The transcendental skeleton in a human context
Episode 1: Wittgenstein's early work

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24th March 2018

Abstract

We address the question whether, and if so to what extent, Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* ((Wittgenstein, 1960), henceforth 'TLP') should be interpreted as transcendental. Rather than placing TLP in the tradition from Kant onwards, we focus on a transcendental reading of tractarian themes that is in line with its future, viz., Wittgenstein's later work. We advance a contextual reading in which TLP presents a transcendental scheme of description that can be developed and instantiated in different ways. Read thus, the conceptual relations between logic, language and reality are other than what is usually proposed. In a human context, the transcendental skeleton ensures that description and what is described are subtly entwined. It allows the construction and application of logical tools that help to achieve philosophical clarity. The resulting 'philosophy as application' leaves no room for substantial psychology or epistemology: subject and will only manifest themselves as non-material, acting aspects to attain a representing and reflective interaction the world. To trace which aspects of transcendental idealism Wittgenstein rejected and which he accepted, we highlight a tension between the contextual approach and the early Wittgenstein's claim that sense must be determinate, briefly compare it with elements from Kant and Schopenhauer, and discuss some authors that have placed Wittgenstein in their tradition.

1 Introduction

The question whether, and if so to what extent, TLP contains arguments or concepts that can be, or should be, interpreted as transcendental has concerned interpreters of TLP on and of. In the early days the main focus of exegetical work on TLP and other canonical writings of 'early analytic philosophy', such as the writings of Frege, viewed them essentially as laying the foundations of the twentieth century analytic tradition, and interpreted them with the benefit of hindsight, so to speak, as outlining and pursuing that particular philosophical programme. Only later, when people began to read these works in their historical context, the question arose whether Wittgenstein was attempting in some way to emulate elements of the Kantian tradition of transcendental philosophy.

So the question at stake can not be expected to be answered in any straightforward way. We will start from the assumption, which we concede is not obvious, that there is 'something right' about the hunch that transcendentality in some form or other is relevant for TLP. However, the issue is complicated, for a number of reasons, and it is doubtful whether pure textual exegesis can provide a clear and unequivocal answer. One of the complexities is obvious: it is the relative lack of explicit reflection on its own goals and methods that TLP is known for. Also, the text took shape over a period of seven to eight years, during which

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Wittgenstein's philosophy evolved. The philosophy itself is phrased in highly condensed, literary German. It is no wonder that what little the text contains on the issues that we are concerned with here, can be read in quite divergent ways. Another complexity has to do with the second element in the comparison: transcendentality. That, too, is a far from simple and unambiguous concept, and it depends on one's point of departure in the richly layered history of transcendental philosophy what one may take it to encompass.

What complicates the matter further is that the text displays a tension between a philosophy which, in line with Wittgenstein's later work, seeks close contact with the human context, and a notion of determinate meaning which, when radicalised, does not fit such contexts easily. Indeed, with hindsight the friction between Wittgenstein's early and later philosophy can already be discerned in the TLP itself. In this paper we shall indicate in what manner and argue that a contextualised form of transcendentalism helps to eliminate it, at least to a certain extent. But we begin with indicating how early Wittgenstein's relates philosophy to the world we find ourselves in.

2 The mysteries of logical modelling

When in October 1911 Wittgenstein started to study philosophy with Russell, he seemed mainly interested in developing his analytical interest in the nature of mathematics, meaningful sentences, logic, truth,... Yet, even then he engaged in philosophy not just as an abstract, academic exercise, but also to come to grips with his own unquiet, tormented life. A famous anecdote from Russell's autobiography contains a telling mixture of analysis and reflection:

> He used to come and see me every evening at midnight, and pace up and down like a wild beast for three hours in agitated silence. Once I said to him: 'Are you thinking about logic or about your sins?' 'Both', he replied, and continued his pacing. I did not like to suggest that it was time for bed, as it seemed probable both to him and me that on leaving me he would commit suicide. [*Russell (1975, 330)*]

Again, a diary-entry on the fate of his brother Paul − the pianist who lost his right arm during an assault on Poland in 1914, − clearly indicates the reflective, life-saving role Wittgenstein attributed to philosophy, in the context of a sometimes hostile world.

> Time and again I must think of poor Paul, who has LOST HIS VOCATION SO SUDDENLY. How awful. Which philosophy would be needed to come to terms with this! If at all there is another option than suicide!! [*MS101, 28.10.14.*]

Philosophy or suicide, those were the two options that came to his mind.

In his diaries, MS101-3, especially in the ciphered parts, there are quite a few passages in which Wittgenstein takes his own life as point of departure for philosophical reflection.[1] The philosophical value of these remarks is often belittled. Schroeder, for example, holds it to be a fact that:

> ...young Wittgenstein's musings and gnomic aphorisms on the meaning of life and the mystical, although extremely significant from a biographical point of view, are of little philosophical value and only tenuously related to his work on logic and language. [*Schroeder (2012, 1-3)*]

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1. It is a shame the diaries MS101-3 are still not published in a properly edited fashion. What makes these documents so valuable is the blend of personal and more philosophical entries, a distinction that is often hard to make and is best left to the reader. Facsimiles are available at `wittgensteinsource.org`.

Similar opinions can be discerned in Hacker (1984, chapter 4), Glock (1999), and elsewhere. We disagree. Not only is it crucial to see that Wittgenstein *applied* philosophy to his daily life in this way, we also think that the relationship between ethics, logic and language is much subtler than Schroeder and others suggest.[2]

We think it is remarkable that, somewhat like in the later language games, early Wittgenstein often developed core philosophical insights on the basis of quite specific contexts. Before the idea that sense concerns logical modelling got idealised into the abstract, it took off from concrete instances such as a model in a Parisian court, a sketch of two people fighting, an ink-pot on a table:

> Propositions [. . .] are themselves facts: that this ink-pot is on this table may express that I sit in this chair. [*Wittgenstein (1913)*]

Similarly what in TLP appears to be rather abstract views on ethics and aesthetics, derive from shifts in perspective on concrete contexts:

> The usual way of looking, views objects as it were from their midst, the view *sub specie aeterni* from the outside. So, that they have the entire world as their backdrop. [*Wittgenstein (1979, 07-10-1916)*]

> If I have been contemplating the stove, and then am told: but now all you know is the stove, my result does indeed seem trivial. For this represents the matter as if I had studied the stove as one among the many things in the world. But if I was contemplating the stove it was my world, and everything else colourless by contrast with it. [*Wittgenstein (1979, 08-10-1916)*]

For reasons that we hope will become clear in this paper, we think that such philosophy, with its different ways of interacting with the world and its shifts in perspective, is best viewed as a 'contextualised holism'.

What has survived of the pre-tractarian period at first gives the impression that Wittgenstein's interest in analytical topics remains separated from his existential apprehensions, and at first sight the sculpted, detached theses of the TLP strengthen this impression. Still, in his diary from 1916 one finds quite strong indications these strands in his philosophy are getting merged:

> [I know,] that life is the world. [*11-06-1916., MS103*]

> Yes, my work has expanded from the foundations of logic to the essence of the world. [*2.8.16., MS103*]

In the TLP this becomes:[3]

> To give the essence of a sentence means to give the essence of all description, and thus the essence of the world. [*5.4711*]

> The world and life are one. [*5.621*]

Interestingly, with this overall connection in place, Wittgenstein does not present logic and language as abstract ideals – as Frege and Russell did, – but much rather relates them squarely to the language we use in the world we live in:[4]

> In fact, all sentences of our everyday language, just as they stand, are in perfect logical order. [...]
> (Our problems are not abstract, but perhaps the most concrete that there are.) [5.5563]

This is not to say that the essence of description and the world it describes can be read of its sleeves. The reason is there is a clear and present friction between Wittgenstein's philosophy as concerning our daily life and language, and his abstract views on logic and language, which are based on the assumption that sense must be determinate and prior to truth.

In section 4 we shall investigate this apparent tension between application and logical modelling in more detail. Now, let us start with an observation that everyone who has ever had to explain TLP must be familiar with, viz., the fact that we can not give examples of its core notions. Not of objects, nor of states of affairs, not of names, nor of elementary sentences. Even providing examples of situations and complex sentences is difficult in that we need to take a lot for granted. Take the real world situation that Amsterdam lies (roughly) to the north of Rotterdam, and its linguistic equivalent 'Amsterdam lies (roughly) to the north of Rotterdam'. To maintain that we are dealing with a situation in the specific sense of TLP means to assume that it is a complex that can ultimately be analysed in terms of states of affairs being realised or not. And analogously for the sentential counterpart. That is an assumption that is easier to make than to justify, at least concretely. For any attempt to do so leads us back to square one: what are examples of states of affairs, what are examples of elementary sentences? And what are examples of their component parts, objects and names?

The key factor that makes it impossible to come up with 'real world' examples is the requirement that states of affairs are atoms, in the sense that the realisation of one is logically independent of that of any other. And the same holds for elementary sentences. This requirement is grounded in the conviction, partly shared with Russell, that analysis would make clear that all what can be described can just as well be modelled logically (4.01). For the logical approach offered in the TLP, the conviction turned out be untenable. If we take anything that is realised in space-time, we immediately run into the problem that its being realised excludes a range of other things being realised that should count as states of affairs as well. An object being located at a certain point in space-time, an object having a certain mass, speed, direction, and so on: it all excludes that object being located elsewhere, having a different mass, speed, direction. And it would be utterly implausible to regard one as a state of affairs, but not the others.

One way out of this conundrum is to resort to artificial examples, in a more or less literal sense. Okay, we do not know of any sentence of English (or any other natural language) that is elementary in the sense of TLP, but we can point to the case of, e.g., propositional logic where we have a concept of an elementary sentence built right into the definition of the language. So we say 'Think of proposition letters in logic, that is what elementary sentences are like'. And with some handwaving we can even persuade our audience that we thereby have also given them examples of states of affairs. But we know that we are cheating, and our saying '... what elementary sentences are *like*' gives that away.

The situation is not just somewhat embarrassing, but also quite puzzling. If Wittgenstein really wants TLP to tell us what the a priori structure of reality and language look like,

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4. As is well known, one of the things Wittgenstein disliked about Russell's introduction to TLP is his suggestion that Wittgenstein was after a reform of natural language in favour of a perfect one.

is it not strange that we can not connect that in any way to concrete reality and concrete language? If we can not, then what is it that TLP is a specification of? In our view, this indicates that we need to pay attention to the transcendental aspects of the TLP, and this in concrete human contexts.

3   A contextual reading of transcendentality

One often defends a transcendental reading of TLP, or parts thereof, by placing it in the tradition of transcendentalism idealism from Kant onwards and maximising the similarities.[5] In this section we want to explore a different approach, one that looks not so much to the past of TLP as to its future, viz., the later work.

Looking for continuities in Wittgenstein's work is, of course, nothing new, but, at least as far as we are aware, it has not been tried specifically with an eye to coming to grips with the question of TLP's transcendentality. Our overall project aims to approach the matter from two angles: transcendental elements in Wittgenstein's later work and in the text of TLP itself. The present paper is confined to the latter, the former aspects will be dealt with in a sequel to this paper.

3.1   Application

There is reason to believe that at the time Wittgenstein was completing TLP, he started to sense a tension between rigid logical modelling and everyday meaningful language. We think his suggestion was that we may need to approach the matter not from an absolute, but rather from a contextual perspective. Thesis 2 and its offspring, which can be traced to the inception of TLP, suggest an absolute reading, while 5.55 and its offspring, which date from the time of TLP's completion, point to a more contextualised view. As a matter of fact, a contextual interpretation along the following lines has already been suggested, although perhaps not quite from this angle, quite early in the literature, by Erik Stenius (Stenius, 1960). What follows is inspired by his remarks.[6]

In 5.557 Wittgenstein states the following:

> The *application* of logic decides what elementary propositions there are.
> What belongs to its application, logic cannot anticipate.
> It is clear that logic must not clash with its application.
> But logic has to be in contact with its application.
> Therefore logic and its application must not overlap.   [5.557]

If we take all that is stated prior to this thesis as a specification of the transcendental conditions for meaningful language and thought, this might, or actually should, come as a surprise. What Wittgenstein is saying here is that it is practical application, and not some absolute, a priori deduction, that determines what are elementary sentences and their ontological counterparts.

This raises two questions. First, what kind of application does Wittgenstein have in mind here? Can there be different applications and how different can they be? And second, how does application affect the status of the statements about ontology, meaning, and language that make up the larger part of the text?

Let us begin with some observations about the passages just quoted. 'Logic must not clash with its application': this can be read as stating that whatever constraints logic imposes,

5.   Here we think e.g. of Stenius (1960), Magee (1983), Moore (2013), Hacker (1984), Glock (1999), Sullivan (2013), Tang (2011), Schroeder (2012).
6.   Cf., also the discussion in Stokhof (2002, chapter 3).

it should *always* be able to meet them. Now, if logic would not impose any constraints, this would be trivially true, but note that Wittgenstein also states that 'logic has to be in contact with its application'. That seems to indicate that logic does impose constraints. So, the key question is: how can we make sense of a logic that constrains, but does so in a way that does not preclude any type of application? Here the transcendental nature of logic comes to the fore: it defines a framework that has no substantial effect on anything contingent; any application is contingent, and no application is ruled out. Yet logic is 'in contact' with application: for it is what defines in the most general sense what application is, it is what makes application possible. Hence Wittgenstein's 'Therefore logic and its application must not overlap': this is indeed what follows from the transcendental nature of logic and the empirical nature of application.

So far, so good. What is then crucial to note is what it is that logic does. It supplies concepts and their relations, but in such a way that as far as truth-functionality is concerned nothing follows with regard to concrete instantiations of those concepts. Thus, logic supplies the concept of an elementary sentence, but it puts almost no constraints on what elementary sentences are. That is by and large determined by application. But what is that?

TLP does not say much about application. The term occurs eleven times in the text. Six of these refer to the application of an operation to its argument(s) (5.2521, 5.2523, 5.32, 5.5, 6.001, 6.126), and one is about self-application and the theory of types (6.123). These are clearly not relevant for the meaning of application that is at stake here. That leaves four other occurrences. Two of these concern the application of signs (3.262, 3.5), and the other two are explicitly about the application of logic (5.5521, 5.557). It is these four that we need to draw upon.

Let us first take a look at the two earlier passages, 3.262 and 3.5. These occur in the long discussion on the fundamental properties of linguistic signs and their meaning that begins in 3.1 and continues to 4, where Wittgenstein starts to discuss the basic logical structure of language. In the context of this prolonged investigation of signs, symbols, and meaning, 3.262 makes the following claim:

> What signs fail to express, their application shows. What signs slur over, their
> application says clearly.   [*3.262*]

The point here is that no sign is able to express what makes it meaningful, or what its meaning is. What is interesting is that Wittgenstein states that it is not logic, but application that comes to the rescue. Of course, the sign itself is unable to state its own logic, i.e., its fundamental properties and its relations to other signs. But it is not logic (as a formal scheme) that supplies that information, rather it is the application of the sign, i.e., how we set up and use a system of signs. Apparently, that is where the actual logic of a sign is determined, not by logic as such.

The crucial role of application as what determines the meaningfulness, and the actual meaning, of any form of symbolic representation is further supported by 3.5:

> A propositional sign, applied and thought out, is a thought.   [*3.5*]

It is never the symbolic system as such that makes a sign meaningful, rather its meaningfulness depends on the application that we make of it. Cf., in this connection also 2.1, the statement that opens the section of TLP that deals with the picture theory: 'We picture facts to ourselves.' The reference to an animate subject may come as a surprise at that stage in the text, but in view of the essential role that application plays, it makes perfect sense. Further confirmation comes from other passages such as 3.11:

> We use the perceptible sign of a proposition (spoken or written, etc.) as a
> projection of a possible situation.

The method of projection is to think of the sense of the proposition.

[*3.11*]

Note that both logic and the human element are crucial: logic provides the mould that we use to capture reality (actual or hypothetical), and reality should allow such use. Cf., also 3.341:

So what is essential in a proposition is what all propositions that can express the same sense have in common.
And similarly, in general, what is essential in a symbol is what all symbols that can serve the same purpose have in common. [*3.341*]

The reference to 'purpose' is an implicit reference to the use that we make of signs, to application. I.e., besides to a criterion of identical sense, 3.341 also refers to the pragmatic criterion of identical purpose as essential for propositions, symbols and their signs. Apparently, it is a specific use of a sign that ensures that a sign expresses one sense rather than another one.

Of course, these remarks are suggestive rather than definitive. But they do fit a pattern and we feel that they strengthen the interpretation of the later passages, viz., 5.5521 and 5.557, that we argue for. And there are other passages which do not mention 'application' but rather talk about 'use', that add further evidence.

The German original has two terms that are commonly translated as 'use', viz., 'Gebrauch' and 'Verwendung'. The first occurs in 3.326, 4.123, 4.1272, 4.241, 6.211, and, in the negative, in 3.328. The second in 3.327, 4.013, 6.1202. The use of these terms in 4.103, 4.123, 4.1272, 4.241, 6.211 and 6.1202 are straightforward and do not relate to the issue that is under discussion here. But the passages 3.326–3.328 are interesting because they tie meaning directly to the use or the employment of a term:[7]

In order to recognise a symbol by its sign we must observe how it is used with a sense. [*3.326*]

The sign determines a logical form only together with its logical syntactic application. [*3.327*]

If a sign is *useless*, it is meaningless. That is the point of Occam's maxim.
(If everything behaves as if a sign had meaning, then it does have meaning.)

[*3.328*]

The distinction between symbol and sign that 3.326 refers to is the distinction between a mere orthographic or phonetic object and a meaningful expression. What 3.327 and 3.328 imply is that meaningfulness and use are intrinsically tied: there is no meaning without use, and use is decisive to determine meaning. At this point it is worth observing that, despite crucial differences, the role of logic in the TLP has much in common with the role of grammar in Wittgenstein's later work.

3.2 Logic and application

The passages just considered provide further support for our interpretation of how logic and application are related. Explicitly, Wittgenstein talks about that in 5.57, with which we started our discussion, and slightly earlier, in 5.5521:

And if this were not so, how could we apply logic? We might put it in this way: if there would be a logic even if there were no world, how then could there be a logic given that there is a world? [*5.5521*]

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7.   Hidé Ishiguro (Ishiguro, 1969) already discussed these passages as illustration of the continuity between the picture theory of TLP and the use theory of *Philosophical Investigations*

In order to understand what the opening remark refers to we have to look at the preceding remark, 5.552:

> The 'experience' that we need in order to understand logic is not that some-
> thing or other is the state of things, but that something *is*: that, however, is
> *not* an experience.
> Logic is *prior to* every experience—that something *is so*.
> It is prior to the question 'How?', not prior to the question 'What?'
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> [*5.552*]

What Wittgenstein is saying here is that in a specific way logic is dependent on reality: not on any contingent feature of it, but on their being reality to begin with. To put it bluntly: logic exists only because there is reality. So even though logic is not tied to any specific way the world is, its *raison d'être* is the pure existence of reality: it can be any world but there must be *a* world. The transcendental conditions that logic formulates can not be *not* met.

The justification for the claim made in 5.552 is provided in 5.5521: the relationship between logic and the world, which is a relationship of application, necessitates that logic and reality are bound together in this specific way. For if logic could exist without reality, then its very essence would have nothing to do with reality. But it is only due to its essence that logic can be applied, so this essence has to rest on a relationship with reality. And that relationship is that of applicability, without application logic loses its point.

All this can still be read as somehow neutral with respect to the nature of the dependency between logic and reality. But 5.557 is explicit about that: it is application that determines the substance of logic, i.e., application tells us how logic is put to use. By itself, i.e., outside the context of application, logic can state only very general conditions that fall short of specifying what is needed for concrete application. So logic is not self-applying, it needs to be applied in a context, and that means that we need to set the terms.[8]

Read in this way 5.557 (repeated here for convenience) and 5.5571 make explicit what was implicit in the other remarks on use and application:

> The *application* of logic decides what elementary propositions there are.
> What belongs to its application, logic cannot anticipate.
> It is clear that logic must not clash with its application.
> But logic has to be in contact with its application.
> Therefore logic and its application must not overlap.   [*5.557*]
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> If I cannot say a priori what elementary propositions there are, then the
> attempt to do so must lead to obvious nonsense.   [*5.5571*]

What is interesting to note is that Wittgenstein makes the point in terms of language, not ontology. What is at stake is what elementary sentences are, not states of affairs. The two are linked of course, as language and ontology are throughout TLP. But apparently from the perspective of application the focus is on language and ontology is certainly not *sui generis*.

And this makes sense. Application of logic is something we do, and we do so in the first instance through the language that we bring to bear on the phenomena that we want to analyse. To a certain extent we can decide what that language will look like, setting up the vocabulary and the grammar, and employing the resulting expressions in particular ways. 'Setting up an ontology', however, without the use of language seems decidedly odd.

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8. The observation that our concepts and our language are not self-applying is of course a familiar theme from the later work, cf., e.g., the 'cube'-argumentation in *Philosophical Investigations* 138 ff.

3.3 The human context

Now that we have established the centrality of application, we turn to context: how does application support a contextual reading of transcendentality? The very wording seems an oxymoron: how can what is necessary be read in terms of what is changing and contingent?

Let us start with the aspect of contextuality. Although there is limited support for this in the text of TLP we think it makes sense to think of application in the context of logic, or in the context of signs, in a concrete manner. Application is the actual application that we make of signs, be they the words and phrases of a natural language, the signs that make up formal languages, such as used in logic and mathematics, or the elements of some other symbolic system. (They need not be very 'language-like', as long as they are able te refer and depict.) With that actuality and concreteness comes contextuality. For not every application is the same, not every language that we use serves the same purpose.

In some contexts it makes sense to disregard certain structural features whereas in other context these features are relevant and hence necessitate a different take on complexity. In a similar vein, the wealth of formal languages that we have developed in the course of our history, each of them fine-tuned to tackle a particular set of problems or phenomena, testifies to the intrinsic contextuality of the core concepts involved. There is no fixed, a priori established set of elementary sentences, as there is no fixed a priori concept of elementariness. It is our application that decides what to treat as such, depending on the context in which we apply logic.

We think that the key to a proper view on the relationship between the necessity of transcendentality and the contingency of application is contained in Wittgenstein's statement in 5.57: 'What belongs to its application, logic cannot anticipate.' This is because the two do not operate on the same level: there can be no clash between necessity and contingency, precisely because we are dealing with necessity that is of a transcendental nature.[9]

The transcendental nature of logic resides in the constraints it formulates on any application: that there be names, elementary sentences, truth-functional operations that generate complex meaningful expressions; that there be objects, states of affairs, situations. That these be linked by the relation of picturing, i.e., by means of a pictorial relationship between names and objects and identity of logical form. That is what is necessary, that is what can be established a priori.

But what are elementary sentences, and all that follows from that, can be determined only when we have access to a concrete context of application. It is how *we* use the concepts that logic provides, what *we* deem a useful and meaningful application of them in context, that determines what are elementary sentences. And that is what is contingent, what can be established only a posteriori by looking at the concrete context of application.

3.4 Transcendental scheme and instantiation

The previous section indicates that a major consequence of our approach concerns how we should read TLP. On first sight, it appears that Wittgenstein develops an integrated scheme of language and ontology, that can be read as a metaphysical specification of a number of concepts and the principles that connect them in an abstract, yet substantial way. On the account we argue for, this is no longer the case. What TLP has to say about language and ontology is not itself an applied instantiation, but a kind of meta-specification of the general principles that each and every concrete application should adhere to.

This is in many ways akin to how Wittgenstein describes the status of Newtonian mechanics in 6.341 ff. The opening passage of 6.341 introduces the core idea:

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9. It is like the relationship between character – content in Kaplan's analysis of demonstratives: character is what is fixed, content is what changes, and there is no conflict between the two, as they operate on different levels.

> Newtonian mechanics [. . .] imposes a unified form on the description of the world. Let us imagine a white surface with irregular black spots on it. We then say that whatever kind of picture these make, I can always approximate as closely as I wish to the description of it by covering the surface with a sufficiently fine square mesh, and then saying of every square whether it is black or white. In this way I shall have imposed a unified form on the description of the surface. [*6.341*]

This passage illustrates Wittgenstein's conception of transcendentality clearly. What a set of transcendental concepts and principles does, is determine a form, but no content. What concrete description we will give will depend on the level of accuracy we want to achieve. But any such description will be of the same form, which is given by the transcendental scheme.

The same point is made in 6.342:

> [. . .] The possibility of describing a picture like the one mentioned above with a net of a given form tells us *nothing* about the picture. (For that is true of all such pictures.) But what *does* characterise the picture is that it can be described *completely* by a particular net with a *particular* size of mesh.
> Similarly the possibility of describing the world by means of Newtonian mechanics tells us nothing about the world: but what does tell us something about it is the precise *way* in which it is possible to describe it by these means. We are also told something about the world by the fact that it can be described more simply with one system of mechanics than with another. [*6.342*]

That the world can be described by a particular scheme underdetermines what the world actually is like. However, it does say something about the world: it reveals some of its formal, but none of its material properties.

In the case of physics no theoretical framework can claim necessity: there is an element of arbitrariness in the form that a framework specifies:

> [. . .] The form is optional, since I could have achieved the same result by using a net with a triangular or hexagonal mesh. Possibly the use of a triangular mesh would have made the description simpler: that is to say, it might be that we could describe the surface more accurately with a coarse triangular mesh than with a fine square mesh (or conversely), and so on. The different nets correspond to different systems for describing the world. [. . .] [*6.341*]

This distinguishes the case of physics from that of logic. It is generally assumed that for Wittgenstein logic, unlike physics, is absolute, i.e., does not allow for alternatives, and hence lacks the kind of arbitrariness that is inherent in a framework of physics, such as Newtonian mechanics. The difference between logic and physics is also addressed in the opening remark of 6.342:

> And now we can see the relative position of logic and mechanics. (The net might also consist of more than one kind of mesh: e.g., we could use both triangles and hexagons.) [*6.342*]

The parenthetical remark characterises physics as relative, and apparently this is to be understood as the difference between logic and physics, as especially the non-elementary, truth-functional part of logic allows no such variants. This is the part of logic that 'must take care of itself.' (5.473)

However, that logic and physics differ in this respect does not mean that the relationship between a framework and the use that we make of it, its application, is different in each case. It works in the same way, which Wittgenstein describes in the last part of 6.341:

> [...] Mechanics determines one form of description of the world by saying that all propositions used in the description of the world must be obtained in a given way from a given set of propositions – the axioms of mechanics. It thus supplies the bricks for building the edifice of science, and it says, 'Any building that you want to erect, whatever it may be, must somehow be constructed with these bricks, and with these alone.'
> (Just as with the number-system we must be able to write down any number we wish, so with the system of mechanics we must be able to write down any proposition of physics that we wish.)
>
> [*6.341*]

If we apply this to the case of logic and language, the thing to note is that the 'bricks' are not concrete elementary sentences. What counts is their being elementary, i.e., their having a specific form and also the way in which they can be combined into truth-functional complexes. The actual bricks need to come from elsewhere, but any building needs to be constructed from bricks, by using the materials in specified ways. The parenthetical remark on numbers makes the same point.

This reading receives further support from the following remark:

> We ought not to forget that any description of the world by means of mechanics will be of the completely general kind. For example, it will never mention *particular* point-masses: it will only talk about *any point-masses whatsoever*.
>
> [*6.3432*]

The same can be said of TLP's transcendental scheme of language and ontology: examples of names and objects are never given, it suffices to assume that there are such entities, and up to a certain point we are free to choose what we will regard as such.

4 Detailing the transcendental scheme

Having argued for the prominence in TLP of application and human context, we now need to discuss in more detail the tension between Wittgenstein's philosophy as concerning our daily life and daily language and TLP's abstract views on logic and determinate sense. This should help us to achieve more clarity on what is to be included as part of the transcendental scheme and what not.

Our first diagnosis of the friction, in section 2, was the usual one: due to the logical independence of elementary sentences that the TLP requires, it is hard to come by natural examples. In natural language, stating that one in a certain range of options holds, often excludes the other options in that range. Space, time and colour are prime examples, but for sure not the only ones. As it seems impossible to reduce the exclusion properties of such ranges to truth-functionality, TLP leaves no other choice than to take them as properties of the elementary, but this counters elementary independence.[10]

There appear to be forces at work in TLP that counter its suggestion that philosophy is applicable and applied in a human context. We now trace these forces to the assumption

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10. In the middle period, Wittgenstein often uses the ruler as a prototype of the exclusion phenomenon: one length excludes all others; 2.1512 and 2.15121 also use this imagery, interestingly without mentioning exclusion.

that sense must be determinate and prior to truth, and show that it carries some further idealisations in its wake. Next, we raise questions concerning the applicability of an idealised transcendental scheme, and argue that most of the frictions noted can be resolved in what we call 'contextualised holism'.

4.1   Determinate sense and logical modeling

That sense must be determinate is stated clearly in 4.023:

> Reality must be fixed by a sentence to either 'yes' or 'no'.
> To do so, it must describe reality fully.
> A sentence is a *description* of a state of affairs.   [*4.023*]

The principle is inherited from Frege but is used here in a novel way. We read 4.023 as stating that somehow a sentence describing a state of affairs must already be logically in order. That is, analysis must reach a point where no further refinement is possible. At this point it becomes clear how reality is fixed to either 'yes' or 'no'.[11]

Determinate sense is at the heart of Wittgenstein's claim that truth-functionality captures the general form of sentences, and this is where we think the core of the transcendental scheme is located:

> That there is a general sentential form is proved through the impossibility
> of there being sentences whose form we could not have foreseen (that is:
> constructed). The general form of propositions is: the facts are so and so.
>
> [*4.5*]

The general form indicated in 4.5 – the facts are so and so, – is a loose way to phrase the main characteristic of truth-functionality, which is captured more precisely in 6. Wittgenstein's contention that this rudimentary logical form suffices, is based on some clever reductions that eliminate the need to consider identities, the most common quantificational forms, and even intensional contexts. Or so it seemed at the time.[12]

Given what we have noted earlier on application and use, it is interesting to see that Wittgenstein argues from the constructive nature of language, and not from ontology, to arrive at general form. One does wonder how the argument goes; cf., the different views on abstract constructions. What should be stressed, is that early Wittgenstein states that the sense of a sentence can always be modelled as a truth-table, which in the TLP is a sign, *not* a semantic object. A truth-tables is based on enumerating all truth-possibilities of its elementary content (sentences). Such enumerations force elementary sentences to be logically *in*dependent of each other, or else certain truth-possibilities of a truth-table may have to be excluded for non-truth-functional reasons. This would introduce non-truth-functional forms of necessity, contra TLP's claim truth-functional necessity is the only form

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11. States of affairs are of course the smallest parts of reality that can be described, by means of elementary sentences. Wittgenstein's terminology seems to be a bit sloppy here, for in general sentences describe situations involving possible realisation patterns of different states of affairs. See van der Does (2011, § 7.2) for details.
Another reading of 4.023 takes 'reality' literally, so that each sentence would involve a (mostly hidden) maximal consistent description of a possible world. As this reading would rob, e.g, 5.135 of any application and has other, more absurd consequences, we stick to the modest interpretation based on 4.023c.
12. Natural language has several aspects that seem hard to come by in TLP's transcendental scheme. Cases in point might be generalised forms of quantification or the analysis of intensional constructions in language. As to the latter, Wittgenstein held only logic to be necessary, and we should also recall Frege's even stronger dismissal of modalities from logic. We do well to remember that the historical context in which TLP was conceived and written is partly responsible for the content of TLP's transcendental scheme. With regard to truth-functionality, for example, there is an obvious link with the works of both Frege and Russell.

of necessity (6.37).[13] Thus, logic frames the overall shape of ontology.

Wittgenstein's stress on a unique general form of sentences comes with logical independence at the elementary level, and so seems to hamper a straightforward application of his philosophy to sentences used in daily life. And it is not the only obstacle, for a similar logical radicalisation is found at the sub-sentential level.

4.2   Sense as a projected logical model

To clarify how sense can be determinate and prior to truth, Wittgenstein compares the sense of a sentence with a logical picture, or in TLP's alternative terminology: a logical model (2.12, 4.01). In such a model 'its elements are related to one another in a determinate way' (2.141). These objects have a double role: they allow us to abstract regularities across sentences and what they describe, and they ensure logical modelling is well-founded, i.e., comes to an end.

Our daily sentences often compress and conceal how, if at all, they fit the sub-sentential aspect of the transcendental scheme, since they are constructed for ease of use rather than for philosophical clarity. Indeed, that the overt form of our common language may deviate from its logical form, is held to be a main source of philosophical confusion. To eliminate confusion we analyse the forms of language-use that seem to mislead us, and we this do with activities and tools that help us to clarify which sense is expressed or to show why the language analysed does not have meaning.

TLP's focus is hardly on the process of analysis but more on its outcome: either we exhibit the sense of a sentence as a projected truth-table sign, or we give sufficient indication no sense is forthcoming, as projection of or reduction to a truth-table sign fails. We surmise the process of analysis comes in different stages in which we apply definitions and notations to exhibit the sign and its projection bit by bit.[14]

Whatever the nature of analysis may be, it is crucial it hits rockbottom. The TLP introduces substance to cater for this in a way that leaves sense independent of, even logically prior to, truth. To determine whether a meaningful sentence is true or false, its sense should project its logical model onto what it purports to describe. Substance is non-composite and unchanging, and so ensures that the analysis of meaningful sentences comes to an end.

> Objects make up the substance of the world. That is why they cannot be
> composite.   [*2.021*]
> If the world had no substance, then whether a proposition had sense would
> depend on whether another proposition was true.   [*2.0211*]
>
> In that case we could not sketch any picture of the world (true or false).
>
>   [*2.0212*]

Logical modelling as a universal characteristic of sense comes with the claim that everything which can be described, can be so modelled. Objects are at the hart of our models. However, in the final analysis these objects may not be of the kind that furnish our daily surroundings. Tractarian objects are first and foremost content and form (2.025). I.e., an object is an instantiation of a certain way in which it may combine with other objects to form part of the complete configuration of a state of affairs (2.01, 2.0141). These barren objects are not in space or time, have no colour or other material or sensory properties. Their forms rather seem to constitute space, time, colour and the like (2.0232, 2.0251).

> The substance of the world *can* only determine a form, and not any material
> properties. For it is only by means of sentences that material properties are

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13. In 'Some Remarks on Logical Form' (Wittgenstein, 1929) Wittgenstein considers truth-tables that omit certain truth-possibilities, which strongly suggests he did not expect anything problematic at the time of TLP.
14. van der Does (2011, § 1.3) gives a fairly detailed sketch of what analysis may involve.

> represented – only by the configuration of objects that they are produced.
>
> $[2.0231]$

As spatial, temporal, chromatic, material and sensory properties are interdependent – the realisation of one excludes others, – one would expect the configurations inducing these aspects to be interdependent. That is, even thought the elementary sentences describing states of affairs must be logically independent, the states of affairs described need not be ontologically independent of each other. However, as we know, ontology inherits the independence that logic requires.

> States of affairs are independent of one another. $[2.061]$
> From the existence or non-existence of one state of affairs it is impossible to
> infer the existence or non-existence of another. $[2.062]$

The linguistic tension that hampers applicability thus has a strict ontological counterpart. Again, a radical consequence surfaces of assuming sense to be a fully determinate affair, especially when combined with an idealised notion of sense as logical model.

Determinate sense comes with the logical radicalisation of perfect analyses that result in 'pure' truth-functional complexes of 'pure', logic-less configurations of utterly simple objects. Now, even if we were confident that our analysis may normally remain high-level, since some general insights would ensure us that a 'purely' logical foundation can always be attained, the need for such a foundation is philosophically troublesome. With a view to the open character of elementary sentences that 5.55 and its offspring promote, 'pure' logical entities that do not resemble objects in our immediate context the least bit, induce some quite pressing questions:

q1 What human ability is early Wittgenstein committed to that enables logico-linguistic analysis or construction?

q2 How are language and ontology related for such an open notion of elementary sentence to be possible?

q3 What tools do humans have to clarify the nature of language and ontology? Do we discover this nature or do we construct it?

We will now address these questions in order to further detail and confirm the contextual reading of transcendentality that we argue for.

4.3 Q1: A hidden life of language?

Applied logic is at the heart of TLP and so is its assumption of determinate sense. To what extent can such a philosophy still be called human?

This is a good point to remind ourselves that at the time TLP was conceived, the apparent gap between daily use and idealised logical analysis still seemed bridgeable. Wittgenstein must have convinced himself that what appears nebulous in everyday language, somehow can always be analysed in the finest determinate detail. Such confidence grants the radical, logical abstractions of elementary sentence and state of affairs, of name and object rather the status of 'regulative ideals', which only need to be attained if deep philosophical confusion requires it. Then, as 3.1431 suggests, it is quite natural to expect that under normal circumstances an analysis in terms of our common context suffices.

Still, if at its highest resolution language may come with enormous complexity, one does wonder how its use comes of the ground? The apt image of 4.002 gives a rough indication.

> Man possesses the ability to construct languages capable of expressing every
> sense, without having any idea how each word has meaning or what its mean-

ing is – just as people speak without knowing how the individual sounds are produced.

Everyday language is a part of the human organism and is no less complicated than it.

It is not humanly possible to gather immediately from it what the logic of language is.

Language disguises thought. So much so, that from the outward form of the clothing it is impossible to infer the form of the thought beneath it, because the outward form of the clothing is not designed to reveal the form of the body, but for entirely different purposes.

The tacit conventions on which the understanding of everyday language depends are enormously complicated. [*4.002*]

Although the use of language is presented as a human ability – one that clearly includes mundane and daily language use, – much of its workings is presented as concealed and hidden. Why? Some of the observations in 4.002 hold unaltered for Wittgenstein's later philosophy; e.g., that the tacit conventions on which the use of everyday language depends can be complicated, or that it need not be humanly possible to gather *immediately* from everyday language what its logic (or later: its grammar) is. But that complex language structure is often hidden, is characteristic only of the early work, and mainly due to its unnatural assumption of determinate sense. The sources of concealment are the mysteries of logical modelling and its idealised notions of object and structure, which force a gap between everyday language and the purported models of its meaning.

What are the human abilities that 4.002 indicates, given the nature of language as TLP presents it? The abilities should concern all levels of languages use, for if philosophical puzzlement drives us, what is currently hidden can be made explicit without loss of sense (if there is any). At the elementary level one needs to be able to discern and compare logical forms, and to project different instantiations of form onto each other (when one object, used as name, is taken to refer to another object). Also, one needs to be able to perform logical operations on sentences, in order to combine logical models into more complex ones, which are used to describe situations. Given a puzzling sentence, one should be able to establish if the sentence has sense, and if so, which one. Or one should be able to settle if it is senseless and logical, or decide that it is a non-logical bit of nonsense.[15] One should be able to abstract a common form from a group of sentences, a form that captures a formal concept. One should be able to exhibit logical relationships among sentences based on the forms of their logical models.

It is not our contention to give an exhaustive description of the human abilities that TLP intimates, for details are philosophically irrelevant. In Wittgenstein's later work such abilities are part of the forms of life in which language is used. What we should note, though, is that they are non-material, ineffable features of language creation and use:

What signs fail to express, their application shows. What signs slur over, their application says clearly. [*3.262*]

4.4 Q2: A merge of language and ontology?

It has often been observed that TLP's opening remarks on ontology are infused with observations on logic or language: cf., 1.13, 2.012, 2.0121, 2.0122, 2.0201. Conversely, remarks

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15. Wittgenstein was among the first to see the essentials of the tableaux method; see van der Does (2011, §5.4, § 11.3.3). The beauty of his insight is that transforming a given sentence suffices to determine whether it is logical or has meaning, or to decide whether it is strictly nonsense. No *ab ovo* derivations from 'self-evident' axioms are needed.

on picturing or language are mixed with comments on ontology: cf., 2.1, 2.141, 2.16, 3.14, 3.142, 3.1431. To us this suggests that language and ontology are intertwined and somehow dependent on each other. What strengthens this suggestion is that at the elementary level language and ontology must be isomorphic to each other. Here the relevant theses are 4.26 and 5.53:

> The specification of all true elementary sentences describes the world completely. The world is completely described by the specification of all elementary sentences plus the specification, which of them are true and which false. [*4.26*]

> Identity of object I express by identity of sign, and not by means of an equal sign. Difference of objects by difference of signs. [*5.53*]

These remarks imply that elementary language and ontology are identical qua form and only differ in instantiation. 4.26 ensures that all names have a reference, and 5.53 that this reference is unique. If so, the projection of elementary sentences onto the states of affairs they describe must be an isomorphism. The idea of an isomorphism also tallies seamlessly with the fact that TLP maintains that the essentials of names and objects, as well as those of elementary sentences and states of affairs are identical.

At this point we should wonder how these claims combine with Wittgenstein's even stronger claim that language and ontology are of the same category: sentence-signs and their pictures are facts, just like what they describe or model (2.141, 3.14). These statements convey first and foremost that both language and ontology must be structured: sets of names or things are too unstructured to express sense. Secondly, they indicate an early move away from mentalism and toward the world in which language is used. Although determinate sense and the analysis it comes with pulls Wittgenstein into the abstract, he does retain a strong tendency to keep sense mundane:

> The essence of a sentential-sign is seen very clearly if we imagine it composed of spatial objects (such as tables, chairs, and books) instead of written signs. [*3.1431*]

Early Wittgenstein considered meaning a worldly matter, which in the idealised setting of the TLP amounts to this: within the space of possibilities of applied logic, elementary sentences are realised states of affairs that are *used* as elementary sentences, and thus the names in such sentences are objects in the states of affairs so used. Indeed, if psychology were to discover an isomorphic copy of psychological constituents underlying what we took to be elementary sentences – as Wittgenstein somewhat wearily suggests in his letter to Russell (Wittgenstein, 1995, 19.8.19., pp. 124–5), these configurations of constituents would be part of the world and would take over the role of elementary sentences, leaving no space for accompanying mental processes.[16]

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16. See van der Does (2011, p. 57) for a picture of reality, language and isomorphism. Interestingly, there is an abstract analogy here between Schopenhauer and Wittgenstein. According to both reality – or: the world, – is a totality comprising, first, the logical representations ('representations of representations', according to Schopenhauer;[17] 'pictures' or 'models', according to Wittgenstein), and, second, that what is represented (just 'representation' for Schopenhauer; 'states of affairs' or 'situations' for Wittgenstein). The vast difference between them is that Schopenhauer's philosophy is epistemological, Wittgenstein's logical. Also, Wittgenstein's logic of representation is way beyond anything Schopenhauer ever envisioned, while Schopenhauer's subtle reconstructions of how the world arises from space, time and causality, whether correct or not, is way beyond Wittgenstein's treatment of the material world. Wittgenstein boldly claims the elements of the material world can be viewed as logical constructions out of configurations of bare substance. Due to his logical turn away from epistemology, Wittgenstein considered further details a matter of science, not philosophy.

With meaning a worldly matter, does this mean ontology comes first, language second? No. Sections 4.1 and 4.2 already strongly suggest that the highly abstract nature of states of affairs and their objects, with characteristics far out of the ordinary, derives from applied logic, not *vice versa*. In our reading of TLP, the application of logic is most basic: its logical space of possibilities is a pre-condition for language and ontology. According to TLP humans can sense that something *is* regardless of *how* its is (6.44).[18] This 'experience' is at the heart of our ability to apply logic, and thus to construct meaningful languages (5.552, 4.002). Strictly speaking, the direct confrontation with being is *not* an experience, it is part of the human ability to cast logical nets on what there is (5.511). Yet, all description is embedded in logic: a pure and empty transcendental scheme, the use of which puts no substantial restrictions on what is or what is not the case.

Of course, in many ways language and the world it describes are different, but according to TLP the differences concern their external, not their internal properties. At first blush, the signs of elementary sentences and the states of affairs they describe appear totally different. But these differences mask an essential identity: we manage to wrap and compress logical models in signs that they are convenient to use. As far as showing sense is concerned, the wrapping and compressing are inessential. When forced to unwrap and uncompress a meaningful sentence, we should be able to show the forms of its elementary sentences to be the same as the states of affairs they depict; they differ in 'bare' bits of content but instantiate identical forms.

Up till now we have only considered the elementary level. With complex forms, some further differences between language and its ontology may arise. The ontology of language can be restricted to states of affairs, realisable independently from each other. By contrast, elementary sentences can be combined in purely formal logical complexes that model situations; i.e., different ways in which the states of affairs that a complex model is projected onto can be realised. Besides, human beings are able to abstract so-called 'formal concepts' from these complexes, concepts that exhibit a shared form. Still, we view this added complexity as a pragmatic convenience. If humans were only able to use lists of literals, as in 4.26 – i.e., elementary sentences or negations thereof, – for all descriptive purposes that basic language would do.[19]

4.5   Q3: An open logical toolbox?

According to TLP, philosophical problems incite us to analyse our language, in order to make logical structure explicit. Let us now turn to the third question posed and try to get more clarity on the nature of the tools that we have to do this. One may be inclined to think its is 'just' truth-functional logic, perhaps finite, perhaps infinitary. We think this is incorrect if 'logic' is taken in the sense of modern logic, for that has inherited too much from Frege to be counted as tractarian.

Several conventions and definitions can be used that allow us to model the sense of a sentence as a truth-table sign, i.e., as a sign that is projected 1-to-1 onto the states of affairs corresponding with the elementary signs it contains.[20] Is this all? Well, no. For firstly, we have to ask: what is the aim of analysis? Does it help us to discover a human independent reality? Or does it help to reveal what the ontology of language should be in order for the part of language under consideration to have sense? We have made clear already that we do not think discovery of ontology *simpliciter* is an option. Rather, based on the fixed truth–

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18. For convenience, we restrict our attention to human beings, but tacitly always allow for a broader class of capable living beings.
19. It is worth to observe this simple language still leaves the operation of negation as a basis for arithmetic; cf., 6.02 and its offspring.
20. Strictly speaking meaningful signs should be 'normalised' in order to eliminate logical parts. Cf., 4.465.

functional character of an otherwise quite open scheme, we *construct* our logic so that clarity is achieved. That is, for the puzzling, unanalysed sentences, *we* make clear which parts are pure logic, which parts carry sense (and show how), and which parts are gibberish (and show why). We cannot get around the transcendental scheme, but within its boundaries, *we* let our tools show what carries sense and what dissolves into nonsense. TLP offers no independent arbiter that decides this for us.

Let us be more precise on what TLP's logical toolbox has to offer. Its tools come in five categories: sentences, names, expressions, variables, and operations. *Sentences* are bi-polar, complete configurations of names. They can be used to describe the world, which they fix to either 'yes' or 'no'. The bi-polarity of sentences is the static core of the transcendental scheme, a scheme which in almost all other respects is quite open. *Names* are incomplete and can only contribute to sense in the context of a sentence (3.3). They provide the content and non-truth-functional form of sentences, which via projection enables sentences to model situations in the world. Apart from stating that names are simple and have form and content, TLP leaves their further specification open. This is deliberate. As Johnston (2009) shows: the logic of TLP is neither Fregean functional, nor Russellian relational. Prior to analysis, we cannot specify which elementary sentences there are, and so it must lead to nonsense trying to specify such typing *a priori* (5.5571).[21] Somehow bounded by the totality of objects, the types are for us to specify when applying and refining the transcendental scheme in a process of elucidation:

> There cannot be a hierarchy of the forms of elementary propositions. We
> can foresee only what we ourselves construct.   [*5.556*]

Next, *expressions* are (possibly incomplete) configurations of names, which highlights that different sentences have a form in common. The category is as open as that of names. Which sub-configuration can be considered an expression does not seem to be fixed in advance; this, too, is to be decided in the process of clarification. Expressions help to abstract *tractarian variables*. Variables correspond to formal concepts; they are sequences of sentences that highlight a shared logical form. *Operators*, finally, are rules that transform truth-functional signs into a truth-functional sign, or transform variables into sentence-signs. Wittgenstein only names the operator N, which elegantly captures the truth-functional essence of transcendentality.

All that is a toolbox. It is not an end result, but our starting point, it provides the means to our ends:

> Now we understand our feeling: we have a correct logical point of view, as
> soon as everything in our sign-language is all right.   [*4.1213*]

Indeed, 'our feeling', 'we', 'our sign-language'; TLP's philosophical tools are as human as they can get.

4.6   Resolution: contextualised holism

On our interpretation the totality of elementary sentences is not fixed once and for all: it depends on a context of application. As we have noted, there is a palpable tension in TLP between an absolutistic and a contextual approach. Its contextual aspects are elaborated, e.g., in 5.55 ff., which were added at a later stage in the writing of the text. The remarks at the beginning of the book, which were added at an early stage, rather suggest an absolute totality of language and ontology. Cf.:

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21. Independently, van der Does (2011, chapter 2) came to a similar conclusion, but via a more formal route. At the end of this paper, Johnston seems to argue for discovery rather than construction. With this we would disagree.

It is obvious that an imagined world, however different it may be from the
real one, must have something – a form – in common with it.   [*2.022*]
Objects are just what constitute this unalterable form.   [*2.023*]

The question is: is there a way to relieve the tension between absolute and contextual?

To begin with, it is worth observing that in an atomistic framework it would suffice
to have substance as a fixed totality of structureless *contents*, which instantiate forms that are
given with a certain use. As 4.002 suggests, that use is a (possibly hidden) transcendental
aspect of language creation. On that approach, object-content is imbued with form in the
application of logic, without this making truth logically prior to sense. Elementary facts
concern combinations of objects that have form, not objects simpliciter; objects must have
form for facts and sense to be possible.[22]

Taking the content of substance as absolute but not its form, gets some support from
3.327, which, via isomorphism, indicates that form is dependent on a notion of application:

The sign determines a logical form only together with its logical syntactic
application.   [*3.327*]

Substance as content that attains form in application, does indeed help to reconcile the
absolutistic streak of the TLP with its more contextual features:

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

There cannot be a hierarchy of the forms of elementary propositions. We
can foresee only what we ourselves construct.   [*5.556*]

For sure our ability to construct languages would be restricted way too much if a fixed form
was assumed that encompasses all possible configurations of substance. Such form would
introduce a tension with the creative tendencies pervading TLP that borders on contradiction.
Rather, as 3.1431 suggests, the notion of object should best be considered as a regulative
ideal, that can be bypassed in favour of using the mundane objects that furnish our everyday
surroundings.

On the current proposal TLP is absolutistic and atomistic when it comes to truth-
functionality, but is contextual and holistic in other respects. In the same way as the whole
world changes with an altered ethical stance (6.43), so too the totality of the elementary
changes *in toto* with application, complying with the degrees of freedom the transcendental
scheme leaves. If so, the presentation of the totality at the beginning of the TLP, which,
except for the statement of a unique form, is given in an abstract and open manner, can
be seen as a reflection on the 'world as I found it' (5.631) with a language that has already
been created. This language and its ontology is based on a scheme that is holistic but only
partly absolute. Similar kinds of holism survive into the middle period and later, long after

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22. There is a crucial difference between Schopenhauer and Wittgenstein in the way they view substance. Witt-
genstein assumes substance to be given. It is a logical notion that allows the same form to be instantiated more than
once, and so provides for a rock-bottom that enables sense to be prior to truth. Taking substance as primitive is
Wittgenstein's solution to a problem that Schopenhauer never considered. According to Schopenhauer, substance
is a synthesis of sensations in terms of space, time and the principle of causality, in which the will manifests itself.
In a way, this makes substance dependent on a synthetic a priori truth.

TLP's transcendental scheme has collapsed. Here, it is worth to recall that in his notebooks Wittgenstein presents his holism as allowing for different ways to interact with the reality we find ourselves in.[23] On our view this 'contextualised holism' is already present in TLP. That holism can be combined consistently with contextualism seems obvious. Changes in elementary sentences can remain local. A current situation can be seen in the midst of other situations or against the backdrop of the world as a whole. Holism just requires the system as such, each instantiation of the scheme, to remain in tact.[24]

We think that the friction between absolutism and limited forms of contextualism in TLP is a first sign of what is to come later: the rejection of sense as a structure that complies with a universal transcendental scheme. The absolutism of TLP reflects the idea that philosophical problems require an analysis and refinement of our language, so as to show a logical structure at a rock-bottom of ideal simplicity. Yet, in the end such a philosophy of language leaves the holistic model of sense that TLP also contains, a mystery. For one, it makes Wittgenstein present humans as being able to build languages without requiring them to see how the fine-structure of sense comes about (4.002). He seems to have convinced himself that bare substance as the basis of logical modelling would somehow provide for everyday objects and their interrelationships, too, and with that a ground for our more pragmatic abilities; *quod non* as an array of exclusion problems showed a decade later. But when the problem (re)surfaced, it paved the way for an even richer philosophy in which humans create sense out in the open, using signs developed in the myriad of contexts in which they live.

5   Some consequences

The contextual reading of transcendentality we have presented has a wide range of consequences, too many to discuss here in detail. In what follows we indicate what we think are the most important ones, realising very well that a proper discussion of each of them would require a separate paper.

5.1   Remnants of subject and will

Transcendental interpretations of TLP that assert a connection with Kant or Schopenhauer, usually construct a strong affinity between early Wittgenstein and the tradition in terms of the role that the notion of a metaphysical subject plays. We agree that there are definite similarities, but also note that there are important differences, the key one being that the transcendentalism in TLP remains non-epistemological, also with regard to the metaphysical subject.

There are a number of authors that try to establish a direct connection between Kant and TLP. For reasons of space we can not discuss them in detail. But let us illustrate what we think is a fundamental problem with such attempts. An interesting recent contribution is that of Hao Tang (Tang, 2011), who argues for an insubstantial transcendental idealism in the TLP, like we do, but uses an entirely different approach. Tang claims that 5.6 ff. has a role similar to Kant's transcendental deduction: it establishes the transcendental unity of (self-)consciousness – or, apperception – in TLP. Although we agree with Tang's conclusion, we think his attempt to come up with a TLP-analogue of Kant's deduction is not convincing. Not only are too many ingredients of Kant's deduction missing in TLP, more importantly the very idea that it is meaningful to *deduce* a substantial philosophical thesis, such as this one concerning self-consciousness, is quite alien to TLP's notion of philosophy as application. Kant's and Wittgenstein's views on the aim and nature of philosophy are simply too different

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23. Cf., the passages quoted in section 2.
24. *In nuce*, the pragmatic holism that Stern (1991) discerns in the later work can be found already in TLP.

to allow for the construction of such an analogy. Tang himself seems to acknowledge this as he concedes that his reconstruction can not really be considered 'Kant-style'. For such reasons, we feel, attempts to construct a strong link between Kant and Wittgenstein are not successful.

When it comes to placing TLP in the transcendental tradition, tracing the connections with Schopenhauer is more promising. That there exists a connection between Schopenhauer and early Wittgenstein can not be contested. There is a shared vocabulary and in certain areas, such as in their respective views on ethics, there are noticeable affinities. However, the mere use of the same terminology should not blind us to the fact that with Schopenhauer and Wittgenstein, too, there are also substantial differences. As Glock puts it, the allusions to Schopenhauer in Wittgenstein's early work may be used 'by way of inspiration *and* opposition alike.' (Glock, 1999, 426).

One point where Schopenhauer may have exerted a direct influence on Wittgenstein concerns the former's view on the concept of a transcendental deduction:

> If we summarise Kant's expressions, we shall find that what he understands by the synthetic unity of apperception is, as it were, the extension-less centre of the sphere of all our ideas, whose radii converge to it. It is what I call the subject of knowing, the correlative of all ideas, [...] the focal point of all intellectual activity.
>
> [*Schopenhauer (1859, 576)*]

This quote, which introduces a metaphor familiar to readers of TLP, nicely captures the insight that the correlation of subject and object cannot be deduced or even explained in a non-circular way. It is part of the ineffable essence of active representation and our awareness of it, or so we take Wittgenstein to have read it. To the extent that the transcendental deduction bothered Wittgenstein at all, he must have been convinced by Schopenhauer's critique. So, contra Tang (2011), we read Wittgenstein's views on the matter as a reflection of his reading of Schopenhauer, not as a direct criticism of Kant.

One of the main Schopenhauerian influences on Wittgenstein concerns the role of the subject. For Schopenhauer, the 'I' plays a pivotal role in the way the world is present. At various point Wittgenstein's writings reflect a similar fascination with the concept, cf., e.g.:

> The I, the I is what is deeply mysterious!   [*Notebooks 1914–1916, 5.8.16.*]

TLP discusses the 'I' in terms of subject and solipsism.[25] Schopenhauer's philosophy allows one to be aware immediately of the unity of the world as will and, in a way, of the world as representation. No transcendental deduction is needed. The immediate awareness that the TLP offers – e.g., in 6.45 – is analogous.

Especially the passages in 5.6 ff. have been read as supporting a substantial Schopenhauerian influence on Wittgenstein's early work. However, when tracing the use of Schopenhauerian terminology in Wittgenstein's early writings, one notices a strong tendency to empty them: subject and will are moved from philosophy's center toward its periphery. Thus our view is contrarian: we interpret Wittgenstein's discussion here as an attempt to make

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25. Hacker (1984), Glock (1999) and Schroeder (2012) provide richly informed overviews of how idealism fascinated Wittgenstein well into his middle period. All present Wittgenstein as a transcendental solipsist. Now, on the issue of solipsism Schopenhauer and Wittgenstein are of one mind: they reject the position as absurd, so in that sense constructing both a direct line between them and ascribing them a solipsistic stance is not possible Cf., Stokhof (2002, chapter 4) for more discussion. However, Glock and Schroeder view Schopenhauer-as-read-by-Weininger to be Wittgenstein's main influence. But Weininger beatifies loneliness as a precondition of ethics and puts forward the peculiar claim that only a solipsist can be lonely in the appropriate way. We see no reason to assume Wittgenstein adopted such a troublesome, uninteresting philosophy. For reasons of space, a more detailed defence of this assessment will need to be deferred to another occasion.

good on the claim he stated in 4.1121, viz., that epistemology is philosophy of psychology, that psychology has no special relation to philosophy, and to rid the TLP-system of any epistemological connotations. His analysis of the empirical subject serves the same purpose, as noted above.[26] The attempt starts before the discussion of the metaphysical subject in 5.6 ff. Wittgenstein prepares the ground in 5.541 ff., with his discussion of the psychological subject as a 'composite soul', lacking a bearer of its contents. The psychological subject is reduced to the sum-total of thoughts, i.e., specific descriptions of the world that employ instantiations of names ('logical types'). The upshot of these considerations is that the psychological subject is thoroughly contingent, in the sense that each thought is contingent, while, analogous to Hume, the psychological subject does not exist as a separate container that is the bearer of it. This relegates the study of the psychological subject to psychology. In the area of human knowledge there is no room for a philosophical epistemology, since there is nothing necessary to investigate.

Now, what about the metaphysical subject? The main point that Wittgenstein's argumentation in 5.6 ff. develops is that the notion of metaphysical subject, like that of psychological subject, is empty. In TLP the metaphysical subject is tied to the purely logical possibility of language at the ultimate level of abstraction, – in 5.6 ff. –, and to reality *sub specie aeterni*, i.e., the world as a limited whole, in the sections on ethics. All this is correlative to the analysis of the empirical subject. The metaphysical subject does not exist as a most abstract configuration in logical space, which can be represented or thought about. Although the claim that 'the world is my world' suggests 'a sense in which philosophy can talk about the [metaphysical] self in a non-psychological way', this talk must remain indicative and non-substantial.

The suggestion of 5.62's 'The world is my world' is that the world appears from the perspective of a subject as its center. However, Wittgenstein does *not* 'side' with the subject, and, like Schopenhauer, stresses the mutual dependence of subject and object (world). When one realises that the metaphysical subject is 'a point without extension', the subjective element fades and 'there remains the reality co-ordinated with it' (5.64). At this point, the text has already made clear that reality consists of descriptive facts, i.e., the use of language together with what is described, the world. World and life are one, but nothing in the world shows a trace of a subject, or even of an 'I' as different from other subjects.

> [. . .] no part of our experience is at the same time a priori.
> Whatever we see could be other than it is.
> Whatever we could describe at all could be other than it is.
> There is no a priori order of things.   [*5.634*]

This leaves the philosophical 'I' as a living, acting aspect: our logico-linguistic and reflective stances toward the world. Cf. 5.641, 5.64.

In TLP, the will gets a similar treatment as subject: in the final resort its philosophical relevance is minor.

> Of the will as the bearer of ethical attributes we. can not speak.
> And the will as a phenomenon is of interest only to psychology.   [*6.243*]

Our abilities to use and create language need not be purely reflective and powerless, but may involve change and will. In a philosophy that presents world and life as one (5.621), it is

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26. For a more in-depth discussion, cf., Stokhof (2002, chapter 4). Anscombe, too, challenges those who want to use TLP's identification of thought and language to smuggle in a barren form of epistemology. She observes that it would be an 'extraordinarily over-simplified account of knowledge' that has nothing to offer on 'sensation, perception, imagination, and, generally, of "experience" '. Such a 'theory of knowledge has, to be sure, nothing but clarity and simplicity to recommend it'. See Anscombe (1963, 152, 158, 162).

only natural to have a notion of reality that, besides its more structural features, comes with an active principle, which may be called 'will'. In TLP such a principle is crucial to relate logic, language and ethics with each other. Yet, we should be cautious not to overestimate its philosophical relevance.

Wittgenstein follows Schopenhauer in identifying the human will with human action. In particular, the will is not a separate 'thing', 'event' or 'process' that causes acts. Now, one might be tempted to describe reality's continuous and contingent change as 'acts', and then identify these acts with a 'metaphysical will'. This is quite harmless, as long as this metaphysical will is not taken to have any separate ontological import: one should resist the temptation to view the will as something that somehow objectifies itself, as Schopenhauer did. This Wittgenstein disapproved of. For him, subject and will is nothing over and above that which enables the application of logic, and our leading an ethically relevant life.[27]

So, although Wittgenstein adopts Schopenhauer's notions of subject and will in broad outlines, he did radicalise them, as part of a non-substantial Kantian project to uncover the preconditions of sense and ethics. Such a philosophy eliminates a sharp distinction between representation and will, and views humans and the world as interacting in different ways, both depicting and non-depicting, reflective and active. The problem with many transcendental interpretations (in particular those that focus on the influence of Schopenhauer on Wittgenstein) is that they do not acknowledge the strongly anti-epistemological nature of TLP. By neglecting that they fall into the trap of reading too much into the notions of subject and will.

5.2   Ethics

Comparisons of Schopenhauer's and Wittgenstein's philosophies usually remain general, due to considerable differences in detail and intent. However, when it comes to ethics, the kinship is more clear and more concrete. One main point of convergence is given by Schopenhauer' claim that the world, beside a physical, also has an ethical dimension.

> That the world only has physical, no moral significance, is the greatest, the most corrupting, the fundamental error, the real PERVERSITY of our basic convictions.   ['On Ethics' (Schopenhauer, 1851)]

This dual nature of the world corresponds with different ways in which we interact with it: as representation and as will. In the TLP a similar duality can be found, where it states that logic *and* ethics are transcendental (6.13, 6.421): logic pervades the world, which is a world that must have ethical value.[28]

Are the transcendentality of logic and ethics related in any way? The prominence of logical and semantical topics in the TLP suggests otherwise. Still, as Wittgenstein himself claimed about TLP: 'The book's point is an ethical one.'[29] And the main ethical concern is: How to live a good life in a world full of contingent change? This is a deep concern, for as a matter of course Wittgenstein holds life can only be good in an absolute, non-contingent manner.

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27. In line with this reading, we think the relation between will and intention that Glock (1999, § IV) elaborates on, can already be traced back to TLP. According to Glock, Wittgenstein rejects the idea of the metaphysical will as a 'primordial force operating the world'. He holds Wittgenstein's conception of the will to be 'purely *contemplative*', 'merely an ethical attitude to the world'. Wittgenstein would have rejected Schopenhauer's route to the will on the grounds that 'the only relation I can have to the world is depicting'. Glock notes this even points to a 'major difficulty in the Tractatus', in that it 'insists on the impotence of the will while tacitly relying on acts of the metaphysical will for connecting language with reality' (Glock, 1999, 450-1.).
28. It would lead to far to offer a detailed comparison here, but we refer to Stokhof (2002, chapter 4), also for how Wittgenstein's view on ethics compares with those of others.
29. In a 1919 letter to Ludwig Ficker.

Much like his views on analysis for the purpose of philosophical clarification, Wittgenstein's early view on ethics is fairly open ended and non-dogmatic. It deliberately restricts itself to indicating a few general insights on where to look for a proper ethical stance toward the world. As all facts in its applied logic are contingent, *in* the world no ethical value is to be found (6.41). Instead:

> The facts all contribute only to setting the problem, not to its solution.
>
> [*6.4321*]

Still, ethics is transcendental: world and life must have ethical value. A good life is not to be looked for in any array of facts, it rather lies in a holistic stance toward the world as such, *sub specie aeterni* (6.45), with ethical reward somehow inherent to the way we act (6.422).

The good life is lived rather than reasoned about: any attempt to force it into a theory quickly goes astray because of the contingency of any meaningful theory. Here we do well to observe the transcendentality of ethics and logic are distinct yet intertwined. Both ethics and logic are considered with regard to the same concrete world, but characterise different ways to interact with it. The application of logic brings to light which aspects of our language and its ontology are necessary and which are contingent. For the resulting notion of sense it is clear there can be no ethical theory or prescription. Yet, world and life *must* have ethical value, and to attain a good life we must interact with it in a non-discursive, non-descriptive manner. Along these lines we see the transcendentality of ethics and logic as correlated.

Wittgenstein's view is that 'God does not reveal himself *in* the world' (6.432), but leaves us the full freedom of contingent possibility with which we, as willing, i.e., acting subjects, need to cope. At this point there is a crucial difference with Schopenhauer, according to whom a good life requires silencing the will, since in the world as representation the will is not free but bounded by causality. Ethical value does not lie in arguing for moral principles or in feeling obliged to follow them. Much rather its shows itself in the way we go about, in the context of the world as a whole, where we strive to act properly, in silence (6.45, 7).

The worldly ethics Wittgenstein arrives at does have a long and diverse tradition. Kant, too, saw his theoretical philosophy as preliminary to his practical philosophy. His demarcation of knowledge was intended to give ethics its proper due. Wittgenstein's originality lies, among other things, in eliminating a sharp distinction between theoretical and practical philosophy: he dovetails his views on the fine-structure of logic, language and ethics with the practical aspects of their application in everyday life.

Observe, finally, that also in the case of ethics we see a mixture of absolute elements, viz., the right ethical attitude, and contextual and individual elements, viz., the moral principles that we choose to apply. Here it is important to distinguish between relativism and contextualism. Wittgenstein's views on morality are not relativistic in the common sense of that term. Despite the fact that the ethical *attitude* is absolute and universal, he does acknowledge the crucial importance of context and contextual considerations that prevent the formulation of absolute ethical maxims or rules.

5.3 Philosophy as application

Early Wittgenstein's view on philosophy is that of an activity, not one of theory (4.112). Philosophy has no substance, there is only the development and application of certain formal tools, used to clear up misunderstandings As we have seen, there is no room for a discursive ethics. And there is also no room for epistemology in any substantial sense:

> Psychology is no more closely related to philosophy than any other natural science.
>
> Theory of knowledge is the philosophy of psychology. [*4.1121*]

This is Kant completely 'naturalised': what epistemology is concerned with is the study of phenomena in the natural world, i.e., what belongs to the realm of science. Philosophy has no contribution to make to the substance of that inquiry. Note also that where Wittgenstein does speak of thinking and thought (as, e.g., in 3.11 discussed above) this is always in the context of concrete application of language, i.e., as an activity of ordinary humans.

Neither is there any substantial ontology. In TLP language and ontology are correlative: a linguistic specification, i.e., a choice of elementary sentences and names, determines what counts as states of affairs and objects. Given an application of logic, we can meaningfully speak of states of affairs and their objects. There is no independent characterisation of the latter, just as there is not context-independent specification of the former. It is up to us to decide what will count as what.

The transcendental scheme that TLP specifies does have certain implication but these are minimal: logical contingency and truth-functionality applied in the ontological, linguistic and epistemological sphere are the main effects. In fact these features hardly deserve the qualification 'epistemological' or 'ontological', as they pertain across the board viz., they are tied to sufficiently capable agents, human or otherwise, and have no proper epistemological content. They are best viewed as formal, necessary conditions on concrete applications and analyses, lacking substantial content.

Application as it appears in TLP, then, is a contextual affair: it aims at resolving philosophical misunderstandings by constructing and applying the tools that its transcendental scheme allows. In each case our use makes manifest what in that particular context should count as elementary sentences and states of affairs. What the scheme dictates is that there be elementary stuff, configured in chunks that are independent of each other and are combined in a truth-functional manner. The rest is up to our use, depending on the goals we want to achieve. Use also determines what aspect of a complex of statements or situations, is relevant and what is not. The misunderstanding 'disappears', in this sense that it is not accounted for by the language that we use and the logic that we impose on its expressions. What is relevant is spelled out in language thus analysed.

5.4   This is barely nonsense

A radical reading of TLP's so-called 'frame-remarks', especially 6.54, reduces most of the book to a single paradoxical sentence:

This is nonsense.

Exactly how the book manages to state that remarkable fact, –if such it is, of course, –, is left unexplained: the proponents of this reading rely on an unarticulated notion of meaning to pick out the frame-remarks as the only meaningful ones.[30]

More important is that the 'self-refutation' of TLP that plays such a prominent role in the debate about the resolute reading proposed by the new Wittgensteinians, crucially depends an identification of levels. Instead of on a transcendental scheme and its instantiations, it is based on a substantial, closed interpretation of what TLP proposes. TLP must contain a

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30. Of course the sentence 'This is nonsense', when used to convey some kind of insight and so taken to be more than undefined gibberish, is paradoxical. In a TLP-like context the nature of its paradox may be unexpected though. To see this, first observe it is consistent with two of TLP's main principles, not with a third. If sense is prior to having a truth-value – first principle, – the sentence cannot be true. So, due to bi-polarity of truth-values – second principle, – it must be false. Now, this does contradict that only truth-functional validities are necessary – a third principle, – but still leaves a paradoxical twist for any unarticulated semantics that allows for other kinds of necessity: the necessary falsity must have sense. This strongly suggests it is quite impossible to state or claim that something is nonsense, and that it is much more promising, in case philosophical confusion requires, to work from within what has sense to make plain what its logic (grammar) is; just as TLP and Wittgenstein's later work indicates on a non-resolute reading.

actual and real specification of the essence of language and reality for it to be able to contra-dict itself: what it specifies applies to the specification. The view put forward in this paper is radically different. It recognises an uninstantiated transcendental scheme that, except for truth-functionality, is open and non-substantial: it can be instantiated and detailed as philo-sophical clarification requires. Thus, there need not be friction at all, as the transcendental scheme and its instantiations have entirely different roles to play and can not be in conflict.

Indicating the outlines of the transcendental scheme itself is admissible, since it is part of a reflection on specific, everyday description in terms of formal concepts and relations. Also, the use in TLP of such empty terms like 'empirical subject' or 'metaphysical subject' are examples of how its philosophical analysis can clarify their proper status. What may still appear troublesome is TLP's apparent talk of the indescribable aspects of application, activity and contemplation, ethical and otherwise. But here TLP invites us to engage in philosophical ostensions to help those addressed at the beginning of the book: readers who have, or are on the verge of having, similar insights as TLP puts forward. These bits of language are like fingers pointing: not meaningful in and of themselves, but, if properly taken, indicating a path that is worth exploring in further philosophical activity.

6   Looking back, and the road ahead

In TLP, Wittgenstein rejects some core outcomes of traditional transcendental philosophy: he trades epistemology for the application of logic and only holds the truth-functional core of applied logic to be necessary. It is for good reasons that in the literature comparisons with, e.g., Kant or Schopenhauer remain high-level, as more detail can only reveal differences in approach and intent. We agree with Stenius (1960) and Glock (1997) that the kinship of Kant and Wittgenstein is mainly methodological, and with Glock (1999, 428) that Wittgenstein radicalises Kant's restriction of metaphysics to the transcendental. Like Kant, Wittgenstein engages in transcendental philosophy to demarcate the boundaries of sense, and this to pave the way for finding a proper ethical stance in life. But when sense and reflection are both structural and applied, as they are in TLP, traditional distinctions between theoretical and practical philosophy begin to blur.

As we have seen, in the TLP world and life are one so radically that even the most basic transcendental distinction, that between subject and object, tends to disappear. Similarly, if our will and our acts coincide, 'will' becomes a manner of speech, and human acts in a changing world remain. Embedded in contingency, some humans crave for purity and idealisation, which up to a point can be had as 'regulative ideals'. But as is witnessed by TLP itself, when pushed too far, viz., by holding sense always to be determinate, tensions result concerning 'bare' objects or 'independent' states of affairs that are hard to surmount. Still, the ethical point stands: value is intrinsic to how we act, description or prescription has nothing to do with it. Anything of importance in life is expressed implicitly and perhaps best passed over in silence.

Compared to the later work, the amount of contextualisation that can be discerned in TLP is still limited. Application is always a matter of contextual determination, but every contextually determined representational system shares with every other such system the basic logical outlines. Truth-functional compositionality and atomism are design features that apply across all contexts. At the elementary level an integral world description must result. So, even though application is local to a context, it will always carry holistic over-tones. To put it differently, while leaving room for a whole range of concrete instantiations that differ according to needs and purposes, TLP formulates one transcendental scheme, the core of which is truth-functional and absolute. In this regard, the contextual applications of

the transcendental scheme maintain overall comparability, and in that sense TLP proposes a contextualised holism.

TLP contains quite some seeds we see bloom in the decades to follow: the prominence of application in a human context; a notion of logic that becomes similar to 'grammar', e.g., in its role to attain perspicuity; diversity at the elementary level; a fairly permissive logical tool set; a strong tendency toward non-mentalism. But only in the later work the fixed truth-functional aspect of TLP becomes one among an open range of possible ways in which language operates. Logic, though certainly not discarded as such, does loose its special status. Only then does the pragmatic holism that can already be discerned in TLP, become truly pluralistic.

Wittgenstein was among the first to realise that his early criticism of traditional transcendental philosophy, especially his views on necessity, were too radical. For such notions as time, space or colour, it is hard to see how they can regulate object-configuration – i.e., be forms of objects, – in such a way as to do justice to the exclusion properties required. In his later work, most prominently in *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein came to the insight that, like in case of synthetic a priori truths, there may be apparently contingent statements that capture what is necessary. But contra Kant this is not taken to be a matter of truth, but one of use. Moreover, necessities are no longer viewed as static: what is necessary in forms of life, may vary over time. We consider the contextual approach to elementary sentences in TLP, with its merge of logic and pragmatics, as a first step in this direction.

The reading of transcendentality in TLP that we have introduced in this paper gets support from various places in the text. But, as we noted, that support is not always very direct, we really need to 'read into' the text at various places to be able to discern the contours of the skeleton hiding in the context of our application of language.

A lot of issues and questions remain, which all center around the way in which the 'human context' we have discerned in TLP develops into the much more encompassing naturalism of the later work, a naturalism that no longer requires a bi-polar logic for language to be meaningful. The features that we propose with regard to TLP's philosophy as activity already tend to be open and non-dogmatic. Yet, the concerns of how our take on TLP relates to later developments must be addressed properly for our reading to stand. We will take them up in the next instalment: 'Episode 2: the later work'.

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