THE

FATE

OF

WONDER

Wittgenstein's Critique
of Metaphysics
and Modernity

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KEVIN M. CAHILL

I

INTERPRETING THE *TRACTATUS*

1.1

In a 1919 letter to *Der Brenner*'s publisher Ludwig von Ficker, sent in the hopes of getting the *Tractatus* published, Wittgenstein writes:

> You see, I am quite sure that you won't get all that much out of reading it. Because you won't understand it; its subject-matter will seem quite alien to you. But it isn't really alien to you, because the book's point [*der Sinn des Buches*] is an ethical one. I once meant to include in the preface a sentence which is not in fact there now but which I will write out for you here, because it will perhaps be a key to the work for you. What I meant to write, then, was this: My work consists of two parts: the one presented here plus all that I have *not* written. And it is precisely this second part that is the important one. My book draws limits to the sphere of the ethical from the inside as it were, and I am convinced that this is the ONLY *rigorous* way of drawing those limits. In short, I believe that where *many* others today are just *gassing*, I have managed in my book to put everything firmly into place by being silent about it.[1]

Shortly after this remarkable passage, in which he says that his book has an ethical point and in which he claims to have delimited the ethical precisely through what he does not say in the book, Wittgenstein tries to give Ficker more help in understanding the *Tractatus* by offering the following advice: "I would recommend you to read the *preface* and the *conclusion*, because they contain the most direct expression of the point of the book."[2] The preface to the *Tractatus* begins as follows:

Perhaps this book will be understood only by someone who has himself already had the thoughts that are expressed in it—or at least similar thoughts.— So it is not a textbook.—Its purpose would be achieved if it gave pleasure to one person who read it with understanding.

The book deals with the problems of philosophy, and shows, I believe, that the reason why these problems are posed is that the logic of our language is misunderstood. The whole sense of the book might be summed up in the following words: what can be said at all can be said clearly, and what we cannot talk about we must remain silent about.[3]

Thus the aim of the book is to set a limit to thought, or rather—not to thought, but to the expression of thoughts: for in order to be able to set a limit to thought, we should have to find both sides of the limit thinkable (i.e. we should have to be able to think what cannot be thought).

It will therefore only be in language that the limit can be drawn, and what lies on the other side of the limit will simply be nonsense.[4]

The preface concludes with these remarks:

If this work has any value, it consists in two things: the first is that thoughts are expressed in it, and on this score the better the thoughts are expressed—the more the nail has been hit on the head—the greater will be its value.—Here I am conscious of having fallen a long way short of what is possible. Simply because my powers are too slight for the accomplishment of the task.—May others come and do it better.

On the other hand the *truth* of the thoughts that are here set forth seems to me unassailable and definitive. I therefore believe myself to have found, on all essential points, the final solution of the problems. And if I am not mistaken in this belief, then the second thing in which the value of the work consists is that it shows how little is achieved when these problems are solved.[5]

Turning now to the concluding three remarks of the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein writes,

§6.53 The correct method in philosophy would really be the following: to say nothing except what can be said, i.e. propositions of natural science—i.e. something that has nothing to do with philosophy—and then, whenever someone else wanted to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate to him that he had failed to give a meaning to certain signs in his propositions.

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

He must overcome these propositions, and then he will see the world aright.

§7 What we cannot talk about we must remain silent about.[6]

Taken together, what Wittgenstein writes in the letter to Ficker, in the preface, and in the conclusion sets any interpreter of the *Tractatus* a formidable exegetical challenge. For in them Wittgenstein tells us, among other things, that his book has an ethical point, that the truth of the thoughts expressed in it is definitive, and that anyone who understands him will recognize the propositions of the book as nonsense. This chapter will lay out an interpretative framework for understanding the *Tractatus* and what followed it, and this will shape my discussion for the remainder of this book.

1.2

I begin by presenting two lines of interpretation that, in various forms, have been adopted by some well-known interpreters of the *Tractatus*. The second line in particular relies on a certain way of understanding the distinction between saying and showing in the *Tractatus*. One place where this distinction is prominent is in the remarks that run from §4.12 to §4.124.[7]

§4.12 Propositions can represent the whole reality, but they cannot represent what they must have in common with reality in order to be able to represent it—logical form.

In order to be able to represent logical form, we should have to be able to station ourselves with propositions somewhere outside logic, that is to say outside the world.

§4.121 Propositions cannot represent logical form: it is mirrored in them.
What finds its reflection in language, language cannot represent.
What expresses *itself* in language, *we* cannot express by means of language.
Propositions *show* the logical form of reality. They display it.

§4.1212 What *can* be shown, *cannot* be said.

§4.122 In a certain sense we can talk of formal properties of objects and states of affairs, or, in the case of facts, about structural properties: and in the same sense about formal relations and structural relations.

(Instead of "structural property" I also say "internal property"; instead of "structural relation" "internal relation."

I introduce these expressions in order to indicate the source of the confusion between internal relations and relations proper [external relations], which is very widespread among philosophers.)

It is impossible, however, to assert by means of propositions that such internal properties and relations exist: rather, they make themselves manifest in the propositions that represent the relevant states of affairs and are concerned with the relevant objects.

§4.124 The existence of an internal property of a possible situation is not expressed by means of a proposition: rather it expresses itself in the proposition representing the situation, by means of an internal property of that proposition.

It would be just as nonsensical to assert that a proposition had a formal property as to deny it.

It appears that the conclusion we are to draw from these passages is that trying to say *with* a proposition what can only be shown *by* a proposition produces nonsense.

Readers of the *Tractatus* have rightly found this kind of conclusion baffling. In his introduction to the book, Russell expresses "some hesitation in accepting Mr. Wittgenstein's position. . . . What causes hesitation is the fact that, after all, Mr. Wittgenstein manages to say a good deal about what cannot be said."[8] Russell's concern can be put this way: In the remarks quoted above, Wittgenstein seems to argue for certain conclusions about what can and cannot be said with propositions. But his arguments imply that these very conclusions are themselves nonsensical. The upshot is that we appear to be left with the paradox that these conclusions are somehow true but inexpressible.

One way some interpreters have dealt with this problem has been to proceed as though many of the passages that Wittgenstein would condemn as nonsensical are perfectly intelligible philosophical claims about such topics as semantics and philosophical logic. Consequently, they can be straightforwardly evaluated and compared with the approaches and conclusions of other theories. Wittgenstein's claim that these sentences are nonsense is therefore read as a bizarre confusion or an inexplicable blindness on his part, or it is seen as some strange quirk on his

part, indicative of his hostility toward philosophy and perhaps a result of his penchant for mysticism.[9]

This way of reading the *Tractatus* has the advantage that it avoids ascribing what looks like a paradoxical view to the author of the book. It also makes possible two further things, which are perhaps even more important to its advocates. It makes the book available as a source of useful insights into logic and language, and it opens up what seem to be the substantive claims of the book to ordinary philosophical criticism. Nevertheless, in one important respect at least, it seems a poor attempt at philosophical interpretation, if only because such total disregard for the author's intentions on such a crucial issue can hardly be a promising interpretative starting point.[10] Consequently, other commentators have attempted to deal with the question of the role of nonsense in the book by introducing a distinction into the very idea of nonsense itself.[11] Such a distinction can be seen as having its textual basis in remarks such as §4.122, quoted above. There we find Wittgenstein telling us "it is impossible, however, to assert by means of propositions that such internal properties and relations exist"—an assertion that only appears to convey to us that we may not speak of internal properties and relations by doing so. These commentators argue that nonsensical sentences such as §4.122 serve as guides to what one can say through the quite particular ways in which they themselves fail to say anything. In claiming that nonsense sentences like §4.122 have this special character, these interpreters have tried to take the edge off the apparent paradox that Wittgenstein wants to convey inexpressible truths via this nonsense. Concerning such "truths," Elizabeth Anscombe writes, "an important part is played in the *Tractatus* by the things which, though they cannot be 'said,' are yet 'shown' or 'displayed.' That is to say: it would be right to call them 'true' if, *per impossibile*, they could be said; in fact they cannot be called true, since they cannot be said, but 'can be shewn,' or 'are exhibited,' in the propositions saying the various things that can be said."[12] Anscombe goes on to suggest that we can perhaps see that a different kind of nonsense results from attempts to contradict certain would-be statements that, though nonsense, are somehow correct. These attempts result in nonsense too, but since they, so to speak, try to deny the deeper truth about things, they contain as she says "more error, or more darkness" than attempts to say what is "quite correct." To explain Wittgenstein's motivations for presenting his reader with nonsense in the first place, Anscombe suggests that "It would presumably be because . . . Wittgenstein regards the sentences of the *Tractatus* as helpful, in spite of their being strictly nonsensical according to the very doctrine that they propound; someone who had used them like steps 'to climb out beyond them' would be helped by them to 'see the world rightly.' "[13]

P. M. S. Hacker develops an approach to this problem that is similar to Anscombe's in many respects. He holds the view that the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus* believed that there were inexpressible truths: "Wittgenstein did think, when he wrote the *Tractatus*, that there were ineffable metaphysical necessities."[14] Moreover, like Anscombe, Hacker argues that we can better deal with the problem of nonsense in the *Tractatus* by making a distinction in the way we talk about it:

> Philosophers try to say what can only be shown, and what they say, being nonsense, does not even show what they try to say. Nevertheless, even within the range of philosophical . . . nonsense we can distinguish, as we shall see, between what might (somewhat confusedly) be called illuminating nonsense, and misleading nonsense. Illuminating nonsense will guide the attentive reader to apprehend what is shown by other propositions which do not purport to be philosophical; moreover, it will intimate, to those who grasp what is meant, its own illegitimacy.[15]

"Misleading" nonsense, often a result of unreflectively practicing traditional philosophy, indicates a lack of insight on the part of the speaker into the nature of language. On the other hand, by intentionally "violating" or "flaunting" the laws of logical syntax, one person might employ illuminating nonsense to guide another to understand these laws and thus to "see the world aright."[16] Hacker writes: "The source of the error of past philosophy lies in its failure to understand the [unstatable] principles of the logical syntax of language which are obscured by grammatical forms."[17] Accordingly, Hacker concludes that we need not attribute any serious confusion to the author. "Wittgenstein was quite correct and consistent; the *Tractatus* does indeed consist largely of pseudo-propositions. Of course, what Wittgenstein meant by these remarks . . . is, in his view, quite correct, only it cannot be said. Apparently what someone means or intends by a remark can be grasped even though the sentence uttered is strictly speaking nonsense."[18]

I have been discussing how some noted interpreters have dealt with the question of how we ought to regard the role of nonsense in the *Tractatus*. The discussion as I have framed it thus far has touched only on questions concerning the nature of logic and language. Now I want to turn to some of the passages toward the end of the book, which touch on the themes of ethics, aesthetics, and the mystical. What follows is an extremely condensed overview, intended only to convey the logic, as it were, of Wittgenstein's discussion there.

At §6.41, we read:

> 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.

§6.42 and §6.421 continue in a similar vein:

> And so it is impossible for there to be propositions of ethics.
>
> Propositions can express nothing that is higher.
>
> It is clear that ethics cannot be put into words.
> Ethics is transcendental.
> (Ethics and aesthetics are one and the same.)

Now I want to skip ahead to §6.521 and §6.522.

> The solution of the problem of life is seen in the vanishing of the problem.
> (Is not this the reason why those who have found after a long period of doubt that the sense of life became clear to them have then been unable to say what constituted that sense?)
> There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They *make themselves manifest*. They are what is mystical.[19]

We have already read that ethics, indeed *everything* of value, lies *outside* the world, apparently beyond the picturing possibilities of propositions. From these last lines, we seem to be led to believe, moreover, that our somehow coming to understand such *things* constitutes the "problem of life." This is suggested by the parenthetical passage, where we read of "those who have found . . . that the sense of life became clear to them." But what is clear to such persons, the sense of life, is also the sense of the world, since "The world and life are one."[20] Yet we have already read at §6.41, quoted above, that "The sense of the world must lie outside the world . . . *in* it no value exists." This would appear to entail that those to whom

the sense of life becomes clear, those for whom the problem vanishes, are clear about some *thing* that lies *outside* the world, beyond what can be said. How is this possible? "There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They *make themselves manifest*. They are what is mystical."

1.3

For commentators who seek to place these last remarks in some sort of historical context, there has been a tendency to see in them the influence of Schopenhauer.[21] In her book on the *Tractatus*, Anscombe writes, "If we look for Wittgenstein's philosophical ancestry, we should rather look to Schopenhauer; specifically, his 'solipsism,' his conception of 'the limit,' and his ideas on value will be better understood in the light of Schopenhauer than any other philosopher."[22] Hacker is even bolder in this regard, claiming that Schopenhauer "moulded [Wittgenstein's] conception of the metaphysical self and his notion of the mystical."[23] Hacker thus includes "a detailed comparison of some of Wittgenstein's doctrines on solipsism with those of Schopenhauer from whom they are derived" as an essential part of his interpretative strategy.[24]

Schopenhauer, of course, considered himself a disciple of Kant and professed to make only a few, albeit significant, corrections to the master's thought. Among them was the claim that Kant had erred in making Reason (*Vernunft*) a possible source of moral or practical knowledge.[25] Against this, Schopenhauer argues that Reason is a purely formal linguistic capacity that humans possess and that allows them to think abstractly.[26] As such, it is entirely barren as a source of knowledge. In Schopenhauer's eyes, Kant's attribution of anything to Reason beyond this formal ability both marked a deviation from his own better judgment and opened the floodgates for philosophers such as Hegel to ascribe to Reason what are, for Schopenhauer, incredible powers of suprasensible knowledge of reality.[27] Schopenhauer holds, against idealists like Hegel, that knowledge comes only from either empirical or synthetic a priori representations, both of which are rooted in and conditioned by the understanding. In short, for Schopenhauer, one can know the world only as representation, and there is no knowledge of things-in-themselves or the Absolute, which he thinks amount to the same thing. In this sense, he is closer to Kant than are the idealists whom he shunned.

From afar, however, Schopenhauer seems closer to the idealists than he would no doubt wish to appear. For his doctrine of the world as Will, a sort of mystical

monism that he derives in large part from his interpretation of Hindu and Buddhist philosophy, does amount to the sneaking admission that we can glimpse behind the veil of appearances; he simply refuses to call this knowledge. We would do better to call such glimpses insights into the nature of things. Schopenhauer's writings are full of vivid descriptions of the occasions for such insights, such as when we are confronted with terrible forces of nature.

> The storm howls, the sea roars, the lightning flashes from black clouds, and thunder-claps drown the noise of storm and sea. Then in the unmoved beholder of this scene the twofold nature of his consciousness reaches the highest distinctness. Simultaneously, he feels himself as individual, as the feeble phenomenon of will, which the slightest touch of these forces can annihilate, helpless against powerful nature, dependent, abandoned to chance, a vanishing nothing in face of stupendous forces; and he also feels himself as the eternal, serene subject of knowing, who as the condition of every object is the supporter of the whole world, the fearful struggle of nature being only his mental picture or representation; he himself is free from, and foreign to, all willing and needs, in the quiet comprehension of the Ideas. This is the full impression of the sublime.[28]

Two avenues for attaining such insight are given particular attention by Schopenhauer: asceticism and art. The ascetic who renounces all willing sees through the illusion of the *principium individuationis* by which the world appears to be a manifold of different objects. Instead, he perceives that everything, including his own empirical personality, is merely a manifestation of one evil, lusting Will and that the only way to happiness and tranquility is the cessation of all desire.[29] Similarly, the artist, in losing himself in pure aesthetic contemplation, also loses a sense of a separate "I" and thus all sense of willing. In such moments, the artist is able to grasp timeless "Ideas," the Platonic forms that function as archetypes in Schopenhauer's metaphysics.[30]

Now from the mere tenor of the remarks that make up most of the last few pages of the *Tractatus*, a strategy such as the one Hacker suggests, which would attempt to interpret them as expressions of a modified version of Schopenhauer's metaphysics, is certainly tempting. Once one takes into account biographical sources and the *Notebooks*, from which much of the *Tractatus* is drawn, it could seem inevitable.[31] In truth, the *Notebooks* do occasionally read like meditations on *The World as Will and Representation*. Passages like the following are just a few of the many that would serve to justify such an approach.

What do I know about God and the purpose of life?

I know that the world exists.

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

That this meaning does not lie in it but outside it. (Cf 6.41)

That life is the world. (Cf 5.621)

That my will penetrates the world.

That my will is good or evil.

I can only make myself independent of the world—and so in a certain sense master it—by renouncing any influence on happenings.[32]

Only remember that the spirit of the snake, of the lion, is *your* spirit. For it is only from yourself that you are acquainted with spirit at all.[33]

Elsewhere, Wittgenstein simply seems to be paraphrasing, if not rehearsing, lines from Schopenhauer:[34] "As my idea is the world, in the same way my will is the world-will";[35] "The work of art is the object seen *sub specie aeternitatis*; and the good life is the world seen *sub specie aeternitatis*. This is the connexion between art and ethics."[36] And in the *Tractatus* itself, we find what sound like echoes of Schopenhauer's mystical monism: "To view the world sub specie aeterni is to view it as a whole—a limited whole. Feeling the world as a limited whole—it is this that is mystical."[37] One might even claim to find Schopenhauer's metaphysics making its way into the "Lecture on Ethics" that Wittgenstein delivered to the Heretics Society in Cambridge on November 17, 1929. There, Wittgenstein's description of his experience of "absolute or ethical value" might sound like an echo of Schopenhauer's description of the sublime.

Now in this situation I am, if I want to fix my mind on what I mean by absolute or ethical value. And there, in my case, it always happens that the idea of one particular experience presents itself to me which therefore is, in a sense, my experience *par excellence* and this is the reason why, in talking to you now, I will use this experience as my first and foremost example. . . . I believe the best way of describing it is to say that when I have it *I wonder at the existence of the world* . . . I will mention another experience straight away which I also know and which others of you might be acquainted with: it is, what one might call, the experience of feeling *absolutely safe*. I mean the state of mind in which one is inclined to say "I am safe, nothing can injure me whatever happens."[38]

Now the point here is not that all, or even most, of the "Schopenhauerian" remarks in the *Tractatus* or the *Notebooks* formally accord with all of the details

of Schopenhauer's philosophy. Nor is it that any of the commentators who see his handiwork in them are so simpleminded as not to notice important differences. Anscombe, for example, points out that Wittgenstein's treatment of the will, at least in the *Tractatus*, looks fundamentally different from Schopenhauer's.[39] Regarded in their entirety, nevertheless, these remarks certainly could indicate something like the following interpretation: In the remarks on the will, solipsism, value, ethics, aesthetics, and the mystical, Wittgenstein employs nonsense in order to *intimate* to his reader the "quite correct" truth that the totality of statable facts comprises a limited world whole. In thus gesturing at the limit of this world whole, he is also conveying something about what lies beyond it, a noumenal domain of value ("what is higher") that is in some way graspable by us through mystical insight but about which we can *say* nothing, on pain of speaking nonsense. This sort of interpretation is not idiosyncratic. Janik and Toulmin are explicit about this: "The world—the totality of facts—relates to the will, in Wittgenstein's view, in very much the same manner as Schopenhauer's world as representation relates to the world as will, as husk to kernel, as *phenomenon* to *noumenon*."[40] One thus ends up with an interpretation of the *Tractatus* in which Wittgenstein is combining important parts of Schopenhauer's ethics and ontology with a more rigorous logical theory. It is worth pointing out that Schopenhauer, too, is at least dimly aware of the problematic nature of sentences concerning the ineffable. With this in mind, he occasionally warns his reader that these descriptions of sublime experiences are to be treated with caution: "Certainly . . . we fall here into mystical and figurative language, but it is the only language in which anything can be said on this entirely transcendent theme."[41] As Schopenhauer has not thought through his semantic theory to the same extent as Wittgenstein, however, he still conceives of such utterances as having an (albeit unusual) semantic content.[42] He thus fails to see these descriptions for what they really are: nonsensical utterances that *say* nothing and therefore must ultimately be thrown away but that can be used to *show* the sensitive reader something higher. Concerning such matters as ethics and aesthetics, therefore, Schopenhauer's reader is left in a semantic no-man's-land. Wittgenstein's more rigorous logical standards, on the other hand, will lead his reader to a knowing silence. Hacker summarizes this view when he writes of Wittgenstein's doctrines of the ineffable that

They express a doctrine which I shall call Transcendental Solipsism. They involve a belief in the transcendental ideality of time (and presumably space), a rather perverse interpretation of the Kantian doctrine of the unity of apperception together with the acceptance of Schopenhauer's reification of the unity of

consciousness, and other related and undigested theories about ethics, the will, aesthetics and religion. The originality of the doctrines in Wittgenstein is negligible, their ancestry is of dubious legitimacy, and their validity more than a little questionable. Wittgenstein's originality in the matter lies in his attempt to dovetail these doctrines into the sophisticated theory of meaning with which most of the *Tractatus* is concerned. Unlike Kant and Schopenhauer, Wittgenstein thought that his transcendental idealist doctrines, though profoundly important, are literally inexpressible.[43]

If what Hacker says here is right, then it seems plausible to read Wittgenstein as attempting to complete Kant's project of limiting the scope of science and reason, thereby protecting what is "higher," in a way that Kant himself did not envision. Hacker concludes: "The Kantian idea echoes in Wittgenstein, but what in eighteenth-century Königsberg led to an *a priori* critical rationalist ethics, produced in the twentieth century a romantic ethics of the ineffable."[44] Janik and Toulmin concur: "In short, the primary concern of the author of the *Tractatus* is to protect the sphere of the conduct of life against the encroachments from the sphere of speculation."[45] And: "His world-view expresses the belief that the sphere of what can only be *shown* must be protected from those who try to *say* it."[46]

1.4

The ineffabilist approach just described broadly accords with the accounts favored by many well-known commentators besides Anscombe and Hacker.[47] Yet this way of reading the *Tractatus* has serious drawbacks and, for several years now, so-called resolute readers, most notably Cora Diamond and James Conant, have roundly attacked it.[48] If one can discern a general basis for their criticism, it is their view that readings like Anscombe's and Hacker's force an incoherent position onto Wittgenstein without any compelling textual or other interpretative justification for doing so. The incoherence lies in the idea that there are two *different kinds* of nonsensical utterances and that one of these kinds can be identified by *internal* features of the pseudopropositions that are used to make them. Hacker's reading, in particular, rests on the view that the nonsensical sentences of the *Tractatus* are intended to serve as guides to what one can say through the specific ways in which they themselves violate the principles of logical syntax.

Conant has termed the kind of view just described a "substantial" conception of nonsense. Although Hacker has vigorously denied it, Conant has nevertheless

argued that Hacker's view in effect invites us to imagine against hope (that Wittgenstein thought) that there could be something like an identifiable nonsensical-sense that some nonsense makes.[49] Against this view, he and Diamond have argued for what Diamond has dubbed an "austere" view of nonsense in the *Tractatus*.[50] Rejecting the substantial view and adopting an austere attitude toward nonsense requires us to abandon the idea that there are different kinds of nonsense at work in the *Tractatus* and that these can be distinguished from one another by attention to internal features of certain nonsensical sentences in isolation from any context of use.[51] Diamond and Conant thus dispense with the idea that Wittgenstein believed that nonsense could be divided into a deep variety that gestures at sublime truths and at garden-variety nonsense. One significant consequence of this interpretation is that after we throw away Wittgenstein's nonsensical elucidations, the only sentences remaining are those that can be used to say something: *ordinary* sentences.[52] On the austere view, nonsense arises not from a violation of the principles of logical syntax but simply from someone's failure "to give a meaning to certain signs in his propositions."[53] While confusing combinations of signs (e.g., "Green is green") will not be permitted in a perspicuous notation, we can in fact give a meaning to any string of signs whatsoever. According to Diamond and Conant, there is no independently identifiable and inherently "important nonsense" that Wittgenstein employs to somehow convey or gesture at ineffable truths of logic, metaphysics, or anything else.

In developing her account, Diamond takes seriously Wittgenstein's suggestion to Ficker that the preface and conclusion are central for a proper understanding of the *Tractatus*, since, as he puts it, "they give the most direct expression" of its point. Recall that Wittgenstein begins the preface with the following remark: "Perhaps this book will be understood only by someone who has himself already had the thoughts that are expressed in it—or at least similar thoughts.— So it is not a textbook [*ist kein Lehrbuch*]." Commenting on this, Diamond writes, "to read the *Tractatus* with understanding, Wittgenstein tells us, is not to read it as a *Lehrbuch*. His intention is not that the book should teach us things that we did not know; it does not address itself to our ignorance."[54] This suggests, then, that the book imparts no new theories, doctrines, or truths of the kind ordinarily associated with philosophical treatises. Now, the remarks on value at the end of the book are not the only passages where Wittgenstein has been taken as trying to convey ineffable truths. It is possible to champion different ineffable topics: the necessary existence of simple objects, logical form, formal concepts, solipsism, and so on. Diamond, on the other hand, is happier to take Wittgenstein at his word, when Wittgenstein writes in the preface:

In order to be able to draw a limit to thought, we should have to find both sides of the limit thinkable (i.e. we should have to be able to think what cannot be thought).

It will therefore only be in language that the limit can be drawn, and what lies on the other side of the limit will simply be nonsense.[55]

There is no intimation here on Wittgenstein's part that in fact nonsense can be divided into a deep variety that gestures at sublime truths (logical or ethical/aesthetic) and garden-variety nonsense like "piggle wiggle tiggle": "His statement that what is on the other side of the limit is plain nonsense seems to be meant to rule out exactly the idea that some of our sentences count as nonsense but *do* manage to gesture towards those things that cannot be put into plain words."[56]

But this still leaves unexplained the most puzzling feature of the *Tractatus* that ineffabilist interpretations were supposed to account for: the conjunction of Wittgenstein's claim at §6.54 that his propositions serve their elucidatory purpose when they are recognized as nonsense with his claim in the letter to Ficker that his book has an ethical point. To get clear about these questions, I want to begin with a passage from a paper by Conant. As it has been a few years since the paper was written, I am not certain whether this passage still reflects precisely what Conant (not to speak of anyone else in this debate) thinks. Nevertheless, to my mind it stands as a concise and elegant description of Wittgenstein's conception of the *Tractatus*, one that I believe amenable to at least most resolute readings of the book. Conant writes,

> The guiding assumption of the *Tractatus* is that the philosopher typically suffers from an illusion of understanding, from the projection of an illusory sense onto a (pseudo-) proposition which has not yet been given a clear sense. The task, therefore, is not to disagree with what he thinks, but to undo his illusion that there is something which he is thinking—to show that what he imagines himself to be thinking fails to amount to a thought (that there isn't a "what" there for him to think). The method of the *Tractatus* relies upon the thought that under such circumstances the only procedure that will prove genuinely elucidatory is one that attempts to enter into the philosopher's illusion of understanding and explode it from within.[57]

Conant connects two difficult ideas in this passage. The first idea is that the traditional philosopher suffers from a kind of illusion. The second idea is that the only way for one to clear up this illusion ("the only procedure that will prove genuinely elucidatory") is to somehow find a way into that illusion oneself. On

the view of the *Tractatus* that Conant is espousing in this passage, this activity of entering into the philosopher's illusion is called "elucidation" (*Erläuterung*). As to the first idea, Conant notes elsewhere that Wittgenstein is far from alone in the history of philosophy in holding that the proper response to traditional philosophical questions is to come to see them as chimeras.

> Taken by itself, there is nothing new in the thought that progress in philosophy will come not with the formulation of better answers to the old questions, but rather by accounting for the source of our attraction to the questions—by (to look no further than the opening words of the *Critique of Pure Reason*), for example, showing that "human reason has this peculiar fate that . . . it is burdened by questions which, as prescribed by the very nature of reason itself, it is not able to ignore, but which . . . it is also not able to answer." (A vii) The overarching task that guides the tradition formed by Lessing, Kant, Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein (among others) is to show that the disputes in philosophy we are tempted to take sides in are often illusory.[58]

Michael Kremer gives us a concise explication of the second idea, that of *Tractarian* elucidation, as Conant, Diamond, and others understand it:

> The propositions of the *Tractatus* do not begin by making sense, only to be gradually reduced to nonsense. They are nonsense all along. The only thing that is corroded is our view of ourselves as making sense of them. We start under the illusion that we understand certain strings of signs. Under this illusion we manipulate these strings "logically" so as to arrive at other strings, relying on apparent "structural" similarities to sensible argumentation. As we are led along by the seeming logic of the "argument" we come upon (illusory) "conclusions" that so puzzle us that we lose our grip on the idea that we were ever making sense at all, so also that we were following an "argument."[59]

In order to elaborate a bit on the relation between illusion and elucidation on a resolute reading of the *Tractatus*, I want to bring in something Diamond has written about the early Wittgenstein's conception of philosophical activity. She sees the *Tractatus* as responding to the philosopher's predicament through a self-conscious employment of imagination.

> To want to understand the person who talks nonsense is to want to enter imaginatively the taking of that nonsense for sense. . . . The *Tractatus*, in its understanding of itself as addressed to those who are in the grip of philosophical

nonsense, and in its understanding of the kind of demands it makes on its readers, supposes a kind of imaginative activity, an exercise of the capacity to enter into the taking of nonsense for sense, of the capacity to share imaginatively the inclination to think that one is thinking something in it. If I could not as it were see your nonsense as sense, imaginatively let myself feel its attractiveness, I could not understand you. And that is a very particular use of imagination.[60]

This description is meant to apply, of course, to Wittgenstein's own understanding of his relation to the reader of the *Tractatus*. The sentences of that book are chosen and arranged, if Diamond is right, through Wittgenstein's own imaginative activity, through his permitting his own imagination to wander and feel the attraction of words that he imagines others may take for the expression of profound philosophical truths. It is therefore such a use of imagination that is central to these sentences serving as philosophical elucidations, which the reader might "overcome" so that she can "see the world aright."

Now recall from above that Diamond and Conant have claimed that there is a confusion in the idea that one can internally distinguish one bit of nonsense from another in order to separate off what we take to convey metaphysical truth from that which we take for mere gibberish. Nevertheless, in the following Diamond indicates a different way in which we might conceive of distinguishing between different occurrences of nonsense:

> In a particular case of the utterance of a nonsense-sentence, its utterance may fail to reflect an understanding of oneself or of others; it may depend on this or that type of use of imagination. But there is no way of taking any nonsense-sentence and saying that, by the sentence it is, it is philosophical elucidation, not metaphysical nonsense. For a sentence that is nonsense to be an elucidatory sentence is entirely a matter of features external to it.[61]

The external features of a nonsensical utterance concern its context, which include the intentions of the speaker and his imaginative relation to what is said. Diamond discusses three ways in which imagination can mediate our relation to metaphysical nonsense. One way is the tendency to assume that the mental images one has when one utters or hears a sentence are intrinsically connected with the logical and semantic features of that sentence. But the mental images I may connect with a particular utterance often have little or nothing to do with the way a sentence conveys information about the world, with the way another person can understand something by it through its being logically articulate. Rather, such images form part of the causal chain of my mental history; they are a fact

about me. Combating this kind of psychologism about meaning is something that Wittgenstein made a lifelong task, and, as Diamond notes, it forms part of his inheritance from Frege.[62] Psychologism, then, is one of the ways that imagination is involved in the production of metaphysical nonsense. Diamond writes, "We are attracted by certain sentences, certain forms of words, and imagine that we mean something by them. We are satisfied that we mean something by them because they have the mental accompaniments of meaningful sentences."[63]

We imagine that these mental accompaniments were themselves somehow sufficient to guarantee that a sentence made sense. This leads to a kind of indolence in our relations to what we say; it inclines us away from careful attention, since the conjuring up of images that we take for an adequate guarantor of meaning something is a largely passive phenomenon. Closely related to this is the second case of false imagination that Diamond sees as one of Wittgenstein's targets in the *Tractatus*. This is the unreflective assumption that there can be philosophy in the traditional sense.

> The attractiveness of the forms of words expressive of philosophical confusion arises out of the imagining of a point of view for philosophical investigation. And it is precisely that illusory point of view that the *Tractatus* self-consciously imagines itself into in an attempt to lead one to see that there was only false imagination in the attractiveness of the words one had been inclined to come out with.[64]

The illusory point of view out of which the *Tractatus* tries to lead us is one from which we imagine that we can, so to speak, objectively consider the limits of thought and the nature of the world as a whole. Here we can perhaps see an important conceptual relation to the illusory perspective of transcendental realism that Kant saw as leading to the *Antinomies*. He diagnoses the underlying difficulty as stemming from the tacit premise that one can consider the world and all of its conditions as an object of knowledge. Kant's resolution of the *Antinomies* is based on his claim that, because of the subjective nature of the conditions of synthesis that make experience possible, there is no such objectifiable totality. Thus, Kant problematizes the very notion of a world whole that would provide the metaphysician with the perspective he (thinks he) requires.[65]

To see the possibility of a third way in which imagination may be related to nonsense, consider the opening sentences of the *Tractatus*: "The world is all that is the case. The world is the totality of facts, not of things." We have here sentences, indeed magisterial-sounding sentences, that silently invite us to imagine ourselves as enjoying a bird's-eye view on "the world and all of its conditions" and that what

follows will be a discourse from just this view. On Diamond's and Conant's reading of the *Tractatus*, however, such sentences are expressions of an activity called elucidation, by which Wittgenstein tries to enter imaginatively into the viewpoint of the would-be practitioner of metaphysics, a person who is inclined to come out with sentences about the "world as a whole" and to imagine that he means something by them. Diamond writes,

> Here, then, is a description,—an external description—of the difference between the propositions of the *Tractatus* and the propositions of the metaphysician. The former are recognized by their author to be plain nonsense, the latter are not; the former are in the service of an imaginative understanding of persons, the latter are the result of a sort of disease of imagination, and the philosopher who comes out with them lacks that understanding of himself which the *Tractatus* aims to secure for us.[66]

1.5

In the course of explicating Diamond's and Conant's reading of the *Tractatus*, we have so far seen two different possible attitudes characteristic of a speaker of nonsense: that of the traditional philosopher or metaphysician, whose nonsense is said to reflect his false imagination that there is a perspective for philosophical investigation, and Wittgenstein's self-conscious nonsense, which is spoken in the service of philosophical elucidation. Diamond argues that "ethical sentences," as understood by Wittgenstein, constitute a third group. That is to say, the intentions behind such utterances are different both from the intentions behind the elucidations of the *Tractatus* and from the intentions behind traditional metaphysical utterances. The reader of the *Tractatus* is supposed to see that sentences that he initially took for real philosophical theses concerning the nature of the world, logic, mathematics, and ethics are in fact nonsense, and this realization is then supposed to break the hold that such word formations have on his imagination. There is a definite sense, then, in which the sentences of the *Tractatus* are supposed to affect the reader. Diamond, however, understands the intentions behind "ethical" utterances as distinct from those at work in the *Tractatus*: "The intention of the would-be engager in ethics is not like that, is not in that way therapeutic. So 'ethical sentences' are distinguishable from those of the *Tractatus* by the intention with which they are uttered or written. They are distinguishable from philosophical nonsense-sentences by their relation to the self-understanding towards which the *Tractatus* aims to lead us."[67]

There is actually an important common feature of the intentions characteristic of ethical nonsense sentences as understood by Wittgenstein and metaphysical nonsense: both kinds of nonsense reflect the attraction exerted on our imagination of there being a point of view on the world as a whole. The metaphysician tries to imagine himself into a standpoint over and against the world, from which he can propound theories not about this or that aspect of the world but rather about what I have been calling "the world and all of its conditions." Recall from the "Lecture on Ethics" Wittgenstein's own examples of the kind of ethical nonsense that he finds compelling:

> I believe the best way of describing it is to say that when I have it *I wonder at the existence of the world*. . . . I will mention another experience straight away which I also know and which others of you might be acquainted with: it is, what one might call, the experience of feeling *absolutely safe*. I mean the state of mind in which one is inclined to say "I am safe, nothing can injure me whatever happens."

So we see that the imaginative activities involved in these two kinds of utterance are not totally distinct. Nevertheless, they differ crucially in the way that the imagination of the speaker is connected with his intentions. The metaphysician has the sober intention of propounding theories that, whatever their truth value, he at least imagines make sense; the reflective speaker of ethical nonsense is not under this illusion, though his intentions are perhaps no less sober. But whereas, according to Diamond, "as Wittgenstein saw traditional philosophical activity, it would not survive recognition that the intentions in it were incompatible with making sense,"[68] for the self-conscious speaker of ethical nonsense, the imaginative appeal of sentences such as "The world of the happy man is a different one from that of the unhappy" would not necessarily suffer from this recognition. She concludes,

> If we understand ourselves . . . we shall not come out with ethical sentences under the illusion that we are talking sense. We may show this by framing our sentences; for example, someone might say "I am inclined to say 'The goodness of life does not depend on things going this way or that.'" Words like "This is what I am inclined to say," used to frame such sentences, may thus mark both that they are recognized by the utterer as nonsense, and that that recognition does not involve their losing their attractiveness, their capacity to make us feel that they express the sense we want to make.[69]

This last remark suggests how we can distinguish Wittgenstein's views clearly from those of the logical positivists, who of course rejected traditional

philosophical ethics on the grounds that ethical statements were unverifiable and thus nonsensical pseudostatements. This is an important point, since on the surface Wittgenstein and the positivists might seem to be close here. Indeed, it can hardly be surprising if Wittgenstein has often been mistaken for a kind of proto-positivist on ethics, especially as some well-known positivists took their views to be inspired in part by him. Maybe the best-known and influential case of this was A. J. Ayer's widely read *Language, Truth, and Logic*, a book that, particularly in the English-speaking world, functioned as a sort of summary introduction to the doctrines of logical positivism. The preface to the 1936 first edition begins with the claim that "the views which are put forward in this treatise derive from the doctrines of Bertrand Russell and Wittgenstein, which are themselves the logical outcome of the empiricism of Berkeley and David Hume."[70]

Looking at Ayer's discussion, we see that, on the one hand, he wanted to do away with any kind of discourse that failed to conform to a verificationist criterion of meaning. This not only included eliminating all traditional ontological theorizing but also the attempt to treat ethics as a genuine sphere of knowledge.

> It is our business to give an account of "judgements of value" which is both satisfactory in itself and consistent with our general empiricist principles. We shall set ourselves to show that in so far as statements of value are significant, they are ordinary "scientific" statements; and that in so far as they are not scientific, they are not in the literal sense significant, but are simply expressions of emotion which can be neither true nor false.[71]

First, note that from the vantage point of a resolute reading, according to which Wittgenstein does not intend to put forth anything like a semantic theory of meaning in the *Tractatus*, Ayer's explicit reliance on "general empiricist principles" should already make one suspicious about the degree to which his views can be properly regarded as deriving from Wittgenstein's book. Second, and more immediately relevant, is the way in which Ayer understood his own metaethical enterprise as one of treating utterances that purported to say something ethical as utterances that indicated something about the psychology of the speaker, for example, about his or her preferences, feelings, or dispositions.

> In every case in which one would commonly be said to be making an ethical judgement, the function of the relevant ethical word is purely "emotive." It is used to express feeling about certain objects, but not to make any assertion about them.... In fact we may define the meaning of the various ethical words in

> terms both of the different feelings they are ordinarily taken to express, and also the different responses which they are calculated to provoke.[72]

These "ethical" feelings and responses may in turn be investigated systematically—not by the philosopher but rather by the psychologist and sociologist.

> We find that ethical philosophy consists simply in saying that ethical concepts are pseudo-concepts and therefore unanalysable. The further task of describing the different feelings that the different ethical terms are used to express, and the different reactions that they customarily provoke, is a task for the psychologist. There cannot be such a thing as ethical science, if by ethical science one means the elaboration of a "true" system of morals. . . . All that one may legitimately enquire in this connection is, What are the moral habits of a given person or group of people, and what causes them to have precisely those habits and feelings? And this enquiry falls wholly within the scope of the existing social sciences. . . . It appears, then, that ethics, as a branch of knowledge, is nothing more than a department of psychology and sociology.[73]

This passage makes clear that Ayer sees no difficulty in using the traditional term "ethics" to describe this wholly naturalized new field of study. Diamond remarks in this regard that the positivist project of metaethics "reflects the idea that sentences which are in some way 'ethical' can be recognized and discussed philosophically in sentences that make sense and that do not wholly ignore whatever is ethical in those sentences."[74] According to Diamond, it is precisely this having it both ways that Wittgenstein thinks represents a confusion in one's attitude toward ethics. If we are clear here, we will see that we are instead presented with a choice: "Grasp the sentences in question as ethical by imaginatively treating nonsense as sense or stick to talking and thinking sense yourself and lose touch with anything ethical in the sentences."[75] Diamond's way of putting it is to say that the positivists were confused about what language they wanted to be in. Their attempt at making sense of ethical utterances by grounding our understanding of them in empirical psychology was, for Wittgenstein, to miss what was at the very heart of ethics as he saw it. This can be seen again from what he says in the following passage from the "Lecture on Ethics," where he argues against the idea that there can be a correct logical analysis of ethical utterances:

> I see now that these nonsensical expressions were not nonsensical because I had not yet found the correct expressions, but that their nonsensicality was their

philosophical ethics on the grounds that ethical statements were unverifiable and thus nonsensical pseudostatements. This is an important point, since on the surface Wittgenstein and the positivists might seem to be close here. Indeed, it can hardly be surprising if Wittgenstein has often been mistaken for a kind of proto-positivist on ethics, especially as some well-known positivists took their views to be inspired in part by him. Maybe the best-known and influential case of this was A. J. Ayer's widely read *Language, Truth, and Logic*, a book that, particularly in the English-speaking world, functioned as a sort of summary introduction to the doctrines of logical positivism. The preface to the 1936 first edition begins with the claim that "the views which are put forward in this treatise derive from the doctrines of Bertrand Russell and Wittgenstein, which are themselves the logical outcome of the empiricism of Berkeley and David Hume."[70]

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> I see now that these nonsensical expressions were not nonsensical because I had not yet found the correct expressions, but that their nonsensicality was their

very essence. For all I wanted to do with them was just *to go beyond* the world and that is to say beyond significant language. My whole tendency and I believe the tendency of all men who ever tried to write or talk Ethics or Religion was to run against the boundaries of language.[76]

Just before this remark, Wittgenstein asserts that he would reject any analysis that succeeded in making sense of an ethical utterance *on the very grounds of its significance*.[77] If this is the case, then quite apart from whatever Wittgenstein's view comes to, it certainly seems wrong to lump him in with the logical positivists on the subject of ethics (and aesthetics), even if we do reject the ineffabilist reading of the *Tractatus*. Diamond thus draws the following lesson: "What I am warning against is any idea that we should take Wittgenstein's remarks about ethics to constitute philosophical analysis of a kind of discourse, rather than as remarks aimed at bringing about a kind of self-understanding through the reader's imaginative activity."[78]

It is worth connecting what I have just been saying about the difference between Wittgenstein's and Ayer's respective understandings of ethics with a strand of thought that Diamond finds in Kant. Much of my discussion above turns on the importance of the sense/nonsense distinction. Diamond sees a relevant connection here with another pair of complementary concepts from Kant: transcendental and empirical. We have seen that one of the ways the positivists differed from Wittgenstein on ethics concerned the idea that one can give an analysis of ethical utterances by treating them as though they could be made sense of in terms of laws of empirical psychology. We have also seen how for Wittgenstein this leaves out something that he saw as essential to ethics. Kant, too, would have rejected any attempt to make ethics a matter of descriptive psychology. According to Kant, ethics can never be grounded in the empirical world, because the empirical world is governed by the law of causality, and that makes the freedom necessary for morality impossible. Diamond puts the analogy between the two this way:

> In reading Wittgenstein or Kant, we can take the word "transcendental" as a kind of warning. For Kant, the connection between ethics and the transcendental subject is such that ethics is destroyed, there is no ethics, if you try to move ethical thought into the realm of what we can know, the empirical world. For Wittgenstein, the connection between ethics and the transcendental is not, as it was for Kant, a matter of tying ethics to something other than what we can know, other than the empirical world. But for him as for Kant, ethics is destroyed, there is no ethics, if we try as it were to push ethics into the empirical world.[79]

Diamond is suggesting here that we see Kant and Wittgenstein as sharing the attitude that it is misguided to look in the realm of the facts for what is ethical. One might go further and connect what Diamond says here about Kant and the empirical world with the concept of justification. For it is implicit in what she says about Kant that for him ethics cannot have as its grounds or justification any fact in the world. It was central to Kant's understanding of ethics that justification for action not be sought in any facts of the world but rather in Reason. Of course, he believed that facts *are* properly connected with justification in areas of life quite distinct from ethics, such as the natural sciences. For Kant, however, empirical facts can never serve as the basis for justification in ethics. Diamond's point is that the transcendental/empirical dichotomy in Kant can, to a certain degree, shed light on Wittgenstein's own outlook.[80] If this is true, then the concept of justification, which is intimately related to this distinction in Kant's thought, may well be important for a deeper understanding of the *Tractatus*. This is a point that I will explore further in the next chapter.

On an ineffabilist reading of the *Tractatus*, one is able to move fairly directly to an interpretation of Wittgenstein's claim that his book has an ethical aim. The rejection of ineffabilist interpretations required that I take an extended detour before I could return to this question. Now that an alternative and, I think, better interpretation of the book is at hand, I want to show in the next chapter how it allows us to understand this dimension of the *Tractatus* in altogether different terms.[81]

of his thought, and there is an emphasis on, in this case, the text of *Philosophical Investigations* itself. To see some differences and similarities with my own approach here, it is worth comparing Cavell's idea of the text of the *Philosophical Investigations* presenting us directly with a philosophy of culture with what Jacques Bouveresse says in his essay "'The Darkness of this Time': Wittgenstein and the Modern World." Bouveresse makes a sharp distinction between Wittgenstein the cultural thinker and Wittgenstein the philosopher who produces clean, objective results. So, finding no cultural remarks per se in, for example, the *Investigations*, he proceeds as though Wittgenstein's cultural outlook is essentially absent from the text. While it is true that Bouveresse does not explicitly reject Cavell's idea that a philosophy of culture might somehow be presented in the text of the *Investigations*, his practice in effect urges us to do just that. To this end, except for a brief discussion of the original context of the motto, Bouveresse remains entirely outside Wittgenstein's philosophical texts for his discussion of his cultural thought. For all their apparent differences, however, a point of intersection between Cavell and Bouveresse seems to me to be that there is little or no exploration of the possibility that Wittgenstein's philosophical texts and those texts where cultural topics are more explicitly taken up may shed light on each other. But I am not convinced that an adequate story about the cultural significance of Wittgenstein's philosophy can be found directly or conclusively in the *Investigations* or in any other writings. I am much more inclined to think that this understanding has to be teased out and that what one purports to discover in any given text is best supported by using material from other sources. This is the method I use here. While I agree with Cavell that remarks such as those found in *Culture and Value* don't "constitute Wittgenstein's claim to be a philosopher of culture," I do think that these and other remarks can go a long way toward helping us understand just what kind of a philosopher of culture he was. I also believe that properly interpreted in relation to his "philosophical remarks," they can be seen as containing philosophy themselves, especially as many of the remarks are long enough and coherent enough to stand on their own. Furthermore, some of these remarks are repeated in Wittgenstein's manuscripts and typescripts, sometimes over the span of several years, and display variant formulations by Wittgenstein, showing that he returned to them out of dissatisfaction with their original wording. All of this suggests to me that it would be mistaken to see these remarks as mere asides interspersed amongst properly philosophical remarks. See Stanley Cavell, "Declining Decline: Wittgenstein as a Philosopher of Culture," in his *This New yet Unapproachable America*, 52–75. See also Jacques Bouveresse, "'The Darkness of This Time': Wittgenstein and the Modern World."

22. It is difficult to tell whether this passage is an actual part of the sketch for a foreword or a comment on the sketch. At any rate, it is clear that it is connected to that sketch. See Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, 10, 11.

23. See the preface to Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Remarks*.

24. Ibid.

25. The same considerations hold, of course, for my use of recorded conversations and lecture notes. However, Norman Malcolm's report that Wittgenstein "said that he always regarded his lectures as a form of publication" should go a long way toward easing anxieties over the mere use of the latter. Malcolm, *Ludwig Wittgenstein*, 48.

26. Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, x.

I. INTERPRETING THE *TRACTATUS*

1. Wittgenstein, *Prototractatus*, 16. Throughout what follows, I generally stick to the translation of *Sinn* as "point" (sometimes substituting "goal" or "aim"). *Sinn* could also be translated as "sense" or "meaning," however, and each of these alternatives might give what Wittgenstein writes here a different inflection. In any case, I do not think this has any real consequences for my arguments.

2. Ibid.

3. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*, 3. Unless otherwise stated, I use the Pears and McGuinness translation. My amendment of the Pears and McGuinness translation of *"wovon man nicht reden kann, darüber muss man schweigen"* is a more colloquial rendering of Ogden's "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent." Pears and McGuinness's translation reads "what we cannot talk about we must pass over in silence."

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., 3–4.

6. Pears and McGuinness translate the German *überwinden* as "to transcend." I have amended this to the somewhat more prosaic "overcome," which is closer to the Ogden translation's "surmount." "Transcend" perhaps carries with it a transcendental flavor that is not necessarily warranted by the German.

7. I have omitted §4.1211, §4.1213, and §4.123 for reasons of space. I do not believe this adversely affects my discussion. See also the discussion of formal concepts from §4.126 to §4.1274.

8. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*, xxi.

9. The latter seems to have been Russell's own feeling on the matter. Gilbert Ryle epitomizes the attitude behind the "straightforward" interpretation, an attitude that insists simply on contradicting Wittgenstein, by reading much of the "nonsense" of the *Tractatus* as a set of philosophical theses. Ryle, in "Ludwig Wittgenstein," writes, "Now it is true that philosophical clarity is achieved in the acts of appreciating arguments rather than in propounding theorems. But is it true that all philosophical talk is nonsensical talk? Wittgenstein himself said very effective things, and talking effectively is not talking non-sensically." Besides Russell, those who have in one way or another taken this approach include Ramsey in his 1923 review of the *Tractatus* (reprinted in his *Foundations of Mathematics*, 270–286); Carnap, *The Logical Syntax of Language*, 282ff; and Max Black, *A Companion to Wittgenstein's Tractatus*, 378ff. More recently, see Peter Carruthers, *The Metaphysics of the Tractatus*.

10. In a letter to Schlick dated August 8, 1932, Wittgenstein leaves little doubt about his attitude to Carnap's approach: "I cannot imagine that Carnap should have so completely misunderstood the last sentences of the book and hence the fundamental conception of the entire book." See Nedo and Ranchetti, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Sein Leben in Bildern und Texten*, 255.

11. One may in fact attempt to introduce more than one distinction. P. M. S. Hacker, for example, makes a distinction between "overt" and "covert" nonsense. Overt nonsense is nonsense that can be immediately recognized as such. Gibberish is an example of overt nonsense. We may require philosophical analysis, on the other hand, to recognize something as a bit of

covert nonsense. As far as Hacker's work is concerned, my discussion here touches on his attempt to introduce a distinction into covert nonsense only. See Hacker, *Insight and Illusion*, 18.

12. Anscombe, *An Introduction to Wittgenstein's Tractatus*, 162. Peter Sullivan has criticized Cora Diamond for ascribing to Anscombe this idea that Wittgenstein wanted to convey inexpressible truths by means of nonsense. See Sullivan, "Ineffability and Nonsense," 200–202.

13. Anscombe, *An Introduction to Wittgenstein's Tractatus*, 162.

14. Hacker, *Insight and Illusion*, 54. D. F. Pears does not address the question of the role of nonsense in the book, but he does ascribe to Wittgenstein an ineffabilist view similar to the one described by Anscombe and Hacker: "When Wittgenstein made his selection from his copious exploratory notes and put the *Tractatus* together, his leading idea was that we can see further than we can say. We can see all the way to the edge of language, but the most distant things that we can see cannot be expressed in sentences because they are the preconditions of saying anything." See Pears, *The False Prison*, 146–147.

15. Hacker, *Insight and Illusion*, 18.

16. Diamond and Conant think that while it might be correct to attribute such a conception of logical syntax to Carnap, it is a mistake to attribute it to Wittgenstein. More recently, Hacker has argued that resolute interpreters have misrepresented Wittgenstein, Carnap, and Hacker himself. Although Hacker directs most of his criticisms at Conant specifically, he no doubt believes that many of them apply in spirit to Diamond and others as well. See Hacker, "Wittgenstein, Carnap, and the New American Wittgensteinians."

17. Hacker, *Insight and Illusion*, 19.

18. Ibid., 26. Here is a somewhat more recent statement by Hacker of the same basic view: "There are . . . many positive claims about the nature of logic made in the wake of [Wittgenstein's] criticisms of Frege and Russell. . . . These claims, and many more too, are backed with solid argument. . . . But none of these important claims is a bipolar proposition with a sense. All of them involve the use of formal concepts, and by the lights of the *Tractatus* they are illegitimate in as much as they try to say something that can only be shown." Hacker, "Was He Trying to Whistle It?" 369.

19. The original German reads as follows: "*Es gibt allerdings Unaussprechliches. Dies zeigt sich, es ist das Mystische.*" There is an important question, which I will mention here but not address in any detail, concerning whether Pears and McGuinness's translation of this passage has itself inclined some interpreters to give the kind of interpretation of the *Tractatus* that I am outlining. There is certainly nothing in the original German text that forces on us a reading that implies that the "Mystical" is composed of a plurality of distinct things that cannot be put into words but make themselves manifest. The passage can *at least* equally well be translated as: "There is indeed the inexpressible. This shows itself, it is the Mystical." I make note of this because the alternative translation I have given here is more consistent with approaches to the text (e.g., Diamond's) that I depend on for my own discussion, ones according to which Wittgenstein need not be read as trying to gesture at inexpressible truths at all. Michael Kremer discusses this issue in "The Purpose of *Tractarian* Nonsense," esp. 60–62.

20. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*, §5.621.

21. This is not to suggest, however, that Schopenhauer is the only thinker whose influence commentators purport to find in these passages.

22. Anscombe, *An Introduction to Wittgenstein's Tractatus*, 12.

23. Hacker, *Insight and Illusion*, 2.

24. Ibid, 81. Although Hacker's discussion of Wittgenstein and Schopenhauer focuses on the remarks on solipsism in the *Tractatus*, these are routinely connected by other authors to the remarks on value, which my discussion here focuses on. That Hacker would endorse making this connection seems to be implied in his reference to Wittgenstein's "notion of the mystical" having been molded by Schopenhauer. Wittgenstein's references to "the mystical" occur among the passages on ethics that I am discussing, not in those touching on solipsism. See also Gardner, "Schopenhauer and Wittgenstein," in his *Schopenhauer*, 275–282; Griffiths, "Wittgenstein and the Four-Fold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason," 1–20. Rudolph Haller and Allan Janik have each argued that the influence of Otto Weininger may be at least as important as Schopenhauer for understanding these parts of the *Tractatus*. Wittgenstein did, of course, read Weininger with great enthusiasm. But Weininger himself was in many ways an enthusiastic Schopenhauerian. In any case, for my purposes here, very little rides on whether Wittgenstein is directly treating Schopenhauerian themes, those themes as filtered through Weininger, or some of each. See Haller, "What Do Wittgenstein and Weininger Have in Common?" in his *Questions on Wittgenstein*, 90–99. See also Janik, "Wittgenstein and Weininger," in his *Essays on Wittgenstein and Weininger*, 64–95.

25. Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*. See especially the appendix, "Criticism of the Kantian Philosophy" (1:501–528). See also Schopenhauer, *The Four-fold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*, 164, 168, 172, 176–177. Whether or not Schopenhauer has interpreted Kant correctly on this matter is less relevant here than the fact that he does interpret him this way.

26. Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, 1:477–480; Schopenhauer, *The Four-fold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*, 145–164.

27. Schopenhauer, *The Four-fold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*, 164–180.

28. Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, 1:204–205.

29. Ibid., 1:389–392.

30. Ibid., book 3, *passim*, esp. 178–207.

31. See Anscombe, *An Introduction to Wittgenstein's Tractatus*, 11; See also G. H. von Wright's biographical sketch in Malcolm, *Ludwig Wittgenstein, a Memoir*, 5.

32. Wittgenstein, *Notebooks*, 72–73. I have retained the editors' parenthetical notes, which indicate the place in the *Tractatus* where the corresponding remark is to be found.

33. Ibid., 85. These last lines, where Wittgenstein refers to the spirit of the snake and lion, seem especially to bear Weininger's stamp. See Janik, "Wittgenstein and Weininger," n. 8.

34. Phillips Griffiths, in "Wittgenstein and the Four-fold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason," argues that such remarks should be read as places where Wittgenstein is reminding himself of orthodox Schopenhauerian doctrine and thus entering into a dialogue with Schopenhauer.

35. Wittgenstein, *Notebooks*, 85.

36.   Ibid., 83.

37.   Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*, §6.45.

38.   Wittgenstein, "Lecture on Ethics," 41.

39.   Anscombe, *An Introduction to Wittgenstein's Tractatus*, 171–172. Anscombe also notes that many of the passages on the Will in the *Notebooks* do, however, appear much closer to Schopenhauer. This is not the place to go through detailed interpretive contortions in order to demonstrate that, differences on topics such as the Will and the a priori not-withstanding, to these passages a coherent reading can be given in which Wittgenstein's remarks are seen as consistent with and even derivable from Schopenhauer's ontology and ethics. See Goodman, "Schopenhauer and Wittgenstein on Ethics," 437–447; Young, "Wittgenstein, Kant, Schopenhauer, and Critical Philosophy," 73–105. Goodman and Young have each done a rather nice job of working out the apparent logic of these Scho-penhauerian passages in the *Tractatus* and *Notebooks*. Nevertheless, I think that there are some serious difficulties with their interpretative approaches when it comes to Wittgen-stein's book. One problem, something that they share with many other commentators, concerns their handling of the *Notebooks*. There is no question that it is useful to read the *Notebooks* for a better understanding of the *Tractatus*. It is a dubious practice, however, to deal with them on the same textual level and to reconstruct whole arguments by extracting passages out of both.

40.   Janik and Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna*, 195. See also Hacker, *Insight and Illusion*, chap. 4.

41.   Quoted in Engel, "Schopenhauer's Impact on Wittgenstein," n. 88.

42.   It is certainly not the case that Schopenhauer is unable or unready to call a bit of language meaningless or nonsensical. On the contrary, one merely has to read his polemics against Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel to see that this is not so. Cf. Schopenhauer, *The Four-fold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*, 59–61. He even employs these categories as more formal terms of art. See Schopenhauer, *Essays and Aphorisms*, 59, 67. The point is rather that he does not hold his depictions of mystical experience to the same standards.

43.   Hacker, *Insight and Illusion*, 99–100. There is more than one way to understand Schopen-hauer's influence on Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus*. Though Schopenhauer plays a signifi-cant role in his interpretation, Pears does not attribute an idealist outlook to Wittgenstein, as Hacker does. On the contrary, he reads the *Tractatus* as an argument for a very strong version of realism. He maintains that Wittgenstein rejects Schopenhauer's metaphysics altogether while retaining its spirit. For Pears, the ineffable truths of the *Tractatus* do not concern things-in-themselves at all but rather have to do with the structure of the phenom-enal world. See Pears, *The False Prison*, 5–7.

44.   Hacker, *Insight and Illusion*, 107.

45.   Janik and Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna*, 198.

46.   Ibid., 195. Janik and Toulmin summarize the *Tractatus* as a "certain type of language mysti-cism" (197).

47.   I have already cited Pears and Janik and Toulmin in this regard. Other are: Maslow, *A Study in Wittgenstein's Tractatus*; Edwards, *Ethics Without Philosophy*; Hintikka and Hintikka, *Investigating Wittgenstein*; and Geach, "Saying and Showing in Frege and Wittgenstein."

48.   See Cora Diamond, "Frege and Nonsense," "Throwing Away the Ladder: How to Read the *Trac-tatus*," "What Nonsense Might Be," "Ethics, Imagination, and the Method of Wittgenstein's

Tractatus," "Criss-cross Philosophy," and "Logical Syntax in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*." See also Conant, "Must We Show What We Cannot Say?" "Throwing Away the Top of the Ladder," "Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein, and Nonsense," "Putting Two and Two Together," "Two Conceptions of *Die Überwindung der Metaphysik*," "The Method of the *Tractatus*," and (with Cora Diamond) "On Reading the *Tractatus* Resolutely."

49.   Conant, "The Method of the *Tractatus*," 398–405. Though I do not go into this issue here, it is interesting to note that while Hacker thinks that Wittgenstein's purported ineffabilist view is ultimately incoherent, his own way of explicating the *Tractatus* seems to lead him to a vigorous defense of the cogency, plausibility, and coherence of the views he finds in the book.

50.   Diamond, "Ethics, Imagination, and the Method of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*," 153.

51.   See note 16. Hacker has argued that his critics have misrepresented him, Wittgenstein, and Carnap. See Hacker, "Wittgenstein, Carnap, and the New American Wittgensteinians." Although Hacker directs most of his arguments at Conant specifically, he no doubt believes that many of them apply to Diamond and others as well.

52.   Diamond, "Throwing Away the Ladder," 200. Michael Kremer has argued that even tautolo-gies and equations can be regarded as having a meaning when they have a use in connection with sentences that say something, when, for example, they serve as shorthand guides for future inferences between significant propositions. See Michael Kremer, "Mathematics and Meaning in the *Tractatus*."

53.   Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*, §6.53. See also §5.473–5.4733.

54.   Diamond, "Ethics," 149.

55.   Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*, 3.

56.   Diamond, "Ethics, Imagination, and the Method of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*," 150.

57.   Conant, "Throwing Away the Top of the Ladder," 346. See also Conant, "Method," 424.

58.   Conant, "Putting Two and Two Together," 296.

59.   Kremer, "The Purpose of Tractarian Nonsense," 42. Diamond writes in a similar vein: "To throw the ladder away is, among other things, to throw away in the end the attempt to take seriously the language of 'features of reality.' To read Wittgenstein himself as not chickening out is to say that it is not, not really, his view that there are features of reality that cannot be put into words but show themselves. What is his view is that that way of talking may be useful or even for a time essential, but it is in the end to be let go of and honestly taken to be real nonsense, plain nonsense, which we are not in the end to think of as corresponding to an ineffable truth. "Throwing Away the Ladder," 181. Neither the passage from Kremer just quoted nor this one from Diamond—nor the one above where Conant speaks of explod-ing the philosopher's illusion from within—should be read as a summary of *the* resolute reading or of any particular resolute readings, if only because as of now there is no com-pleted resolute reading or readings of which it might be a summary. Conant and Diamond argue that a resolute reading of the *Tractatus* actually has very few core commitments. Taken together, these commitments amount primarily to a view about how the book ought *not* to be read, namely, "according to which the truths of the theory supposedly advanced in the body of the book prescribing what can and cannot make sense are themselves supposed to be necessarily ineffable." They stress that this kind of minimal commitment allows for mul-tiple and competing resolute readings (as in fact there are). Thus, "resolute reading" should be understood as indicating a starting point for reading the book, not for any single

interpretation. Even if Conant and Diamond think that this starting point is clearly superior to more standard approaches, they emphasize that any fully worked-out resolute reading has the obligation to provide the details of *how* various passages in the book fall apart when the reader tries to work through them, how, that is, that we end up with what Kremer calls here "strings of signs with only structural similarities to sensible argumentation." See Conant and Diamond, "On Reading the *Tractatus* Resolutely," 46–48.

60. Diamond, "Ethics, Imagination, and the Method of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*," 157–158.

61. Ibid., 159.

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid. Conant, in "The Method of the *Tractatus*," writes, along the same lines: "Thus what happens to us as readers of the *Tractatus*—assuming the work succeeds in its aim—is that we are drawn into an illusion of occupying a certain sort of a perspective. From this perspective, we take ourselves to be able to survey the possibilities that undergird how we must represent things as being, fixing what is 'logically' necessary and what is merely contingent. From this perspective, we contemplate the logical structure of thought as it is and imagine that we are also able to contemplate the possibility of its being otherwise. We take ourselves to be occupying a perspective from which we can view the logical structure of language 'from sideways on'" (422).

65. This comparison is based on Henry Allison's interpretation of the two "mathematical" Antinomies. See his *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, 35–38. I am not suggesting that the *Antinomies* are written with the same self-understanding as the *Tractatus*. I am merely making use of an interesting conceptual connection between their methods.

66. Diamond, "Ethics, Imagination, and the Method of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*," 160.

67. Ibid., 161. As I understand it, the *Tractatus* as a whole is not itself intended as an example of ethical nonsense, although it may contain instances of it, particularly in the §6.4s. That is, I take it that there can be a distinction between the overall ethical aim of the book itself, a book written for people of a particular philosophical bent, and the intentions behind self-aware utterances of ethical nonsense such as the kind Wittgenstein describes in the "Lecture on Ethics." As I will argue in the next chapter, one way of describing the ethical aim of the *Tractatus* is that its elucidatory sentences put the reader in touch with his impulse to speak ethical nonsense by clarifying his relationship to language. Presumably, this kind of elucidatory function need not be at work in most self-conscious utterances of ethical nonsense, although ethical nonsense may have a vital role to play when, like the *Tractatus*, a book is written with such an ethical point.

68. Ibid., 162.

69. Ibid., 161.

70. Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic*, 31. While Ayer's views on ethics were not contemporaneous with those of the early Wittgenstein, using his book as a contrast to Wittgenstein has the advantage that Ayer's presentation of ethics is both clear and quite well known. Without denying the differences among their positions, few of the positivists are more associated with the "positivist position on ethics" than is Ayer. Since his book contributed significantly to the misinterpretation of the *Tractatus* in the English-speaking world, there is, perhaps,

also something appropriate with using him as a foil to mark out the early Wittgenstein's views on ethics more clearly.

71. Ibid., 102.

72. Ibid., 108.

73. Ibid., 112.

74. Diamond, "Ethics, Imagination, and the Method of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*," 161.

75. Ibid., 76.

76. Wittgenstein, "Lecture on Ethics," 44.

77. Ibid.

78. Diamond, "Ethics, Imagination, and the Method of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*," 164.

79. Ibid., 168.

80. So long, that is, as we recognize that for Wittgenstein, unlike Kant, there is nothing like Reason to appeal to as a source for practical knowledge.

81. My use of "better" here is not merely intended as a polite gesture of philosophical modesty but as an acknowledgement that, while on the whole I find their work convincing enough to let it guide my discussion, there are challenges facing Diamond's and Conant's reading of the book. Some of these challenges concern so-called external evidence, that is, things Wittgenstein said or wrote that are relevant to interpreting the *Tractatus* yet that are not part of the book itself. For example, I find troubling what is said at *Philosophical Investigations* §46 about objects in the *Tractatus*. What Wittgenstein writes in "Some Remarks on Logical Form" (in Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Occasions*, 29–35) also seems difficult to reconcile with resolute approaches to the *Tractatus*, although there note that Wittgenstein strongly disavowed this paper almost immediately after it was written and apparently did so repeatedly later. At any rate, lest it seem that I assume that Diamond's and Conant's interpretation of the *Tractatus* can simply be insulated from the very possibility of being disconfirmed by external evidence, imagine one of Wittgenstein's close philosophical or personal confidants having recorded Wittgenstein making the following remark in conversation: "When I wrote the *Tractatus*, I thought that I could use nonsense to convey ineffable truths about the nature of thought, language, and reality. In particular, I believed it possible to lead a reader to see the necessary features of thought, language, and reality by the ways certain pseudosentences in the book violated the laws of logical syntax, specifically by the ways in which expressions belonging to certain syntactical categories were improperly combined in these pseudosentences. I later came to regard these ideas on based on false theories of logic and meaning." I would regard such a passage, or any passage relevantly resembling it, as providing excellent reasons for thinking that Diamond's and Conant's interpretations are untenable. Of course, in reality, evaluating the overall evidence for any textual interpretation is usually a much more piecemeal matter, involving putting together a total picture from many small bits of evidence. But it is, nevertheless, very significant to my mind that, in the extant external evidence regarding the *Tractatus*, there is nothing even remotely approaching the gold standard provided by my imagined example above that weighs against Diamond's and Conant's views, widespread prejudices to the contrary notwithstanding. Kremer addresses some of the external evidence toward the end of "The Purpose of Tractarian Nonsense" and in "The Cardinal Problem of Philosophy." The latter piece deals in particular with a 1919

letter from Wittgenstein to Russell that has been taken by some as obviously weighing against resolute readings. See Wittgenstein, *Cambridge Letters*, 68.

2. THE ETHICAL PURPOSE OF THE *TRACTATUS*

1. Diamond, "Throwing Away the Ladder," 179. In the second introduction to *The Realistic Spirit*, Diamond writes, "If we read the *Tractatus* as containing metaphysical claims about reality, if we take the metaphysics that we think we find in it to be joined with the idea that metaphysical claims cannot be put into genuine propositions, we shall miss entirely the character of Wittgenstein's later philosophy" (20). In both this passage and the one quoted above, I think Diamond overstates the connection between resolute readings of the *Tractatus* and therapeutic readings of Wittgenstein's later work. This is to say that it does not seem inconceivable to me that a reader could hold a standard reading of the *Tractatus* and a genuinely therapeutic reading of the *Investigations* yet still get much out of the later book, even by Diamond's own lights. The minimal requirement for combining these two possibilities would be the belief that *sometime* after finishing the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein came to see philosophy as a fundamentally therapeutic activity, even if it took him several years to work out what that idea came to when carried through thoroughly. Naturally, this would mean that one would understand Wittgenstein's later criticisms of his earlier work differently, depending on whether one held a standard or resolute reading of the *Tractatus*. One's understanding of *that part* of his later thought would depend crucially on how one read the earlier work. But Wittgenstein engages much more philosophy in his later writings than merely his former self. And so it seems to me unwarranted to insist that a resolute reading of the *Tractatus* is practically a requirement for a therapeutic understanding of his later work. All this being said, on the whole I do believe that resolute approaches to the *Tractatus* and therapeutic approaches to the later work do fit well together, do strengthen each other, and that the resolute-therapeutic lineage does make the most sense of much of the material I deal with here.

2. Diamond, "Throwing Away the Ladder," 200.

3. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*, §6.53. This means that even the sentences of the *Tractatus* are not *essentially* nonsensical. On the resolute reading, there is no such thing as a sentence's being essentially nonsensical. Nonsense results from our not giving a meaning to certain signs in our sentences. If we want to say that there is a "problem" with the sentences of the *Tractatus*, then we would have to say that those sentences are written in such a way so as to tempt us to think that we have given each of their constituent signs a meaning when in fact we have not done so. I have been helped here by discussion with Michael Kremer. Cf. *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*, §5.473, §5.4733.

4. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*, §6.53.

5. Kremer, "The Purpose of Tractarian Nonsense," 45.

6. Ibid., 47.

7. I also agree with Kremer when he writes: "The view that I will develop is, I think, suggested by scattered remarks in Diamond and Conant's many writings on the *Tractatus*. Still, I think

it is fair to say that neither of them has attempted a unified account of the purpose of Wittgenstein's use of nonsense." Ibid., 46.

8. What follows is by no means intended as a full account of intentionality.

9. Waismann, *Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle*, 68.

10. Wittgenstein, "Lecture on Ethics," 44.

11. Conant writes, "the premise underlying the procedure of the *Tractatus* (and this is connected to why the point of the work is an ethical one) is that our most profound confusions of soul show themselves in—and can be revealed to us through an attention to—our confusions concerning what we mean (and, in particular, what we fail to mean) by our words." Conant, "Method," 421.

12. My use of Heidegger in this chapter draws substantially on Hubert Dreyfus's *Being-in-the-World*. See also Richard Polt, *Heidegger: An Introduction*; and Stephen Mulhall, *Heidegger and* Being and Time. My discussion here follows Dreyfus especially closely in the way it presents Heidegger's exposition of resolute authenticity in *Being and Time* as containing a part that stresses Dasein's formal constancy vis-à-vis the average, everyday practices of the "they" and a part that includes a fuller exposition of authenticity in terms of anticipatory resoluteness and authentic historicality (see section 2.11, below). In a later paper, Dreyfus claims that the presentation of everydayness and authenticity in his commentary was marred by a failure to recognize Heidegger's two-staged uncovering of authenticity in division 2 of *Being and Time*. The first stage is characterized by Heidegger as an acknowledgment of guilt, where the German word *Schuld* brings out the sense of Dasein's indebtedness to the "they" for its average everyday understanding of things. Resoluteness at this stage captures what I've just called Dasein's formal constancy vis-à-vis the everyday, anyone practices of the "they." As we'll see below, this kind of resoluteness also makes it possible for Dasein to adapt creatively the practices of the "they" to the specifics of new situations. Dreyfus, citing the work of Theodore Kisiel, claims Heidegger develops this idea based on Aristotle's description of the man of practical wisdom (*phronimos*). These features of formal constancy are reflected to some extent in what Dreyfus says in his commentary concerning authentic Dasein's openness to the Situation. His point in the later paper is rather that his earlier discussion did not appreciate the full significance of Heidegger's description of guilt as this phenomenon gets interpreted in the light of insights already found in Aristotle's ethics. The second stage of authenticity, anticipatory resoluteness, involves Dasein's facing the full anxiety of death, which opens it up to getting a whole new understanding of itself and its world. Dreyfus argues that this stage of Heidegger's account develops out of his understanding of authentic temporality as that gets worked out in relation to the Pauline doctrine of the moment of conversion (*Augenblick*) in Luther and later in Kierkegaard. My argument in this chapter that it is helpful for understanding the ethical aim of the *Tractatus* to regard it as close in spirit and conception to formal authenticity in *Being and Time* does not explore the relevance of anything like Heideggerian *phronesis* for our understanding of early Wittgenstein's view of our relation to language. It does, however, seem to be an upshot of resolute readings of the *Tractatus* that coming to understand the ethical aim of the book would necessarily involve recognizing the different intentions behind coming out with either routine or creative uses of language (say, in science), on the one hand (both of these falling on the side of the public and ultimately

2

THE ETHICAL PURPOSE
OF THE *TRACTATUS*

2.1

The previous chapter served mainly to set the stage for my remaining discussion. As we saw, on a resolute reading, the ethical aim of the *Tractatus* is intimately connected to Wittgenstein's understanding and practice of philosophy as an activity whose goal is clarity rather than the establishment of philosophical truth or the refutation of philosophical theories. Indeed, the idea that Wittgenstein had as little desire to advance any sort of philosophical doctrine in the *Tractatus* as he did in his more mature philosophy is a point that resolute readers are particularly keen to emphasize as an important part of the continuity of his thought. On this point, Diamond remarks,

> Whether one is reading Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* or his later writings, one must be struck by his insistence that he is not putting forward philosophical doctrines or theses; or by his suggestion that it cannot be done, that it is only through some confusion one is in about what one is doing that one could take oneself to be putting forward philosophical doctrines or theses at all. I think that there is almost nothing in Wittgenstein which is of value and which can be grasped if it is pulled away from that view of philosophy. But that view of philosophy is itself something that has to be seen first in the *Tractatus* if it is to be understood in its later forms.[1]

One very important consequence of resolute readings is that after we have followed Wittgenstein's injunction at §6.54 to throw away the ladder of elucidatory nonsense that makes up the main body of the *Tractatus*, we should see that the only sentences with which we are left are *ordinary* sentences.[2] That is to say, we should see that the only sentences remaining with which we might *try* to say something are sentences that actually *do* say something, that is, the propositions of natural science, that is, sentences all of whose constituent signs have been given a meaning.[3] And, as Wittgenstein tells us, these sentences will have "nothing to do with philosophy" and so nothing to do with traditional ethics.[4]

At this stage, however, I think that one is still entitled to wonder about the *substance* of Wittgenstein's claim in the letter to Ficker. So far, the understanding we have seems largely negative, consisting mainly in a clearing away of misunderstandings about what kind of book the *Tractatus* is *not*. If Wittgenstein rejects *both* traditional philosophical ethics *and* the idea that there can be inherently "important nonsense" that manages somehow to "convey" or "gesture at" ineffable truths of ethics (in addition to gesturing at ineffable truths of logic or metaphysics), then how can we read the *Tractatus* as having an *ethical point*? Michael Kremer has made what I take to be roughly the same point. He argues that resolute interpreters have "to explain *why* Wittgenstein wrote a book consisting almost entirely of nonsense. *What* did he think he could accomplish through doing this?"[5] He adds, "Diamond suggests that the *Tractatus*'s aim will be achieved when the self-understanding of those attracted to philosophy leads to their losing that attraction. Yet this leaves one wondering what the source of this attraction *is*, and why bringing about the end of such an attraction is the aim of a book with an *ethical* purpose."[6] These kinds of questions are not pressing for interpreters such as Hacker; they have a ready answer: Wittgenstein wrote a book of nonsense in order to convey to his reader a number of ineffable truths about logic, metaphysics, and ethics. As we have seen, however, this is precisely the kind of answer that is not available to Diamond and like-minded interpreters of the *Tractatus*. I believe that Diamond does do more than merely point out that Wittgenstein hoped that the book would make philosophical nonsense unattractive to us. She also says that he thought that ethics would not lose its attractiveness to us merely through our recognition that it, too, was nonsense. Nevertheless, I agree with Kremer that she doesn't develop this point in much detail, and I think that Kremer is right in suggesting that this leaves us without an adequate sense of what Wittgenstein's ethical aim in writing the book might have been.[7]

This is the main question that I address in this chapter. I begin by taking a brief look at a difference between an ordinary way of thinking about conveying an intention and a difficulty for doing so in the context of reading the *Tractatus*. Most of the chapter is then taken up with articulating a way of understanding the ethical purpose of the *Tractatus* through comparison and contrast with certain themes from Heidegger's *Being and Time*. To this end, I first give a brief overview

of Heidegger's phenomenological account of anxiety, the "they," and authenticity. I then turn to Wittgenstein's remarks on causality and mechanics in the *Tractatus*, showing how reading those remarks in light of what he says in the "Lecture on Ethics" and elsewhere makes evident a way in which the book is engaged in a form of cultural critique that is central to its ethical point. Next, I bring out some striking and substantive parallels and points of connection between Heideggerian authenticity and the relation to language that the *Tractatus* aims to bring about. This leads to an examination of a paper in which Michael Kremer has argued that the ethical point of the book can be fruitfully seen in relation to Saint Paul's and Saint Augustine's writings on justification and to an examination of an interpretation worked out by James Conant, who has argued that the book shares important philosophical goals and methods with some of Kierkegaard's pseudonymous works. I argue that problems with Conant's interpretation of Kierkegaard make his comparison of the latter's thought with Wittgenstein's problematic and that these problems are likely sources of trouble for Kremer as well. Finally, I argue that the ethical point of the *Tractatus* is to reawaken us to a sense of wonder, a sense of wonder that is perhaps best thought of in religious terms, although not necessarily along confessional lines.

2.2

There is a straightforward, perhaps commonsense way in which an intention, a desire, for instance, can be expressed in an ordinary sentence.[8] I might, for example, express my desire for ice cream by saying "I would really like some ice cream now." In this case, one can go from the sentence expressing the desire back to the nature of the desire itself. The logical articulateness of the sentence, along with its context of use, let us see what the desire is and what implications or possible outcomes it has. But imagine having an impulse like the one Wittgenstein describes in the "Lecture on Ethics," the very essence of which consists in the desire *not* to make sense. If there really is no such thing as articulating a bit of nonsense, no articulating the inarticulate, and if Wittgenstein's impulse when it comes to ethics is to come out with nonsense, then it follows that there is no such thing as straightforwardly articulating such nonsense so as to get an understanding of his intention, no such thing as analyzing the sentence and working back to the intention. Does it follow that the would-be speaker of ethical nonsense cannot be understood and is in a hopelessly isolated predicament? For his part, Wittgenstein left no doubt about the importance that this "urge to run up against the limits of language" had for him.[9] He concluded the lecture with this remark: "Ethics

so far as it springs from the desire to say something about the ultimate meaning of life, the absolute good, the absolute valuable, can be no science. What it says does not add to our knowledge in any sense. But it is a document of a tendency in the human mind which I personally cannot help respecting deeply and I would not for my life ridicule it."[10] One would have to be exceptionally clear about the nature of this tendency or urge not to get confused about it. One would, for instance, constantly have to refrain from the temptation to make it seem like any ordinary desire, whose content could be given in an ordinary sentence.[11] That would mark confusion in oneself about what one really wanted to do when one felt the need to give expression to it. I believe that it was Wittgenstein's view that all (or most) people had within them the germ of such an impulse but that they had fallen into something like the confusion just mentioned.

In the everyday kind of cases just sketched above, understanding someone consists in our standing in relation to logical features of his utterance, such that we can be guided by these features directly to the intention behind the utterance, directly to the speaker himself, as it were. In the previous chapter, however, we read how the form that philosophical elucidation takes in the *Tractatus* could be seen as depending on particular uses of imagination, especially on how its sentences are constructed and arranged so as to make us feel the attraction of words suggesting a point of view for the philosophical investigation of the world as a whole. Our coming to see how a book consisting entirely of nonsense could be written with an ethical point is clearly different from the more ordinary kind of cases of understanding a speaker's intention. Necessarily, it is indirect.

I want to suggest also that if the ethical point of the *Tractatus* that Wittgenstein mentions in the letter to Ficker, what I take to be the intention that lies behind the writing of the book, cannot be articulated in terms of an ordinary sentence, then the only way that Wittgenstein can get us to understand his intention—and the only way that we might understand something similar in ourselves—is if something like this intention might already be in us, ready to be reawakened, as it were. Conveying this kind of intention, then, could not involve a mere assertion that the reader might grasp directly in order to see if he found the same in himself. Instead, we should see Wittgenstein's procedure as more of an *uncovering and a disentangling* of an intention in his reader, one with which all sorts of other ordinary intentions have been confused. We might only be able to approach this intention, however, through a kind of *via negativa*, by seeing in ourselves something left over, some impulse to keep going, when all the intentions connected to whatever can be said have been accounted for. With these thoughts in hand, I want to turn now to some central ideas in the early work of another twentieth-century philosopher.

2.3

Heidegger's project in *Being and Time* is to uncover and articulate the fundamental structures of human existence.[12] This attempt to arrive at the "meaning of Being of Dasein" (Heidegger's term for human being) was his way into the more ambitious (and ultimately abandoned) project of fundamental ontology, where the goal was to arrive at the "meaning of Being" in general.[13] An important conceptual-phenomenological distinction that Heidegger makes is that between what he calls "existential" (*existenzial*) and "existentiell" (*existenziell*). The first term, "existential," denotes a fundamental, ontological structure of human existence, while the second, "existentiell," refers to a particular instantiation of that structure, such as Dasein's interpretation of itself in a particular situation. "Existential" and "existentiell" thus form a complementary pair of terms.[14] A crucial ontological and methodological point for Heidegger to make concerns the connection between the *existential* structure of anxiety (*Angst*) and the *existentiell* possibility of authenticity (*Eigentlichkeit*). Heidegger calls anxiety a "ground mood" (*Grundstimmung*) and distinguishes it from the specific emotion of fear. Fear is always fear of some particular entity in the world.[15] On the other hand, "That in the face of which one has anxiety is Being-in-the-world as such."[16] He writes, in addition, that "Anxiety individualizes Dasein for its ownmost Being-in-the-world. . . . Therefore, with that which it is anxious about, anxiety discloses Dasein . . . as something individualized."[17]

Heidegger thinks that phenomenological reflection reveals that Dasein is a being who always brings to its activities a prereflective set of practices and ways of comporting itself that allow things to show up to it as intelligible. Heidegger calls this set of background practices an "Understanding-of-Being" (*Seinsverständnis*).[18] Anxiety, according to Heidegger, individuates Dasein by wrenching it out of its "fallenness" (*Verfallenheit*), its seamless absorption in the everyday world as this gets disclosed to it through the average, banal interpretations of these background practices by what Heidegger terms the "they" (*Das Man*). Indeed, Heidegger emphasizes that most of the time, Dasein understands not only the everyday world but even its own existence in terms of the "they-self":

> Dasein is for the sake of the "they" in an everyday manner, and the "they" itself articulates the referential context of significance. When entities are encountered, Dasein's world frees them for a totality of involvements with which the "they" is familiar, and within the limits which have been established by the "they's" averageness. . . . Proximally, it is not "I," in the sense of my own Self, that "am," but rather the Others, whose way is that of the "they." In terms of the

"they," and as the "they," I am given to "myself." Proximally Dasein is "they," and for the most part it remains so.[19]

Nevertheless, it is important not to misconstrue the "they" as some kind of evil spirit hanging over Dasein.[20] Heidegger wants to demonstrate, rather, that the "they" is an existential structure of Dasein, one that is necessary if there is to be a publicly intelligible world at all. He writes, "*The 'they' is an existentiale; and as a primordial phenomenon, it belongs to Dasein's positive constitution.*"[21]

To elaborate a bit further, Heidegger claims that attention to the way it is most of the time shows that, contrary to the philosophical tradition's bias toward theoretical reflection, Dasein is primarily an agent in a world of concrete involvements that are intelligible to it by virtue of its shared skills and background understanding. In order for these skills to function as such, however, they must, as it were, "recede into the background." For example, when I am skillfully driving a car with a manual transmission in busy city traffic, I don't need to be thinking about what I am doing. The clutch pedal, the stick shift, brakes, and steering wheel, if they are all working properly, become mere extensions of my body as I use them to navigate through town.[22] In these and similar cases, there is often no need for deliberate thought, or what Heidegger calls "thematic awareness." I may *in fact* be thinking about something, but this need not have any relevant connection with the task that I am engaged in at the moment. Indeed, in the kind of case that I have described, quite often to the extent that I am deliberating about my actions, I am not engaging the situation skilfully.[23] One needs, in some sense, to "forget" the skills in order for them to permit one to cope adequately with the world.

In fallenness, however, Dasein reveals a tendency, as Heidegger puts it, "not only to forget the forgotten, but to forget the forgetting itself."[24] Charles Guignon comments, "to say that we are prone to forgetfulness is to say that we have a tendency to become so preoccupied with the way things show up for us in our world that we lose sight of the background conditions . . . that first make it possible to encounter anything at all."[25] With such "second-order" forgetting, Dasein loses sight of the "first-order" forgetting, wherein the practices and skills recede to the background. When Dasein "forgets the forgotten," however, it becomes not merely absorbed but "fascinated." Heidegger calls such fallen fascination "inauthenticity": "'Inauthenticity' . . . amounts . . . to a quite distinctive kind of Being-in-the-world—the kind which is completely fascinated by the 'world' and by the Dasein-with of others in the 'they.'"[26] For our purposes here, the most important characteristic of the entities that Dasein encounters in its dealings with the world is that they have a fixed nature: a hammer *just is* a tool for carrying out various tasks, a dentist *just is* a professional who treats one's teeth, and so on.[27]

And, indeed, inauthentic Dasein interprets itself as essentially the bearer of some constellation of social roles that seem to confer on it an essential nature.[28] Inauthenticity, however, is not merely a matter of Dasein's embodying social interpretations and practices, because Heidegger sees these as a requirement for Dasein to have a world at all. Rather, in inauthenticity, one's relationship to such roles and practices is obscured in that one does not understand them for what they are.

Anxiety confronts Dasein with the understanding that none of these ways of being can give it any specific personal content, since they are anonymous, public, "anyone" ways of the "they-self" for comporting oneself.[29]

> [In anxiety], the totality of involvements ... discovered within-the-world, is, as such, of no consequence; it collapses into itself; the world has the character of completely lacking significance.[30]
>
> In anxiety what is environmentally ready-to-hand sinks away, and so, in general, do entities within-the-world. The "world" can offer nothing more, and neither can the Dasein-with of Others.[31]

Thus, somewhat paradoxically perhaps, Heidegger claims that Dasein is *individuated* in anxiety precisely by being wrenched out of its everyday world, thereby seeing that it has *no fixed identity* and *can have none*. Dasein sees clearly that all of the practices of the "they-self" are publicly interpreted anonymous practices and that all of the everyday objects and equipment by which it is surrounded are anyone's freeways, anyone's streetcars, anyone's telephone, and so on. It is precisely the understanding of these "anyone" practices *as such* that makes it manifest to Dasein *that* it is in a publicly interpreted world: "The utter insignificance which makes itself known ... does not signify that the world is absent, but tells us that entities within-the-world are of so little importance in themselves that on the basis of this *insignificance* of what is within-the-world, the world in its worldhood is all that still obtrudes itself."[32]

When faced with anxiety, Dasein has two *existentiell* possibilities: authenticity or inauthenticity. Authentic Dasein holds on to the insight that it has gained through anxiety concerning the general, leveled nature of the average background practices. Inauthentic Dasein, on the other hand, flees back into the "tranquilized" comfort of the "they."[33] Anxiety, Heidegger thus writes, "brings Dasein back from its falling, and makes manifest to it that authenticity and inauthenticity are possibilities of its Being."[34] When authentic Dasein holds on to anxiety, its new relation to the "they" need no longer be one of simply falling for the banal, rigid interpretations of its practices. Rather, in an authentic relation to the "they," Dasein can gain a new possibility, which Heidegger terms "resoluteness"

(*Ent-schlossenheit*).[35] Resolute Dasein maintains a kind of constant openness to new possibilities, and Heidegger's description of resoluteness militates against a reading in which it is interpreted as anything like an intentional choice made by a deliberating subject. "One would completely misunderstand the phenomenon of resoluteness if one should want to suppose that this consists simply in taking up possibilities which have been proposed and recommended, and seizing hold of them."[36] Rather, resoluteness should be understood more on the order of an openness to being called by anxiety: "'Resoluteness' signifies letting oneself be summoned out of one's lostness in the 'they.'"[37]

In resolute openness, Dasein no longer interprets itself as having an essence, given once and for all by the current roles and projects that it has taken over from the "they." More to our present point, since resolute Dasein no longer takes on the banal interpretations of the "they" as simply obvious and necessary but instead *as* practices, Heidegger claims that these same ordinary background practices allow things to show up for resolute Dasein in a more variegated and nuanced fashion. Specifically, resolute Dasein's openness affords it the possibility of responding to what Heidegger calls the "Situation": "The existential attributes of any possible resolute Dasein include the items constitutive for an existential phenomenon which we call a 'Situation' and which we have hitherto passed over."[38] In being open to the Situation, Dasein no longer encounters whatever or whoever constitutes its current involvement in a general, one-size-fits-all, banal way. Instead, resolute Dasein is called forth "into a clear and honest appreciation of where it is placed, of what it is that calls for decision, and away, therefore, from the They's facile interpretations which serve only to 'close off' the nature of its Situation."[39] To this extent, then, resolute Dasein is distinguished from the "they," since "the 'they' knows only the 'general situation.'"[40] It is crucial to appreciate, however, that resolute Dasein's projects are in principle no less shared and public than before. Rather, its openness to the Situation is ultimately dependent on its more sensitive relation to the average, everyday practices already available to it. Heidegger is clear that, although in resolute authenticity Dasein can realize its "ownmost potentiality for being," it in no way becomes, so to speak, more of a Dasein or in any way otherworldly. "Resoluteness, as authentic Being-one's-Self, does not detach Dasein from its world, nor does it isolate it so that it becomes a free-floating 'I.' ... Resoluteness brings the Self right into its current concernful Being-alongside what is ready-to-hand, and pushes it into solicitous Being with Others."[41] Moreover, because Dasein always finds itself in a concrete situation in the world, there is no need for Dasein to, as it were, "re-enter the world by *making* a resolution" or "to be called back to the world." Instead, Dasein can once again take up its projects, but in a way that manifests its essential nullity, that is,

without the illusion that these involvements and projects alone can give it an essential identity.[42]

Since that part of Heidegger's account of authenticity that I have summarized above does not yet indicate a way in which authentic Dasein's life might be any different from inauthentic Dasein's life in terms of content, we can understand it as concerning the *form* of Dasein's involvements in the world. What has been emphasized is the view that the "they" cannot provide Dasein with a telos of its own through which it might attain a unique differentiating content. Moreover, this aspect of Heidegger's description of authenticity does not distinguish between particular cultures in which Dasein may find itself but rather is meant to bring out a structural possibility of Dasein, regardless of its specific historical context. This involves Dasein's maintaining constancy in its life in terms of resolute openness toward the world and the ways of the "they." In saying, however, that a feature of authenticity for early Heidegger involves overcoming the tendency to live as though the leveled practices of the "they" could provide any personal meaning to one's life, one comes quite close to saying that the particular facts of the world to which resolute Dasein relates are not what is most important to this struggle. Authentic and inauthentic Dasein inhabit the same world, but their way of inhabiting that world differs. Heidegger writes, "The 'world' which is ready-to-hand does not become another one 'in its content,' nor does the circle of Others get exchanged for a new one; but both one's Being towards the ready-to-hand understandingly and concernfully, and one's solicitous Being with Others, are now given a definite character in terms of their ownmost potentiality-for-Being-their-Selves."[43] Staying open to anxiety thus lets Dasein take up its projects again authentically, not in the lostness of the "they," and win for itself a kind of life not possible for inauthentic Dasein. Heidegger writes, "Along with the sober anxiety which brings us face to face with our individualized potentiality-for-Being, there goes an unshakable joy in this possibility."[44] With this background in place, I now turn to bringing out some related themes in the *Tractatus*.

2.4

The mere idea of the *Tractatus* as engaged in a kind of cultural critique should not come as too radical of a suggestion. Indeed, as I will go on to argue, this critique is essential for understanding the book's ethical point.[45] There have, after all, been various proposals for reading *Philosophical Investigations* this way, an understanding that to some extent Wittgenstein himself encourages by, for instance, his choosing for the book's motto a line taken from a play by an Austrian cultural

critic and by his expression in the preface of his doubts about its reception in the "darkness of this time."[46] The idea gains in plausibility from the fact that Wittgenstein's sense of the philosophical significance of cultural matters and his sense of the state of Western culture were fairly constant from the time he wrote the *Tractatus* until the end of his life.[47] Of particular significance for him in this regard was what he saw as the distorting effect that causal-scientific modes of thought exerted on our understanding both in philosophy and in the broader intellectual and spiritual life of the West.[48] The two following passages are fairly representative of numerous remarks on this subject that one finds scattered throughout the *Nachlass*: "That is the fatal thing about the scientific way of thinking (which today possesses the whole world), that it wants to respond to every disquietude with an explanation"[49] and "The insidious thing about the causal point of view is that it leads us to say: 'Of course, it had to happen like that.' Whereas we ought to think: it may have happened like that—and also in many other ways."[50] Although Wittgenstein recorded these comments in 1933 and 1940 respectively, I will show how the attitude that they exhibit toward a particular way of thinking motivates the remarks concerning the law of causality and mechanics in the *Tractatus* and how this attitude is crucial for a proper understanding of what the book sets out to accomplish.[51]

In raising the possibility that the *Tractatus* engages in a form of cultural critique, I do not mean to suggest that it seeks to alter its readers' aesthetic taste (although it may have that consequence). Instead, I mean to point to the possibility that the book attempts to engage the self-understanding of a reader who is likely to come to it with a certain cast of mind that includes unexamined commitments from a particular cultural context. On my understanding of the overall method of the *Tractatus*, it stands to reason that this particular mode of engaging the reader would have to be part and parcel of the overall therapeutic aim of the book. Given both the continuity of Wittgenstein's cultural outlook and that outlook's continued significance for his work in philosophy, gaining a better understanding of what it is that obstructs the *Tractatus* from achieving its ethical and cultural aims should be an important step in assessing whether those aims might be more successfully integrated and pursued in a work like *Philosophical Investigations*.[52]

2.5

On May 6, 1930, Wittgenstein recorded this recollection in one of his manuscript books: "When I had the thought 16 years ago that the law of causality might in

itself be without content, and that there is a way of looking at the world that it does not envisage, I had the feeling of the dawn of a new epoch."[53] The recollection apparently refers to the spring of 1914, a period when Wittgenstein was living in Skjolden, Norway. Unfortunately, there is no mention of this insight in the small amount of written material that has survived from this time. He mentions the law of causality in a letter to Russell written in January 1914, but the point Wittgenstein makes there seems to be a quite different one from what he is talking about in the remark above.[54] The notes dictated to G. E. Moore in April 1914 make no mention of the law of causality at all.[55] But in the notebooks from which most of the text of the *Tractatus* would eventually be taken, we do find the following remarks, recorded on March 29, 1915, that seem to express at least an important part of the insight about the law of causality to which Wittgenstein is referring above. They read,

> The law of causality is not a law, but the form of *a* law.
>
> "Law of Causality" is a class name. And just as in mechanics—let us say—there are minimum laws—e.g., that of least action—so in physics there is a law of causality, a law of the causality form.
>
> Just as men also had an inkling of the fact that there must be *a* "law of least action," before precisely knowing how it ran.
> (Here, as so often happens, the *a priori* turns out to be something purely logical.)[56]

Apart from some minor changes, these remarks would eventually come to be §6.32, §6.321, and §6.3211, respectively, of the *Tractatus*. In addition to what these passages say concerning the law of causality, the §6.3s also tell us that Newtonian mechanics belongs to the class of causal laws specified by the law of causality, which we just saw Wittgenstein describe as a class name.[57] Moreover, the relation between mechanics and the description of the world that it yields is compared to the description one would obtain by laying a square mesh over a surface and then reading off whether any given square seen through the mesh is black or white. The individual scientific propositions one would obtain by imposing a unified form of description such as Newtonian mechanics on the world are then supposed to be understood by analogy with the color propositions obtained in the manner just described. In any case, whichever "mesh" of laws we choose to apply to the world for the purpose of describing it, just as the mesh is "*purely* geometrical; all its properties can be given *a priori*," so, too, because they provide an a priori form that our descriptions of the world take, the laws of mechanics are "purely logical," that is, without content.[58]

In the recollection quoted above, Wittgenstein makes a connection between his insight about the law of causality and "a way of looking at the world that it does not envisage." At *Tractatus* §6.45, we find such a way described:

> To view the world *sub specie æterni* is to view it as a whole—a limited whole.
>
> Feeling the world as a limited whole—it is this that is mystical.[59]

We don't need to assume that there must be some kind of logicodeductive relation, either between individual remarks of the *Tractatus* or between its various groupings of remarks, in order to suppose that there is philosophical significance in the placement of these words at the end of the §6.4s' treatment of ethics and in the fact that these remarks are placed immediately after the treatment of causality and mechanics in the §6.3s. But any uncertainty about the fact or significance of this relation is removed by Wittgenstein himself in the "Lecture on Ethics." There, we saw him describe his own "experience *par excellence*" of what he means by "absolute or ethical value" as an experience of wonder at the existence of the world.[60] Somewhat further on, now nearing the end of the lecture, he elaborates on this experience in a way that connects directly with my discussion:

> Let me first consider, again, our first experience of wondering at the existence of the world and let me describe it in a slightly different way; we all know what in ordinary life would be called a miracle. It obviously is simply an event the like of which we have never yet seen. Now suppose such an event happened. Take the case that one of you suddenly grew a lion's head and began to roar. Certainly that would be as extraordinary a thing as I can imagine. Now whenever we should have recovered from our surprise, what I would suggest would be to fetch a doctor and have the case scientifically investigated and if it were not for hurting him I would have him vivisected. And where would the miracle have got to? For it is clear that when we look at it in this way everything miraculous has disappeared; unless what we mean by this term is merely that a fact has not yet been explained by science which again means that we have hitherto failed to group this fact with others in a scientific system. This shows that it is absurd to say "Science has proved that there are no miracles." *The truth is that the scientific way of looking at a fact is not the way to look at it as a miracle.* For imagine whatever fact you may, it is not in itself miraculous in the absolute sense of that term. For we see now that we have been using the word "miracle" in a relative and an absolute sense. And I will now describe the experience of wondering at the existence of the world by saying: it is the experience of seeing the world as a miracle.[61]

The language Wittgenstein uses here to express his wonder has clear resonances with the language we find at *Tractatus* §6.45, where, as we just saw, he writes of the eternal view and mystical feeling of the world as a "limited whole" (*ein begrenztes Ganzes*). To help bring out the importance of the relation between what Wittgenstein says at §6.45 and what he says in the passage from the lecture, it will be useful to emphasize a difference between the meaning of the German expression that he uses to describe the world at *Tractatus* §1.1 and §1.12, "*eine Gesamtheit*" ("totality"), and the expression he uses elsewhere, "*ein Ganzes*" ("whole"). This contrast perhaps comes out less clearly in English than it does in German, where the sense of the former term tends to be that of a collection or heap of individuals (or individual facts, as the case may be), while the latter expression tends to have the holistic sense of being an organic unity. To speak of the world in the terms proper to being a totality is to speak of it in terms of discrete, contingently related facts and entities, while to talk of feeling the world as a limited whole is to talk of a feeling where one imagines the world as an organic unity in which everything has its place, where everything is as it should be, must be, necessarily. Whereas with a totality it makes perfectly good sense to speak of discrete events and entities as standing in comprehensible causal relations to one another, to view the world as a limited whole is to imagine there being no genuinely discrete events or entities in the first place and so no causal explanations of their relations.[62] Imagined from such a perspective, *whatever* happens in the world (and not merely what is exotic or temporarily inexplicable) must be regarded as both happening of necessity *and* as being miraculous. This (to some perhaps perverse) combination of the concepts of the necessary and the miraculous has clear overtones of a religious perspective from which it is natural to speak of regarding whatever happens in the world as being brought about by the will of almighty God, an image that Wittgenstein invokes later in the lecture when he says "But this allegory also describes the experience [of wonder] which I have just referred to. For [this] is, I believe, exactly what people were referring to when they said that God had created the world."[63] However we interpret Wittgenstein's understanding of expressions of wonder, his claim in the lecture that "we cannot express what we want to express and that all we *say* about the absolute miraculous remains nonsense" makes evident that he thought of the place they might have in our life as clearly distinct from the role played by ordinary scientific assertions.[64]

2.6

My discussion so far makes it clear that the "ethical point" of the *Tractatus* is closely connected to its attempt to achieve clarity about the difference between

what Wittgenstein describes in the ethics lecture as a way of regarding the world as a miracle and a way of understanding natural phenomena in causal-scientific terms. But, above, we also read Wittgenstein recall how his insight into the nature of the law of causality brought with it the feeling of the dawn of a new epoch, and in line with this I want to argue for the idea that there is an essential cultural dimension to this enterprise as well. I begin by looking at *Tractatus* §6.371–§6.372, which I think provide some strong, textual support for the idea that a particular sort of cultural critique has a significant role to play in the book.

> The whole modern conception of the world (*die ganze moderne Weltanschauung*) is founded on the illusion that the so-called laws of nature are the explanations of natural phenomena.
>
> Thus people today stop at the laws of nature, treating them as something inviolable, just as God and Fate were treated in past ages.
>
> And in fact both are right and both wrong: though the view of the ancients is clearer in so far as they have a clear and acknowledged terminus, while the modern system tries to make it look as if *everything* were explained.[65]

It may be tempting to interpret these passages as *denying* that the laws of nature really *are* the explanations of natural phenomena. But the remarks can also be taken as posing a challenge to the reader to try to make sense of the expression "explanation" as it occurs here.[66]

On the one hand, it is far from obvious what is wrong with regarding the laws of nature as explanations, because of course there are very harmless ordinary contexts in which they *can* function as explanations of natural phenomena. If someone were to ask me why a ball falls in the way it does, there is nothing wrong if I answer, "Because of the law of gravity." This answer won't necessarily mean the end of the discussion, but that it *could* (perhaps after a bit more filling out) shows that there are contexts where invoking a law of nature is accepted as providing an explanation. Naturally, it may be that my invoking a law of nature as an explanation is not accepted, even with some elaboration. It is conceivable that the person who asks me the question might respond by saying "No, that's not right. I don't believe your explanation!" Whether I find this response strange or irritating, and however I choose to go on from there (perhaps I offer different kinds of support for my explanation), there is no doubt that this person's denial of the truth of the law of gravity is not somehow self-contradictory. Furthermore, the fact that it is possible for her to reject the law of gravity as part of my explanation shows how it is functioning here as a full-blown proposition with a sense.[67] In a different context, however, the law of gravity might play a very different role. If I were teaching

a high-school physics class and a student were to ask me to explain why a ball of a certain mass that is shot straight up into the air with a certain initial velocity takes a certain amount of time to return to the earth's surface, I may derive the answer from the law of gravitation (or a simplified version of it), and this answer might be all that is required of my explanation. There may be no need to *assert* the law of gravity before proceeding with my derivation, and one way of understanding this is to see that in this case the law of gravity is not so much functioning as a substantive part of my explanation as it has *already been accepted* as providing the *form* of the propositions that will constitute my explanation.

I take the upshot of the instability of "explanation" in §6.371–§6.372 to be to bring out how we moderns want to have it both ways. We want the laws of nature to function as true assertions with explanatory force, as the law of gravity does in the first context, *and* we want them to have the kind of logical necessity they have when they function as the law of gravity does in the second context.[68] Passages §6.371–§6.372 can thus be read as part of Wittgenstein's attempt to deconstruct what he sees as a characteristically modern illusion that we can have it both ways, an illusion belonging to the same family as superstitious belief in the causal nexus.[69] The "clarity" of the ancients, then, seems to have consisted in this: that while they perhaps believed God's power could explain the facts, it is really we moderns who try "to make it look as if *everything* were explained" by treating the laws of nature as though they could magically explain both the facts and "the logic of the facts."[70]

We find further evidence for thinking that a kind of cultural project is integral to the *Tractatus* in a long remark recorded on November 11, 1930, where Wittgenstein criticizes the nineteenth-century social theorist Ernst Renan.

> In Renan's "Peuple d'Israël" I read: "Birth, sickness, death, madness, catalepsy, sleep, dreams, all made an immense impression and, even nowadays, only a few have the gift of seeing clearly that these phenomena have causes within our constitution."
>
> On the contrary there is absolutely no reason to wonder at these things, because they are such everyday occurrences. If primitive men can't help but wonder at them, how much more so dogs and monkeys. Or is it being assumed that men, as it were, suddenly woke up and, noticing for the first time these things that had always been there, were understandably amazed?—Well, as a matter of fact we might assume something like this; though not that they become aware of these things for the first time but that they do suddenly start to wonder at them. But this again has nothing to do with their being primitive. Unless it is called primitive not to wonder at things, in which case the people of today are

> really the primitive ones, and Renan himself too if he supposes that scientific explanation could remove (*heben*) wonderment.
>
> As though lightning were more commonplace or less astounding today than 2,000 years ago.
>
> Humans have to awaken to wonder—and so perhaps do peoples. Science is a way of sending him to sleep again.
>
> In other words it's just false to say: Of course, these primitive peoples couldn't help wondering at everything. Though perhaps it is true that these peoples *did* wonder at all the things around them.—To suppose they couldn't help wondering at them is a primitive superstition. (It is like supposing that they *had* to be afraid of all the forces of nature, whereas we of course have no need to be afraid. On the other hand we may learn from experience that certain primitive tribes are very strongly inclined to fear natural phenomena.—But we cannot exclude the possibility that *highly* civilized peoples will become liable to this very same fear once again; neither their civilization nor scientific knowledge can protect them against this. All the same it's true enough that the *spirit* in which science is carried on nowadays is not compatible with fear of this kind.)[71]

I read Wittgenstein to be claiming here that it is nothing more than a modern prejudice to assume, as Renan does, that the wonderment with which the Israelites beheld the phenomena of birth, death, dreams, and so on was necessarily a common feature of their humanity and ours, some kind of primitive version of our scientific curiosity, so that we can simply take for granted that this wonderment is, as it were, smoothly continuous in its evolution with the goals of modern scientific explanation. Rather, their wonderment may have belonged to an altogether different way of inhabiting and seeing the world.[72]

I have quoted this long passage in full because I think it brings out two extremely important points. First, there is its clear implication that there is nothing in the content of modern science itself that is incompatible with wonder but that something about the cultural climate in which science takes place blocks a reawakening to wonder. Second, given the striking parallels between the wording of this passage and the wording of much of the ethics lecture, as well as the equally striking parallels between the "primitive peoples" and "people of today" spoken of here and the "ancients" and the "modern system" spoken of at *Tractatus* §6.371–§6.372, there are compelling reasons not only for thinking that clarity concerning the nature of causal-scientific explanation was essential to the ethical aim Wittgenstein claimed for the *Tractatus* in his letter to Ficker, an aim that it now appears reasonable to understand as intimately connected to reawakening us to the possibility of wonder, but also that the book was written with the awareness

that this endeavor only makes sense if understood in a particular historical and cultural context.[73] Specifically, this means clearing away certain cultural prejudices that Wittgenstein thought were embedded in confusions about the nature of scientific explanation. Now we read at *Tractatus* §6.53:

> The correct method in philosophy would really be the following: to say nothing except what can be said, i.e. propositions of natural science—i.e. something that has nothing to do with philosophy— and then, whenever someone else wanted to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate to him that he had failed to give a meaning to certain signs in his propositions.[74]

While the claim here is that only the propositions of natural science say something, it is clear from what Wittgenstein says at the end of his "Lecture on Ethics" that he did not believe it followed from this that we need to confine ourselves to those expressions. On the contrary, it is only when we (moderns) become clear about what we want to do when we use sentences that say something that we will also have clarity about the very peculiar impulse to give expression to wonder. This is why in the lecture Wittgenstein also claims that he would reject any analysis that succeeded in making sense of an ethical utterance *on the very grounds of its significance*.[75] For, by his lights, to imagine such an analysis betrays a failure (and a failure that he thought passed for common sense in the modern West) to recognize the distinct natures of these two intentions. The book thus tries to lead its reader to understand that while the propositions of natural science may exhaust the propositions of meaningful language, and while it is the essence of meaningful language that making an ordinary assertion cannot give expression to wonder at the world, this understanding need not lead us to rationalize away the impulse to express wonder.

But what might help to prevent expressions of an intention to speak ethical nonsense from being confused with ordinary "anyone" sentences expressing ordinary intentions? How can these expressions be marked off from "all the claptrap about ethics—whether intuitive knowledge exists, whether values exist, whether the good is definable"?[76] On the one hand, the first part of a passage from Waismann's notes suggests that one could avoid confusion here simply by keeping quiet: "Is talking essential to religion? I can well imagine a religion in which there are no doctrinal propositions, in which there is thus no talking."[77] On the other hand, the second part of the passage, while reaffirming this possibility, also makes clear the importance of attention to context in those cases where we choose not to remain silent: "Obviously the essence of religion cannot have anything to do with the fact that there is talking, or rather: when people talk, then this itself is part of a

religious act and not a theory. Thus it also does not matter at all if the words used are true or false or nonsense."[78] As Diamond has argued, there is no way of categorizing nonsense into various kinds; all that can give a particular nonsensical sentence its "ethical significance" is its particular external circumstances, including the intentions of the speaker and various ways in which she might signal that her utterance is not intended to be taken as a straight-out declaration of fact. Attention to the way an utterance is framed by other words, for example, may lessen our temptation to take it seamlessly out of context and pass it on as an ordinary assertion. Take "I am inclined to say 'I am safe, nothing can injure me whatever happens.'" Reported directly, "Wittgenstein said 'I am safe, nothing can injure me whatever happens'" is simply nonsense: it has the form "Wittgenstein said 'p,'" where "p" makes no sense. It is true, however, that the sentence "Wittgenstein said 'I am inclined to say, "The goodness of life does not depend on things going this way or that"'" is *not* nonsense. But the hope is that the "I am inclined to say" part of this sentence will flag the (at least somewhat alert) listener's attention in such a way that he'll be less tempted to take this utterance for a report where Wittgenstein asserts "I am safe, nothing can injure me whatever happens." That is to say, the listener will be warned off of passing this utterance on seamlessly as something Wittgenstein *said*, as something that he the listener agrees with or disagrees with; he won't ask whether it's really true, won't ask "Who does Wittgenstein think he is anyway? How could he possibly know *that*?" He might even respond to this "I am inclined to say" by asking, for instance, "Where was Wittgenstein when he said this, what was his mood like? What else was going on? What is this inclination?" Inquiring into the circumstances of the utterance in this way might bring him to treat it differently from an ordinary utterance, and of course treating it differently might just mean coming to think that Wittgenstein is sounding off again incomprehensibly. That would, at any rate, be a far more perceptive response than taking the utterance as obviously and unproblematically accessible to oneself and others, as just one more assertion on which everyone is free to offer his or her opinion.

2.7

I now want to articulate a point of deep philosophical resonance that I find between, on the one hand, an understanding of Dasein's fundamental structure, which Heidegger's phenomenology is supposed to impart to his reader, and, on the other hand, an insight into our relation to language, to which Wittgenstein aims to lead his reader by way of his employment of elucidatory nonsense. The

resonance consists in this: Heidegger wants to show how anxiety makes authenticity possible for Dasein by revealing to it that the average, everyday understanding and self-interpretations in which it is immersed cannot in themselves satisfy its apparent need for a stable unique identity and a differentiated world of its own.[79] Anxiety lets Dasein see instead that the ordinary background practices of the "they" are actually anonymous, "anyone" ways of understanding itself and its world. Analogously, Wittgenstein wants his reader to see that once the Tractatus's ladder of elucidatory nonsense has been thrown away, all that remain are the ordinary, anonymous, "anyone" sentences of natural science. But this clarification of language is at the same time a clarification of the impulse to run up against its limits and so opens for a clarified, authentic experience of wonder with the realization that these "anyone" sentences cannot give this impulse any support or justification.[80] Quite the contrary. As we saw, Wittgenstein makes clear in the "Lecture on Ethics" that these sentences, as publicly intelligible descriptions of states of affairs in the world and when regarded from the perspective of wonder, must be rejected on the grounds of their own significance. These are important and difficult connections that I will try to make clearer.

Heidegger interprets anxiety as an existential ground mood that makes manifest to Dasein that the world as it is articulated and interpreted in terms of the average understanding of the "they" is incapable of providing it with anything like a set of meaningful distinctions having essential reference to it as a unique person. By bringing this to light, anxiety individuates Dasein, lifting it out of its everyday lostness in the "they" and making it possible for it to take up its projects in resolute authenticity, where so far this has been distinguished from inauthenticity not so much by the facts that constitute its world but by the character of authentic Dasein's relation to those facts. Now a central thrust of resolute interpretations of the Tractatus involves reading the book as abandoning the search for any special moral and aesthetic facts, either in the "empirical" world or in any "noumenal" domain. On these readings, Wittgenstein thought that the search for such special facts showed a kind of confusion about language that was symptomatic of a deeper confusion about what was essential to what he wanted to call "ethics." I think that part of reading the Tractatus this way involves the idea that it is essential to the book's "ethical point" that the reader come to see that the meaning of any (ordinary) sentence does not depend on who utters it or on her attitude or intention in doing so. Nor does the meaning of a sentence depend on there being any facts that one might be tempted to say have a "special relation" to some people but not others. If this is true, then the facts encountered by someone who is clear about the nature of the proposition, the person who sees that any sentence that makes sense is unsuitable for expressing "absolute value" or "anything that

is higher," are the same facts as those encountered by someone who is not. This is because there simply are no special facts to which the Tractatus tries to draw our attention.

Thus, the ethical aim of the Tractatus that Wittgenstein hoped his employment of elucidatory nonsense would achieve should be understood as a change in the reader's self-understanding through a change in her relationship to language. Viewing this change in self-understanding through the prism of Heidegger's description of authenticity leads me to suggest further that we understand this change in self-understanding as specifically involving the isolation and clarification of the nature of the reader's impulse to "run up against the limits of language," her desire for something more than the ordinary, "anyone" sentences of natural science could give her. I think it is also true to say that this clarity would necessarily have an individualizing effect on such a person. For if the "anyone" sentences of ordinary language are seen in this way, then naturally discovering that one had an impulse to somehow go beyond them cannot help but in some sense set one apart from them.[81] With this in mind, it is worth returning again to what Wittgenstein described in the "Lecture on Ethics" as his own "experience par excellence" of an urge to run up against the limits of ordinary language. He said, "I believe the best way of describing it is to say that when I have it I wonder at the existence of the world."[82] A bit later, he describes this experience again: "And I will now describe the experience of wondering at the existence of the world by saying: it is the experience of seeing the world as a miracle." He then immediately adds a further description: "Now I am tempted to say that the right expression in language for the miracle of the existence of the world, though it is not any proposition in language, is the existence of language itself."[83] There are two points that I would like to make against the backdrop of this quotation. The first concerns a connection between authenticity and the ethical aim of the Tractatus that I have already mentioned, where I suggested that a person's clarity about the impulse to go beyond the "anyone" sentences of ordinary language would have an individualizing effect on that person. I suggest here that we regard the words Wittgenstein uses to describe his experience as an example of the very sort of individual psychological distance to the sentences of ordinary language that I was talking about. We see this distance manifest in his temptation to say that the right expression for the miracle of the world is no proposition in language but the existence of language, the totality of language itself. It is important that I emphasize what I am not attributing to Wittgenstein here. I am not attributing to him the claim that such experiences involve a synoptic view of the totality of language that would enable him to arrive at and somehow communicate sublime truths about logic, language, and the world. That would be to smuggle in the very view of Wittgenstein

that I take Diamond and others to have rightly rejected. That is why I have couched my discussion in psychological and not epistemological terms, and it is probably also why immediately after the remark quoted above, Wittgenstein adds, "for all I have said by shifting the expression of the miraculous from an expression by means of language to the expression by the existence of language, all I have said is again that we cannot express what we want to express and that all we say about the absolute miraculous remains nonsense."[84] The second point concerns what I will call a "reciprocal clarity" that I believe Wittgenstein thinks lies at the root of such experiences. The reciprocity concerns both clarity about the nature of ordinary sentences and clarity about one's impulse to transcend them. Clarity about either entails clarity about the other.[85] In *Being and Time*, Heidegger is trying to uncover anxiety as something that calls us to clarity about our relationship to the anyone practices of the "they." Living in this clarity is what he calls authenticity. My claim here is that Wittgenstein's attempt in the *Tractatus* to clarify language and the impulse to go beyond its limits and Heidegger's attempt in *Being and Time* to uncover anxiety as a source of understanding into Dasein's fundamental structure ought to be seen as serving what are in central respects the same philosophical end.[86]

2.8

At this point, I want to address what might be a nagging concern even for those who are generally sympathetic to my attempt to draw certain lines of philosophical contact between the early Wittgenstein and the early Heidegger. As I have been trying to articulate it so far, this contact concerns the nature of Wittgenstein's attempt to clarify what we heard him call in the "Lecture on Ethics" a "tendency of the human mind" to express wonder (a tendency whose clarification I have argued we see as essential to the ethical aim of the *Tractatus*) and Heidegger's attempt to reveal anxiety as a phenomenon that clarifies our relationship to the anyone practices of the "they-self." Now, quite apart from the oddity that some may find in my bringing into contact two books with such different forms and methods as the *Tractatus* and *Being and Time*, the nagging concern has to do with the fact that the point of contact I try to bring out between wonder and anxiety would seem to point to very different phenomena. For, it might be thought, given the positive feelings we commonly associate with "wonder" and the negative feelings we commonly associate with "anxiety," these two expressions would seem to point to two quite distinct and in some respects even opposing phenomena. Indeed, the second description that Wittgenstein gives in the "Lecture on

Ethics" of what he calls an "experience of absolute or ethical value" is what he calls the "experience of feeling absolutely safe." Heidegger, on the other hand, tells us repeatedly that Dasein does not heed the clarifying call of anxiety but instead flees back into the inauthentic, tranquilized ways of "the they." What I want to do now in addressing this concern is to show that there is in fact no genuine problem here with the way in which I have brought Wittgenstein and Heidegger into contact. In fact, addressing this concern actually strengthens the plausibility of their philosophical contact as I have laid it out so far.[87]

First, we should recall this description that Heidegger gives of a life led in resolute authenticity: "Along with the sober anxiety which brings us face to face with our individualized potentiality-for-Being, there goes an unshakable joy in this possibility." Heidegger provides a slightly reformulated but substantially similar description in his inaugural lecture "What Is Metaphysics?" given in Freiburg in July 1929. There he says: "the anxiety of those who are daring cannot be opposed to joy or even to the comfortable enjoyment of tranquilized bustle. It stands—outside all such opposition—in secret alliance with the cheerfulness and gentleness of creative longing."[88] If anxiety goes with unshakable joy and is in secret alliance with the cheerfulness and gentleness of creative longing, it is evidently far from an unambiguously "negative" phenomenon.[89] More telling is that in *Being and Time* Heidegger actually implies a close link between anxiety and wonder. The link goes through the contrast Heidegger points out between wonder and curiosity. He writes, "In not-staying, curiosity makes sure of the constant possibility of *distraction*. Curiosity has nothing to do with the contemplation that wonders at being, *thaumazein*, it has no interest in wondering to the point of not understanding. Rather, it makes sure of knowing, but just in order to have known."[90] Curiosity, moreover, is described by Heidegger as a mode of inauthenticity:

> Curiosity . . . does not make present what is objectively present in order to *understand* it, staying with it, but it seeks to see *only* in order to see and have seen. . . . Greed for the new indeed penetrates to something not yet seen, but in such a way that making present attempts to withdraw from awaiting. Curiosity is altogether inauthentically futural, in such a way that it does not await a *possibility* but in its greed only desires possibility as something real.[91]

If wonder is incompatible with inauthenticity, which is characterized by Dasein's fleeing anxiety through distraction, it must have some connection to authenticity, which requires that Dasein remain open to anxiety. Indeed, Heidegger makes this connection explicit in "What Is Metaphysics?" where he claims that *anxiety makes wonder possible* by revealing the nothing (*Das Nichts*) in the ground of

Dasein and that it is only on the ground of wonder that we pose "the basic question of metaphysics which the nothing itself impels: 'Why are there beings at all, and why not rather nothing?'"[92] In Heidegger's case at least, the concern that the expressions "wonder" and "anxiety" must denote incompatible phenomena, because of various associations we might have with them, is groundless; quite the opposite turns out to be the case.

If we turn now to Wittgenstein, we see that not everything he says in the "Lecture on Ethics" about these matters invites us to have purely "positive" associations with the "tendency of the human mind" to speak ethical nonsense. In addition to characterizing what he calls his experience of ethical value as "wonder at the existence of the world" and as the experience of "feeling absolutely safe," he also describes this experience in a third way, as feeling guilty, which he glosses as the feeling that "God disapproves of our conduct."[93] Furthermore, the passage I have quoted above where he criticizes Renan suggests that Wittgenstein sees a close connection between the feeling of wonder and a particular sort of deep-seated fear of natural phenomena.[94] Significantly, the passage makes it clear that he does not think that what he describes as an inclination to fear natural phenomena often found among "primitive peoples" has any necessary connection to scientific ignorance, since he also says that peoples from scientific cultures might also, once again, become liable to this same kind of fear (and wonder) if their science were carried on in a different spirit.

Elaborating the connection Wittgenstein sees between a certain kind of fear and wonder will strengthen the connections I am trying to make between an aspect of Heideggerian authenticity and Tractarian ethics. In section 2.2, I described how the ethical aim of the *Tractatus* required a kind of indirect uncovering or disentangling of an intention in the reader to speak ethical nonsense. This requirement pertained to the peculiar nature of the intention itself. Now, it may not seem as though getting clear about such an impulse would be something we would naturally want to flee or avoid, especially if one describes the experience behind the inclination as "wonder at the existence of the world." But, from the perspective on human life from which the *Tractatus* is written, it looks as though we (especially we moderns) often do, in fact, resist staying open to wonder and the impulse to express it without interposing a philosophical justification. On December 30, 1929, a few weeks after the "Lecture on Ethics," Waismann recorded Wittgenstein as remarking, "The inclination, the running up against something, *indicates something*: St. Augustine knew that already when he said: 'What, you swine, you want not to talk nonsense! Go ahead and talk nonsense, it does not matter!'"[95] Wittgenstein seems to echo this thought many years later when he writes "Don't for heaven's sake, be afraid of talking nonsense! But you must pay

attention to your nonsense."[96] The connection I now want to elaborate concerns Wittgenstein's understanding and appropriation (both in the *Tractatus* and in the "Lecture on Ethics") of descriptions of a certain class of experiences, descriptions that are found in some of those works that had the most profound influence on his philosophical imagination.

Perhaps most relevant among these works for my discussion here is William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*, a book that Wittgenstein read with enthusiasm as a young man and that he continued to recommend to friends and students later in life. In a 1912 letter to Russell, Wittgenstein writes:

> Whenever I have time I now read James' "Varieties of Religious Experience." This book does me *a lot* of good. I don't mean to say that I will be a saint soon, but I am not sure that it does not improve me a little in a way in which I would like to improve *very much*: namely I think that it helps me to get rid of the *Sorge* (in the sense in which Goethe used the word in the 2nd part of *Faust*.)[97]

James's book is famously full of detailed descriptions of conversion experiences. I quote at length here James's introduction to one of these descriptions, followed by the description of the experience itself:

> Let us turn now to the feelings which immediately fill the hour of the conversion experience. The first one to be noted is just this sense of higher control. It is not always, but it is very often present.... The need of such a higher controlling agency is well expressed in the short reference which the eminent French Protestant Adolphe Monod makes to the crisis of his own conversion. It was at Naples in his early manhood, in the summer of 1827.
>
> My sadness, he says, was without limit, and having got entire possession of me, it filled my life from the most indifferent external acts to the most secret thoughts, and corrupted at their source my feelings, my judgement, and my happiness. It was then that I saw that to expect to put a stop to this disorder by my reason and my will, which were themselves diseased, would be to act like a blind man who should pretend to correct one of his eyes by the aid of the other equally blind one. I had then no resource save in some influence from without. I remembered the promise of the Holy Ghost; and what the positive declarations of the Gospel had never succeeded in bringing home to me, I learned at last from necessity, and believed, for the first time in my life, in this promise, in the only sense in which it answered the needs of my soul, in that, namely, of a real external supernatural action, capable of giving me thoughts, and taking them away from me, and exerted on me by a God as truly master of my heart as

he is of the rest of nature. Renouncing then all merit, all strength, abandoning all my personal resources, and acknowledging no other title to his mercy than my own utter misery, I went home and threw myself on my knees, and prayed as I never yet prayed in my life. From this day onwards a new interior life began for me: not that my melancholy had disappeared, but it had lost its sting. Hope had entered into my heart, and once entered on the path, the God of Jesus Christ, to whom I then had learned to give myself up, little by little did the rest.[98]

Compare this description to a passage from Schopenhauer already cited in chapter 1, the kind of passage with which Wittgenstein will certainly have been familiar:

The storm howls, the sea roars, the lightning flashes from black clouds, and thunder-claps drown the noise of storm and sea. Then in the unmoved beholder of this scene the twofold nature of his consciousness reaches the highest distinctness. Simultaneously, he feels himself as individual, as the feeble phenomenon of will, which the slightest touch of these forces can annihilate, helpless against powerful nature, dependent, abandoned to chance, a vanishing nothing in face of stupendous forces; and he also feels himself as the eternal, serene subject of knowing, who as the condition of every object is the supporter of the whole world, the fearful struggle of nature being only his mental picture or representation; he himself is free from, and foreign to, all willing and needs, in the quiet comprehension of the Ideas. This is the full impression of the sublime.

Before or during the time when he wrote the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein would have encountered descriptions of mystical or conversion experiences in many writers besides James and Schopenhauer.[99] Like James, what interested Wittgenstein was not the "cognitive significance" of these experiences or their descriptions. What struck both men as significant above all was the persistent recurrence of such descriptions in the annals of human thought.[100]

Here I want to draw attention to a particularly striking feature that these descriptions share with each other as well as with Heidegger's description of anxiety. This concerns a way in which such descriptions seem to indicate a subverting of the integrity or everyday givenness of our normal sense of ourselves as subjects. By this I mean to point to a way of imagining these descriptions as expressing a kind of psychological distance from, and in some sense an impulse to reject, the "anyone" sentences ordinarily used to describe one's subjective experience.[101] But if for the moment we understand this rejection in relation to what Wittgenstein says in the "Lecture on Ethics," where he claims that he would refuse any analysis of utterances like "I wonder at the existence of the world" or "I feel absolutely

safe" on the grounds of their very significance, then we should be wary of taking these descriptions of mystical experiences or conversion experiences or anxiety as intending to provide ordinary first-person reports: such ordinary reports can be written in a *Begriffsschrift* and can be studied by the science of psychology.[102] And if this is so, then the "tendency of the human mind" to speak of a "higher controlling agency," of a "real external supernatural action, capable of giving me thoughts, and taking them away from me," of a "supporter of the whole world," or of a mood where neither the world nor other people can offer anything more, a mood in which the world has the character of completely lacking significance, all these can be understood as the human mind's own tendency to undermine its ordinary sense of itself as a self-sufficient sphere of the inner. This is not to imagine the isolation of a Cartesian ego, a mind cut off from the outer world but otherwise intelligible to itself with all of its contents intact. This is to imagine the stripping away of the very content that gives the self its presumed identity in the first place, a threat to its very structure.

It may help to make my discussion clearer to connect it to a stretch of remarks that I have yet to address. The remarks I mean are *Tractatus* §5.6–§5.641, where the themes taken up include the a priori, the limits of logic and language, solipsism, and the subject as limit of the world. Rather than reading these remarks as, for example, either flatfooted statements of, or nonsensical gestures at, an ineffable Schopenhauerian or Weiningerian metaphysics, I suggest instead that their function in the text be understood in terms of what we saw Diamond claim for "ethical nonsense." In other words, we should regard many of the sentencelike structures one finds among these remarks such as "The world and life are one" (§5.621) and "I am my world (The microcosm)" (§5.63) as sentence-signs that Wittgenstein felt would not necessarily lose their attractiveness to us even after we recognized them as nonsensical.[103] If this is right, then that these sentences are nonsense may not exclude the possibility that I will understandingly allow them to exercise a pull on my imagination and so use them to express my feeling. But at the same time, my authentic use of these and similar expressions requires that I am clear about what I am doing in using them, that in a certain sense I acknowledge my relatedness to them, that I recognize *that I am using them*, and so that I am not, so to speak, seamlessly one with them when I use them. This is what I take to be the upshot of a remark by Wittgenstein recorded by Waismann about one year after the "Lecture on Ethics": "At the end of my lecture on ethics I spoke in the first person. I think that this is something very essential. Here there is nothing to be stated any more; all I can do is to step forth as an individual and speak in the first person. For *me* a theory is without value. A theory gives me nothing."[104] Thus the self can bring itself into philosophy through the authentic use of sentences like

"The world is my world." The "nonpsychological way" in which philosophy can talk about the self,[105] the way in which a speaker can show himself as the "metaphysical subject and limit of the world," is to show his understanding and responsibility for making utterances like these, utterances that say nothing (§5.641). If these are things that I find myself drawn to say even if I see they are nonsense, then in acknowledging the draw and accepting responsibility for speaking thus, I acknowledge an impulse in myself to thwart my everyday sense of myself. But at the same time, I acknowledge a degree of responsibility for my meaningful uses of language, because the world is partly mine to uncover as intelligible in the ways in which I make signs into symbols.[106] Real wonder wrenches me from the comfort of the "modern worldview" and reveals the disturbing insight that I am not wholly satisfied with that comfort. It distances me from the everyday sentences of the "they" and reveals that whether I intend to speak nonsense or sense, I am the one who is speaking.[107] But in either case, the acknowledgment would outstrip any ordinary justification, which is to say any justification at all, that I can give of myself.[108] And so the *Tractatus* must be written in the expectation that achieving its ethical aim of awakening the reader to wonder will meet with resistance and evasion.[109] This is because acknowledging wonder goes against the grain of what Wittgenstein saw as the modern worldview's self-understanding that anything one wants to say should be justified with reference to the so-called laws of nature; it crashes with an especially powerful modern aversion to acknowledging the importance of any impulse to speak that does not seek refuge in the comfort of the "anyone" propositions of natural science.[110]

2.9

I have been discussing how we might better understand the ethical aim of the *Tractatus* by examining it in relation to part of Heidegger's account of authenticity. Bringing the *Tractatus* into contact with Heidegger's thought in this way also points to a way of resolving a possible difficulty for resolute readings. In the closing remarks of the preface to the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein writes, "The *truth* of the thoughts that are here set forth seems to me unassailable and definitive. I therefore believe myself to have found, on all essential points, the final solution of the problems."[111] This passage looks like it poses a serious difficulty for resolute readings, because Wittgenstein speaks of the "truth of the thoughts that are here set forth," whereas for instance on Diamond's and Conant's reading, §6.54 tells us to throw away the main body of the book as plain nonsense. Interpretations of the book where Wittgenstein is read as trying to get his reader to grasp certain

ineffable truths of logic and metaphysics might seem to be better suited to account for what Wittgenstein says about truth in the preface. While we are far from compelled to adopt such a reading, it might seem as though no other alternative is available. In fact, it is possible (and preferable) to make sense of what Wittgenstein says about truth in the preface to the *Tractatus* from within an overall resolute approach to the book. And I will suggest that Heidegger's account of truth in *Being and Time* may be of help in laying out just such an alternative reading.

There is, of course, a sound internal textual basis for resisting the temptation to understand the "truth" that Wittgenstein speaks of in the preface as concerning particular truths that the book tries to convey to its reader. For at the very beginning of the preface, Wittgenstein says that the *Tractatus* is *not* a textbook (*ist kein Lehrbuch*). It is not a book that purports to teach us any doctrines. Instead, I suggest that we not hear Wittgenstein as speaking from within the web of concepts and argumentative terms that make up the traditional philosophical lexicon when he speaks of truth in the quoted passage from the preface. A good description of what I mean here by "traditional" is given by Heidegger himself, who writes in *Being and Time* of theses that "characterize the way in which the essence of truth has been traditionally defined: (1) that the 'locus' of truth is assertion (judgment); (2) that the essence of truth lies in the 'agreement' of the judgment with its object."[112] In a later passage, Heidegger describes what he thinks is the more fundamental sense of truth that comes to light as a result of his ontological investigation of Dasein.

> Resoluteness is a distinctive mode of Dasein's disclosedness. In an earlier passage, however, we have Interpreted disclosedness existentially as the *primordial truth*. Such truth is primarily not a quality of "judgment" nor of any definite way of behaving, but something essentially constitutive for Being-in-the-world as such. Truth must be conceived as a fundamental *existentiale*. In our ontological clarification of the proposition that "Dasein is in the truth" we have called attention to the primordial disclosedness of this entity as the *truth of existence*; and for the delimitation of its character we have referred to the analysis of Dasein's authenticity.[113]

This is a very dense passage, and I do not pretend to give anything like a full explication of it here. But I take Heidegger to be saying in effect that through an examination of Dasein's authenticity, the "primordial" truth is revealed, that is, that a world becomes intelligible through Dasein's Understanding-of-Being, the largely implicit background understanding that already orients its various sense-making activities, including the philosophical inquiry into the grounds of truth. Earlier

in *Being and Time*, Heidegger remarks that the expression "Being-in-the-world" stands for a unitary phenomenon.[114] By this he means that the world that gets disclosed through Dasein cannot be understood in conceptual isolation from Dasein *and* that Dasein cannot be understood in conceptual isolation from the world: this is what makes it even possible for Dasein to make particular true (and false) judgments about the world. This points to an important way in which Heidegger means to undermine traditional debates between metaphysical realism and metaphysical idealism.

Wittgenstein, too, wants his reader to regard such debates as resting on a false dichotomy, and the person who attains the authentic relation to language to which the book seeks to bring her understands that the world is only intelligible or "disclosed" through ordinary sentences and that these same ordinary sentences make no sense in conceptual isolation from the world.[115] So Wittgenstein is not referring to a traditional conception of truth in the preface, something like correspondence between a proposition (or even a quasi-proposition that cannot really be uttered) and its object; rather, the *Tractatus* is meant to reveal the emptiness of attempts to arrive at anything like a philosophical theory of truth. We should instead let our sense of what he means by truth in the preface be mediated by what he says in the penultimate proposition of the book (§6.54), where he writes that the reader who has understood him will "see the world aright."[116] But then it seems that the question of truth here must come back to the question of the ethical point of a book consisting of a ladder of elucidatory nonsense. I have already claimed that central to the ethical aim of the *Tractatus* is an attempt to isolate and clarify the reader's impulse to express her sense of wonder through a change in her relationship to language. I take myself to be saying the same thing in claiming here that central to the ethical aim of the book is an attempt by Wittgenstein to guide his reader to being "in the truth" in the sense discussed here.[117] Against the inclination to respond with skepticism to the idea that a book so taken up with language might have an ethical point (I have heard it said, with a tone of bored contempt, "So it's just about language; you are saying that all this about the ethical point of the book is just about language"), I am saying that what Wittgenstein took to be the definitive unassailable truth of the thoughts set forth in the *Tractatus*'s effort to overcome the kind of confusion that underlies debates between realists and idealists is of a piece with an effort to bring out a sense of wonder and reverence at the fit between word and world (call this the "miracle of science") and so of a piece with an attempt to foster an appreciation for how deeply language is interwoven with what is special about human life. Earlier, I quoted a passage from the "Lecture on Ethics" where Wittgenstein says, "Now I am tempted to say that the right expression in language for the miracle of the existence of the world,

though it is not any proposition *in* language, is the existence of language itself."[118] The ethical aim of the *Tractatus*, the exploding of the philosopher's illusion when he throws away the ladder of the book's elucidatory nonsense, would be achieved if its reader appropriated the significance of three words: we can talk.[119]

I have been arguing at length for the idea that it can help our understanding of the *Tractatus* if we think about some of its most central and most puzzling features in relation to certain themes found in *Being and Time*. For all the undeniable differences between them, especially when it came to philosophical methodology, the early thought of both Wittgenstein and Heidegger is shaped by a certain common vision of philosophy wherein one of its primary tasks is to bring to light a pervasive problem of clarity. The problem concerns the need for an acknowledgment of those general forms of intelligibility that open us up to a common world, on the one hand, and our individual and collective need to wrest something away from these general forms, on the other, even if (perhaps especially, in the early Wittgenstein's case) doing intellectual justice to these general forms seems to allow for not much more than an insistence on the significance of the need itself. The felt intensity of this problem even made it natural or inevitable for both men to adapt the descriptions of central parts of their projects to the language of religious crisis and conversion. In the early Wittgenstein, this needs to be seen in the way his understanding of logic and (what he calls) ethics interpenetrate each other. In particular, I have argued that Wittgenstein's way of working out this problem, so to speak, mimics the logic of Heidegger's attempt to uncover anxiety as a phenomenon that individualizes Dasein from the anyone ways of the "they." Wittgenstein's understanding of logic and the nature of philosophical confusion, taken together with his religious-psychological reading of the descriptions of mystical and conversion experiences to be found in Schopenhauer, Tolstoy, James, Augustine, and others, come together in the *Tractatus* as an attempt to undermine the idea that the anyone sentences of natural science can provide any foundation or justification to the "tendency in the human mind" to express wonder. After having brought these two thinkers together philosophically in this way, however, I now want to examine briefly the possible meaning of a different kind of connection.

2.10

In his notes for December 30, 1929, Friedrich Waismann records the following:

To be sure, I can imagine what Heidegger means by being and anxiety. Man feels the urge (*Trieb*) to run up against the limits of language. Think for example

of the wonder (*das Erstaunen*) that anything at all exists. This wonder cannot be expressed in the form of a question, and there is also no answer whatsoever. Anything we might say is a priori bound to be mere nonsense. Nevertheless we do run up against the limits of language. Kierkegaard too saw that there is this running up against something and he referred to it in a fairly similar way (as running up against paradox). This running up against the limits of language is *ethics*.[120]

Given the low esteem in which Heidegger was held by members of the Vienna Circle, the statement seems remarkable in itself for the apparent openness that Wittgenstein shows toward Heidegger's words. More remarkable still, however, is that he goes on to connect what "Heidegger means" to his own understanding of ethics. Naturally, the salient question here becomes *how* Wittgenstein might have understood that connection with ethics and, in particular, how he might have imagined what Heidegger meant by being and anxiety. Now, the mere existence of an affinity between Wittgenstein's thinking about ethics at this time (a period during which I would still broadly classify his thinking about ethics as Tractarian) and Heidegger's thought from the late 1920s, an affinity that I've tried to articulate as mediated by the themes of wonder and anxiety, does not depend on what Wittgenstein actually imagined in this case. Still, that this brief remark can be read as touching on the very points I have been elaborating suggests that the affinity may not have been altogether unrecognized by Wittgenstein himself.

In looking at this issue, we first have to try to decide *which text* from Heidegger Wittgenstein is referring to in the passage.[121] It's not of course unnatural to assume that the text would have been *Being and Time*. McGuinness, for example, seems to give a tacit endorsement to this idea by providing a footnote reference to *Being and Time* that includes an excerpt from the book's discussion of anxiety that could have been the basis for Wittgenstein's remark.[122] Wittgenstein's reference to Kierkegaard appears to lend further plausibility to the idea that he was familiar with *Being and Time*, since in a footnote Heidegger cites Kierkegaard as an important source for the concept of anxiety: "The man who has gone farthest in analyzing the phenomenon of anxiety—and again in the theological context of a 'psychological' exposition of the problem of original sin—is Søren Kierkegaard."[123] Nevertheless, and apart from my simply finding it hard to believe that Wittgenstein read extensively in *Being and Time* (my incredulity being no argument, I realize), I think a much likelier source of any familiarity that Wittgenstein had with Heidegger's thought would have come through his contact with members of the Vienna Circle itself, where he could have heard discussions of or read comments on Heidegger's work.

One obvious source to consider in this vein is Rudolf Carnap's paper "The Elimination of Metaphysics Through Logical Analysis of Language," a paper in which Carnap singles out certain sentences from Heidegger's lecture "What Is Metaphysics?" for treatment as prime examples of metaphysical nonsense.[124] The following is the largest block of text from the lecture to appear in Carnap's paper:

> What should be examined are beings only, and besides that—nothing; beings alone, and further—nothing; solely beings, and beyond that—nothing. What about this nothing?—— Is the nothing given only because the "not," i.e., negation, is given? Or is it the other way around? Are negation and the "not" given only because the nothing is given?—— We assert that the nothing is more original than the "not" and negation.—— Where shall we seek the nothing? Where will we find the nothing?—— [W]e do know the nothing . . . —— Anxiety reveals the nothing.—— [T]hat in the face of which and for which we were anxious was "really"—nothing. Indeed: the nothing itself—as such—was there.—— How is it with the nothing?—— The nothing itself nihilates.[125]

We know from his so-called *Diktat für Schlick* that Wittgenstein read at least some of "The Elimination of Metaphysics," since this dictation contains comments on Carnap's method in the paper, in particular his treatment of "The nothing itself nihilates."[126] Given, however, that the paper was published in the second issue of *Erkenntnis* for 1931, there is a question as to whether Wittgenstein *could* have read Carnap's paper already by the time of his conversation with Schlick and Waismann on December 30, 1929. But it is quite possible that the paper had been written well before then. In an addendum to the end of his paper, Carnap refers to a radio lecture given by Oskar Kraus on May 1, 1930, where Heidegger's *Nichts-Philosophie* is denounced. If Carnap heard the radio broadcast already then, and if this is a late addition to the proofs, then it seems quite possible that the paper had been written well before May 1930 and so possible that Wittgenstein had already seen a manuscript as early as December 1929. On the other hand, in the same note Carnap also refers to the printed version of Kraus's lecture, which dates from 1931, and so it may well be that this is where he first learned of Kraus's talk.

At any rate, I think that what Wittgenstein says in conversation with Schlick and Waismann comes so strikingly close to words and themes from Heidegger's lecture—the one speaks of an urge to wonder that anything at all exists, the other of our being impelled to wonder why there are beings at all and why not rather nothing[127]—that it's hard to believe he had read or heard nothing more of the lecture than those impoverished blocks of text printed in Carnap's paper.[128] Given his contact with Carnap and other members of the Vienna Circle, it seems

plausible that Wittgenstein could have had access either to the text of "What Is Metaphysics?" or at least to a reliable set of lecture notes. And this prospect raises some final questions that I think must remain open but that nevertheless are worth raising in their own right. First, assuming that Wittgenstein is indeed commenting on Heidegger's lecture in his conversation with Schlick and Waismann and that he had indeed read or heard substantial portions of the lecture before the conversation, are his comments best understood as taking Heidegger to be *making a point about wonder*, for example, making a point about wonder as it could be connected to anxiety (as Wittgenstein might have imagined that connection from the lecture alone and without having read *Being and Time* in any detail)? His grouping together of Heidegger with Kierkegaard and Augustine, where it seems clear enough that the latter two are being referred to here as *making points* about the speaking of ethical nonsense and not merely *as speakers* of ethical nonsense, makes it natural to understand Wittgenstein as taking Heidegger's words in this way as well.[129] Wittgenstein's own practice, both in the preface and conclusion of the *Tractatus*, in conversation, and in the "Lecture on Ethics" make it unreasonable to exclude this possibility. Or, should Wittgenstein's comments be understood more on the order of a sympathetic response to an actual example of ethical nonsense that he imagines Heidegger coming out with in the lecture? Perhaps in the context of this conversation Wittgenstein (or Waismann) simply was not concerned with distinguishing between these two different ways of imagining what Heidegger meant. But, of course, this is not the only place where one finds a striking resonance between Heidegger's lecture and Wittgenstein's words. Wittgenstein is, in fact, echoing themes here that he had already touched on in the lecture he gave to the Heretics Society in Cambridge only one month before this conversation with Schlick and Waismann took place in Vienna. And this means that we have to take seriously the possibility that Wittgenstein actually appropriated some of Heidegger's rhetoric for the "Lecture on Ethics."

I have argued at length for the idea that it deepens our understanding of the ethical point of the *Tractatus* if we bring to light the striking conceptual and structural similarities its philosophical perspective on human life and language shares with a significant part of the early Heidegger's account of authenticity. If I am correct there, then what is surely strangest about Wittgenstein's encounter with Heidegger in 1929 is that he responds to Heidegger's words from a philosophical perspective that in crucial respects is structurally similar to much of Heidegger's own description of authenticity in *Being and Time* without his having any detailed knowledge of *Being and Time* itself.[130]

2.11

Much of this chapter has been taken up with exploring how the ethical point of the *Tractatus* can be usefully understood in relation to Heidegger's account of authenticity from *Being and Time*. That required some care, because the description of authenticity that was relevant for my discussion in section 2.3 and then in sections 2.7–2.10 was entirely concerned with Dasein's relation to the banal, everyday interpretations of the Understanding-of-Being that Dasein takes over from the "they." This explains my repeated use of phrases such as "part of," "aspect of," and "feature of" when referring to Heidegger's account of authenticity. But Heidegger's discussion includes more than a mere description of Dasein's formal constancy when it is "in the truth" about the anonymous practices of the "they." He also indicates an important additional possibility for resolute Dasein. Heidegger writes, "The resoluteness in which Dasein comes back to itself, discloses current factical possibilities of authentic existing, and discloses them *in terms of the heritage* which that resoluteness, as thrown, takes over."[131] In what follows, I want to explore how this points to an important *difference* between the *Tractatus* and *Being and Time*.

Hubert Dreyfus understands what Heidegger says here in terms of what Dreyfus calls "marginal practices." As Dreyfus explains them, marginal practices may have been part of the everydayness of Dasein's culture in the past, but they have been displaced by the anonymous practices of the "they" that have become dominant in that culture since. For example, Dreyfus suggests that resolute Dasein can be open to possibilities such as engaging in a version of Christian caring modeled on early Christian practice. He comments, "Such alternative possibilities, precisely because they do not make good, average, everyday sense but rather seem old-fashioned, trivial, or meaningless, would neither be undermined by anxiety nor levelled by the public. They would therefore attract authentic individuals."[132] Heidegger thus thinks that resolute Dasein's life is characterized not only by its authentic relation to the dominant everyday practices of the "they" but also in terms of the nonbanal marginal practices from its heritage to which Dasein is now open and that make possible for it a kind of *differentiating content*. In the same vein, David Cooper writes that when Dasein avails itself of its heritage, it "is not left without guidance as to the possibilities on which to resolve, for the 'authentically historical' person who 'takes over' his heritage will draw these possibilities precisely *from* that heritage. For what the heritage offers are 'the possibilities of the Dasein that has-been-there.' "[133] In sum, authentic Dasein will be able to attain both a certain constancy in its life, in terms of its resolute openness toward the

"they," and will also gain the possibility of differentiating itself, since by taking up possibilities from its heritage it acquires specific content.

Heidegger does not claim that Dasein must be aware that it is taking up marginal practices in order to do so. It seems that authentic Dasein may just be naturally sensitive to the neglected alternatives that its historical culture has to offer; it can pick up on them and is, as it were, attuned to them as possibilities. With this possibility in mind he states, "there is hidden a *handing down* to [Dasein] of the possibilities that have come down to it, but not necessarily *as* having thus come down."[134] Heidegger maintains, however, that such appropriation from the heritage can also be explicit and conscious: "The existentiell ability-to-be-upon which it projects itself can be gleaned *explicitly* from the way in which Dasein has been traditionally understood. The resoluteness which comes back to itself and hands itself down, then becomes the *repetition* of a possibility of existence that has come down to us."[135] Finally, Dasein may repeat a possibility of existence on the model of someone from the culture who has gone before and who is a particularly noteworthy embodiment of the marginal practice that authentic Dasein wishes to take up. Heidegger calls this "the possibility that Dasein may choose its hero."[136]

In sections 2.7 through 2.10, I argued that it is useful to think about the ethical point of the *Tractatus* in relation to the part of Heidegger's description of authenticity in *Being and Time* that concerns the form of Dasein's engagement with the world. My discussion in this section, on the other hand, brings to light an important difference between Heideggerian authenticity and the ethical point of the *Tractatus*. James Conant has attempted to articulate what the ethical aim of a book consisting simply of nonsense might be by bringing Wittgenstein's method in the *Tractatus* into contact with some of Kierkegaard's pseudonymous writings, in particular with the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*.[137] Michael Kremer, also writing from a resolute perspective, has suggested a way of understanding the ethical aim of the *Tractatus* in terms of St. Paul's and St. Augustine's writings on justification. What I want to show next is how this difference between Heidegger and Wittgenstein that I have been sketching can be understood as a secular version of a difference between the *Tractatus* and the writings of St. Paul, St. Augustine, and Kierkegaard that, in my view, makes problematic some of the connections between their thought and Wittgenstein's that Conant and Kremer have tried to establish.[138]

2.12

Michael Kremer has argued that an appreciation of the discussions of justification and faith in the writings of St. Paul and St. Augustine can bring us closer to

understanding the meaning of Wittgenstein's claim that the *Tractatus* has an ethical aim. Kremer cites St. Paul's argument in the letter to the Romans that obedience to the Mosaic Law cannot provide justification before God but only condemnation. Justification is not through works under the law but through faith.[139] Kremer aptly points out that Paul is not advocating in the letter that we merely subjugate ourselves before God in faith rather than doing so through obedience to the law, for that might suggest that what we need for faith is a particularly strong act of willpower.

> This superficial reading, suggesting that faith is something we can do, a work we can perform in accordance with a new commandment—"accept Jesus Christ as your personal savior, and you will be redeemed"—misses the point entirely. The repentance Paul calls for is not something we can do by obeying some or other command; it is an inner conversion that has to be brought about in us by God's grace. The law condemns us not just because we are unable to obey it, but because our need to justify ourselves through obedience to it is itself a sign that we are sinful. . . . Justification before God, a setting things right in which harmony and peace are restored, is accomplished not through "faith" in the sense of "voluntary assent" but rather through God's grace, which transforms our lives by bringing faith into them. [140]

Kremer finds similar themes in Augustine, for example in his criticisms of the attempts by pagan philosophers to formulate ethical theories and systems that could serve as justifications for action. As Kremer points out, for Augustine such philosophers are guilty of the sin of pride: "They represent the false hope that human beings can on their own power discover how the universe must be ruled and put this into effect."[141] Kremer connects these considerations with the *Tractatus* by making what I think is the very interesting suggestion that one of Wittgenstein's fundamental goals in that book was to expose as illusory all attempts for ultimate justification in logic, metaphysics, and, of course, ethics.

In fact, Kremer sees the very notion of *ineffable truth*, which interpreters including Hacker claim Wittgenstein was trying to express in the *Tractatus*, as one that in fact Wittgenstein wants to expose as empty an attempt at justification. In the search for ultimate foundations for a theory, whether in metaphysics or ethics does not matter, we often find that whatever propositions we arrive at to serve as our foundation have further conditions that they rely on for their truth or intelligibility. In this case, we are faced with the threat of an infinite regress:

> To stop the looming regress we seem to need something sufficiently like a proposition to serve as a justification, an answer to a question, yet sufficiently different

from a proposition to need no further justification, to raise no further questions in turn. The doctrine that there are "things" that can be shown—and so can be "meant," "grasped," and communicated, and can also be "quite correct"—but which cannot be said—and so cannot be put into question—seems to fit the bill. The thought is that by appeal to such ineffable "things" we can solve our problems of justification once and for all.[142]

Kremer argues, persuasively I think, that, far from being what Wittgenstein is trying to get his reader to grasp, the hope that ineffable truths that might ground a philosophical theory is instead a sort of last-ditch effort in the search for justification, in particular for ethical justification: "The *Tractatus* aims to relieve us of this need for ultimate justification by revealing that all such justificatory talk is in the end meaningless nonsense."[143] The connection with Paul and Augustine that Kremer draws from this revelation is that in it we see that we are finite creatures who are unable to provide ourselves with the foundations of knowledge and right action. Kremer concludes, "we will find what we sought only by abandoning the search for justification altogether, and with it the prideful hope that we can give meaning and value to our lives. In this way we will be awakened to the value and meaning that was there all along."[144]

This last remark by Kremer indicates an important connection between his interpretation of the ethical point of the *Tractatus* and that advocated by James Conant. Besides being one of the original proponents and subsequently most important advocates of resolute readings of the *Tractatus*, Conant has argued for a reading of the book according to which we see it as sharing important goals with much of Kierkegaard's work, in particular with the works published under the pseudonym Johannes Climacus.[145] Conant focuses most of his attention on the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, and, in addition to reading the *Postscript* and the *Tractatus* as having similar goals, he also claims that the two books have quite similar methods as well: "Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* can be seen to have both the same aim (one of providing a mirror in which the reader can recognize his own confusions) and the same method (one of having the reader climb up a ladder which in the end he is to throw away) as the [*Concluding Unscientific Postscript*]."[146] Each of these books, Conant says, employs an "indirect method," and he explains both books having this method as a function of their substantially similar aims.

In a well-known passage from the *Postscript*, Kierkegaard's pseudonym Climacus describes how two different modes of relating to an object, subjectivity and objectivity, are correlated with distinct spheres of existence:

In the ethico-religious sphere the accent is not on the "what," but on the "how." But this is not to be understood as referring to demeanor, expression or the like; rather it refers to the relationship sustained by the existing individual, in his own existence, to the content of his utterance. Objectively the interest is focused merely on the thought-content, subjectively on the inwardness. At its maximum this inward "how" is the passion of the infinite, and the passion of the infinite is the truth. But the passion of the infinite is precisely subjectivity, and thus subjectivity becomes truth.[147]

This passage and others like it in his work have prompted both defenders and attackers to view Kierkegaard as an extreme irrationalist, in particular when it concerns the claim that he appears to be making here that in an infinitely passionate relationship to the paradox of the god-man, subjectivity becomes truth. Conant wishes to resist this interpretation. He asks,

Is it not the widespread consensus of the scholarly community that Kierkegaard is the apologist par excellence for the possibility of some category of higher nonsense? Everything will hinge here on what, in the end, one takes Climacus' endless dialectical manipulations of the category of "the absolute paradox" to be in service of.[148]

Conant's description of the philosophers for whom he believes Kierkegaard is writing, as well as of those interpreters of the latter's work who read him as pleading for a category of "higher nonsense," should sound like Kremer's description of those who hope that the ineffable truths they claim to find in the *Tractatus* can serve as justifications for ethics and logic:

Since no ordinary form of belief seems to suffice to effect the transformation of oneself into a Christian, one assumes it must require some extraordinary form of belief: a form of belief that requires something extraordinary of the intellect—that one strive to believe against the grain of one's understanding, that one attempt to hold fast to the absurd.[149]

Exploding the illusion that there is any kind of "extraordinary belief" to hold on to is what, on Conant's view, Climacus's manipulations of the category of the absolute paradox is supposed to effect. Indeed, this is one of the most important methodological features he sees the *Tractatus* and *Postscript* as sharing: "These works exhibit certain nonsensical (yet apparently innocent) propositions and

build on them until the point at which their full nonsensicality will (hopefully) become transparently visible."[150]

This similarity between Conant's interpretation of the *Tractatus*, which relies on his understanding of Kierkegaard, and Kremer's reading of the book that we discussed above, becomes even clearer when we look at what Conant has to say about the purpose of Kierkegaard's employment of nonsense. Echoing Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus*, Conant writes, "[Kierkegaard's] aim is to show [the philosopher] that where he takes there to be a problem there isn't one. The solution to what he takes to be the problem of life is to be found in the vanishing of the problem."[151] He adds, "the problem is not one of teaching the reader something he does not know but rather one of showing him that, with respect to the activity of becoming a Christian, there is nothing further he needs to *know*."[152] Conant believes that interpreters of Kierkegaard who ascribe to him a doctrine of "higher nonsense" fail to see that he is not arguing that becoming a Christian involves attaining any special knowledge that could serve as a foundation for faith. Instead, he is trying to get the philosopher to see that the belief that such special knowledge is vital for becoming a Christian is the result of taking a distorted view of the ordinary or everyday, a view in which their real significance as the starting place for becoming a Christian is concealed. And so typically, the philosopher interested in understanding Christianity only engages the ordinary in his life in terms of a philosophical theory and a confused view of genuine religiousness: "His eagerness to be able to represent his knowledge to himself as an intellectual achievement forces the philosopher to come to know 'the simple' (i.e. what we otherwise all already know) by means of a reflective detour."[153] According to Conant, Kierkegaard thinks that normally the philosopher who seeks to understand Christianity as an abstruse doctrine flees the everyday, what we otherwise all already know, because he can't see how *this* could provide him with the kind of justification he thinks he needs in order to become a Christian. But on Conant's understanding of Kierkegaard, the real problem is not one of epistemic justification at all: "The philosopher interprets the task of becoming a Christian to require the cultivation and application of his understanding, postponing the claim that the Christian teaching makes upon his life, deferring the insight that what is required is the engagement of his will—the achievement of resolution."[154] On Conant's view, then, the philosopher flees "the simple" in his life, because he cannot envisage how it, with all of its contingencies and uncertainties, could serve as the kind of foundation he imagines he needs for making the commitments essential to becoming a Christian. Conant's point, however, is that the foundation the philosopher seeks is simply irrelevant to this task and that what is needed is, as he says, the achievement of resolution. Conant connects this account of Kierkegaard with the *Tractatus* in an

effort to get us to see that for Wittgenstein, once our attraction to philosophical theories has been exposed as an attempt to evade the requirements that life makes on us to act, then perhaps we will be in a position to commit ourselves to acting with resolution. His understanding of the ethical aim of the *Tractatus* is thus one with his understanding of Kierkegaard's goals in works such as the *Postscript*: "It is, I believe, against the background of such a vision of us in flight from our lives (and hence ourselves) that one should first attempt to understand what Wittgenstein and Kierkegaard each might have meant by the claim that what he had written was a work of ethics."[155] While there are differences (perhaps of interpretation, at least of emphasis) between Conant's and Kremer's accounts, they share two key ideas concerning the ethical point of the *Tractatus* with which I am in fundamental agreement. The first idea is that Wittgenstein's employment of elucidatory nonsense is intended to achieve a change in the reader's self-understanding through a change in her relationship to language. The second idea is that this change in self-understanding that Wittgenstein wanted to effect in his reader is not primarily of a cognitive nature, not, that is, the sort of change we tend to associate with accepting the truth of a theory. It would be characterized primarily by how we do or do not act, not by what we do or do not know. Nevertheless, I argue in the next section that Kremer and Conant each overlook a fundamental disanalogy between the aims of St. Paul's, St. Augustine's, and Kierkegaard's thought on the one hand and the aims of the *Tractatus* on the other.

2.13

While it should be obvious that Conant's work is central to my own understanding of the *Tractatus*, I have serious differences with his reading of Kierkegaard and deep reservations about the way in which he brings this reading into contact with the early Wittgenstein. Put succinctly, the main difference between Conant's understanding of Kierkegaard and my own concerns what realization Kierkegaard wants to bring about in his reader. For Conant, this is the discovery by the philosopher that he has avoided making the commitments that a Christian life requires of him and has instead taken the "reflective detour" of speculative philosophy. While a critique of speculative philosophy is certainly part of the story, I take Kierkegaard to be trying to bring his reader to see that the true predicament of the self is despair, that the self lacks the resources to *make* any genuinely meaningful commitment, and so that what the self needs is some object outside of itself that would *confer* meaning and value on its life and at the same time *solicit* a commitment from it.[156]

Because on my understanding of Kierkegaard he is close to Paul and Augustine on this matter, it may help to return to my discussion in the last section, where we can see a possibly parallel issue crop up with Kremer's claim that Wittgenstein shares something like Paul and Augustine's view on justification. There we saw Kremer make clear that according to these two saints, all attempts at self-justification are futile and even sinful. We saw further that justification can only be had through faith and that faith is not a relation that can be entered into by an act of will but must itself be bestowed upon one through God's grace. This lets me bring out an important ambiguity in the claim by Kremer that I took to suggest an affinity with Conant. Recall that after arguing that Wittgenstein's ethical aim in the *Tractatus* is to show the futility of the search for justification in metaphysics and ethics, Kremer writes, "we will find what we sought only by abandoning the search for justification altogether, and with it the prideful hope that we can give meaning and value to our lives. In this way we will be awakened to the value and meaning that was there all along." There is a way of taking this claim, which is entirely unproblematic, as a statement of Paul's and Augustine's points of view, so long as we distinguish "the value and meaning that was there all along" from Conant's understanding of "what we otherwise all already know." To see this, we should first realize that it follows from what Kremer says about Paul's and Augustine's criticisms of others, that they do not abandon the idea that the self *needs* justification but only the idea that it can provide itself with justification through its own efforts. "The value and meaning that was there all along," then, could be taken to indicate something like the value and meaning that God gives to each human as one of His special creations, and so what in each case He has already given to one before one commits the sin of pride by trying to provide oneself with justification. It could even be plausibly taken to mean something like "the *possibility* that was there all along of getting value and meaning through faith."

On the other possible interpretation that I have in mind, Kremer might intend the phrase "the value and meaning that was there all along" to mean the "ordinary" or "everyday" in Conant's sense, one in which these terms carry with them no definite religious associations and, as Conant points out, imply that what is required of the individual is courage and resolution. If that is the case, however, then Kremer would come close to contradicting what he says about grace, for there it was clear that the faith required for transforming a person, which I am assuming for Paul and Augustine, at least, is intimately connected to any meaning and value I might discover having been in my life all along, is something that must come from God.[157] No act of will can bring a person into a relation of faith with God. Assuming that he would not want to lose hold of his correct insights concerning Paul and Augustine by ascribing to them the same sort of view that

Conant ascribes to Kierkegaard, we now can see a serious disanalogy that Kremer has overlooked between the two saints and Wittgenstein. As I said earlier, neither Paul nor Augustine does away with the *need* for justification. They believe, rather, that there is no possibility (and thus also no need) for *self*-justification, and both point to the real source of justification, namely God. But there is nothing analogous in the *Tractatus* to this last part of Paul's and Augustine's thinking. Put simply, in the *Tractatus* there is no concrete "god-term" outside of the self that is pointed to in the book that might *provide* the self with the very justification, that, on Kremer's reading, it purports to show is beyond our reach.

This touches on what I take to be a related problem with Kremer's description of the kind of transformation he believes the *Tractatus* to be capable of bringing about. Kremer sees the book not only as leading the reader to an abandonment of the search for justification in ethics and metaphysics but also as potentially fostering specific virtues in the reader, especially Christian humility. In this vein he writes,

> It would be a mistake to conclude that in showing us how to abandon the search for self-justification, and so the search for ethical principles by which to rule our lives, Wittgenstein means to free us to "do as we please" and so give license to unbridled self-gratification, or to a kind of ethical anarchy. For St. Paul, faith frees us from the law not by freeing us to sin, but rather freeing us to do what the law commands. For St. Augustine, humility transforms our basic attitude towards our condition as creatures, and so makes it possible for us to act out of true concern for others. Similarly, Wittgenstein aims at a conversion which will free us not only from the need for justification but from the conflicted and impossible desires which this need both engenders and signifies. As our motivations and desires are transformed, so will our lives and actions. There are many things that those who have learned the lesson of the *Tractatus* will not, in fact, do, simply because they lack any desire to do them.[158]

He adds a bit further on, "I take the *Tractatus* to be aimed at inculcating such virtues as humility, and the love of one's neighbor, which I, with Augustine, would see as a virtual corollary of humility."[159] In effect, this claim faces the same objection that I have made above concerning the important differences on justification between Wittgenstein, on the one hand, and Paul and Augustine, on the other. Once the requirement and possibility for self-justification have been shown to be incoherent, it is unclear to me what would prevent someone from wanting to emulate a figure such as Napoleon instead of a figure like Jesus. The implications of what Kremer says about dropping the requirement for self-justification, for example,

seem to me very consistent with much of what can be found in Nietzsche, and there we do not find much worth put on specifically *Christian* forms of humility.

Kremer does not merely claim that there are actions from which the person who understands the author of the *Tractatus* will refrain. He goes even further, in seeming to suggest that through understanding the intention of the author of the *Tractatus* in writing a book of nonsense, the reader can see him as an example of someone who embodies both humility and other virtues: "In recognizing [Wittgenstein's propositions] to be nonsense, we understand Wittgenstein, and come to see how to live"[160] and "Wittgenstein aims to provide us with such an example in writing the *Tractatus*—an example that we can follow in coming to a new way of life, if we understand him."[161] But these ideas are deeply problematic, particularly in light of what Kremer says himself: "True humility, like St. Paul's faith, is not something that one brings about, but rather a gift of God's grace that recognizes itself as such; the truly humble person is the one whose gratitude to God encompasses and includes her own humility."[162]

Because wonder and humility are close in certain respects, it may seem strange for me to be criticizing Kremer on this point, having put so much weight on the role that the former concept plays in the overall aim of the *Tractatus*. I don't want to deny that the *Tractatus* may (try to) set a kind of spiritual or intellectual example. But I believe that Wittgenstein himself would stress that much more is needed to show us how to live, including how to live according to specifically Christian virtues, than his book. With no God, no savior, nor even any prophets or saints in his text who might *humble* us or give us specific concrete examples of how to embody humility and other virtues, it is difficult for me to see how the mere recognition that the search for ultimate justification in philosophy is an illusion can bring about the kind of transformation Kremer claims for the book.[163]

We see, then, that what should be regarded as a fundamental religious dimension in the writing of these other figures makes too close a comparison with the work of the early Wittgenstein problematic, because this integral part of their thought finds no correspondence in the conception of the *Tractatus*. My way of putting this difference just now was to say that in the *Tractatus* there is no concrete "god-term," no God or savior outside of the self that is pointed to who might provide the self with justification or confer meaning and value on its life. To see the difference from Heidegger that I discussed in section 2.11 as a secular version of this difference from Paul, Augustine, and Kierkegaard, we need to move up a level of abstraction. One might say that the difference between Paul, Augustine, Kierkegaard, and Heidegger, on the one hand, and the early Wittgenstein, on the other, is that the reader of the *Tractatus* who understands Wittgenstein, one who is left at the end of the book with only ordinary sentences, is not directed to any

definite concrete *thing* outside of himself, whether that be a savior, marginal practice, or hero, that entering into a relation with could give unique value and meaning to his life.[164] This also indicates that if Wittgenstein intended the *Tractatus* to bring about the same kind of transformation in his reader as Paul, Augustine, Kierkegaard, and Heidegger hoped to bring about in theirs, then quite apart from the success or failure of their attempts, there seem to be good grounds not only for thinking Wittgenstein's book to be unsuitable for this task but also for seeing it as misguided in its conception.[165] I will argue in the next section, however, that we do not need to view the ethical purpose of the book that way.

2.14

If one of Wittgenstein's goals in writing the *Tractatus* had been to show his reader how to live, then given that I have claimed that the reader who is able to "throw away the ladder" at the end of the book will see that he is only left with ordinary "anyone" sentences, one would be justified in concluding that the *Tractatus* fails in one of its essential tasks so badly as to impugn Wittgenstein's right to claim that it had an ethical aim. However, there is a very good reason for not thinking this, which we can begin to see by returning to the preface.

Consider, first, the initial sentence of the second paragraph of the preface: "The book deals with the problems of philosophy, and shows, I believe, that the reason why these problems are posed is that the logic of our language is misunderstood." Wittgenstein tells us here that his book deals with the *problems of philosophy*. This in itself does not entail that the book is not also concerned with what could be called "the problems of life," but Wittgenstein does not at any rate say anything to this effect. In fact, I believe that what he goes on to say about the connection between the problems of philosophy and "the logic of our language" makes it even more plausible that his book is aimed primarily at a narrow swath of philosophers rather than to thoughtful members of a broader public who might pick up a work of philosophy that did explicitly address itself to the meaning and problems of life.

Next, I want to turn to the last paragraph of the preface, where we read the following: "The *truth* of the thoughts that are here set forth seems to me unassailable and definitive. I therefore believe myself to have found, on all essential points, the final solution of the problems. And if I am not mistaken in this belief, then the . . . thing in which the value of the work consists is that it shows how little is achieved when these problems are solved." I have already proposed in section 2.9 a way in which we might understand the "truth" that Wittgenstein speaks of in this

passage. That concerns the character of the relationship to language to which the book tries to lead its reader. Wittgenstein goes on to say that based on this "unassailable" truth, he has found the "final solution" to the problems of philosophy. Notice, however, that in the final sentence of the preface Wittgenstein writes *how little* is achieved when the problems of philosophy are solved. This doesn't sound like the sort of thing an author would say if one of his main purposes in writing a book were to show a reader how to live a meaningful life. Thus, Kremer's suggestion to the contrary is *precisely* the kind of thing that I am arguing the *Tractatus* understands itself as unsuited to accomplish. More to the point, if Wittgenstein thought that entering into the "unassailable," "definitive" "truth" that solves the problems of philosophy would lead one to see how to live or to discover the meaning (or lack of meaning) in one's life, it seems extremely odd to me to describe such a momentous occasion by declaring *how little* is thereby achieved.

So the *Tractatus* does not fail in its attempt to lead its reader to a realization about the meaning and value in his life, or in trying to show him how to live, since these were never part of its "ethical aim" in the first place. I think that Wittgenstein's own "ethical" ambitions for the book were, while very ambitious in one sense, more modest than what Kremer or Conant have argued. Wittgenstein felt that traditional philosophy rested on illusions, perhaps even on illusions that the philosopher entered into as an evasion of life, what we heard Conant call earlier a "reflective detour." If, after reading the *Tractatus*, one was left with the insight that there are only ordinary sentences, then this would of course mean that, as Diamond has put it, the idea that there can be philosophy in the traditional sense would be shown up as an illusion. That would certainly constitute a "final solution" to these problems (or perhaps more appropriately, a "final dissolution"). While I do not believe that Wittgenstein thought that reorienting his philosophical reader's relation to language in this way would automatically lead him in any particular life direction, such as becoming a Christian, I do believe that he hoped that imparting this insight into the nature of language would remove at least one important obstacle that blocks this sort of transformation from taking place in the life of the philosopher, that obstacle being the illusion that a work consisting of philosophical sentences can show him how to live. And this *preparatory* act is certainly integral to what Wittgenstein saw fit to call the "ethical aim" of his book. Recall, furthermore, that earlier I used the word "individualized" to characterize the situation of the reader of the *Tractatus* who understands that none of the ordinary sentences with which he is left after he has thrown away the book's nonsensical ladder can do justice to his tendency to come out with ethical nonsense, since this very tendency would tend to create a kind of psychological distance between himself and those very sentences. Whether Wittgenstein assumed

that as a result of being individualized in this way the philosopher would take his search for meaning in a quite different direction, and what Wittgenstein thought that direction would or should be, is not something about which he believed his book had anything to say. Given his understanding of the nature of philosophical activity at the time he completed the *Tractatus*, the removal of the obstacle of speculative philosophy is all, I believe, he thought philosophy itself could achieve.

letter from Wittgenstein to Russell that has been taken by some as obviously weighing against resolute readings. See Wittgenstein, *Cambridge Letters*, 68.

2. THE ETHICAL PURPOSE OF THE *TRACTATUS*

1. Diamond, "Throwing Away the Ladder," 179. In the second introduction to *The Realistic Spirit*, Diamond writes, "If we read the *Tractatus* as containing metaphysical claims about reality, if we take the metaphysics that we think we find in it to be joined with the idea that metaphysical claims cannot be put into genuine propositions, we shall miss entirely the character of Wittgenstein's later philosophy" (20). In both this passage and the one quoted above, I think Diamond overstates the connection between resolute readings of the *Tractatus* and therapeutic readings of Wittgenstein's later work. This is to say that it does not seem inconceivable to me that a reader could hold a standard reading of the *Tractatus* and a genuinely therapeutic reading of the *Investigations* yet still get much out of the later book, even by Diamond's own lights. The minimal requirement for combining these two possibilities would be the belief that *sometime* after finishing the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein came to see philosophy as a fundamentally therapeutic activity, even if it took him several years to work out what that idea came to when carried through thoroughly. Naturally, this would mean that one would understand Wittgenstein's later criticisms of his earlier work differently, depending on whether one held a standard or resolute reading of the *Tractatus*. One's understanding of *that part* of his later thought would depend crucially on how one read the earlier work. But Wittgenstein engages much more philosophy in his later writings than merely his former self. And so it seems to me unwarranted to insist that a resolute reading of the *Tractatus* is practically a requirement for a therapeutic understanding of his later work. All this being said, on the whole I do believe that resolute approaches to the *Tractatus* and therapeutic approaches to the later work do fit well together, do strengthen each other, and that the resolute-therapeutic lineage does make the most sense of much of the material I deal with here.

2. Diamond, "Throwing Away the Ladder," 200.

3. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*, §6.53. This means that even the sentences of the *Tractatus* are not *essentially* nonsensical. On the resolute reading, there is no such thing as a sentence's being essentially nonsensical. Nonsense results from our not giving a meaning to certain signs in our sentences. If we want to say that there is a "problem" with the sentences of the *Tractatus*, then we would have to say that those sentences are written in such a way so as to tempt us to think that we have given each of their constituent signs a meaning when in fact we have not done so. I have been helped here by discussion with Michael Kremer. Cf. *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*, §5.473, §5.4733.

4. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*, §6.53.

5. Kremer, "The Purpose of Tractarian Nonsense," 45.

6. Ibid., 47.

7. I also agree with Kremer when he writes: "The view that I will develop is, I think, suggested by scattered remarks in Diamond and Conant's many writings on the *Tractatus*. Still, I think

it is fair to say that neither of them has attempted a unified account of the purpose of Wittgenstein's use of nonsense." Ibid., 46.

8. What follows is by no means intended as a full account of intentionality.

9. Waismann, *Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle*, 68.

10. Wittgenstein, "Lecture on Ethics," 44.

11. Conant writes, "the premise underlying the procedure of the *Tractatus* (and this is connected to why the point of the work is an ethical one) is that our most profound confusions of soul show themselves in—and can be revealed to us through an attention to—our confusions concerning what we mean (and, in particular, what we fail to mean) by our words." Conant, "Method," 421.

12. My use of Heidegger in this chapter draws substantially on Hubert Dreyfus's *Being-in-the-World*. See also Richard Polt, *Heidegger: An Introduction*; and Stephen Mulhall, *Heidegger and* Being and Time. My discussion here follows Dreyfus especially closely in the way it presents Heidegger's exposition of resolute authenticity in *Being and Time* as containing a part that stresses Dasein's formal constancy vis-à-vis the average, everyday practices of the "they" and a part that includes a fuller exposition of authenticity in terms of anticipatory resoluteness and authentic historicality (see section 2.11, below). In a later paper, Dreyfus claims that the presentation of everydayness and authenticity in his commentary was marred by a failure to recognize Heidegger's two-staged uncovering of authenticity in division 2 of *Being and Time*. The first stage is characterized by Heidegger as an acknowledgment of guilt, where the German word *Schuld* brings out the sense of Dasein's indebtedness to the "they" for its average everyday understanding of things. Resoluteness at this stage captures what I've just called Dasein's formal constancy vis-à-vis the everyday, anyone practices of the "they." As we'll see below, this kind of resoluteness also makes it possible for Dasein to adapt creatively the practices of the "they" to the specifics of new situations. Dreyfus, citing the work of Theodore Kisiel, claims Heidegger develops this idea based on Aristotle's description of the man of practical wisdom (*phronimos*). These features of formal constancy are reflected to some extent in what Dreyfus says in his commentary concerning authentic Dasein's openness to the Situation. His point in the later paper is rather that his earlier discussion did not appreciate the full significance of Heidegger's description of guilt as this phenomenon gets interpreted in the light of insights already found in Aristotle's ethics. The second stage of authenticity, anticipatory resoluteness, involves Dasein's facing the full anxiety of death, which opens it up to getting a whole new understanding of itself and its world. Dreyfus argues that this stage of Heidegger's account develops out of his understanding of authentic temporality as that gets worked out in relation to the Pauline doctrine of the moment of conversion (*Augenblick*) in Luther and later in Kierkegaard. My argument in this chapter that it is helpful for understanding the ethical aim of the *Tractatus* to regard it as close in spirit and conception to formal authenticity in *Being and Time* does not explore the relevance of anything like Heideggerian *phronesis* for our understanding of early Wittgenstein's view of our relation to language. It does, however, seem to be an upshot of resolute readings of the *Tractatus* that coming to understand the ethical aim of the book would necessarily involve recognizing the different intentions behind coming out with either routine or creative uses of language (say, in science), on the one hand (both of these falling on the side of the public and ultimately

senseful uses of language), and the intention behind the impulse to speak ethical nonsense, on the other. See Hubert Dreyfus, "Could Anything Be More Intelligible Than Everyday Intelligibility?" See also Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's* Being and Time.

13. The project thus described refers only to what Heidegger envisioned for part 1 of *Being and Time*. Part 2 was supposed to involve a stepwise, systematic "destruction of the history of ontology" that would begin with Kant, move back through Descartes, and ultimately arrive at Aristotle. Much of Heidegger's writing after *Being and Time* can to a certain extent be understood as in fact carrying out this destruction, but no longer in the original overall context of the project of fundamental ontology. See the introduction to *Being and Time*.

14. See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 32–33, 70. It may be helpful to think of this complementary pair of concepts as an ontological analogue to the transcendental/empirical distinction in Kant.

15. Ibid., 231. Though clumsier than "ground mood," I believe that "fundamental attunement" is actually closer to what Heidegger means by "*Grundstimmung*."

16. Ibid., 230.

17. Ibid., 232.

18. Ibid., 25, 32.

19. Ibid., 167. Heidegger thinks that most of the time situations and equipment only show up for us as intelligible or usable because they are articulated for us as average. That is, a way to understand the background skills is to see them as providing general ways of dealing with various situations: one drives a car thus and so, one uses a hammer thus and so, one greets a friend thus and so, etc. For this reason, Dreyfus has suggested that a more interesting translation for *Das Man* would be "The One." See Dreyfus, *Being-In-The-World*, xi.

20. Even so, there is tension between Heidegger's frequent reminders to his readers that he is engaged in a project of fundamental ontology and his dark description of the "they." For example, when (167) Heidegger claims that "leveling down" (*Einebnung*) is a way of being of the "they" that constitutes its "publicness" (*Offentlichkeit*), he clearly seems to be inviting his reader to connect his discussion with Kierkegaard's culturally specific critique of modern nihilism, *The Present Age*. There, we read, "The public is, in fact, the real Leveling-Master rather than the actual leveler, for whenever leveling is only approximately accomplished it is done by something, but the public is a monstrous nothing" (60). Here we can see one of the (clearly many) important differences between the *Tractatus* and *Being and Time*. Whereas I will show in sections 2.4 through 2.6 that while the *Tractatus* is quite consciously directed at what Wittgenstein regards as the idolatry of science in the modern West, the role that cultural critique plays in *Being and Time* is ambiguous at best. See also notes 73 and 89, below.

21. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 167. Italics in the original.

22. Heidegger's term for equipment that shows up for us in this way is the "ready-to-hand" (*zuhanden*). For a well-developed account of this picture of human agency, see Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*. For an account of its results for the field of artificial intelligence, see Dreyfus and Dreyfus, *Mind Over Machine*.

23. Traditional philosophers and cognitive scientists have learned to respond to this kind of case by claiming that since thinking is necessary for intelligent behavior, there must be something equivalent to "unconscious thought" occurring here.

24. Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 290. Quoted in Guignon and Pereboom, *Existentialism*, 197.

25. Guignon and Pereboom, *Existentialism*, 180.

26. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 220.

27. Authentic Dasein encounters these same entities and roles, but its stance toward them is different. Read ahead for more on this.

28. Heidegger's term for what I here call social roles is "for-the-sake-of-which" (*das Worumwillen*). Dreyfus, in *Being-in-the-World*, points out some problems with interpreting "for-the-sake-of-which" as "social role" (95), but his worries are overly fine for my purposes here. He does allow "social role" as a first approximation of "for-the-sake-of-which." See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 116–117.

29. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 153–154, 163–164.

30. Ibid., 231.

31. Ibid., 232.

32. Ibid., 231.

33. Ibid., 222, 233.

34. Ibid., 235.

35. Ibid., 343.

36. Ibid., 345. This is made even clearer elsewhere: "[Resoluteness's] relation to being is one of letting-be. The idea that all willing should be grounded in letting-be offends the understanding." Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 17. "The resoluteness intended in *Being and Time* is not the deliberate action of a subject, but the opening up of [Dasein], out of its captivity in that which is, to the openness of being." "The Origin of the Work of Art," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 67.

37. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 345.

38. Ibid., 346. Macquarrie and Robinson translate Heidegger's use of the ordinary German word *Lage* as "situation" and his use of *Situation* in German as "Situation" with a capital *S* in English. Dreyfus translates the German *Situation* as "Unique Situation" in order to emphasize this difference. See *Being-in-the-World*, 320. See also note 12, above.

39. Cooper, *Heidegger*, 47.

40. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 346.

41. Ibid., 344. Heidegger earlier writes, "*Authentic* existence is not something which floats above falling everydayness; existentially, it is only a modified way in which such everydayness is seized upon" (224). These passages should suggest that if the popular conception of authenticity has any basis at all, it is not to be found in Heidegger.

42. Ibid., 346.

43. Ibid., 344.

44. Ibid., 358.

45. My discussion here builds on a suggestion made by Diamond, where she points out the importance of historical and cultural context for understanding the ethical point of the *Tractatus*. She writes, "My suggestion is that we do not read the *Tractatus* well unless we see how its temper is opposed to the spirit of the times, and how it understands that spirit as expressed in connected ways in the idea of natural laws as explanatory of phenomena, in

philosophy, and in relation to what Wittgenstein thinks of as ethics." See Diamond, "Ethics, Imagination, and the Method of the *Tractatus*," 171.

46. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, preface. For two quite different (yet I believe complementary) understandings of the nature of this critique, see Cavell, "Declining Decline," and Taylor, "*Lichtung* and *Lebensform*," in his *Philosophical Arguments*.

47. If, moreover, one thinks, as I do, that Wittgenstein's attitude to his work throughout his life was characterized by essentially a constant *moral* seriousness, then one would be justified in suspecting that the cultural critique embodied in his later work will, like the *Tractatus*, have been written with an "ethical point." I take this issue up in chapters 4 and 5.

48. Of course, Wittgenstein had no complaint with causal explanations or scientific thinking per se. Rather, his complaints in this vein are almost always lodged against a confused kind of mechanistic thinking that he saw as pervasive in philosophy, in Russell's *Analysis of Mind*, for example (cf. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Remarks*, §21–26, pp. 64–65). These are the misuses of causal thinking that are relevant for my discussion here. I do not address the possibility of whether there might be other kinds of causal explanation in philosophy to which Wittgenstein did not object. On this, see Klagge, "Wittgenstein on Non-Mediative Causality."

49. Wittgenstein, *Wittgenstein's Nachlass*, 219 81 (January 1933), my translation. The original German reads "Das ist das Verhängnisvolle an der wissenschaftlichen Denkweise (die heute die ganze Welt besitzt), [daß sie jede Beunruhigung mit einer Erklärung beantworten will. / daß sie jede Beunruhigung für eine Frage hält und sich wundert, sie nicht beantworten zu können.]" The material inside the brackets indicates that Wittgenstein never settled on a final formulation for this passage. I have chosen to translate the first formulation. The reference given above reflects the standard numbering system devised by G. H. von Wright for Wittgenstein's *Nachlass*, which was adopted by the *Wittgensteinarkivet* at the University of Bergen, Norway, for putting together the *Bergen Electronic Edition*. The first pair of numbers, in this case "219 81," indicates typescript 219, page 81. In all future references to the *Nachlass*, when the first member of this pair of numbers falls between 100 and 199, this indicates a manuscript. When this number falls between 200 and 299, this indicates a typescript. When possible, this pair of numbers is followed by the complete date of composition. See von Wright, "The Wittgenstein Papers," in his *Wittgenstein*, 35–62. See also the "2002 Addendum to von Wright's 'The Wittgenstein Papers'" in Wittgenstein, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Public and Private Occasions*.

50. Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, 37.

51. Given, moreover, how in certain contexts causal explanations can function (both logically and psychologically) as justifications, my discussion here remains in close conceptual contact with Kremer's discussion of the *Tractatus*' ethical purpose (see pages 76–78). I should make it clear that I do not pretend to give a comprehensive treatment here of all of the possibly relevant issues or texts that are pertinent for understanding the relation between the *Tractatus*, causality, culture, and ethics. In particular, I do not discuss the function of the remarks that deal with the freedom of the will (§5.1362), the logical independence of the world and the will (§6.373–§6.374), and the will as the subject of ethical attributes §6.423–§6.43. Diamond has a superb discussion of the relation between the will and ethics in the *Tractatus* in "Ethics, Imagination, and the Method of the *Tractatus*."

52. In chapter 4, I explore the idea that one of the ways in which *Philosophical Investigations* can be seen as making progress over the *Tractatus* as a piece of therapeutic philosophy is intertwined with the way in which it forms a critique of a culture committed to a metaphysical conception of progress. My criticisms in chapter 3 of the *Tractatus* might also be thought of as pointing ahead to how the later work makes progress in its attempt at cultural critique.

53. Wittgenstein, *Wittgenstein's Nachlass*, 183 21 (my translation). MS 183 is also known as the "Koder diaries." The text of the original diaries along with an English translation appears in Wittgenstein, *Public and Private Occasions*, 8–251. The above passage appears there on 29.

54. Wittgenstein, *Notebooks*, 128–129.

55. Ibid., 108–119. The same is true for the 1913 *Notes on Logic*, found in the same volume (93–107).

56. Ibid., 41.

57. By far the majority of the remarks making up the §6.3s were composed between December 1914 and May 1915.

58. Cf. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*, §6.341–6.342, §6.35. There does not seem to have been much significant change in the wording of the §6.3s between the *Prototractatus* and the *Tractatus*. Nor have their relative or absolute positions changed much either. It is interesting to read these remarks against the background of Hertz's discussion of a notation (or "images" as he says) for a system of mechanics in the introduction to the *Principles of Mechanics*. Hertz first gives two requirements that any system must fulfill: that the system not "contradict the laws of our thought," that is, that it be "logically permissible—or briefly . . . permissible," and that the essential relations of the system not contradict the essential relations, that is, that the system of images be "correct." A third characteristic that a system of images ought to have according to Hertz is that it be "appropriate." This he describes as follows: "Of two images of the same object that is the more appropriate which pictures more of the essential relations of the object, —the one which we may call the more distinct. Of two images of equal distinctness the more appropriate is the one which contains, in addition to the essential characteristics, the smaller number of superfluous or empty relations, —the simpler of the two." Hertz, *The Principles of Mechanics*, 2.

59. In the passage quoted above, Wittgenstein writes of "*eine Betrachtung der Welt*." Here he writes "*die Anschauung der Welt*."

60. Wittgenstein, "Lecture on Ethics," 41. To avoid misunderstanding here (even at the risk of seeming pedantic), I will note that the two questions Wittgenstein mentions as glosses on his feeling of wonder should not be taken in a cosmological sense. I take him to be making this very same point in the following remark from 1950: "If the believer in God looks around & asks 'Where does everything I see come from?' 'Where does all that come from?', what he hankers after is *not* a (causal) explanation; and the point of his question is that it is the expression of this hankering. He is expressing, then, a stance towards all explanations." Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, 96–97 (MS 173 92r: 1950). That the experience of wonder he describes in the "Lecture on Ethics" is not to be equated with the kind of amazement we feel when we observe something incredible is made clear by his example of a man's growing a lion's head. This is merely a case of our having yet to subsume a seemingly freakish event under a causal law. Wittgenstein mentions two other experiences, what he calls the "experience

of feeling *absolutely* safe" (41) or, later in the lecture, "safe in the hands of God" (42) and the feeling of guilt or "that God disapproves of our conduct" (42).

61. Wittgenstein, "Lecture on Ethics," 42–43, my emphasis. There is a question whether Wittgenstein should be taken here and in the *Tractatus* as arguing for conventionalism concerning causality and the laws of mechanics. I believe what he says is best understood as part of a deflationary attack on a metaphysical conception of necessity that says that the world must be viewed in causal-scientific terms.

62. For a related discussion emphasizing the importance of these different senses of "world" in the *Tractatus*, see Friedlander, *Signs of Sense*, 163–164.

63. Wittgenstein, "Lecture on Ethics," 42. Wittgenstein articulates these themes in a remarkably similar way in this remark recorded in a manuscript dating from 1947: "In the way in which asking a question, insisting on an answer, or not asking it, expresses a different attitude, a different way of living, *so* too, in this sense, an utterance like 'It is God's will' or 'We are not masters of our fate.' What this sentence does, or at least something similar, a commandment too could do. Including one that you give to yourself. And conversely a commandment, e.g. 'Do not grumble!' can be uttered like the affirmation of a truth." Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, 69–70 (MS 134 143: 13–14.4.1947).

64. Wittgenstein, "Lecture on Ethics," 42–43. Cf. Diamond, "Ethics, Imagination, and the Method of the *Tractatus*," 168.

65. It's worth pointing out that the placement of these remarks toward the very end of the §6.3s makes it natural to read them both as summing up the prior discussion of causality and mechanics and as forming part of a bridge into the discussion of ethics in the §6.4s.

66. One could also take these passages as pressing the reader to make sense with the sign "everything" (*alles*).

67. Waismann, *Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle*, 230.

68. Some of Wittgenstein's criticisms of Frege and Russell concern the analogously ambiguous role played by logical truths in their respective systems. Consider too in this vein a passage found at Wittgenstein, *Wittgenstein's Nachlass*, MS 108 198–199, one of the manuscripts for *Philosophische Bemerkungen*. It is dated June 29, 1930. It also appears at TS 236 6, but the date of transcription is not known. "It is very remarkable that in the explanations for a book on the differential calculus, one finds set-theoretic expressions and symbols that completely disappear in the calculus. This reminds one of the first declarations in physics textbooks where there is talk of the law of causality and the like, which are never mentioned again once we get to the point." In other words, the law of causality is presented as though it were some kind of foundational and substantive truth, but it finds no real application in the actual subject matter of physics. See also Waismann, *Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle*, 164.

69. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*, §5.136.

70. Ibid., §4.0312. Paul Ernst's description of "magical conceptions" in his postscript to the Grimm fairy tales made a profound impact on Wittgenstein, as is evident in this remark from 1931: "Should my book ever be published, its foreword must contain an acknowledgement to the foreword of Paul Ernst to his edition of Grimm's Fairy Tales, which I should have acknowledged already in the [*Tractatus*] as the source of the expression 'misunderstanding the logic of language.'" Wittgenstein, *Wittgenstein's Nachlass*, MS 110 184 (June 20, 1931). Quoted in Nyiri, "Wittgenstein's Later Work in Relation to Conservatism," 51–52.

Nyiri points out that the "foreword" to which Wittgenstein refers is actually a postscript to the third volume of Ernst's edition of the *Grimmische Kinder- und Hausmärchen*. In this context, compare *Philosophical Investigations*, §192: "You have no model of this superlative fact, but you are seduced into using a super-expression. (It might be called a philosophical superlative.)"

71. Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, 7–8 (MS 109 200). In the first edition of *Culture and Value* (1980), Winch translated *heben* as "intensify." He changed this to "enhance" in the second edition (1998). I have replaced these with "remove," which, although a secondary meaning of *heben*, is what I believe fits better in the context of Wittgenstein's remark. For the reference to Renan, see Renan: *History of the People of Israel*, vol. 1, chapter 3.

72. The charges that Wittgenstein makes here against Renan are, in effect, the same as those he levels elsewhere against the anthropologist Sir James Frazer. See "Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough," reprinted in Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Occasions*, 115–155.

73. In claiming as I do here that the *Tractatus* is engaged in a kind of cultural critique that is internal to its attaining its ethical point, I am also bringing attention to an evident difference between the book's conception and that behind *Being and Time*. This is because Heidegger conceived of his book as a cross-cultural project of fundamental ontology, part of which is an examination and critique of the purportedly cross-cultural problem of inauthenticity. Nevertheless, as I indicate elsewhere (see notes 20 and 89), there is a degree of ambiguity running through *Being and Time* on this point, and the philosophical and cultural status of natural science is one of the many issues that the ambiguity concerns. Heidegger's existential account of science is, after all, both an attempt to put science in a proper philosophical context and an attempt to dissuade us from seeing scientific modes of intelligibility as basic. But this is surely an error that only people belonging to scientific cultures would be tempted to commit. So there is a perfectly genuine sense in which *Being and Time* targets those sharing a particular cultural heritage. Still, given his explicitly stated project of fundamental ontology, Heidegger seems committed to the idea that regardless of whichever particular inauthentic interpretations happen to be most tempting to *Western* Dasein, some or other leveled interpretations will always be on hand to tempt *any* Dasein into inauthenticity, regardless of the culture to which he or she belongs. Whether or not Wittgenstein held a similar view when he wrote the *Tractatus* is, I think, very unclear.

74. I should make clear here that I am not taking *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus* §6.53, §6.54, or §7 to function as elucidatory nonsense. On this, see Diamond, "Ethics, Imagination, and the Method of the *Tractatus*," and Conant, "The Method of the *Tractatus*."

75. Wittgenstein, "Lecture on Ethics," 44.

76. Waismann, *Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle*, 68–69.

77. Ibid., 117. The conversation is dated December 17, 1930.

78. Ibid.

79. I have this phrase from Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, 335.

80. As we will see presently, wonder and authenticity are connected by Heidegger as well.

81. Let me emphasize that I am *not* addressing every aspect of the question of whether Wittgenstein is attempting to put his reader in touch with "exactly the same phenomena" as the ones Heidegger calls "anxiety" and "authenticity." For example, internal to Heidegger's account of each of these phenomena are his existential interpretations of death and guilt, and my

discussion does not deal with the question of whether these two themes are present in the *Tractatus* in a recognizably Heideggerian form. Friedlander has done so in the case of death, however, and what he says has very interesting connections to my discussion of the subject on pages 67–68. He writes: "I have claimed earlier that the notion of world is tied essentially to the way in which a subject is made manifest by appropriating meaning. Possibilities are essentially dependent on my taking language upon myself: they are always fraught with the possibility that nothing may happen any more. The possible is to be understood not as an objective space external to the subject, but as something which always contains within its horizon the possibility that nothing is possible, that of my death. In this case, the possibility of having possibilities, of having a world, is internally related to the possibility of losing a world. Friedlander, "Signs of Sense," 136.

82. Wittgenstein, "Lecture on Ethics," 41.

83. Ibid., 43–44.

84. Ibid.

85. A remark by Friedlander about *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus* §7.0 seems to cast this point primarily in terms of remaining silent in the face of the impulse to speak nonsense: "For human beings, silence manifests itself in the form of a demand. This is not the Kantian imperative arising from the division between nature and reason, but rather, it is the sign that the source of the significance of speech manifests itself only through the drive to nonsense. The imperative in language cannot be heard apart from the temptation to nonsense, to noise. This is precisely why being silent is possible only as an imperative. The imperative to listen in silence is the demand to do away with the noisy elements of nonsense that surround us, but the imperative form precisely means that silence is ever to be achieved through overcoming the temptation to noise. We cannot listen to pure silence." Friedlander, *Signs of Sense*, 150. I think this is right, but it is not the whole story. Part of the point of my discussion on pages 58–59, where I refer to Wittgenstein's claim that he can imagine a religion in which there is no talking, is that depending on the context either silence or the production of ethical nonsense can manifest clarity about significance. In a footnote to the above passage (n. 4, p. 150), Friedlander connects this issue to conscience: "Listening has always been a favorite philosophical figure for the appearance of the ethical imperative, the voice of conscience." My point could be rephrased by saying that speaking and the call of conscience need not exclude one another. See also note 107, below.

86. I take it that both Wittgenstein and Heidegger saw their work of clarification as aimed primarily at philosophical audiences. Certainly Wittgenstein saw the possibility of embodying a kind of clarity about language that made philosophical clarification superfluous in certain cases. For example, I think his (idiosyncratic) rendering of a passage in Augustine's *Confessions* (see page 64) makes it evident that he would not have thought that understanding the *Tractatus*, which he says in the preface deals with the problems of philosophy, was necessary for someone who was simply willing to experience and express religious wonder without feeling the need to offer a philosophical justification for doing so. Similar considerations apply to *Being and Time*. Heidegger does not think that a philosophical understanding of Dasein's fundamental structure is a prerequisite for authenticity. On the other hand, I think it is untenable to argue that Heidegger believed that his existential phenomenology can succeed without the philosopher seeing for himself the substantial connections between

the structures of Dasein that Heidegger is trying to uncover and the ways in which those structures inform the philosopher's own self-understanding and his own lived experience. I think that what is most true to say is that there is a certain ambiguity running through the book concerning the relation between philosophical understanding and authenticity.

87. By taking up the issue of the emotional tenor of these terms, I should not be understood as expressing an interest in addressing what I consider to be an irrelevant question, viz., whether "wonder" and "anxiety" "pick out" the same feelings. On the contrary, I mean to bring out more clearly how the use of these expressions by Heidegger and Wittgenstein indicates structural similarities in their thought that are mutually illuminating. Nevertheless, it perhaps bears repeating that in *Being and Time* Heidegger describes anxiety as a ground mood that uncovers for Dasein its basic structure as Care (thrown, fallen, projection in the anonymous interpretations of the "they"). On a resolute reading, however, the *Tractatus* is supposed to leave us with only ordinary sentences, and so it is not supposed to result in anything like a description of the fundamental nature of language. (I will discuss how the *Tractatus* fails to live up to this ambition in the next chapter.)

88. Heidegger, "What Is Metaphysics?" 108.

89. Dreyfus argues that it is in fact unclear how in the context of the project of fundamental ontology Heidegger can accommodate the idea that Dasein ordinarily flees anxiety. According to Dreyfus, Heidegger's importation from Kierkegaard of a Western, specifically Christian-*psychological* understanding of fleeing into his story about authenticity simply will not work, given the overall cross-cultural, *ontological* framework within which he is (supposed to be) working. Dreyfus's point seems to be that even if it makes a great deal of ontic, psychological sense to those raised in a Christian culture, no conceptual analysis of the aloneness and groundlessness of anxiety will show why, as a matter of *ontology*, anxiety is something one would ordinarily flee from, especially when holding on to it makes possible the unshakable joy of resolute authenticity. In other words, it's hard to make sense of the view that an analysis of the structures that allow Dasein to have an intelligible world should reveal Dasein to be a kind of being that can't stand being the kind of being it is. See Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, 333–336. See also notes 20 and 73. If we think about this question in relation to the aims of the *Tractatus*, it's interesting to see why a parallel problem connected to what could be called "our tendency to flee the groundlessness of giving expression to our wonder" need not arise, at least given the self-understanding from which the book is written. This is because the strategy of the *Tractatus* takes for granted a kind of psychological perspective on its modern reader that, if Dreyfus is right, will not fit into the self-understanding of Heidegger's project of fundamental ontology. As will become clear in the next chapter, however, this part of the *Tractatus'* strategy loses its appearance of innocence once seen against the background of the book's own concealed foundationalism.

90. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 161. This is the only time in this text that I have made use of Stambaugh's translation.

91. Ibid., 318. The sense of the German text is somewhat shaped by the fact that the German word for curiosity, *Neugier*, literally means "greed for the new."

92. Heidegger, "What Is Metaphysics?" 104–112. In making my point here, I am compressing a number of passages found toward the end of the lecture. But what I say does follow clearly from the logic of those passages. In a new introduction to "What Is Metaphysics?" written

in 1948, Heidegger warns against a cosmological understanding of the question with which he concludes the lecture. See Heidegger, "The Way Back Into the Ground of Metaphysics," 277–279. By the late 1930s, after he had abandoned the project of fundamental ontology, Heidegger turned his attention directly to wonder itself without regarding it as grounded in anxiety. Wonder is one of the central themes in a 1937–1938 lecture course (published as *Basic Questions in Philosophy*). The main topic of these lectures is the early Greek understanding of truth as uncovering or unconcealment (*aletheia*) and its transformation to an understanding of truth as correspondence (*homoiosis*). Corresponding to this change, Heidegger claims, is a degeneration from wonder to curiosity. I have benefited here from a paper by Stone, "Curiosity as the Thief of Wonder."

93. In fact, these "bipolar" descriptions are not uncommon: "A solemn state of mind is never crude or simple—it seems to contain a certain measure of its own opposite in solution. A solemn joy preserves a sort of bitter in its sweetness: a solemn sorrow is one to which we intimately consent." James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 51.

94. Perhaps for a certain kind of reader of Heidegger, my calling attention to the fact that wonder plays a significant role in both Wittgenstein's and Heidegger's thinking will be enough to confirm a suspicion that I am on the wrong track. I am thinking mainly about a suspicion that goes like this: In *Basic Questions*, Heidegger not only distinguishes wonder (*Erstaunen*) from curiosity (*Neugier*) but also distinguishes carefully between wonder and what on the surface seem to be three closely related stances toward the world: amazement (*Sichwundern*), admiration (*Bewundern*), and astonishment (*Bestaunen*). These three stances turn out, however, to have nothing in common with wonder and much in common with curiosity. It might then seem as though Heidegger and Wittgenstein must be speaking past each other when they speak of wonder, since in the passage I cite on pages 56–57 where he criticizes Ernst Renan, Wittgenstein basically uses *sichwundern, staunen, erstaunen*, and *anstaunen* interchangeably. Similar worries might be voiced about the connection that Wittgenstein makes in the same passage between wonder and fear (*Furcht*). This concern arises because in *Being and Time* Heidegger distinguishes sharply between fear and anxiety, where the ontic emotion of fear is a kind of inauthentic interpretation of the ontological structure of anxiety; authentic Dasein is fearless. See especially *Being and Time*, sections 30 and 40. And so, it might be thought, Wittgenstein's reference to fear in the Renan passage must not have any relevant connection to anxiety or wonder as these are understood by Heidegger. In response, it's worth repeating first that what Wittgenstein says in the "Lecture on Ethics" about the case of a man growing a lion's head (see page 53 and note 60) and about his temptation "to say that the right expression in language for the miracle of the existence of the world, though it is not any proposition *in* language, is the existence of language itself" (see page 61) make it unreasonable to interpret what he says about wonder in anything like a causal or cosmological sense. More importantly, to insist that the mere occurrences of the expressions *sichwundern* or *Furcht* in the Renan passage are enough to undermine the connections I am trying to make amounts to nothing more than a kind of textual fetishism that only gets in the way of genuine philosophical understanding. Wittgenstein is not operating in the same philosophical tradition as Heidegger, and so his choice of words can hardly be expected to conform to Heidegger's in every respect. Understood in context, the mere appearance of certain expressions in the Renan passage shouldn't provoke any particular

knee-jerk interpretative response on the part of the Heideggerian purist. What I am arguing for should stand or fall on whether these and other expressions are being *used* by Wittgenstein in ways that make interesting philosophical contact with Heidegger's thought.

95. Waismann, *Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle*, 68–69. This is Wittgenstein's paraphrase of *Confess.* 1.4: "et vae tacentibus de te, quoniam loquaces muti sunt" ("Yet woe betide those who are silent about you! For even those who are most gifted with speech cannot find words to describe you"). See Augustine, *Confessions*, 23. In an undated conversation, Drury recalls Wittgenstein paraphrasing the same passage as "And woe to those who say nothing concerning thee just because the chatterboxes talk a lot of nonsense." See Rhees, *Personal Recollections*, 104.

96. Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, 64. In a remark from 1931, he says that it is essential to clarification that it be carried out with courage. See ibid., 16.

97. Wittgenstein, *Cambridge Letters*, 14. The date of the letter is June 22. Wittgenstein's student and friend Maurice Drury recalls the following exchange, which he dates from 1930:

> Drury: I find Lotze very heavy going, very dull.
> Wittgenstein: Probably a man who shouldn't have been allowed to write philosophy. A book you should read is William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*; that was a book that helped me a lot at one time.
> Drury: Oh yes, I have read that. I always enjoy reading anything of William James. He is such a human person.
> Wittgenstein: That is what makes him a good philosopher; he was a real human being.

Rhees, *Personal Recollections*, 121. Although I don't endorse his reading of the *Tractatus* itself, the second chapter of Goodman's *Wittgenstein and William James* has a very useful discussion of Wittgenstein's relation to James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*.

98. James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 224–225. A few pages later, James quotes with approval this summary of these experiences from the psychologist James Leuba: "When the sense of estrangement . . . fencing man about in a narrowly limited ego, breaks down, the individual finds himself 'at one with all creation.' He lives in the universal life: he and man, he and nature, he and God, are one. That state of confidence, trust, union with all things, following upon the achievement of moral unity, is the *Faith-state*" (227).

99. Certainly among these would have been St. Paul, Luther, and Tolstoy (as quoted in James and independently). Whether Wittgenstein had read Augustine or Kierkegaard before he completed the *Tractatus* is less certain. In a 1953 letter to Ludwig Ficker, Wittgenstein's friend Ludwig Hänsel writes that he and Wittgenstein read Augustine together during the year they were prisoners of war in Monte Cassino. See Hänsel, *Ludwig Wittgenstein*, 251. After he saw Wittgenstein again for the first time since the war, Russell wrote to Ottoline Morrel from The Hague on December 20, 1919: "I had felt in his book a flavour of mysticism, but was astonished when I found that he has become a complete mystic. He reads people like Kierkegaard and Angelus Silesius, and he seriously contemplates becoming a monk. It all started from William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*, and grew (not unnaturally) during the winter he spent alone in Norway before the war, when he was nearly mad." Wittgenstein, *Cambridge Letters*, 140. McGuinness claims that Wittgenstein would

111.   Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*, 5. Emphasis is in the original.

112.   Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 257. The third thesis is "that Aristotle, the father of logic, not only has assigned truth to judgment as its primordial locus but has set going the definition of 'truth' as 'agreement.'"

113.   Ibid., 343. It bears repeating that there is an inherent tension in drawing the kind of connection between the early Wittgenstein and the early Heidegger that I am attempting here. Heidegger almost certainly does not think of the sentences that make up this passage to be "ordinary" in the sense I have used that term in the context of articulating a resolute reading of the *Tractatus*. On a resolute reading, Wittgenstein would consider these sentences to be (possibly elucidatory) nonsense.

114.   Ibid., 78.

115.   Here, perhaps, is an "isomorphism" between language and world that some commentators find in the *Tractatus*' "picture theory" of the proposition. I should stress that I am *not* saying here that Heidegger thinks an authentic relation to language lets us see that the world only gets disclosed through ordinary sentences. This recognition is part of what I am claiming for "Tractarian" authenticity.

116.   Kremer, in "The Purpose of Tractarian Nonsense," 25–27, addresses this issue as well, substantially along the same lines that I do here. My way of connecting truth and ethics in the *Tractatus* via *Being and Time*'s discussion of truth at paragraph 44 seems to me strikingly close to Friedlander's (*Signs of Sense*, 126–127) way of connecting ethics in the *Tractatus* with Heidegger's description of significance and worldhood at paragraph 18. He writes: "Whereas the sensicality of a proposition is always a matter of fact, significance makes a world of difference. It is not one part of the world that has of itself absolute value in itself or is the ground for significance as such. It is, rather, the world as a whole that is illumined with significance, that waxes and wanes for us. That kind of significance, associated with having a world, is never partial, which is why it seems at times so remote, so inaccessible." One might say, then, that the primary ethical dimension has to do with inhabiting language, with acknowledging its conditions, with opening the space for action. "The fundamental ethical act is the act of assuming significance, the manifestation of the subject through the sphere of significance, its possibilities and its demands. The correlate of that act, in respect of the subject, is the world rather than a particular fact in the world" (Friedlander, *Signs of Sense*, 133). What I see as the nearness of our thought here is perhaps not so surprising given Heidegger's own connection of truth with worldhood: "Being-true as Being uncovering, is . . . ontologically possible only on the basis of Being-in-the-world. This latter phenomenon, which we have known as a basic state of Dasein, is the foundation for the primordial phenomenon of truth" (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 261).

117.   I take Diamond to be hitting on closely related themes when she writes: "When logic or ethics is said by Wittgenstein to be transcendental, this does not mean that it is concerned with the activities of some transcendental subject. What 'transcendental' means in the *Tractatus* is that the 'sign' for whatever is called transcendental is the general form of a proposition, not some particular proposition or set of propositions that says something in particular. The only thing that could be said to do any meaning here—in logic or in ethics—is a sign that *says* nothing, but which contains (in a sense) every combination of signs to which we do give sense, every combination of signs that does say something, and no one of which

expresses a logical state of affairs or an ethical one. There—in the general form of a proposition—you can see that logic and ethics are not spheres in which we express ourselves by means of signs." Diamond, "Ethics, Imagination, and the Method of the *Tractatus*," 168.

118.   The strands in Heidegger's and Wittgenstein's thought that I am discussing here are helpfully brought together in "Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and Humility," a paper by David Cooper. He comments: "I suggest that the mystery, the proper object of wonder, is the same for both men. It resides . . . in that meeting of language (or thought) and world—that fitting together of two inseparable components—whose 'joint product' is our world, the world as experienced and described. When Wittgenstein and Heidegger wonder that anything exists at all, this is not amazement at some cosmic event, the 'big bang' or whatever: but wonder that we and the world are so fitted for one another that anything can, as it were, be a *something*, an identifiable thing present for us in thought and speech" (113). My quoting this passage in the context of my discussion of the *Tractatus* is somewhat misleading, since it is clear in his paper that Cooper intends a comparison between only the later Wittgenstein and Heidegger, while I think it expresses well what I want to say about the early Wittgenstein too. Although there is much in his understanding of the *Tractatus* that I do not endorse, I found Cooper's discussion very insightful nonetheless. In a paper from 1966 ("The Mysticism of the *Tractatus*"), Brian McGuinness interestingly suggests that holistic themes in the *Tractatus* be read as Wittgenstein's response to views that Russell expresses in the essay "Mysticism and Logic" about the relations between science, mysticism, and metaphysics.

119.   And here I mean to align already the early Wittgenstein with a tradition where something like Herder's concept of *Besonnenheit* shapes the terms of philosophical criticism. On this, see part 3 of Charles Taylor, *Philosophical Papers: Volume 1, Human Agency and Language*. Friedlander writes: "The original experience of the very possibility of a significant world is characterized in Wittgenstein's 'Lecture on Ethics' in terms of the sense of wonder at the very existence of the world, or alternatively, at the very existence of language. . . . The source of significance, the transcendence involved in significance as such, can be related to the concept of a miracle. But this is not a miracle that occurs at one time in a particular place in the world. There is no burning bush. Rather, the only sense that can be given to this miraculousness is related to the existence of significance altogether. The existence of a meaningful world, or, what comes to the same, the existence of language as such, is to be considered a miracle. It is in this sense that the *Tractatus* can be regarded as dealing with creation itself. For when it comes to this dimension, one does not feel the happiness associated with the recognition of what things are, with the showing of significance, but rather one's experience concerns the very existence of a significant world rather than nothing." Friedlander, *Signs of Sense*, 140.

120.   Waismann, *Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle*, 68. I have amended the translation slightly. The German reads: "Ich kann mir wohl denken was Heidegger mit Sein und Angst meint. Der Mensch hat den Trieb, gegen die Grenzen der Sprache anzurennen. Denken Sie z.B. an das Erstaunen, dass etwas existiert. Das Erstaunen kann nicht in Form einer Frage ausgedrückt werden, und es gibt auch gar keine Antwort. Alles, was wir sagen mögen, kann a priori nur Unsinn sein. Trotzdem rennen wir gegen die Grenze der Sprache an. Dieses Anrennen hat auch Kierkegaard gesehen und es sogar ganz ähnlich (als Anrennen gegen das Paradoxon) bezeichnet. Dieses Anrennen gegen die Grenze der Sprache ist die *Ethik*."

Other parts of this same excerpt from Waismann's notes are quoted on pages 58 (cf. note 76) and 64 (cf. note 95). The reference seems to be to Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments*, 37. In 1965, *The Philosophical Review* 74 (January) published Wittgenstein's "Lecture on Ethics," which he delivered shortly after returning to Cambridge in 1929. As an addendum to this, *The Philosophical Review* included a few lines from the notes recorded by Friedrich Waismann in conversation with Wittgenstein a few weeks after the lecture. Strangely, the editors expunged Waismann's own heading for the passage, "Apropos of Heidegger," as well as the first line, where Wittgenstein refers to Heidegger.

121.   My discussion here has benefited from a paper by Keicher, "Untersuchungen zu Wittgenstein's 'Diktat für Schlick.'" See also Murray, "A Note on Wittgenstein and Heidegger."

122.   Waismann, *Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle*, n. 25, 68. The footnote text is taken from Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 230–231, and reads as follows: "*That in the face of which one has anxiety is Being-in-the-world as such*. What is the difference phenomenally between that in the face of which anxiety is anxious and that in the face of which fear is afraid? That in the face of which one has anxiety is not an entity within-the-world . . . *the world as such is that in the face of which one has anxiety.*"

123.   Heidegger *Being and Time*, n. iv, 492. Heidegger's reference is to Kierkegaard's *Der Begriff der Angst* [*The Concept of Anxiety*], 1844, *Gesammelte Werke* (Diedrichs), vol. 5. Heidegger also refers here to Augustine and Luther as prefiguring Kierkegaard's analysis. On this question, see Rentsch, *Heidegger und Wittgenstein*, 211.

124.   In particular, Carnap tries to demonstrate how Heidegger's sentence "*Das Nichts selbst nichtet*" ("The Nothing itself nihilates") violates the laws of logical syntax. See Rudolf Carnap, "The Elimination of Metaphysics Through Logical Analysis of Language." Carnap and Heidegger had met in the spring of 1929 in Davos, Switzerland, where Carnap not only heard Heidegger debate Ernst Cassirer but also held informal discussions with him. See Friedman, *A Parting of the Ways*.

125.   I say "block of text" rather than "passage," because Carnap has literally strung together sentences that are spread over several pages of Heidegger's lecture. I have not used Arthur Pap's translation here (cf. Ayer, *Logical Positivism*, 69) but rather assembled the corresponding translations from Heidegger's lecture found in Krell's *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, 97–105. The other block of text printed in Carnap's paper, broken up by his interjection, runs as follows:

> With regard to the nothing question and answer alike are inherently absurd. — — The commonly cited ground rule of all thinking, the proposition that contradiction is to be avoided, universal "logic" itself, lays low this question. *Basic Writings*, 99.
>
> [Carnap's interjection:] So much the worse for logic! We must overthrow its reign:
>
> If the power of the intellect in the field of inquiry into the nothing and into Being is thus shattered, then the destiny of the reign of "logic" in philosophy is thereby decided. The idea of "logic" itself disintegrates in the turbulence of a more original questioning. *Basic Writings*, 107.

126.   The *Diktat für Schlick*, item 302 in Wittgenstein, *Wittgenstein's Nachlass*, stems from the period 1931–1933. See Conant's "Two Conceptions of *Die Überwindung der Metaphysik*" for

an excellent discussion of Wittgenstein's remarks on Carnap's paper and of how that paper has shaped both early and later receptions of the *Tractatus*.

127.   And, to repeat, neither of them is speaking to the cosmological question.

128.   Of course, it cannot be ruled out a priori that Wittgenstein knew of Heidegger's brief mention of wonder in *Being and Time*. But for Wittgenstein to have traced the connections between this brief mention back to authenticity and anxiety would have required a much more detailed knowledge of the way that those concepts hang together in Heidegger's book than I believe it plausible to ascribe to him.

129.   In fact, this is why I believe Wittgenstein mentions Kierkegaard after Heidegger in the conversation. Of course, it's not unthinkable that Wittgenstein may have been stimulated by Heidegger's lecture to consult *Being and Time*. Since Kierkegaard is mentioned in the book but not in the lecture, this could partly account for Wittgenstein's reference to him immediately after the reference to Heidegger and anxiety. But I don't think it is necessary to invoke this remote possibility; Wittgenstein could have simply seen the philosophical connections between what he had read of each man's work.

130.   I am not suggesting that Heidegger would have recognized Wittgenstein's reaction in the conversation with Waismann nor the idea of Tractarian "authenticity" that I have been operating with here. Heidegger's account of authenticity concerns all of the practices of the "they" and all of Dasein's involvements, whereas the authenticity that I am arguing is a goal of the *Tractatus* seems to concern only our relation to language. Moreover, it is fair to say that the early Heidegger has a much richer conception of language than does the early Wittgenstein, since even the "anyone" linguistic practices of the "they" include a wide variety of uses, whereas the locus of engagement between Wittgenstein and his reader is restricted to a narrow construal of language, what for Heidegger would have amounted to an understanding fundamentally in terms of assertion (*apophansis*). See *Being and Time*, paragraphs 33 and 34). Without denying this important difference, it's worth noting, first, that talking itself is an activity and, second, that language permeates so many of our other activities that it is arguable that the kind of alteration in one's relation to it that I am arguing Wittgenstein sought to bring about would result in a change in the way one engaged in many of those activities as well.

131.   Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 435.

132.   Ibid., 329.

133.   Cooper, *Heidegger*, 49.

134.   Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 435.

135.   Ibid., 437. See page 46 for a brief explanation of the terms "existentiell" and "existential."

136.   Ibid., 437. Dreyfus suggests Martin Luther King Jr. as an example of someone who explicitly repeated an aspect of the Christian heritage when he took it upon himself to be the advocate for the poor and oppressed. One might also see King as having chosen Jesus for his hero, or perhaps Jesus and Gandhi as his heroes. In the future, people may in turn choose King for their hero.

137.   See especially Conant's "Must We Show What We Cannot Say?", "Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein, and Nonsense," and "Putting Two and Two Together."

138.   I am not claiming that the discussion of this section concerns the only important difference between the *Tractatus* and the understanding of authenticity at work in *Being and Time*

(cf. note 130, above). Rather, the difference between those two works that I have focused on here is important for understanding my criticisms of Kremer and Conant in the next section, in particular because I see it as essentially the same difference that they overlook in their discussions comparing the *Tractatus* to the works of Paul, Augustine, and Kierkegaard. A question that I cannot take up here is whether Heidegger's talk of authentic Dasein's historicality, in particular its choosing its hero, is *actually coherent*. The question does not arise for all such talk, not, for example, for Paul's talk about Christ in his epistles, but rather because there is a question about the overall coherence of the context in which Heidegger's talk of the heritage and hero takes place; that is, there is a question about the coherence of Heidegger's project of fundamental ontology itself.

139.   Kremer, "The Purpose of Tractarian Nonsense," 47. *New International Version* (Barker, 1985) cited by book, chapter, and verse.

140.   Kremer, "The Purpose of Tractarian Nonsense," 47–48. Cf. Romans 7.

141.   Kremer, "The Purpose of Tractarian Nonsense," 49. Cf. Augustine, *City of God*, 852.

142.   Kremer, "The Purpose of Tractarian Nonsense," 52.

143.   Ibid., 51.

144.   Ibid., 56.

145.   Conant, "Must We Show What We Cannot Say?" "Throwing Away the Top of the Ladder," "Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein, and Nonsense," "Putting Two and Two Together," "Two Conceptions of *Die Überwindung der Metaphysik*," "The Method of the *Tractatus*," and (with Cora Diamond) "On Reading the *Tractatus* Resolutely."

146.   Conant, "Putting Two and Two Together," 249.

147.   From *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, translated by Walter Lowrie (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1941). Reprinted in Guignon and Pereboom, *Existentialism: Basic Writings*, 83.

148.   Conant, "Must We Show What We Cannot Say?" 261.

149.   Conant, "Putting Two and Two Together," 283.

150.   Conant, "Must We Show What We Cannot Say?" 262.

151.   Conant, "Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein, and Nonsense," 205.

152.   Ibid.

153.   Ibid., 206.

154.   Ibid. Elsewhere, he writes, "the attack in Kierkegaard is on a form of reflection which subserves a strategy of evasion—a form of reflection that offers the promise of enlightening us as to the nature of the ethical or religious life but in fact prevents us from ever arriving at the performance of a decisive action and hence from properly embarking on such a life." Conant, "Putting Two and Two Together," 311, n. 35.

155.   Conant, "Must We Show What We Cannot Say?" 254. Conant also writes: "Kierkegaard sometimes describes his pseudonymous writings as works of ethics. What these authors have in mind here seems to be accurately captured in the claim that they thought of their works as ethical deeds. . . . The vigilance they call upon us to exercise in our use of language (and hence the vigilance with which they ask us to live our lives) can be justifiably termed an ethical demand. . . . The ethical purpose that guides them lies in nothing more, and nothing less than their hopes of changing one or another of their readers." Conant, "Putting Two and Two Together," n. 25, p. 278. Conant does not tell the reader where Kierkegaard says this

nor to which pseudonymous works Kierkegaard is referring. Thus it is difficult to render a judgment about the significance of Kierkegaard's utterance. This is unfortunate, since it is possible to take this utterance as making a very different point from the one Conant takes it to be making. If one understands Kierkegaard as I do, then one might think he was *limiting* the significance of some portion of his pseudonymous authorship by pointing out that since it consists of works of ethics, it does not give expression to the highest sphere, namely, the religious. At any rate, what Conant says correctly implies that in whatever sense Wittgenstein meant the *Tractatus* to be ethical, it certainly is not in the same sense as that in which the idea of *the ethical* is to be found in *Fear and Trembling*. There the idea of the ethical concerns universal ethical principles, and this is clearly not what Wittgenstein is referring to in his letter to Ficker or in the "Lecture on Ethics."

156.   In order to keep the focus of the main text on the interpretation of Wittgenstein, I will sketch my differences with Conant over Kierkegaard as best I can in this long footnote. These differences mainly concern the significance of Kierkegaard's pseudonymous authorship, specifically, what to make of Religiousness B. Based on his understanding of Climacus's revocation at the end of the book, Conant would have us throw Religiousness B away with the rest of the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. He describes the authorial strategy of the *Postscript* as one in which "a host of apparently fully objective distinctions (such as, for example, that between Religiousness A and Religiousness B)" are drawn by Climacus, Kierkegaard's pseudonym (Conant, "Putting Two and Two Together," 263). He then adds, "the crucial question that Climacus gradually urges the reader up the work's dialectical ladder toward is the following: if the paradox [Religiousness B] is only objectively identifiable in virtue of the fact that it represents the utmost pitch of incomprehensibility, how are we to distinguish it from other extreme forms of incomprehensibility?" (261). Conant's answer is that we cannot objectively identify Religiousness B and that this is one of the things that the humorist Climacus was leading us to see. Conant thus believes that Kierkegaard employs plain nonsense in the *Postscript* in much the same way, and for many of the same reasons, as Wittgenstein does in the *Tractatus*: "That one *can* indeed genuinely imagine that one grasps a distinction where none has been drawn—that a projection of false necessities, beneath or beyond the conditions upon which our mastery of language rests, can prove mysteriously irresistible and gratifying—*this* is what these two books are, above all, about." ("Must We Show What We Cannot Say?" 254). Though I believe that what he writes here is true of the *Tractatus*, I believe that it is misleading when it comes to Kierkegaard. In fact, the problem may arise in part because Conant's almost exclusive focus on the *Postscript* prevents him from seeing that work in the broader context of Kierkegaard's writing.

To elaborate a bit further, Conant understands Kierkegaard's use of nonsense in the *Postscript* as having two main goals. First, to show the philosopher who assumes that understanding Christianity consists in acquiring abstruse knowledge that he is not a Christian (Conant, "Putting Two and Two Together," 275). "The attraction to the use of such concepts is often tied, he thinks, to the user's wish to sustain for himself the illusion of being a Christian. Kierkegaard's sense of the difficulty of his project is tied to a suspicion that his reader may have deeply entrenched motives—motives which he conceals from himself—for not wishing to clarify for himself what it is that he means when he employs such concepts" (ibid., 277). The second, related, goal consists of unraveling conceptual confusions of the

philosopher from within, confusions that result from the philosopher's fleeing from the ordinary in his life, fleeing, that is, what Conant, echoing Stanley Cavell, calls knowledge "which one cannot help but already have." And in bursting the bubble of the philosopher's illusions that stem from this fleeing, Kierkegaard returns the philosopher to himself, to the everyday or ordinary in his life. Though he clearly acknowledges that Kierkegaard distinguishes between religious and ethical categories, the following passage makes it evident that Conant reads Kierkegaard as accomplishing this task by following in the footsteps of Socrates: "Most of what the ancients called 'philosophy' falls under the category of the ethical for Kierkegaard. Socrates is his paradigm of the ethical teacher (see for example, Chapter 1 of *Philosophical Fragments*). The ethical teacher's aim is to serve as a midwife who enables us to give birth to our true self. This he does not by imparting a doctrine but by serving as an occasion through which the repression of knowledge—*which one cannot help but already have*—is undone" (ibid., 314, n. 38, my emphasis). Since, on Conant's view, the original fleeing from oneself is not itself motivated by intellectual difficulties, he would not regard his claim that Kierkegaard means to clear up conceptual confusions as ascribing to him an overly intellectualist goal. But Conant does think that clearing up conceptual confusion, especially his philosophical reader's confusion about Christianity, is all that Kierkegaard himself thought could be accomplished through his writings.

Though it is of course correct that one must be aware of the literary strategy of the *Postscript*, in *The Sickness Unto Death*, Religiousness B is not described from the standpoint of a disinterested humorist (like Climacus) but from that of a committed Christian, Anti-Climacus. Precisely because Climacus himself is a philosopher, we ought to be suspicious about taking his logicizing away Religiousness B as Kierkegaard's intended resting place for his reader and so be wary of putting as much weight on the *Postscript* as Conant does for our overall interpretation of Kierkegaard. (Here too I should acknowledge the influence of Hubert Dreyfus on my views. This comes in part from the appendix to *Being-in-the-World*, which he co-wrote with Jane Rubin, but mostly through what I have taken away from many discussions with him over many years. I make no claim, however, that what I say here precisely represents either of their views.)

It is true that Conant himself states that his discussion is essentially limited to the pseudonymous works authored by Johannes Climacus: "This is perhaps the place to remark that I do not take what I say in this essay about the structure of the pseudonymous authorship to apply to the works authored by Anti-Climacus. They do not belong to the corpus of what Kierkegaard calls 'the aesthetic works.' His comments in *The Point of View* about the method of indirect communication as employed by the other pseudonyms—as a strategy of deceiving the reader into truth—are not meant to apply to Anti-Climacus. The reasons for employing the device of pseudonymity in this case lie elsewhere. Kierkegaard is not prepared to say of himself, as Anti-Climacus will say of himself, that he is 'an extraordinary Christian such as there has never been.' Hence the name Anti-Climacus: he is the antithesis—the polar opposite—of Climacus, the pseudonym who repeatedly says of himself that he is not a Christian" (Conant, "Putting Two and Two Together," 327, n. 97). Nevertheless, I do not think Conant acknowledges the degree to which this admission bears on his interpretation. First, there are references to the spheres of existence, which Conant would have us throw away as part of the ladder of the *Postscript*, in nonpseudonymous works such

as *The Present Age* and the *Edifying Discourses*, suggesting that Kierkegaard did not merely take these to be literary devices. Moreover, in the 1851 piece "My Activity as a Writer," in *The Point of View for My Work as an Author*, Kierkegaard indicates that *The Sickness Unto Death* represents the right attitude toward Christianity. He writes of Anti-Climacus, "All the earlier pseudonyms are lower than the 'edifying author' [Kierkegaard, in this context]; the new pseudonym represents a higher pseudonymity" (Kierkegaard, *Point of View*, 142). In a supplement to this piece, he tells us that although he "knows what Christianity is, my imperfection as a Christian I fully recognize" (153). And when he adds, "I am infinitely concerned that the requirements of the ideal [Christianity] may at least be heard," it seems clear from the context that it is Anti-Climacus who "ventures to say everything" concerning that ideal that Kierkegaard admits to falling short of (153). Yet this nonpseudonymous work is a precursor to the longer, posthumously published *The Point of View for My Work as an Author*, which is claimed by Conant himself as one of the few reliable sources we have for how to read the pseudonymous authorship. It may be true that Kierkegaard is not prepared to say of himself that he is a Christian, but it is arguable that what he does say in *The Point of View* strongly suggests that he wanted *someone* to speak from this (perhaps logically confused non-) standpoint. As a Christian, Anti-Climacus *cannot* entertain the possibility that the disinterested humorist Climacus can, that the paradox of the god-man's existence is not *actually* necessary. For someone like Anti-Climacus, who has actually taken on the risk and commitment of Christianity, *both* the passion of faith *and* its object, that Jesus was the savior, are necessary.

Once the Religiousness B of *Sickness Unto Death* is identified as Christianity, one gets a very different reading on where Kierkegaard intends to leave his reader. Instead of leaving him with the ordinary knowledge that he has had all along, Kierkegaard wants to lead his reader to the realization that his true condition is despair and that this despair can only be eradicated by Christianity. It is therefore problematic to suggest, as Conant does, that Kierkegaard is interested in guiding his reader to the insight that the ordinary in life is adequate for satisfying his needs. Rather, the reader is to see that in despair he is powerless to meet his own needs, and so he must relate himself to something outside of himself, ideally Jesus. While I take it to be one of his correct insights that becoming a Christian for Kierkegaard is definitely not a matter of acquiring new knowledge, Conant neglects the possibility that Kierkegaard believed there is a way (exemplified by Anti-Climacus) to embody the passion of faith in the paradox of the god-man that would make it irrelevant that Climacus (or we) cannot understand it. Consequently, Conant puts too much emphasis on problems raised by Kierkegaard's philosophical humorist. The notion that the self is incomplete without faith in God and a relation to a savior (or at least some other object outside the self) seems to me more in line with the nature of the religious dimension of Kierkegaard's thought than Conant's interpretation will have it.

157. For example, Augustine writes in 4.1 of the *Confessions*, "Without you I am my own guide to the brink of perdition. And even when all is well with me, what am I but a creature suckled on your milk and feeding on yourself, the food that never perishes? And what is any man, if he is only man?" At 5.3, paraphrasing *Psalms* and *1 Corinthians* he writes, "Your wisdom is inscrutable, but your only-begotten Son was given us to be our wisdom, our justification, and our sanctification."

158. Kremer, "The Purpose of Tractarian Nonsense," 58.

159. Ibid.

160. Ibid.

161. Ibid., 61.

162. Ibid., 49.

163. The demands that Wittgenstein places on his readers may well require certain virtues, but this is very different from *showing* his reader how to live or from indicating what the showing and learning of virtues comes to in human life. The philosophy of the *Tractatus* does try to lay the groundwork for the possibility of what I have been characterizing as a kind of authenticity, an important part of which is the example given by the wonder expressed by the clear-sighted speaker of ethical nonsense. This is a position which Wittgenstein seems to take himself to be exemplifying in the "Lecture on Ethics." But as I will show in the next chapter, Wittgenstein's own tacit metaphysical assumptions about language during his Tractarian period preclude him from imparting an understanding that helps his reader to appropriate this possibility in any serviceable way.

164. I am not at all claiming here that the *Tractatus* actually *forbids* such a relation, only that it does not take itself to point the way to one. At one time, I thought that the *Tractatus* could be read as a response to the problem of contemporary nihilism. Mainly because of the issues discussed in this paragraph (the appreciation of which I owe to criticisms by Hubert Dreyfus), I no longer believe this is correct. What I still think is the case, however, is that Wittgenstein believed that modernity's obsession with justification obscured the meaning of our impulse to come out with ethical nonsense and that to the extent that he understood himself as attempting to clarify the nature of this impulse in his reader, he also saw himself as battling a historical trend.

165. My criticisms in this section of Kremer (and, by implication, Conant) are focused on a significant disanalogy that he overlooks between the *Tractatus* and the writings of Paul and Augustine. I am also arguing that it tracks an important difference between the *Tractatus* and *Being and Time*, given the latter's self-understanding. I am not arguing, however, for the coherence of Heidegger's project of fundamental ontology and so for the coherence of his idea that authentic Dasein can choose its hero, per se.

3. A RESOLUTE FAILURE

1. It is not uncommon, moreover, for commentators on the early Heidegger to have recourse to later Wittgensteinian ideas or terminology, especially when they are attempting to explain Heidegger to a broader philosophical audience. Dreyfus sometimes adopts this strategy in *Being-in-the-World*. See also Guignon, *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge*; and Cooper, *Existentialism: A Reconstruction*.

2. See Rorty, "Heidegger, Wittgenstein, and the Reification of Language."

3. I would also dispute Rorty's reading of Heidegger's philosophical development but can only say a few words about this here. Toward the end of "The Way Back Into the Ground of Metaphysics," Heidegger describes the project of *Being and Time* as in some sense still in

the grip of traditional ontology: "From the point of view of metaphysics, to be sure, the title 'fundamental ontology' says something that is correct; but precisely for that reason it is misleading, for what matters is success in the transition from metaphysics to recalling the truth of Being. As long as this thinking calls itself 'fundamental ontology' it blocks and obscures its own way with this title. For what the title 'fundamental ontology' suggests is, of course, that the attempt to recall the truth of Being—and not, like all ontology, the truth of beings—is itself (seeing that it is called 'fundamental ontology') still a kind of ontology. In fact, the attempt to recall the truth of Being sets out on the way back into the ground of metaphysics, and with its first step it immediately leaves the realm of all ontology. On the other hand, every philosophy which revolves around an indirect or direct conception of 'transcendence' remains of necessity essentially an ontology, whether it achieves a new foundation of ontology or whether it assures us that it repudiates ontology as a conceptual freezing of experience" (276–277). I understand what Heidegger says here to be not only an important reflection on his own early work but in essence as expressing a perspective that Wittgenstein himself could later have taken when reflecting on the shortcomings of the *Tractatus*. With both philosophers, the later work reflects a greater awareness of the situatedness of philosophical activity, a deeper appreciation for the difficulties of relating to the philosophical tradition, and thus the necessary radicalization of contextualist elements already present, but incompletely developed, in their early work. See Guignon, *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge*, esp. 117–127, 208–248; and Blattner, "Remarks on Iain Thomson's *Heidegger on Ontotheology*."

4. See pages 33–36.

5. This view is forcefully given by Malcolm, in *Nothing Is Hidden*.

6. Conant, "Putting Two and Two Together," 297. Among remarks on philosophical method that he recorded in 1931, Wittgenstein himself writes, "All reflections can be carried out in a much more homespun manner than I used to do." See "Philosophy," in Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Occasions*, 180.

7. Conant, "Putting Two and Two Together," 302.

8. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*, 3.

9. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §66.

10. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*, 5. If we put together what I go on to say here with what I said in the previous chapter about how "truth" might be understood in this passage, then we get the thought that the *Tractatus* means to leave us with an understanding of the seamlessness of mind and world but that instead its elucidations narrate a story of our attunements in monotone.

11. There may in fact be several elucidatory stages in the book where we come to see or suspect that something we took for argumentation was in fact pseudoargumentation. But only at §6.54 does Wittgenstein "come clean," as it were.

12. Conant, "Putting Two and Two Together," 303. Diamond writes in a similar vein, "It . . . marks a great change in Wittgenstein's views that he got rid of the idea that you can replace philosophical thinking by carrying out a kind of complete analysis of sentences in which the essential features of sentence sense as such are totally visible." Diamond, "Throwing Away the Ladder," 184.