to be the natural expression

of pain and a correct use of pain language, but to leave

out the intentional act of the human being in this use,

is not to posit a human use of language. In this latter

case, one could say that these only seem to be symptoms

and presuppositions of pain, and this only seems to be

pain talk.

Going back to the private language which has no

expressions of sensations which are naturally tied to

them, one can see that Wittgenstein argues against this

supposed language on two grounds. First, language cannot

be thought to originate from the resources of an autonomous

being. Every possible instance of language presupposes

language, and the possibility of understanding any instance

of language depends upon understanding language as such.

(199) On the other hand, the depicted private language,

apart from its illusory character, does not even suppose

a human use of language, for such a use is not human

behaviour in which the human being moves in the language-

game. Without presupposing language in his descriptions

of the origins of language, Wittgenstein says human beings

must be trained into the agreement in judgments which makes

communication possible. The possibility of training, how-

ever, is said to depend upon characteristic, primitive,

natural expressions shared in common by human beings.

Thus he offers a possible description of the origin of

the agreement in judgments concerning the use of sensation

words:

> 244.   How do words <u>refer</u> to sensations?--There doesn't
> seem to be any problem here; don't we talk about
> sensations every day, and give them names? But how
> is the connexion between the name and the thing named
> set up? This question is the same as: how does a
> human being learn the meaning of the names of sensa-
> tions?--of the word 'pain' for example. Here is one
> possibility: words are connected with the primitive,
> the natural, expressions of the sensation and sit in
> their place. A child has hurt himself and he cries;
> and then adults talk to him and teach him exclamations
> and, later, sentences. They teach the child new pain-
> behaviour. "So you are saying that the word 'pain'
> really means crying?"---On the contrary: the verbal
> expression of pain replaces crying and does not de-
> scribe it.[60]
>
> 245.   For how can I go so far as to try to use lan-
> guage to get between pain and its expression

In these remarks, Wittgenstein offers an alterna-

tive description of the relationship of a human being to

his language than that found in the hypothetical third

thing depiction. He says the pain and the expression of

pain, that is, pain and pain-behaviour, are tied together

in such a way that to posit a distinction between them

such that a human being could be said to learn of his pain

or to doubt whether he is in pain is nonsense. (246) Thus

he asserts, "Pain behaviour can point to a painful place,

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[60]My translation.

--but the suffering person is he who expresses pain."[61](302)
The natural unity of pain and its expression is restated
in various places in the P.I. and various other concepts
are used. (See also 54, 256, 591, 606, 647.)

Wittgenstein speaks of a human natural history.
(25, 415) .This concept includes what might be called
the natural manifestations of primitive behaviour. He
argues that the learning of the use of concepts is achieved
through a training which is made possible because human
beings share these natural behavioural manifestations of
human nature with human children. Building language on
these natural expressions, children are trained into a
mastery of the use of words such that they are able to
use them on their own in new situations, and so in this
way they get the concepts.(208) The relationship of
language and reality, according to this view, is established
by the ability to use the facts of language as an exten-
sion of the facts of human behaviour.(Zettel, 545) In this
way Wittgenstein argues that using language is itself
natural human behaviour, and so acting linguistically in
the particular circumstances in which a move is made in a
game, a human being is manifesting the common behaviour
of human beings as much as an unweaned infant does when

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[61]My translation.

it cries when stuck by a pin. According to Wittgenstein's argument, sense is using the tools of language; using the tools of language is an action of one who has mastered their use; mastering the use depends on training; and training depends on the common, primitive, natural behaviour of human beings. Though the range of possible uses of language is indeterminate, sense is achieved only in a particular move in a particular language-game. Therefore, language and reality are one in this sense, for language is objectively real and autonomous, and its kind of reality is its use as a natural form of human behaviour. (25)

His argument against the idea of a third thing which stands behind language and reality and merely associates the two realms in a contingent fashion, leads Wittgenstein's later philosophy to a view of language which has parallels to that found in the Tractatus. As demonstrated above, in the earlier work Wittgenstein argued that the human being acts in the production of the signfact and in so doing manifests the logical form of reality. Throughout the P.I. Wittgenstein argues that every move in a language-game is a linguistic act in which the human being means something by using the tools of language for particular purposes in particular circumstances. In this sense, every use of language is a performance or an action

by a human being which is natural. Thus, meaning or sense
is not something which takes place behind or prior to
the linguistic action, but is the action itself.[62]

In the Tractatus this conclusion found support in
Wittgenstein's argument against the third man. In the
earlier work he said that sentences like, "A says p", have
the same form as "p" says p. A drops out of consideration
in the determination of sense, and this proves that the
soul as a third thing does not exist. Therefore, the one
who produces the proposition does not stand behind it, but
rather exists in the production of the proposition itself.
Wittgenstein parallels this argumentation in the P.I. to
the same end. In the play of the language-game, the
human being performs the moves and is not something behind
them by which sense is achieved. Thus he says:

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[62]Wittgenstein makes a direct reference to his
earlier work on this point. In the Notebooks he said:
"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.
One cannot will without acting."(P. 87) In the P.I. he
says: "'Willing, if it is not to be a sort of wishing,
must be the action itself. It cannot be allowed to stop
anywhere short of the action.' If it is the action, then
it is so in the ordinary sense of the word; so it is
speaking, writing, walking, lifting a thing, imagining
something. But it is also trying, attempting, making an
effort,---to speak, to write, to lift a thing, to imagine
something, etc. ."(615)

22.   . . . . And if I write, not "It is asserted that /such-and-such is the case/", but "It is asserted: such-and-such is the case", the words "It is asserted" simply become superfluous. . . . . Of course we have the right to use an assertion sign in contrast with a question-mark, for example, or if we want to distinguish an assertion from a fiction or a supposition. It is only a mistake if one thinks that the assertion consists of two actions, entertaining and asserting (assigning the truth-value, or something of the kind), and that in performing these actions we follow the propositional sign roughly as we sing from the musical score. Reading the written sentence loud or soft is indeed comparable with singing from a musical score, but 'meaning' (thinking) the sentence that is read is not.

In this paragraph Wittgenstein reaffirms that one step to solipsism is the possibility of transforming sentences into those which seem to posit the thinking human being behind the actual production of sentences in particular circumstances. It is against this view that many of his later arguments are directed. The difference between the Tractatus and the P.I. on this point is that in his earlier book Wittgenstein had to posit the third man in a transcendental way and then argue him into existence in the construction of the sign-fact. That is, the transcendental judgment of logical form does lead Wittgenstein to speak of the subject as the limit of language and the world. However, as transcendental, this subject is not a third thing, but the a priori condition for this proposition to make sense. Thus his third man is argued not to have an autonomous existence.

In the P.I. Wittgenstein argues by descriptions,

not deductions, and so he begins by positing a training on the basis of common human behaviour. This training leads to the mastery of language (which is the natural result of the training children receive). Once mastered, the human being is able to act linguistically on his own, and using language correctly means that the human being moves in the action.(615) He argues that the human being must act conditioned by the training in order to act linguistically in a particular language-game, which exists independently (even if he invented this game). Thus Wittgenstein says, "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."(p. 18n) Since language must be learned, even for there to be new and different forms of language, Wittgenstein asserts that speaking a language is participating in human life: "Here the term 'language-game' is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life."(23)

The parallels that are important for seeing the continuity in Wittgenstein's philosophical life may be summarized in the following manner:

<u>Tractatus</u>	<u>P.I.</u>
Logical form is the form of language and reality in that propositions are facts. (Above pp. 102-114.)	The form of human life is the form of the facts of human behaviour which extends into language behaviour. (Above pp. 248-9, 267-8.)
The transcendental judgment of logical form is necessary condition for language. (Above pp. 122-127.)	Based on the shared natural behaviour human beings agree in their judgments of the forms of human life. This agreement is the result of training. (Above pp. 264-267.)
Human beings act linguistically in the production of sign-facts. (Above pp. 158-160.)	Human beings act linguistically in making a particular move in a particular language-game. (Above pp. 242-4, 286-8.)
Human beings are free to produce sign-facts limited only by the logical form of reality. (Above pp. 160-163.)	Human beings are free to go on making moves, limited only by the requirement that this is a particular move in a particular game, and thereby a form of human life. (Above pp. 206-210.)
The limits of language are the limits of the world. (Above pp. 175-177.)	A human being is the master of his use of language. (Above pp. 256-262.)
A human being is the source of the new sign-fact and acts in its production. No third man arguments. (Above pp. 168-169.)	A human being is the source of the move in a language-game and acts in that move. No third man arguments. (Above pp. 281-283.)

CHAPTER VI

WITTGENSTEIN AND FIDEISM

It was demonstrated in Chapter I of this essay that
the interpretation of religion which has been called
'Wittgensteinian Fideism' rests upon an epistemological
theory of language and grammar. Wittgenstein's use of the
concept of autonomy of grammar is interpreted by the
'Fideists' to mean that the rules for correct linguistic
usage have developed out of the historical conditions of
distinct cultural and social groups. Grammar, understood
as the forms of our linguistic representations of the real,
is said to be autonomous from reality and function as the
rules which govern the language of a people, and these
forms are without any possible justification by what
might be called an independent reality. The 'Fideists'
recognize that there is a latent question about the 'real
in itself' when their position is described in this way.
Their response is that any question about such a reality
is a form of metaphysics which Wittgenstein has demonstrated
to be nonsense. They argue that what we call real or
unreal is determined and constituted by the language and
that it makes no sense to speak of the real outside of

some particular linguistic context.

In Chapter V of this essay I presented an alternative interpretation of Wittgenstein's use of 'autonomy of grammar' in which I demonstrated that it has no epistemological implications and that it gives rise to no possible metaphysical misconceptions concerning the idea of an extra-linguistic reality. The autonomy of grammar is a phrase which Wittgenstein uses to prevent his reader from asserting a grammatical proposition as if it were an empirical proposition. Wittgenstein shows that grammatical propositions have a surface appearance of an empirical assertion, and yet their grammar is such that they do not belong to the language-games with which a person plays with the true/false linguistic tools. The attempt to assert a grammatical proposition results in the illusion that what is asserted must be the case. The proposition cannot be false and make sense, so things cannot be otherwise.

In the 'fideistic' interpretation it is granted that the grammatical propositions cannot be asserted, but it is argued that these propositions must function as paradigmatic pictures or propositions which form our representation of the real. These propositions are said to be neither true nor false in comparison with reality, but are true by virtue of the conventions of language

which they govern. The 'Fideists' argue that religious

beliefs, understood as grammatical propositions or

paradigmatic pictures, function not as representations of

something, but rather as the objects of belief. They do

not represent anything because they function as the rules

of language and not as any kind of descriptive proposition.

I think that a non-Wittgensteinian source of the

'fideistic' interpretation of Wittgenstein's later work

is to be found in a kind of Kantian view of the function

of language and its grammar. The main exponent of the

epistemological view of the autonomy of grammar is P. M. S.

Hacker, and he compares Wittgenstein's work, as he has

interpreted it, to Kant: "It is therefore not surprising

that Wittgenstein's philosophy bears deepest affinities

to Kant's. . . ."[1] David Pears has also given a strongly

epistemological interpretation to the _Tractatus_ and the

_P.I._ and in his book he relates his interpretation directly

to the Kantian tradition of critical philosophy: "In both

periods his aim was to understand the structure and limits

of thought, and his method was to study the structure and

limits of language. His philosophy was a critique of

language very similar in scope and purpose to Kant's

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[1]Hacker, _Insight and Illusion_, _op. cit._, p. 139.

critique of thought."[2] I take the Kantianism in the
'fideistic' presentation of religious belief to be the
epistemological view that language and its grammar contain
the forms of our view of reality. Thus Hacker says,
"/Grammar/ is the form of representation, the tangle of
conceptual connections by means of which we conceive of
the world."[3] Pears concurs with this when he says,
"/Wittgenstein/ suggests . . . our language determines our
view of reality, because we see things through it."[4]
An epistemolgical view of Wittgenstein's philosophy
divides it into two possibilities: either reality must
form our language (this is a common interpretation of the
Tractatus, which takes its rise from Wittgenstein's theory
that logical form is the form of reality); or else our
language must form our representation of reality (and
this is the 'fideistic' interpretation of the P.I.).

I have tried to show that there is a continuity
in Wittgenstein's works concerning the autonomy of logical
form/form of life which enables his philosophy to break
out of the horns of this particular kind of subject-object
dichotomy. Rather than argue for a dominance of the real

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[2]Pears, op. cit., p. 12.

[3]Hacker, Insight and Illusion, op. cit., p. 114.

[4]Pears, op. cit., p. 13.

over the forms of language, or the dominance of language

over the forms of the real, Wittgenstein posits a third

alternative in his emphasis on the facticity, and in this

sense, independence, of language. He argues that language,

as an order of facts in the world, must be given to

human beings in order for them to communicate. Based on

the shared natural form of human behaviour which make

training possible, Wittgenstein says, human beings come

into an agreement in judgments which avoids the language-

reality distinction. I have spoken of a co-originality

of language and reality as a way of alluding to the

essential unity, constituted in human nature, of the

facts of language with all other facts. Wittgenstein

brings this out in the P.I. by speaking of language as

instrument and tool. He argues that human beings use and

act with the factual materials of the world in achieving

sense and communicating with each other. Rather than posit

language as autonomous from reality, Wittgenstein argues

that human beings achieve sense only if they act in the

world in harmony with, or conditioned by, the shared

forms of their natural life. In this way Wittgenstein

does not 'overcome' the subject-object dichotomy, but

rather rejects it altogether as an epistemological either/

or which has plagued modern philosophy. This is not a

simple rejection, however, for Wittgenstein is able to

find a solution to the problems which this either/or

poses by demonstrating a philosophical view of the human

being as he lives in the objective order of the world.

Though an epistemological form of fideism is not

in harmony with Wittgenstein's philosophy, I think that

there is a way in which another kind of fideism may emerge

from his arguments. I will divide this presentation into

two parts. The first will be concerned with the general

question concerning the relationship of belief to

understanding: in what sense is belief or trust a prior

condition for understanding that which is believed? The

second concerns Christian religious belief and asks in

what sense one must believe the teachings of the Christian

religion in order to understand them? The first question

is answered by recalling Wittgenstein's use of the concept

of understanding in relation to the concept of training.

He argues that there are instinctive natural forms of

human behaviour and that these shared patterns of behaviour

are the grounds upon which we train our children into

independence and mastery of their actions.

Wittgenstein shifts our view of the concept of

understanding from some idea about mental processes to a

view of our ability to use the materials of the world in

our everyday activities. Some of these activities could

be called thinking and reasoning. A person is trained

into the ability to think and reason. The condition for
the possibility of this kind of human behaviour is the
natural instincts of human children to accept the efforts
of those who train them. It is the concept of language
as an order of facts which is given to human beings
which shows that belief is prior to understanding and
reasoning. The autonomy of language and its grammar from
human beings and the necessity that human beings act in
harmony with the grammar of language in making moves in
language-games shows that there is a deep element of
authority which conditions all human activities. Human
beings accept the authority of grammar and they accept
the authority of those who train them into the mastery
of language.

I think that there is also an approach to reli-
gious belief which shows that Wittgenstein's later
philosophy can support a kind of fideism. This approach
is in contrast to the theory of religious belief offered
by the 'Fideists' because it is the result of a gramma-
tical investigation of some religious beliefs and not
the result of an epistemological theory. It might be
asked whether the truth of a religious belief is something
which is self-justified in the sense that believing it
makes it true. One could argue for this concept of
religious belief by saying that it is not to what a

religious belief corresponds that makes it true or false, but rather <u>how</u> a person believes it. In this context it would not matter <u>what</u> is believed, as long as it is believed religiously, i.e. in some sense in an absolute and unshakeable manner. Wittgenstein in his lecture on religious belief seems to support this kind of view of religious belief.[5] He speaks of a religious belief as unshakeable.(<u>LC</u>, p. 54) He says the grammar of the concept of religious belief is not like that of a hypothesis which deals with probabilities.(<u>LC</u>, p. 57) He says a religious belief is something for which a person would risk everything, and even indubitability is not enough to characterize the manner in which it is believed.(<u>LC</u>, p. 57)

In these lectures, Wittgenstein is contrasting the kind of belief which is religious from other kinds of belief.[6] These general remarks should be understood as marking some specific differences between the grammars of these different concepts of belief. Wittgenstein is distinguishing the manner in which a person holds a religious belief. It has to do with a kind of certitude as

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[5]<u>LC</u>, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., pp. 53-72.

[6]The editor remarks in the preface to these lectures that the context for the remarks on religious belief is a course on belief which Wittgenstein was giving. See <u>ibid</u>., p. vii.

this is linked to the role these beliefs have in the life

of a human being. Though Wittgenstein does not concern

himself with the content of belief, except as examples,

I think one could say that in another context he could

have spoken of _what_ is believed, rather than how it is

believed, but perhaps this is what he would characterize

as the task of theology--setting out the grammar of the

words and sentences as they are used by those who are

believers.[7]

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[7]In the _P.I._ Wittgenstein speaks of his philosoph-
ical work as grammar. It is a grammatical investigation(90)
which clears up misunderstandings of the way words and
sentences are used by describing various particular uses
in concrete circumstances. Since the reader already knows
the grammar, he will recognize this description as a
legitimate occasion in which something is said. Philoso-
phy as grammar describes the way we use ·language and dis-
tinguishes the various _kinds_ of statement we make.(90)
It also shows the variety of ways we speak about things,
and a grammatical investigation will bring out what kind
of thing it is that is being discussed in a particular
language-game. Thus Wittgenstein says, "Grammar says what
kind of object anything is. (Theology as grammar.)"(373)
Theology understood as a grammatical investigation will
proceed in a way very much like Wittgenstein pursues his
philosophical investigations. It will set forth the
grammar of the expression of beliefs of a religious tra-
dition. It will try to clear away misunderstandings of
the ways the words and sentences are used and describe
correct usage.

The difference between the theologian and the
philosopher might be clarified by Wittgenstein's remark,
"The philosopher is not a citizen of any community of
ideas. That is what makes him into a philosopher." (_Zettel_,
455) The theologian is one who is _able to use_ the expres-
sions of belief of a religious _community_. He is able to
recognize the grammar and has the ability, as a theologian,

Wittgenstein's analysis of the concept of religious

belief in these lectures does not set limits to <u>what</u> can

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to recognize misuses of the language and to describe the
variety of correct uses which the community will already
know and accept. In this sense the theologian <u>is</u> a member
of a community of ideas.

Wittgenstein makes the distinction between what he
calls the 'surface grammar' and the 'depth grammar' of the
use of language. The former refers to the sounds and looks
of the particular linguistic production. The depth grammar
refers to the total context, spatial and temporal as well
as the intentional context of the specific purposes with
which a human being uses these words. Wittgenstein's de-
scriptions of the grammar of language shows that part of
the depth grammar of language lies in the way human beings
'move' in their activities of playing language-games.

The depth grammar of a religious belief which the
theologian tries to clarify is more than the relationships
of words and propositions. It also includes the proper use
of these linguistic tools. The proper use will include the
ways a human being 'moves' in the use. Faith could be
called the grammatical requirement for correct usage of re-
ligious concepts. In this sense one could say that a theo-
logian must have faith and be able to use the religious
beliefs according to their depth grammar if he is to be able
to recognize correct and incorrect usage. If the theologian
does not have faith, then his work will be guided by the
surface grammar of the language, and this will not get at
the kind of clarity which Wittgenstein indicates that a
grammatical investigation can achieve. Also, the work of
a theologian, understood in terms of Wittgenstein's thought,
is itself a religious use of language. Its purposes are to
clarify the grammar so that others will see its depth gram-
mar and be able to use the concepts without misunderstand-
ings. If such correct use could be called 'faith', the
theologian's work provides for the faith of the community.
If this is a correct analysis of Wittgenstein's considera-
tion of theology, then the view of the theologian as an
uncommitted philosopher is a misunderstanding of both
theology and of Wittgenstein's view of grammar as inquiry.
Such an interpretation is given by Richard Bell,
"Wittgenstein and Descriptive Theology", <u>Religious Studies</u>,
5 (1969), pp. 1-18.

be believed as a religious belief. However, I think his
philosophy does not argue that just anything can be a
religious belief. Wittgenstein says, "Language is an
instrument. Its concepts are instruments. Now perhaps
one thinks that it can make no great difference which con-
cepts we employ." (569) This remark can be joined to his
statement, ". . . what we call 'measuring' is also deter-
mined by a certain constancy in results of measurement."
(242) If one applies these statements to the concept of
religious belief, one could say, "Not just anything can
be believed as a religious belief." It is not just
anything which can regulate for all in a human being's
life.(LC, p. 54) What we call religious belief is also
determined by a certain constancy in the use of these
beliefs in the lives of human beings. There is a family
of things called religious belief and though one will not
be able to draw a strict boundary around this family,
except perhaps for some particular reason, still this is
a family of concepts with which human beings know how to
function. A distinction which people make, though a
difficult one to make, is between fanaticism and religion.
If anything could function as a religious belief just by
the absolute way a person affirms what he believes, there
would be no such distinction. Consequently I do not think
that Wittgenstein's thought can be used to support the

contention that the concept of religious belief is determined simply by how they are believed and not by what is believed.

If one shifts the question to the truth of what is believed one enters into a much more complex discussion. The question about the truth of a religious belief in this context directly concerns whether or not a religious belief is a claim about how things stand. In order to approach this question one would have to ascertain the kind of claim concerning the way things stand which a religious believer makes. If it is a claim about the occurrence of some spatial, temporal event, then one could investigate what kind of procedures would be relevant for determining the truth or falsity of the belief. It may be that there are no possible procedures, but this too will need to be known. As Wittgenstein says, "Asking whether and how a proposition can be verified is only a particular way of asking, 'How d'you mean?' The answer is a contribution to the grammar of the proposition."(353) The 'whether and how' of verification procedures contributes to our understanding of the grammar and will help determine what kind of spatial, temporal phenomenon is being discussed. The kind of event or object something is, is determined through such grammatical investigations.(373)

I have argued that the distinction between an

empirical and a grammatical investigation is central to
Wittgenstein's later work. A grammatical investigation
will determine, for example, whether or not something is
an event which can be empirically verified. If a religious
belief is a claim about such an event, the expression of
this claim will obviously make sense if it is negated.
Therefore, one could simply say that the religious belief
is either true or false. Either the event occurred or
it did not. It is obvious that Christianity is a religion
which makes claims about the occurrence of historical
events. However, there are also religions which make no
such claims. If one wishes to discuss the question of the
truth of religion, it is necessary to determine what kind
of claims are being made and whether or not these claims
are about the occurrence or non-occurrence of what is
believed. In this essay I will speak only about the
Christian traditions because these are the traditions
which the 'Wittgensteinian Fideists' discuss, and also
because these traditions do assert certain truth claims
about empirical matters of fact. One could imagine the
situation arising where a Christian would say, "Jesus had
no human father, but rather was born of a virgin," and
a non-Christian would say, "Every human being has a father
and therefore Jesus had a human father also." In this
context there is a direct contradiction between two people's

statements. Each is making an historical statement con-
cerning the paternity of a particular human being, though
they are basing their claims on different grounds. The
Christian's claim is based upon traditions handed down
from the early ages of the Church, while it could be said
that the non-Christian is basing his claim upon a gram-
matical statement.

Here I think one could use as a grammatical remark
the statement that events which have occurred in the past
cannot be verified, i.e. historical claims can always be
doubted.[8] That these contradictory historical claims do
not admit of any possible verification by those who make
these claims does not obviate the contradiction. In this
context one could use as a grammatical remark the state-
ment that past events cannot be known but only believed.
Of course this grammatical proposition does not encompass
the full grammar of the way we speak of our knowledge of
past events, though it does reveal an aspect of it.

Wittgenstein affirms that Christianity is said to
rest upon an historical foundation.(LC, p. 57) He does
not say that this religion makes no truth claims concerning

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[8]This grammatical remark is parallel to
Wittgenstein's statement in the LC, p. 57: "Here we have
a belief in historic facts different from a belief in
ordinary historic facts. . . . . Those people who had
faith didn't apply the doubt which would ordinarily apply
to any historical proposition."

past events, but only that these beliefs are not <u>treated</u>
as we treat other kinds of historical propositions.(<u>LC</u>,
p. 57) Believers do not apply that kind of doubt which
is ordinarily applied to historical claims, especially to
those claims concerning events in the distant past. To
say that these are religious beliefs and not ordinary
historical beliefs means that a person could be imagined
who would risk everything for them and change his whole
way of life.(<u>LC</u>, p. 57) I think it is correct to say that
Christians believe that certain historical events occurred,
and that these beliefs are held as religious beliefs.
Because they are historical beliefs, a doubt is possible.
They might not have have happened. Jesus may have had a
human father, and the tomb may not have been empty, or its
emptiness could have been achieved by some other means
than the resurrection of his body. To say that the grammar
of these beliefs is not that of truth claims is incorrect.
The historical propositions still make sense if they are
negated. If Christianity has a historical foundation,
then one could say that these historical propositions must
be believed, as all historical statements must be believed.
In this sense a grammatical investigation of these reli-
gious beliefs would show that a kind of fideism is a
correct approach.

However, there is a second kind of religious

belief which is often discussed when one speaks of the
truth of religion. It is a question of the existence or
non-existence of God. It is beyond the scope of this
essay to enter into the complex discussion of whether or
not philosophical thinking can establish the existence
or non-existence of God. In Chapter I I made the statement
that Christians believe that God is the creator of all
things and that He is everywhere always wholly present
and active creating and saving His creation. I said that
this sentence may be a way of showing what the words
'eternal God' mean. Are the propositions with which
Christians speak of God assertions about some kind of
thing, or are they grammatical propositions which merely
show how Christians use the conceptual tool, 'God'? If
they are assertions which make truth claims, it is obvious
that empirical verification is not applicable to the
determination of the truth or falsity of these claims.
That it is not, contributes to a correct view of the
grammar of these claims. Wittgenstein points out that in
learning the use of the word 'God' children are taught
that one must believe in the existence of God.[9] (LC, p. 59)
If the religious belief in the existence of God is a truth

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[9] See above pp. 39-42, for my discussion of
Wittgenstein's view of assertions about the existence of
God in the context of belief in that existence.

claim about the existence of something, at least it is

unlike any matter of fact or historical truth claim.

If these beliefs are not truth claims, but only

grammatical propositions, does that mean reality has

nothing to say here and that these propositions are

arbitrary conventions of certain human societies? I think

one can recall Wittgenstein's thought concerning the

relationship of reality to grammatical propositions and

see that if the proposition e.g. "God eternally exists"

is not a truth claim but a grammatical remark an exami-

nation of the contexts of its use will reveal in what

way the _facts_ contribute to its appropriateness.[10] I

think one could contend that this can be used as a

grammatical proposition which show us the correct use of

the word 'God', and that this use is related to certain

historical propositions which refer to events which

Christians believe to have occurred. Perhaps it could

be said that the grammatical proposition, "God eternally

exists" reflects the belief in the identity of the God

of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; the God of Moses and the God

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[10]I speak of the appropriateness of the use of a
proposition because Wittgenstein's later philosophy offers
a variety of ways of evaluating the sense of an utterance.
True or false is only one of these ways. If one uses a
proposition in the wrong context, nonsense may result, and
yet the evaluation of this use may not be made on the
basis of whether or not the words true and false apply.

in Christ; the one God of the Jews and Christians to whom,
they believe, He has revealed Himself and with whom, they
believe, He lives. It reflects the fact that Christians
and Jews pray to someone who is believed to be wholly
present everywhere and always, and it could be said that
this belief is related to the belief in particular
historical events in which He is said to have revealed
Himself. In this sense the proposition, "God eternally
exists", viewed as a grammatical proposition, far from
being empty of content, far from being nonsense, and far
from being a 'necessary existential proposition',
reflects the religious beliefs in certain historical
events. If these are used as grammatical propositions
based upon historical events, then we are back to the
previous position that since all historical claims are
believed, so too must be these religious beliefs. Perhaps
this is what St. Paul meant when he said that belief in
the Christian message is dependent upon preaching.[11] In
order to know that a historical event has occurred, one
must either have witnessed it or have been told about it

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[11]St. Paul, Romans 10:14, 17: "But how shall they
call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how can
they believe unless they have heard of him? And how can
they hear unless there is someone to preach? . . . .
Faith, then, comes through hearing." New American Bible,
(New York: Benziger, Inc., 1970).

by witnesses. If Christianity rests upon a historical

foundation then it is necessary for someone to be given

this information in order to believe it.

The kind of fideism which Wittgenstein's later

thought supports is not a theory of religious belief. I

offer this analysis of beliefs of the Judaeo-Christian

traditions in order to show that in its application to

topics in religion Wittgenstein's philosophy does not

lead to the kind of epistemological fideism which is

often attributed to his thought. However, one might ask,

given that this interpretation of Wittgenstein's philo-

sophy is correct, whether this account of religious be-

lief is a correct one. On the one hand I think that my

argument concerning the historical religious beliefs is

both true to Wittgenstein and true to the historical

religions of Christianity and Judasim. On the other

hand I am in doubt concerning the discussion of the

existence of God. It is not unusual for a religious

tradition to hold the position that every human being

already knows that God exists, and that no human being

is free from the responsibility of worshipping this God.

Such a position might be found in St. Paul's Letter to

the Romans where he says the invisible realities of God's

power and divinity are manifested by the visible things

of the created order. (Romans 1:20) It is reported that

Wittgenstein was impatient with so-called proofs of God's existence.[12] It is clear from the earlier philosophy that the demonstration of the transcendental character of logical form is the closest Wittgenstein comes to a philosophical concept of God as the one, true, good and beautiful. Whether this concept can be related to what is referred to as God in religious traditions, I do not know.

In his later work Wittgenstein completely rejected the earlier transcendental philosophy such that the widest concept of the P.I. is form of life. Wittgenstein's later work is completely non-theistic even to the extent that he does not employ a metaphysical category as the ultimate foundation of his philosophy but only a concept which has descriptive uses. In this sense it seems that Wittgenstein's later work stands against those claims of religious traditions that religious belief is grounded upon a knowledge of God which is natural to every human being. Consequently the view of fideism that I have presented is an analysis of only some religious beliefs and not of all, and I make no claims in terms of belief in God whether knowledge or belief is prior to the other.

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[12]Malcolm, Memoir, op. cit., p. 71.

CONCLUDING SUMMARY

I have demonstrated that Wittgenstein's purpose in
philosophy is to lead his reader into a clarity concerning
his own ability to use language to make sense. Central
to his works is the abiding conviction that every human
being already has whatever is necessary to say something.
For this reason Wittgenstein believes that philosophy
is not interested in gaining information, discovering new
and different things, or supporting hypotheses concerning
human natural history or mental processes. The purpose
of philosophy is to show what is already known in such a
way that a person will be able to recognize the foundations
of his own life. I think this can be called an ethical-
religious purpose of Wittgenstein's two periods of philo-
sophy.

Wittgenstein says in the preface to the Tractatus
that his goal in philosophy is to solve the philosophical
problems in a definitve and final way,[1] and he concludes
the book with a reference to seeing the world aright.(6.54)
He says these problems arise from a misunderstanding of

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[1]Tractatus, p. 5.

311

the logic of language,[2]and the solution is to be found

in a completely clear view of the logical form of reality.

In order to achieve this purpose of philosophy Wittgenstein

says he will set a limit to language. Once this limit is

set a person should be able to see what it means to say

something and thereby be able to speak clearly without

uttering nonsense. As he says in the Tractatus,

philosophy ". . . will signify what cannot be said, by

presenting clearly what can be said."(4.115) What cannot

be said can be shown(4.1212), and this is what enables

propositions to say anything at all(4.12), i.e. logical

form. Seen in this way the goal of the Tractatus is to

bring the reader into a clear view of the logical form of

language and reality which will enable him to say some-

thing. This means, as was demonstrated above, that the

human being will be able to act linguistically in harmony

with the world without unwittingly producing nonsense.

In speaking of the mystical Wittgenstein makes

the following remarks:

> 6.44   It is not how the world is that is the
> mystical, but that it is.

> 6.45   The view of the world sub specie aeterni
> is the view of it as a ---limited--whole.
>   The feeling of the world as a limited
> whole is the mystical.

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[2]Tractatus, p. 3.

6.522   There is indeed the unsayable. This
           manifests itself. It is the Mystical.

These remarks concerning the mystical parallel those con-

cerning logical form and the subject. It is logical form

which is unsayable and which manifests itself in proposi-

tions which do say something.(4.12 - 4.1212) It is

logical form which is not concerned with _how_ the world

is but _that_ it is.(5.552) And it is logical form and the

linguistic subject which knows logical form _a priori_ which

constitute the limits of the world.(5.6) Therefore when

the subject understands clearly the logic of language he

sees it as the limits of all possible worlds and as the

condition for his ability to represent all possible

worlds. The unsayable which the subject feels or sees

manifested is the condition for there being a world, and

this is the one transcendental form of logic, ethics and

aesthetics which is recognized when one sees the world

sub specie aeterni.

Though Wittgenstein speaks of the mystical in

terms of a feeling(6.45) or a seeing(6.54) his argument

leads away from these experiences toward the requirement

for ethical action in the present moment. By ethical

action Wittgenstein means actions which make sense by

being conditioned by the eternal forms of reality.(6.4311)

The direction of the Tractarian argument, then, is from

a presentation which exhibits the logical form of reality

toward the task set by the world which only the transcen-

dental agent can accomplish through acting in the present.

Such an action is freedom, eternal life and the reward

for the exercise of a good will.(6.422)

Wittgenstein attempts in his later work to say

only what can be said. As a philosopher he rigorously

and artfully uses language in the particular language-games

of philosophy. Rather than produce a work in order to

end philosophy, as he intended to do with the Tractatus,

his later work is his attempt to enable his reader to

make sense in every kind of language-game, including philo-

sophy. Wittgenstein turns away from explanations and

theories of language. He emphasizes the descriptive

character of his later work in order to affirm the facti-

city of language as it is woven into the actions of human

beings. He argues that the production of language which

makes sense is the use of the tools of language in the

particular circumstances of a person's life. These tools

are factual materials, and the human being is able to use

them conditioned by the forms of human life. The use of

these things is an action of a person. As master of the

language the person is the source of his actions.

Meaning, in the use of language and in any human action,

is the movement of the human being. For this reason

Wittgenstein says in the P.I.:

> 455.   We want to say: "When we mean something, it's like going up to someone, it's not having a dead picture (of any kind)." We go up to the thing we mean.

> 456.   "When one means something, it is oneself meaning"; so one is oneself in motion. One is rushing ahead and so cannot also observe oneself rushing ahead. Indeed not.

Wittgenstein's reference to a 'dead picture' may appear to be a rejection of the Tractatus' theory of meaning, especially if one does not recognize the unity of pictorial form and pictorial relationship which he establishes in his first book. If pictorial relationship is not essentially part of pictorial form, the Tractatus would have resulted in a theory of language in which pictures and propositions are lifeless facts which do not project possible situations. The direction of Wittgenstein's earlier thought is toward exposing that which makes picture-facts picture. He asks, what gives life to this fact such that it is able to represent some possible occurrence in the world? His answer is, the human being who already knows the logical form of language and reality and projects the fact. In the P.I. Wittgenstein once again asks this question, and his answer parallels that of the Tractatus. He says:

> 432.   Every sign by itself seems dead. What gives it life? --In use it lives. Does it have its living breath in itself there?   --Or is the use its breath?

By themselves the tools of language are merely facts in
the world without life and meaning. When a human being
uses these tools they mean something and live. Their
use is the breathing of the tool and it is the human being
who breathes life into them. This life is his own, and
in using the tools he means them and acts in and through
them. For this reason Wittgenstein says, "Meaning is a
physiognomy."(568) Human beings live bodily, and they
mean through bodily actions in which they manifest them-
selves. Whatever a person means by his bodily action is
himself meaning.

Wittgenstein's attempt to show the way human
beings are dependent upon, yet free to act because of
their training could be understood as a religious aim of
his philosophy. His thought, in both periods of his work,
is distinctively non-theistic. He recognizes no revela-
tion, and says that he is unable to use the words and
sentences of the religious traditions of which he has
knowledge. The object and limit of his investigations
is the grammar of language, and grammar is not a god.

In his later work Wittgenstein produces his second
attempt to show the foundational conditions for the
possibility of human life, which are independent of the
human being and are given to him. Wittgenstein insists
that we master our language. He shows the freedom we

have to 'go on' and act in the particular circumstances
of our lives. He argues that language is a tool and uses
of language are extensions and expressions of our natural
bodily life in the world. He tries to lead his reader to
recognize the conditions for the possibility of his own
life which he has in common with all humanity. The real
need is to move(107), and if these conditions are met,
one will be able to act in freedom. If one moves, he
is present, acting in freedom in unity with the world.
It is here, I believe, that one can recognize what Malcolm
has called the possibility of religion in Wittgenstein's
philosophy.[3] It is here that one can see the fundamental
unity and center of Wittgenstein's philosophical life.

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[3]Malcolm, Memoir, op. cit., p. 72.

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