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Sub Specie Aeterni:
The Mystical in the Early Writings of Ludwig Wittgenstein

James Atkinson

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to consider what reasonably follows from the hypothesis that the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* can be interpreted from a mystical point of view. That is, if the final passages on the mystical are considered as the conclusion of the book, how does this end follow from Ludwig Wittgenstein's claim that the *Tractatus* deals with the problems of philosophy?

First, I will attempt to show that Russell's method based on analysis is an inadequate means of understanding what cannot be put into words. Second, in contrast to analysis, I will consider the method Wittgenstein uses in light of the topics in the *Tractatus* that cannot be expressed in words. This second point is the focus of this project because, as I will show, while reality cannot be expressed in words, neither can it be considered nonsense.

Next, the thesis will examine the question of showing in three parts. First, it will demonstrate that Wittgenstein's notion of showing forms the basis for his separation from Russell's theory of types; second, it will illustrate that there is no distinction between what is shown and what shows itself; and third, it will connect Wittgenstein's notion of showing to the mystical.

Following this, the thesis is concerned with what sense we can grasp of what cannot be put into words. In dealing with the eternal and the mystical, this section will offer a view

from outside language to satisfy both concerns (i.e. both reality and what cannot be expressed in words). Viewing the world in this way is the mystical.

Finally, we will discuss sense and nonsense, and the mystical from the view of other philosophers in order to show that Wittgenstein's thoughts on nonsense and the mystical cannot be interpreted from either a metaphysical point of view or an anti-metaphysical perspective.

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Dedicated to my late mother
who never wavered in her love and support.
If she had one more breath, this would be her moment.

Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to consider what reasonably follows from the hypothesis that the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* can be interpreted from a mystical point of view. That is, if the final passages on the mystical are considered as the conclusion of the book, how does this end follow from Ludwig Wittgenstein's claim that the *Tractatus* deals with the problems of philosophy? The interpretation of the *Tractatus* this thesis offers does not preclude other interpretations. Rather, it seeks to understand the passages on the mystical in the context of the entire book.

Bertrand Russell writes in his Introduction to Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* that the book "certainly deserves, by its breadth and scope and profundity, to be considered an important event in the philosophical world". In Wittgenstein's Preface to his book we have a sense of this profundity when he begins the second paragraph with the statement that "the book deals with the problems of philosophy". He continues by stating that the reason the problems of philosophy are posed is due to the misunderstanding of language that attempts to say what cannot be said. According to Wittgenstein, the means to solving the problems of philosophy is through drawing limits to the expressions of thought. Having reached the aim of drawing limits to the expressions of thought, what remains? According to Wittgenstein, on one hand there are the propositions of natural science, but natural science has nothing to do with philosophy. On the other, there are the things that cannot be put into words. Wittgenstein calls these things the mystical. However, if the mystical cannot be put into words, (that is, propositions about it are nonsense), what

sense can we make of the passages on the mystical? The challenge we face is to make sense with words of something that cannot be expressed in words.

We will attempt to meet this challenge in the ten chapters that follow, which can be grouped into four larger sections. The first section (Chapters 1 and 2) will show that Russell's method based on analysis is an inadequate means of understanding what cannot be put into words. Second, in contrast to analysis, it will consider the method Wittgenstein uses in light of the topics in the *Tractatus* that cannot be expressed in words. Employing a method that seeks to draw a distinction between what can and cannot be said, we discover that what cannot be said can be seen in two ways: first, as propositions that do not correspond to reality; second, as the experience of reality. This second point is the focus of this project because, as I will show, while reality cannot be expressed in words, neither can it be considered nonsense. The word Wittgenstein uses to describe reality in this sense is *Realität*, or empirical reality. The second section (Chapters 4, 5, and 6) is concerned with the question of showing. There are three parts to this section: the first part demonstrates Wittgenstein's notion of showing forms the basis for his separation from Russell's theory of types; the second illustrates that there is no distinction between what is shown and what shows itself; and the third connects Wittgenstein's notion of showing to the mystical. The purpose of this section is to demonstrate that Wittgenstein's notion of showing is not only a relationship between propositions and logical form (i.e. what a proposition shares in common with reality), but is linked to the mystical as reality (*Realität*). However, if what the mystical shows cannot be put into words, why should we be concerned with Wittgenstein's thoughts on the

mystical? The third section, chapters (7 and 8), is concerned with what sense we can grasp of what cannot be put into words. That is, while propositions have sense because they correspond to reality, the question this project will consider is what sense can we make of what cannot be put into words but is reality. In dealing with the eternal and the mystical, the chapters in this section will offer a view from outside language to satisfy both concerns (i.e. both reality and what cannot be expressed in words). Viewing the world in this way is the mystical. The final two chapters are about the topics of sense and nonsense, and the mystical from the view of other philosophers. The objective these chapters meet is to show that Wittgenstein's thoughts on nonsense and the mystical cannot be interpreted from either a metaphysical point of view or an anti-metaphysical perspective.

The first chapter begins with Russell's scientific method of philosophy to show that a method based on analysis is an inadequate means of understanding what cannot be expressed in words. This chapter will draw a connection from Russell's belief in the independent nature of complexes and their constituents to his scientific method of philosophy. The purpose of making this connection is to show that the assumption about the independent nature of things leads to a method that is unable to grasp what lies outside the independent nature of things. The following chapter will examine that an analytic approach to objects, the solipsistic self and the mystical does not apply because they are not self-subsistent things that can be put into words. The consideration of these things that cannot be put into words will set the ground for a method based not on what can be said, but on making clear what can and cannot be said.

The main thrust of the third chapter will be to contrast Russell's interpretation of Wittgenstein's thoughts on language with the account of language we find in the *Tractatus*. The separation from Russell's view serves as a base from which we can introduce key elements for the discussion on the mystical that will follow. Among these key points is the distinction between two references to reality, *Wirklichkeit* and *Realität*. The former is the reality that corresponds to the existence and non-existence of states of affairs, while the latter is the reality we experience. A second topic that will be introduced is Wittgenstein's notion of contemplation and that a viewpoint from outside language means a view of which nothing can be said. The fourth chapter is concerned with Wittgenstein's objections to Russell's theory of types. The purpose of introducing the theory of types is to show that the motivation behind Wittgenstein's critique is his notion of showing. Wittgenstein's thoughts on showing are important to our consideration of the mystical because it serves to establish the distinction between *how* the world is (i.e. what can be expressed in language) and *that* the world is (i.e. the mystical). The fifth chapter follows on Wittgenstein's thoughts on showing to introduce two key concepts. First, in response to Max Black's account of Wittgenstein's thoughts on showing, it will be demonstrated that there is no actual distinction between what shows itself and what is shown. That is, the distinction we find in Black is one made in language, but I will show that it is not consistent with Wittgenstein's intentions. This chapter will also consider Erik Steinius' distinction between external showing and internal showing. The critique I shall consider is based on two terms Wittgenstein uses for showing, "*weisen*" (display) and "*zeigen*" (to point or indicate). The sixth chapter will

consider the connection between showing and the mystical. The first of two main parts to this discussion will focus on the distinction between the view of the world from inside the world and language and the view from outside the world and language. Although there are things that cannot be put into words, this chapter will demonstrate that they show themselves. To reach this aim, this chapter will focus on establishing the distinction between the viewpoint of seeing the world through language and the viewpoint from outside language. The importance of the second viewpoint is to establish that there are things that cannot be put into words, but show themselves. These things are the mystical. First recognizing how *Wirklichkeit* and *Realität* are different, and then seeing them in light of being the same world will motivate this discussion. Finally, in order to indicate what lies outside what can be put into words, we shall consider *Realität* in light of *zeigt*, or to point to or indicate something.

Chapter 7 will establish that Wittgenstein's notion of the eternal as the present moment is the mystical. The two parts to the argument that supports this claim are found in response to Russell's two objections to the mystic's notion of the eternal: first, he states that it does not account for change; second, he claims that denying the past and future presents an unreal notion of time. From Russell's first objection I shall argue the eternal is the present living moment, while his second objection will provide the base for the claim I shall make that this present moment is the mystical. The importance of this chapter is to draw a link that connects the immediate present to *Realität* and what cannot be put into words. Chapter 8 is concerned with the significance of what cannot be put into words. That is, when the aim of philosophy (drawing limits to what can be said) is met, what sense can

we make of what cannot be expressed in words? This chapter will establish that while the mystical is what cannot be put into words, the sense we can find in what cannot be expressed in words is the immediate present reality. The final two chapters are concerned with the question of Wittgenstein's notion of nonsense and the mystical from the viewpoint of other authors. In Chapter 9 we will consider a metaphysical interpretation of the *Tractatus* that we find in the works of G. E. M. Anscombe and P. M. S. Hacker, and a rejection of the metaphysical view we shall examine in the writings of Cora Diamond and James Conant. The core issue of the debate between the metaphysical view and the anti-metaphysical view is what can one take away from the text. Anscombe and Hacker believe that there is something outside language that can be taken away from the book. On the other hand, Diamond and Conant take the passages on nonsense literally and think there is nothing outside what can be said. I shall offer as an alternative view that while there is no metaphysics in the book, we gain a view of the world from the outside. That is, when all metaphysical language is rejected and we see the propositions of the *Tractatus* as nonsense, we are left with a view of the world as a limited whole. This view, according to Wittgenstein, is the mystical.

Before proceeding we must clarify the use of the term "the mystical" that will be used throughout this thesis. To begin, the *Tractatus* is not a book about mysticism. The term "mysticism" is not used in the *Tractatus*. Rather, the only term Wittgenstein uses is "the mystical". "Mysticism", unlike "the mystical", implies a doctrine that knowledge of God, reality and so on can be attained through insight, or a mystical theory. Wittgenstein rejects all doctrines and theories. This especially applies to metaphysics, as Wittgenstein

believes that the method of philosophy should show that all metaphysical and ontological propositions are nonsense. Philosophy in his view is an activity that is concerned with the logical clarification of thoughts. When Wittgenstein talks about objects, states of affairs, facts and so on, they should not be understood as ontological statements. Rather, as this project will demonstrate, they help clarify what can be spoken. However, at the end, if one fully understands the *Tractatus*, one sees that the propositions in the book are nonsense. This is the point where one sees the world aright. Wittgenstein says that one “sees” the world right in this case, while he refers to the mystical as a view or a feeling of the world as a limited whole.

A final point should be made regarding the language of the *Tractatus* and this project. In attempting to acquire sense from topics that are concerned with things that cannot be put into words we run into contradiction and nonsense. There is no hidden metaphysics in the *Tractatus* or in this project, although the language used to express what cannot be put into words may sometimes appear that way. A point that I stress throughout this project is that we should not confuse reality with what can be said. If we *say* something cannot be put into words, or if we say that something cannot be *said* to exist or not exist, it only expresses what can be stated in language. Reality, I shall argue, cannot be expressed in words, but this does not mean to deny it. When all philosophical language has been rejected, including the propositions of the book we are left with “seeing” the world correctly, not understanding or knowing it in a correct manner.

Chapter 1: Self-subsistence and Method

The aim of this chapter is to show the relationship between Russell's belief in the independent nature of complexes and their constituents and his notion of the scientific method of philosophy. This relationship is important to this thesis in that it shows that a philosophical method based on analysis is an inadequate means of understanding the mystical we find in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*.

In Russell's 1918 lectures, "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism" (in *Logic and Knowledge*, LK), we find the essence of his notion of philosophy, whether it be metaphysics or epistemology, embodied in the maxim 'Occam's razor'. That 'entities are not to be multiplied beyond necessity' becomes a method for Russell that proceeds by asking the following question:

What is the smallest number of simple undefined things at the start, and the smallest number of undemonstrated premises, out of which you can define the things that need to be defined and prove the things that need to be proved? (LK, 271)

In Russell's application of Occam's razor we find two assumptions. First, Russell assumes that the process of analysis reveals self-subsistent simples. Second, he assumes that the complexes that his method analyzes and the simples it reveals are actual entities. The fact that undefined things and undemonstrated premises are actual reveals his assumption that they are not possible. In other words, in order to constitute the smallest number they must be actual, possible things and entities would increase the number of things and entities to unwieldy numbers.

Russell turns to physics to demonstrate how he applies Occam's razor and how his notion of analysis reveals simples. In Russell's illustration of a desk he shows that what we refer to as ordinary objects are actually logical fictions. Russell asks what makes one think that a series of successive appearances of a desk is the same desk (LK, 273). He states that while it is easier to conceive an object as a continuous entity, this is not what is given in the empirical world. Although a desk is perceived from different angles and at different times, we believe that it is the same desk. However, Russell denies that what makes a thing "really real" is that it lasts for a very long time or forever. Rather, he claims that the things that are really real are those things that "last a very short time" (LK, 274). He thinks that the successive images of an object perceived over a period of time define the object as a single persisting entity. The things that we think are real (tables, chairs and so on) are "systems, series of classes of particulars and the particulars are real things, the particulars being sense data when they happen to be given to you" (ibid.). He continues to state that objects such as tables and chairs are a "series of classes of particulars, and therefore a logical fiction" (ibid.). In fact, he believes that objects of this kind are on the same level of reality as hallucinations and phantoms. When Occam's razor is applied to the world we learn that the starting point is not the world of objects such as tables and chairs, or the objects of the constituents of matter as in physics, but simple moments of perceived sense data, or particulars.

We begin with Occam's razor because it offers the key to Russell's method, namely to reduce philosophical problems to the smallest number of the simplest parts. Moreover, the influence of Occam's razor is found in three points that are keys to understanding

Russell's method of scientific philosophy. The first key is found in Russell's critique of monism in 1907. The main point in this critique is Russell's belief in the self-subsistent nature of complexes and their constituents. Next, we find the influence of this belief on his theory of judgment. The key point we find in this discussion is a shift from an absolute notion of truth to our knowledge of truth. The third key is Russell's distinction between two kinds of knowledge: acquaintance and description. The significant point of this distinction is that Russell attempts to bring us to a point of unanalysable atoms of meaning as the ultimate constituents of knowledge. This chapter begins with Russell's belief in the self-subsistent nature of things in his critique of monism.

1.1 Critique of Monism

Russell's rejection of the idealists' view of the internal relationship of a subject to its predicate shows that he promotes a worldview of self-subsistent things whose relations are not defined by their natures.

In *The Philosophy of Mathematics* (1900), Russell believes that independence is a quintessential quality of a term. The independent quality of a term reappears throughout those writings of Russell that this thesis will consider. For example, in Russell's 1906-1907 essay "The Monistic Theory of Truth" (*Philosophical Essays*, PE, 131-146), he holds and applies this belief to a critique of a form of monism in which it was assumed all things are not connected through the identity of a term, but with its nature. It is worthwhile examining Russell's rejection of monism because the arguments he uses for this rejection promote a worldview of self-subsistent things whose relations are not

defined by their natures.

In “The Monistic Theory of Truth”, Russell offers a critique of H. H. Joachim’s book *The Nature of Truth*, criticizing the following quotation in particular: “That the truth itself is one, and whole, and complete, and that all thinking and all experience move within its recognition and are subject to its manifest authority; this I have never doubted” (Joachim, 178 in PE, 131-132). In his critique of Joachim, Russell examines what is meant by the nature of a term. He begins with the question, “Is the nature of a term different from the term” (PE, 144)? If it is different, this raises the question of relationship: a term reduces to the relationship it shares with its nature. If a term reduces to such a relationship, Russell claims that the “term is not other than its nature” (PE, 145). On the other hand, if there is no relationship and the subject, as a term, is its own nature, (because the subject includes the predicate) “every true proposition attributing a predicate to a subject is purely analytic” (PE, 145). The thrust of Russell’s argument is as follows: if we say that subject x has the predicate y , it is no longer clear what we mean by subject x if y is specified in explaining the nature of x .

For Russell, the nature of a subject includes its predicates as features of the subject; however, where predicates are seen as separate attributes of the subject, it raises the problem of how to explain the bond that unites a particular collection of predicates into the predicates of a particular subject. Russell states that any collection of predicates presupposes subject; however, if this tack is taken, it raises the following issue: if the nature of a term or subject is defined in terms of predicates, there is no difference

between a subject and its predicates, thereby rendering the terms “subject” and “predicate” meaningless. In either case, whether a subject is identical to or different from its nature, there exist two problems. First, these arguments show that the relationship between a term and its nature cannot be established, and second, that the relationship between the subject and predicate cannot be shown. Russell shows that these two points demonstrate that the axiom of internal relations is “incompatible with complexity” (PE, 146). In contrast to Russell’s view of relations, for the idealists, the relationships of the constituents of a fact are related to each other in a determinate way. For example if we say “A loves B” there exists a relationship of “A” to feeling of love it has for “B”. In other words, there is an internal relationship between “A” “love” and “B” in “A loves B”. Russell’s point of contention with this view is that it leads to monism. That is, “A” is not only related to “love” and “B”, but also to “C”, “D” and so on. Each of these relations is related to countless others through countless relations, to the point where each thing is related to everything else. In the idealists’ view, individual things cannot be considered self-subsistent because if relations are seen as internal, each thing is seen in a dependent relationship with all other things. Russell’s aim with this line of reasoning is to refute monism, and in particular the notion that there is “identity in difference”. In other words, where difference is perceived in the constituents of aRb , Russell shows that the relationship of a to b to R is not internal. Rather, he claims that “there is identity *and* there is difference” (PE, 146, emphasis mine).

Russell shows through the identity of a term with its nature (or a subject to its predicate) that in the appearance of difference one should not confuse that difference with identity.

For Russell, complexes have some elements that are identical and some that are different. The basis of Russell's view is his belief that complexes are composed of independent simple things, which he states as follows:

We thus get a world of many things, with relations which are not to be deduced from a supposed 'nature' or scholastic essence of related things. In this world, whatever is complex is composed of related simple things, and analysis is no longer confronted at every step by an endless regress. (PE, 146)

With this line of thinking, Russell counters the monistic view of truth as one, whole and complete. Moreover, as we shall examine in latter sections, it provides us with a key to Russell's method. That is, if he assumes that complexes and their constituents are self-subsistent, the method he employs will seek to separate complexes into simpler and simpler constituents. As we shall later examine, the application of this method to the problems of philosophy means that a method of analysis will attempt to divide complex philosophical questions into separate less puzzling questions.

1.2 Russell's Theory of Judgement (1910)

The focus in the following two sections will be upon Russell's shift from a belief in absolute objective truths to the knowledge we can have of truth.

At the time of the publication of the *Philosophical Essays* (1910), Peter Hylton in his essay "The Nature of the Proposition" (in *Philosophy in History*, PH) suggests that a shift in Russell's thought begins to occur. At the time of this shift Hylton argues that Russell "professes doubt about his view of propositions" (PH, 385). Hylton remarks that Russell "gives up the idea that there are propositions which are independent of our acts of judgement" (PH, 386). From Russell's first draft of "The Monist Theory of Truth" in

1906-1907, until 1910, he held the view that an “act of judgement was the apprehension of a single entity entirely distinct from the act” (PH, 386). An alteration to this theory of judgement takes place in 1910 when he thinks that a judgement is now a “relation between a person and various non-propositional entities which the person judging somehow unites so that a judgement is formed” (ibid.). Because judgements are no longer thought of as two-place relations, but as multiple relations among the person judging and the multiple entities judged, this view came to be known as the multiple-relation view of judgement. Hylton suggests that the striking feature of this shift in Russell’s thought is that by 1910 he seems to have accepted this aspect of the idealists’ views that he once attacked. That is, his view at this point seems to have altered to accept that propositions are dependent on mental acts for their existence (ibid.). The difficulty that presents itself to Russell with this view is that the act of judgement imposes no restrictions on what can be judged or what can be true. The mental act on which the theory depends lacks the power to impose constraints on what can be judged. The problem here is that there is no way to explain why it is impossible to judge nonsense. That is, it is possible to form a judgement from a random selection of things that I am acquainted with that appear as nonsense, such as “the table penholders the book” (PH, 386-387). The problems in his theory of judgement led him to revise the theory in 1913. The significant feature of this new theory is the introduction of logical form, meaning “the way in which constituents are put together” (Russell in PH, 387). Russell does not abandon the relationship of the mental act of judgement, but includes logical form to explain how a judgement is made. The function of logical form in the 1913 theory of judgement is to offer constraints on what can be judged (PH, 387). From his first doubts about the nature of the proposition to

his 1913 theory of judgement, Russell shifts his emphasis from ontology to epistemology. Despite these shifts in thought, one consistent point remains: the existence of complexes that are comprised of independent simples.

1.3 Epistemology – facts (1914)

Epistemology continues to be Russell's concern in 1914. In his essay "Logic as the Essence of Philosophy", (in *Our Knowledge of the External World*, OKEW, 42-69), Russell introduces the notion of facts.

When I speak of a "fact", I do not mean one of the simple things in the world; I mean that a certain thing has a certain quality, or that certain things have a certain relation. (OKEW, 60)

Russell gives the example of Napoleon, who is not a fact. However, it is a fact that he married Josephine. In this example, the relationship of Napoleon to Josephine is a fact, where Napoleon alone is not. In this sense, facts are not simple, but consist of two or more constituents. These constituents are not other facts, but are "things and qualities or relations" (OKEW, 61). A fact is a single relation of one or more things. One relation of two or more terms may hold between A and B and A and C; however this constitutes two distinct facts, as in the case where A is the son of his father and the son of his mother (ibid.). Russell's notion of a fact consists of a single relation and does not permit any case that is constituted by other facts. However, this example does not include the case where A is related to B on the account of C, as in the case where A is jealous of B because of C. In this case there is only one fact consisting of three people (ibid.). In this way Russell maintains that a fact is a single relation and stresses the point that each fact is self-subsistent and independent of other facts.

Although facts look similar to propositions, they differ on the account that facts are “objective, and independent of our thought or opinion about it” (OKEW, 61). On the other hand, propositions involve thought. They are true or false, positive or negative (OKEW, 62). We should note that the discussion on propositions has shifted from the subject-predicate notion Russell has criticized to an assertion of his own definition. Russell offers the examples of “Charles I was executed” or “he did *not* die in his bed” to illustrate that a proposition is “a form of words that may be either true or false...” (ibid.).

A form of words which must be either true or false I shall call a *proposition*. Thus a proposition is the same as what may be significantly asserted or denied. A proposition which expresses what we have called a fact, i.e. which, when asserted, asserts that a certain thing has a certain quality, or that a certain thing has a certain relation, will be called an atomic proposition. (ibid.)

We see a shift that has occurred in Russell’s thought at this time. In 1903 he held that a proposition is a true or false complex entity. However, its constituents and their arrangement do not give meaning by its truth-value; rather, its meaning is given by the criteria of its identity as we see in the following example (REAP, 297-298). To say “Grass is green” expresses a different proposition than “Desdemona loves Cassio” (REAP, 298). Moreover, the latter statement also expresses a different proposition than “Cassio loves Desdemona” (ibid.). The shift that occurs following the multiple-relation view of judgement is the introduction of logical form to express how things are united in a proposition. A group of objects requires logical form in order that they can be united in a proposition. Only when this order has been established can the act of judgement occur. The second shift that occurs following Russell’s critique of monism is a move from the independent, objective and absolute notion of truth to a theory of judgement that places

the emphasis on our knowledge of truth. Despite these changes, Russell holds to his belief in the notion of the independent nature of complexes and their constituents.

1.4 Epistemology – knowledge by acquaintance

In Russell's book on Leibniz we saw that his belief in the independent nature of complexes and their constituents had an influence upon the early statement of his method. He takes as a self-evident truth that the method of philosophy should begin with an analysis of propositions (PL, 8). Moving now to *The Problems of Philosophy* (PP) in 1912, we find the method of analysis he mentions in *The Philosophy of Leibniz* becomes sharper. In *The Problems of Philosophy* Russell draws a distinction between two kinds of knowledge: knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description. The significance of this shift is that Russell wants to take us down to unanalysable atoms of meaning as the ultimate constituents of knowledge. The distinction between knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description is that the former is immediate knowledge of things. Russell describes knowledge of acquaintance as follows: "We shall say that we have acquaintance with anything of which we are directly aware, without the intermediary of any process of inference or any knowledge of truths" (PP, 46). In simple terms, acquaintance is concerned with knowledge of things that exist. It is knowledge of the sensation of the "data of the outer senses" (PP, 51). Knowledge of acquaintance is composed of objects of two kinds, particulars and universals. Particulars refer to particular things that exist. Universals refer to objects of immediate knowledge of general ideas such as "*whiteness, diversity, brotherhood* and so on" (PP, 52).

By “knowledge by description” Russell means “any phrase of the form ‘a so-and-so’ or ‘the so-and-so’” (PP, 52). Russell calls the former (‘a so-and-so’) an ambiguous description, while the later (‘the so-and-so’) he refers to as a definite description. “A man” is ambiguous because it does not refer to any one man, while “The man” refers to a specific man. Common words and proper nouns are descriptions. This is the kind of knowledge one finds in statements such as “The French Suites were composed by J. S. Bach in 1722” or “The French Suites were recorded by Glenn Gould in 1978”. The point is that the various descriptions all apply to the same entity, the French Suites, as Russell states, “in spite of not being acquainted with the entity in question” (PP, 55). The primary importance of knowledge by description is that it allows us to move beyond the limits of our immediate private experience. For example, if we make a statement about J. S. Bach, although he is not present before our eyes, we share a common description of an eighteenth century German musician who composed the Brandenburg Concertos, Saint Matthew’s Passion and so on. However, the fundamental principle in the analysis of statements of description is as follows: “*Every proposition which we can understand must be composed wholly of constituents with which we are acquainted*” (PP, 58). In other words, by this understanding, all knowledge by description fundamentally reduces to knowledge by acquaintance, whose basic constituents are self-subsistent moments of experience. From this point Russell’s mature form of the scientific method in philosophy begins to emerge.

1.5 Formulation of a method

As we saw, knowledge by acquaintance includes both particular things and universal

properties. Russell states those universals are sensible qualities (such as “whiteness”), or relations in space and time (such as “north of”). Universals, according to Russell, are not merely thoughts, but objects of thoughts (PP, 99). That is, universals are real and subsist independent of our thoughts. Although unlike particulars, which can be said to exist, universals subsist or have being (ibid.). The difference between existence and subsistence in this context is that the former refers to a world that is

fleeting, vague, without sharp boundaries, without any clear plan or arrangement, but it contains all thoughts and feelings, all the data of sense, and all physical objects, everything that can do either good or harm, everything that makes any difference to the value of life and the world (PP, 100).

In other words, the qualities of existence and universals correspond to Russell’s notion of knowledge of acquaintance. On the other hand, Russell refers to the world of being as “unchangeable, rigid, exact, and delightful to the mathematician, the logician, the builder of metaphysical systems, and all who love perfection more than life” (ibid.). He sees the difference between existence and being as “the two worlds” (ibid.). In this context of Russell’s thoughts on knowledge by acquaintance and description arises the multiple relation view of judgement (PP, 123-127). In giving up the notion that propositions are independent of judgement, Russell establishes a foundation for his scientific method of philosophy based on unanalysable atoms of meaning or atomic facts, as he calls them in *Our Knowledge of the External World*. That is, it is during this period of interest in knowledge of the external with the notion of the self-subsistence of complexes and their constituents that Russell formulates his method.

The aim of Russell’s method by 1914 is to replace classical logic with a modern logic that in his words “enlarges our abstract imagination” and provides an “infinite number of

possible hypotheses to be applied to the analysis of any complex fact” (OKEW, 68). The emphasis on hypotheses shows that the method Russell supports is more important than any doctrine, because it will provide a means to ensure the progress of philosophy. The advantage of this new method is that hypotheses that are rejected in classical logic (because it is assumed if they cannot be proved, that reality has a “certain special character”) are included in the modern logic. Russell states that the hypotheses that are rejected in classical logic can be important keys in the development of his method of philosophy if a correct analysis is applied (ibid.).

Russell’s thoughts on this new method of logic are found in *Our Knowledge of the External World*. Russell begins this discussion with atomic facts, which, as with unanalysable atoms of meaning in *The Problems of Philosophy*, are perceptions of sense, such as “this is red” (OKEW, 62-63). However, in pure logic, atomic facts are not mentioned, because in logic one is confined to forms at the exclusion of perceptions. Russell states, “pure logic and atomic facts are two poles, the wholly *a priori* and the wholly empirical” (OKEW, 63). Between these two poles lies an area of intermediate propositions and logic known as molecular propositions (ibid.). These propositions are those that contain conjunctions such as “if”, “and”, “or” and so on (ibid.). An example of a molecular proposition is “If it rains, I shall bring my umbrella” (ibid.). Molecular propositions have a form that is different from atomic propositions. However, they are important to logic, “because all inference depends on them” (ibid.). The next case of propositions Russell examines is general propositions, such as “all men are mortal” (OKEW, 64). However, it is impossible to empirically know if general propositions are

true or not. The case of “all men are mortal” shows this. The empirical way to confirm that all men are mortal would be to find each and every person that ever lived and observe if he or she died. In order to understand general propositions we must depend on a priori knowledge. Since general truths cannot be inferred from atomic or particular truths alone, Russell believes that if they are to be known they must be “either self evident or inferred from premises of which at least one is a general truth” (OEKW, 65). General knowledge, he states, is found only in logic (OEKW, 66). The purpose of logic is to examine the structure of forms without a concern for the facts that fill the forms. Again, in Russell’s essay “Scientific Method in Philosophy”, we find the same thoughts apply to his method of philosophy. Russell writes that philosophical problems, which are based on logic, do not deal with the specifics of things of science involving the earth, the solar system, space or time; rather, the domain of general propositions that may be asserted are about individual things, “such as the propositions of logic” (ML, 110).

1.6 The scientific method in philosophy

The method that Russell introduces in *Our Knowledge of the External World* is developed further in an essay published in the same year, “Scientific Method in Philosophy” (1914). In this essay Russell remains under the influence of his thoughts on atomic facts and molecular propositions. The two characteristics of his method of philosophy are that philosophical propositions must be general and that they must be a priori (ML, 110-111). First, by the word “general” Russell believes that propositions must not deal with things on the earth, in the solar system, or portions of space and time. In addition he believes that there can be no proposition in which the universe is the

subject (ML, 110). He holds that there are “general propositions which may be asserted of each individual thing, such as the propositions of logic” (ibid.). This means that the propositions that can be asserted are those that assert that there are properties that belong to “each separate thing”, but not the “whole of things collectively” (ML, 111). He maintains that philosophical propositions are concerned with all things distributively and not the whole of things collectively (ibid.). He calls this philosophy logical atomism because he denies that there is a whole of which everything is constituted. The second characteristic of philosophical propositions is that they must be *a priori*. That is, they are propositions that can be “neither proved or disproved by empirical evidence” (ibid.).

For Russell these two characteristics of philosophical propositions sum up that “*philosophy is the science of the possible*” (ibid.). By the term “possible” he means that philosophy is indistinguishable from logic. The study of logic in his view is concerned with general statements, which can be made without alluding to anything specific, and with “analysis and enumeration of general forms” (ML, 112). That is, philosophy is concerned with propositions that “may occur” (ibid.). In other words it provides “an inventory of possibilities, a repertory of abstractly tenable hypotheses” (ibid.). We see that the influence of his critique of monism has been translated into a philosophy of absolute pluralism that is grounded in the notion of the self-subsistent nature of things and their constituents. The method that follows from this belief, in addition to his views on knowledge by acquaintance, logic and generality, leads to a method that deals with problems in a “piecemeal” manner. Its progress, as with science, is measured in terms of partially correct results that serve as a base to which improvements are added. Russell

points to the fact that most philosophies have been constructed in one block, which, if partially incorrect, were rejected. Russell believes that this is why philosophy has not progressed as the other sciences. He thinks his method succeeds where others have failed because where proven incorrect it is not necessary to start again from the beginning.

Russell explains this method as follows.

A scientific philosophy such as I wish to recommend will be piecemeal and tentative like other sciences; above all, it will be able to invent hypotheses which, even if they are not wholly true, will yet remain fruitful after the necessary corrections have been made (ML, 113).

In other words, Russell's method consists in the inventing and testing of hypotheses by means of the analysis of propositions. This method is key to the development of Russell's theory of logical atomism, to which we now turn.

1.7 The application of method

We see the application of this method in Russell's thoughts on logical atomism following 1914. In "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism", Russell pursues a course whose aim is to arrive at logical atoms that he refers to as the "last residue in analysis" (*Logic and Knowledge* LK, 179). He defines his use of atomism in this context as the common sense belief that there are separate things (LK, 178). This belief leads him to defend the practice of analysis against his critics who maintain that destroying the whole analysis leads to a method of falsification. Russell rejects his critics in favour of a view he advocates that will result from "undeniable data" (LK, 179). In this term we find the influence of his theories of judgement. In "undeniable data" he has given up the idea of true data in favour of "the sort of thing that nobody can deny" (ibid.). Russell's point is that "undeniable" is a psychological term, while "true" is not. If something is undeniable

it does not mean that it is true, but that we all think that it is true. Russell's point is that what we think is true is as close to what is true as we are able to find. The importance of Russell's view is that he believes that epistemology is tied to subjectivity. His concern is less with what is true about the world, but rather, "What can I know of the world" (ibid.). This not to say Russell abandons metaphysics. Rather, his concern shifts to consider knowledge in terms of a phenomenon in the world. We see that this shift that occurred between 1906 and 1910 toward epistemology still plays a significant part in Russell's thinking in his 1918 thoughts on logical atomism.

In "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism" (1918) Russell claims the atoms he hopes to arrive at as the result of logical analysis are "logical atoms, not physical atoms" (LK, 179). The examples he gives of these atoms are particulars (such as patches of colour, sounds, and momentary things), predicates, relations and so on (ibid.). As we saw in his critique of monism, Russell believes in the independent nature of things. In 1918 he holds the same view with regard to particulars, which he states stand "entirely alone and completely self-subsistent" (LK, 201). These logical atoms are the result of a logical and not an empirical or scientific pursuit. Although particulars include empirical sensations, his intention is to arrive at undeniable data through logical means. The key to this process is a method that moves from the vague ambiguous things that we feel sure of to "something precise, clear, definite" (ibid.). In other words, through reflection and analysis we discover the real truth of which the familiar thing is seen as a mere shadow (LK, 180). The approach that Russell advocates is a piecemeal method based on analysis. In the final lecture of "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism" Russell writes the following.

One purpose that has run through all that I have said, has been the justification of analysis, i.e., the justification of logical atomism of the view that you can get down in theory, if not in practice, to ultimate simples, out of which the world is built, and that those simples have a kind of reality not belonging to anything else. (LK, 270)

Each of these simples possesses a particular reality that does not belong to anything else (ibid.). In this passage we find Russell's belief in the self-subsistence of simples.

Russell's belief in atomism complements his method of analysis. That is, a world that is comprised of complexes and ultimate simples can be broken down into its constituent parts. Russell maintains the advantage to this method is that it reduces the possibility of error (LK, 280). In the example of the desk we considered at the beginning of this chapter, Russell states that if the method of analysis reveals the successive appearances of simple data or particulars, it reduces the need to assume a metaphysical desk. A philosophy that is not tied down to proving or denying notions such as a metaphysical desk has a smaller risk of error (ibid.). However, Russell realizes that the application of his method leaves little room between philosophy and science.

In Russell's view, the difference between science and philosophy is that philosophy is a part of science that people have "opinions about" (LK, 281). The advance of science is that it reduces the number of philosophical problems. However, Russell feels that this does not mean that philosophy will come to an end because there will always be people who are attracted to the charm of speculative freedom, "in the fact that you can play with hypotheses" (ibid.). In other words, he believes that philosophy is fuelled by the imagination of man.

1.8 Limits: Flaws in Russell's Method and the Aim of the *Tractatus*

Despite Russell's support for his scientific method in 1914, by 1924 he became aware of its flaws. The point of concern for Russell centres on the problem of limits. In his 1924 essay "Logical Atomism" he defines simples as what is known "only inferentially as the limits of analysis" (LK, 337). He believes that a logical language (that is, a language comprised of simple symbols or symbols that are not comprised of parts) will not err, if it corresponds to objects (either simple or complex) (ibid.). He then states two points that indicate the limits of logical analysis.

The only drawback to such a language is that it is incapable of dealing with anything simpler than the objects which it represents by simple symbols. But I confess it seems to me ... that what is complex must be composed of simples, though the number of constituents may be infinite. (ibid.)

To clarify Russell's point, the first limit we observe that presents a problem for Russell's method of analysis is that a logical language cannot consider anything simpler than the objects it represents. The second limit concerns the number of symbols that are required to correspond to an infinite number of simples is infinite. In the second case the process of analysis is daunting. It does not seem reasonable to assume that a process of analysis would reveal an infinite number of simples. Moreover, we must assume that Russell does not mean an infinite number of different simples. The capacity of a language to contain an equal number of symbols is unmanageable.

In contrast to the limits of the simple and the infinite that expose a boundary to Russell's method of analysis, we find that Wittgenstein's method of philosophy in the *Tractatus* is solely concerned with drawing limits to establish what can be thought or said. In his preface to the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein states that the aim of his book is to draw limits to

the expressions of thought. However, unlike Russell's method of analysis we discussed above, Wittgenstein suggests the limits of language shows what cannot be said.

The first limit we encounter in the *Tractatus* is the limit of what can be said, which Wittgenstein states is the whole sense of the *Tractatus*. He claims that what can be said, can be said clearly. This also is Russell's view of language. However, Wittgenstein continues, "What we cannot talk about we must pass over in silence". The significant part in this passage is that what can and cannot be said is not left as a simple distinction. Rather, what cannot be said must be passed over in silence. If Wittgenstein's intentions are merely to clarify what can be said, there is no need to include "pass over in silence". As we saw above, the aim of the *Tractatus* is to draw limits to the expressions of thought. Wittgenstein restates this point in his discussion about philosophy. At 4.114 and 4.115 Wittgenstein states that in setting limits to what can be thought and presenting clearly what can be said, what cannot be thought will be signified. The passages at 4.114 and 4.115 lead into Wittgenstein's discussion on showing. Here we find that propositions show the logical form of reality, but they cannot say what cannot be put into words. In other words, propositions show what they share in common with reality, but what they share with reality cannot be put into words. A further example of Wittgenstein's thoughts on what cannot be said is found at 6.522 where he states that the things that cannot be put into words show themselves.

If we look for what Wittgenstein means by "what cannot be put into words" and "silence" in light of Russell's method of analysis we find that this method does not apply to silence.

Analysis depends upon a world that is comprised of complexes and simples. In the case of what cannot be put into words, there is nothing to be analyzed. This is not to say that Wittgenstein rejects either analysis or Occam's razor. At 4.221 Wittgenstein maintains that propositions are analysed into elementary propositions, which are further analysed into names. However, the analysis of propositions is not the aim of the book. The same point is found with regard to Occam's razor. At 3.328 he claims that the meaning of Occam's razor is to show if a sign does not have a use, it is meaningless. By the term "sign", Wittgenstein means what is perceived of a symbol (3.32). Symbols are recognised by signs in use, which means a sign with sense. However, while analysis and Occam's maxim contribute to making clear what can be said, they cannot be applied to what cannot be put into words or silence. However, this presents a dilemma. On one hand we can attempt to understand what cannot be put into words as something outside language or outside the world. This presents us with a two-worlds view, in which we have a world of what can be said, and a world of what cannot be said. On the other hand, how do we explain what cannot be said in terms of language? In other words, this presents a contradiction, because what cannot be put into words cannot be part of language. We find the same dilemma with regard to other topics considered in the *Tractatus*. In the discussion of the self or subject Wittgenstein claims that it cannot be found in the world, yet it is the world as my world. In the case of time the eternal is not the infinite temporal duration of time passing from the future into the past. Rather, the eternal is both timeless and living in the present. The question this leaves us to consider in the following chapters is how we are to interpret what cannot be put into words in term of language of the *Tractatus*. The following chapters will consider this dilemma in light of an interpretation

of the *Tractatus* based on Wittgenstein's passages on the mystical.

1.9 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to give an account of Russell's belief in the independent nature of complexes and their constituents. As we have seen, this belief lies at the core of the method of philosophy Russell established in 1914. However, as we saw, a method based on the assumption of the independent nature of things sets limits to the range of inquiry. In contrast, Wittgenstein's aim in the *Tractatus* is to set limits to what can be thought. The difficulty we shall discover in the following chapters is that a method based on the independent nature of things is unable to reveal anything about what cannot be put into words. However, as we shall discover, we cannot ignore what cannot be said if we are to understand Wittgenstein's aim of the *Tractatus* and how in reaching this goal the final solution to the problems of philosophy is found (Preface).

Chapter 2: What cannot be put into Words, Method and Mysticism

The purpose of this chapter is to show that if we read at face value the passages in the *Tractatus* that claim that objects, reality, the solipsistic self and the mystical cannot be put into words, an analytical approach cannot apply. If we take as the starting point that there is nothing that can be said about the mystical, the mystical cannot be said to exist or not exist. However, if we accept the hypothesis that it is possible to read the *Tractatus* from a mystical perspective, we can then observe what method would follow from such an interpretation. I will argue that considering the work in light of this hypothesis, that if the end of the *Tractatus* is to signify what cannot be put into words, the method one must apply is the one we find in the *Tractatus*. This method follows from Wittgenstein's aim to draw limits to the expressions of thought. Related to Wittgenstein's thoughts on philosophy is the method of doubt, namely that doubt exists only when there is something that can be said, but after a period of doubt, both doubt and the desire to express what cannot be put into words no longer exist. In both the case of setting limits and of doubting, the aim is to signify what cannot be put into words, which includes the mystical.

2.1 Introduction:

Although Russell wrote his Introduction to Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* in 1922, a few years after the Russell material we considered in the previous chapter, it contains many of the same themes we explored. In this chapter, what particularly interests us in Russell's method is its influence upon his interpretation of the book. Moreover, Russell's Introduction contains important insights into the differences between the two

philosophers' thoughts on philosophy. Although both Russell and Wittgenstein talk about facts and their constituents, their different views on this subject lead to different approaches to philosophical problems. An important example of their difference in views is that Russell sees facts and their constituents (i.e., particulars) as self-subsistent; that is, having independent existence. For example, in the case of particulars, he writes that each "does not in any way logically depend on any other particular" (LK, 202). In contrast to Russell's view, this chapter will show that in Wittgenstein's view, *Gegenstände* or objects (the configuration which produces states of affairs (*Sachverhalt*)) cannot be put into words.

We find the influence of Russell's atomism and scientific view of philosophy in his interpretation of Wittgenstein's views on facts. Russell believes that Wittgenstein sees facts (*Tatsachen*) as composed of atomic facts (*Sachverhalt*) and simples (*Die Gegenstände*). As an illustration of Russell's view, he takes the fact "Socrates was a wise Athenian" and breaks it into constituent parts or simpler facts: "Socrates was wise," and "Socrates was an Athenian" (Intro. 12). When a fact such as "Socrates was wise," cannot be analyzed into other facts, he calls these atomic facts (i.e., states of affairs). Atomic facts can, however, be further broken down (i.e. analysed) into constituents called "simples" or "objects". In this example, the atomic fact "Socrates is wise," can be broken down into the simples, "Socrates" and "wise" (ibid.). Here we find the first point of difference between Russell and Wittgenstein. Following from his views of logical atomism, Russell believes that these atoms are self-subsistent entities. However, as he acknowledges, Wittgenstein believes we cannot isolate simples or have empirical

knowledge of them. Russell considers Wittgenstein's simples to be "demanded by theory, like an electron" (ibid.). However, as we shall later discover, this is not the case; Wittgenstein's view of simples (objects) is not demanded by a theory.

The first objective of this chapter is to determine what cannot be put into words. We will consider objects (though they can be named), the solipsistic self (though it shows itself as my world) and the reality that is co-ordinated with the solipsistic self. We will then draw a connection between these three and the mystical. However, we must be clear that there is no ontology in the *Tractatus*. As this chapter will show, Wittgenstein's intention is not to tell us how the world is, but to show us that it is.

The second objective of this chapter is to consider the method of negation that motivates the *Tractatus* and serves as the first step in understanding Wittgenstein's reference to the mystical in the penultimate passages. By "method of negation" I mean that Wittgenstein's method sets clear limits to what can be said, so that the attempt to say anything about what cannot be put into words will neither refute nor deny its existence. The reply to any proposition about what cannot be put into words must be "Not this". In other words, I shall interpret the passage "cannot be put into words" at face value, which means denying any attempt to express what cannot be said. We find the effect of this method in Wittgenstein's denial of all philosophical doctrines. In setting limits to what can be said we also find that the questions of philosophy cannot be framed in words.

2.2 Objects cannot be said to exist

Unlike Russell, who believes that simples are the constituents of complexes, Wittgenstein states that they (as objects) “make up the substance of the world” (2.021). This passage contains the key to the interpretation of Wittgenstein’s view on objects. At 2.024 we learn that substance is independent of what is “the case”, which Wittgenstein takes to mean the world or totality of facts (1.1). Language corresponds to the world, as in the case of a proposition that corresponds to a fact. That is, a proposition shows the logical form of reality it shares with a fact. In light of this account of objects, it would seem that they neither exist in the world, nor can be expressed in language. However, this is not accurate. We must bear in mind that existence claims only apply to things in the world. In this case we cannot *say* that objects either exist or do not exist. With regard to objects, at 4.1272 Wittgenstein supports this view as follows: “So one cannot say, for example, ‘There are objects’, as one might say, ‘There are books’.” At 3.221 he makes the same claim that objects cannot be put into words. Objects can be named, but these names are only their representatives (ibid.). A closer examination of Wittgenstein’s comments on objects will help make this point clear. It should be stressed that when considering objects, one must resist the urge to claim that they exist or do not exist. As previously stated, there is no ontology in the *Tractatus* (such a view would violate 4.112 that states that philosophy is not a doctrine, but a work of elucidations). Hence, Wittgenstein does not make existential claims about objects.

In light of this fact, I want to stress that that there is nothing that can be *said* about that which lies outside language, including existential claims. This means that while objects

can be named, we can only know the names. We cannot know or say anything about objects as objects. Names can only be known in the context of states of affairs.

2.3 Objects and Possibilities

The next point of consideration is that objects contain possibilities. At 2.014 Wittgenstein states that objects “contain the possibilities of all situations”. That is, in addition to the dependent relationship of objects in states of affairs, they also contain all possible combinations of these relationships. The possibility of an object occurring in a state of affairs is “the form of the object” (2.0141). By the term “form”, Wittgenstein means possibility of structure (2.033). For example, pictorial form is the possibility that things are related in a certain way (2.151). While it is possible to say that being coloured is a form of an object (2.0251), “objects are colourless”(2.0232). To illustrate, a ball, which is not an object in Wittgenstein’s sense of the word, cannot be colourless. Even if it is transparent it takes on the colour of the background. The possibility of being coloured is contained in the object.

However, we appear to be presented with a contradiction between actual and possible. For example, if we say the ball is red in the proposition “The red ball is in the air”, “red” here is actual in the context of the configuration of objects. Nevertheless, the possibility of being any colour is not an actual colour. It cannot be “actual” unless it takes the form of the configuration, as is described in the 2.03’s. In the case where it is not “actual”, it is the form of the object. While we can say that the configuration of objects exists, objects themselves cannot be *said* to be a particular colour. Objects can be named only in the

context of their configuration. Being a particular colour is like the link in a chain of other objects that make up a state of affairs; that is, they are configured. Outside of this configuration, objects cannot be said to exist or not exist.

As with the apparent contradiction between actual and possible, we find a similar conflict between 2.021 and 2.01. At 2.021 we learn that objects “make up the substance of the world”. Substance determines only forms or possibilities, not material properties (2.0231). “Possibility” in this sense means to contain all possible situations of occurrence. In this sense objects are unalterable, because there are no other possible forms. Although we cannot say that objects are actual, they are subsistent. However, at 2.01 we read that a state of affairs is a combination of objects. Moreover, at 2.03 Wittgenstein claims that in states of affairs objects fit together as links in a chain. We see in these two accounts an apparent dualistic nature in objects. That is, as the constituents of substance, objects contain “the unalterable possibility”, but as the constituents of states of affairs, objects are linked together. Their configuration produces states of affairs that are reality. The two aspects of objects we find are that they can be named in their role as producing states of affairs, and that nothing can be said about them in their role as possibilities. In order to resolve this apparent conflict between the named and unnamed role of objects, we turn to consider the dependent way objects are connected in states of affairs.

2.4 The Dependent Relationship of Objects

In a passage that sounds like Russell’s, Wittgenstein states “Objects are simple” (2.02).

However, they are not simple in the sense of Russell's logical atoms. Unlike Russell's notion of particulars that are self-subsistent, simples in the *Tractatus* possess a dual nature. On one hand they are unalterable, subsistent and potential (2.027). On the other hand, the configuration of objects produces states of affairs. However, in states of affairs, objects lack independent self-subsistence, because in states of affairs objects "stand in a determinate relationship to each one another" (2.031). Again we seem to have a conflict between passages on objects in the 2.02's and those found in the 2.03's. However, a closer examination reveals that Wittgenstein's statements are not in contradiction, but reveal two aspects of objects found in the *Tractatus*.

To begin with, in the determinate relationship of objects found at 2.031, it appears as though objects lack independence and self-subsistence. For example, if A stands in a determinate relationship to B, it cannot be said that either A or B is independent and self-subsistent. That is, in a relationship where the existence of A depends on B, if B is removed, A does not exist. In other words, if a dancer is defined by having a partner who dances, in the case of one who is left without a partner, he or she is not a dancer, nor, for this person, is there a dance. By this definition of a dancer, he or she is only a potential dancer until he or she finds a partner. In the case of objects, if we take a configuration of objects (O1- O2- O3) in a state of affairs (S) where they exist in a determinate relationship, O1, O2 and O3 must be present. In other words, if O2 were absent, neither O1 nor O3 could be said to exist. That is, outside of S, neither O1, O2, nor O3 can be said to exist.

The key to the determinate relationship of objects is found at 2.0272, which serves as the connection between the 2.02's and the 2.03's. At 2.0272 Wittgenstein states, "The configuration of objects produces states of affairs". Objects in this sense are contrasted with objects that are described at 2.023 as "the unalterable form". Moreover, they differ from the claim at 2.01 that states of affairs are a combination of objects, because at 2.0272 Wittgenstein describes objects in terms of *producing* states of affairs. The determinate way in which objects are connected in states of affairs can be illustrated with an example of a ball. As mentioned above, the "ball" in this example does not represent an object. Wittgenstein does not offer an example of an object. However, in the case of "the ball", while we can say, "The ball is in the air," or "The ball is not in the air," we cannot say, "The ball exists." The first two cases are propositions or pictures that correspond to facts because we can picture either "The ball is in the air," or "The ball is not in the air," but we cannot picture the ball existing outside of a relationship with other things. That is, we cannot picture a universe that consists of only a ball and no surrounding space. The ball exists in a relationship to something that is non-ball. In the same way that a spatial object cannot be imagined outside of space, and a temporal object cannot be imagined outside of time, "there is *no* object that we can imagine excluded from the possibility of combining with others" (ibid.). The key to this argument begins with the point mentioned above, that an object is found only in a relation with other objects in states of affairs and it cannot be imagined independent of its possibility of being situated in a combination with other objects.

2.5 Russell's Method and Objects

Let us consider if Russell's method of analysis applies to objects. The difficulty of applying Russell's scientific method of philosophy to Wittgenstein's objects is that there is nothing to analyse. As we have stated, there is no ontology in the *Tractatus*, because from Wittgenstein's notion of language propositions must represent reality. Wittgenstein does not provide an example of an object or any other clue to its nature outside its role as unalterable form. Objects are not atoms in Russell's sense of the word. They are not self-subsistent constituents of complexes as Russell thought of simples in his theory of logical atomism. Due to the dependent relationship of an object to each of the other objects in states of affairs, they cannot be separated into constituents. Independent of being named in states of affairs, there is nothing that can be said about objects. Predicates about objects cannot be the answer to any question. As Wittgenstein states at 6.5, where an answer cannot be expressed in words, neither can the question be put into words. The point is that what cannot be put into words cannot be either the answer to a question or the subject of a question.

In light of Wittgenstein's intention to make clear what can be spoken or thought, we find that objects are not included in what can be spoken. However, this does not mean that objects are nothing; after all, they can be named. If we apply a method of negation to a world of self-subsistent simples that constitute self-subsistent complexes we are left with nothing. That is, if we assume 'x', and say that 'x' is not this and not any other thing, if 'x' is a self-subsistent thing, the only thing we can say is that it is nothing. In fact, we cannot even say that 'x' exists. However, if we apply the same method of negation to

what cannot be put into words, nothing changes, because there is nothing to negate. That is, what cannot be put into words can be neither affirmed nor negated by propositions. Propositions are pictures of reality (4.021) that show how things stand if they are true (4.022). Propositions restrict reality to either yes or no (4.023). In other words, language is restricted to propositions that restrict reality to yes or no. In the case of objects, they can be named in propositions that describe states of affairs. However, there is nothing that can be said about objects that are not named. The phrase “objects that are not named” refers to the form of the object or the possibility of it occurring in a state of affairs. In other words, it is the unalterable form, while the configuration of objects in states of affairs is what corresponds to propositions. However, in terms of the unalterable form, objects cannot be expressed by propositions. Objects, in this sense, can neither be negated nor affirmed. Moreover, an object cannot be the subject of analysis, because analysis cannot be applied to what lies outside of language. Propositions have one complete analysis (3.25), which consists of names (3.201, 3.202). Although propositions correspond to reality, this does not mean that what cannot be expressed in words is not reality. At issue here are two words Wittgenstein uses to express reality.

In the case of the reality that corresponds to propositions, Wittgenstein uses the word “*Wirklichkeit*”. *Wirklichkeit* refers to reality in terms of actual fact. The proposition “The ball is in the air” corresponds to an actual event of a ball in the air. A proposition shares a logical form in common with reality. Although this logical form cannot be expressed in words, it is shown in a proposition (4.121). Propositions contain the form, but not “the content of their sense” (3.13). Names, when they are the constituents of elementary

propositions, show the logical form of reality. As we have seen, objects can be named, but names only correspond to *Wirklichkeit*. On the other hand, objects are form and content (2.025). The significance of this difference corresponds to the two expressions for reality found in the *Tractatus*. The second word Wittgenstein uses to describe reality is *Realität*. The importance of this difference is that *Realität* is empirical reality. The limit of empirical reality is determined by the totality of objects (i.e. form and content). What I am suggesting is that *Realität* cannot be expressed in words and is not subject to analysis. In order to understand what Wittgenstein means by *Realität*, we turn to a second subject that Wittgenstein deals with that cannot be put into words: the solipsistic self.

2.6 Solipsistic Self and What Cannot Be Put Into Words

As we have seen, objects can be named, but names (in propositions) only show the form of reality. They cannot say what either the logical form or reality is. On the other hand the form of objects can be represented by names, but the content of objects cannot be put into words. Objects, (i.e. form and content) are reality (*Realität*) as we see at 5.5561 where Wittgenstein states that *Realität* is limited by objects. Although we can apply Russell's method of analysis to propositions, it cannot be applied to what cannot be expressed in words. We now turn to consider another part of reality, the solipsistic self, which remains co-ordinated with *Realität*. As this section will show the solipsistic self also cannot be put into words and cannot be the subject of a method based on analysis.

Returning to the discussion of reality, we find the connection of the solipsistic self to reality at 5.64 where Wittgenstein states that the solipsistic self shrinks to a point without

extension where it remains co-ordinated with reality (*Realität*). Although the solipsistic self will be the topic of further chapters, at this point we must be clear that the solipsistic self is not the subject of psychology or one's sense of personal identity. Moreover, the solipsistic self is not the human being in terms of one's body or soul (5.641). At 5.542 and 5.5421 we find that Wittgenstein's rejection of the notion of the soul or the subject is based on the claim that "A believes that p", "A has the thought p", or "A says p" all share the form "'p' says p". In other words, if one asks what the subject 'A' is, the answer is that it is neither subject nor object. In the case of "A believes that p", A is the belief p. This seems to be Wittgenstein's point at 5.552 where he states that the experience required to understand logic is that "something *is*". However, he adds, this experience "is *not* an experience" (ibid.). The experience we need to experience logic is not the personal experience of a subject. If we say, "A" experiences "something is", we could ask, "What is A?" However, what we have referred to as "A" cannot be named. That is, if we say that "A thinks x", it could be interpreted that "A" (defined as the source of experience) has a thought "x". However, by saying "x thinks x", Wittgenstein seems to be saying that the thinker "A" *is* the thought "x". Wittgenstein denies that the subject is a thing that thinks (5.631). In other words, there is no thinker that has the thought; rather, there is only the thought. To take this example one further step and ask, "What has this thought 'x'?", both the question and the answer are in the form of thoughts. That is to say, thought will not reveal a thinker, but only more thoughts. When we apply this example to what experiences an event, it is not possible to say "A" has the experience "y". Rather, there is only the experience and not the experience of a subject who experiences.

If we take this discussion in light of the solipsistic self, it can be interpreted to mean that when Wittgenstein states that it is a point without extension (5.64), he means it cannot be put into words. At 5.62 he states that what the solipsistic self intends to say is correct, but it cannot be said; rather, it shows itself as my world. In the *Notebooks*, Wittgenstein says that the key to determining the way in which solipsism is truth is in understanding the nature of “my soul”. Although he rejects the notion of a personal soul, he recognises that there is one world soul, which “I for preference call *my* soul” (NB, 49). The difference between the personal soul or the soul with which psychology deals and *my* soul is that the latter is a limit of the world soul. The personal soul is a composite of personal attributes that contribute to one’s sense of identity. On the other hand, the world soul is not part of the world. *My* soul is also not part of the world, but is a limit of the world soul. At 5.632 we discover that the subject does not belong to the world, but is a limit of the world. We know this limit as my world; that is, it is the world I alone understand. Through the world being my world, the ‘I’ makes its appearance in philosophy (NB, 80, 5.641). By the phrase “my world” Wittgenstein means the reality with which the solipsistic self is coordinated, the word he uses for reality in this case being “*Realität*”. It is important to note that *Realität* is used here rather than *Wirklichkeit* because the former means empirical reality. In other words, *Realität* is reality that we experience as “my world”. Propositions, which correspond to *Wirklichkeit*, tell us how the world is. However, propositions do not tell us that it is. The difference between *Realität* and *Wirklichkeit* can be seen in the distinction between ‘an experience’ and ‘saying that I had the experience’. In saying that ‘I experienced x’, one is removed from the direct ‘experience x’ to a proposition about the experience. This is to say that the ‘experience x’ cannot be put into words. Although

this topic will be considered in Chapter 7 on the eternal, the point here is that the “experience x” is in the immediate present, while the proposition “I experienced x” is a comment about a past event.

As we have seen, the solipsistic self, and *Realität* that remains co-ordinated with it, cannot be put into words. *Realität*, which is limited by objects (form and content), cannot be put into words nor can it be the subject of analysis or hypothesis. That is, it is not possible to investigate the solipsistic self and *Realität* using Russell’s method.

2.7 The Mystical and What Cannot Be Put Into Words

To this point we have considered three features in the *Tractatus* that cannot be put into words: 1) objects (in the sense that they are the substance of the world), 2) *Realität* (which is limited by the totality of objects) and 3) the solipsistic self (which remains co-ordinated with *Realität*). This section will not only attempt to show that the mystical cannot be put into words, but also will draw a connection between these three features that cannot be put into words and the mystical.

At 6.522 Wittgenstein states that there are things that cannot be put into words that show themselves, which are the mystical. There are two additional points to the mystical we must consider. First, it is not *how* the world is, but *that* it is (6.44). Second, it is to view or feel the world as a limited whole (6.45). In the first case at 6.44, “*how* the world is” corresponds to reality as *Wirklichkeit*, and in the second I will attempt to show that “*that* the world is” corresponds to *Realität*. In the first case, Wittgenstein states, “propositions

only say *how* things are, not *what* they are". Propositions show what they share in common with reality and say if it is true. Although the showing and saying distinction will be addressed in the chapter on showing, for the present we need only know that propositions describe states of affairs (4.023) and that the existence and non-existence of states of affairs is reality (*Wirklichkeit*) (2.06). We should also know that the sum total of reality is the world (2.0263). The statement "*how* the world is is not the mystical," means that the world that corresponds to *Wirklichkeit* is not the mystical. Next, we shall consider if *Realität* corresponds to "*that* the world is". There are three things we know about *Realität*: it is empirical reality (5.5561), it is limited by the totality of objects (*ibid.*) and it is co-ordinated with the solipsistic self (5.64). Let us begin with the claim about the totality of objects.

It cannot be assumed that Wittgenstein means that there are a finite number of objects that can be counted and that this sum is the limit of *Realität*. At 4.1272 he states that objects cannot be counted in the same way that one counts books, for example. He states that it is impossible to say, "There are 100 objects" (*ibid.*). The limit Wittgenstein refers to at 5.5561 refers to objects that make up the configuration of objects that produces states of affairs (2.072). As we saw above, we should not think of objects as simples that constitute the world, as one would think of the atoms that make up the universe. Rather, objects are not things, but contain the possibility of all situations (2.014). This possibility is shown as a state of affairs in the configuration of objects that produces it (2.0272). The configuration of objects corresponds to the "configuration of simple signs in the prepositional sign" (3.21). By the term "prepositional sign" Wittgenstein refers to a fact

(3.14), while “simple signs” are names (3.202). Propositions are not a mere collection of words; rather, they articulate sense, as a piece of music is not simply notes, but the theme it expresses (3.141). Wittgenstein rejects the notion that the constituents in a proposition can be thought of as separate entities; rather they “stand in a determinate relation to one another” (3.14). This determinate relationship is expressed in the case of the complex sign “ aRb ”. Wittgenstein states that we should not think of “ aRb ” in terms of a standing to b in the relationship R . Rather, a and b stand in a relationship that *says* aRb . Outside of their configuration, objects are possibilities. That is, objects and the names that represent objects cannot be articulated independent of the configuration in which, in a dependent relation to one another, they can express sense. In light of 5.5561, the total number of objects does not limit empirical reality; rather, the total number of objects that constitute a state of affairs limits reality. However, we should be aware that the reality Wittgenstein refers to at 2.0272 is *Wirklichkeit*.

Empirical reality (*Realität*) appears at 5.5561 because the 5.55s are concerned with the possible forms of elementary propositions. Wittgenstein’s point is that it is not possible for logic to deal with forms that one can invent. However, it is possible to deal with that which “makes it possible for me to invent them” (5.555). The turn this discussion indicates is that the attention of the *Tractatus* following the 5.55s will be towards the self and solipsism. Following 5.555, Wittgenstein speaks of the forms of elementary propositions that “we ourselves construct” (5.556). In the following passage we discover that the totality of elementary propositions is limited in the same way that objects limit empirical reality (5.5561). Elementary propositions consist of names (5.55) that

correspond to states of affairs. We return to the passage at 2.0272, “The configuration of objects produces states of affairs”. The article “the” emphasises that there is only one configuration, which means that a state of affairs is limited by the totality of objects that stand in a determinate relationship to one another (cf. 2.031). Wittgenstein’s point seems to be that the same is true for elementary propositions. That is, an elementary proposition is limited by the names that stand in a determinate relationship with each other. The connection between 2.0272 and 5.5562 lies in the means to understanding the forms of elementary propositions, not through attempting to understand forms that we invent; rather, by coming to know what makes it possible to invent these forms, we come to an understanding of them (5.555). This is solipsism, because what Wittgenstein refers to as ‘what I invent’ at 5.555 is the language that I alone understand at 5.62. What I invent and what I understand is the hardness in the soft, because the configuration of objects (as possibilities) produces the material world. We do not know the states of affairs that the configuration of objects produces, nor do the propositions that correspond to the states of affairs have sense that we understand, but we do know the thoughts that find expression through a proposition (3.1). We know these thoughts because they are perceived by the senses (*ibid.*), and are therefore empirical reality. Wittgenstein states, “a thought finds an expression that can be perceived by the senses” (*ibid.*). An expression according to Wittgenstein is “the mark of form and content” (3.31). At both 2.0272 and 3.31 we find the article “the” used in “the configuration of objects” and “the mark”. “The” is a definite article that limits or particularises a noun. In this case it could be interpreted that Wittgenstein means that there is only one configuration and one mark. Returning to 5.5561 we find that empirical reality is limited by objects. In addition, we know that

objects are form and content (2.021, 2.025). We should note that propositions contain only the form and not the content of sense. However, empirical reality is both form and content, and unlike propositions, objects limit it. We can also say at this point that while propositions tell us how things are, they can only express the form of reality. That is, propositions can only say how things are in the world. At 3.13 we read that propositions contain the form, but not the content, of their sense. On the other hand, *Realität* is not how the world is, but that it is, as form and content. We know this because it is perceived. The link between *Realität* and propositions is the expressions of thought. As we saw above, a thought finds expression in a proposition that is perceived by the senses. The connection to *Realität* is that an expression is the mark of form and content.

Let us now consider if *Realität*, which is co-ordinated with the empirical self is related to the mystical. We recall that the mystical is that the world exists. We also know that it is a way of viewing the world (“contemplating” in the Ogden translation) *sub specie aeterni* or feeling the world as a limited whole. In the *Notebooks* we find clues to Wittgenstein’s meaning of these passages. To view an object *sub specie aeternitatis* means that the object is not seen from the perspective of a thing among other things (NB, 83). That is, the subject that perceives is not a thing among the things it perceives. He refers to this way of seeing as contemplation. Although this is a subject we shall consider in much depth in future chapters, we can say here that he means that if I contemplate a thing, it means that the thing is not seen as one thing among other things in the world. Rather, contemplation means to see the thing as my world. This raises the point that my world,

which is *Realität* that is co-ordinated with the solipsistic self, means to see the world sub specie aeterni.

The points that have been raised in this section will be the subject of much deeper consideration in future chapters. However, the point to this chapter is to observe what method will follow if we can reasonably assume that it is possible to read the *Tractatus* from a mystical perspective. We know that the mystical cannot be put into words (6.522) and this restricts access to it by Russell's scientific method of philosophy. However, if the mystical cannot be put into words, it appears that no method can approach the subject. This is not the case for Wittgenstein. If we read 6.522 in the context of the 6.5's, a method begins to emerge.

2.8 Wittgenstein's Method and the Mystical

At 6.5 Wittgenstein states that when an answer cannot be put into words, neither can the question. The converse of this is that when a question can be put into words, it is "*possible* to answer it" (ibid.). If we apply this to questions such as "What is the subject?" or "Is the subject inside or outside the world?" we find that cannot be put into words. According to Wittgenstein, anything that can be expressed in words as either a question or an answer is subject to doubt (6.51). In terms of what cannot be put into words that we have considered in this chapter, there is nothing to ask or nothing to say. However, having nothing to say does not mean we are left with nothing. The strategy Wittgenstein employs leaves one with only what can be said clearly, which means the questions of science. However, he admits that even if these questions are answered, the problem of

life remains (6.52). The method of doubt prevents Wittgenstein from making a statement about the problem of life. He claims that the solution lies only in the vanishing of the problem, which is to say that the problem vanishes when one realises that the problem of life cannot be framed into a question nor is there an answer to be found in words. He then approaches the reader of the book at 6.521 directly and asks if this is not the reason why after a long period of doubt “the sense of life becomes clear to them [that are] unable to say what constituted that sense.” Wittgenstein concludes the 6.5s with the passage that the mystical is the things that cannot be put into words, but show themselves. Although the 6.5s, and in particular the problems of life, will be discussed in later chapters, it is important to take from this discussion that the sense of life and the mystical cannot be expressed in words. However, this does not mean that they are to be rejected. The 6.5’s indicate the sense of life becomes clear after a period of doubt, while the mystical shows itself.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that Wittgenstein’s notion of objects, reality (*Realität*) and the solipsistic self cannot be expressed in words. It also drew a connection between these three and the mystical, which also cannot be put into words. It was also established that Russell’s method of analysis is an inadequate means of inquiring into what cannot be put into words. Rather, we find in the *Tractatus* a notion of philosophy that aims at limiting what can be thought. In setting these limits, that is, in presenting clearly what can be said, what cannot be said is signified. Similarly, we find that doubt exists only when there is question and something that can be put into words. However, even when there are no

questions, the problem of life and the mystical remain. That is, doubt reveals the mystical, as we shall consider in future chapters.

Chapter 3: Language, Method and Mysticism

Bertrand Russell's break with idealism, which gave rise to a philosophy of realism, was based on the notion of self-subsistent objects that are independent of the mind and all other objects. According to Russell, the key point in this belief was the rejection of the idealist's view that the relationship between objects was internal and not external. As we considered in chapter one, this proved to be the foundation for Russell's philosophical method that he called the "scientific method in philosophy". Wittgenstein rejects Russell's method stating it is "simply a retrogression from the method of physics" (*1914-1916 Notebooks*, NB, 44). This denial of Russell's method is one part of the base of Wittgenstein's method. The other is that Wittgenstein thought that a fundamental error among philosophers is that they are concerned with problems that lie outside the limits of language (*ibid.*). Wittgenstein's aim was to make clear what can and cannot be said. This aim involved setting limits to the expressions of thought. He thought that by presenting clearly what can be said, what cannot be said would be signified (4.115). While the previous chapter considered the method that would follow if the mystical were taken as the starting point, the purpose of this chapter will be to draw a distinction between Russell's interpretation of Wittgenstein's thoughts on language and the interpretation presented here that links Wittgenstein's notion of language to his thoughts on the mystical. In meeting this objective, this chapter will open the key topics to be discussed in the following chapters that will attempt to reach an understanding of Wittgenstein's thoughts on the mystical.

While it is true that Wittgenstein practices Russell's method of analysis in order to understand the constituents of language, Wittgenstein shows that the analysis of language does not lead to metaphysical insights into the structure of language as Russell had thought. Rather, Wittgenstein thinks the intention of the analysis of language is to eliminate the kind of thinking that leads to theories of metaphysics. By focussing on Russell's comments in his Introduction, this chapter will attempt to draw a distinction between Russell and Wittgenstein's methods based on the question of logically perfect languages. We begin with Russell's method and consider its influence on his interpretation of the *Tractatus*. Although Russell believes that Wittgenstein is concerned with logically perfect languages, he is not. Rather, Wittgenstein believes that propositions of everyday life are in perfect logical order. His notion that everyday propositions are in perfect logical order will lead us to consider if his views could be interpreted in a way that is consistent with a mystical reading of the *Tractatus*. This chapter will begin with Russell's interpretation of Wittgenstein's aim of the *Tractatus*. It will then move to consider why Wittgenstein's thoughts on language cannot be interpreted as an attempt to create a perfect language. From this critique I will show that there exists a connection between Wittgenstein's thoughts on language and his notion of the world as my world. The following section will attempt to show that there is no distinction between thoughts and language. This point further alienates Russell's view that Wittgenstein is concerned with a logically perfect language and turns the attention towards the aim of his project, drawing limits to the expression of thoughts. In considering thoughts in relation to my world, I shall attempt to show that the subject is not a thing and with this draw a

connection to the mystical through Wittgenstein's notion that a proposition is an expression seeing the world *sub specie aeterni*.

3.1 Russell's Interpretation of the *Tractatus*

In Russell's Introduction to the *Tractatus* he states that Wittgenstein's aim is to establish the conditions for a logically perfect language.

A logically perfect language has rules of syntax, which prevent nonsense, and has single symbols that have always had a definite and unique meaning. Mr. Wittgenstein is concerned with the conditions for a logically perfect language - not that any language is logically perfect, or that we believe ourselves capable, here and now, of constructing a logically perfect language, but that the whole function of language is to have meaning, and it only fulfils this function in proportion as it approaches to the ideal language which we postulate. (Introduction, 8)

Two points are raised in this quotation that pertain to the contrast of Russell and Wittgenstein's methods. First, Wittgenstein is not concerned with a logically perfect language. Although Wittgenstein is interested in the symbols of language, he does not want to replace the syntax of everyday language. Second, Russell talks of constructing a logically perfect language as the means to approach an ideal language; however, the construction of a logically perfect language rests on the hypothesis that such an approach is possible.

3.2 Contrasting Views on Logically Perfect Languages

Regarding the first point, Wittgenstein is not concerned with the matter of logically perfect languages. Passages at 3.322 - 3.325 seem to indicate, as Russell suggests, that Wittgenstein is interested in logically perfect languages. At 3.322 Wittgenstein states that using one sign to indicate two different objects cannot express a common characteristic

of the two, because signs are arbitrary. However, in common language, one word can have different modes of signification. The two expressions we encounter in this discussion are “sign” and “symbol”. Wittgenstein states, “ A sign is what can be perceived of a symbol” (3.32). A sign can be written or spoken (3.321). However, confusion can arise when there is one sign for more than one symbol. For example the word “rose” can either be a flower or the past tense of the verb “to rise”. Similarly, the word “is” serves “as a copula, as a sign for identity, and as an expression for existence” (3.323). Wittgenstein believes that the most fundamental confusions are produced in this manner, especially in philosophy (3.324). For example, when the word “is” as an expression of existence is confused for a copula, as in the case of taking “is” for a predicate instead of an existential quantifier claim, problems in philosophy arise. The most notable example of this is the ontological argument for the existence of God and its variations that rely on confusing “is” as a predicate. To avoid such confusions, he suggests that we employ a sign language that avoids using the same sign for different symbols and prevents the use of signs in a superficial way that have “different modes of signification” (3.325). This language will use different signs for different symbols, so that in the case of the word “is”, one symbol will be used in reference to existential claims, and another symbol will be employed when it is being used as a copula.

3.3 In Contrast to a Logical Perfect Language

We must bear in mind that this discussion on signs and symbols should not be read as a theory of language. Rather, Wittgenstein’s concern with signifying serves only as a means to achieve the aim of the *Tractatus* to draw limits to the expressions of thought.

He shows little interest in Frege's or Russell's thoughts on this matter. Although Frege's and Russell's conceptual notation is the same as the sign language Wittgenstein refers to at 3.325, he maintains that it "fails to exclude all mistakes" (ibid.). To Russell this failure implies that we have not developed a logically perfect language. This view of the need for a logically perfect language that Russell holds influences his belief that Wittgenstein is concerned with a theory of language that is concerned with symbolism and the "conditions that would have to be fulfilled by a logically perfect language" (Intro. 7). However, this view is not consistent with the passage at 5.5563:

In fact, all the propositions of our everyday language, just as they stand, are in perfect logical order.

In fact, Wittgenstein's concern is not with models that convey a likeness to truth, but "the truth itself in its entirety" (ibid.). Wittgenstein's intention is not to offer a theory of language, but to reveal the nature of all propositions as they stand. Again, at 5.4733 we find that Wittgenstein does not support a theory that promotes a logically perfect language. In his view "any possible proposition is legitimately constructed" (ibid.). Due to the failure to give meaning to some of the parts of a proposition, it has no sense (ibid.). In other words, while the logic of a proposition cannot fail in its role, we can take a sign and symbolize it in an entirely different way, as we see in the example, "Socrates is identical" (ibid.). Wittgenstein claims that the example says nothing because we have not given an "*adjectival* meaning to the word identical" (ibid.). Wittgenstein's point here is to show that logic will look after itself, as he states at 5.473. That is, everything that is possible is legitimate. If a sign has the possibility of signifying, it must have the capacity to do so (ibid.). Since we cannot determine how a sign will be used in logic once we have given it a meaning, we cannot give to it the wrong sense (5.4732). In contrast to the

notion of a theoretical logically perfect language, in one sense Wittgenstein sees language in terms of the meaning that we give signs. When these signs are names, the application of logic determines what elementary propositions there are (5.557). However, the application of logic cannot foresee other applications. As Wittgenstein states, “logic must not clash with its application” (ibid.). In other words, the possibility of language must not overlap with what it does. In a second but related sense, Wittgenstein sees language in terms of the language that I alone understand, which is my world. That is, the language that I alone understand is not the possibility of language, but what it does. It is to this topic we now turn our attention.

3.4 Language and My World

The topic for this section will be language and its relationship to Wittgenstein’s notion of my world. The purpose of the discussion in this and the following sections is to use the separation between Russell’s thoughts and Wittgenstein’s notion of language discussed above to draw a connection to Wittgenstein’s notion of the mystical.

The relationship between the application of logic and my world is revealed at 5.5561, where we read that objects limit empirical reality in the same manner that names limit elementary propositions. Let us begin with clarifying the distinction Wittgenstein makes between empirical reality and pictures of reality and propositions. While elementary propositions picture states of affairs (reality as *Wirklichkeit*), empirical reality (*Realität*) cannot be pictured. Objects produce states of affairs (*Wirklichkeit*) and limit empirical reality (*Realität*). While the configuration of names produce elementary propositions in

the same way that objects produce states of affairs, names and elementary propositions are one step removed from reality (objects, states of affairs). Here lies the reason why names do not limit empirical reality and objects do not limit elementary propositions. Names cannot limit *Realität* because elementary propositions and propositions only tell us about reality (*Wirklichkeit*). *Realität* cannot be named; because the moment it has been named it is no longer reality, but a name that corresponds to reality. Names signify objects in elementary propositions and only tell us about objects in terms of the configuration that produces a state of affairs. Names cannot say what an object is; objects cannot be put into words. On the other hand, objects do not limit elementary propositions for the following reason. The truth or falsity of elementary propositions corresponds to the existence and non-existence of states of affairs or reality (*Wirklichkeit*). An object is related to an elementary proposition through being named. However, while the configuration of objects in a state of affairs corresponds to the configuration of names in an elementary proposition, they are not separate. In other words, it is not possible to separate language from reality or the application of logic.

The line of reasoning that supports the interpretation I shall now offer begins with the claim that language is not separate from my world. We begin at 5.6: “*The limits of my language means the limits of my world*”. By the phrase “limits of my language” Wittgenstein means the language that I alone understand, which is my world. The connection between language and my world lies in *Realität* and its co-ordination to the solipsistic self. The solipsistic self is unable to say what it means; rather, it shows itself. It cannot say what it means because elementary propositions correspond to *Wirklichkeit*, not

Realität. *Realität* is the content of the occurrence we understand as “my world”. I use the word “occurrence” here to emphasise that it is not an experience in the sense of an event separate from the one who experiences. We cannot say that there is an experience of *Realität* in the sense of an experience separate from the one who experiences. In other words, the occurrence of *Realität* is different from one’s experience of the taste of wine, because in the experience we find both the experience and one who experiences it. We find at 5.552 that the experience of something that *is*, is not an experience. The meaning of this passage is found at 5.632 where Wittgenstein states that there is no subject in the sense of the subject that thinks or has an experience, because what we think of that thinks is only another thought among others. Similarly, the experience of the subject is only an experience among all other experiences. In other words if the notion we have of a personal subject is in the world, it is only a thought or an experience, but not a unique thought or experience. That is, in terms of thought, there are only thoughts and not a subject. With these thoughts we turn to the relationship of language to my world.

We read in the 1s that the world is the totality of facts, and at 2.063 that the world is the sum total of reality (*Wirklichkeit*); however, at 5.62 the world is my world. On one hand Wittgenstein describes the world in terms of the reality that corresponds to propositions. On the other hand we find he describes the world in terms of the reality that is coordinated with the solipsistic self. However, at 5.63 we have a clue to what he means by my world when he equates “I” with “my world”. Again, the “I” is not a personal I, as the solipsistic self is not a personal self. However, we must be careful about drawing a connection between, on one hand, the I and my world and on the other, the solipsistic self

and *Realität*. If we say that my world is *Realität* that remains co-ordinated with the I or the solipsistic self, we ignore the fact that my world is the world (*Wirklichkeit*). This leaves the problem of whether we attribute my world to *Wirklichkeit* or *Realität*.

However, if we view this problem in light of language, a different picture emerges. The image of language that corresponds to *Wirklichkeit* is one in which propositions picture reality. They do this by showing the form of a situation, but not the content. However, this picture of language and the world leaves out life. On the other hand, if the situation were one that included only the I of the solipsist or the subject, we would lack the form and structure of the world. As we have seen, the subject is not part of the world and the solipsistic self is without extension. However, when the I of the solipsist shrinks to a point without extension, what remains is the “reality co-ordinated with it” (NB, 82). What Wittgenstein means by shrinking to a point without extension is found in the *Notebooks*. He claims, “I objectively confront every object” (NB, 80). However, I do not objectively confront the I (ibid). That is, the I is not an object one can confront. If we want to understand what Wittgenstein means by the I, we must begin by recognizing that the I of the subject is not an object (ibid.) and by eliminating everything I objectively confront that I believe forms my sense of individual identity. This includes eliminating the physical and psychological attributes we normally attribute to personal identity. This process of elimination is the shrinking of the I to a point without extension. Only at this point does the I enter philosophy (ibid.). At the same time the I appears in philosophy “through the world’s being *my* world” (ibid.). Wittgenstein emphasises the word “my” to make clear that my world is not mine in the sense of my personal identity or in terms of physical and psychological attributes. Rather, my world is reality as *Realität*.

If all the attributes of personal identity I objectively confront are eliminated, it cannot be said that the subject exists or does not exist. That is, if the subject is neither an object that is configured in a state of affairs, nor a name that is configured in an elementary proposition, it does not belong to the world. In this light if we reconsider 5.631 where Wittgenstein states, “There is no such thing as a subject”, it could be interpreted that he means that the subject cannot be a thing of any kind. In other words, “I” does not mean an object; it is not a name. Moreover, it does not correspond to an object in an elementary proposition. In order to say that the I exists or does not exist it must be part of the world. However, this does not mean that the I of the subject can be ignored. In Wittgenstein’s words, the subject is “what is deeply mysterious” (ibid.). Wittgenstein uses a phrase such as “deeply” mysterious because we cannot know the subject. In contrast to thinking of the subject in a personal sense, Wittgenstein views the thinking subject as mere superstition and illusion (ibid.).

We cannot overlook the importance of the subject to the *Tractatus*. The sense of a proposition depends upon the subject. That is, as we discussed above, while a proposition contains form, the content of its sense is found in terms of the reality that is co-ordinated with the solipsistic self. Content is what we understand as the limit of world, because it is the reality that is co-ordinated with reality. These limits are shown as my world.

At this point we see that *Wirklichkeit* and *Realität* are not separate realities. It is not possible to talk about my world without the world (*Wirklichkeit*). That is, the world provides the form and structure to the world that I alone understand (i.e. my world). The

phrase “I alone understand” is used to emphasize the subject limits the world as my world; that is, the subject is a boundary that defines the world as my world. Without this limit of the world, (i.e. my world), the world cannot be understood. In other words, the world that I alone understand as my world is *Realität* at its point of co-ordination with the solipsistic self. This is also true for language. The subject limits language and is a boundary that defines the language that I alone understand. This limit means the limit of my world (5.62).

3.5 Thoughts and My World

The importance of the subject with regard to language rests in thoughts. At 3.13 Wittgenstein states that a proposition does not contain its sense, only the possibility of expressing it. The sense of a proposition is expressed in thought. The means of this expression is a picture that can be perceived by the senses. Where an elementary proposition shows the form of a state of affairs, a thought is what we picture (of a state of affairs) to ourselves. The difference between a proposition and a thought is that the former is a picture of reality (4.01), while the latter is what we picture to ourselves (3.001). The significance of this difference is that a thought is perceived. With this difference in mind we will turn to Wittgenstein’s passage: “Language disguises thought” (4.002) to show that the first concern of the *Tractatus* is with thoughts. Although language is important, the Preface states that in language the limit to the expressions of thought are drawn. It appears that Wittgenstein sees that there is a difference between thoughts and language; however, a closer investigation will reveal the two are not separate.

Although the passages at 4.01 and 3.001 appear to present a clear distinction between thoughts and propositions, other passages in the *Tractatus* do not present this difference as clearly. For example, at 4 Wittgenstein states, “a proposition is a thought with sense”. Let us begin with what appears as the distinction between thoughts and propositions. We get a sense of the difference between a proposition and a thought in a letter Wittgenstein wrote to Russell on August 19th, 1919. In this letter Wittgenstein states that thoughts do not consist of words, but “psychical constituents that have the same sort of relation to reality as words” (*Letters to Russell, Keynes and Moore*, LRKM, 72). The difference between the two does not lie in the relationship to reality, but in one’s relationship to them. We see this in the case of the proposition “The ball is in the air”. While two individuals can say if it is true picture of reality or not, they cannot say if a third person’s psychical constituents correspond to the reality they share with the proposition “The ball is in the air”. In other words the first two individuals cannot say if the third person’s psychical constituents are a true picture or not. Despite this difference, words and psychic constituents have the same relation to reality. At this point our discussion turns to Wittgenstein’s notion of thoughts and their relationship to language. The fact that language and thoughts share the same relation to reality indicates that they are not different, as the quotation above would suggest. In showing that thoughts and language are not different we begin to identify a greater difference than we saw above between Russell’s concern with a theory of language and Wittgenstein’s rejection of such theories. Moreover, in showing that there is not a separation between thoughts and language we draw a connection from language to the mystical.

At 4.002 Wittgenstein states, “Language disguises thought”. We recall that Wittgenstein’s aim of the *Tractatus* is to draw limits to the expressions of thought. His concern with language goes only as far as it serves to meet this aim. The purpose of language is only to reveal its limits. Wittgenstein rejects the notion that it is possible to employ propositions to talk about language. Propositions can only represent states of affairs. They only state something insofar as it is a picture of reality, but language itself is not reality. At 4.462 he states that propositions that are not pictures of reality are tautologies or contradictions. In the case of propositions, the attempt to say something about language suggests they are tautologies because the conditions of agreement with the world cancel each other out (4.62). The cancelled conditions of agreement are such that no aspect of reality can represent itself (*ibid.*). Owing to the fact that propositions cannot make statements about language, Wittgenstein believes that philosophy is restricted to the clarification of what can be said. However, the aim of philosophy is the “logical clarification of thoughts” (4.112), and not the creation of perfect languages. In other words, philosophy aims to reveal the thoughts that language disguises. The means to this end is that philosophy “must set limits to what can be thought and in doing so what cannot be thought” (4.114). By working with what can be thought and setting limits to what can and cannot be thought, this aim is achieved. Wittgenstein claims that only in presenting clearly what can be said, what cannot be said will be signified. In contrast to Russell, Wittgenstein has no intention of offering a theory of any kind, especially a theory of language. In Russell’s view, it is important to clarify language to make it a more accurate means by which thought can express itself. In this view there is the

assumption that thought and language are separate and by tinkering with one, the other will be improved. In light of Wittgenstein's letter to Russell, it would seem that Wittgenstein supports the position that language and thoughts are different, because language consists of words and thoughts consist of psychical constituents. However, we learn that that this is not an accurate interpretation of Wittgenstein's thought. Rather, in light of his claim that thinking is a kind of language (NB, 82), we find that thinking and language are not separate. At 3.1 we read that propositions and thoughts are not parallel languages that correspond to the same reality: "In a proposition a thought finds expression that can be perceived by the senses". If thinking is a kind of language, does this mean that the psychical constituents of thought are a non-material substance that finds physical expression through propositions? As we shall now consider, the answer to this question leads us to Wittgenstein's thoughts on the mystical.

3.6 The Mystical

The connection of Wittgenstein's notion of thoughts with the mystical begins with asking if thoughts are material. Considering that Wittgenstein states that psychical constituents and words share the same relationship with reality, it would not seem that if words were a material substance that thoughts must be non-physical. In light of 3.1, it would appear that thoughts use propositions as a vehicle of their expression. However, this may not be the idea of thoughts Wittgenstein had in mind. We have two important points that enable us to understand Wittgenstein's thoughts on thinking. First, we know that thoughts correspond to reality. Second, thoughts are an expression that is perceived by the senses. Empirical reality (what Wittgenstein refers to as *Realität* at 5.5561 and 5.64) is what

remains co-ordinated with the solipsistic self. Since the solipsistic self is without extension, it does not find expression through a proposition. Let us illustrate the relationship of the solipsistic self to reality through Wittgenstein's example of the eye and its relationship to the field of vision. The key to this example is that it is not possible for the eye to turn itself into an object of sight; yet the eye that cannot be seen is essential for sight (5.633 – 5.6331). We can say that in the moment of sight, the eye remains co-ordinated with an object in its field of vision, as the solipsistic self remains co-ordinated with reality. At this point we want to consider if there exists connections between solipsism and the notion that thinking and language are the same, and between these two and the mystical. We begin this consideration with the passages from September 1916 we find in the *Notebooks* (NB, 82-83).

We take up Wittgenstein's thoughts on September the 2nd (NB, 82) and his discussion about solipsism. The next point is in the passage, "The way in which language signifies is mirrored in its use" (ibid). This is followed by an entry the following day where he states, "Now it is become clear why I thought that thinking and language were the same" (ibid.). The connection between solipsism, and his belief that thinking and language are the same, is found in his view that the self of solipsism is an extensionless point that remains co-ordinated with reality. At NB, 49 and 5.62 we learn that the limits of language mean the limits of my world. Wittgenstein's intention is that the limit refers to the reality that is co-ordinated with the solipsistic self. At this point or occurrence of reality it is not possible to distinguish between language as words, (as in the case of propositions), or as psychical constituents, (as in the case of thoughts). At the point of reality (*Realität*)

thoughts and language are the same. We return to Wittgenstein's example of the eye and its relationship to the visual field to understand this point. Although the eye distinguishes objects in the visual field, such as a ball from a field of wheat, all objects are visual images in the moment they are perceived. In terms of the point of reality that is co-ordinated with the solipsistic self, both thoughts and propositions are logical pictures of reality. That is, they both are in sense pictures that share logical form in common with reality. However, what remains different is the way in which language and thoughts signify. As Wittgenstein states, this difference is reflected in their use. In light of the discussion on solipsism, it seems to be the intention of Wittgenstein's remarks that thinking and language are the same.

As we considered above, a thought finds expression in a proposition (3.1) and a thought is a proposition with sense (4). However, we also learn at 3.31 that a proposition is an expression. It is at this point we turn to consider the mystical. By the term "expression" Wittgenstein means a mark of form and content (ibid.). In light of the discussion on form and content in the previous chapter, where the claim was made that *Wirklichkeit* refers to the form of reality while *Realität* corresponds to both form and content, we can interpret Wittgenstein's use of the term "expression" in terms of *Realität*. This means that an expression is co-ordinated with the solipsistic self. We now return to Wittgenstein's September 1916 passages in the *Notebooks* and discover that in addition to a proposition being an expression (3.31), art is a kind of expression (NB, 83). The key to the connection I wish to draw between Wittgenstein's use of the term "expression" and the mystical lies in the passage following his claim that art is a kind of expression where he

states that a work of art is an “object seen *sub specie aeternitatis*” (ibid.). At 6.45 we draw the connection to the mystical where Wittgenstein states that to view or feel the world *sub specie aeterni* is the mystical. That is, if thought finds an expression in a proposition and that expression is form and content, it is the content of the reality that is co-ordinated with the solipsistic self. To see the content of reality as *sub specie aeterni* is to view the world as a limited whole, or as my world. According to Wittgenstein, to view the world in this way is the mystical.

Although the topic of Wittgenstein’s thoughts on the connection of the language to mystical will be further considered in the following chapter, we have a clear indication from the subject considered in this chapter where this discussion will lead. This chapter also marks the course of inquiry for further chapters on the mystical. At NB, 83 Wittgenstein states that the usual way of looking at things is from the midst of them. That is, when identifying with the subject as a thing among other things (thoughts, experiences impressions and so on) we fail to see the world as my world. Therefore, in keeping with the aim of the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein seems to indicate that in drawing limits to the expressions of thought, we realize that there is no such thing as a subject. That is, one does not see the world as a subject (thing) among other things. At NB, 83 Wittgenstein refers to seeing in this way as contemplation. He says that in contemplating an object, it is seen as my world. The key to Wittgenstein’s notion of contemplation, as we will later examine, is seen in the contrast he draws between seeing the bare present as a “worthless momentary picture in the whole temporal world” and seeing the same present as the “true world among the shadows” (ibid.).

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter considered the separation that is found between Russell's interpretation of Wittgenstein's thoughts on language, and an interpretation that attempts to place Wittgenstein's thoughts in the context of the aim of the book, namely, to draw limits to the expressions of thought, and the final passages of the *Tractatus* that discuss the mystical. This chapter and the previous chapter have introduced the topic of the mystical. We shall now turn to examine in detail what Wittgenstein means by the mystical in considering its relationship to other sections of *Tractatus*.

Chapter 4: Showing and Wittgenstein's Two Objections to Russell's Theory of Types

In the "Notes Dictated to G. E. Moore", Wittgenstein rejects Russell's theory of types. He claims that it is impossible (NB, 109) because what can be said *in* language can never be said *by* language, but instead shows its meaning in its use. The purpose of this chapter will be to argue that Wittgenstein's notion of showing is the motivation for his objections to Russell's theory of types. Following this discussion we shall consider the connection between Wittgenstein's notion of showing and his notion of the mystical in order to draw the distinction between "how the world is" and "that it is" and the consequence of this difference on problems such as Russell's solution to his paradox. Although this chapter is in the form of a critique of Russell's theory of types, its purpose is to make clear the distinction between the two views of philosophy we find in Russell and Wittgenstein. We begin with a brief look at Russell's paradox and the solution he offers in the theory of types.

4.1 Russell's Paradox

The issue Russell in his paradox is the relationship of individual things to their collective properties. The example of the paradox Russell gives in *My Philosophical Development* (MPD) starts with teaspoons and the notion that the class of teaspoons is not a teaspoon. The observation of this property of classes led Russell to claim that in most cases a class is not a member of itself. In other words, the extension of the class of teaspoons contains a large number of teaspoons, but does not include the class itself. The paradox arises when one considers the case of the class of all classes that are members of themselves,

which includes such classes as the class of all things that are not teaspoons. In the case of the class of all things that are not teaspoons, the class, which is a member of the class, is both a class and a member of itself. Russell describes the paradox as follows:

I asked myself whether [the class of all classes that are not a member themselves] is a member of itself or not. If it is a member of itself, it must possess the defining property of the class, which is to be not a member of itself. If it is not a member of itself, it must not possess the defining property of the class, and therefore must be a member of itself. Thus each alternative leads to its opposite and there is a contradiction. (MPD, 76)

In other words, if the class of all classes that are not members of themselves is a member of itself, then it isn't a class of all classes that are not members of themselves. On the other hand, if it is not a member of itself, then by definition it is a member. Thus, we have a paradox.

4.2 Russell's Solution: The Theory of Types

Russell introduced this problem in the *Principles of Mathematics* (1903) (PM, 102) and offered his first attempt to solve the paradox in the Appendix B "The Doctrine of Types". He called his solution "the theory of the hierarchy of types". The essence of this theory is the division of classes into a hierarchy beginning first with individuals, then classes of individuals, then classes of classes of individuals and so on (PM, 523-524). An individual is defined as "any object which is not a range" (PM, 523). By the term "range", Russell means the range of significance of definition. That is, according to Russell every propositional function $\phi(x)$ has a range in which x must lie within $\phi(x)$ (whether true or false) if x is to be a proposition (ibid.). Each of these ranges of significance form a type. He states that if x is a member of a range "there is a class of objects" (ibid.). The lowest type of an object is a term or an individual. Russell refers to terms or individuals of this

type as classes of one. Classes of many things are such things as individuals (classes of psychic experiences), or objects of daily life that can be named such as books, dogs, and so on (classes of material points and secondary qualities). As opposed to the lowest type of an object (classes of one), individuals of this kind are defined as objects of which “numbers cannot be significantly asserted” (ibid.), or classes of many. The next type includes classes of individuals. This class refers to the range of significance that includes individuals such as the class of all leather bound books, and so on. The next class after classes of individuals is the class of classes of individuals (PM, 524).

In Russell’s essay “Mathematical Logic as based on the Theory of Types” (*Logic and Knowledge*, LK 59 - 102), he turns to language, which he argues corresponds to the hierarchical universe found in *The Principle of Mathematics*. In this work we find the same structure for a hierarchy of classes as found in “The Doctrine of Types”. For example, Russell defines a type as the “range of significance of a propositional function, i.e., as the collection of arguments for which the said function has values” (LK, 75). Russell thought that dividing objects into types avoided the reflexive fallacies that characterized the problem found in his paradox, “because no totality can contain members defined in terms of itself” (ibid.). That is, the constituents of a class, say the class of teaspoons, cannot contain as one of its members an object defined differently, say an object defined as the class of all teaspoons. In order to achieve the solution to the paradox, he proposed that the following restriction be imposed on classes: “Whatever contains an apparent variable must not be a possible value of that variable” (ibid.). That is, whatever contains an apparent variable must be a type that is defined as different from

the possible values of the apparent variable. The variables contained in a type are what determine the type. However, as the type is different from its variables, it is considered of a higher order (ibid.). Russell believes that the paradox will not arise when the difference in type between the different levels of the hierarchy is maintained. The difference in levels of types prevents a type from being a member of itself because of the separation of the type and the variables that define it.

Unlike the hierarchy of types found in “The Doctrine of Types”, Russell defines types in “Mathematical Logic” by ordinal sequence. This 1908 version of the theory was later called the “Ramified Theory of Types”, as opposed to the simple version found in 1903. The focus in the 1908 version of the theory shifts to orders of language. To begin, elementary propositions are the first logical type, because they contain only individuals. The first step in Russell’s hierarchy is generated by “applying a process of generalization to individuals occurring in elementary propositions” (LK, 76). By the term “generalization” Russell means substituting a variable for a term in a proposition and asserting the function for all possible values of the variable (ibid.). This level of generalization he calls first-order propositions. When first-order propositions occur as variables, a new level of propositions arises, which he calls second-order propositions, from which rises the third logical type (ibid.). Thus, in terms of classes, they may be thought of as a class of members of type n (ibid.). Russell believes that this process of the theory of types “can be continued indefinitely” (ibid.). The advantage Russell gains with this theory is that it counters the problem that a class cannot be both a member of itself and not a member of itself, as in the case of the class of all classes that are not members

of themselves. According to Russell, the problem of self-referential classes can now be avoided because the process whereby the separation of apparent variables and the type that contains them is continued indefinitely.

4.3 Wittgenstein's Objection to the Theory of Types

As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, Wittgenstein's states in his 1914 "Notes Dictated to G. E. Moore" that "a theory of types is impossible" (NB, 109). In order to explain the difficulty that lies in the theory of types, Wittgenstein turns to what can be shown by language but not said. In the example of "M is a thing", he says it cannot be said. In fact, "it is nonsense" (ibid.). However, the symbol "M" shows something (ibid.). We can apply this example to propositions, which cannot be said but show themselves by a symbol. According to Wittgenstein, the theory of types is impossible because it attempts to say something about types. A proposition shows the logical form it shares with reality. However, in the case of a proposition about a type, there is nothing for the proposition to correspond to. To say that a symbol has a particular type is the same as saying that a symbol is a thing.

Wittgenstein expresses the same view about types in the *Tractatus*.

No proposition can make a statement about itself, because a propositional sign cannot be contained in itself (that is the whole 'theory of types'). (3.332)

At two earlier passages we see Wittgenstein's line of thought that leads him to the statement at 3.332. At 3.326, he states, "in order to recognize a symbol by its sign we must observe how it is used with sense". Moreover, this passage indicates that the difference between a sign and a symbol lies in the fact that a symbol is a sign with sense.

This passage is followed by the claim that a sign only determines a logical form when “it is taken together with its logico-syntactical employment” (3.327). Wittgenstein means that a sign (written, spoken and so on) is what we perceive of a symbol (3.32). A sign is arbitrary, as shown in the case where two different symbols have the same sign in common. In each case the sign signifies in a different way as is seen in the sentence “Green is green”. While the first “Green” is a proper noun, the second “green” is an adjective. The key to understanding the different ways a sign signifies is found at 3.326 and Wittgenstein’s use of the word “observe”. What we observe is what shows itself as the sign. When a sign is used with sense it shows that it corresponds to a symbol. All other symbols are redundant.

By suggesting that certain symbols in logic are redundant, Wittgenstein offers at 3.333 a further critique of Russell’s theory of types. Wittgenstein states that a function cannot be its own argument because “the sign for a function already contains the prototype of its argument, and it cannot contain itself” (ibid.). Wittgenstein explains this point as follows.

For let us suppose that the function $F(fx)$ could be its own argument: in that case there would be a proposition ‘ $F(F(fx))$ ’, in which the outer function F and the inner function F must have different meanings, since the inner one has the form $\phi(fx)$ and the outer one has the form $\psi(\phi(fx))$. Only the letter ‘ F ’ is common to the two functions, but the letter by itself signifies nothing (ibid).

The claim here against Russell’s theory of types is that it is impossible for the inner “ F ” and the outer “ F ” to be the same symbol and express different meanings. The range of significance of the latter is the propositional function of the type, while that of the former is the function of the type itself. According to Wittgenstein, “propositional function” means a proposition of the expressions of the type contained in it. In other words, a

propositional function that attempts to express itself in the form of $F(F)$ cannot be related to the same type.

Returning to the “Notes Dictated to G. E. Moore”, we find Wittgenstein’s thoughts on showing contained in the claim against Russell’s theory of types. Wittgenstein states that the same distinction between what can be shown by language but not said “explains the difficulty that is felt about types” (NB, 109). We see what Wittgenstein means by showing in the example of “M is a thing”. Although nothing can be said about the example because it is nonsense, “*something is shewn* by the symbol ‘M’” (ibid.). The word “something” is in italics because what is shown cannot be named. In the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein refers to this something as logical form, or that which a proposition shares in common with reality. However, in the *Tractatus* he emphasises that propositions cannot represent their logical form (4.121). The word “shewn” is in italics in the quotation above to stress the point that it can only be shown and not said. In other words, the symbol ‘M’ shows something that cannot be named. However, there is no separation between what shows itself and what is shown. According to Wittgenstein, both the proposition and the form are given at the same time (NB, 109). It is not possible to isolate the form from a proposition in order to say something about it independently of how it shows itself in a proposition. Moreover, to say anything more about the form after understanding the proposition is superfluous “because what it tries to say is something which is already seen when you see ‘M’” (ibid.). In other words, the meaning of a proposition cannot be expressed by a proposition; rather, it expresses itself. The

difference between form and meaning can only be made in language. However, propositions about form are nonsense.

4.4 Wittgenstein's Objection to the Theory of Types: a Mystical Perspective

We find Wittgenstein's separation from Russell and the importance he places on showing in two letters. The first letter is dated March 13th, 1919. In this letter he states that the *Tractatus* will overturn all of their previous work on classes, numbers, theories of truth and so on (*Letters to Russell, Keynes and Moore*, LRKM, 68). In a letter dated six months later he expresses his frustration at Russell's failure to grasp the main idea of the *Tractatus*, while stating the importance of showing to the meaning of the book.

Wittgenstein's letter dated August 19th, 1919 states these views as follows.

Now I am afraid you haven't really got hold of my main contention, to which the whole business of logical props is the only corollary. The main point is the theory of what can be expressed [*gesagt*] by props - i.e., by language - (and which comes to the same, what can be thought) and what cannot be expressed by props, but only shown [*gezeigt*] which I believe is the cardinal problem of philosophy (LRKM, 71).

Wittgenstein's feeling that Russell has failed to grasp the central point of the book is based on Russell's apparent inability to distinguish theories that can be expressed by language (i.e. what can be thought) from what cannot be expressed by language but only shown. If we assume a mystical reading of the *Tractatus*, the passage at LRKM, 71 could be interpreted in the following way. At the end of the passage it is stated that what cannot be expressed by language shows itself. At 6.522 we find that there are things that cannot be put into words, which show themselves, which Wittgenstein calls the mystical. If we read this passage in light of 6.44, (that the mystical is not *how* the world is, but *that* it is), we can interpret "what shows itself" as "*that* the world exists". The distinction

Wittgenstein draws at 6.44 is between language that allows us to grasp *how* the world is and the mystical that shows us *that* it is. Although the distinction between *how* the world is and *that* it is will be examined in a following chapter, for the present we allude to this distinction to draw attention to Wittgenstein's differentiation between natural science, that can only say how the world is, and philosophy, that has nothing to do with natural science (6.54). In this, Wittgenstein is in contrast to Russell, who attempts to say how the world is by using language, as we saw in the example of his theory of types. Wittgenstein has no such aim. In the previous two chapters we saw that Wittgenstein attempts to make clear what can and cannot be said so that what cannot be put into words shows itself.

Chapter Two showed that objects, *Realität* and the solipsistic self cannot be put into words, yet we know *Realität* as my world, which I argued can be interpreted as "*that* the world exists" and the mystical. A mystical interpretation of the *Tractatus* reveals that when the division between what can and cannot be said is clearly established, it is not the same distinction between what exists and what does not exist. As we saw in the previous two chapters, what cannot be put into words means that nothing can be said, which includes statements about existence or non-existence. In Wittgenstein's view there are things, such as logical form, which cannot be put into words but shows themselves.

However, from Russell's point of view, all complexes and their constituents are self-subsistent, as in the case of teaspoons, the class of teaspoons and so on. The advantage of Wittgenstein's view (of distinguishing between what can be said from what cannot, but only shown) is that where Russell is limited to describing how the world is, Wittgenstein shows that the problems of philosophy are not to be solved by a description of the world. The theory of types is one example of this. In Wittgenstein's view, in philosophy there is

nothing to describe, but in making clear what can and cannot be thought, what cannot be put into words will be indicated.

4.5 Conclusion

While the next chapter will consider the topic of Wittgenstein's notion of showing in greater depth, this chapter has shown that showing is involved in Wittgenstein's critique of Russell's theory of types. Wittgenstein's belief that Russell errs in assuming that a propositional sign can say something about itself indicates the distinction he makes between what can be said in language and what can never be said by language. The latter shows its meaning in its use. This distinction helps to make clear Wittgenstein's thoughts on showing as an objection to Russell's theory of types and his passage on the mystical at 6.44 that it is not how the world is, but that that it is.

Chapter 5: Two Senses of Showing

As we saw in the previous chapter, Russell's notion of types attempts to solve problems associated with classes such as the class of all classes that are not members of themselves. Russell suggests that a class and its constituents are different types so that what can be said of one cannot be meaningfully said of the other. Wittgenstein rejects Russell's notion of class by claiming that the theory of types attempts to put into language what cannot be said but shows itself. We are reminded that Wittgenstein states that philosophy is not a doctrine, nor does it result in philosophical propositions (4.112). Rather, philosophy is an activity that attempts to give sharp boundaries to what can and cannot be said.

In light of Wittgenstein's thoughts on the purpose of philosophy, we should proceed with caution as we turn to consider his comments on what shows itself. As we shall see in the following discussion of Max Black's interpretation of Wittgenstein's thoughts on showing, the reference to what is shown as a thing of any kind blurs the sharp distinctions Wittgenstein attempts to make between what can and cannot be said. We begin with Black's distinction between the passages on showing in the 4's and those that fall in the 5's and 6's. Next, we shall consider Stenius' attempt to show that a contradiction exists between the account of showing at 4.121, which suggests there is only one kind of showing, and the account at 4.022, in which he believes two kinds of showing are found. The first purpose of this chapter is to show that if "what cannot be said" is taken at face value, the distinction between what is shown and what shows itself cannot be established. As we saw in the first three chapters, this distinction is the key to Wittgenstein's method

that seeks to set limits to what can be said. The second purpose is to demonstrate the importance of recognizing the difference between two types of showing: what something displays of itself and what something points to or indicates. This distinction will be important when we consider what shows (in the sense of the latter) itself as the mystical.

5.1 Showing: Two Views in Black

This section will show that Max Black's account of the passages on showing in the *Tractatus* assumes two distinctions, which I shall refute. First, he believes there is a distinction between what shows itself and what is shown. Second, he argues that the passages on showing (4.022 – 4.461) should be read separately from the passages on showing at 5.5561, 5.62 and 6.522.

According to Max Black in *A Companion to Wittgenstein's Tractatus* (CWT), the passages on showing can be divided into two groups. In the first group the key passages fall at 4.022, 4.0621, 4.121, 4.1212 and 4.461.

A proposition shows its sense.

A proposition shows how things stand if it is true. And says that they do so stand.
(4.022)

(4.0621) But it is important that the signs ' p ' and ' $\sim p$ ' *can* say the same thing. For it shows that nothing in reality corresponds to the sign ' $\sim$ '.

Propositions cannot represent logical form: it is mirrored in them.

What finds its reflection in language, language cannot represent.

What expresses *itself* in language, *we* cannot express by means of language.

Propositions *show* the logical form of reality.

They display it. (4.121)

What *can* be shown *cannot* be said. (4.1212)

(4.461) Propositions show what they say: tautologies and contradictions show that they say nothing.

The main word in these passages is “show” (*aufzeigen*). Black’s point is that there are various things that show something else. In addition to the passages cited above, Black sets apart another group of passages that mention showing.

Empirical reality is limited by the totality of objects. The limit also makes itself manifest [*zeigt*] in the totality of elementary propositions. (5.5561)
 In fact what solipsism *means*, is quite correct, only it cannot be *said*, but it shows itself. (5.62)
 There is indeed the inexpressible. This *shows* itself; it is the mystical. (6.522)

Black refers to this latter group (5.5561, 5.62 and 6.522) as “doubtful” (CWT, 191), because they do not correspond to what he believes is Wittgenstein’s criteria for showing. In the former group (4.022 – 4.461) Black explains that Wittgenstein uses the term “showing” as “(1) something material about the reference or the sense of the given expression or (2) something about the logical form of the reference or sense” (ibid.). In the former case Black takes Wittgenstein to mean that what shows itself appears in the feature’s form of the use of the symbol. In other words, understanding the symbol means using it correctly. This leads him to state, “what shows itself is not wholly incommunicable” (ibid.). In Black’s example of ‘Eisenhower’, he states when correctly used it stands for a living person (in 1962 when the book was published). The fact that ‘Eisenhower’ stands for a living person shows itself in sentences containing the correct use of the name (ibid.). In the second case what shows itself is a corresponding “‘formal’ or ‘logical’ feature of the corresponding symbol” (CWT, 192). The comprehension of this does not come through insight; rather, Black thinks, the “‘logical form’ of a symbol is, in general, revealed discursively by appeal to the relevant rules of syntax that governs use” (ibid.).

In Black's first group of passages about showing (4.022 – 4.461), he believes that the significance of Wittgenstein's notion of showing lies in the expression of "something unsayable that shows itself in the features of propositional symbols" (CWT, 196). Thus, he excludes passages containing the limit (5.5561), solipsism (5.62) and the mystical (6.522). However, Black's error in separating "showing" into two groups is found in his objection to Wittgenstein's claim that something cannot be said. Black's example from the *Tractatus* is the following statement: "That 'Socrates' means Socrates cannot be said, but shows itself in our use of propositions containing 'Socrates'" (CWT, 196), (cf. 3.262, 3.263). Black makes the point that what cannot be said is identified by the words, "That 'Socrates' means Socrates" (ibid.). He suggests the way to identify what cannot be said is by saying it; however, Black draws a distinction between the unsayable as a thing that cannot be said and the words that identify it. Black's view of what cannot be said, or otherwise expressed, is that the unsayable is "nonsensical (here in a pejorative sense) to use a form of words intended to say of something that it cannot be said" (ibid.). However, Black's suggestion that there is a separation between what cannot be said and its expression opens the way for a metaphysical interpretation of the *Tractatus*. We know that Wittgenstein rejects metaphysical propositions because they cannot be compared with reality. However, we are left with an apparent relationship between a proposition and the logical form it shares with reality. Nevertheless, this relationship is one that is made in language. It is a misuse of language to make this distinction because nothing can be said about either logical form or its relationships. That is, nothing can be said about logical form. This means that we cannot *say* if logical form exists or does not exist. However, if a proposition has sense, one immediately sees the form of the proposition, as

one understands it (NB, 110). That is, there are propositions that correspond to reality and these we can say have sense. Other propositions that do not correspond to reality, such as propositions about logical form, are nonsense. In the case of propositions that have sense, there is no distinction between a proposition and its form in the moment of understanding it. In the immediacy of seeing the form of a proposition, it cannot be said that a distinction between the two exists.

This is not to say that Black has completely misread Wittgenstein regarding the issue of showing. We find in the following passage a recognition of the difficulty discussing the topic of what cannot be put into words: “There is, however, a serious difficulty in trying to say that some specific such and such cannot be said” (CWT, 196). However, we should be cautioned against the assumption that what cannot be said is a thing, a specific ‘such and such’. Wittgenstein does not say that the unsayable exists. In fact, to say that the unsayable exists presents a contradiction, because if it is truly unsayable, it cannot be put into words, even to say if it exists or does not exist. Unlike in Black’s account of showing, if it cannot be put into words, it cannot be *said* that there is a distinction between what shows itself and what is shown. In other words, in order to *say* that there is a distinction between two entities each must be part of the language.

Although we cannot use language to express logical form, at 4.121 Wittgenstein states that it is mirrored in propositions. At 5.511 he asks how logic, which mirrors the world, use such twiddles ($\sim$) and manipulations to mirror the world. His answer is that they are linked together to form an infinitely fine network, which he refers to as the “great mirror”

(ibid.). Before proceeding with Wittgenstein's thoughts at 5.511 let us be clear that the purpose of this discussion is to elucidate what Black refers to as "what cannot be said" and its expression. My intention is to show that what we can learn about logic and what it mirrors is the same as what cannot be said and its expression. We begin this discussion with considering 5.511 in the context of the 5.51s. At 5.1 he states, "If ξ has only one value then $N(\xi) = \sim p$." The 5.1s conclude at 5.5.51 with, "The positive *proposition* necessarily presupposes the existence of the negative *proposition* and vice versa". To illustrate the necessary relationship between a positive and negative proposition, let us consider the relationship of contradictory opposites.

Contradictory opposites are pairs that cannot be either true or false at the same time. They take the form of p and not- p , black and not-black, living and not-living and so on. With contradictory opposites, white is not the opposite of black, and dead is not the opposite of living. Opposites of this kind (black and white, living and dead) are contrary opposites. For these opposites, while they cannot both be true, they can both be false. In terms of the colour black, an object cannot be both black and white at the same time (excluding shades of grey), but it can be neither (red, for example). Wittgenstein uses the example of contradictory opposites as an analogy to illustrate the concept of truth.

[I]magine a black spot on white paper: you can describe the shape of the spot by saying, for each point on the sheet, whether it is black or white. To the fact that a point is black there corresponds a positive fact, and to the fact that a point is white (*not black*) a negative fact. (4.063 – emphasis mine)

For Wittgenstein, the crucial contrast in this illustration is between black and not black, whereas the contrast of black and white is merely arbitrary, used only for the sake of illustrating his point. What Wittgenstein wants to emphasize in the case of contradictory

opposites is that there is a necessary relationship between the two (i.e. black and not-black). In the case of states of affairs the same relationship is found. At 2.05 Wittgenstein states, “The totality of existing states of affairs also determines which states do not exist”. The case of states of affairs illustrates the point that the dependent relationship between states of affairs is in fact one and not two things. At 2.06 we read that reality is the existence and non-existence of states of affairs. It is not the case, however, that reality is the sum of existence and non-existence of states of affairs. Let us consider the colour blue to illustrate this point. Not-blue does not mean every colour but blue or the negation of all things in the universe but blue; rather, it is the simply not blue, because not-blue cannot be expressed in language. We find this point in Wittgenstein’s discussion on negation. If we say that ‘not-blue’ is the negation of ‘all colours but blue’, then negation of ‘all colours but blue’ is a negation of colours. According to Wittgenstein the pattern of negation is p , $\sim p$, $\sim\sim p$ and so on, so that the negation of blue is ‘not-blue’ and the negation of ‘not-blue’ is ‘not-not-blue’. Nothing can be said about ‘not-blue’. The relationship between blue and not-blue is one in which either one determines the other. This determinate relationship is also found between existing and non-existing states of affairs in which either one determines the other. Returning to the 5.51s we find the same view with regard to propositions.

And similarly we can say that two propositions are opposed to one another if they have nothing in common with one another, and that every proposition has only one negative, since there is only one proposition that lies completely outside it.
(5.513)

As we saw at 5.515, there is a necessary relationship between a proposition and its negative. In the *Notebooks* we find the same point. Despite the fact contradictory opposites cannot be true at the same time, they can be expressed and are “found side by

side” (NB, 28). The side-by-side relationship in which they are expressed is dependent as we see in Wittgenstein’s point as he continues that p and $\sim p$ are like a picture and the infinite plane outside the picture. In other words the picture is bound to that space a dependent relationship. As we saw above, p and $\sim p$ are in a dependent relationship such that given p , $\sim p$ is also immediately given. Similarly, we can also say that given a picture the infinite plane is given, and given a proposition, the logical form is given. The determinate relationship between p and $\sim p$ is the same as between a picture and the infinite plane and between a proposition and logical form.

Because we cannot talk about what shows itself, we cannot say anything about it or its relationship to what is shown. That is, it cannot be said that what is shown and what shows itself are either separate or identical. Concepts such as separation and identity exist in language. If we take Wittgenstein’s comments on what cannot be expressed in words at face value, questions surrounding the nature of logical form cannot be put into words. If we accept Black’s account of showing, it is possible to separate the 4.022 – 4.461 passages on showing from 5.5561 (*Realität*), 5.62 (solipsism) and 6.522 (the mystical). However, if we take that what shows itself discussed at 4.022 – 4.461 as that that cannot be put into words, and take that *Realität*, solipsism and the mystical also as that that cannot be put into words (as we considered in chapter 2), it is not possible to talk about the difference between what cannot be put into words in the 4s and the passages on the solipsistic self and the mystical.

5.2 Showing: Two Senses in Stenius

The purpose of this section is to critically examine the distinction between two kinds of showing in Erik Stenius' *Wittgenstein's Tractatus* (WT). The aim of this critique is to show that in contrast to Stenius' notion of the distinction between external and internal showing, the two kinds of showing found in the *Tractatus* are defined in the two terms Wittgenstein uses: "*weisen*" and "*zeigen*".

On page 178, Stenius points out that the passage at 4.022 appears to contradict 4.121. At 4.121 Stenius suggests that the word "show" is used in just one way: "Propositions show the logical form of reality." However, he states that the two passages at 4.022, namely, "*shows* how things stand *if* it is true" and "*says that* they do so stand" suggest that Wittgenstein uses the word "show" in two different senses: "in one sense of 'show' sentences *say* what they show, in another they *cannot say* what they 'show'" (ibid.). In the first case a sentence says what it has in common with reality. In the second case, a sentence shows its sense. That is, it shows how things stand if it is true. Stenius turns his attention to the passages on pictures (2.15, 2.151 and 2.17) to emphasise his argument that the *Tractatus* contains two kinds of showing. His main contention here is that a picture is shown by both its external and internal structures. The term "external structure" refers to the recognisable form a picture takes. That is, it refers to what we perceive in a picture. On the other hand, what shows itself in the internal sense is the internal form, which cannot be expressed in language. In the first case, Stenius writes that a picture "shows' by the *external* structure of a picture-field and by means of the key of interpretation a state of affairs that is *presents* or *depicts*" (WT, 179). Second, he states

that it shows by the “internal structure of its elements the external structure of the elements of the prototype” (ibid.). In the first case, a picture is shown by the external structure of elements (2.15, 2.151). This case corresponds to language in that both a proposition and the reality it depicts have the internal structure they share; nothing is shown through them. Stenius contrasts this way of showing with the passage at 2.17 that states it is the internal pictorial form that shows itself through the picture. The internal form is shown through, not in a picture or a proposition. It cannot show itself in the external sense because it presupposes the internal structure that shows itself in language (WT, 179). Rather, the internal structure is shown by language. However, language cannot be used to describe the external structure (WT, 181). In light of the passage at 4.022, a proposition describes reality as having the same external structure as the proposition itself. In other words, a proposition, if it is true, says how things are in reality. As Stenius adds, showing in this sense of its external structure is different from what it shows itself by the internal structure of elements (ibid.). Thus, it is Stenius’ contention that at 4.022 “what a sentence ‘shows’ by its external structure must be distinguished from what it ‘shows’ by the *internal* structure of elements” (WT, 181).

The problem with Stenius’ argument for two forms of showing at 4.022 in contrast to a single form of showing at 4.121 is that while Wittgenstein uses two different words to describe showing at 4.121, he only employs one word to express it at 4.022. The meaning of the word he uses at 4.022 will demonstrate that Wittgenstein does not have in mind the two forms of showing that Stenius suggests. At 4.121 Wittgenstein employs the terms “*weisen*” and “*zeigen*” to express two meanings of the verb to show. Pears and

McGuinness translate “*weisen*” as “display”. This word is used to show a quality of a thing’s nature, as a bird displays a particular form of behaviour as a means of communication. The support for this view is found in the translation of “*aufweisen*”, which means, “to produce” or “show”, but also “to possess” or “have what is being shown”. In the case of a picture, at 2.172 Wittgenstein states it cannot depict its pictorial form. In order to depict its form would mean to “place itself outside its representational form” (2.174). A picture displays (*aufweisen*) its pictorial form in its representational form as a picture. The point is not that there is a picture on one hand and pictorial form on the other. Rather, they are different aspects of the same event. Thus, Wittgenstein’s use of “*aufweisen*” in the context of showing in the *Tractatus* is that what shows itself is a quality of what is shown.

Aufzeigen, on the other hand, presents a different meaning of the verb “to show”. In this case “*aufzeigen*” means “to point”, “to show” or “to indicate”. An example of the use of “*zeigen*” is the German word for the index finger, *Zeigefinger*. The kind of showing Wittgenstein has in mind here is not to cause to be seen, but to point out or to demonstrate. By way of an example, if at a river’s edge one says, “look there”, pointing to a hippopotamus, the other person should look towards the animal in the water. However, if the second person looks toward the finger of the person pointing, he has missed the meaning. In terms of a proposition, it both shows (*zeigt*) and displays (*weist*) the logical form of reality. It displays the logical form of reality in the way, as examined above, that a picture displays its pictorial form. However, the presence of a proposition shows or indicates the logical form of reality. Although a proposition cannot represent

logical form, the form is mirrored in the proposition (4.121). However, if we take the image of the mirror, even though we cannot see what is reflected, the reflection *points to* what is being reflected. Similarly, propositions show or point to the logical form of reality.

While at 4.121 there are two forms of showing, at 4.022 Wittgenstein employs only the term “*zeigen*”. However, as we have seen, Stenius believes that there are two forms of showing at 4.022 based on the difference between logical form and internal structure. As we saw above, logical form means the form of individual elements (WT, 71). That is, logical form refers to the possibility of an object occurring in a state of affairs (2.0141). Stenius is correct in stating that an object’s logical form is determined by the states of affairs it can and cannot enter. He interprets 4.121 to mean that logical form is shown through propositions that show the logical form of reality. His interpretation is correct in light of his reading of the 2.17’s. The word Wittgenstein uses to express showing in the 2.17’s is “*weisen*”. “*Weist*” is also found at 4.121, (propositions display the logical form of reality). In light of this version of the word “show” a case can be made for Stenius’ argument. However, at 4.121 Wittgenstein also uses the word “*zeigt*” to express his thoughts on showing: “A proposition shows the logical form of reality”. The reason for using “*weisen*” and “*zeigen*” to express the relationship of a proposition to the logical form of reality will be discussed in the next chapter. For our present purposes, what is important is that the word Wittgenstein uses at 4.022 is not *weist*, but *zeigt*. In using *zeigt* at 4.022, Wittgenstein means is that a proposition shows its sense. In other words, a proposition points to how things stand if it is true. Wittgenstein’s point is that the sense of

a proposition cannot be said. Rather, at the same time a proposition says that that is how things are, it points to how they are if they are true. That is, what a proposition says, immediately points to (shows) its sense. In contrast to Stenius' view, the internal structure is not shown through a proposition; rather, a proposition says points to (shows) how things stand if it is true. In other words, the separation between external and internal structure cannot be said to exist, because what a proposition says immediately points to its sense. The two cannot be said to be separate.

5.3 Conclusion

In light of Wittgenstein's method, this discussion has brought to bear the point that in drawing limits to what can be thought or said, the distinction between what can be thought or said also must be dropped. As we saw, the contrast between what cannot be said or though exists in language, which allows us to make a distinction between what can be said and what cannot. However, what cannot be put into words cannot be expressed in language, including the distinction between what can be said and what cannot. In light of Wittgenstein's aim of the book, we have established that drawing the limits to thought means making clear what cannot be spoken, but also the distinction between what can and cannot be spoken. Moreover, as we now turn to consider Wittgenstein's thoughts on the connection of showing to the mystical, we are aware that the book does not support a reading that includes showing in terms of external and internal structure. Rather, the distinction Wittgenstein acknowledges is to see showing in terms of what is displayed (*weist*) and what is indicated (*zeigt*).

Chapter 6: The Mystical and Showing

The aim of this chapter is to establish a connection between Wittgenstein's thoughts on showing and the latter passages in the *Tractatus* on the mystical. At 4.12 Wittgenstein states that while propositions *show* the logical form of reality, they cannot *say* what the logical form is or what they have in common with reality. According to Wittgenstein, the representation of logical form would only be possible if propositions could be placed outside logical form, that is, outside the totality of facts that share that form, but this, he believes, is impossible. K. T. Fann in *Wittgenstein's Conception of Philosophy* (WCP) offers a diagram to illustrate the distinction between showing and saying. His diagram consists of a large rectangular box, which has inside it a smaller box of the same shape. The smaller inner box contains language, or all that can be said. Outside the smaller box, but still inside the outer box is what Fann refers to as what cannot be said, or "showing". Fann's model is useful because it helps to illustrate two interpretations of the *Tractatus*. If Wittgenstein presents a model of language in which propositions, being inside the smaller box, are found within the limits of forms of representation or logic, two alternatives appear to follow. In the first case, philosophy is limited to the inside box or what can be said. Nothing else can be signified, so the outside box is not part of philosophy. On the other hand, if it is assumed that the inside box signifies something outside what can be said, philosophy includes both propositions that correspond to reality (the inside box) and propositions that do not correspond to reality but signify metaphysical truths (the outside box). In the case of the *Tractatus*, it can be argued that in making clear what can be said, it is possible to point to something transcendental that

cannot be put into words (c.v. 4.115). However, in this view there appears to be a division between what can be spoken and the transcendental. This case could be interpreted in terms of a metaphysical reading of the *Tractatus*. That is, such a reading would imply that something exists outside what can be said. Reconciling the apparent division between what can be spoken and what lies outside words is key to the position I shall take to show that the passages on showing are connected to the mystical. That is, the position I shall defend in this chapter will be neither the anti-metaphysical inside box model, nor the metaphysical both inside and outside model. Rather, if we understand that what cannot be said is what shows itself in such a way that there is no actual distinction between the two, I believe we have one key to understanding Wittgenstein's statements about the mystical.

There are two key points this chapter will attempt to establish in reaching its aim. The first is to establish the distinction between two viewpoints, namely, the world we know through language, and the view from outside what can be said. Although it is not possible to put objects or things into words from this view (from the outside), it will be revealed that they show themselves. They are the mystical. These two viewpoints that motivate this discussion are first to see *Wirklichkeit* and *Realität* as different, then we will consider the two as two aspects of the same reality. The second key is to consider reality in terms of *Realität* in light of *zeigt*, *zeigt* meaning to indicate or point to something. In this case it helps us indicate what lies outside what can be said.

6.1 Showing and the Aim of the *Tractatus*

The purpose of this section is to state the problem of this chapter in light of *zeigt*, “to show”. That is, although we cannot say what shows itself, this does not deny reality. In fact we are left with *Realität* (reality).

Wittgenstein states in the Preface to the *Tractatus* that the book will consider the problems of philosophy, and show (*zeigt*) “that the reason why these problems are posed is that the logic of our language is misunderstood.” His intention in the use of the word “show” is not to offer a new theory or doctrine. Rather, he intends to point out the source of incorrect thinking that falsely creates and maintains metaphysical thinking. The means to pointing out incorrect thinking is to set limits to what can be thought (4.112, 4.114).

We are reminded that what can be said with sense corresponds to reality; all other propositions are nonsense. There are no arguments in the *Tractatus*. Rather than showing what follows from a particular line of reasoning, his intention is to point to the errors in thought that lead to the problems of philosophy. If we realize Wittgenstein’s intention we are left with what can be said (i.e. the propositions of science) and what cannot be said.

At 7 he states that what cannot be said must be passed over in silence. However, at 6.522 he claims that what cannot be said shows itself. Although we cannot say what shows itself, we are nevertheless confronted with reality. As we have examined in previous chapters the reality that correspond to propositions (*Wirklichkeit*) is different from the reality (*Realität*) we understand as my world. Our next task will be to revisit this difference and then show that there is only one reality in which *Wirklichkeit* is *Realität*.

6.2 What the Solipsist Shows: Reality and the Unique *Is*

The issue we turn to consider now is the relationship of the experience to reality to the immediate experience of the world that is in the present. We begin with Wittgenstein's two terms to describe reality, *Wirklichkeit* and *Realität*, and their connection to what we immediately perceive.

The word Wittgenstein uses for reality throughout most of the *Tractatus* is “*Wirklichkeit*”; however, at 5.5561 and 5.64 he uses the word “*Realität*”. We are reminded from our discussion in Chapter 2 that Wittgenstein's distinction between *Wirklichkeit* and *Realität* follows the German definition of the words. *Wirklichkeit* pertains to an actual fact, while *Realität* refers to reality, or more specifically, the experience of reality. The distinction between these two terms for reality correspond to showing in the following way. *Wirklichkeit* is the reality that corresponds to what shows itself as an actual fact, while *Realität* is the experience of reality. A proposition or a picture shows what is ‘actual’, existing in fact (*Wirklichkeit*), via the logical form of reality. In the case of a ball in the air, to state “the ball is in the air” shows the fact in terms of language; that is, it shows itself in the form of the statement. In this case the proposition shows its sense. It shows how things (the ball in the air) stand if it is true (4.022). In this case what is shown as a proposition or a picture shows (in the sense of points to) the actual fact about a situation. However, the experience of that fact is a different matter. If we talk about an experience as discussed above, (that is, an experience separate from an experiencer), looking at a ball in the air is pure realism. The difference

between *Wirklichkeit* and *Realität* is that the former is an act of showing, while the latter is linked to experience.

At 5.5561 and 5.64 we see that Wittgenstein's intention for using the word "*Realität*", where in both cases it is linked to an experience. We find the connection to experience in the opening passage of 5.5561: "Empirical reality [*Realität*] is limited by the totality of objects." The remaining portion of this section will focus on what Wittgenstein means by *Realität* and its relationship to the solipsistic self. At 5.64 Wittgenstein uses the term *Realität* in the following passage: "The self of solipsism shrinks to a point without extension, and there remains the reality [*Realität*] co-ordinated with it" (5.64).

As we examined in Chapter 2, the 'self' Wittgenstein has in mind here is not the personal self, which has extension by virtue of its identity. Rather, it shrinks to a point that is absent of personal identity. The place where the solipsistic self shrinks to is a point where it is co-ordinated with reality. One cannot say that this is an experience of reality because there is no personal self to have the experience. There is no subject that is defined as one's personal identity that is separate from the external reality it perceives. We read in the *Notebooks* that solipsism singles me out as belonging *with* the rest of the world (NB, 85). In as far as we can talk about sides in relation to the solipsistic self and the world, Wittgenstein states that on the side of the solipsistic self "*nothing* is left over" (ibid.). That is, with regard to the solipsistic self there is nothing that can be expressed in language. However, on the other side, there is "as unique, *the world*" (ibid.). The use of the word "sides" suggests that Wittgenstein does not see that the solipsistic self and the

world are separate. Rather, the two sides can be compared to two sides of a coin. Placing “the world” in italics suggests that the coin in this case is “my world” or reality (*Realität*). The reason for emphasising “the world” is found in the word “unique” that precedes it. The suggestion that the world is unique can be interpreted that there is only one world: my world. This claim follows from his statement, “solipsism singles me out alone”. Because of this unique view of the world, he claims, “at last I see that I too belong to the world”. We find further evidence to support this interpretation that the unique world can be interpreted as my world at 5.62 where Wittgenstein draws the same connection between the solipsistic self and the world. Wittgenstein claims what the solipsist intends to say is correct, but it cannot be spoken; rather, it *shows* itself (5.62). His point is that what the solipsist means to say would be correct, but it cannot be put into words. In other words, what the solipsist could say about reality (*Realität*) would be correct, but the moment reality (i.e. the experience of reality) is put into words, the experience is lost.

To see why the moment of reality is lost when it is put into words, we are reminded that propositions only say *how* things are, but not *what* they are (3.221). To understand what Wittgenstein means by “*what*” requires understanding that logic is prior to how things are, but not what they are (5.552). In other words, logic is prior to the experience that something “*is so*”, but it is not prior to the experience that something “*is*” (ibid.). The difference between these two is that “*is so*” refers to a description in language, while “*is*” is the immediate *Realität*. At this point we see that the world is unique because from the viewpoint of my world the moment of experience is only one. In other words, it is not possible for one to have simultaneously two or more experiences of the immediate

perception of something that “*is*”. In light of 5.62 what the solipsist intends to say is the experience that something “*is*”, but this experience cannot be expressed as a proposition because propositions only describe how the world is. Although the solipsistic self cannot say what it means, it shows itself as my world. The experience of what shows itself is not an actual fact (*Wirklichkeit*), but reality (*Realität*). *Wirklichkeit* corresponds to the world that we find in the 1’s; that is, the world of facts. On the other hand, *Realität* relates to the world that we know as “my world”. We can elucidate this distinction between *Wirklichkeit* and *Realität* in light of Wittgenstein’s thoughts on form and content.

6.3 *Wirklichkeit* and *Realität* and What is Shown

The following section briefly examines the distinction between *Wirklichkeit* and *Realität* in terms of form and content to show what can be said about both. We must bear in mind that the distinction that is made here is made in words and is only true for language. In the following section I shall take a mystical viewpoint to show that *Wirklichkeit* is *Realität*.

As we discovered in Chapter 2, the key difference between *Wirklichkeit* and *Realität* is that while the former lacks content, the latter is form and content. A proposition or a picture expresses the form it shares with *Wirklichkeit*. That is, *Wirklichkeit* does not involve an experience, but along with form is represented as a picture or a proposition. The correlation between the elements of a picture and *Wirklichkeit* is similar to feelers by which the former touches reality (2.1515). In order that a picture can depict *Wirklichkeit* the two must share pictorial form (2.17). Although a picture can depict any *Wirklichkeit*

whose form it has (2.171), a picture is not a direct experience of reality. Rather, a picture is a model of reality (2.12) that displays its pictorial form (2.171). We find the same case regarding propositions. A proposition is a model of reality. A proposition is not a direct experience of reality, but “shows the logical form of reality [*Wirklichkeit*]” (4.121). If a proposition shares the logical form it has in common with reality, it can represent reality. However, propositions cannot represent logical form; rather, they “*show* the logical form of reality [*Wirklichkeit*]” (4.121). “They display it” (ibid.). This is also the case for pictures that can display pictorial form, but cannot depict it (2.172). At both 2.172 and 4.121, Wittgenstein uses the German phrase “*er weist sie auf*” (display) to describe the relationship between both pictures and propositions, and form. Pictures and propositions show the form of reality (*Wirklichkeit*), but not the content. Propositions are limited to expressing how the world is because they contain only “the form, but not the content of sense” (3.13). Because propositions do not contain the content of the world, they are prevented from expressing it. On the other hand, empirical reality (*Realität*) requires both form and content. The content of the world is not expressed by words, but is the experience “*is*” or my world, as we saw above. As we saw in the *Notebooks* (NB, 85) Wittgenstein refers to solipsism singling me out alone as unique, “*the world*”. The solipsistic self shows itself as my world, which in light of 5.64 means that the self of solipsism remains co-ordinated with reality (*Realität*). However, despite the differences between *Wirklichkeit* and *Realität* we have seen in this section, both are reality. To understand how *Wirklichkeit* is *Realität* we turn to the mystical.

6.4 *Wirklichkeit* is *Realität*

The purpose of this section is to show that when we see that *Realität* and the mystical do not correspond to Fann's model, a case can be made to show that *Wirklichkeit* is *Realität*. The key to the argument in the following two sections is that while the attempt to *say* anything about what cannot be put into words is not possible because it involves speaking about the world from the outside, it is possible to *see* the world from the outside.

In considering the use of the word "showing" (*zeigt*) in connection with *Realität* and the mystical, two points can be made. First, the common point between the mystical and *Realität* is that each is an experience (in the sense that we defined "experience" in Chapter 2) that cannot be put into words. Second, the *Tractatus* will not attempt to define either the mystical or *Realität*, but in light of having established what can and cannot be said it is possible to show (*zeigen*) what they are not.

We know the mystical in terms of three passages: "that the world exists", "feeling the world as a limited whole" and "the things that cannot be put into words, but show themselves". However, as we have examined in previous chapters, none of the three cases can be expressed by a proposition. The inability to express the mystical in words leaves us with a dilemma, which we can illustrate by Fann's model. The inner box according to Fann contains what can be said. Wittgenstein's statement that the mystical cannot be put into words at 6.522 excludes this possibility. Fann is correct in stating that the mystical is not found in the inner box; however, he is incorrect in placing the mystical outside what

can be said, and here lies our dilemma. Where does the mystical belong? The suggestion that something exists outside what cannot be spoken contradicts Wittgenstein's notion that what cannot be said is nonsense. Although Chapter 8 is concerned with the topic of nonsense, for the sake of this discussion let us take for granted that Wittgenstein means that nonsense is what cannot be said. In the case that nothing can be said about what lies outside language, it is not possible to say that the mystical lies outside language. If it is not possible to say that mystical is outside language, it is not possible to know that it is there. Given that we cannot say that mystical lies either inside or outside what can be said, I believe that we must consider a different approach. This view seems to be what Wittgenstein has in mind in stating that the mystical is not *how* the world exists, but *that* it exists. Rather than considering propositions about the mystical, we must look at what Wittgenstein means by the things that cannot be put into words at 6.522. In other words, what shows (*zeigt*) itself?

If we consider what shows itself in light of 6.45, we find that Fann's model collapses. At 6.45 Wittgenstein claims that the mystical is a view and a feeling of the world. If we see 6.45 in light of 6.552, can we say what lies outside language is not a thing but a feeling? Fann's model presents us with a description in language of what cannot be put into words. What can be said and what cannot be said are both descriptions in language. However, that which shows itself (i.e. the mystical) cannot be put into words. That is it is not a thing in language. If what lies outside language cannot be a thing, it can be a feeling. While we can translate feelings into words, feelings themselves are free from language. That is, the feeling of elation is not a statement about the feeling. In Fann's model we

find an attempt to describe the relationship of what can be said to what cannot be said. This attempt endeavours to offer a description of *how* the world is. However, what we know or what the outer box attempts to discover is always in the world of language. If the larger box is only a thing in language, it collapses into the smaller box of things that can be said. Thus, in order to say something about what cannot be said means to speak from outside the world. If we consider this point of speaking from outside the world in light of Wittgenstein's aim in the book to say only what can be said, we reject the attempt to describe the mystical or its relationship to what can be said. That is from the viewpoint that nothing can be said about the mystical we must mean that it can neither be affirmed nor denied. This seems to be Wittgenstein's intention in saying that the mystical cannot be put into words but shows itself.

In order to understand the mystical as what cannot be put into words we begin with parallel points between *Wirklichkeit* and *Realität*. Starting with *Wirklichkeit*, we are reminded that it refers to the reality that is the world. That is, while reality (*Wirklichkeit*) is the existence and non-existence of states of affairs (2.06), the "sum total of reality is world" (2.063). In the opening passage of the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein states "The world is all that is the case" (1). By the term "the case" Wittgenstein means "the existence of states of affairs" (2). At 5.62 we find a second claim about the world. In this case we read, "The world is my world". By the term "my world" Wittgenstein is referring to *Realität*. We are reminded that *Realität* is what remains co-ordinated with the solipsistic self (5.64). Moreover, we also discover at 5.62 that the solipsist shows itself as the "world that is *my* world". This is shown in the limits of language that mean the "limits of *my* world" (ibid.).

The reason that Wittgenstein states that the world is both “the case” and “my world” is made clear when we see that the “world” Wittgenstein refers to at 5.62 is a reference to the world that corresponds to reality as *Wirklichkeit*. The metaphysical subject limits this world (5.532), but it “does not belong to the world” (5.632). This is not to say that it is outside the world, as in Fann’s model. Rather it means that there is nothing in the world to indicate either its existence or non-existence. As we discussed before, Wittgenstein compares the metaphysical subject to the eye and its visual field. While there is nothing in the visual field to indicate the existence of an eye, it would not be possible to see without it. While there is nothing that can be said about the metaphysical subject, we have an experience of the world. Moreover, there is nothing that can be said of the experience of the world as it is experienced. In other words, we have an experience of the world. If at the next moment we identify that experience as say joy or seeing a ball in the air, the moment of identification is not the experience. At the moment that a feeling of joy has been identified and one says “What a wonderful feeling of joy” the feeling one has identified has become the past. However, the reality of joy cannot be put into words. Nevertheless the joy is reality as *Realität*.

At this point we return to the claim that the limits of language mean the limits of my world. In light of our discussion on the world that is the case (existence of states of affairs) we also know that propositions share the same logical form with states of affairs. In other words, propositions show the form of reality (*Wirklichkeit*). However, we read at 4 that a thought is “a proposition with sense”, bearing in mind that propositions contain “the form, but not the content, of its sense” (3.13). We also read, “In a proposition a

thought finds an expression that can be perceived by the senses” (3.1). The key word in this passage is “expression”. Unlike a proposition that only contains form, an expression is “the mark of form and content”. In other words, when a proposition that corresponds to reality (*Wirklichkeit*) is perceived as an expression of thought, it is reality (*Realität*) in terms of form and content. The co-ordination of the solipsistic self with *Realität* is the mark where the world in terms of the case is my world. In other words, the mark of form and content is the point where *Wirklichkeit* is *Realität*. That is, there is only one reality, but as with the mystical nothing can be said about this reality.

6.5 Showing: A Mystical Interpretation

This section will show that while nothing can be said about reality from the viewpoint of outside what be put into words, something is shown. However, this section will demonstrate that the things that are shown cannot be put into words show themselves. They are the mystical.

We begin with the distinction between *zeigt* and *weist*. Whereas *weist* means to display something of one’s own nature, *zeigt* means to indicate or point to something. In the case of *weist* the suggestion is that what is shown and what shows itself are of the same nature, while *zeigt* suggests that something appears to point to something else. The difference between these two kinds of showing in the context of what cannot be put into words but shows itself is subtle, but significant. When we say that something shows itself in the sense of *weist* the relationship between what shows itself and what is shown is necessary

in the sense that the two cannot be separated. On the other hand, in the context of what cannot be put into words but shows itself, it cannot be said that what is shown is an aspect of what shows itself, because nothing can be said or known about what shows itself. Yet, there exists a relationship in the sense of the solipsistic self that remains co-ordinated with reality. Another term we can use in place of “co-ordinate” is “together with”. I introduce the term “together with” in order to direct the discussion to Wittgenstein’s comment on contemplation in the *Notebooks*. This discussion will show the role of the object in light of the mystical.

As we saw in Chapter 2, Wittgenstein introduces the term “contemplation” through the example of two ways of looking at a stove (NB, 83). He claims the first way of looking seems trivial and not very interesting. In this way the stove is seen *in* space and time as one thing among many other objects in the world, including the self. By the term “self” here Wittgenstein is referring to the psychological qualities normally attributed to personal identity. The other way is to see the stove as if it were “my world”. From this perspective one sees the stove from the viewpoint of contemplation or, as he also puts it, from the outside. The view of the world from the outside is to see the world from the perspective of outside the world and outside language. From this view the stove is seen together *with* space and time and not *in* space and time. Although the topic of time will be the subject of the following chapter, let us briefly outline his thoughts here in order to understand the difference between “with time” and “in time”. At 6.311 Wittgenstein explains the difference between the two notions of time.

If we take eternity to mean not infinite temporal duration but timelessness, then eternal life belongs to those who live in the present.

By “infinite temporal duration” Wittgenstein means a never-ending series of moments extending from the present into either the past or future. On the other hand, by “timelessness” he has the present in mind. If by eternal we mean boundless, then it must be indivisible, for a boundary creates division. In terms of time, we can consider the present as the eternal because it is indivisible. To divide the present would mean to create from it a part that was either the past or the future. In this present lies reality (*Realität*). We take this example of the eternal present to draw a comparison to the mystical view of the world

At 6.45 Wittgenstein states it is possible to feel the world or view it as a limited whole: “To view the world *sub specie aeterni* is to view it as a whole – a limited whole”. While Pears and McGuinness translate *Anschauung* as “view”, Ogden translates it as “contemplation”. The suggestion that is being made in relationship to the use of the word *Anschauung* is that Wittgenstein does not have a passive form of looking in mind, but an active fixing of one’s attention on the world. In the *Notebooks* we find a similar passage to 6.45. However, in this case a particular thing is the subject: “The thing seen *sub specie aeternitatis* is the thing seen together with the whole logical space” (NB, 83). The difference between seeing the object *together with* and *in* space and time is a matter of seeing the world from either the outside or the inside. From the outside, it is to see the world like one’s eye in its visual field (N.B., 73). As we are reminded, the eye does not see itself as an object of sight; however, because the eye lies on the other side of the field of vision, sight is possible (5.633). To see the object *sub specie aeternitatis* from the outside is to see it from outside the world and language. Being outside language there is

nothing that can be said about an object. At 6.522 Wittgenstein states that there are things that cannot be put into words. These things show (*zeigt*) themselves. They are the mystical. These things do not point to another world outside this world, but show themselves as the mystical.

6.6 Conclusion

Although the mystical cannot be put into words, this chapter has shown that this does not mean that it lies outside the world, as a metaphysical interpretation would have it. The mystical is what one finds immediately as reality (*Realität*). The two keys to understanding the mystical demonstrated by this chapter are that what cannot be put into words shows (*zeigt*) itself as the world *that* is and what shows itself must be co-ordinated with the solipsistic self in the moment of experience. This moment, I have argued, is to feel the world as a limited whole. However, it leaves us to ask what are Wittgenstein's thoughts on the present moment. To this topic we now turn.

Chapter 7: Time and The Mystical

The purpose of this chapter is to show that the present moment of experience is what Wittgenstein describes as the mystical at 6.44, 6.45 and 6.522. The two parts of this argument are that the present moment is the eternal and that it cannot be put into words. We begin with Russell's two points of criticism against the mystical notion of time; first, it cannot account for change, and second, by denying the past and future it presents an unreal notion of time. From Russell's first objection, the present will be shown as the eternal while Russell's second objection will provide a basis to demonstrate that the present cannot be put into words.

The issue we are considering is not to advance one notion of the eternal over another. If we define the eternal in light of Russell's notion of time, his method of analysis may provide insight into the notion of the unending duration of time. This point is not being questioned. The reason for considering Russell's thoughts on the eternal is to show that if we are to understand Wittgenstein's notion of eternity, we must approach the matter in a way other than analysis. As this chapter will show, the eternal cannot be defined or expressed by words in any way, which is to say his notion of the eternal is not temporal.

7.1 Russell's Views on Mysticism and Time

This section will consider the two objections to the mystical notion of time in Russell's essay "Mysticism and Logic" (in *Mysticism and Logic*, ML): that it does not account for change and that it sees time as unreal.

Russell rejects the mystical notion of time by way of arguments he finds in Parmenides. In addition to Parmenides' account of time, Russell takes the mystical insight of the Persian Sufi poet Masnavi as a representative of the metaphysical belief in the unreality of time. Masnavi's poem reads as follows:

Past and future are what veil God from our sight.
Burn up both of them with fire! How long
Wilt thou be portioned by these segments as a reed? (ML, 21)

In Masnavi's poem, notions of the past and future lead us away from seeing God. He counsels the reader to give up the notions of time that divide one's life into portions, as the segments of a reed. However, Russell renounces the mystical notion of time that rejects the past and the future for two reasons. First, he claims the mystic's notion of time denies that the past and future are real.

The arguments for the contention that time is unreal and that the world of sense is illusory must, I think, be regarded as fallacious. (ML, 21)

Second, Russell argues that the mystical account of time that originated in Parmenides fails to account for change (ML, 8). Russell offers little else against the mystical notion of time other than to state that knowledge of the past and future must be seen as real as the present (ML, 21). The contrast we find here between the mystic's and Russell's view of time is that where the former sees only the present as real, Russell understands the past and future are real in the same way as the present. Although Russell does not provide an argument to support his view, we know that he rejects what he refers to as "the unreality of time" because he believes it gives rise to a metaphysical notion of substance. We can attribute Russell's rejection of the metaphysical notion of substance to the passage in his essay "Scientific Method in Philosophy" (written the same year as "Mysticism and

Logic”): “I maintain ... that there are no propositions of which the “universe” is the subject” (ML, 110). For Russell, only propositions about individual things can be asserted, but nothing can be said of all things collectively, including the metaphysical notion of substance. That is, he believes that there are no properties that can be asserted which belong to immutable substance. Although it is difficult to separate truth from error in what he refers to as “the unreal view of time”, he believes a truer picture is one where he sees “things entering into a stream of time from an eternal outside world” (ML, 21). What he means by an “eternal outside world” is not clear. However, we can assume that he means an eternal or never-ending future in one direction from the present and an eternal never-ending past in the opposite direction. In contrast to the mystical notion of time that only regards the present as real, we find that Russell believes two points we shall revisit: first, that the past and future are real in the same way as the present, and second, the past and the future extend without end from the present. With these two points in mind we turn to his two arguments against mystical time.

7.2 The Critique of Change

The purpose of this section is to examine the difference between the infinite temporal duration and living in eternity. The arguments presented here point to understanding Wittgenstein’s passages on the eternal in terms of the present. However, the definition of the eternal we find in the *Tractatus* does not answer Russell’s question about change in the mystical notion of time.

The issue we are considering is not to advance one notion of the eternal over another. If we define the eternal in light of Russell's notion of time, his method of analysis may provide insight into the notion of an unending duration of time. This point is not being questioned. However, his method is limited to providing information about the eternal in terms of the past, present and future. On the other hand, if we do not accept that the eternal can be the subject of a proposition, Russell's method yields nothing. In fairness to Russell, it is not his intention to analyse something that cannot be put into words. However, for our purposes, if we are to understand Wittgenstein's notion of eternity, we must approach the matter in a way other than Russell's method of analysis.

As Russell claims, the issue of change is problematic for the mystic's notion of the one eternal present. In Russell's view, the mystical notion of time as unreal leaves us with a static universe. The same objection may be raised against Wittgenstein's notion of the eternal in light of his rejection of the "infinite temporal duration" (6.4311). Rather, Wittgenstein's notion of the eternal consists of two points: timelessness and living in the present (*ibid.*). The important connection in Wittgenstein's definition of the eternal is not between timelessness and the present, but timelessness and *living* in the present.

Although living in the present is still the present in terms of the mystical notion of time Russell rejects, the advantage to stating the present, as a living present is that Wittgenstein avoids having to deal with it in terms of a concept. Owing to Wittgenstein's account of language that does not allow for propositions that do not correspond to reality, the problem with seeing the present as a concept is that it is nonsense. Rather, Wittgenstein sees the eternal in terms of life, in terms of each person who lives in the

present. When Wittgenstein says that the eternal is timeless, he seems to be denying the past and the future in favour of a present that he refers to as “eternal life” (6.4311). The term “timeless” suggests that the eternal is independent of time. That is, it is not subject to the lapse of time. In contrast, we find Russell’s notion of time in terms of the past and future as equally real as the present. In terms of eternal time this means for Russell that it is separated into three equally real parts with the past and future extending indefinitely. However, in Wittgenstein’s account, the eternal is timeless and, as we shall now consider, indivisible without beginning or end.

We can say that by Russell’s account, the past and future are without beginning or end, if we think of each extending indefinitely away from the present. This is one way of looking at eternal time. As we saw, Wittgenstein refers to this notion of the eternal as “infinite temporal duration”. Alternately, we can consider the eternal to be that which is boundless, or having no set limits, but unlike Russell’s view it is indivisible and timeless. Let us now examine if the present can also be considered to be boundless. The key to thinking of the present in this way is to consider if it can be divided. Dividing the present creates a line between two notions of time. On one hand is the present. However, on the other is either the past or the future, not the present. The living present, as Wittgenstein calls it, is only one. It is not possible to experience two presents at the same time. The attempt to divide the present will leave either the present and something else or two present moments. In the first case the something else (past or future) is not the present, while the second case is impossible. While it is not possible to divide the present into parts, it could be argued that it is divided by preceding and succeeding events. In

Russell's notion of eternal time where the past, present and future are equally real, this point would require consideration. However, we are reminded that for Wittgenstein the eternal does not mean being subject to the duration of time, but belongs to those who *live* in the present. Wittgenstein's view of the present is that it is not a concept that can be the subject of analysis. That is, the present is not in language, but is a living moment.

Wittgenstein does not deny time. He states in the *Notebooks* that one way of living is to live in time (NB, 74). The other way to live is in eternity (ibid. & 6.4311). We account for change by observing an event and noting its change over time. That is, we observe that the ball in the air is now (n) over the roof, now (n2) over the pond and now (n3) in the tree. We note change by comparing and contrasting connected events, n, n2, n3 and so on. The way we note the time or what Wittgenstein refers to in the *Tractatus* as a process is by comparing it to another process such as the movement of a clock or changing days on a calendar. However, Wittgenstein warns us that we should not "compare a process with the 'passage of time'" (6.311). The passage of temporal events cannot be described by time (ibid.). Wittgenstein claims that anything that can be described can happen. This means that anything that can be described by the laws of causality can happen, but what the law of causality excludes cannot be described (6.362). While we can compare a process with the law of cause and effect, we cannot compare the eternal with any process, which means it cannot be described. In other words, the eternal cannot be expressed in words. As we have discussed, eternity is timeless. We can also say that eternity is immediate, given Wittgenstein's claim that it means to live in the present. As we shall discuss in the next section, due to the immediacy of the present, nothing can

be said about it. For our present purposes we want to gain from this section

Wittgenstein's notion that there is a difference between time and eternity (NB, 74).

7.3 The Unreality of Time and the Illusory World of Sense

This section will show that if we see the eternal in the present, it is neither unreal nor illusory. The key points to this discussion will be to establish the difference between seeing an object *in* time and seeing the object *with* time. The connection that will be made between the latter view of time and contemplation will enable us to see the present as *Realität* that remains co-ordinated with the solipsistic self. The point to seeing an object with time is to offer an objection to Russell's notion of the mystical idea of time he sees as unreal.

We now turn to consider Russell's second objection to the mystic's notion of time, (as illusory) in light of a mystical interpretation of the *Tractatus* and reality as *Realität*. We begin with two different ways of considering time in light of Wittgenstein's discussion on the contemplation of a stove found in the *Notebooks*. The first way to see a stove is as a thing among all other things. This is the common way one sees an object in space and time. According to Wittgenstein, the stove and the other things one sees are equally *insignificant* (NB, 83). In other words, a stove is one object among others in one's field of vision. The second way to see the stove is as my world. In the case of seeing a thing as my world, it is seen as a *significant* thing.

If I have been contemplating the stove, and then am told: but now all you know is the stove, my result does indeed seem trivial. For this represents the matter as if I had studied the stove as one among the many things in the world. But if I was

contemplating the stove *it* was my world, and everything else colourless by contrast with it. (NB, 83)

We begin unpacking this passage with examining the word “contemplating”. The word that has been translated as “contemplating” is “*kontempliert*”. Rather than use the common word for contemplation “*Betrachtung*”, Wittgenstein chooses an obscure and rarely used word. *Kontempliert* differs from *Betrachtung* in its religious connotation. While *Betrachtung* means to consider, observe or meditate, *kontempliert* means 1) to sink deeply into something, or 2) the word of God in a religious sense (*Duden – German Dictionary*). If we interpret Wittgenstein’s use of “*kontempliert*” in light of the *Duden* translation we find a link to God in the *Notebooks*. Wittgenstein asks, “What do I know about God...?” His answer is “I know that this world exists” (NB, 74). To discover what contemplating (*kontempliert*) means in light of his comment “that the world exists” we can discuss Wittgenstein’s example of the stove.

In this passage Wittgenstein shows that there are two ways of looking at the stove. The first and common way of seeing a stove is as an object among other objects, while the second way sees the stove as my world. With regard to the first point, Wittgenstein tells us that the usual way of looking at things is “as it were from the midst of them” (NB, 84). That is, one sees an object as one object in the middle of other objects. In this way of seeing, one sees the stove “*in* space and time” (*ibid.*). According to Wittgenstein, to be *in* space and time is the common way of seeing an object in a spatial-temporal world. This is the sense of time Russell defends, in which the past and future are seen to be as equally real as the present. Objects are seen to be as among others that exist in a temporal order based on causality. Wittgenstein suggests that an object seen this way is seen as equally

insignificant. The second way to see an object is what Wittgenstein refers to as seeing sub specie aeternitatis. That is, “the object is seen *together with* space and time instead of *in* space and time” (ibid.). We should be aware before considering “together with space and time” that throughout the passages in this section (NB, 82), Wittgenstein uses the definite article “the” rather than “a” or “an” in all cases to referring to objects, things, the stove and so on. The significance of his use of the article “the” is that it singles out a particular object or thing. To say, “an object is seen together with space and time” means to talk about objects in an abstract manner as any one among others. In the case of the stove, it seems trivial as an object among others. On the other hand, to say “the object”, singles it out as one. In the example of the stove, it means that it is “my world” (ibid.). In other words, the stove is singled out as my world, while everything else is “colourless by contrast with it” (ibid.).

The reference to my world brings us back to our discussion in the previous chapter that my world refers to *Realität* that remains co-ordinated with the solipsistic self. As we saw, the solipsistic self and the metaphysical subject are not part of this world. In other words, they are not objects in the sense that a stove is an object. While there is nothing that can be said about the metaphysical subject, we know (in the sense of a clear and certain perception) it by virtue of the world that I know as my world. In other words, the metaphysical self limits the world to the world I call my world. In this world the stove is either seen as an object among other objects in space and time, or it is singled out in the present. That moment of experience is contemplation. It is a moment of certainty, in

which we experience that the world exists. This seems to be Wittgenstein's intention in his use of the word *kontempliert*.

We must be careful in our attempts to say anything about the present moment of experience. To understand the point that nothing can be said of the present requires a shift in our perspective. According to Wittgenstein, to contemplate an object means to see it *sub specie aeternitatis*. To see in this way means "contemplation *sub specie aeternitatis* from outside" (NB, 83). The word translated as "contemplation" in this case is "*Betrachtung*". *Betrachtung* differs from *Kontempliert* in that the focus is on seeing rather than what is seen. The word "outside" does not mean a physical outside, in contrast to what is inside. Rather, if it is outside the world or outside language, it cannot be put into words. Nothing can be said of contemplation. One cannot ask who or what is contemplating or what is being contemplated. Neither the question nor the answer can be put into words. This also applies to the timelessness he describes as living in the present. As Wittgenstein states, this moment is eternity, which we saw above is indivisible. However, if it is indivisible, the eternal cannot be the subject of a predicate. For example, the statement "The indivisible is red" defines the indivisible as one colour in contrast to all other colours. In the same vein, it is not possible to say that the indivisible exists. In contrast, a statement about existence implies non-existence. Moreover, nothing can be said about the present, because the moment a thought is formed about the present or a sentence articulated the present that was the subject of the sentence has become the past. That is, while we can make statements such as, "The ball is in the air", we cannot say, "At this present moment [say p1] the ball is in the air." Although the ball may still be in

the air when the sentence is spoken, by that time the ball is no longer in the air at “this present [p1]”. The ball is now in the air in some other present [say p2 or p3]. To see the ball *sub specie aeternitatis* means to see it together *with* and not *in* space and time. To see the ball in time means to see it in the temporal flow of time. However, to see the ball with time and space means to see it non-temporally, with the present moment here and now. Wittgenstein refers to objects such as the ball, the stove and so on as the bare present image (NB, 83). He states that there are two ways to see a present image: first, as a “worthless momentary picture in the temporal world”, second, as the “true world among shadows”. The second case refers to contemplation. The object that is seen in the moment of perception is true. By “true,” Wittgenstein means that it has no bearing whether the object we see in the sky is a ball or a flying saucer. To say that the object is not a ball, but a flying saucer means to refer to it *in* language. As we saw above, to describe something in language means that there is a separation between what is perceived and what is described. The connection between a perception and the description of the perception is *in* time. However, Wittgenstein is concerned with the object, free from description. To perceive in this way is what Wittgenstein refers to as contemplation.

Wittgenstein distinguishes between two ways of seeing, *in* time and *with* time.

The word “with” is a key to Wittgenstein’s notion of contemplation with regard to the eternal, and addressing the question Russell raises about the unreality of time he finds in the mystic’s account of the eternal. We find parallel to Wittgenstein’s notion of a thing that is *with* space and time in his discussion of *Realität*, which is together *with* the solipsistic self. We also know from our discussion in Chapters 2 and 3 that *Realität* is the

experience of reality. Unlike *Wirklichkeit* that corresponds to propositions, *Realität* is co-ordinated with the solipsistic self. The moment of this co-ordination is seen as “my word”, or the contemplating of an object. As we saw, Russell rejects the mystical notion of time because it is unreal; however, living in the present, which is *Realität* or the contemplation of an object, is immediately real. However, there is nothing to say about either the immediate moment or the eternal. In this account of the present in which nothing can be said, we can ask why the present-eternal is the topic of this discussion. The answer to this question lies in Wittgenstein’s thoughts on the mystical that we shall examine in the following chapter. However, we must not leave this chapter without drawing a connection to the eternal and the mystical.

7.4 The Eternal and the Mystical

The connection between Wittgenstein’s thoughts on contemplating an object in the *Notebooks* and the mystical in the *Tractatus* lies in their common connection to sub specie aeterni. At 6.45 we read that to view the world (“the contemplation of the world” in Ogden’s translation) “sub specie aeterni is to view it as a whole – a limited whole”. Following this statement we read that the mystical is “feeling the world as a limited whole” (ibid.). On one hand we can look at eternity as the whole of time. This is Russell’s view that we examined above. However, if we take the whole of time and see eternity in this present, we have grasped Wittgenstein’s notion of the eternal as “belonging to those who live in the present” (6.4311). In light of our mystical interpretation of the *Tractatus*, we can read living in the present as contemplating the world as a limited whole. According to Wittgenstein, this is the mystical.

7.5 Conclusion

Although Wittgenstein's notion of the eternal does not account for change, we must be reminded that we can only measure processes in comparison to other processes. However, it is important to see that the eternal is neither the past nor the future, but the undivided present moment. This undivided moment is key to understanding that although nothing can be said of the present, it is not unreal, as Russell suggests. However, as mentioned above, this leaves us asking why are we considering the topic if nothing can be said about the present-eternal. To answer this question we go to the next chapter to consider what we can understand about the mystical, and what the sense of that understanding is.

Chapter 8: Mysticism and the Problems of Philosophy

The purpose of this chapter is to show the significance of what cannot be put into words in light of a mystical interpretation of the *Tractatus*. Wittgenstein's Preface to the *Tractatus* contains the following three main points about the book: first, it deals with the problems of philosophy; second, its aim is to draw limits to the expressions of thought; third, it offers the final solution to the problems of philosophy. At 6.53 he states that if one has understood the book one is left with only the propositions of what can be said (i.e. natural science), but that this has nothing to do with philosophy. On one hand philosophy is a method of setting limits to what can be thought, as we find in the 4.11s. Having set those limits, what remains? As we have examined in the chapters leading to this point, the aim of the book is not to lead us to a point where we have provided the limits on what can be said as an endorsement of the propositions of science. At 6.54 Wittgenstein states that all philosophical propositions, including those found in the *Tractatus*, are nonsense. However, we are not to see the propositions in the *Tractatus* as mere nonsense. Rather, they are to be seen as steps in a ladder. Used in this way, and not as doctrine, they lead one to a point beyond them. From this point one will see the world aright (ibid.). However, if the *Tractatus* leads us to a place where we are excluded from the use of language, how are we to make sense of what cannot be put into words?

8.1 The Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this section is to provide a detailed account of the problem this chapter will consider. If we accept that Wittgenstein offers a solution to the problems of

philosophy in making clear the distinction of what can and cannot be spoken, we are left with a world of sense, while everything else is nonsense. However, the final section of the *Tractatus* asks us to consider topics such as the ethical, God, and the mystical that cannot be expressed in words. This section will establish how are we to make sense of what Wittgenstein calls “nonsense” in the Preface.

If we assume that the aim of the *Tractatus* (Preface) and the aim of philosophy (4.114) have been met (i.e. to draw limits to the expressions of thought), it can be inferred that Wittgenstein offers the final solution to the problems of philosophy, as he defines them. That is, the problems of philosophy, which he defines as the result of misunderstanding the logic of our language (Preface), are solved when limits of thought have been clearly set. The key to this solution is the rejection of all metaphysical language. We are reminded of our discussions from previous chapters that Wittgenstein argues that propositions say only how the world is (3.221), because they only correspond to facts. Facts are the existence of states of affairs (2). The existence and non-existence of states of affairs is reality (*Wirklichkeit*) (2.06). Propositions represent reality (4.12); that is, they represent the “existence and non-existence of states of affairs” (4.1) and say if it is true or not. According to Wittgenstein, the “totality of true propositions is the whole of natural science” (4.11). That is, propositions with sense are restricted to natural science, which tell us how the world is. Propositions that attempt to say anything outside this restriction he calls nonsense. For example, he rejects metaphysical language because it fails to give meaning to certain signs in a proposition (6.53). Unlike reality (*Wirklichkeit*) that can be compared to propositions, the metaphysical world cannot be compared to anything in

language. In fact, it is nonsense to speak of it in this or any way, because metaphysical propositions lack sense. Propositions with sense are what constitute natural science. However, he states at 4.111 (and 6.53), “philosophy is not one of the natural sciences.” The problem of philosophy has nothing to do with how the world is. According to Wittgenstein, the problem of philosophy lies in drawing the limits to what can be thought. Having drawn those limits, propositions only give us a description of how the world is. These limits determine both what can be said and what can be asked. According to Wittgenstein, philosophy has nothing to do with what can be asked. Here lies the solution to any problem in philosophy: neither the question nor the answer can be expressed in words. Thus, Wittgenstein rejects philosophical doctrine and adopts the view that philosophy is a method that seeks the logical clarification of thoughts. However, the *Tractatus* does not end at this point. The concluding sections of the book (6.4s and the 6.5s) focus on what cannot be expressed in words.

We find three different passages that help explain Wittgenstein’s reasons for including his references to what cannot be put into words. The first is the concluding remark of the Preface: “how little is achieved when the problems [of philosophy] are solved”. The second and third quotations give the reason that so little is achieved. The second says that in terms of what can be said, the problems of philosophy do not exist. However, this still leaves the problem of life

We feel that even when all the possible scientific questions have been answered, the problems of life remain completely untouched. (6.52)

Finally, in a letter to his friend Ludwig von Ficker, Wittgenstein writes that he had meant to include the following passage in the Preface. He tells Ficker that this passage is key to

the *Tractatus*.

My work consists of two parts: the one presented here plus all that I have *not* written. And it is precisely the second part that is the important one. My book draws limits to the sphere of the ethical from the inside as it were, and I am convinced that this is the only rigorous way of drawing those limits. In short, I believe that where many others are just gassing, I have managed in my book to put everything firmly into place by being silent about it. (*Letters from Ludwig Wittgenstein*, LLW, 143)

Wittgenstein concludes his letter by advising Ficker that the Preface and the Conclusion contain “the most important direct expression of the book” (LLW, 144). The problem that confronts us is that when we apply language as a means to understanding what cannot be put into words, we are confronted with apparent contradiction and a failure to make sense. Among the apparent contradictions that we have considered to this point is the fact that objects cannot be put into words, but are named. Also, we have discussed that the view of the world *sub specie aeternitatis* is from the outside, yet there is no physical inside-outside distinction. Despite these contradictions, what cannot be said is important to Wittgenstein, leaving us with the question of how we are to make sense of what cannot be put into words.

Wittgenstein’s letter to Ficker provides us with two clues, which we also find in the *Tractatus*. First, Wittgenstein states that his book draws limits to the ethical from the inside. At 4.115 we find a similar passage with regard to Wittgenstein’s notion of philosophy: “It will signify what cannot be said, by presenting clearly what can be said”. The second clue is found in the reference to the ethical. At 6.421 we learn that the ethical cannot be put into words. Wittgenstein states that there can be no propositions of ethics, because “propositions can express nothing that is higher” (6.42). The only other reference

to what is higher is found at 6.432 where Wittgenstein states that how things are in the world is “a matter indifferent to what is higher” (6.432). Wittgenstein continues stating, “God does not reveal himself in the world”. In the *Tractatus* we find that God and the ethical are both what is higher. Nothing else can be said about each because what is higher cannot be expressed in words. However, in the *Notebooks* Wittgenstein claims that what we know about God and the meaning of life is connected to the ethical and a number of other topics (as we shall examine) that we have discussed in connection to the mystical. The problem we find with the topic of Wittgenstein’s notion of God and the ethical in the *Notebooks* is that the attempt to acquire sense from what cannot be put into words runs into contradiction and nonsense when the approach employs language. Wittgenstein’s approach to what cannot be put into words is more cautious than what is found in the *Notebooks*. That is, he offers few details to explain what he means by the mystical, ethics, the purpose of life and God. However, his approach to these topics is different in the *Notebooks*, as we find in the passages that follow his question, “What do I know about God and the purpose of life”. The purpose of this chapter is not only to shed light on what cannot be expressed in words, but to find sense in what Wittgenstein refers to as “what is higher”.

8.2 God and the Happy Life

The purpose of this section is to show that the sense that can be brought to what cannot be put into words lies in the ethical and the mystical. That is, if the sense of a proposition lies in its correspondence with reality (*Wirklichkeit*), this chapter will show that the sense of what cannot be expressed in words lies in its co-ordination with reality (*Realität*).

As a note of caution, we must be aware of the fact that the following discussion concerns a topic that cannot be expressed in words. While contradictions cannot be avoided, if we are to gain a sense of what Wittgenstein means by what cannot be put into words we must take him at face value. For example, while he talks of seeing the world *sub specie aeternitatis*, which means seeing the world from the outside. By the term “outside” he means what is outside what can be said or nonsense. However, we must not confuse what we can say with what we can see. The distinction between inside and outside is made in language. A proposition can say if something is inside or outside, but from outside a proposition, nothing can be said. In other words, while we do not need language to *see* the difference between the inside and the outside of a box, we need language to *say* what the difference between inside and outside is. The difference lies only in what can be said. That is, if we see the world from outside language, we cannot *say* what is inside or outside. As we proceed through the following discussion it must be clear that we are concerned with what can be said. We should not conflate what can be said and what exists. For example, in the case where something cannot be said to exist or not exist, this only expresses a limitation in language. It may be that something that cannot be said can be seen or felt.

In answer to the question, “What do I know about God and the purpose of life?”

Wittgenstein offers eight short statements that conclude with the passage stating that the “meaning of life, i.e. the meaning of the world, we can call God” (NB, 73).

I know that this world exists.

That I am placed in it like my eye in its visual field.

That something about it is problematic, which we call its meaning.
 That this meaning does not lie in it but outside it.
 That life is the world.
 That my will penetrates the world.
 That my will is good or evil.
 Therefore that good and evil are somehow connected with the meaning of the world (NB, 72-73).

Connected with these nine passages are four additional statements:

...the comparison of God to the father.
 To pray is to think about the meaning of life.
 I cannot bend the happenings of the world to my will: I am completely powerless.
 I can only make myself independent of the world – and so in a certain sense master it – by renouncing any influence on happenings.

The first two passages, “I know that this world exists” and “That I am placed in it like my eye in the visual field” are topics that we have discussed in previous chapters. However, what should not pass unnoticed is that Wittgenstein does not say, “I know that the world exists”. Rather, he states, “I know that *this* world exists”. His use of the word “this” indicates that he means “I know that the world here and now exists”. We see the importance of the distinction between “this” and “the” in the sentence “The ball is in the air”, which indicates a specific ball. However, “this ball” means this specific ball here and now. In light of our discussion in the previous chapter that nothing can be said about the present moment, the example of the “ball in the air” breaks down. That is, in the time it takes to formulate a statement about this present, the moment has become the past. The use of the word “this” indicates that what we know about God and the purpose of life is not something that can be known in language. This is consistent with the *Tractatus* at 6.432 where Wittgenstein states “God does not reveal himself in the world”. What we know about God will not tell us anything about “*how* things are in the world”. These things are of complete indifference to God (ibid.). To discover what we can know about

God and the purpose of life we turn our attention to the remaining seven statements.

Wittgenstein's next claim about what I can know about God and the purpose of life ("I am placed in [the world] like my eye in its visual field") we have examined in conjunction with the discussion on the metaphysical subject and my world.

Wittgenstein's point is that in order for the eye to see, it cannot be an object of sight.

Similarly, the metaphysical subject cannot be an object in the world. As we saw above, at 6.432 God cannot be made known *in* the world". That is, in the same manner that the eye cannot make itself into an object of sight, we cannot know God because he cannot make himself into an *object* of knowledge. In the case of the eye, we have the visual field to indicate that there is an eye. According to Wittgenstein, while we have *this* world to indicate there is God, there is no proposition to convey any knowledge about God, even to state that God exists or does not exist. However, we are still left with the problem of how we are to make sense of something that cannot be expressed in words.

The next two passages confront the issue of what we can expect to know of something that cannot be put into words.

That something about it [the world] is problematic, which we call meaning.
This meaning does not lie in it [the world] but outside it. (NB, 73)

The German word "*Sinn*" has been translated in these passages as "meaning". However, the translation I will use corresponds to the Pears and McGuinness translation "sense".

These two passages restate the problem that I said this section would consider. Namely, if we cannot state in words what I know about God and the purpose of life, we are confronted with the problem of making sense of these issues. However, the answer does

not lie in language, where we find ourselves faced with contradictions of the kind seen above, but outside. If we say that the sense we are seeking is outside the world and language, it must be clear that the rules of language no longer apply. If we step “outside” language, concepts such as “inside” and “outside” no longer apply. In fact, all concepts vanish, including those of past, present and future time.

The sense that we seek lies outside what can be put into words. However, we should not confuse what cannot be said with what is. That is, when we *say* that an object exists or does not exist, it means that the existential status of an object can be expressed in language. What we *say* has sense if it corresponds to reality. However, as we saw in Chapter 2, things such as objects, the solipsistic self and *Realität* cannot be expressed in words. In the case of *Realität*, as we saw, nothing can be said about reality; however, this neither confirms or denies it. In other words, it does not follow that what lies outside language must lie outside reality. It also does not follow that what cannot be put into words cannot have sense, albeit not the sense we find in meaningful propositions. Outside language means simply that nothing can be said. However, to fully understand what Wittgenstein means by his claim that the sense of the world lies outside the world, we turn to the remaining four statements.

As we turn to the fifth statement “That life is the world,” we find a connection to the first statement “that this world exists”. If life is the world, it is possible to exchange “life” for “world” in the first statement above, which now reads, “that *this* life exists”. This suggests that the reference to “world” in the first passage about what we know about God

and the purpose of life is not the world in the sense of the totality of facts (1.1).

Rather, the statement refers to my world. We find further evidence for this in the word “life” in the fifth statement. The term “life” here means “my life” as we find in two passages in the *Tractatus*.

The world and life are one. (5.621)
I am my world (the microcosm) (5.63)

The “I” in this case refers to the metaphysical subject, which is not the psychological or physical appearance of self. As we saw with the eye and the field of vision, the I encounters various kinds of things, but not the I. Wittgenstein states, “I objectively confront every object. But not the I” (NB, 80). “The I is not an object” (ibid.). Not only can I not confront the I, but also it cannot be expressed in words. Wittgenstein calls it “deeply mysterious” (ibid.). The way the I appears in philosophy is through “the world’s being *my world*” (ibid.). At this point we have the first clue to finding sense to what lies outside, which can be shown through the passage at 5.62 where Wittgenstein states, “The world is *my world*”. This passage is in reference to Wittgenstein’s comments on the solipsistic self where he states that what the solipsistic self means is correct but it cannot be expressed in words; rather, it shows itself as the world that is *my world*. The word “my” is in italics because the world in this case is not “my” in the sense of my personal identity. Rather, it is the reality (*Realität*) that remains co-ordinated with the solipsistic self. Although *Realität* cannot be expressed in words, we do not fully understand the sense that lies outside the world until we examine the remaining passages on the will and ethics.

The final passages that concern our question about God and the purpose of life are

concerned with the will.

That my will penetrates the world.
That my will is good or evil.

Wittgenstein draws a distinction between the acts of the will and wishing. (NB, 88).

Wishing occurs in time. He states that it “precedes the event” (ibid.). That is, by wishing Wittgenstein means to conceive the future and act in accordance with a plan. Because these acts involve conceiving a possible future before the action one may or may not take, they are linked to the thinking subject. As we examined in the discussion on the self, according to Wittgenstein what we think of the thinking subject exists in the world. That is, the thoughts of both the thinking subject and the wishing subject are things in the world. Given that these thoughts can be subjects of a proposition, they are in the world of language. On the other hand, the willing subject cannot be expressed in words. Unlike the thinking subject, the willing subject does not live *in* a world of time governed by fear, hope and expectations; rather, it lives *with* time in the eternal present. I have used italics to emphasise the difference we discussed in the previous chapter between looking at an object *in* time and looking *with* time. The former sees from the vantage point of an object among other objects; that is, the thoughts one has of one’s personal identity are thoughts of the thinking subject. One conceives such thoughts in relation to other thoughts. In other words, the thinking subject is *in* the world. On the other hand, the willing subject is independent of the world. Rather, it lives together *with* time. The confusion between inside and outside becomes problematic, as we discussed above. However, we should be aware that the thoughts of the thinking subject are language. On the other hand, the willing subject is outside language. As we saw above, the laws of sense that apply to language do not apply to what is not in language. In the case of the thinking and willing

subjects, if we take the viewpoint of the thinking subject, what Wittgenstein refers to as “what cannot be put into words” or the view point from the outside will often appear contradictory. If we are to understand what Wittgenstein means by the willing subject we must take the viewpoint from outside the world. However, this leaves the problem for Wittgenstein to explain how things obtain their significance from the viewpoint of the willing subject.

The key to Wittgenstein’s view of the willing subject is the present. The one thing that cannot be denied about the immediate present moment is that it is the point of existence (or reality as in the sense of *Realität*) from which we cannot escape. The things that define a moment as my world are made meaningful in their “relationship” to my will. However, this is not a psychological will. In that moment a thing is what it is and nothing else. That is, a thing is neither a thought nor a concept. (I place the word “relationship” in quotation marks to bring attention to the fact that the relationship we are talking about here exists from the view point of what we can say about things and my will.)

What cannot be imagined cannot be talked about.
 Things acquire “significance” only through their relation to my will.
 For “Everything is what it is and not another thing. (NB, 84)

The first sentence in this passage is found in the *Tractatus*. At 5.61 Wittgenstein states that the remark “what we cannot think we cannot say either” provides the key to how much truth there is in solipsism. The truth he is referring to cannot be said. That is, at 5.62 he states, what the solipsist means is correct, but it cannot be said. Anything we try to say about the solipsist will be from the viewpoint of the thinking subject. However, from this point of view all that can be said will be nonsense. In the following two

statements we begin to see what sense means from the standpoint of the willing subject. Wittgenstein places the word “significance” in quotation marks to alert us to the fact that the meaning of things is free of all value. From the viewpoint of the willing self, things are as they are and we need not impose value or concepts of any kind on them. In the same vein, the next statement claims that things are what they are and not anything different. If we consider this claim in light of the viewpoint of the will, Wittgenstein’s intentions become clear. A thing that is seen, not from the perspective of the thinking subject, but from the willing subject, reveals that it is only as it is, free from what it means in terms of language.

We find that this account of the willing subject parallels Wittgenstein’s thoughts on the solipsistic self. One way to view this connection is to recognize that both are outside the world and language and both related to things in the world. However, where the solipsistic self remains co-ordinated with *Realität*, the will penetrates the world. We discover that Wittgenstein’s thoughts on the I reveal what he means by the term “penetrates”. He states that the will is the centre of the world we call the I (NB, 80). As we have examined in our discussion on the metaphysical subject, the I is not an object in the world. In the same vein, as the eye that confronts objects in its visual field (but cannot see itself), the I confronts objects, but not the I (ibid.). This way of describing the will and the I appears to present us with a relationship between the two. However, a closer examination reveals that this relationship is not one of independent entities, but dependent sides of what we know as my world. To begin with the I, it only appears in a relationship to things. We see the same apparent relationship in Wittgenstein’s example

of the eye. Independent of a visual field, we cannot say that the eye is an eye. In fact, we cannot say anything about the eye. If we turn our attention back to the I, we can say the same for the things the I confronts. That is, Wittgenstein's claim is that things become significant as my world only from the viewpoint of the I. However, neither the I that observes nor the things it perceives can be thought of as self-subsistent entities. We see things in the dependent relationship with the I. That is, the things that define the world as my world are only found in their relationship with the I. On the other hand, the I is only experienced as the centre of my world in its relationship to the things it confronts. The experience that we refer to as the centre of my world is an experience in the sense of Wittgenstein's thoughts of experience at 5.552. We have discussed this point in previous chapters, but to put it briefly again, Wittgenstein's thoughts at 5.552 are that the experience we need to understand logic is not an experience in terms of my personal experience, but the non-personal awareness that something is. In the *Notebooks* we read that all experience is the world, absent of a subject (NB, 89). While to be absent of a subject means to be without the thinking subject, his claim that experience is the world follows from the discussion on "I am the world". We can take from this line of reasoning that the observer is the thing observed. Moreover, it is this line of reasoning that is behind Wittgenstein's claim that my will penetrates the world. From the viewpoint of the thinking subject, a distinction can be made between the observer and the observed. The act of observing is an experience of what is observed. However, from the viewpoint of the willing subject it cannot be said that the act of will is an experience, because there is no subject. At the moment the willing subject penetrates the world, the subject (thinking subject) is gone. At 5.63 we find the same thought expressed as the I, "I am my world".

Wittgenstein's position is that I am not the subject in terms of my personal identity, but the world that I encounter as my world. The relationship of time to the willing subject is also important. According to Wittgenstein, willing means acting in the moment. In other words it is always in the present. In contrast to willing, wishing is not acting (NB, 88), as we shall now turn to examine in connection with Wittgenstein's thoughts on ethics.

The will is connected to Wittgenstein's comments on ethics. As we examined above, the will is the centre of the world we call the I. This centre, he states, is the "bearer of ethics" (NB, 80). Ethics is concerned with the happy life and living without fear and hope, and to live without fear and hope means to live in the present (NB, 76). The experience one has of fear or desire means not to live *with* the moment, but *in* time. To be in time means to think of time in terms of outside the present. That is, to wish means to desire a moment other than the immediate present of the willing subject. Wittgenstein states that wishing precedes an event, while the will accompanies it (NB, 88). That is, the wishing subject precedes an event by its anticipation. The will accompanies an event by being with the present. According to Wittgenstein, wishing is not acting. He states that wishing is related to the movement of a chair (ibid.). That is, it does not act independently. Only the will acts, according to Wittgenstein (ibid.). "The act of the will is not the cause of the action but is action itself" (NB, 87)

The fact that I will an action consists in my performing the action, not in my doing something else which causes the action.

When I move something I move.

When I perform an action I am in action. (NB, 88)

On one hand it seems that action is in temporal time. However, a closer examination reveals that action is neither a static present nor a temporal moment moving from the

present into the past. To begin, as we discussed above the notions of past and future are concepts of time. We think of time future and we remember time past, but the present is always an experience. As we discussed in the previous chapter, the present cannot be expressed in words. In order to account for the movement that we perceive as an action is answered in the fact that the present is always moving through the present. The action is in Wittgenstein's words "my performing the action"; not doing something that causes the action. In other words, it is non-causal. If we consider this comment in light of 6.362, where Wittgenstein claims that what is excluded by the law of causality cannot be expressed in words, action is not something that can be expressed in words. This removes the action of the will from the temporal duration of time. Rather, we find that the action of the will is in the present that Wittgenstein refers to as eternal at 6.4311.

Wittgenstein's contention in the quotation above (NB, 88) is that when I will an action there is no separation between the subject of the action (the I) and the action itself. In action there is no actor who acts, only the action. This is the same point he makes at 5.631 where he states that there is no thinking subject that thinks. There are thoughts, but there isn't a thinker separate from the thoughts. We can put this point in the context of the quotation above (NB, 88): when I think I am the thought. I raise the issue of thought here to illustrate Wittgenstein's views on the relationship of the actor to the act. While it is possible to think of a subject (thinker) separate from a thought, both the subject and the separation between the subject and a thought are thoughts. Hence, when I think something, I am the thought. That is, if Wittgenstein believes that there is no thinking subject separate from thoughts, there is no subject to have the experience. In other words,

there is only thinking. His line of reasoning is that the person each person thinks he or she is is only thoughts, but among those thoughts there is no thought of a thinking subject. Wittgenstein states that every experience is the world, which does not require a subject (NB, 89). This also applies to the willing subject.

What kind of reason is there for the assumption of a willing subject?
Is not *my world* adequate for individuation? (ibid.)

‘My world’ is emphasised in this quotation because in the moment of action where the will penetrates the world, this is my world. In the same vein, there is not an actor separate from the act. The act of the will is not an experience, because there is no subject to have the experience (ibid.). Rather, the experience one has of the world is the world (ibid.). Although ethics and the will remain outside what can be said, the connection between the two becomes clear in light of Wittgenstein’s thoughts on the happy man.

The final passage to be considered connects ethics to the will. According to Wittgenstein, good and bad actions do not alter the facts of the world. However, the happy man and the unhappy man live in different worlds (6.43). By the word “world”, Wittgenstein means my world. The world of the happy man is one who lives without fear and hope in the present. He is without fear even in the face of death (NB, 74). “Only the man who lives not in time but in the present is happy” (ibid.). That is, to be happy means to live in the eternal present, which means to put an end to the problem of life. To be unhappy means to live by fear and desire in a constant state of dissatisfaction. That is, the wishing subject thinks of himself a subject of experience that wishes something other than the present.

We now move to consider the final passage.

Therefore, that good and evil are somehow connected with the meaning of the world.

The meaning of life, i.e. the meaning of the world, we can call God.

Let us briefly reconsider what we know about God and the purpose of life to this point.

First, we know that according to Wittgenstein, God and the purpose of life are connected.

The answer we have for one will apply to the other. We know that the world exists and I am placed in this world like my eye in its visual field. However, it is problematic that what we seek to know about God and the purpose of life lies outside the world. This problem is resolved by rejecting the notion of the wishing subject that sees the world in terms of fear and hope. That is, it is resolved by focussing on the present and not some future time. Hope and fear assume that the present is a point from which the future lies ahead. However, the will is independent of the world; yet, it penetrates it in the present moment. The meaning of life is ethical in that Wittgenstein believes a person who follows the good life, (i.e. the happy man) is one who lives as the willing subject in the present. By the phrase “living in the present”, Wittgenstein means to view the world *sub specie aeternitatis*. This means to view the world as a limited whole or to contemplate an object as if were “my world”. To view the world in this way is the mystical.

Evil means to live the life of the unhappy man or the wishing individual. The good life means to see the world *sub specie aeternitatis*. That is, as we have discussed, it is seeing the world in terms of contemplation, from the outside. It is to see the eternal in the objects of my world, such as a stove (NB, 83). Wittgenstein calls this the good life because the alternative is to take a bare “present image as a worthless picture in the whole

temporal world, and as a true world among shadows” (ibid.). His point is that when the present is seen as an insignificant point in the temporal duration of time, what is true (the world viewed *sub specie aeternitatis*) is lost among the shadows. This takes us to Wittgenstein’s final point of what I know about God: “That my will is good or evil” (NB, 73). Here we see a connection between ethics and the world. The good life corresponds to the acts of the will. In the letter to Ficker quoted above, Wittgenstein begins with the following passage: “The book’s point is an ethical one” (LLW, 143). Later in the letter he states that the book “draws limits to the sphere of the ethical from the inside” (ibid.). In the *Notebooks* we read that the ethical means to see the world *sub specie aeternitatis*. In the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein describes seeing the world in this way as the mystical. As I have argued, his intention to draw limits to the sphere of the ethical from the inside is to see the ethical in connection to the will as centre of the world called I, or my world. Given that the will cannot be put into words, we will not find any sense to the ethical or the mystical in language. Rather, if we follow Wittgenstein’s line of thought, the sense lies in seeing or feeling the world. In order to grasp this point requires a shift in one’s viewpoint from one that understands the world by means of language to one that is outside what can be expressed in words. The most important part of the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein tells Ficker, is the part that it is not written, meaning what could not be put into words. As we shall consider in the next chapter, one view of what cannot be put into words is simply nonsense, while the other view is that it is meaningful nonsense. The view I shall take will be to reject both of these views and offer an alternative view of nonsense based on the material we have just considered.

8.3 Conclusion

If we follow the aim of the book to draw limits to the expressions of thought, we are left with sense, in terms of what can be meaningfully stated, and nonsense. While the meaning of nonsense is a point of debate, as the next chapter will consider, Wittgenstein must provide an account of what cannot be expressed in words if we are to accept his solution to the problem of philosophy. That is, if the solution to the problem of philosophy is found by eliminating all philosophical statements because they do not correspond to reality, one is left trying to make sense of the final sections of the *Tractatus* that are concerned with topics such as the ethical, God and the mystical, that Wittgenstein claims cannot be put into words. This chapter claimed that to make sense of what cannot be put into words, one must see the world from a viewpoint that is outside words.

Chapter 9: Nonsense and Two Interpretations of the *Tractatus*

Russell states in his Introduction to the *Tractatus* that Wittgenstein “manages to say a great deal about what cannot be said” (p. 22). Russell has in mind here the final two passages of the *Tractatus* where Wittgenstein says that the propositions of his book serve as elucidations, that one who understands his thoughts in the text will recognize them as nonsense (6.54) at which point one will pass over what cannot be said in silence (7).

Russell’s concern is that Wittgenstein uses silence as a loophole through the hierarchy of languages, that is, the theory of types we examined in Chapter 4. His second concern is that Wittgenstein takes whole subjects, ethics for example, and places them in a mystical and inexpressible region, yet is capable of expressing his ethical opinions. If Russell’s comments are correct, a second problem for Wittgenstein is that he appears to present a doctrine, while claiming at 4.112 that philosophy is not a doctrine. In the same passage, he states that philosophy is an activity. Wittgenstein intends to engage the reader in an activity that will bring him to the realization that philosophical propositions only add confusion to the problems of philosophy. However, by transcending the propositions that lure one into philosophical discourse, including the propositions of the text, one will come to see the world aright (6.54). In coming to see the world in this way, Wittgenstein shows that what cannot be spoken about must be passed over in silence (7).

In previous chapters we employed a working definition of nonsense in order to express by words what cannot be put into words. The basis of this definition was that while sense includes all propositions that correspond to reality, nonsense are those propositions that

do not, such as metaphysical statements. However, if we define sense as what corresponds to reality, we have sense in terms of propositions (*Wirklichkeit*) and sense that cannot be expressed in words (*Realität*). In this chapter we shall work to achieve a sharper definition of these distinctions by considering the debate surrounding the meaning of 6.54 and 7 among Wittgenstein scholars. I shall argue that the nature of this discussion has fallen into two camps. On one hand there is a school of thought that takes a metaphysical interpretation of these passages. The proponents of this school feel that the passages on nonsense suggest there is something that lies outside language. The two thinkers I shall consider who support this view are G. E. M. Anscombe and P. M. S. Hacker. Opposing the metaphysical view are Cora Diamond and James Conant who take the passages on nonsense literally. They reject the notion that there is any form of metaphysics present in the *Tractatus*. Although both views offer important insights into understanding Wittgenstein's thoughts in the *Tractatus*, the purpose of this chapter is to show that each provides an incomplete picture of Wittgenstein's views. In both camps there is the question of what can be taken away from the text. In other words, when the ladder has been climbed (6.54) is there something metaphysical to be seen, as the metaphysical interpretation would argue, or do we simply toss away the ladder to be left with meaningless nonsense? I shall reject both of these views. With regard to the question, "What can be taken away from the text?" it must be clear that we cannot take away a doctrine of any kind. The fact that Wittgenstein rejects the notion that philosophy contains doctrines undermines a metaphysical reading of the text, but I shall argue this does not mean that we are left with a meaningless vacuum. Rather, my position will be that the passages on the mystical do not support either view of the *Tractatus*. I shall

conclude that the aim of the text, (to set limits to the expressions of thought, (Preface)) reaches its conclusion at 6.54 with the passage that states when the ladder has been climbed and the propositions of the text have been transcended one *sees* the world aright. I shall argue that when one sees the propositions of the text as nonsense and transcends them, one sees the world as a limited whole. This perception is the mystical (6.45).

The centre of debate in this chapter will be two points of interpretation. The first is whether there is something metaphysical outside either the world or language. The passages that suggest this view are found at 6.41 and 6.522. At 6.41 Wittgenstein states, “The sense of the world must lie outside the world” and at 6.522 he claims, “There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They *make themselves manifest*.” The second point of debate concerns the interpretation of Wittgenstein’s use of the word “nonsense” as found at 6.54, “My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical”. At issue in these passages is whether there is something significant that lies outside what can be said. We begin with two accounts of a metaphysical interpretation of the *Tractatus*.

9.1 G. E. M. Anscombe’s Metaphysical Reading of the *Tractatus*

I shall take the use of the term “metaphysical reading” to mean that certain passages in the *Tractatus* are interpreted in such a way as to suggest that there exists a transcendental reality outside the world. Inherent in the nature of this view is the belief in a two-worlds picture of reality; that is, there exists the world of propositions and facts and the world of the transcendental. Proponents of a metaphysical reading of the *Tractatus* cite 6.41 and

6.522 to support their claim. A literal reading of these passages seems to support their view. Let us begin with Anscombe and the passage at 6.41.

The sense of the world must lie outside the world. In the world everything is as it is and everything happens as it does happen: *in* it no value exists - and if it did exist, it would have no value.

If there is any value that does have value, it must lie outside the whole sphere of what happens and is the case. For all that happens and is the case is accidental.

What makes it non-accidental cannot lie *within* the world, since if it did it would itself be accidental.

It must lie outside the world.

In *An Introduction to Wittgenstein's Tractatus* (IWT, 170) G. E. M. Anscombe links the passage at 6.41 with 6.432, "God does not reveal himself *in* the world". Her point is that God is not in the world of accidental things. Following Wittgenstein's thoughts on the picture theory, she claims that if a proposition and its negation are both possible, that whatever is the case is accidental. She then asks, if what is the case is accidental, why does Wittgenstein mention the non-accidental (IWT, 171)? The answer to this question, she claims, lies with understanding what Wittgenstein says about the will. She believes that the most important remark he makes on this point is found at 6.4321: "The facts all contribute to setting the problem, not to its solution". Her argument is that facts do not contribute to the solution because they are concerned with "good and evil and the good or evil character of what is good or evil" (ibid.). The good and evil character of what is good or evil, she states, is non-accidental, and doing so links ethics to God. It is important to note the distinction she makes between good and evil and the good or evil character of good or evil because it indicates that a metaphysical interpretation lies behind her comment. That is, Anscombe sees good and evil acts separate from the nature of good

and evil from which they are products. This separation implies a metaphysics that we find in her discussion on the transcendental, or “transcendentals” as she refers to them.

Although she does not provide us with a definition of the transcendental, she includes logic, ethics, aesthetics and the mysticism. (IWT, 172 –173).

Let us begin with Anscombe’s use of the term “mysticism”. In Wittgenstein’s three references to the mystical in the *Tractatus* he never uses the term “mysticism”.

Anscombe’s mistaken use of the word ‘mysticism’ in place of Wittgenstein’s term ‘the mystical’ implies that he is referring to a body of beliefs held by mystics. Moreover, the use of the term ‘mysticism’ is not consistent with the text, especially at 4.112 where Wittgenstein states that philosophy is not a doctrine. A second unusual term she uses is “transcendentals”. The plural form of transcendental implies that something exists outside language, owing to the fact that what exists outside can be counted. However, this is not the case. If we take what is referred to in the *Tractatus* as being outside language, there is nothing that can be said about it. It cannot be expressed in words, even to say that it is singular, plural or that it exists.

Anscombe’s intention to draw a connection between the transcendental and logic is to show that the propositions of logic “shew something that pervades everything sayable and is itself unsayable” (IWT, 166). However, her confusing the statement that “Logic is transcendental” (6.13) with propositions of logic, which represent the scaffolding of the world (6.124), suggests she believes the *Tractatus* contains a doctrine. Contrary to Anscombe’s view, logic is not a doctrine but a “mirror-image of the world” (6.13).

Wittgenstein's point at 6.124 is that propositions of logic describe the limits of the world, which are mirrored in logic. Anscombe's suggestion that logic is transcendental suggests that logic has a metaphysical quality; that is, it shows something common to everything that is sayable.

We turn now to Anscombe's thoughts on the will and ethics. She states that Wittgenstein claims the subject of ethics is the will, which is independent of the world. Good and bad acts of the will, she adds, alter the limits of the world, not the facts. Wittgenstein stresses one cannot talk about the will as the subject of ethical attributes. However, Anscombe believes that this part of the *Tractatus* is clearly wrong (IWT, 171). She believes that actions can be predicated as either good or bad (IWT, 172). However, she misses Wittgenstein's point that the will is outside the world and language (6.373). The "I" that is the subject of the will is transcendental. It is outside and cannot be known as one knows the objects one confronts, including one's body and psychological self (NB, 80). Wittgenstein states that one cannot "speak about the will in so far as it is the subject of ethical attributes" (6.432). In the same vein one cannot talk about the transcendental. At 6.42 Wittgenstein states that the transcendental cannot be put into words. I think we must take this claim at face value; there is nothing that can be said about the transcendental, not even to say that it exists. At 6.53 we read that the correct method of philosophy is to say nothing but what can be said. These propositions tell us how the world is. They are the propositions of natural science. However, philosophy has nothing to do with natural science (ibid.). The passage at 6.53 continues to state that if anyone wanted to say anything metaphysical, that it should be shown to him that such propositions do not give

a meaning to certain signs. That is, such signs fail to correspond to reality. Signs that try to say something about what cannot be said are what Wittgenstein refers to as nonsensical. We will now consider two interpretations of nonsense, beginning with P.M.S. Hacker's opinion that the references to nonsense refer to illuminating nonsense.

9.2 P. M. S. Hacker's Metaphysical Interpretation of the *Tractatus*

While the claim at 6.41 does not support a metaphysical reading of the *Tractatus*, a literal reading of 6.522 (There are things that cannot be put into words that show themselves) presents a stronger claim for this view. This is Hacker's position in his essay "Was He Trying To Whistle It" (in Cary and Read (eds.), *The New Wittgenstein*, NW). In this essay he offers a two-worlds interpretation of the *Tractatus* in which one world is what cannot be put into words and the other is what shows itself. Hacker claims that the passage at 6.522 is "a leitmotif running through the whole of the *Tractatus*" (NW, 353). He cites Wittgenstein's Preface as the starting point for his two-worlds interpretation of the *Tractatus*: "What can be said at all can be said clearly, and what we cannot talk about we must pass over in silence". In addition to these opening remarks to the *Tractatus*, Hacker refers to the closing passage that states the following: "What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence" (7). His point is that the limits of language are such that there are things of which we can speak and a world of things of which we cannot speak. Corresponding to these two worlds are the truths of which we can speak and the "numerous truths that seemingly cannot be stated, but nevertheless are apparently asserted in the course of the *Tractatus*" (NW, 353). Hacker's arguments hinge on the fact that the *Tractatus* presents us with a two-worlds view of knowledge and reality. He

understands this two-worlds view in terms of a harmony between representation and what is represented. He attributes a Leibnizian (pre-established harmony) strain of thought to Wittgenstein's notion of representation and what is represented (ibid.). However, I shall argue that this two-worlds view of the *Tractatus* is not consistent with Wittgenstein's views on what is outside the world. Moreover, Hacker neglects to mention that the passage at 6.522 states that what shows itself is the mystical. It is this mystical reading that I shall offer in place of Hacker's metaphysical interpretation.

9.3 Metaphysics and Nonsense

I shall consider three objections to Hacker's two-worlds view. First, what lies outside of language cannot be said to exist. Second, at 6.4312 Wittgenstein states that the solution to the riddle of life lies outside space and time. Third, at 6.44 Wittgenstein draws a distinction between "how the world is" and "that that is".

The objection I shall present to Hacker's metaphysical interpretation of the *Tractatus* stems from the Preface: "What can be said at all can be said clearly, and what cannot be said and what we cannot talk about we must pass over in silence". Hacker draws from this passage that the "very nature of language" is such that there are things that cannot be stated or described but are "in some sense shown by language" (NW, 353). From this interpretation he believes that the *Tractatus* contains truths that cannot be stated but are asserted throughout the book. In other words Hacker links "things" that cannot be said with "truths" found in the *Tractatus*. In Hacker's view the *Tractatus* contains truths that are found in language and truths that cannot be said. While Hacker's interpretation seems

to be consistent with 6.522, he fails to acknowledge that the *Tractatus* does not contain truths. At 4.112 Wittgenstein states that philosophy is not a doctrine. In other words the book does not contain anything that can be said to hold true. Hacker is correct to say that the aim of the book is to say clearly what can be said and what cannot be said must be passed over in silence. However, we must take what cannot be said literally. The notion that there are truths that can be said and truths that cannot be said is a notion that exists in language. The distinction between what can and cannot be said is also a notion that exists only in language. The same applies to Hacker's reference that there are things that cannot be said. The notion of a thing is a thing in language. From the viewpoint that nothing can be said, there are neither truths nor things. The discussion falls silent. However, for Hacker even the topic of nonsense does not fall silent, as we shall now consider.

9.4 Nonsense

The next point to be discussed from Hacker's interpretation of the *Tractatus* is 6.54, in particular the question of nonsense. The entire passage reads as follows.

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

Along with Hacker's two-worlds view of the *Tractatus*, we find a similar distinction in his beliefs on the two types of nonsense he thinks can be found in the text. In *Insight and Illusion* (I&I) Hacker refers to the two types of nonsense as illuminating and misleading. The purpose of illuminating nonsense is to "guide the attentive hearer or reader to apprehend what is shown by other propositions which do not purport to be philosophical; moreover, it will intimate to those who grasp what is meant, its own illegitimacy" (I&I,

18). In contrast, misleading nonsense is the result of saying things that can only be shown (I&I, 19). Hacker stresses the first part of 6.54, where Wittgenstein states that his propositions serve as elucidations. He believes that although many of the propositions in the *Tractatus* are nonsense, they serve to elucidate the logical structure of language in order that one can see “the illegitimacy of the pseudo-propositions of the *Tractatus*” (I&I, 30). Here Hacker points out that although illuminating nonsense says nothing about the world, it can reveal certain qualities of logic that cannot be shown otherwise. On the other hand, meaningless nonsense refers to propositions that do not say anything. In Hacker’s view, if we are not to see the *Tractatus* as a body of absurd or foolish statements, we must understand the propositions of the text in the sense of the former, illuminating nonsense. We now turn to the objection to Hacker’s views on illumination nonsense as found in Cora Diamond’s thoughts on Wittgenstein’s notion of nonsense.

9.5 Cora Diamond

Cora Diamond refers to the notion of illuminating nonsense or some feature of reality that cannot be put into words as “chickening out” (*The Realistic Spirit*, RS, 181). Diamond argues that the passages in the *Tractatus* on nonsense should be read literally. She objects to Hacker by maintaining that we should take Wittgenstein at his word when he states that there is no deeper or dual meaning to nonsense; rather, it is nonsense and nothing else. She maintains that the meaning of the passage at 6.54 is unequivocal in stating that after one has thrown away the ladder there is no truth to be gained.

If you read the *Tractatus* this way, you think that, after the ladder is thrown away, you are left holding on to some truths about reality, while at the same time denying that you are actually *saying* anything about reality. (RS, 182)

Diamond emphasizes the word “saying” in this quotation to stress that the distinction between showing and saying does not say anything about what can only be shown. To read the *Tractatus* in the spirit of not chickening out is to abandon all attempts to “take seriously the language of ‘features of reality’” (RS, 181). Diamond argues that for Wittgenstein, philosophical talk is useful at times, but it is “in the end to be let go of and honestly taken to be real nonsense, plain nonsense, which we are not in the end to think of as corresponding to an ineffable truth” (ibid.). Diamond adds that a false notion of the “it” of metaphysics finds its way into the language when one wants to use syntactical structures in the form of “A is a such-and such”. Syntactical constructions of this kind falsely lead one to think in terms of two possibilities: “it is sayable, it is not sayable” (RS, 198). The dissolution of this contrast of expressions leaves one with the sentence structure “A is an object” meaning nothing at all. To grasp what wants to say means that it shows itself in language. To show itself in this way “is to cease to think of it as an inexpressible *content*: *that which* you were trying to say” (ibid.).

Diamond rejects both the kind of thinking that we find in Hacker that sees nonsense in terms of meaningless and illuminating nonsense, and the positivist’s interpretation of nonsense that imposes severe limitations on meaning. This positivist’s view we find in Carnap who argues that all propositions are analytic, but what is not analytic cannot be asserted in a meaningful sentence (“The Elimination of Metaphysics through Logical Analysis of Language”, in *Logical Positivism*, LP, 76-77). In Carnap’s view, all statements that are included in what he refers to as the normative sciences, (ethics and aesthetics) must be based on empirical criteria. This means that there are no normative

sciences for Carnap because such statements he calls “factual judgments”, while those that are “value judgments” contain predicates such as “good” or “beautiful”. This latter group of judgements he refers to as “pseudo-statements” (LP, 77). In his opinion, what this leaves for philosophy is the method of logical analysis (ibid.). In a negative sense this method eliminates meaningless words and pseudo-statements. In a positive sense it lays the foundation “for factual science and for mathematics” (ibid.). Diamond’s strategy around these two interpretations is to emphasize the passage at 6.54: “*anyone who understands me* eventually recognizes them as nonsensical” (italics mine). I have emphasized the phrase “anyone who understands me” to bring us to Diamond’s point that in order to understand 6.53 and 6.54 we must see it in terms of the method of his book. This method, she argues, is to demand of the reader that he or she understand Wittgenstein: “You are to understand not the propositions but the author” (NW, 155). Diamond sees the *Tractatus* as a book that moves from a strictly correct method to an understanding of those who utter nonsense. She claims that to come to an understanding of nonsense the book demands the same pattern of movement from the reader (NW, 156). We are now forced to understand the author as opposed to understanding his words or thoughts. The key to this shift in philosophical perspective requires that we engage in a “kind of imaginative activity” that supposes that the readers exercise a capacity “to enter into taking sense for nonsense” (NW, 157). Diamond seems to have an imagination of particular use in mind, which she describes as follows.

If I could not as it were see your nonsense as sense, imaginatively let myself feel its attractiveness, I could not understand you. (NW, 158)

She feels one must enter into the illusion of the text by the imagination. Seeing the nonsense as an illusion, one sees the meaning of the book and perceives the world

correctly. However, to enter into the text in this way means to see there is no definite metaphysical “it” in the form of a proposition to be gained. Her understanding of the *Tractatus* is that it frames propositions in such a way that when the reader enters the illusion he or she comes to an understanding of the propositions that attracted him or her into philosophy, and is shown that these problems of philosophy are nonsense. This activity shows the way out from the original attraction to the propositions of philosophy. According to Diamond, self-understanding marks the point where one is no longer attracted by philosophy, “by their no longer coming out with unframed philosophical nonsense.” (NW, 160)

By providing us with a view of the *Tractatus* that is consistent with the aim of the book, to draw limits to the expressions of thought, Diamond successfully navigates around the positivist’s view that nonsense is simply meaningless statements and the metaphysical view of illuminating nonsense. By showing that the propositions in the text are nonsense, in a therapeutic way, she shows that Wittgenstein’s intention is to show the reader the way out from the language that attracted him or her to philosophy. With this strategy she meets Hacker’s objection to the positivist’s view of nonsense that asks why Wittgenstein would trouble himself to write a book that was merely without meaning. At the same time as she answers Hacker and other similar metaphysical readings to the text, she meets the positivist’s interpretation without falling into a metaphysical view of the text. Moreover, she remains consistent to the aim of the *Tractatus* by stating that in entering into the illusion, one discovers the limits of thought and how it allures one into the propositions of philosophy.

9.6 Objection to Diamond's View

Despite the appeal of Diamond's views in manoeuvring around the positivist and metaphysical readings of the notion of nonsense in the *Tractatus*, she fails to account for passages on the mystical. Moreover, connected to Wittgenstein's thoughts on the mystical are the passages on the solipsistic self and realism that are not consistent with Diamond's thoughts on entering into the illusion that is the world of the *Tractatus*. Both these points will be the subject of the following discussion.

While Diamond is correct in arguing that Wittgenstein seeks to set us free from our desire to seek an "it" in philosophical discourse, she fails to recognize that the aim is not merely to put an end to metaphysical discourse, but to view the world from the outside, *sub specie aeterni*. At 6.44 Wittgenstein states that the mystical is not *how* the world is, but *that* it is. Diamond's account satisfies the first part. That is, through the elimination of the desire to seek the "it" in philosophical discourse, she shows that there is nothing outside the world. This applies to metaphysics, as she demonstrates, and it applies to the mystical. In terms of 6.44 it is consistent with Diamond's view that the mystical is not how the world is. However, her account of the *Tractatus* does not consider "*that* the world is". The importance of "that the world is" is found in light of 4.115: "[Philosophy] will signify what cannot be said, by presenting clearly what can be said". To restate the objection to Diamond's view I am suggesting in light of 4.115, while she succeeds in signifying what cannot be said, she does not acknowledge what philosophy will signify when it has accomplished this. We find that what is signified when what can be said is

clearly presented is what cannot be put into words. In light of our discussion in previous chapters, what cannot be put into words refers to “*that* the world is”. As we considered in the chapter on the eternal, the present was shown to be what cannot be expressed in words. Moreover, the discussions on the solipsistic self showed that what the solipsistic self means is correct, but it cannot be expressed in words; rather, it shows itself as my world. As we demonstrated in this discussion, the solipsistic self is co-ordinated with *Realität*, which also cannot be put into words. Finally, at 6.522 Wittgenstein states that the mystical is what cannot be put into words, but shows itself. The correlation between the present and *Realität* is that both are the immediate world that is, or to restate it in light of 6.44, *that* the world is, which is the mystical.

If we take Wittgenstein at his word at 6.54, we do not find the illusion that must be entered, as Diamond claims. Wittgenstein says that his propositions serve as elucidations. Following his claim from his Preface that the book deals with the problems of philosophy, we can say that his propositions are intended to shed light on those problems by showing that they disappear. At 6.41 we learn that the sense of the world lies outside the world; that is, there is no science of ethics. Not only are the answers we seek to philosophical problems outside the world, but “when the answers cannot be put into words, neither can the question be put into words” (6.5), because neither can be framed as a proposition. In terms of language, the problem does not exist (*ibid.*). Yet, Wittgenstein seems to be saying that there is an unspoken insight at his penultimate statement where he states that his propositions serve as elucidations to a question that cannot be put into

words. Diamond believes that Wittgenstein's statement "anyone who understands me" means one must enter into the world of nonsense. However, I argue that if we take this statement literally, he means that anyone who understands what I mean by these propositions will see that they are nonsensical. There is no need to introduce the notion of entering into a world of nonsense in order to understand Wittgenstein's comments that his propositions are nonsensical. Rather, his comments on the propositions follow from the aim of the text to draw limits to the expressions of thought. That is, his propositions are nonsensical in that any attempt through the use of language to formulate the problems of philosophy or attempt to answer a malformed question will result in nonsense.

Although both Hacker and Diamond agree on this point, I believe we need to understand it in light of Wittgenstein's thoughts on philosophy. Philosophy, he states, is not a doctrine, but a method, because to formulate a problem or an answer in terms of language would give rise to a doctrine. The method is designed to limit propositions to only those that correspond to facts. As we discussed above, propositions have nothing to do with the solution to the problems of philosophy. Yet at 6.41 we find that the sense of the world lies outside the world. At issue here is that neither the question nor the answer can be put into words (6.5). At 6.52 he tells us that even if all the problems that can be formulated into propositions (i.e. scientific questions) are answered, the problem of life remains. Here we find two errors in Diamond's thoughts.

First, if by entering into the illusion we are rid of the desire that brought us to philosophy and we realize that all philosophical propositions are nonsensical, we are still left with the problem of life. It is true that Wittgenstein states that the answer to the problem of life is

that there is no question (6.52). However, he states that this solution “is seen in the vanishing of the problem” (6.521), because it cannot be put into words. That is, those that have discovered this sense of life in the vanishing of the problem find that they are “unable to say what constituted that sense” (ibid.). If the solution to the problem of life is the vanishing of the problem because neither the answer nor the question can be put into words, we must ask what else Wittgenstein means by what cannot be put into words. This brings us to our second point.

As we discussed throughout this project, what cannot be expressed in words is not limited to propositions that lack sense, (because they do not correspond to reality), but includes objects, the solipsistic self, *Realität*, the ethical and the mystical cannot be put into words. We shall now apply this knowledge to the problem of life. At 6.4312 Wittgenstein asks, “Is not this eternal life itself as much of a riddle as our present life?” The eternal life in this case refers to those who live in the present. His answer to the question about the riddle of life lies outside space and time. In the previous chapter on time we discovered that living in the present moment means to be outside time in terms of the temporal duration. He states at 6.4311 that living in the present is timelessness or eternity. As we discovered in the chapter on time, the present moment cannot be expressed in words. We could say that the present lies outside what can be said. However, in that present moment, and only in the present, the solipsistic self is co-ordinated with *Realität*. We see that the key parts to the solution to the problem of life (i.e., the present, the solipsistic self and *Realität*) cannot be expressed in words. As we have seen above, Diamond’s account of the *Tractatus* offers many advantages in understanding the limits of language and the

meaning of nonsense; however, she does not consider the application of this understanding towards the problem of life. We are reminded of a passage from the Preface where Wittgenstein states that the *Tractatus* contains “the final solution to the problem of philosophy”. However, he follows this statement by claiming how little is achieved when the problems of philosophy are solved. So little is achieved because the problem of life remains. On this last issue (the problem of life), Diamond says nothing.

9.7 James Conant

In a similar vein to Diamond’s reading of 6.54, James Conant takes the passage on nonsense as a key to understanding the *Tractatus*. As with Diamond, Conant’s strategy for attacking the metaphysical readings of the text is to go inside nonsense to show the flaws in the metaphysical interpretation of the *Tractatus*. Conant also agrees with Diamond that the *Tractatus* does not leave us with anything to take away from understanding nonsense. Rather, he argues that the nonsense passages are intended to free one from the confusion that is inherent in all philosophical theories. Conant’s attack on the metaphysical reading of the *Tractatus* focuses on the denial that behind the logical structure of language there are metaphysical truths waiting to be found. His second point of criticism is that the rules of logic cannot be broken while remaining meaningful. Conant’s point is that running up to the limit of language does not imply that there is something beyond. His view of the passage on throwing away the ladder (6.54) is that the entire ladder, rungs and all, must be thrown away leaving one with very little of the text that is any use once Wittgenstein’s intention has been grasped.

In his essay “Elucidation and Nonsense in Frege and Early Wittgenstein” the ladder that Conant sees that must be thrown away consists of five rungs. At the bottom one sees that there is something that must be, in other words the “it” of metaphysical discourse. Next, one understands that the “it” cannot be said; then, that it cannot be thought. In other words, these two steps (the second and third) together mean that the limits of my language mean the limits of my thoughts. The fourth rung is the realization that all along there was no “it” to be grasped. That is, one sees if it cannot be thought, it cannot be grasped. Finally, at the fifth rung one throws away the entire ladder. Throughout the first four steps on the ladder one is engaged in the practice of traditional philosophy, inferring conclusions from premises and so on. However, at the fifth step he who has understood the *Tractatus* looks “back upon his progress upwards and ‘recognizes’ that he has only been going through the motions of ‘inferring’ (apparent) ‘conclusions’ from (apparent) ‘premises’” (NW, 196). Conant’s answer to the question “What, then, is one left with once one has thrown away the ladder?” is “Nothing.” (“Throwing Away the Top of the Ladder” TATL, 337) He follows this response with the passage at 7 of the *Tractatus*: “Whereof we cannot speak, thereof we must be silent” (ibid.). In Conant’s view the solution to the problem lies in the vanishing of the problem in the sense that philosophy is hopeless. In other words, the only thing that is lost by this approach is a house of cards. He states that nothing is really lost because “you are never deprived of anything that you never had or could have had” (ibid.). All that one loses is the confusion created by philosophical questions.

While Conant's focus is the problematic doctrine that "nonsense can make ineffable truths manifest", his other concern, unlike Diamond's, is the idea that we are left with nothing that must also be thrown away (TATL, 337). For his thoughts on this latter point we must turn to Wittgenstein's comments at 7. Conant's understanding of Wittgenstein's final passage on silence is shaped by his thoughts on 6.54. As with Diamond, Conant emphasizes the passage at 6.54: "anyone who understands me". Conant takes this passage to mean that while the reader cannot understand Wittgenstein's propositions (given that they are nonsense), we can understand him, or at least the activity with which he is engaged. This activity Conant states is "one of showing that we suffer from the illusion of thinking we mean something when we mean nothing" (TATL, 344). In Conant's view the aim is to free the reader from well formed propositions that "resonate with an aura of sense" (ibid.). The *Tractatus* leaves us with a silence in which nothing has been said or can be said of what we imagined we could say about the world. In order to see this silence, one must see that the book aspires to say nothing. In Conant's view, in a similar vein to Diamond, the silence we find in the *Tractatus* is not the end of philosophical discourse; rather, it is a silence that comes as a result of the attempt to assert philosophical truths (ibid.). "It is therefore not a silence the work itself confers upon us, but rather one in which it discovers us" (ibid.). That is, the book attempts to show us that we are subject to attractions of this kind. In other words, it provides us with a mirror in which we see our own philosophical inclinations. Conant believes that the silence, which Wittgenstein speaks, does not contain hidden meanings. The function of nonsense in the *Tractatus* is to show that "another less self-evidently nonsensical piece of nonsense is nonsense" (TATL, 345). Thus, the steps in the ladder are constructed in such a way that it

is an insight into the nonsense of the propositions below that prompts insight into each of the steps toward the top.

However, we learn in Conant's endnotes (102) to "Elucidation and Nonsense in Frege and early Wittgenstein" that not all the sentences in the *Tractatus* are intended as nonsense. The sentences that he believes are intended as nonsense are those that elucidate. Referring to 4.112, he states that the *Tractatus* does not consist entirely of nonsense propositions. In Conant's words, he states that Wittgenstein does say: "A philosophical work consists *essentially* of elucidations" (NW, 216). However, Conant states that not every statement in the *Tractatus* needs be considered as nonsense, because not every sentence serves as an elucidation (ibid.). In Conant's view some sentences serve as the framework within which the passages on elucidation work. Other sentences offer instructions about how the book should be read, while still others offer guidance about what is going on in a stretch of elucidations. Conant's position is that most of the statements he considers in his article are of the kind that "impart their instructions concerning the nature of the elucidatory aim and method of the work if recognized as *sinnvoll*" (i.e. meaningful) (ibid.). By suggesting that there exists a division between nonsense statements and meaningful statements, these passages seem to indicate that Conant contradicts his own criticism of the metaphysical interpretation of the text. Moreover, Conant appears to suggest that there is a doctrine that can be discovered through the passages that pertains to the framework. However, Conant denies that nonsense statements are intrinsically nonsense (*Unsinn*) or meaningful (*Sinn*) (ibid.). "There can be no fixed answer to the question what kind of work a given remark with the

text accomplishes” (ibid.). The level of sense each reader brings to the text will determine the meaning of a sentence. In other words, not only is there not an ineffable or absolute “it” philosophy hopes to reveal, but the passages one sees as nonsense or framework are not absolute, being defined according to the level where one finds one’s self on the ladder. “What sort of foothold(s) a given remark provide(s) a given reader in her progress up the ladder thus depend(s) upon the sort(s) of aspects it presents to her, and that will depend on her” (NW, 217). Conant’s suggestion here is similar to what we found in Diamond. The text serves as a guide into the world of nonsense and instructs one up the ladder until one reaches the top where, being free from the illusion of philosophical language, one throws the ladder away. The meaning one finds in the framework is not inherent, but only conveys its meaning concerning the aim of the book “if recognized as *sinnvoll*”. In other words, if framework sentences are recognized as meaningful, the meaning of these sentences is found in their use as the framework.

Given this interpretation of the *Tractatus*, I think Conant’s understanding of the text neglects the robust reading he intends to bring to it. Conant interprets 6.54 in terms of 4.112 where Wittgenstein states that a philosophical work consists of elucidations that aim at the logical clarification of thoughts. However, the other passage where Wittgenstein uses the term “elucidation” does not support Conant’s views. At 3.263 Wittgenstein states, “Elucidations are propositions that contain primitive signs [names]”. His point here is that names are simple and cannot be further broken down (3.26). The meaning of a name is shown through its application (3.262). In showing itself in a proposition, a name expresses its meaning. The use of the term “elucidation” at 3.263

suggests that the light that is shone on the meaning of a proposition occurs in the moment it shows itself. At 4.112 where Wittgenstein states that a philosophical work should consist of elucidations, I think he means the term “elucidations” in the sense of 3.623. That is, elucidations show their meaning without logic or steps. Wittgenstein attempts to show the reader the limits of the expressions of thought with propositions; however, when this is understood the limits of thought are seen as nonsensical. In other words, the end of the book inspires us to see that philosophical propositions, including the ones in the text, are senseless. The difference between the view that I am proposing and the one we find in Conant is as follows. Conant suggests that the text consists of propositions that serve as a framework for other propositions which themselves are elucidations enabling one to progress to a point where the propositions in the text are *understood* as nonsensical. I think that a better understanding is one in which the propositions of the text serve as a means to shed light that enables one to *see* that the propositions of the text are senseless. The difference I want to stress is that in the end Conant leaves us with an *understanding* about nonsense, while I believe that Wittgenstein’s intention is to enable us to *see* immediately the work as nonsensical. This reading is supported by the final passage at 6.54: “He must transcend these propositions, and then he will *see* the world aright” (emphasis mine).

Conant believes the *Tractatus* leaves the reader free from the attraction he or she has for words that are meaningless (i.e. philosophical doctrine). In answer to the question “What does this understanding leave us with after we have thrown away the ladder?” Conant’s reply is “our own sense of deprivation.” (TATL, 337) That is, Conant believes we are

simply left with silence, as found at 7. The sense of deprivation is one in which we are left with a feeling of loss for something we never had. However, despite the important points Conant makes regarding the elimination of metaphysical language, this not the aim of the *Tractatus*. Wittgenstein's intention is not to leave us with a sense of deprivation. Rather, he wants to lead us to a point where we will see the world correctly. I think if Wittgenstein's concern was with metaphysics or the rejection of metaphysics he would have stated his position in the Preface. Conant may be right that Wittgenstein's work destroys a house of cards, or an unfounded notion of metaphysics, but Wittgenstein's intention is to set limits to the expressions of thought so that we can see the world aright. The focus of the *Tractatus* is neither metaphysics nor the rejection of metaphysics. Rather, the aim of the text is the clarification of thoughts in order to determine what can and cannot be spoken. What follows from that point may or may not be metaphysics, (or something else altogether), but it is important that we keep Wittgenstein's aim of the *Tractatus* foremost in our attempt to understand the book.

If we understand the *Tractatus* in terms of limiting language to what we can say, the point I have made through this thesis is that what cannot be put into words must not be conflated with reality. That is, while there is nothing that can be said about metaphysics, *Realität*, the solipsistic self, objects and the mystical cannot be expressed in words. To explain this point I turn to Conant's discussion about the fourth rung of his description of the ladder. Conant's interpretation of this rung is that one realizes that what cannot be thought also cannot be grasped. While this view is correct, he fails to recognize the significance of what cannot be thought, or said. Conant states that at the fourth rung one

realizes that the “it” in metaphysics cannot be said, but one continues to communicate under the guise of showing rather than saying thoughts about the “it” (NW, 196).

Conant’s view is that simply there is no “it” to be either said or shown. In contrast to Conant, I believe a more plausible position is that the “it”, as he calls it, cannot be put into words and cannot be said either to exist or not exist. Wittgenstein’s point is that what lies outside language cannot be expressed in language. The problem with phrases such as “what lies outside language” suggests that something is outside a barrier into another space, as one might think of something being outside a jar. However, “outside” does not mean the other side of language. In the example of contradictory opposites we discussed in chapter 5, outside language means not-language. What lies outside language does not possess the quality of individuation. What is not-language, in this case, means only that nothing can be said. As I mentioned, from the viewpoint of outside language this implies that one cannot say that a thing exists or does not exist. However, while Conant stresses the first part of 6.54, he neglects the second part: “He must transcend these propositions, and then he will see the world aright.” That is, while stressing the elimination of nonsensical propositions, Conant neglects the importance of seeing the world aright.

The significance of the latter passage at 6.54 is found in the word “see”. What Wittgenstein means by seeing the world aright is linked to seeing the world *sub specie aeterni* (6.45 and NB, 83). If we take at face value Wittgenstein’s letter to Ficker, the point of the *Tractatus* is an ethical one. As we discussed in the previous chapter, the ethical means the “good or bad exercise of the will” (6.421). Ethics is transcendental; it cannot be put into words (6.421). However, as the good exercise of the will, it is an

action. By this action he means that the will is the “centre of the world, which we call the I, and which is the bearer of ethics” (NB, 80). According to Wittgenstein, the I is not something we know or experience, as we objectively know the world (ibid.). The I lies outside the world. By the term “good exercise of the will” Wittgenstein means that an act is an action without the subject or the actor, as we discussed in the previous chapter. In other words there is only the action. The other example we considered was the relationship of the thinker to thoughts. According to Wittgenstein, the subject lies outside the world, so one cannot say that there is a thinker that thinks thoughts; rather, there are only thoughts. In other words, the actor is the action, and the thinker is the thought. The point of ethics is to see the world *sub specie aeternitatis*; that is, to see the world from the outside (NB, 83). This view cannot be accomplished with propositions about what it means to see from this perspective; rather, Wittgenstein leaves the reader with the silence he mentions at 7. If we read 6.54 in light of NB 83, to *see* the world from the outside means to *see* the world aright. The view of the world we find at NB 83 is to see the world without propositions, *sub specie aeterni*. To view the world in this way, as we read at 6.45, is the mystical.

9.8 Conclusion

Although the metaphysical accounts of the *Tractatus* found in Anscombe and Hacker offer an interesting interpretation of the passages we discussed, their views on the book must be rejected because they do not take into account other passages that reject metaphysics. On the other hand, Diamond and Conant reject all metaphysical views, including that there are two kinds of nonsense, illuminating and meaningless. Diamond

provides sound arguments that reject both the positivist's and the metaphysical reading of the text and offers an interesting account of entering the illusion of the *Tractatus* in order to remove the allure of metaphysical propositions. Conant follows Diamond in kind and offers an interesting account that focuses on the example of the ladder at 6.54, but as with Diamond he fails to explain the passages on the mystical in his account of the text.

Although the mystical reading of the text rejects the metaphysical interpretation, it does not fall into Conantian nonsense and a sense of our own deprivation. What the mystical view offers that I believe is consistent with the text is that in seeing the propositions in the text as nonsense (as what cannot be put into words) one sees the world aright.

Chapter 10: Metaphysics and Mysticism

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that in order to see what Wittgenstein refers to at 6.44 as “the world *that is*”, the mystical in the *Tractatus* must be free from all metaphysical interpretation. This thesis has assumed the working hypothesis that it is possible to read the *Tractatus* from the viewpoint of the mystical. The two papers this chapter will consider also argue that the mystical is a key to understanding Wittgenstein’s intentions in the *Tractatus*. Moreover, this chapter will consider Schopenhauer’s influence on Wittgenstein’s thoughts on the mystical.

In his paper “The Mysticism of the *Tractatus*”, B. F. McGuinness interprets Wittgenstein in terms of traditional mysticism. He argues by comparing the *Tractatus* to other mystical writings that in grasping the nature of a mystical experience we can understand the mystical content of the text. However, Eddy Zemach, in his paper “Wittgenstein’s Philosophy of the Mystical” (in Copi and Beard, *Essays on Wittgenstein’s Tractatus*, EWT), rejects the notion that the passages on mysticism in the *Tractatus* are to be understood in terms of external views on mysticism; rather, he believes that the mysticism found in the text must be understood in terms of the text itself, in particular what Wittgenstein says about facts and language. Although both views of the *Tractatus* offer important insights into the topic of mysticism, the purpose of this chapter will be to expose that both papers are burdened with metaphysical theories. As we have considered in previous chapters, Wittgenstein rejects metaphysical language and denies philosophical doctrine. The key to understanding the difference between Zemach’s view

of the *Tractatus* and the mystical reading I attempt to establish is that Zemach supports his theory by confusing Wittgenstein's two references to reality, *Wirklichkeit* and *Realität*. In failing to make the distinction between the two, this chapter will show that he falsely connects the general form of a proposition with the passage on the mystical that states the mystical is *that* the world is. Before we turn to McGuinness and Zemach, we shall begin with a popular interpretation of Wittgenstein's understanding of the mystical that draws upon similarities between Schopenhauer and Wittgenstein.

10.1 Schopenhauer's Views on Mystical Writings

In *Insight and Illusion*, Hacker writes that it is "indubitable" that what "Wittgenstein called 'the mystical' was of supreme importance to him" (II, 74). However, he continues by saying that what Wittgenstein meant by the mystical is "opaque" (ibid.). Anscombe feels that the passages are mysterious and thinks that the term "mystical" is an odd name for what Wittgenstein refers to at 6.44, 6.45 and 6.522. (IWT, 169) As we saw in the previous chapter, both Anscombe and Hacker support a metaphysical interpretation of the *Tractatus*. For guidance in their attempt to understand what Wittgenstein refers to as "the mystical" they turn to Schopenhauer, who they believe had a large influence on Wittgenstein's thoughts. The purpose of this section is to demonstrate that the significant difference between Wittgenstein and Schopenhauer is that the former appeals directly to the reader and not to theories or arguments.

Although Schopenhauer may have had an influence on Wittgenstein's thoughts in the years leading up to the writing of the *Tractatus*, the separation between the two occurs when Wittgenstein rejects all language that leads to doctrines and metaphysical theories. In Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation* (WWR), he bases a theory of metaphysics based on the notion of the will. According to Schopenhauer, the world is only known as a representation. Without the consciousness of the knowing subject there would be no world. The will as the source of this representation is not part of the world we know. The will is a thing-in-itself and unknowable, yet it remains the foundation of the experience we understand as the world. The origin of knowledge is from the will. However, the highest point for religions in mysticism is found in a denial of the will. The point where knowledge ends he calls the "blank spot for knowledge" (WWR II, 610). There is nothing that can be expressed about this blank spot, which means it can only be expressed by negation. Schopenhauer acknowledges the mystical representations of what is expressed by negation, but states, "the mystic is opposed to the philosopher by the fact he begins from within" (WWR II, 611). According to Schopenhauer, the mystic begins with an inner experience in which he finds himself eternal. In contrast, the philosopher begins from without, or from what is common to all (*ibid.*). In contrast to the philosopher's world of objective phenomena and the facts of self consciousness that can be communicated, the mystic's world is one, eternal and inside the self. The philosopher can form theories and doctrines in relationship to his world, but for the mystic, nothing can be communicated about his world. Schopenhauer believes that it is the place of philosophy to explain "from every aspect *what* this world is, what it *may be* in its inner most nature" (WWR II, 612). However, he believes that this is the limit of philosophy.

That is, philosophy is restricted by the limitations of the world. The method Schopenhauer recommends is negation. That is, if the goal is to discover something that is not a thing in the world, then, Schopenhauer believes, it is in general nothing. However, it is not absolutely nothing. His point here is that it is not “nothing” from every possible point of view and from every possible sense (ibid.). Rather, this negation means that we are restricted to a “wholly negative knowledge of it” (ibid.). Schopenhauer’s point is that the means to discovering what cannot be found within the limits of the world is found through negating all aspects of a limited world. The adoption of this method of negation reflects our limited point of view; however, he believes that it leads to the kind of knowledge found in the writings of the mystics.

The contrast between Schopenhauer’s and Wittgenstein’s views of mysticism is that Wittgenstein does not attempt to describe the mystical, present an argument, or explain it in terms of the writings of other mystics; rather, he appeals directly to the reader. This appeal is made under the assumption that the reader has already had the same thoughts as those found in the *Tractatus*. He states that the book is not a textbook (Preface). In other words, the *Tractatus* is not a book of instruction. It does not offer theories or arguments. Moreover, Wittgenstein does not compare his thoughts on the mystical to other accounts of mysticism. According to Wittgenstein, the mystical is not *how* things are in the world, but *that* they are (6.44). As we have seen throughout this project, the way one understands the mystical and *that* the world is follows from Wittgenstein’s aim to draw limits to the expressions of thought. His intention is to show that we do not understand the mystical by means of saying how the world is, but by viewing (contemplating) or

feeling the world as a limited whole, including seeing the limits of language as the limits of my world. By the phrase “expressions of thought” Wittgenstein refers to thoughts in terms of form and content or *Realität*. In other words, the expressions of thought are what we experience in the moment of experience. We only know the mystical by experience, and, as we have discussed in previous chapters this experience cannot be expressed in words. On the other hand, propositions tell us how the world is. This is natural science. In Wittgenstein’s view, philosophy is the means by which we become clear about what can and cannot be said, but it has nothing to do with natural science. Only when we are clear on what cannot be said (i.e. metaphysical propositions) do we begin to see the world as my world, or as a limited whole. As we have discussed in previous chapters, seeing or feeling the world as my world, is the mystical.

10.2 McGuinness’ Account of Wittgenstein’s Mystical.

The purpose of this section is to refute McGuinness’ notion that the mystical can be connected to a theory of metaphysics. Moreover, it will offer a critique of the accounts of mysticism McGuinness believes help to explain Wittgenstein’s thoughts on the mystical.

Brian McGuinness, in his paper “The Mysticism of the *Tractatus*”, also refers to the influence of Schopenhauer in interpreting Wittgenstein’s thoughts on the mystical, but he believes that Wittgenstein has “transcended Schopenhauer.” McGuinness begins his essay with Russell’s four characteristics of mysticism: 1) a belief in revelation, insight or intuition as opposed to sense, reason and analysis; 2) a belief in unity and a denial of opposition and division; 3) a denial of the reality of time; and 4) a belief that all evil is

illusory. (ML, 9-11) McGuinness argues that the first characteristic of Wittgenstein's thoughts on mysticism is insight, the second is his belief in feeling the world as a limited whole, the third is his thoughts on timelessness and that the man who lives in the present is one who lives in eternity, and the fourth is his denial that good and evil are in the world. (MT, 306-307) The question McGuinness asks is whether Wittgenstein is entitled to have "a single doctrine of mysticism embracing all these elements" (MT, 307). McGuinness argues that Wittgenstein's possible mystical experiences are important evidence to support Wittgenstein's claim that there is a single doctrine of mysticism in the *Tractatus*. However, these arguments that focus on his personal experiences are weak. The evidence for or against the claim that Wittgenstein had mystical experiences has biographical interest, but holds no more weight in this discussion than to say that the author of *this* work has had a mystical experience. Moreover, in contrast to the passage cited by McGuinness, it cannot be said that Wittgenstein makes a claim for mysticism or anything else that can be thought of as doctrine. Rather, he thinks of philosophy as an activity whose aim is the logical clarification of thoughts (4.112). As I have argued, the result of this activity is what Wittgenstein calls the mystical, but the mystical is not a doctrine. Neither is the mystical a hypothesis that Wittgenstein attempts to prove. Rather, the result of engaging with the book in order to set the limits to the expressions of thought results in no longer seeking answers to questions that cannot be put into words. In other words, setting limits to the expressions of thought means to cease pursuing answers to the question *how* things are in the world. When one no longer seeks answers to *how* things are, one is left with what cannot be put into words, which Wittgenstein says is *that* the world exists, or the mystical.

However, McGuinness makes an interesting claim. In his view, the difference between Russell and Wittgenstein, with regard to the four characteristics of mysticism, is that Russell took for granted that “philosophy itself was not inexpressible in the way that mysticism was” (MT, 310). McGuinness cites the *Notebooks* (129) to support the claim that in contrast to Russell, Wittgenstein believes that both philosophy and the mystical are inexpressible. In contrast to Wittgenstein’s belief, McGuinness refers to Russell’s claim that as it applies to philosophical propositions the theory of types is a theory of correct symbolism: “a symbol must have the same structure as its meaning” (MT, 310). Wittgenstein’s response to Russell is the following: “That’s exactly what one can’t say. You cannot prescribe to a symbol what it *may* be used to express” (ibid. & NB 129). Wittgenstein’s point is that symbols and logical properties of the world cannot be expressed, but are shown. That is, we cannot put into words what a symbol represents; rather, it shows itself. In this way we need not look to see *how* the world is, but *that* it is. In other words, his concern is with the world (as a limited whole) that shows itself. As McGuinness correctly suggests, to view or feel the world in this way is the mystical.

Having established this distinction between Wittgenstein and Russell, McGuinness attempts to determine if there is a single doctrine of mysticism that runs through the *Tractatus*. Although this project has assumed that it is possible to interpret the *Tractatus* from a mystical point of view, one must be cautioned that this viewpoint begins with logical clarification of thoughts, which includes refuting all doctrines. However, McGuinness makes an important point concerning Wittgenstein’s account of the mystical

found at 6.44 and 6.52. From the passage at 6.44 he states that it is not *how* things are, but *that* they are, which is the mystical. He claims that there is no difference between “that something is” and that “there is a world”. (MT, 314) He states that something implies that there are objects, or more specifically, possibilities (ibid.). According to McGuinness, that there are possibilities means that there is a world. In McGuinness’ interpretation, the mystic is not struck by the existence of any particular world, but by the fact that there is a world. In other words, the mystic is not concerned with how the world is, but that there are certain possibilities, which are realized.

However, McGuinness’ understanding of the passages that contain the terms “mystical” is unclear.

By mysticism, Wittgenstein does not mean merely the attitude of mind in which a man asks these questions, but rather that attitude of mind in which he finds a certain answer to them. The mystic grasps the world as a whole and sees that, or rather feels that, it is a system with a definite character. (MT, 316)

The questions he refers to in this passage are those that seek an answer pertaining to something that is the way *that* it is. In other words, they are questions that demand an explanation of the sense of the world, or “the reason why there is a world, from some necessary features of all possible worlds” (ibid.). That is, mysticism is not an attitude of mind that seeks reasons why there is this world and not that. However, an important distinction between the passage above (MT, 316) and the three passages that mention the mystical in the *Tractatus* is that Wittgenstein never uses the word “mysticism”; rather, he only refers to “the mystical”. As we saw in the previous chapter, the importance of this distinction is that “mysticism” is a noun. The use the noun “mysticism” instead of the adjective “mystical” implies a doctrine. While the term “mysticism” can mean the quality

of being a mystic, it also means the theories or doctrines of mystics. That is, it is a doctrine that implies mystical knowledge is attainable through direct revelation or spiritual insight. In other words, if Wittgenstein states at 6.45 that feeling the world as a limited whole is mysticism, it implies that feeling the world in this way supports a theory of mysticism, or it is a quality of a person that is defined as a mystic. The first case is rejected because at 4.112 Wittgenstein denounces doctrines of any kind. In the second case, the notion that a person is defined as a mystic is rejected because at 5.631 he states that the subject that thinks does not exist; moreover, the self that concerns Wittgenstein in the 5.6's is not a self with any sense of personal identity whether it be psychological, physical, or of the soul. The *Tractatus* is not concerned with states of being. On the other hand, to say that feeling the world, as a limited whole is the mystical implies that it pertains to something. In this case, it pertains to a view of the world and a feeling or something that is shown. However, by the term "view" Wittgenstein does not mean a particular opinion of the world. The Ogden translation of 6.45 uses the word "contemplation" rather than "view". The implication is that Wittgenstein means by his use of the German word "*Anschauung*" a perspective or way of seeing.

The next point of concern in the passage above (MT, 316) is whether for Wittgenstein an attitude of mind is required to find certain answers to the question pertaining to '*that it is*'. McGuinness is right to say that the answer will not come in language, but this does not mean we can make statements about how the mystic understands the world. That is, while it is true that neither the question nor the answer can be put into words, it does not mean that the answer to a question that cannot be put into words lies in an attitude of mind. As

6.5 states, if the question cannot be framed, neither can the answer. That is, if neither can be framed, the problem does not exist (ibid.). More precisely, neither the problem nor the solution exists in language. At 6.41 Wittgenstein claims that in the world “everything is as it is”. We make sense of this passage in understanding that the sense of the world lies “outside the world”. To be outside the world means to be outside what can be put into words. To be outside the world is a view of the world that Wittgenstein refers to in the *Notebooks* as *sub specie aeternitatis* (NB, 83). As we have considered in past chapters, this view does not deny the world; rather, it denies what can be said about the world as my world. The aim of the *Tractatus* is not theories about the mystical. Rather, as I have argued, when the aim of drawing limits to the expressions of thought has been met, the reader is left with the mystical. To say anything more about the mystical is nonsense, or is attempting to put into words what cannot be spoken.

Despite these inconsistencies with the text, McGuinness makes two important observations, the first with regard to solipsism and the second with regard to timelessness. McGuinness draws the connection between the solipsistic self and the man who lives in the present. He ties these two claims into Wittgenstein’s discussion on happiness, which he supports with passages from the *Notebooks* (pp. 82, 85 & 74). The argument he presents is as follows: “The world is my world” (i.e. the metaphysical self is not part of the world but a boundary, but the human body as well as the things in the world are my world) (NB, 82); only the man who lives in the present (i.e. not in time) is happy (NB, 74); the happy man is happy because he feels no fear, not even in the face of death. (NB, 74). The happy man feels no fear because he identifies himself with the world as his

world in the present. When the subject is identified with a position *in* time relative to past and future, the concepts of fear and hope appear real. That is, from the reference point of the present looking into the future (in time), one may fear or desire a future event that one imagines will be the case. However, the self (in the sense of “I am the world”) is always in the present “since all momentary states of the world (together with thoughts of past and future that are present in each of them) are merely different actualizations of a set of possibilities, all of which are good.” (MT, 318) The use of the term “good” here refers to happiness (*ibid.*). That is, according to McGuinness, the possibilities he refers to as objects at MT, 314 imply something that is, which shows itself, as “I am the world”. McGuinness argues that opposed to the good man, the wicked man is one who has “failed to attain a state of living in the present.” (MT, 319) That is, the wicked man is constantly at odds with the world in terms of identifying himself with “I am my world”. However, the experience of the world as my world is more than an experience, it is also a doctrine, as we will now consider.

In light of Russell’s four characteristics of mysticism, the question McGuinness sets out to answer is whether there is a single doctrine of mysticism that embraces these four elements. His answer is that all the elements of mysticism are united in the “single realm of experience” (MT, 320), that is, the single experience of living in the present in the sense of grasping the world that I perceive as my world. The next question McGuinness seeks to answer is whether “Wittgenstein is talking about a genuine mystical experience, or is he misusing the term?” (MT, 320) In my view, McGuinness misuses the term. Although McGuinness correctly mentions that for Wittgenstein there is no difference

between various kinds of thoughts, good or bad, he is incorrect in stating that there is no difference between such thoughts and “having a mystical experience that involves them” (ibid.). The problem lies in the phrase “having a mystical experience”. Wittgenstein never mentions a mystical experience in either the *Notebooks* or the *Tractatus*. While it is true that the mystical is *an* experience in the way of viewing or feeling the world, it is not an experience about which one can say, “this is a mystical experience”. The mystical cannot be expressed in propositions. As I have argue in previous chapters, the moment of experience cannot be expressed in words because by the time one has formulated the experience into a sentence the experience has become the past. Rather, in the moment of feeling the world as a limited whole the mystical shows itself, as at 6.522 where Wittgenstein states that the things that cannot be put into words show themselves; they are what is mystical.

In further consideration of McGuinness’ use of the term “single realm of experience”, we discover that while it is true the experience of the world as “my world” may correctly be construed as a single realm of experience, the expression must be used with caution. The same note of caution applies in his use of the term “mystical experience”. In both “a single realm of experience” and “mystical experience” there exists a problem of locating what or who experiences the mystical experience. As we have seen, the metaphysical subject is not in the world; moreover, the solipsistic self lacks extension. As discussed in a previous chapter, the metaphysical subject serves to limit the world, while the solipsistic self is co-ordinated with reality. However, in order to serve these functions, neither the solipsistic self nor the metaphysical subject can be part of the world.

According to Wittgenstein, the metaphysical subject limits the world and shows itself as my world. Similarly, what the solipsistic self means is that although it cannot be put into words, it shows itself as my world. In both the solipsistic self and the metaphysical subject, there is no personal self in this world that can be said to be the seat of a mystical experience or a single realm of experience, because the experience of both the body and its psychological properties are no different than any other experience in “my world”, such as rocks, plants, animals and so on. Wittgenstein’s view of the mystical means there is no experiencer to experience the mystical experience. On the other hand, McGuinness’ understanding of Wittgenstein preserves the experiencer as the one who experiences the mystical experience (i.e. the single realm of experience). As we discussed in a previous chapter, 5.552 suggests that we must use the word “experience” with caution. As he states, the experience we need to understand logic requires “that something *is*”, but it is “*not* an experience”. As we stated it is not an experience of the subject of personal identity. The phrase “*that* something is” is contrasted here with the phrase “*how* something is”. While the latter is what can be expressed by propositions, the former cannot. In the case of “*that* something is”, while we may refer to it as an experience in the sense of awareness that something is, there is no separate subject of the experience. To say that there exists an experiencer separate from the experience is not consistent with Wittgenstein’s thoughts. In the *Notebooks* we read that all experience does not need a subject (NB, 89). His point is that when I perform an action, I am that action (NB, 88). In other words, the experiencer is the experience. The same point with regard to a thinking subject is that there is no separate thinking subject outside of the thought; that is, the thinker is the thought. If we bring this back to McGuinness’ use of the phrase “single

realm of experience”, he fails to make clear that there is no experiencer to have the experience. McGuinness’ failure to acknowledge this point leads him to draw incorrect comparisons between Wittgenstein’s use of the term “the mystical” and writings on mysticism that talk about individuals having an experience we call mystical.

With this false view of the mystical experience, McGuinness attempts to answer the question pertaining to Wittgenstein’s use of the term “mystical experience”. To show that Wittgenstein is talking about a genuine mystical experience and not misusing the term, McGuinness takes his bearings from R. C. Zaehner’s book *Mysticism: Sacred and Profane*. In particular McGuinness draws upon Zaehner’s chapter “Some Nature Mystics” to seek credibility to support Wittgenstein’s claims of mysticism. McGuinness distances his interpretation of Wittgenstein from the theological assertions of mysticism that suggest that the mystical experience is a feeling of being one with God. Despite the references to God in both the *Notebooks* and the *Tractatus*, McGuinness believes that Wittgenstein’s intentions are the identification with Nature (MT, 321). McGuinness assumes that this sort of “nature pantheism” follows from the passages where Wittgenstein mentions the experience of the union with the world, as in the passage, “I am the world”. McGuinness draws upon dubious sources in this examination of what he calls “nature mysticism”. For example, McGuinness draws a comparison between Aldous Huxley and Wittgenstein. While the reality of the phenomena of the world is important to both Wittgenstein and Huxley, Huxley’s mystical experiences by way of the drug mescaline has no place in Wittgenstein’s project that seeks to set limits to the expressions of thought.

As for the pantheism question McGuinness raises, this must be rejected on the grounds that not only is there no mention of a pantheistic god in the *Tractatus*, nor is there a hint of evidence that suggests Wittgenstein held such a view. Wittgenstein's comments on God deny the possibility of a pantheistic god. For example, Wittgenstein states, "God does not reveal himself *in the world*". (6.432) Unlike a pantheistic god, Wittgenstein's notion of God is one in which God lies outside the world. However, from the *Notebooks* Wittgenstein writes as follows:

What do I know about God and the purpose of life?
I know that this world exists. (NB, 72)

This passage could be seen to support the view that Wittgenstein holds a pantheistic belief in "nature pantheism", based on the definition of the world as the entire world (i.e. universe). If the world is seen in this light it could be interpreted that what can be known about God is the fact of the existence of the world. However, the passage at NB, 72 does not refer to the world in the broad sense of the term (i.e. the entire world), but "this world". In other words, the passage "this world exists" refers to "my world". Moreover, the quotation at NB, 72 should be read in the context of 6.522: "There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They *make themselves manifest*." Neither God nor the things that cannot be put into words reveal themselves in the world. However, Wittgenstein's view is that the same way we know about the things that cannot be put into words, because they make themselves manifest, we know about God by virtue that *this world exists*. We gain a clearer idea of what he means by the phrase "this world exists" in the passage that follows NB 72. Wittgenstein states that I find myself in the world "like the eye in its visual field." (NB, 73). He thinks we know that there is an eye,

(despite that we cannot see it), because of the visual field. In the same way, Wittgenstein believes that we know the things that cannot be put into words because of what shows itself, and we know about God because there is *this* world. In contrast to McGuinness' view, Wittgenstein's understanding of the world is not the pantheistic nature god from which the experience of one's identification with this god is the mystical.

McGuinness also makes a passing reference to the thirteenth century German mystic Meister Eckhart in reference to his notion that the mystic lives in the eternal now. Although McGuinness is looking for a link to Huxley's remarks about an experience induced by drugs, the Eckhart passage is important if one looks for a connection between Wittgenstein's views and the religious experience of mysticism. In *German Mysticism from Hildegard Bingen to Ludwig Wittgenstein*, (GM) Andrew Weeks makes the claim that Wittgenstein falls into the German tradition of mysticism because of views he shares with Meister Eckhart. Weeks draws parallels between several areas of Eckhart's and Wittgenstein's thoughts. In particular, he states that neither one sees ethics in terms of reward and punishment in the usual sense. He also draws upon their similar views on time that correspond to issues raised in the previous chapter on time. That is, to live in eternity means to live in the present. This eternal, he states, is the backdrop against which the world is to be felt as a limited whole.

What we can say is that Wittgenstein's formulations present us with an ultimate, truncated form of our theme of the union of worlds, of time and eternity, immanence and transcendence; of the good as a rebirth or translation of the reborn into another mode of being; of the question of the meaning of things, the world, or life; of the intuition of the world as a manifestation or expression of the hidden God; and, finally, of the unutterable *es*, which *shows* itself but cannot be expressed: "About what one cannot speak one must remain silent" (7). (GM, 237)

By the word “*es*” Weeks means the unutterable “there” or presence as in “there is”. In response to McGuinness’ intention to identify Wittgenstein in a mystical tradition, Week’s understanding of the material is far superior to Zaehner. In any case, I doubt the connection between Eckhart and Wittgenstein would have been of much interest to either Eckhart or Wittgenstein. In both thinkers, the aim is to show the reader that what cannot be put into words shows itself through immediate experience of the world as limited whole or my world.

10.3 Zemach’s Account of Wittgenstein’s Mystical

The purpose of this section is to reveal that the metaphysical assumptions in Zemach’s account of the mystical lie is his conflating reality (*Wirklichkeit*) in terms of states of affairs and the world for reality (*Realität*) or that the “that the world exists”.

In an essay that shows many similarities to McGuinness’ paper but attempts to make the mystical connection through understanding the *Tractatus* rather than looking for parallel line of thoughts in other writers, Eddy Zemach attempts to show that the mystical depends upon what Wittgenstein says about “facts, objects and language” (EWT, 359).

McGuinness refers to Zemach in his essay stating that he is in agreement with the core of Zemach’s thought. However, he disagrees with Zemach’s point that God is identical with the world in one sense, but not identical in another (MT, 321). That is, McGuinness feels that God should be identical with both the form of the world and what is contingently the case (*ibid.*). By the phrase “contingently the case”, McGuinness refers to the world we know that shows itself. Zemach’s claim is at odds with McGuinness’ attempt to link God

to what is contingent. However, we shall see that many of the arguments presented against McGuinness' view of the mystical apply to Zemach's claims, in particular the meaning of 6.522 that the mystical cannot be expressed in words. We begin with considering the background of Zemach's thoughts in his essay.

In Zemach's view, any attempt to bring in "alien doctrines and concepts to clarify Wittgenstein's intentions totally misses the mark." (EWT, 359) He believes that the final passages of the *Tractatus* are not an appendix to his thoughts in the book, but are a culmination of the entire body of work. He begins his discussion with facts, quoting 1.1 "The world is the totality of facts." His point is that facts are independent of each other. Moreover, facts are the basis of the world including "what Wittgenstein names 'God'" (EWT, 361). He considers three propositions to support his notion of God: 6.522, "There is indeed the inexpressible. This *shows* itself; it is the mystical", 6.432, "How the world is, is completely indifferent to what is higher. God does not reveal himself *in* the world", and 6.44 "Not *how* the world is, is the mystical, but *that* it is". Zemach takes from these passages three points: (1) "that the mystical is that there is a world (and not how it is)"; (2) "that this "fact", i.e. that there is a world, is not itself *in* the world"; (3) that this "fact" cannot be *pictured* by facts, but it can be *shown* by them. The error in Zemach's reasoning occurs at his second point with his notion of "fact". Zemach's understanding of the difference between fact and "fact" leads to a metaphysical and not mystical interpretation of the *Tractatus*.

The objection I shall raise to Zemach's notion of "facts" that leads to theory of metaphysics is based on his failure to distinguish between reality as *Wirklichkeit* and reality as *Realität*. We begin this discussion with a closer examination of Zemach's discussion on facts. According to Zemach, it is possible to differentiate between facts in the way Wittgenstein uses the term in the *Tractatus* and "facts" or what makes facts possible. Zemach states that "facts" are the formal or internal properties of facts (EWT, 362). He claims that formal "facts" are shown in facts. Also included in formal "facts" are God, the inexpressible and the mystical. From this point Zemach reasons that he can make the claim that "the formal 'fact' *that* the world is, namely, *that* there is the totality of facts, is God" (EWT, 363). Zemach's line of reasoning assumes that a distinction can be made between "what is shown" and "what shows itself", or in his words between fact and "fact". He puts "fact" between quotation marks to refer to formal properties that show themselves as facts. He believes that this distinction between what is shown and what shows itself, or between form and sense is "absolutely essential to the understanding of the *Tractatus*." By the term "sense" he means what is shown by the arrangement of the constituents of a fact (*ibid.*). On the other hand, form is what is mirrored in a fact (*ibid.*). According to Zemach, if one fails to make this distinction one will not be able to reconcile the passages at 2.221 "What a picture represents is its sense." and 4.022 "A proposition *shows* its sense." with 4.121 "What finds its reflection in language, language cannot represent (*ibid.*). In other words, Zemach argues that it is important to see that what is shown and what shows itself, or facts and "facts", as he calls them, are separate. According to Zemach, there are two steps to drawing the connection between God and logic. First, the distinction between facts and "facts" must be established. Second, the two

are seen as one. The key to this second point is to see the distinction between facts and “facts” in light of the function of God in the *Tractatus*. According to Zemach, facts and “facts” are one in light of his claim that God is the seat of all facts. That is, he sees that the formal “fact” “*that the world is*” is God and the mystical. He interprets the phrase “*that the world is*” to mean the totality of facts. That is, Zemach understands “*that the world is*” has a universal presence by being common to each fact. We are reminded that the connection to the mystical lies in Wittgenstein’s claim at 6.44, the mystical is *that the world is*.

However, the assumption that lies behind Zemach’s view is the formal fact “*that the world is*” corresponds to discussion in the *Tractatus* on facts, as *Wirklichkeit*. A fact is the existence of states of affairs (2). The existence and non-existence of states of affairs is reality (*Wirklichkeit*) (2.06). As for formal properties, these too correspond to reality in the sense of *Wirklichkeit*. Propositions correspond to *Wirklichkeit*, and say *how* the world is. If it is assumed “*that the world is*” is understood as reality in terms of *Wirklichkeit*, it can be interpreted as the totality of facts. The objection raised against this view is that it leads to a metaphysical reading of “*that the world is*”. That is, “*that the world is* serves as a common principle, or a thing that is inherent, in all facts.

According to Zemach, the factuality of the world cannot be spoken. He means by “factuality” what shows itself in a fact, or logical form. He believes that the factuality of facts does not show itself in any specific fact comprised of elements in a determinate relationship. Rather, the factuality of facts is shown “by the ‘fact’ that a fact is a fact”

(EWT, 363). That is, the factuality of facts is “*that* the world is”, which he equates to the totality of facts. According to Zemach, propositions present their sense; in other words they have it, but they do not contain it. The difference between “have” and “contain” is that the former refers to what is shown, while the latter is the possibility contained within a proposition. A proposition contains the form of the sense; that is, it contains the “possibility of presenting” (EWT, 364). The sense of a proposition is shown, but is never contained in the proposition. The extension of this point, according to Zemach, is that the sense of the world is not contained in the world, but in what is higher. Propositions cannot express what is higher, but the sense of what is expressed is higher than the fact that represents it (*ibid.*). Following this point Zemach argues that the sense of the world is higher than the totality of facts (*ibid.*). The next move in his argument is to link what is higher to God. Having established that God is the sense of the world, he argues that God is the essence of the world and how things stand. However, Wittgenstein does not state that the sense of a proposition is higher. In fact, what the sense of a proposition and God have in common is that neither can be expressed in words. The significance of this point is that nothing can be said about the sense of a proposition or God. We find that at 6.432 Wittgenstein does not state that God is higher, but rather that he does not “reveal himself *in* the world”. In fact, the passage reads, “*How* things are in the world is a matter of complete indifference for what is higher” (6.4321). “*How* things are in the world” refers to what can be said. Propositions cannot express what is higher because it cannot be put into words (6.42, 6.421). Zemach may be correct that a connection can be made among the sense of a proposition, what is higher, and God, but he misses the point that there is nothing to say about each or the possible links they share. That is, Zemach’s

consideration of the topics discussed above is an expression in language. God, the sense of a proposition, what is higher and the connection among the three are things we have put into words. However, if they cannot be put into words, we must realise that there is nothing that can be said.

As we have discussed throughout this project, the elimination of what cannot be expressed in words does not leave a vacuum. In fact, as I have stressed throughout, we should not confuse what can be said with reality; *Realität* cannot be expressed in words. By attempting to establish a connection between the totality of facts and “*that* the world is”, Zemach believes he offers a picture of “the world”. However, the picture of the world Zemach offers is at odds with 5.62 that states, “The world is *my* world”. Zemach understands the world in terms of the passage found at 1.1: “The world is a totality of facts”. However, a closer look at 6.44 reveals that the world in terms of the totality of facts refers to part of the passage, “It is not *how* things are in the world that is the mystical”. That is, the description of how things are refers to reality in terms of *Wirklichkeit*. However, the world in the next part of the passage (“but *that* it exists”) does not refer to the world of what can be said, but *Realität*, or my world that is co-ordinated with the solipsistic self. Although propositions can tell *how* the world is, (that is, they show the logical form they share with *Wirklichkeit*), they tell us nothing about *Realität*. Unlike Zemach’s attempt to provide an argument that draws a connection between facts and the mystical and God, it remains that “*That* the world is”, *Realität*, the mystical and God cannot be expressed in words. If we understand God in terms of “this world” (NB

72), “*That* the world is”, *Realität*, and the mystical are the present moment that we cannot put into words.

We find further evidence of the metaphysical assumption that lies in Zemach’s thoughts on the mystical in his claim that the sense of a proposition and its formal features are identical in light of the perspective “*that* the world exists”, which is God. However, in the distinction between the claim that sense and formal features are identical, and the claim they are seen identical in light of God, lies his metaphysical claim. According to Zemach, God, the mystical and *that* the world exists are formal “facts”, which are ineffable. While it is true they cannot be expressed in words, they are not what provide the factuality to facts. In other words, formal facts are not the essence of facts. With regard to the issue of God, in the *Notebooks* Wittgenstein states that what one can know about God is that “this world exists” (NB, 72). By the use of the word “this” Wittgenstein means the present world. Moreover, unlike Zemach’s claim that factuality of the world is not shown in a specific fact, but the general “fact” of the matter that a fact is a fact (in the sense of *that* the world exists); Wittgenstein’s point is that the specific arrangement of a fact as it shows itself in the present is the sense of a fact. In Wittgenstein’s account there is no need to add any further ideas or concepts to say anything about this.

10.4 Conclusion

This chapter has identified metaphysical assumptions in each of the three accounts it has considered. One objection to attaching the notion of metaphysics to the *Tractatus* is that at 6.53 Wittgenstein rejects all metaphysical propositions and states that if one had the

urge to say anything metaphysical that one should “demonstrate to him that he has failed to give a meaning to certain signs in his proposition”. In light of the mystical, the problem with metaphysical language is that there is nothing that can be said. The mystical cannot be expressed in words. Rather, the mystical is a direct appeal to the world *that* is.

Conclusion: Silence

Wittgenstein concludes the *Tractatus* with the passage: “What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence”. The book ends not with a statement about silence, but silence. We should not be surprised by this conclusion. In the second paragraph of the Preface Wittgenstein states that the sense of the book is summed up in making clear what can be said, and what cannot be said must be passed over in silence. If one climbs the steps, as Wittgenstein suggests, and transcends both metaphysical language and the propositions in the *Tractatus* that have lead us to this point, we will see the world correctly. In this way of seeing one does not ask, “What does silence mean?” or “What is the relevance of silence to the *Tractatus*?” rather, one is left without words to pose a question. This project has argued that reality should not be confused with language. That is, the silence Wittgenstein mentions in the final passage of the book does not deny reality. Rather, silence and what cannot be expressed in words is a viewpoint from outside language.

In light of the aim of this project, to consider what reasonably follows from the hypothesis that the *Tractatus* can be interpreted from a mystical point of view, we must conclude that this point of view is one that emphasises the aim of the book: to draw limits to the expressions of thought. We began this project with the problem of finding a method that can be applied to the things that cannot be expressed in words. As we saw, a method such as Russell’s method of analysis provides no insight into issues that cannot be expressed with words. The advantage to Wittgenstein’s method is that by presenting clearly what can be said what cannot be said is signified. However, what cannot be said is not something outside the world, but is the world that is. While we are not left with

propositions about what cannot be said, we are clear of the false thoughts or statements that prevent us from seeing it. This view from outside language, as I have argued, is the mystical.