REALISM AND ANTI-REALISM IN WITTGENSTEIN'S LATER PHILOSOPHY.

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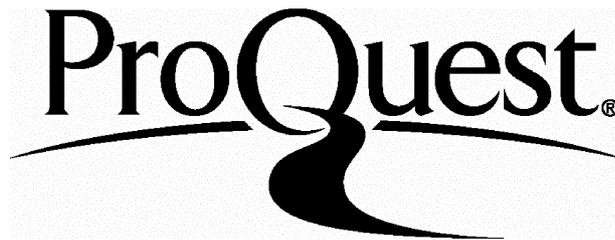
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ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to provide a clear account of Wittgenstein's later views on sensations, necessity, and ethics, and to determine where they stand with regard to the realism/anti-realism debate. Examining Wittgenstein's treatment of these three areas of discourse provides us with an invaluable perspective from which to consider the place of his later philosophy as a whole in the debate between realists and anti-realists.

In the Introduction, I describe the two main types of interpretation that are currently given of Wittgenstein's place in the debate: the internal realist one and the quasi-realist one. I also briefly consider Boghossian's view that irrealism about meaning entails global irrealism about truth, and explain why it should be rejected.

In Chapter 1, I begin by describing the traditional conceptions of realism and anti-realism about sensations. I then examine and elucidate Wittgenstein's thoughts on self-ascription and other-ascription of sensations, and reach the provisional conclusion that, given the traditional understanding of the debate, Wittgenstein's position on sensations exhibits anti-realism.

In Chapter 2, I give a brief delineation of the traditional conceptions of realism and anti-realism about necessity (Platonism and conventionalism). I then examine the conventionalist interpretation of Wittgenstein's thoughts on necessity, and Wright's alternative understanding of them, and provide grounds for rejecting them both. Finally, I put forward my own interpretation of Wittgenstein's "middle way" between Platonism and conventionalism.

In Chapter 3, I aim at elucidating Wittgenstein's later views on ethics. In order to do so I consider two different approaches to this topic. The first focuses on Wittgenstein's later remarks on meaning, and concludes that a realist view of ethics can be derived from them. The second begins by examining Wittgenstein's earlier (i.e. Tractarian) notion of transcendental ethics, and contends that his later ethics remains equally transcendental. At the end of the chapter, I bring these two aproaches

together and put forward what I believe is the most accurate understanding of Wittgenstein's later conception of the ethical.

Chapter 4 introduces Wright's framework for the assessment of a discourse's realism. Wright isolates four different types of debate between realists and anti-realists (a debate on convergence, a debate on factuality, the Dummettian debate on evidentially unconstrained truth, and the debate on the explanatory asymmetry between truth and superassertability – i.e. the Euthyphro contrast). I then delineate Wright's four criteria for assessing the place of a discourse in each of these debates.

Finally, in Chapter 5, I apply this framework to Wittgenstein's later views on sensations, necessity and ethics. I conclude that the language-game of sensations exhibits internal realism about facts, realism in the Cognitive Command sense, Dummettian anti-realism, and neither realism nor anti-realism in the Euthyphro sense. The discourse on necessity, on the other hand, exhibits realism in all senses except for the Dummettian one. The subject matter of ethics exhibits anti-realism about facts, and in the sense that it does not display Cognitive Command, but bypasses the two other debates.

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INTRODUCTION.

Two main views dominate current discussions as to where Wittgenstein's later philosophy stands regarding the debate between realists and anti-realists. The first, put forward by Sabina Lovibond, amongst others, holds that Wittgenstein is an internal realist. This interpretation has often been used to promote a quietist understanding of Wittgenstein, as is shown in McDowell's version of it[1]. The second view, advanced by Blackburn, presents Wittgenstein as a quasi-realist. In order to get a clear idea as to how these interpretations differ, it is useful to introduce the distinction between the first-order and the second-order descriptions of a language-game. To give the first-order description of a language-game is to describe its internal workings; in other words, it is to give an account of which terms are made use of in the game, and of how they are used. For instance, we would be giving the first-order description of a language-game if we were simply saying that it makes use of the words "truth", "fact", "reality", etc., in such and such a way. To give the second-order description of a language-game, on the other hand, is to give an account of why the game operates as it does, for instance by explaining what justifies or grounds the internal workings of the language-game. Imagine an area of discourse that makes first-order use of the expression "description of facts" (such as that of physics, for instance): a realist second-order account of it would involve saying that "description of facts" is used in this game *because* true statements in this area of discourse describe substantive facts which obtain independently of us (i.e. independently of our language and our conceptual scheme). Hence, the realist would argue, it is these extra-linguistic facts which *justify* the internal workings of the game, and, in particular, the use it makes of "description of the facts". Two positions can differ in their second-order descriptions without differing in their first-order ones: they can provide the same description of how the language-game operates internally, whilst giving divergent accounts (or no

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account at all) of why it operates as it does. Indeed, the difference between the internal realist interpretation and the quasi-realist one can be regarded as resulting from a disagreement on second-order issues only[2].

Internal realism, as Lovibond describes it in <u>Realism and Imagination in Ethics</u>, rejects the realist second-order view that true statements are justified *because* they describe an extra-linguistic reality. Lovibond argues that certain language-games do, of course, make first-order use of expressions such as "describing reality" or "describing the facts", but that these expressions are not to be regarded as signifying that what is described obtains independently of language and of our conceptual scheme. To hold the contrary is to assume that we can occupy a stand-point which lies outside our linguistic scheme, and from which we can directly observe these independent "facts" or "reality". This, however, is a mistaken assumption. There is simply no such a thing as stepping out of our linguistic and conceptual systems, since all of our enquiries, in order to be enquiries at all, have to be embedded in a network of concepts and meaning. It is therefore impossible to gain an insight into the pre-linguistic world of independent facts which is presupposed by realism. We simply cannot explain language from outside language, and, in particular, we cannot make sense of the idea that it is the pre-linguistic reality which justifies or grounds the internal workings of our language-games. Reality is not grasped by looking at the world from an impossible perspective, but by examining how the term "reality" is used. "Reality" is simply *that which we talk about* in some of our language-games.

The upshot of this is that all areas of discourse have the same status, in the sense that there is no difference to be drawn between those areas of discourse which describe reality "as it really is" and those which don't. There can be differences in the status of language-games, but these differences amount only to divergences in the type of terms that the games use, and in how they make use of them. If two language games make the same use of the notions of "reality",

"facts", "truth" etc., they must be considered to have the same status: it cannot be argued that, although their internal operations are the same, only one of them really does describe reality. It is in this sense that Lovibond claims that "What Wittgenstein offers [...] is a homogeneous, "seamless" conception of language. [...] On this view, the only legitimate role for the idea of "reality" is that in which it is coordinated with [...] the metaphysically neutral idea of talking about something". The upshot of this is that it makes no sense to say that a proposition can have the grammatical form of a proposition without being a "real" proposition (in the sense of not describing objective reality, for instance). The only way in which a proposition may fail to describe reality is by being false according to the dictates of the language-game; there is no other "metaphysical" reason why it could be said not to describe reality.

In line with this, Lovibond argues that Wittgenstein puts forward a non-foundational account of knowledge, whereby knowledge stands "without justification". We talk about an objective world, not because we rely on a rational foundation acquired through sensory experience, but because our linguistic practice is so designed. There is no foundational role for the idea of reality, since there is no distinction to be drawn between a presumed metaphysical truth (or facts) and the notion of truth (or facts) as constituted by the practice of the language-game. Lovibond contends that Wittgenstein's views lead to the rejection of the traditional fact/value dichotomy, which entails that there is no metaphysical reason to equate the evaluative with the subjective in the way that traditional non-cognitivists do. The fact/value dichotomy is thus replaced in her account by a fact/value *continuum*. Because of this, Lovibond argues that assessing the level of objectivity of a discourse no longer involves deciding whether it is evaluative or not. It now consists of looking at the relevant features of the linguistic practice, and of positioning the practice on the spectrum in accordance to them. Internal realism maintains all the first-order commitments of the realist account of language (i.e. the idea that certain language-games make use of the notions of

"describing the facts", "reality" etc.), but rejects the realist second-order description: the reality that we talk about is not an extra-linguistic reality which obtains independently of our linguistic system, and which justifies it. To give this kind of second-order account is to pretend that we can look at the world from a metaphysical perspective which is impossible.

Quietism is often regarded as the natural corollary of internal realism, although internal realism is not the only possible route into the former[3]. Quietism is the view that metaphysical debates make no sense, precisely because it is impossible to occupy the external perspective that they require us to adopt. Hence, all that we can do is explore the internal workings of language-games. Quietism therefore holds that those second-order accounts which require us to adopt an extra-linguistic perspective should be abandoned. If we really want to give something in the way of a second-order description, we must limit ourselves to describing what makes language *possible*. For instance, as we will see in chapter 3, Lovibond combines her quietistic internal realism with the second-order view that, for language-games to be possible, their players must share certain biological characteristics. McDowell, in turn, argues that language presupposes a certain agreement or "meeting of minds". In line with this, he highly commends Cavell's view that, in order for there to be a practice, its participants must share «routes of interests and feeling, senses of humour, and of signification, and of fulfilment, of what is outrageous, of what is similar to what else, what a rebuke, what forgiveness, when an utterance is an assertion, when an appeal, when an explanation – all the whirl of organism Wittgenstein calls "forms of life"»[4]. Quietism is therefore not silent about all types of second-order descriptions, but only about those which force us to adopt an impossible metaphysical perspective. It allows for discussions as to what makes language possible, but only insofar as these discussions are guided exclusively by the observation of the internal workings of our language-games.

Two main problems face Lovibond's type of internal realism, independently of

the issue of whether it represents Wittgenstein's views accurately or not. The first one is that she does not provide any clear criteria for placing a language-game in one area of the spectrum rather than another. She argues, for instance, that if a language-game makes use of the notions of "truth", "facts", etc., then it can be placed in the objectivity side of the spectrum. But she offers no account as to where exactly in that area the game should be placed. This is related to the second problem inherent in her account, which is that it does not seem enough to say that a discourse is objective merely because it makes use of certain terms. Surely, different language-games will make use of the same terms in different ways, and it is the way in which they are used, rather than the mere fact that they are used, which determines the place of the game in the spectrum. Unfortunately, Lovibond gives no satisfactory account of this, and her position remains unstable.

The second main interpretation of Wittgenstein which is currently available is the quasi-realist one. In Options for the World, Simon Blackburn explains that quasi-realism is a variety of projectivism. It gives the same first-order description of language-games that is offered both by realism and by internal realism, but differs from them in the second-order account it advocates. According to quasi-realism, the internal workings of Wittgenstein's language-games are neither justified by the fact that they describe a pre-linguistic reality (as realism holds), nor simply stand without a justification (as internal realism has it). Instead, the way in which a language-game operates internally is justified by the fact that we have "projected" onto it those features that best suit our needs, interests, desires, attitudes, etc. Quasi-realism differs, however, from ordinary projectivism in that it stipulates that these projections follow certain normative constraints. Hence, we cannot simply project onto our language-games whatever features we want, in whatever way we want. Unfortunately, what Blackburn means by "projection" and by "normative constraints" is desperately unclear. He

argues, however, that a proposition in a language-game is to be justified in terms of a quasi-realist "projection", if one of the following obtains: "Perhaps they [the propositions] serve as instruments governing the flow of confidence among genuine descriptions of the world; or as expressions of intellectual or emotional habits or attitudes. Perhaps they function as norms, or create a framework within which more ordinary descriptions of the world can be provided".

Blackburn argues that his interpretation of Wittgenstein is more accurate than that of Lovibond, because Lovibond fails to acknowledge that there is room in Wittgenstein's system for distinguishing between types of proposition: "her Wittgenstein holds not only (a) that propositions are all equally subject to assessment as true and false, in terms of correlative notions of fact or reality, but also (b) that anything with the grammatical form of an indicative sentence expresses a proposition". He argues that this is a misrepresentation of Wittgenstein's thoughts, since it is a central part of his argument that certain indicative sentences do not describe any facts, but create instead the context in which talk of facts is possible. Hence, for instance, necessary statements in the language-game of mathematics play the role of *rules* of description rather than that of descriptive propositions (i.e. they create the form of, rather than describe, mathematical facts). Similarily, the framework propositions of On Certainty do not provide descriptions of facts but rather rules for the use of our notion of facts. Because of this, Blackburn contends, Lovibond's homogeneous conception of language (according to which, he says, all indicative sentences describe internal facts[5]) misrepresents Wittgenstein. Hence, a different account must be provided, at least for those framework propositions which do not "describe facts" but shape them. The ideal candidate for this is, he claims, his brand of quasi-realism.

The main problem with Blackburn's argument is that it seems to grossly misrepresent the internal realist position. It is true that Lovibond sometimes appears to be claiming that all propositions with the grammatical form of an

indicative sentence describe internal facts. It is also true that, if Lovibond really meant this, she would be seriously misrepresenting Wittgenstein. However, since Lovibond argues for a fact/value spectrum, it seems reasonable to regard her as acknowledging that certain types of indicative propositions (e.g. "this is funny") will be at the value end of the continuum, and that they therefore will not describe any facts. Moreover, it seems implausible, given Wittgenstein's insistence on this issue, that she should have failed to realize that framework propositions shape, rather than describe, facts. Indeed, the point of her remarks on Wittgenstein's non-foundational account of knowledge is to show that the non-descriptive propositions which shape our notion of facts are to be explained, not by appealing to a pre-linguistic world or to quasi-realism, but *via* the thought that, without them, our language-games would simply not be what they are. When Lovibond talks of a "homogeneous, seamless" language she is therefore putting the emphasis on the idea that all language-games have the same metaphysical status (i.e. that none are justified by extra-linguistic, independent facts), rather than on the idea that all indicative sentences are given by language the same role of describing internal facts. The appearance to the contrary is the result of Lovibond's somewhat precipitate style, rather than the mark of her incapacity to account for framework propositions.

Blackburn's claim that internal realism cannot account for framework propositions is therefore mistaken. We do not *need* to turn to quasi-realism in order to account for the status of these propositions. Blackburn provides one possible account of what happens at the limits of the Wittgensteinian language-games, but not the only possible one.

There are therefore two main views as to how Wittgenstein's later philosophy fares with regard to the debate between realists and anti-realists. The first holds that Wittgenstein is an internal realist, and that this is the only form of realism to which one can aspire. The second argues that Wittgenstein is an anti-realist of

the quasi-realist variety, at least as far as his framework propositions are concerned. Both of these operate with highly intuitive notion of to what realism and anti-realism involve, and are therefore not ideal. The aim of this thesis is to clarify Wittgenstein's position in the debate by providing a more methodical framework with which to assess his views. Because it is impossible to review here all of Wittgenstein's later thoughts, I shall limit myself to examining three representative samples of his later work, namely his reflections on sensations, necessity, and ethics. Chapters 1, 2, and 3 elucidate, respectively, Wittgenstein's views on these three areas of discourse. In these chapters, I will be examining the various interpretations that have been made of Wittgenstein's remarks on these topics, and will determine which of them are the most accurate. In doing so, I will be making use of some further intuitive accounts of how realism and anti-realism about these areas of discourse should be defined. In turn, chapter 4 introduces a more methodical framework for the assessment of a discourse's realism, namely that delineated by Crispin Wright in Truth and Objectivity. This framework establishes that there are four main types of debate between realists and anti-realists, and provides the criteria necessary for determining how a discourse fares with regard to them. In chapter 5, I will finally apply these criteria to those interpretations of Wittgenstein's thoughts that I found most satisfactory in chapters 1, 2 and 3. By doing so, I will gain a clearer picture as to whether, and in what sense, Wittgenstein's remarks on sensations, necessity and ethics have a place within the realism/anti-realism debate.

At this stage, however, it is important to pre-empt one possible type of objection to my approach in this thesis. Someone could indeed argue that whatever goes for meaning goes globally for truth, and that, therefore, I should not be looking at Wittgenstein's treatment of these three particular language-games, but at his remarks on meaning *per se*. This is the type of objection that would indeed be raised by Boghossian[6]. In taking this approach, I am obviously

claiming that Boghossian's view is mistaken. Unfortunately, I cannot offer a fully detailed discussion of this issue here, but I will give a brief delineation of my reasons for believing Boghossian's claim to be invalid. Boghossian's key argument runs as follows[7]:

Kripke argues that, for Wittgenstein, there are no facts of meaning. Hence:

(1) For any S, P: "S means that P" is not truth conditional.

Since the truth-condition of a sentence S partly depends on its meaning, non-factualism about meaning entails non-factualism about truth-conditions:

(2) For all S, P: "S has truth-condition P" is not truth conditional.

But since "S has truth-condition P" is not truth conditional, it is never strictly true: (3) It is not the case that "S has truth-condition P" is true.

Courtesy of the disquotational properties of truth, we get that: "S has truth-condition P" is true if and only if S has truth-condition P. However, since "S has truth-condition P" is never strictly true, it follows that:

(4) For any S: "S" is not truth conditional.

There are three main objections to Boghossian's argument. Firstly, by arguing in this way, Boghossian is failing to make the necessary distinction between use and mention[8]. It is indeed essential to draw a contrast between the idea that *that the sentence* ("S has truth-condition P") *says what it does* is not truth-conditional, and the idea that *what the sentence says* is not truth-conditional. Boghossian's use of the disquotational device in (3)/(4) clouds this distinction and therefore leads to an invalid conclusion. Secondly, if "For any S: "S" is not truth conditional", then (1) itself cannot be truth-conditional and therefore cannot be true either. This means that, if Boghossian's argument works, it automatically undermines itself[9]. Thirdly, it is important to note that, if, as Boghossian argues, "S has truth-condition P" is not truth conditional, then not only can "S has truth-condition P" not be strictly true, but it cannot be strictly *false* either. Therefore, we get that:

(3*) It is not the case that "S has truth-condition P" is false.

Hence:

(4*) It is the case that "S has truth-condition P" is true.

From which it follows that:

(5*) For all S: S is truth conditional.

We can thus conclude that Boghossian's argument fails to establish that "whatever goes for meaning must go globally for truth", which shows, I believe, that the approach of this thesis is justified. Boghossian's account of the relation between what happens to meaning and what happens to truth is flawed. There is, of course, a relation between these two issues, but the relation is not to be described by saying that the account we give of meaning fixes rigidly the way in which truth must be protrayed. Instead, we should be saying that what happens to meaning restricts the range of things that can happen to truth. What is said about meaning does not force upon us one specific account of truth, but rather delimits the range of accounts of truth from which we can choose. As Wright argues in Truth and Objectivity, "the rule following considerations set an *upper bound* on the robustness of the realism which is available anywhere".

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CHAPTER 1: WITTGENSTEIN AND SENSATIONS.

1. Realism and anti-realism about sensations.

Wittgenstein's views on sensations have often been regarded as exhibiting anti-realism, mainly, I believe, because of the vehemence with which they attack the type of realism about sensations championed by Cartesian dualism. In order to be able to locate his views more clearly, and since it is somewhat unusual to speak of realism and anti-realism in the context of the philosophy of mind[1], it is useful to start with a brief delineation of what is meant by these two terms when applied to the concept of sensations. Typically, a realist view about sensations holds (and an anti-realist one denies) that sensation statements refer to (and are made substantially true or false in virtue of) substantive non-physical or brain states. Cartesian dualism, which is Wittgenstein's main target, is characterised by three main stances. Firstly, its ontology regards sensations as substantive non-physical objects or states, to be contrasted with physical, brain states. Secondly, Cartesianism contends that sensation statements refer to these substantive non-physical entities, and that they are made substantially true or false in virtue of their reference to them. Thirdly, its epistemology of sensations is characterised by a first-person/third-person asymmetry: each of us stands in a privileged epistemic relation to his or her own sensations (since these are epistemically transparent objects that we can access directly through introspection), but we cannot gain any direct knowledge of other people's sensations (since all that we can rely on in order to make third personal ascriptions are indirect and defeasible behavioural criteria). The modern supporter of the idea that sensation statements refer to non-physical states is Kripke[2]. He holds that the word "pain" is a rigid designator or, in other words, that it designates the same object in all possible worlds: "whenever anything is such and such a pain, it is essentially that very object, namely such and such a pain"[3].Since "brain state" is also a rigid designator, if there was an identity

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between pain and brain state it would have to be a necessary identity, because any identity between two rigid designators must be necessary. Intuitively, however, it seems that the identity between pain and brain state is contingent, as it is possible to imagine that someone should feel pain without being in the appropriate brain state and vice-versa. This feeling of contingency cannot, moreover, be explained away as it can be in the case of other identities. Consider, for instance, the identity between light and stream of protons: "light" and "stream of protons" are also rigid designators, and an identity between what they designate would therefore also have to be necessary. Here again, however, it is possible to conceive that the identity is in fact contingent; it is imaginable that there could be light without there being a stream of protons. But, in fact, in the case of "light" and "stream of protons", this feeling of contingency can be explained away so that the identity retains its necessary status. Indeed, what this feeling of contingency marks is, not that there could be light without a stream of protons, but that there could be something with the phenomenological *appearance* of light without there being a stream of protons. This "something" would not however be "light", but only "fool's light" (like fool's gold). The identity between light and stream of protons really does therefore hold necessarily. In the case of "pain" and "brain state", however, the feeling of contingency cannot be explained away in this way because there is no distinction to be drawn between the feeling or appearance of pain and the pain itself, and there is therefore no room to manoeuvre. Since "pain" and "brain state" are rigid designators and the identity that supposedly holds between what they designate is not necessary, Kripke concludes that it cannot, in fact, be said to be a real identity at all. "Pain" must therefore be said to rigidly designate a non-physical (as opposed to a physical/brain) state.

The Cartesian thought that we stand in a privileged epistemic relation to our sensations is characterised by three key notions: introspection, undefeasible evidence, and the idea that sensation statements are analogous to reports or descriptions. It is held that we access our sensations via introspection, where

introspection is likened to the observation of one's inner world. Because the only way to gain access to sensations is by introspecting, each of us can be said to be the "sole witness"[4] of his or her sensations. Sensation statements are absolutely secure, not only because we have a privileged access to the available evidence (i.e. to the non-physical object/states that we observe through introspection), but also because of the very nature of the sensation-evidence: sensations are epistemically transparent objects, they provide immediate, undefeasible evidence on which to ground our sensation statements. Note, for instance, that it is not possible for me to be mistaken as to whether or not I am in pain. This portrayal of our relation to sensations results in the third main Cartesian thought, namely the notion of a first person/third person asymmetry (or, in other words, the notion that "I can only *believe* that someone else is in pain, but I *know* it if I am", as Wittgenstein puts it in Philosophical Investigations §303). This expresses the view that other people's sensations are *hidden* from us, since we cannot introspect their minds and the only criteria we have, in order to ascertain that they do experience certain sensations, are behavioural criteria. These behavioural criteria are unsatisfactory, the Cartesian holds, not only because they are indirect evidence (as opposed to the direct evidence that we get from introspection), but also because they are unreliable: people can hide what they are feeling (they can, for instance, decide not to let their pain show), and they can also lie about it (by pretending to be in pain when they are not, for example). Thus, pretence plays the role in generating scepticism about other minds that illusion plays in the case of scepticism about the external world.

Because of the vehemence with which Wittgenstein attacks this realist account, it has sometimes been thought that his position exhibits anti-realism. Anti-realism about sensations consists in arguing that sensation statements do not refer to (and are not made substantially true in virtue of) substantive non-physical or brain states. One of the anti-realist views *par excellence* is behaviourism. Behaviourism splits into two main varieties: logical behaviourism (according to which mental

terms can be used so long as it remains clear that they reduce to behavioural ones) and eliminative, psychological behaviourism (which holds that mental terms should be abandoned altogether). Certain forms of functionalism (namely those which identify sensations exclusively with causal relations) can also be said to display anti-realism. It is clear, however, that a rejection of realism about sensations need not lead to full-blown anti-realism. There are half-way houses available, for instance that inhabited by Lewis's views[5]. Lewis argues that the concept of pain is the concept of a state that occupies a certain causal role. "Pain" is a non-rigid designator, that is, it does not designate the same (material) state in all possible worlds. Instead, "X is in pain *simpliciter* if and only if X is in a state that occupies the causal role of pain for the *appropriate population*"[6]. This is a half-way house because a creature can be considered to be in pain either if he/she/it is in the appropriate (physical) state, or if he/she/it stands in the appropriate type of causal relations. A Martian whose physiology is different from ours and who does not have C-fibers in his brain can still be said to be in pain, if he is in that state which, in the case of Martians, provokes the causal interactions that C-fiber stimulation causes in us. Conversely, a Madman who does not react to C-fiber stimulation like other humans (he does not wince or try to deaden the sensation), can also still be said to be in pain because he is in that state (namely C-fiber stimulation) which in the other members of his population (i.e. mankind) would lead to the causal interactions of pain. Lewis's position thus features a materialist, type/type identity theory accompanied by an a priori, functionalist characterization of sensations.

2. Wittgenstein and sensations.

Having delineated what has been typically considered to be realism and anti-realism about sensations, we can now turn to Wittgenstein's thoughts on the

subject. For the sake of clarity, it is useful to treat separately the cases of the self-ascription and the other-ascription of sensations, although we must remember that the first-person ascription is not an autonomous language-game, but only an aspect of a language-game that involves essentially the third-person ascriptions.

A. First-person sensation ascriptions.

According to Wittgenstein, one of the central mistakes of Cartesianism is that of modelling its account of sensations on external objects[7]. Cartesianism suggests, just like in the case of external objects, that sensations are *inner objects* or states which we can *observe* (introspect), that first-person sensation ascriptions are grounded on *evidence* and justified by *criteria*, that they are *reports* or *descriptions* of what we observe, etc. This results from having transferred certain terms from the language-game of the "outer" (i.e. of external objects) to that of the "inner" (i.e. that of the mental), without having realised that in the latter language-game these terms do not in fact have the same use that they have in the former. What "observation" means in the context of the mental is, for instance, desperately unclear. What could it possibly be to "observe one's consciousness"? Wittgenstein expresses his perplexity with regard to this issue in Investigations §421: «But what can it mean to speak of "turning my attention on to my own consciousness"? This is surely the queerest thing there could be!». Wittgenstein does not want to deny that we do sometimes legitimately talk of "observing" and "describing" what is in our minds, and that we also talk of "concealing" and "revealing" our mental states to others. What he wants to emphasise, however, is that, when we say these things, we do not mean by them the same that we mean when we talk of external objects in this way. We need to gain an insight as to how exactly these expressions are used in the context of the "inner". In PI §423 Wittgenstein says "The picture is there. And I am not disputing its validity in any particular case. - Only I also want to understand the application of the picture". We need to carry out a surview of

the way in which we apply the words "introspect", "describe", "reveal" in the case of sensations. Doing so would help us realise, for instance, that talking of "introspection" *can* make sense, but not if by introspection we mean a process of "inner observation" analogous to the observation of external objects. In § 587 Wittgenstein says «It makes sense to say "Do I really love her or am I only pretending to myself?" and the process of introspection is the calling up of memories; of imagined possible situations, and of feelings one would have if...» When we say that we introspect, we do not thereby mean that we "look" inwards to an inner, mental landscape; and if Cartesianism argues the contrary, it is because it is making the mistake of importing the meaning (i.e. the use) that "observation" has in the domain of the "outer" into the domain of the "inner", without considering what use is really given to this term in the latter domain.

The gravest consequence resulting from modelling the inner on the outer in this way is that it misleads us into thinking that we have indefeasible *knowledge* regarding our own sensations. Wittgenstein argues that we cannot in fact be said to *know* that we are, say, in pain, because knowledge, in order to be knowledge, requires there to be an independent criterion of correctness which is lacking in the case of self-ascription of sensations. Think for instance of the chart-model account, inspired by Cartesianism, of how we *know* that we are experiencing a particular sensation: according to this model, each of us has a mental chart that correlates sensation samples with their specific names, so that when we experience a particular sensation we "go with it" to the chart, find the corresponding sample, and look its name up. Having found out its name, we are then justified in saying that we *know* that we are experiencing, say, a "toothache". The crucial problem with this model is that such a chart would have to be a *remembered* one. When using it, we would not therefore be referring to an independent table capable of providing us with a real criterion for the correctness of sensation self-ascriptions. Using the chart does not help us in any way, since we must in each case be able to recall it, which involves precisely being able to remember what the name of each

sensation in the chart (including the one that we are currently experiencing) is. Thus, the mental chart model has no explanatory force: we need to know what we are looking for before we are able to use the chart to find out what we are looking for. It could be argued that this objection means only that we cannot know the *name* of the sensation we are experiencing, but that the argument does not run to counter the idea that we do *know* that we currently have an (unidentified) sensation. But this is a very weak argument. For how are we supposed to know that what we are experiencing is a sensation and not, say, the occurrence of a belief? Presumably, in order to know that what we are experiencing is a sensation we would need another chart specifying which samples fall under the concept of "sensation" and which under the concept of "belief", and then the same problem emerges.

However, it could be objected that we are making a mistake here. Maybe the fact that we can not find an independent criterion for the correctness of sensation self-ascriptions does not undermine the idea that we can *know* our own sensations, but, on the contrary, supports it. Maybe it is precisely because of the special nature of sensations (i.e. because they are epistemically transparent to us) that we do not need to use a criterion other than the sensation itself to justify our claim to *know*. It could be, therefore, that the lack of independent criteria is simply a manifestation of the fact that our judgements about our present sensations are infallible. This argument runs however immediately into trouble. First of all, it runs into trouble because we cannot be said to be infallible in this way. Wright[8] argues that, although the range of possible errors that we can commit when making judgements about our sensations is more limited than that characterising other kinds of judging, some sources of error remain. Judgements about sensations involve a cognitive mechanism, and, because of this, we can always make second-order mistakes (e.g. falsely believing that we have the belief that we are in pain), if not first-order ones (e.g. believing that we are in pain when we are not)[9]. Moreover, according to Wright, we can only be infallible about sensations if

sensations really are transparent to us. And one of the most crucial insights that Wittgenstein provides us with is that sensations are not transparent in this way. To believe that they are is to believe in the "myth of the given". Sensations are not fully formed objects, whose conceptual shape is impressed upon us as soon as we experience them. There are no such things as pre-linguistically fully formed mental objects on which we can simply stick a name label. On the contrary, it is language which delineates what exactly we mean by a pain, where the concept of pain ends and that of an itch starts, etc.

It makes no sense to say "I *know* I am in pain" because the grammar of self-ascriptions of sensation is not suited to talk of knowledge. Knowledge requires there to be a justification, a criterion endorsing our knowledge claims, and this is a concept that has no place in the language-game of first-person sensation statements. "What I do is not, of course, to identify my sensation by criteria, but to repeat an expression. But this is not the end of the language-game: it is the beginning" (*PI* I, § 290)[10]. Cartesian dualism is misled into talking of knowledge in this context, because it embraces a misconceived dualism between conceptual scheme and the pre-conceptual given. Sensations are regarded here as the pre-conceptual given, to which we attach a name and a concept when we learn a language. The Cartesian thought behind the claim that we *know* our sensations is that it is this pre-conceptual given which grounds or justifies our subsequent conceptualizations of it. Hence, it is the pre-conceptual particular (which is transparent to us) which justifies us in ascribing the concept of a particular to it. Conceptualizing "the given" is simply a matter of taking these pre-conceptual, fully-formed sensation-particulars, and of classifying them according to certain criteria or rules. But the "given" is already there, independently carved up into individuals, and it is because of this that it can ground our first-personal sensation judgements and conceptualizations. I know that this is a "toothache" because the pre-conceptual nature of this particular is immediately accessible to me (i.e. it is transparent). All that I need to do is check under which concept and name it falls

(by using the appropriate criteria - e.g. the chart discussed above). The problem with this account is that something cannot work as a justification if it is not conceptualized. Something can act as a justification only if it integrated in the linguistic-conceptual language-game of justifications. The pre-conceptual Cartesian sensation is therefore playing here an illicit double role: it is transparent to us because it is pre-conceptual (i.e. because it is "the given" and we do not need language or concepts in order to apprehend it), but it provides justifications, which only conceptualized items can do. This misrepresents completely the role of sensations, and the use of first-personal sensation statements.

The obvious objection to Wittgenstein's argument at this stage is that his remarks suggest that pre-linguistic children, animals, etc., cannot experience sensations. But to say this is to distort his views. Wittgenstein is indeed not saying that we only start experiencing sensations when we start speaking a language. A pre-linguistic child can of course experience pain, itches, hunger, thirst, etc.[11] What Wittgenstein is saying, rather, is that sensations are not pre-conceptually carved up into particulars capable of impressing themselves upon us independently of their being integrated into a linguistic and conceptual scheme. A sensation "is not a *something,* but not a *nothing* either!" (PI §304). It is not a "something", in the sense that it is not a pre-linguistically and pre-conceptually fully formed object which grounds our judgements about it. But it is not a "nothing" either, not only because "sensation" is a word which has an obvious use, but also because we do of course experience sensations before we learn to speak: it is just that what we experience is not yet carved up into particulars, and it does not provide us with any grounds or justifications. The ambivalent nature of sensations (namely, their being neither a something nor a nothing) is a manifestation of the fact that they fall under a boderline concept. As McDowell puts it[12] they are "a *limiting case* of the model of object and designation - a limiting case of the idea of an object that we can designate and classify. [...] the particular has no status except as what is experienced as instantiating the concept".

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In other words, sensations are a something (i.e. a particular) only insofar as the grammar and conceptualization of sensations treat it as such. But pre-linguistic experiences are not independently carved up into "somethings" or particulars.

From this, it should be relatively easy to see why Wittgenstein can not be said to be a behaviourist. Sensations are not a nothing, since we do, of course, experience these things: "*Certainly* all these things happen in you – And now all I ask is to understand the expression we use" (*PI* §423). Wittgenstein does not even want us to stop using expressions like "mental state" or "mental process": «Why should I deny that there is a mental process? But "There has just taken place in me the mental process of remembering..." means nothing more than: "I have just remembered..."» (*PI* §306). Rather, he wants to guard us against the trap of thinking that, just because we *talk* of mental *states* and *processes*, we must *mean* by them something analogous to what is meant by outer states and processes (i.e. by the external entitites that we can observe and describe, and also *know*).

It is crucial to note that, when we say that no criterion can be found for the self-ascription of sensations, we are not making a sceptical point. We are not saying that, since there are no secure criteria on which to ground sensation self-ascriptions, no such ascriptions are valid. Rather, we are saying that self-ascriptions of sensations are not the kind of ascriptions that need to be justified, let alone with reference to criteria. "To use a word without justification does not mean to use it without a right" (*PI*, I § 289). We do obviously often have the right to say that we are in pain, but saying this does not correspond to making a report on something that we *know* on criterial grounds. It doesn't, firstly, because these self-ascriptions are not descriptions. Self-ascriptions of sensations stand half-way between expressive pain behaviour and ordinary descriptions; they are *linguistically codified expressions of* rather than *reports on* pain. «"So are you saying that the word 'pain' really means crying?" – On the contrary: the verbal expression of pain replaces crying and does not describe it.» (*PI* I, §244). And it does not, secondly,

because self-ascriptions are not grounded on anything. It can only make sense to say "I know x" in a context where it can also make sense to say "I do not know x"; but in the context of sensations this does not make sense (i.e. it makes no sense to say "I do not know whether I am in pain or not"). It makes no sense to say so, not because our judgements about sensations are infallible, not because they are grounded on absolutely secure criteria, but because they are *groundless*. The authority that each of us has in ascribing sensations to himself does not result from the fact that each of us stands in a privileged epistemic relation *vis-à-vis* his or her sensations. Rather, this authority is a constitutive principle of the language-game of sensations. It enters into the conditions of identification of the mental, and is a manifestation of the fact that self-ascriptions of sensations are groundless. Without it, the language-game of the mental would simply not operate as it does[13].

B. Third-person ascriptions.

All of this changes when it comes to third-person statements about sensations. In the case of third-person ascriptions our language-game does make a real use of the notions of knowledge, justification and criteria. When we learn this language-game, we are taught to ascribe sensations to others *on the basis* of their behaviour, and in particular, of course, of their verbal behaviour. Here, talk of knowledge is justified because there is a real sense in which we use criteria to establish whether someone else is in pain. The fact that someone is crying, groaning, and holding his jaw can, for instance, be taken to be sufficient grounds for saying "He has a toothache, he is very much in pain". The problem, however, is that these criteria seem to be desperately unreliable. Other people can decide both to hide what they are feeling (in order not to upset others, for example), and to lie about it (e.g. pretending to be in pain in order to skip school). There seems to be something unsatisfactory about the inescapable

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defeasibility of these criteria: there is something about the other person that apparently remains hidden from us. But is there really? And how exactly are we to understand the notion that something remains hidden? According to Wittgenstein, nothing remains hidden in the Cartesian sense. There are no mental states that the person can *observe* but that we cannot observe because we are not that person. Obviously, it does make sense to say that we sometimes do not know what is going on "inside someone else's head". But this only makes sense *if we thereby mean precisely that* we don't know whether he or she is being sincere, or revealing all. If, on the other hand, we do have the absolute certainty that the other person is being sincere and open, it makes no sense to keep insisting on the idea that, because we cannot "look inside" his or her mind, something nevertheless remains hidden from us. Thinking that it does results from assuming that we use the words "concealing" and "revealing" in the case of sensations like we do in that of external objects – the paramount Cartesian error. "If I see someone writhing with pain with evident cause I do not think: all the same, his feelings are hidden from me" (*PI*, IIxi. p223).

Having said this, it remains true that other people can make us believe things about their sensations which are not true. People can, in a straightforward, non-Cartesian sense lie about and conceal their sensations. Does this not justify us in saying that Wittgenstein's behavioural criteria are desperately unsatisfactory, and that the knowledge they yield is in fact no knowledge at all? This question ensues from having misconstrued what Wittgenstein means by "criteria". Wittgenstein uses the term "criterion" in a very specific sense[14]. For him, a criterion is not so much something which ascertains the existence of whatever thing it is a criterion of, but rather something which helps to demarcate the extension of the thing's concept or meaning. To give the criterion of x is to provide an insight into how the word "x" is used. Note indeed that the examples in which Wittgenstein uses the term "criterion" denote no asymmetry between something that is accessible and something that is not[15].

He is not, in these examples, providing us with tools (i.e. the criteria) that enable us to ascertain the existence of things which would otherwise remain undiscovered and inaccessible. This is not at all the tone of his comments on criteria. Consider the following remarks from the Investigations:

"Our criterion for someone's saying something to himself is what he tells us and the rest of his behaviour." (§344)

"What is the criterion for the sameness of two images? [...] For me, when it is someone else's image: what he says and does." (§377)

«"How do you know that you have raised your arm?" [...] You are certain that you have raised your arm: isn't this the criterion, the measure, of the recognition?» (§625).

Wittgentein's behavioural criteria are not to be used to ascertain whether a person really is, say, in pain, but help us to delineate the meaning of pain itself. They help us understand that pain is something that is ascribed on the grounds of behaviour, and also that we can be mistaken in thinking that someone else is in pain. The fact that others can conceal and lie about their sensations is indeed an important aspect of what we mean by sensation, and of how sensation-ascriptions work.

The fact that Wittgenstein's behavioural criteria do not yield absolute knowledge about other people's sensations should not therefore be deplored. It is indeed because they do not yield such a secure knowledge that they help to bring out an essential characteristic of the mental, namely the concept of the privacy of individuals. This privacy has nothing to do with the Cartesian privacy which consists in being the "sole witness" of one's mental landscape. It is rather, simply, the privacy of being able, within certain limits, to conceal and even lie about one's mental states. This notion of privacy constitutes the background against which all of our mental concepts are understood, and is

therefore essential. Without it, we would not be holding a proper concept of the human mind. We fall into the trap of regretting the lack of certainty about other people's sensations both because we are caught in the Cartesian spell of thinking that there *is* a perspective from which sensations really do reveal themselves with crystal clarity, and because we do not recognise the crucial role that this notion of privacy plays in shaping our concept of the human mind.

3. Conclusion: Wittgenstein's views on sensations and the realism debate.

As we said at the beginning of this section, the traditional realist view of sensations is that sensation statements refer to, and are made substantially true in virtue of, either non-physical states or brain states. It is clear that Wittgenstein's views do not exhibit non-physicalist realism. The bulk of his account of sensations is indeed constituted by the rejection of the pre-linguistically fully formed sensation-objects of Cartesianism, and the rejection of the Cartesian notions of introspection, evidence and criteria. It is harder to ascertain what Wittgenstein's views on the relationship between sensations and brain states are, since his remarks on this issue are much scarcer. All the evidence does however point to the view that he is unsympathetic to this physicalist form of realism as well. His commitment to the autonomy of language-games, plus the fact that at no point does he indicate that sensation language-games involve the specification of physical, brain states, do indeed direct us towards this conclusion[16]. We can therefore conclude that, according to the notions of realism and anti-realism that we have been working with here, Wittgenstein's views on sensations exhibit anti-realism.

CHAPTER 2: WITTGENSTEIN AND NECESSITY.

Before starting to describe Wittgenstein's views on mathematical and logical necessity, and in order to be able to place them more easily, it is useful to present a brief delineation of what realism and anti-realism about formal logic and mathematics typically involve. According to the realist view, the meaning of a mathematical/logical statement is explained in terms of its truth conditions, as opposed to its assertability conditions. The realist view *par excellence* is Platonism, where for each mathematical/logical statement there is some substantive fact in mathematical/logical reality in virtue of which the statement is either true or false. According to the anti-realist theory, on the other hand, the meaning of a mathematical/logical statement is explained in terms of its assertability conditions. In the case of mathematics, for instance, the assertability conditions are satisfied in those circumstances where we are in possession of a suitable proof.

The account of why some statements are necessary (i.e. "true in all possible worlds") varies depending on the theory adopted. For a Platonist, for instance, statements are necessary in virtue of the fact that they correspond to the feature of the mathematical/logical reality that is appropriate to necessity. For an anti-realist, on the other hand, no such feature of reality exists, and necessity needs to be explained otherwise. Conventionalism constitutes an attempt to explain precisely this, since it holds that propositions are necessary because we conventionally decide to treat them as unassailable. We will look more closely at this issue in the course of our discussion.

1. Wittgenstein and Conventionalism.

Michael Dummett[1] holds that Wittgenstein's views on necessity display a radical type of conventionalism. Radical conventionalism, as put forward by Dummett, is

indeed the view that "That a given statement is necessary always consists in our having expressly decided to treat that very statement as unassailable; it can not rest on our having adopted certain other conventions which are found to involve our treating it so". Thus, according to radical conventionalism, *all* necessary statements (rules of inference, etc.) are to be regarded as direct registers of conventions. We can simply decide to lay down as necessary any statements we want, and we do so as we go along. Dummett believes this to be Wittgenstein's view of necessity: "Wittgenstein goes in for a full-blooded conventionalism; for him the logical necessity of any statement is always the *direct* expression of a linguistic convention"[2].

According to Dummett, Wittgenstein's position is extremely vulnerable, since radical conventionalism about necessity faces two insurmountable problems. Firstly, declaring a statement to be necessary means granting it the status of an admissible rule of inference, and this, in turn, means accepting that it cannot be used to infer false conclusions from true premises. Indeed, rules of inference are supposed to be such that, if we use them and thereby find ourselves moving from true premises to a false conclusion, we must conclude that some particular error has been committed along the way. To understand why this raises a problem for the radical conventionalist about necessity, imagine the following example. We want to work out how many individuals are in a group, and in order to do so we decide to use two different methods. First, we count each member of the group and find out that there are four people. Secondly, we count on the one hand the men and on the other hand the women, find that there are two women and two men, and add up the two figures. Since, according to radical conventionalism, we can decide at any stage what the necessary rules of inference are, we now decide that "2 + 2 = 5". As a result from this, we face a situation where our two methods for deciding how many individuals are in the group yield two different results (i.e. according to the first method there are four people in the group, whereas according to the second there are five). We thus have to conclude that *some* mistake has been made along

the way. The problem is that it will be impossible to determine which *particular* mistake has occurred: we won't be able to find any mistakes non-inferentially (i.e. by counting), since the diverging results are in fact the consequence of our having granted "2 + 2 = 5" the status of a necessary and thus valid rule of inference. Hence, we face a situation where we have to conclude that a non-inferential mistake has occurred, but where no such mistake can ever be identified. According to Dummett, the second reason why radical conventionalism is an untenable position is that it leads to the breakdown of communication. If individuals can arbitrarily decide, as they go along, which statements to treat as necessary (and thus as valid rules of inference) there is no guarantee that there will be a general agreement as to what any statement means. In fact, it is most probable that no such agreement will be reached, rendering communication impossible.

Dummett believed that Wittgenstein was a radical conventionalist about necessity, and that his position was therefore untenable. There is, however, sufficient evidence to suggest that such an interpretation fails to grasp the essence of Wittgenstein's thinking: firstly, Dummett's view stems from a mistaken understanding of the way in which Wittgenstein intends to use his examples of the other mathematical "tribes"; secondly, it contends that Wittgenstein bases his concept of necessity on certain notions of decision and convention, for which there is in fact no real room in Wittgenstein's system.

Dummett's remarks suggest that his interpretation stems at least in part from a misunderstanding of Wittgenstein's examples of the mathematical practices of the other "tribes". Dummett believed Wittgenstein to be facing the dilemma of either arguing that alternative mathematical systems are intelligible to us and can thus be adopted at will (thereby promoting conventionalism), or arguing that they are not intelligible to us (and thereby failing to undermine the appeal of Platonism, by failing to show that mathematical practices can be other than they are)[3]. Dummett

thought that, in the face of this dilemma, Wittgenstein had chosen the first option, that is the view that the mathematical practices of the other tribes are intelligible to us and thus constitute alternatives that we could freely take up at any point in time. It is because of this that Dummett felt justified in presenting Wittgenstein as a conventionalist, and in particular a radical one.

There is powerful evidence to suggest, however, that this is not the way in which Wittgenstein intended these remarks to be taken. It seems relatively clear that, for him, preserving the "hardness of the logical must" requires that these alternative practices should not be intelligible. In <u>Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics</u> (III, 29) he says, for instance: «So much is clear: when someone says: "If you follow the rule, it *must* be like this", he has not any *clear* concept of what experience would correspond to the opposite. Or again: he has not any clear concept of what it would be like for it to be otherwise. And this is very important». Again, in IV, 31 he says «It must be like this, does not mean: it will be like this. On the contrary: "It will be like this" chooses between one possibility and another. "It must be like this" sees only *one* possibility.»

Indeed, the more we think about the alternative tribal practices, the less intelligible they become. Imagine for instance a tribe whose members are physically similar to humans, who live on earth and have the same language as ours. Imagine that they act like us in every respect (including all mathematical calculations) except that, for them, 2 + 2 = 5. Now try to imagine what 2 + 2 = 5 might mean, assuming that it does not express a mere terminological disagreement. That is, imagine that by "2", "5", "+" and "=" these people mean exactly what we mean[4] but that they nevertheless insist that 2 + 2 = 5. The more we think about this alternative way of adding two plus two, the less we are able to understand it. We simply cannot see its point or comprehend its implications.

For Wittgenstein, the practices of these other tribes are not ones that we could freely take up, since they are not intelligible to us. But this does not entail that we must resign ourselves to a reconciliation with the Platonic picture. On the contrary,

these alternative practices *can* be used to help us realise that Platonism misrepresents the phenomenon of necessity, and this is indeed part of the role that Wittgenstein intends them to play: the remarks are intended to be used as a tool, as a means for weakening the hold that the Platonic perspective has on us. By reflecting on what it would be like for 2 + 2 to equal 5 (in the example given above), we gain an insight into what exactly is involved in ascribing necessity to a statement. Platonism held that statements are necessary when they correspond to a certain type of entity in an extra-linguistic mathematical reality[5]; thus, statements such as 2 + 2 = 5 are unintelligible because there is nothing in the mathematical reality to which they could correspond. Wittgenstein's examples of the other tribes help to undermine this account in that they invite us to speculate about what is missing, about what would make "2 + 2 = 5" intelligible. And what these speculations reveal is that, whenever we attempt to make sense of "2 + 2 = 5", we find ourselves seeking to establish what *use* it might have for the other tribe[6]. Our spontaneous reaction is not to turn to a supposed mathematical reality, we do not try to make sense of the statement by saying that there might be an entity in the mathematical realm that we have failed to identify but which the other tribe may be familiar with. Instead we try to construct a hypothetical *context* in which this proposition could be shown to have a use for the other tribe. We might argue, for instance, that, perhaps, the laws of nature change around these people so that, when they add two objects to two others, a fifth one materialises. Of course, such speculations do not, as they stand, render 2 + 2 = 5 intelligible. It remains very hard to imagine what it would be like for the laws of nature to be such that they changed around these people in this way. But this kind of deliberation helps us gain an insight into what constitutes necessity, because it makes us realise that what is crucial to it is that there should be a certain kind of context and use, rather than a certain type of entity in a Platonic mathematical reality. It is in this way that the examples of the other tribes help to undermine the Platonic account of necessity.

These examples thus fulfill two functions. Firstly, they help us realise that those

statements which contradict necessary ones are not intelligible to us, even though they might appear to be so at first sight. This prevents us from falling into the pitfalls of conventionalism. Secondly, they help us to realise that what makes a statement necessary is use and context, and not reference to a Platonic mathematical reality. We discover this when we reflect on what it would take to render statements such as "2 + 2 = 5" intelligible.

The second reason for believing Dummett's interpretation to be misguided is that it attributes to Wittgenstein a concept of decision which does not really have a place in his thinking. It is indeed essential to conventionalism that we can decide to take up whatever available alternatives we choose: as we saw above, radical conventionalists about

necessity think that we can decide to grant any statement the status of being necessary. If Wittgenstein was a radical conventionalist, he would therefore be saying that we can decide to adopt whatever practice we choose, that is, in this case, that we can decide to treat any statement we choose as necessary. The first problem with this is that it seems unlikely that Wittgenstein would agree in saying that we "decide" to take up practices. Linguistic practices are not chosen at will, instead we are drawn into them by a process of training and they thereby become a second nature. Confusion as to whether, according to Wittgenstein, it is possible to decide on which practices to take up may seem justified by certain of his remarks. In <u>Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics</u> (IV, 23) he says for instance «"We decide on a language-game." "We decide *spontaneously*" (I should like to say) "on a new language-game"». This appears to suggest that we can indeed simply decide which practices to adopt. I believe, however, that we would be misunderstanding Wittgenstein's intentions if we interpreted him in this way. Indeed, in VI, 24, he adds «Doesn't its being a spontaneous decision merely mean: that's how I act; ask for no reason! [...] When I say "I decide spontaneously", naturally that does not mean: I consider which number would be the best one here and then plump for...». This indicates that the notion of decision only has a place in his account in

the trivial sense that the *phenomenology* of what happens to me when I am faced with "2 + 2" is best described by saying that I react *spontaneously* by "deciding" to answer "4". But what is really important here is not the notion of "decision" *per se*, but rather that of *spontaneity*. We do not, like in other cases of deciding, look at all the available alternatives and then choose one amongst them. Here, we simply "go for it" spontaneously, and we do so because this is what we have been trained to do. We have been trained to answer "4" to "2 plus 2", we have not been trained to consider various options and choose one amongst them. Thus, although Wittgenstein does make use of the notion of decision here, he does so in a very specific way. He does not mean that we can freely decide which practice amongst many to take up, and, in particular, he is not saying that we can freely decide whether "2 + 2 = 4" or "2 + 2 = 5" is necessary. When we reply "4" to "2 + 2", we do not do so because we have carefully considered all the various alternatives and decided that this is the answer we like most. As we saw above, there isn't really an intelligible set of alternatives that we could choose from. What we are doing is much more spontaneous, less cerebral than this: we are simply acting according to a training. The term "decision" is therefore simply used here to underline the fact that this is a spontaneous process resulting from a certain training, as opposed to the kind of process advanced by Platonism, where an extra-linguistic mathematical reality is scrutinised until the correct answer to "2 + 2" is located. Note that, in the <u>Philosophical Investigations</u> (§186), Wittgenstein says "It would *almost* [my italics] be more correct to say, not that an intuition was needed at every stage, but that a new decision was needed at every stage", a point which he clarifies in the <u>Brown Book</u> (p. 143) by saying that "It is not an act of insight, intuition, which makes us use the rule as we do at the particular point of the series. It would be less confusing to call it an act of decision, though this too is misleading, for nothing like an act of decision must take place, but possibly just an act of writing or speaking".

The second reason why the conventionalist notion of decision can find no room

in Wittgenstein's thinking about necessity is that, in order to be able to claim that certain issues are decided, we must be able to show that other issues are not[7]. That is, in order to retain a full-blooded notion of decision, our position must allow for a contrast between those issues which are decided and those which are not. In principle, there is no reason why an ordinary conventionalist about necessity should not be able to secure such a contrast. He could, for instance, say that necessarily true statements contrast with contingently true ones in that, whilst we can just decide whether statements are necessary, we cannot just decide whether they are contingently true (whether they are or not depends on certain autonomous facts of the matter). Those who claim that *Wittgenstein* is a conventionalist about necessity do not, however, have such an option. As we said above with reference to Dummett, arguing that Wittgenstein is a conventionalist amounts to saying that, since, according to him, the necessity of statements does not correspond to an extra-linguistic reality, then we are simply *deciding* whether these statements are necessary or not. But if this is the argument, then the required contrast can not be secured. Indeed, for Wittgenstein, both necessary and contingent truths represent moves in language-games which themselves lack foundations in an extra-linguistic reality. Hence the contrast cannot be ensured, and it becomes impossible to retain the full-blooded notion of decision that conventionalism requires[8].

We can therefore conclude that Dummett misrepresented Wittgenstein by portraying him as a radical conventionalist about necessity. It is however relatively easy to understand how Dummett might have been misled into taking such a view: Wittgenstein's primary aim was to undermine the Platonist account of mathematical and logical necessary statements, and the vehemence with which he argued against it reflected the degree to which he thought it was entrenched in our views on these issues. But his determination to undermine the hold that this picture has on us led him to overcompensate on the opposite side, to the point that some of his

comments do appear to be in line with radical conventionalism. The radical appearance of his remarks is not however an expression of Wittgenstein's sympathy towards conventionalism, but an expression of his aversion to Platonism. Indeed, his views on necessity do not really leave room for conventionalism (let alone *radical* conventionalism) since they are not suited to incorporate the conventionalist notions of available alternatives and of decision. Wittgenstein is thus best understood, not as rejecting Platonism and thereby falling into the arms of conventionalism, but rather as trying to find a middle way between these two extreme positions. Our task is therefore to elucidate what might constitute this "middle way".

2. Wright's interpretation of Wittgenstein's "middle way"[9].

In Wittgenstein on the Foundations of Mathematics, Wright offers an interpretation of this "middle way" which is based both on the idea that negating necessary statements is unintelligible and on the notion that logic and arithmetic are antecedent to truth. According to Wright's account, Wittgenstein believes that statements are necessary neither because we simply decide conventionally that they are so, nor because they correspond to a certain kind of entity in an extra-linguistic mathematical world. Statements are necessary because they have a particular *use*. Ascriptions of necessity are neither a question of simply choosing at will one amongst other viable statements (since there are no such intelligible alternatives), nor are they a question of identifying mathematical or logical objects in a Platonic reality. We ascribe necessity because this is what we have been trained to do, because this is how the language-games of logic and mathematics are played.

Certain statements are necessary because we have been trained to treat them as unassailable, and because negating them is unintelligible to us. We have been trained to regard and use these statements as the frame judgements of the

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language-games of logic and mathematics, the judgements which demarcate and regulate which moves are correct and which are not. This is in line with Wittgenstein's thoughts in that, in Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics (VI, 46), he says: "What *must* come out is a foundation of a judgement, which I do not touch". Note that, by necessary propositions, Wright means the tautologies, self-contradictions and rules of inference of formal logic, and the propositions of arithmetic (such as "2 + 2 = 4", etc...). It is also crucial to note at this point that, according to Wright's Wittgenstein, these necessary propositions regulate, amongst other things, the way in which we ascribe contingent truth to statements. Take for instance the Dummettian example where, in order to calculate the number of people in a group, we count first each member of the group one after the other, and then count the men and the women separately and add up the two figures. According to Wright, if we get two different end results, then, because arithmetic determines the truth of our countings, a mistake *must* have been made in our countings. There is no room for saying that, although our arithmetic dictates that some mistake has been made, no particular mistake has in fact been made (i.e. Dummett's suggestion). Saying this does not make sense because it is precisely arithmetical propositions which determine whether and when a mistake has occurred[10]. It is in this sense that, according to Wright, Wittgenstein's views on necessity embrace the notion that logic and arithmetic are antecedent to truth. The thought that logic and arithmetic are antecedent to truth hence signifies, both that logic and arithmetic do not correspond to any prior facts or truths (i.e. they are free-standing), and that they fix facts and truth (i.e. they determine when something is a fact, when a statement is true, and also, therefore, when a mistake has occurred).

According to Wright, Wittgenstein holds that statements are necessary because they are treated as unassailable. There is no justification for treating them as unassailable other than the fact that they are what constitutes and characterises the language-games of logic and mathematics. The fact that there is no other justification for treating them as unassailable seems to re-introduce an element of

contingency into the picture: we treat these statements as unsassailable because they *happen* to demarcate the language-games of logic and mathematics that we have *happened* to be drawn into. This element of contingency produces a tension in Wright's account, namely the tension between the notion that we have simply *happened* to inherit these games (with their constitutive, necessary statements), and the notion that the negation of necessary statements is unintelligible. This tension results from the thought that we could have just as easily inherited a different set of mathematical and logical practices and that, if we had, then presumably we would find *those* practices intelligible[11].

Having described what he takes to be Wittgenstein's views, Wright puts forward his own alternative conception of necessity, which, he argues, is not identical to Wittgenstein's but remains suitably "Wittgensteinian". This alternative conception has the advantage, amongst other things, of dissolving the tension noted in the previous paragraph. It is based on the view that logic and arithmetic are antecedent to truth (understood as above), but departs from Wittgenstein's account in that it imposes a qualification on the relationship between (un)intelligibility and necessity. It thereby re-introduces a minimal type of conventionalism into the Wittgenstenian picture. According to Wright, attributing necessity to a true statement whose negation is unintelligible to us is a policy that we can choose to adopt or not. Whilst the Normal Man chooses to adopt it, the Cautious Man does not. The latter argues that, although *he* finds the negation of certain truths unintelligible, it is possible that a superior creature should be able to comprehend them: the fact that we find the negation of these truths unintelligible says more about our mental capacities than about the truths themselves, and does not therefore give us sufficient reasons for concluding that these truths must be necessary. Note that both the Normal Man and the Cautious Man agree on which statements are true and which are false. They only disagree as to whether some of the true statements (namely those whose negation is unintelligible to us) should be called necessary.

This is important because it indicates that disagreements about necessity do not affect the ascription of contingent truth, which in turn shows that, according to Wright's own account, necessity is not best described as that which fixes truth. Necessity is merely a policy that we can adopt or not, regardless of how we ascribe contingent truth to statements. This is why the position is said to exhibit minimal conventionalism about necessity.

Wright's revised account seems promising because it emphasises that there is a limit to the role that (un)intelligibility can play in an account of necessity. (Un)intelligibility must remain in the picture, since it is the intuitive vehicle that we seem most readily to appeal to when we wish to access the complex notion of necessity. But its role has been overrated: there indeed seems to be something exceptionally presumptuous about the claim that any statement whose negation *we* find unintelligible must be necessary. This is particularly problematic since there is at least one example in the history of mathematics (there may be more) where a postulate whose negation was previously considered to be unintelligible, was eventually negated intelligibly: before Riemann it must indeed have been thought that negating the fifth Euclidian postulate (in other words, saying that *no* or *more than one* parallel to a straight line goes through a point not belonging to that line) was unintelligible.

The merit of Wright's contention is therefore that it puts (un)intelligibility in its place. There is, however, a serious difficulty with the other side of Wright's argument, namely the notion that logic and arithmetic are antecedent to truth (where antecendence is understood as explained above). There is indeed something deeply disquieting about the idea that, for instance, there is no truth to the counting of the members of a group other than that fixed by a certain arithmetical equation. Edward Craig in "Arithmetic and Fact" argues that Wright's two contentions (the antecedence thesis and the remarks on necessity being a policy) can be separated, and that they should indeed be so, since the antecedence thesis

weakens rather than strengthens the argument. He argues that Wright's antecedence thesis results, at least partly, from the thought that it would be impossible to ascertain whether a counting mistake had occurred simply by counting the members of the group over and over again. This thought leads, he argues, to the notion that only arithmetical propositions can yield an authoritative criterion for the occurrence of mistakes in counting. Craig objects to this by saying that there is, on the contrary, a finite set of perfectly conclusive non-arithmetical criteria that can be used to ascertain that a counting mistake has been made. Moreover, he argues, it remains deeply unclear how arithmetic is supposed to render truth-values determinate. "7 + 5 = 12" cannot, for instance, yield the secure verdict that no counting mistake has occurred, since the equation is compatible with the eventuality of there having been compensatory mistakes[1,2].

3. Necessity revisited.

It is not just Wright's version of the antecedence thesis which is problematic, however. His entire interpretation of Wittgenstein's views on necessity can be said to be misconstrued, in that it is pegged at the wrong level (a contention which will become clearer as this section progresses). In what follows I put forward what I believe to be a more accurate representation of Wittgenstein's later views on necessity.

The first point that needs to be made is that, for Wittgenstein, a necessary statement is not so much one whose negation is unintelligible or unthinkable *to us*, but one whose negation is *unthinkable* - period. Necessity does not mark the boundaries of what *we* are capable of comprehending or thinking, but rather the boundaries of thought itself. In line with this, Wright was correct in saying that (un)intelligibility (to us) does not *per se* secure necessity: a statement can, of course, be unintelligible to me without being unintelligible to another type of mind;

in other words, unintelligibility (*to us*) does not entail unthinkability. Wittgenstein is not arguing, however, that necessary statements are those statements whose negation is unintelligible *to us*. His point is a much stronger one. Necessary statements demarcate the limits between thought and lack of thought, rather than the limits between what *we* are capable of thinking and what we are not. It is not that *we* cannot conceive of their negation, it is that *thought* is impossible if they are negated. Note that in <u>Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics</u> (I, §131) Wittgenstein says «The laws of [formal] logic are indeed the expression of "thinking habits" but also of the habit of *thinking.*» And again; «The propositions of [formal] logic are "laws of thought", because they bring out the essence of human thinking - to put it more correctly: [...] They shew what thinking is and also shew kinds of thinking.» (*RFM*, I, §133). In this respect, I believe that Wittgenstein's later conception of necessity is characterised by the continuation of the <u>Tractatus</u> view that illogical thought is no thought at all, and that there can be no mistakes in logic (*TLP* 5.473): you either think or fail to think, but you cannot think *mistakenly* (i.e. you cannot think in a way that violates the laws of thought, since, if you do, you are simply failing to think).

In order to understand why Wright's account is pegged at the wrong level, consider the way in which Putnam classifies statements[13]. Putnam divides statements into three types, namely empirical ones, quasi-necessary ones, and necessary ones. A statement is empirical relative to a body of belief if an observation (not drawing from anything outside that body of belief) can disconfirm it. A quasi-necessary statement, on the other hand, is one that cannot be overthrown through mere empirical observation because its rejection requires the rejection of the whole body of belief, and its replacement by a new one. Finally, a necessary statement is one that cannot be disconfirmed, since its negation is unthinkable (as opposed to unintelligible to us). I believe that, for Wittgenstein, there is a contrast to be drawn between those propositions which constitute the framework of the language-games of formal logic and pure mathematics (pure

arithmetic, pure geometry, etc.), and the framework propositions of those language-games which represent specific applications of them (i.e. applied mathematics and applied logic). There is, for instance, a contrast to be drawn between pure geometry and a geometry which purports to give a representation of physical space. According to Wittgenstein, the framework propositions of pure mathematics and logic are a priori necessary, whereas those framing *applied* mathematics and logic are merely quasi-necessary. Whilst the negation of the former is unthinkable, the negation of the latter is merely unintelligible to us at a given time, but not unthinkable. There cannot, for instance, be thought if a postulate of pure geometry is rejected (e.g. if we reject that one and only one line passes through two points), but thought remains possible if the framework proposition of an applied, geometrical theory about physical space is negated (e.g. if we negate that one and only one ray of light goes through two points in physical space). A serious problem emerges at this point, however. For, as we saw above, there seems to have been at least one example[14] in the history of pure mathematics when a necessary postulate has been intelligibly negated: Riemann's negation of the Fifth Euclidian Postulate. Doesn't this entail that necessity marks merely that which is, as yet, intelligible to us, rather than that which is thinkable? After all, the Euclidian system *is* a system of pure geometry: how can it be possible to negate intelligibly one of its postulates if necessity really does demarcate the boundaries of thought itself? This objection stems, however, from a misunderstanding of what Riemann's work involved. What his work did was not to prove that the Fifth Euclidian postulate was false and should be rejected, but rather that Euclidian geometry was not the only possible type of pure geometry available. Riemann started off by trying to prove that the Fifth Postulate really was consistent with the rest of Euclidian geometry (something that no one had succeeded in proving conclusively in the past), and in order to demonstrate this, he intended to show that the negation of the postulate led to a contradiction. But what he discovered, instead, was that no contradiction resulted from this negation,

because, in fact, there existed not just Euclidian geometry, but also several other geometrical systems, which were *compatible* with the Euclidian one and could be developed in parallel to it. It was with this in mind that Non-Euclidian geometry was developed. This new type of geometry did not aim at replacing something which had proved to be flawed, but aimed instead at delineating those alternative systems which were compatible with the Euclidian one. In other words, what Riemann's example shows is not that a necessary proposition (i.e. the Fifth Euclidian Postulate) was in fact intelligibly rejected, but rather that this proposition did not tell the whole story: what is necessary is not that one and only one parallel to a given straight line goes through a point not belonging to that line (the original Euclidian postulate), but rather that either no parallel, or one parallel, or more than one parallel (depending on which system one considers) can be regarded as passing through such a point.

Although the framework propositions of applied mathematics and logic are not necessary but merely quasi-necessary, they do, however, stand in a privileged relationship to the necessary laws of thought. To make this point clearer, it is useful to compare what happens when we negate necessary propositions, the framework proposition of <u>On Certainty</u>, and these quasi-necessary statements. To negate a necessary proposition (such as, for instance "Either p or not p" or "2 + 2 = 4") is unintelligible in three senses: firstly, it is unintelligible in the sense that if we negate it we are not playing the language-games of logic and pure mathematics properly; secondly, it is unintelligible in the sense that *we* cannot think of its negation; and, thirdly, (and most importantly) it is unintelligible because it cannot be thought of (i.e. there cannot *be* thought if it is negated). Negating a framework proposition from <u>On Certainty</u> (e.g. negating that the world has existed for a long time) is unintelligible *only in the sense that* our language-games presuppose the contrary (i.e. they presuppose that the world *has* existed for a long time): if we negate this proposition, we are not playing one of our most important language-games properly. But such a negation is not unintelligible either in the sense that *we*

cannot think of it, or in the sense that it is unthinkable. We can, of course, conceive of its negation, and we do indeed sometimes do so (for instance, in science fiction or horror stories, where the hero suddenly discovers that he has been a brain in a vat, floating in outer space all along). In turn, the negation of a quasi-necessary proposition (e.g. the negation of one of the framework propositions of applied mathematics, which shape our conception of the nature of physical space) stands half-way between these two extremes. Such a negation is unintelligible in two senses: firstly, it is unintelligible in the sense that it involves playing the game wrongly; and, secondly, in the sense that *we* cannot think of it. But the fact that *we* cannot think of it does not entail that it is unthinkable. Not only might a superior mind be already capable of thinking it, but *we* might, in time, also come to conceive of it. The negation of quasi-necessary statements is something that we cannot conceive of *until* a proper use is given to it. In order for this to happen, our whole current body of belief about the nature of physical space would have to be replaced by a new one. If this happened, then such a negation would come to have a real use and would thereby become intelligible to us. This kind of shift is indeed happening at the moment, albeit in a very reduced domain: quantum mathematics are after all a variety of applied mathematics designed to account for what happens in physical space at the quantum level. They are designed to yield a new description of physical space, a description which is needed because our current laws about physical space cannot cater for what occurs at the quantum level.

4. Conclusion.

This interpretation of Wittgenstein's views on necessity has, I think, various advantages. First of all, it offers a harmless but not vacuous antecedence thesis: here the thesis is simply that there cannot be truth without certain laws of thought (i.e. without certain constraints on what thought is). It is not that arithmetic fixes

truth about countings (as Wright would have it), but rather that the necessary propositions of pure logic and mathematics lay down the context which makes talk of truth possible. Secondly, this interpretation provides a viable "middle way", which secures the "hardness" of necessity itself, but avoids conventionalism. The hardness of necessary propositions is preserved, since their negation is unintelligible in three senses: it is unintelligible, firstly, in the sense that we would not be playing the game correctly if we negated these statements; secondly, in the sense that *we* cannot think of their negation; and, thirdly, in the sense that their negation is not thinkable. But this "hardness" is not to be accounted for by talking of a Platonic mathematical or logical reality: it is not that statements are made necessary in virtue of certain Platonic facts, but rather that there cannot be thought if these necessary propositions are negated.

This account also provides a satisfactory middle way for quasi-necessary statements (i.e. the framework propositions of applied mathematics). Quasi-necessary statements are made quasi-hard in virtue of the special relationship that holds between them and necessary propositions, a relationship which manifests itself, amongst other ways, in the fact that we find the negation of quasi-necessity unintelligible in two senses rather than just one. Because of this feature, quasi-necessary statements retain a special status, a status not shared by the framework propositions of most of our other language-games (such as, for instance, the frame-propositions of On Certainty). In the case of quasi-necessary propositions, Platonism is also kept out of the picture because the language-games they frame do not demarcate what is thinkable, but only what *we* are able to think. There may therefore be tribal language-games framed by thinkable quasi-necessary propositions which are unintelligible to us; there may, for instance, be other "valid" (i.e. thinkable) types of geometrical accounts of physical space. This last point guards us against the pitfalls of claiming that our current quasi-necessary language-games are the only correct ones, without committing us to the arbitrariness of conventionalism. It has the merit of introducing a valuable

flexibility into our account of applied mathematics, without appealing to conventionalism. 47

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CHAPTER 3: ETHICS AND THE LATER WITTGENSTEIN.

The realist/anti-realist debate has, with respect to ethics, taken the form of a debate between cognitivists and non-cognitivists, where the former maintain (and the latter try to deny) that moral cognition or knowledge is possible. Several strands of the debate have emerged, each of them expressing a different view as to what is the essential criterion for establishing that knowledge is possible in a given area of discourse. Accordingly, whilst some cognitivists have argued for the existence of objective moral qualities in the world, others have defended the subtler notion of moral facts, and others still have pointed to the existence of a convergent type of moral rationality.

Wittgenstein stopped making any explicit reference to the subject of ethics in 1933. However, given the importance that he ascribed to ethical thinking in the Tractatus, it seems unlikely that he should have intended the Philosophical Investigations to have no ethical dimension whatsoever. Because of this, I believe that we are justified in thinking there *is* an ethical side to his later work, and that we are warranted in developing some cautious conjectures as to what this ethical view might involve. Obviously, any work done in this area will be highly speculative. Two major approaches to the subject naturally spring to mind, however, and must therefore be pursued. The first focuses on Wittgenstein's later remarks on meaning, and tries to establish whether any ethical views can be derived from them. The second consists in going back to the Tractarian ethics, and trying to ascertain how they might have evolved in the light of Wittgenstein's later change of philosophical course. We will consider both approaches in turn.

1. Sabina Lovibond's moral cognitvism[1].

Sabina Lovibond, in Realism and Imagination in Ethics, argues that

Wittgenstein's views on meaning promote a version of moral cognitivism based on the thought that the traditional fact/value dichotomy should be replaced by a fact/value continuum. She argues that this form of moral realism is encouraged by Wittgenstein's later philosophy, since its non-cognitivist counterpart rests on the metaphysical and epistemological foundations of empiricism, foundations which Wittgenstein's later philosophy disputes.

Lovibond's version of moral cognitivism thus challenges a specific variety of non-cognitivism which, she argues, hinges on six major empiricist assumptions[2]. The first is that language is exclusively an instrument for the communication of thoughts. The second is that it is a process whereby words are grafted on to fully pre-formed thoughts. The third is that language is modelled on the notion of a calculus and that, therefore, once the use of a word is set it remains absolutely fixed. The fourth assumption is that sensory experience is the rational foundation for all our beliefs and theories, and that it must be gained through the passive process of acquiring non-theory-laden sense-data. The fifth assumption is that only those entitities that the experimental sciences deal with really belong to the fabric of the world, and that therefore only primary qualities constitute "real" qualities of objects. Finally, the sixth assumption is that there are two distinct types of meaning: one descriptive or cognitive (which, on Fregean lines, amounts to the contribution that each word makes to the truth value of a sentence) and another evaluative or emotive (which amounts to the systematic contribution that each word makes to the aptitude of a sentence to express or evoke dispositions of the will). Lovibond holds that these metaphysical and epistemological views engender the segregation of reason and sentiment. Propositions about ethics, because of their evaluative and practical character, are therefore seen to posess evaluative meaning only, which results in the notion that there can be no such thing as arguing or reasoning about ethics, and no ethical knowledge.

According to Lovibond, Wittgenstein's later thoughts promote her brand of moral cognitivism, in that they undermine the empiricist foundations of its non-

cognitivist counterpart. As we saw in the Introduction, she interprets Wittgenstein as advocating a variety of internal realism characterised by a homogeneous, "seamless" conception of language and a non-foundationalist account of knowledge. Lovibond argues that this view results in the replacement of the traditional fact/value dichotomy with a fact/value continuum, and that this renders moral objectivity a real possibility, since the evaluative need no longer be automatically equated to the subjective. Having established this, she goes on to argue that the place occupied by our moral discourse in the continuum is one that entitles ethics to the status of objectivity. This is so because the linguistic practice of ethics includes talking about the "way the world is", and makes room for the use of notions such as knowledge, objectivity, rationality and truth. She concludes that, since it is only the shape of the linguistic practice which determines the place that a discourse occupies in the spectrum, since there is no further "metaphysical" criterion to be taken into account, and since moral discourse does make use of the above mentioned notions, it can be ascertained that ethics is objective.

According to Lovibond the objectivity of ethics is characterised by Transcendental Parochialism. In order to clarify this notion, she compares it to that of conservatism. She argues that there are two main senses to "conservatism", and that her views on ethics can be taken to be conservative in the first sense but not in the second. Her account of ethics is conservative in the first sense because of the great emphasis that it places on continuity. Morality is a language-game that we are educated into, and learning it involves learning to take certain propositions for granted. The moral practice is thus (conservatively) maintained through time: our elders or "educators" pass it on to us, and we pass it on to our children. However, she argues, her account cannot be said to be conservative in the second sense. Let us distinguish this sense from the former by referring to the latter as "Conservative" with a capital C. A Conservative view of ethics is one promoting a certain *negative* attitude towards alien moral language-games. In other words, it is one which dismisses those moral practices which are unlike ours as being irrational

or unworthy of consideration. Lovibond argues that her views on ethics do not call for Conservatism. Conservatism is a policy that we can decide to adopt or not. We are free to decide whether we treat moral practices that are different from ours as worth respecting (the Liberal policy) or not (the Conservative policy). Transcedental Parochialism differs from Conservatism, in that it simply expresses the thought that, in order to even *be able* to recognize a practice as being a practice *of ethics,* this practice must be to some extent similar to ours. She takes this to entail that we will only be able to recognise that other creatures have ethical practices (whether worthy of respect or not) if these creatures are sufficiently similar to us in biological terms. Transcendental Parochialism therefore ultimately amounts to the idea that ethics is only conceivable amongst creatures who share certain biological similarities. There can be no ethics without a certain biological form.

To summarize, Lovibond's contention is that Wittgenstein's global philosophical position promotes her own particular brand of moral cognitivism, in that it undermines the foundations of its non-cognitivist counterpart, and opens the way for the positing of a fact/value continuum. This first attempt to elucidate Wittgenstein's later ethical views therefore leads to the conclusion that his later ethical position incorporates a cognitivism *à la* Lovibond, namely a cognitivism characterised by Transcendental Parochialism.

2. Transcendental Ethics.

The second main approach that is open to us, when trying to elucidate Witgenstein's later views on ethics, is to go back to the Tractarian remarks and see what can be learnt from them. It is essential, at this point, to note two crucial features of Wittgenstein's earlier conception. The first is that his earlier ethics seem to be intimately connected to the issue of the meaning of life. In "A Lecture on Ethics" Wittgenstein takes up Moore's definition (namely; "Ethics is the general

enquiry into what is good"), but modifies it by adding "Ethics is the enquiry into what is valuable, or, into what is really important, or [...] Ethics is the enquiry into the meaning of life, or into what makes a life worth living, or into the right way of living." He explains that, by doing this, he is hoping to "produce the sort of effect that Galton produced when he took a number of photos of different faces on the same photographic plate in order to get a picture of the typical features they all had in common". What is most striking about Wittgenstein's choice of phrases here is that only the last one (which includes the term "right") establishes a link between ethics and action. Ethics for Wittgenstein is primarily concerned with the meaning of life, with what makes a life worthwhile. The notion of action only enters the scene because it affects to some extent these issues, but it remains essentially incidental. The second thing to note about his earlier conception of ethics is that he has quite an idiosyncratic view of what falls under the umbrella of ethics. In § 6.421 of the Tractatus he writes, for example, "Ethics and Aesthetics are one and the same thing". In "A Lecture on Ethics", he says further that whenever he wants to fix in his mind what he means by ethics, a certain experience of "absolute or ethical value" immediately comes to the fore: the experience of "wondering at the existence of the world". One of our tasks will therefore be to try to understand why he regards these notions as being relevant to the subject of ethics.

Wittgenstein often described the work carried out in the Tractatus as being essentially ethical in nature. In a letter to Ludwig von Ficker he wrote, for instance, "But it really isn't alien to you because the book's point is an ethical one". At first sight, however, this claim seems deeply obscure. The Tractatus, far from being a work on ethics, appears to be primarily concerned with establishing a realist thesis about logic and language. Indeed, one would think that its key message is simply that sense and truth are determined by the world. According to the received interpretation of TLP, simple names have meaning because they refer to simple objects, and these objects combine with each other to form states of

affairs. States of affairs can obtain or not in the world, and when they do they are called facts. Simple names are concatenated to form elementary propositions, just as objects are combined to form states of affairs. Propositions can be true or false, and true ones express facts. We *see* the meaning in elementary propositions in a way similar to that in which we *see* the meaning in pictures or other forms of representation: the meaning of elementary propositions is expressed by the way in which simple names are concatenated or ordered, and this (physical) organisation of simple names *depicts* the way in which simple objects are physically organised into states of affairs. It is in this sense that the Tractatus is taken to hold a "Picture Theory of Meaning". In parallel to this, and supplementing it, Wittgenstein concentrates on the notion of the self. He argues that an *empirical* self can not be "encountered" in the world – since all that the phenomenology of experience offers us is a complex array of disconnected psychic elements, from which we cannot infer the presence of a unified self. But, he argues, a *Metaphysical* Self is presupposed in the workings of language, in our notion of "the world as I found it", and in the very concept of experience. Note, for instance, that although any object in the world could "show up" in my experience, there is something about my experience which cannot be reflected in itself (or "found in the world"), namely the fact that it is *my* experience. This implies the existence of a Metaphysical Self which is not in the world but which constitutes the limits of the world. This self is compared to an eye, which does not appear in one's field of vision but constitutes the limit of that field. The Metaphysical Self marks the boundary between what is possible and what is not. It therefore coincides with the internal nature of objects. (Remember that, when one simple object is given to us, all other objects and states of affairs are thereby also given to us, since each object has, built into itself, a specification of all the combinations in which it can enter plus all the combinations in which it cannot enter. Simple objects are therefore best regarded as clusters of possibilities, whose nature determines which states of affairs are possible and which are not.) One way to explain why the Metaphysical Self is presupposed in

experience and language is to say that both the world and language come across as being subject to certain constraints, since not all concatenations of names or objects are possible. Hence, something must be constraining them, something which is not in language or in the world, but which delimits both domains. The Metaphysical Self.

On the surface, it seems that these remarks on simple names and objects, and those on the Metaphysical Self, are unrelated to ethics. In fact, however, they are not. One way to elucidate the claim that the point of the Tractatus is an ethical one, is indeed to say that, in writing it, Wittgenstein was trying to find the exact location of ethics, the area where the "sense of life" could be found. According to Wittgenstein, the sense of life cannot be found in the world because the world is merely made up of concatenations of objects. Similarly, it cannot be found in thought or language either, because thought and language give only representations of the world, and not its sense. Hence, the sense of life cannot be found in the world, but must be located at the limits of the world. In § 6.421 of the Tractatus Wittgenstein says "It is clear that ethics cannot be put into words. Ethics is transcendental", and in his Notebooks 1914-1916 he writes again "Ethics does not treat of the world. Ethics must be a condition of the world, like logic".

In order to clarify what exactly it means to say that ethics is transcendental, it is essential to go deeper into the Tractarian system[3]. According to the Tractatus, the world is the totality of facts. At the limit of the world are the two "Godheads": "There are two Godheads: the world and my independent I" (Notebooks 8.7.16). The first "Godhead" (let us, for the moment, call him/her/it: GodI) is not how the world is, but *that* the world is. GodI is here the essence of facts, their *factuality*, or logicality. In other words, it is the "fact" *that* they are facts, the "fact" that the world is the world. This "fact" is not a fact at all in the Tractarian sense (i.e. it is not a concatenation of simple objects), but is rather that which makes facts possible. (From now on I will use «"fact"» to indicate this non-Tractarian sense, and «fact» to refer to the ususal Tractarian sense.) GodI is therefore not *in* the

world, but constitutes its limit. It cannot be said but only shown, since, although facts can be said, "facts" (i.e. the logicality of facts, the "fact" *that* they are facts) can only be shown – namely, in facts. This first "Godhead" is the "meaning of the world". The problem which arises at this point is that "meaning" in the earlier system has a very specific sense. A fact can only say another fact (and thus have a meaning) if there is a method of projection capable of providing us with the key to the symbolism of the language at hand. At a basic level, for instance, we must be capable of recognizing that "a" is the name for the simple object a. But the world cannot be regarded as a propositional sign that refers to GodI (its meaning), since, for this to happen, some fact would have to be pictured by the world, and would therefore have to be distinct from, and thus outside, the world. This is not possible because the world just *is* the "totality of facts". Hence, when Wittgenstein says that GodI is the meaning of the world he cannot be using "meaning" in its ordinary Tractarian sense. What does "meaning" denote here then? In order to answer this question, consider the two types of things that facts can show: facts can show their sense and their form. Sense is what is shown by the internal physical organization of the fact, and therefore requires there to be a method of projection or key to the symbolism, if the fact is going to say anything. The form, on the other hand, is what must be shared by two facts in order for one of them to be able to say the other when a method of projection is provided. Their form is therefore what is necessary (but not sufficient) for one fact to say another, or, in other words, that which is mirrored in the linguistic facts even when no method of projection has been provided. If no key to the symbolism can be given, as in the case of GodI and the world, the world must be regarded as not having a sense, but only a form. Hence, to say that GodI is the meaning of the world can only signify that it is its form.

Let us turn now to the second "Godhead". We have seen that no ordinary, Tractarian method of projection can be given for the world and its meaning (GodI), and that therefore the meaning of the world is its form and limit: when an ordinary

method of representation *is* available, it is the physical organisation and traits of facts which provide us with a key to the symbolism. But for there to be a method of projection in the case of GodI and the world, the world would have to be representing some extra-worldly fact, which is impossible. Hence, no method of projection between facts is at work, and the physical traits of facts provide no keys for decoding the meaning of the world. There is, however, something other than facts which could be capable of providing such a key. Namely, that which is not factual: value. If value can be regarded as a key to the interpretation of the world, then this entails that the world can, after all, be said to have a sense as well as a form.

As we said above, Wittgenstein argued that there were two Godheads; the world and my independent I. The world is GodI. It is also the Metaphysical Self that we examined above, since "I am my world" (Tractatus; 5.63). Hence, GodI is the form and the limit of the world. In turn, the second Godhead is the Ethical Self. Whilst the Metaphysical Self gives the world its form and marks the boundaries between what is possible and what is not, the Ethical Self gives it its significance: it endows it with value. «Things acquire "significance" only through their relation to my will» (Notebooks 15.10.16). It is the will of the Ethical Self which endows the world with its key of representation, and therefore its significance, by bringing out value. Value is not in the world but is projected onto it by the willing subject. Goodness and badness hence belong to the willing subject, not to the world. Good willing makes for a happy world, whereas bad willing makes for an unhappy one.

To summarize: the meaning of the world can be given from two perspectives and through the use of two different methods. From the perspective of logic, the meaning of the world is its form and its limit, and therefore lies in the Metaphysical Self. From the perspective of Ethics, it is its sense and value, which lie in the Ethical Self or the willing subject. In both cases, the meaning of the world is transcendental. It now becomes apparent why the experience of

"wondering at the world" is of such ethical significance for Wittgenstein. This experience draws the subject to the self-consciousness necessary for "good willing". It conveys the notion that the world is limited (and that therefore something has to be limiting it), and by doing so reveals the connection between the Metaphysical and Ethical Selves and the world, and thus the possibility of "good willing". It enables one to look at the world as a limited whole, "*sub specie aeternitatis*", and because of this it has a clear ethical impact for Wittgenstein.

The question we must answer now is, What does the Tractarian ethical system tell us about Wittgenstein's later ethics? Edwards, in Ethics Without Philosophy: Wittgenstein and the Moral Life, argues that in order to clarify this issue it is essential to note that Wittgenstein's earlier views relied heavily on the notion of "rationality as representation". This view of rationality holds that rationality consists in a certain way of representing the world in thought. According to it, "vision" is the best metaphor for one's relation to reality, and the view "*sub specie aeternitatis*" is the apotheosis of such seeing. The metaphor of vision implies that there is a distance between the seer and what is seen, and that reality is always apart from the thinker. Hence, thought is the "thinker's representation of a distant world". Wittgenstein's later philosophy vehemently rejects this conception of rationality. Indeed, its most important insight is that people fall into nonsense because they become "bewitched" by pictures, and that this happens because of their irreverent tendency to "literalize" images. Because of this, it is crucial to free ourselves from the hold that pictures have on us, or, in other words, to "deliteralize" the images we use. Edwards writes: "The object of philosophical criticism is to bring the individual to a certain kind of self-consciousness in the midst of the process of philosophizing, and hence to a certain kind of freedom within it and from it. To recognize a picture as a picture – and, even more helpfully, to recognize alternative pictures to a common one – is to free oneself from the captivity to that picture and from the philosophical perplexity (or clarity)

it brings". To "deliteralize" a picture is precisely to come to see it for what it is, namely *merely* a picture, and thus to become liberated from the hold it has on us. This "deliteralization" can be carried out most effectively by using comparisons, or "putting [the picture] into contact with other, and incompatible, images also found in grammar". In section 122 of the <u>Investigations</u> Wittgenstein says «A main source of our failure to understand is that we do not *command a clear view* of the use of our words. – Our grammar is lacking this sort of perspicuity. A perspicuous representation produces just that understanding which consists in "seeing connections". Hence the importance of finding and inventing *intermediate cases.*»

Edwards argues that the ethical view which is implicit in Wittgenstein's later reflections is very much marked by the notion that it is crucial for humans to achieve a "sound human understanding" and a "sound human life". Sound human understanding is "a sensibility which deliteralized and deliteralizing makes possible for a human a certain presence in the world". This sensibility is achieved by respecting the integrity of images, that is by recognising their necessity (i.e. the important role they play in language), but refusing at the same time to take them literally. In order to succeed in doing this, we need to keep constantly in mind that these are merely images.

Edwards argues that, for the later Wittgenstein, the Tractarian notion of "rationality as representation" was the literalizing agent *par excellence,* since it encouraged the belief that thinking about the world consisted of in some sense encapsulating the world in our "mind's amber". In contrast, achieving sound human understanding corresponds to succeeding in "thinking without philosophy", that is without literalized pictures. In Wittgenstein's later thoughts, the epitome of *non-* sound human understanding is therefore that dominated by "rationality as representation". In section 110 of the <u>Investigations</u> he writes "'Language (or thought) is unique' – This proves to be a superstition (*not* a mistake) itself produced by grammatical illusions. And now the impressiveness retreats to these

illusions, to these problems".

Understanding the difference between a "superstition" and a "mistake", helps to gain a clearer understanding of what "sound human understanding" involves. A mistake is made when one errs about the facts of the matter of something. A "superstition", on the other hand, can be entertained by someone who knows perfectly well what the "facts of the matter" are. Thus, for example, a brilliant physicist (who knows perfectly well how the laws of nature work) may nevertheless hold the superstitious belief that a certain object brings him good luck. Certain features of the world and of life (the very existence of the world, for example) impress themselves very deeply on us. To put it in other words, they have a deep "impressiveness". To this impressiveness, it is possible to respond in two ways. Firstly, we can attempt to control it. This is the "superstitious" or "magical" response to impressiveness. Secondly, we can simply try to acknowledge and accept it, and accommodate it to our lives as well as we can (by learning to comfort ourselves when necessary, etc.). These two ways of considering a situation are illustrated in the following example. Imagine that person A is stabbing a *voodoo* doll which represents person B. This action can be explained either by saying that person A really believes that by stabbing the doll person B will be hurt (A is thus trying to exert a *control* on B's life), or by saying that A is merely acknowledging his hatred of B, and trying to comfort himself. The first is an exemplification of a superstitious response to the way in which hatred of B has impressed itself on person A, the second an instance of a "religious" response to that same impressiveness. Edwards argues that the Tractarian "Rationality as representation" constituted a superstitious response to the "impressiveness" that we experience when we "wonder at the existence of the world". We were looking at the world as if it was a riddle that needed deciphering, and we deciphered it by speaking of representation. In doing so, we were trying to encapsulate the world in our "mind's amber", thereby believing that it was under our control. "Sound human understanding" on the other hand is a religious response to the same

impressiveness. It involves accepting that we experience this impressiveness, and that we ought to regard the world, not as a riddle that needs to be worked out, but as a "miracle". "Deliteralizing" is an essential feature of sound human understanding precisely because it enables us to see the world and language for what they really are.

To summarize, Edwards holds that the Tractarian ethics differ from Wittgenstein's later conception in that the former recommend a superstitious response to impressiveness, whereas the latter advocate a religious one. Wittgenstein's later ethics encourage us to live in accordance with "sound human understanding"; they recommend uncovering what the true nature of things is, and simply accepting this impressiveness. Tractarian ethics, on the other hand, are an incitement to control, rather than accept, the impressiveness of the world.

C. Conclusions.

I have considered two approaches to elucidating Wittgenstein's later views on ethics. The first is the one adopted by Sabina Lovibond, and consists in looking at Wittgenstein's later remarks on meaning and deciding which view of ethics can be derived from them. Lovibond's approach leads to the conclusion that Wittgenstein, in his later period, must have held a variety of moral cognitivism characterised by Transcendental Parochialism. The second approach, which is adopted by Edwards, consists in going back to the Tractarian ethics and trying to establish how these earlier ethics might have evolved, in the light of Wittgenstein's later change of course. This leads to the conclusion that, although in both periods ethics represents a type of response to a certain "impressiveness", the kind of response advocated changed dramatically from the first to the second period. Tractarian ethics recommended a superstitious response to impressiveness, a response marked by the thought that impressivenesss could be controlled. The later ethics, on the other hand, recommended a religious response; it involved uncovering the true

nature of the world and *accepting*, rather than controlling, it. It is now time to consider how (if at all) these two approaches (and their respective conclusions) can be tied together so as to bring out the essence of Wittgenstein's later views on ethics.

Let us consider Edwards' account first. The most important thing to note about it is that it makes one major mistake, in that it fails to recognise that the notion of the "religious attitude" does not emerge for the first time in Wittgenstein's later philosophy: his earlier ethics already held it to be the correct moral outlook, and warned us against superstition. In order to see this, it is important to look at the distinction that Wittgenstein draws between the "wish" and the "will"[4]. Note that "The wish precedes the event, the will accompanies it" (Notebooks 4.11.16). Wishes are the clusters of expectations, desires and hopes which induce or cause us to act as we do and to thereby change the events in the world. The aim of wishes is precisely to change the way things are. The will, on the other hand, is a very different type of entity for Wittgenstein. In the Notebooks he argues that "The act of the will is not the cause of the action but the action itself. [...] The fact that I will an action consists in my performing the action, not in my doing something else which causes the action" (4.11.16). Also: "I cannot bend the happenings of the world to my will: I am completely powerless" (11.6.16). The "wish" aims at changing the facts of the world, something which it is perfectly possible to do, according to Wittgenstein. The wish is that which causes us to act in certain ways, and to thereby change the world. Willing, on the other hand, is not directed towards facts, but towards the factuality of facts, towards their logicality. Willing cannot change anything *in* the world because it does not deal with anything that is *in* the world (i.e. it does not deal with the *way* the world is). Willing deals instead with the "fact" *that* the world is. In other words, willing is directed at the *impressiveness* we experience when we come to recognise *that* the world is. And good willing, that which makes for a happy world, is precisely the religious

attitude. It is the view *sub specie aeternitatis*, an attitude taken towards the factuality or logicality of facts (as opposed to towards facts *per se*). It is only if we adopt this religious view that the world will be a happy one. Good willing amounts to renouncing the idea of controlling impressiveness, thereby acknowledging the integrity of the world, its factuality. By acknowledging this impressiveness, we come to treat the world with the respect it deserves, and this makes the world be a happy world, since it is a world whose integrity is being respected. The view *sub specie aeternitatis* is therefore the view that is taken when we come to respect the logicality of facts: "The thing seen *sub specie aeternitatis* is the thing seen together with the whole logical space" (Notebooks, 7.10.16). Note moreover that, in the Tractatus, the world and life are used as synonyms. This entails that only good willing can make for a happy life. "I can only make myself independent from the world [and thereby achieve some degree of happiness] [...] by renouncing any influence on happenings" (*TLP*, 11.6.16). Adopting the religious attitude makes for a happy life *because* it involves recognising that the factuality of the world cannot be interfered with. This induces us to abandon any intention to alter it, an intention which could never have been satisfied and which therefore would have rendered our life unhappy. It is important to stress again that, although the factuality of the world (the "fact" *that* the world is) cannot be altered, the facts of the world can be: it is possible to wish successfully, but not to "bad-will" successfully. Value can only emerge as the result of good willing, because it is only by adopting the religious attitude that we can see the world as something which possesses an integrity, and which must therefore be respected. In other words, it is only by adopting the religious attitude that we are made capable of seeing the value of the world. But remember that value is not *in* the world. Value is transcendental, it lies in the transcendental Ethical Self, and is only *projected* by the Self onto the world (through the use of good willing). The connection between ethics and aesthetics now emerges clearly: "It is the essence of the artistic way of looking at things, that it looks at the world with a happy eye." (*TLP*, 6.43). To

look at the world with a happy eye is to adopt the religious outlook. Hence, for Wittgenstein, aesthetics involves looking at the world religiously. Aesthetics is like ethics in that it considers the world as something which possesses a certain integrity. To consider an object as an artistic object is to treat it with a certain kind of respect: it is to regard it as a valuable whole. "The work of art is the object seen *sub specie aeternitatis*, and the good life is the world seen *sub specie aeternitatis*. This is the connexion between art and ethics" (Notebooks; 7.10.16).

Both of Wittgenstein's ethics (the earlier and later) hold the religious outlook to be the true ethical one. Edwards is therefore mistaken in arguing that this outlook only has a place in the later ethics. Wittgenstein did not change his mind as to what constituted the ethical. What there was, instead, was a shift in his views as to what the ethical outlook should target. In the Tractatus, the ethical outlook is directed towards the factuality or logicality of the world (towards the "fact" that the world is). In the later system, the religious outlook is turned towards the world that is conveyed in language. It is not an independent, extra-linguistic world which is worthy of respect, but rather the world reflected in our language-games. In order to uncover that which is worthy of respect, we need to settle how language is really used. The religious attitude is directed towards the world which emerges when language is cleansed of nonsense. In this sense, Edwards was right in saying that replacing "rationality as representation" with deliteralization was crucial to the development of Wittgenstein's later ethics.

We now need to examine whether Sabina Lovibond's interpretation coincides in any way with that reached by adopting the second type of approach. Remember that Lovibond's conclusion was that Wittgenstein's views promoted a brand of ethical cognitivism characterised by Transcedental Parochialism. Hence, ethics is a language-game we are trained into, and involves taking certain propositions for granted. When faced with alien ethical practices we can either adopt the Liberal policy or the Conservative one (both are allowed by her system of ethics). But we

can only recognise an alien practice as being a practice *of ethics* if it is sufficiently similar to ours (and therefore recognizable by us *as* an ethical practice). This ultimately entails, according to Lovibond, that there can only be ethics amongst creatures who share certain biological similarities. Curiously, Lovibond's interpretation of the Wittgensteinian ethics has something in common with Wright's interpretation of Wittgenstein's later views on necessity. Both interpretations hold that, for a Wittgensteinian, what *we* cannot conceive of marks the limit of the domain under scrutiny. Wright argues that, for Wittgenstein, if the negation of a statement is unintelligible to us, then that statement is necessary. Similarly, for Lovibond, a practice that cannot be recognised by us as being "about ethics" is not an ethical practice (and therefore is not even a practice to which we can respond by adopting the Conservative policy, since we just do not realise that it is a practice of ethics).

As we saw in Chapter 2, Wright objects to what he believes to be Wittgenstein's views on necessity, by pointing out (correctly) that unintelligibility (to us) does not entail unthinkability. The fact that we can not conceive of the negation of certain statements does not entail that *they* are inconceivable. He thus goes on to develop his own conception of necessity, which, he says, remains Wittgensteinian but is not Wittgenstein's. Analogously, it can be objected to Lovibond that the fact that *we* are not able to recognise certain practices as being practices *about* ethics does not mean that they are not such. This incapacity says something about our own limitations, rather than about ethics itself.

I believe that the fact that there is this parallel between Lovibond's views on Wittgensteinian ethics and Wright's views on Wittgensteinian necessity is no coincidence. Indeed, the way to elucidate Wittgenstein's later views on ethics, and the way to bring our two main approaches together, is to follow a route parallel to that which we followed when trying to elucidate Wittgenstein's views on necessity. For indeed, it seems to me that Lovibond's interpretation of Wittgenstein makes the same mistake that Wright made when presenting his views

on necessity: it is pegged at the wrong level. Just as necessity delineates that which is thinkable (as opposed to that which is intelligible *to us*), ethics encompasses that which has value (as opposed to that which can be recognised *by us* as being valuable). The ethical language-games that Lovibond talks about, those which share the characteristic of being intelligible to us *as language-games of ethics,* do not delimit the domain of the ethical. Value, for Wittgenstein, is not demarcated by what *we* are able to recognise as being a language-game of ethics, or by what we value (i.e. by what our language-game dictates). It is limited by the ethical, and the ethical is transcendental. To say that value is limited by the ethical is to say that value cannot be found in the world, but only in the transcendental self, and that it emerges by adopting the transcendental religious outlook on the world. The religious view regards the world as something endowed with integrity and which is therefore worthy of respect (i.e. valuable). Lovibond's "ethical" language-games do not represent the ethical, but the quasi-ethical. They are the crystallisations of that which each *empirical* group regards as being worthy of respect. They are that which is valued by these various types of creatures, but not value itself. Because of this, it is possible that there should be quasi-ethical language-games that we cannot recognise as being language-games about ethics, since that which demarcates quasi-ethical language-games is not our capacity to recognise them, but transcendental ethics.

To conclude, we can therefore say that the reason why Wittgenstein did not make any explicit references to the subject of ethics after 1933 is that his views on what constitutes the ethical did not change significantly from his earlier to his later phase. He maintained his view that ethics is transcendental, and that it involves adopting the religious outlook. To adopt the religious outlook is to accept the impressiveness of the world, by regarding it as something that possesses integrity. Value emerges when we realise that the world is subject to certain constraints; in other words, when we realise that it has an integrity, a form that cannot be

changed by us. In the earlier system, value emerged when we were made to acknowledge the logicality or factuality of facts (the "fact" that the world is). In the later system, value emerges when we are made to acknowledge that there are constraints on language, and that we cannot just use terms as we please. Certain uses are indeed not real uses at all, but only pseudo-uses which result in nonsense. Acknowledging the integrity of language leads to the removal of linguistic nonsense, and enables us to see the real world, the world which is valuable. Lovibond's ethical language-games do not therefore represent the ethical, but only the quasi-ethical. They correspond to that which *we* (as empirical groups) value, to that which *we* consider to be worthy of respect. The ethical is to be located elsewhere: it is the transcendental standpoint which is presupposed by the empirical language-games of quasi-ethics.

CHAPTER 4. A FRAMEWORK FOR THE DEBATE BETWEEN REALISTS AND ANTI-REALISTS.

In the previous chapters I offered an overview of the various interpretations of Wittgenstein's views on sensations, necessity, and ethics that have been put forward, and gave an account of which of them were the most satisfactory ones, and why. Each of these interpretations understood the contrast between "realism" and "anti-realism" in a different, and highly intuitive, way. It is thus essential at this point to provide a more methodical and rigorous framework as to what the debate between realists and anti-realists exactly involves. This framework draws primarily from the work carried out by Crispin Wright in Truth and Objectivity. Section 1 introduces Wright's contention that there is not one but a plurality of realist/anti-realist debates. It is here argued that, in order to bring out the differences between the debates, we need to uncover a notion of truth that can be shared by both sides. Wright argues that minimal truth is the ideal candidate for this task. Sections 2 and 3 describe the four main directions that the debate can take and provide us with criteria to be used when trying to establish whether a particular area of discourse exhibits realism or anti-realism. In chapter 5, I shall be using these criteria to determine how Wittgenstein's views on sensations, necessity and ethics fare with regard to the realism debate.

1. Minimal truth and the plurality of debates.

Wright begins by trying to determine a notion of truth capable of being shared by both realists and anti-realists, and which could thus serve as the common ground from which to spell out the nature of the debate. He decides that the concept of minimal truth is the ideal candidate for this task. Minimalism about truth is a species of deflationism, but differs from ordinary deflationism in that truth is considered to be a real property of statements[1]. According to the

minimalist thesis, the content of the truth predicate is fully explained by its role in the Disquotational Schema: "P" is true if and only if P. A predicate is minimally truth-apt if it satisfies a certain set of principles or platitudes, the most important of which are those connecting truth to assertion and negation (such as, for example, "To assert is to present as true" or "Any truth-apt content has a significant negation which is likewise truth-apt"). The satisfaction of this set of platitudes is a necessary and sufficient condition for a predicate to be minimally truth-apt. As we have just noted, the relation between truth and assertion is very important: assertoric content (which we can identify merely by checking whether the discourse displays the internal discipline and surface syntax proper to assertion) can always be assigned a minimal truth predicate, so long as the predicate satisfies the minimalist platitudes. It is important to remember, however, that minimal truth, in contrast with deflationary truth, is a real property of statements. This means that, although it has the same normative force as warranted assertability, it can diverge extensionally from it: minimal truth is not equal to warranted assertability, and there will be contexts in which only one of the two concepts will apply.

Wright's fundamental contention is that there is not one but a plurality of debates between realists and anti-realists. In general realists will try to establish (and anti-realists to deny) that there is something more substantial to truth than that which is demarcated by the minimalist platitudes. Obviously, therefore, the most basic form of anti-realism will be one holding that truth simply *is* minimal truth, that is, that there is nothing more to truth than what is specified by the minimalist set of platitudes. Beyond this stage, there are, however, two main directions that the debate between realists and anti-realists can take.

The first one is characterised by its emphasis on the relation between truth and "superassertability". Superassertability is introduced by Wright as an alternative to Putnam's internal realist thesis. For Putnam, truth is warranted assertability under

epistemically ideal conditions. Wright's superassertability, on the other hand, is warranted assertability defined not with reference to a "mythical limit of empirical investigation", but merely as a form of assertability which is warranted by an ordinary, careful investigation (as opposed to an "ideal" one), and which remains "durable under any possible improvement to one's information". Thus, a statement is superassertible if an ordinary investigation warrants it and it would continue to be so warranted whatever new relevant information might subsequently emerge.

In this first strand of the debate, realism is characterised as an attempt to show that truth and superassertability are distinct, whereas anti-realism attempts to establish the contrary. There are two main ways in which this discussion can develop. Firstly, it can concentrate on whether truth and superassertability diverge in extension. This is instantiated in the discussion between the Dummettian realist and the defender of an identity between superassertability and truth. Secondly, the discussion can assume from the start that truth and superassertability do not diverge extensionally, and focus instead on establishing whether one of the two concepts grounds the other. This is exemplified by Wright's adaptation of the Euthyphro debate.

The second main strand of the debate between realists and anti-realists focuses, not on the relation between truth and superassertability, but on whether one of the platitudes that serve to identify minimal truth can be "beefed up" so as to give more substance to the concept of truth, and thereby satisfy the realist intuitions. The platitude in question is the Correspondence Platitude which states that «For a statement to be true is for it to correspond to the facts, "tell it as it is", etc...». This platitude allows the minimalist about truth to make use of the phrase "represents or corresponds to the facts", without thereby committing himself to anything substantial that would correspond to the realist insight.

Wright argues that there are two main ways in which the Correspondence Platitude can be "beefed-up". The first involves giving more substance to the relational term of the platitude, namely to the notions of "representation" and

"correspondance". This can be done by means of the Cognitive Command constraint. The second involves giving more substance to the object term, namely to the notion of "facts". This can be done by using Wright's adaptation of the Best Explanation Test. Cognitive Command and the Best Explanation Test are therefore two criteria for establishing whether the concept of truth used in a certain area of discourse has more substance than merely minimal truth. If an area of discourse displays Cognitive Command, or if it passes Wright's version of the Best Explanation Test, then it is in line with the realist intuitions.

To sum up, there are at least four types of possible debates between realists and anti-realists: the first is illustrated by the discussion between Dummettian realists and the defenders of an identity between truth and superassertability, the second is exemplified by the Euthyphro debate, the third focuses on the notion of Cognitive Command, and the fourth makes use of the Best Explanation Test. The first two involve a scrutiny of the relation between truth and superassertability, and the last two constitute attempts to "beef-up" the Correspondence Platitude.

2. The first strand of debate: the relation between truth and superassertability.

A. The debate on extensional divergence.

The best illustration of this first type of debate is given by the discussion between Dummettian realists and those who advocate an identity between truth and superassertability: the Dummettian realist will hold that truth and superassertability diverge extensionally, because truth is not evidentially constrained whereas superassertability, by definition, is (since the first condition for a statement to be superassertible is that an ordinary investigation warrants it).

The Dummettian anti-realist, on the other hand, will argue that truth and superassertability coincide in extension because there is no intelligible concept of

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evidence-transcendent truth, and thus truth and superassertability are one and the same concept.

B. The Euthyphro contrast.

The best way to illustrate this second type of debate is Wright's own adaptation of the Euthyphro contrast. The original debate between Socrates and Euthyphro focused on the issue of whether "It is because certain acts are pious that they are loved by the Gods" (Socrates' position) or "It is because the Gods love them that certain acts are pious" (Euthyphro's position). Wright transforms this into a discussion of whether truth grounds superassertability or vice-versa: the new discussion thus focuses on whether "It is because certain statements are true that they are superassertible" (the equivalent of Socrates' position) or vice-versa (the equivalent of Euthyphro's position).

The Euthyphro contrast is intended to be used in cases where although two concepts converge extensionally there might be an explanatory asymmetry between them: the fact that one of them is instantiated might explain the fact that the other is, but not vice-versa. Consider the following bi-conditional (which is common to the positions of both Socrates and Euthyphro): "For any act x: x is pious if and only if it is loved by the Gods". To give priority to the left-hand side of the bi-conditional is to side with Socrates in his "detectivistic" view of piety (according to which the Gods love certain acts because they are able to *detect* piety in them), whereas to give priority to the right-hand side of the bi-conditional is to side with Euthyphro in taking a "projectivist" view of piety (where it is the approval of the Gods which is *constitutive* of the piety of the act). We can construct an analogous bi-conditional for our discussion of whether truth grounds superassertability or vice-versa. Such a bi-conditional runs as follows: "For all judgements of kind N: judgement P is true if and only if it is superassertible". The question here is whether the opinion formed under optimal conditions (that is the "best opinion") is

constitutive of, or responsive to truth. To argue that the "best opinion" is constitutive of truth is to take the equivalent of Euthyphro's view (i.e. it is to join the projectivist side). Conversely, to argue that the "best opinion" is responsive to truth is to take the view equivalent to Socrates' (i.e. it is to advocate detectivism about truth).

Since the issue is whether truth grounds superassertability or vice-versa, "best opinion" means the opinion formed under those conditions which lead to making superassertible judgements. The "best opinion" is therefore one which is warranted by an ordinary, careful investigation, and which will *remain* warranted whatever new, relevant information might subsequently emerge.

3. The second strand of the debate: "beefing-up" the Correspondence Platitude.

A. "Beefing-up" the relational term.

The first way to decide whether a particular area of discourse makes use of a substantial (as opposed to a merely minimal) notion of "represents the facts" is to check on the notion of representation at work. It has often been thought that the way to do this is to test whether there is sufficient convergence of opinions amongst the speakers of the discourse. The idea was that, if opinions diverged, then their formation could not be regarded as the work of a substantial representational system. Convergence of opinion was therefore considered to be the ideal criterion for deciding whether the area of discourse accommodated a substantial notion of representation, and thus for whether the discourse could be said to respect the realist intuitions.

Wright argues, however, that a better way to establish whether an area of discourse involves a substantial notion of representation is to focus, not on the notion of convergence *per se*, but on whether the discourse displays Cognitive Command[2]. For Wright «A discourse exhibits Cognitive Command if and only if it

is *a priori* that differences in opinion arising within it can be satisfactorily explained in terms of "divergent input" [...], "unsuitable conditions"[3] [...], or "malfunction"[4] [...]» This means that there is Cognitive Command if and only if it is a priori[5] that differences of opinion are to be explained by a "cognitive shortcoming", unless they are excusable by the vagueness[6] of the statement in question, by differences amongst the language users on what is judged to be the correct standard of acceptability, or by differences in the amount of evidence possessed by each person.

Wright arrives at the notion of Cognitive Command by reflecting on the relation between convergence and representation[7], and argues that all representational systems do indeed display this constraint. Although he firmly believes Cognitive Command to be necessary to all forms of realism, he acknowledges that this is something he has not been able to prove. In particular, he confesses to lacking an adequate specification of what constitutes "cognitive shortcoming". But he argues that, even in the absence of a clear definition of cognitive shortcoming, the Cognitive Command constraint is not easily trivialised[8].

B. "Beefing-up" the object term.

The second way in which we can determine whether an area of discourse makes use of a substantial (as opposed to a merely minimalist) conception of "represents the facts" is by looking at the notion of "facts" exhibited by it. It has often been thought that the best way to check whether such a notion of "facts" is substantial or not is to examine whether the discourse passes the "best explanation test". According to Harman's "best explanation test", a discourse contains a substantial notion of the "facts of the matter" when, in order to give the best explanation of a true belief about x (where x belongs to the area of discourse in question), we must include x in the explanation of the belief. Wright argues that, although on the surface this test may seem unrelated to the issue of distinguishing between merely

minimalist and substantive facts, it does nevertheless have a strong "intuitive pull". We must remember that, although minimally true sentences behave like sentences depicting states of affairs (owing to the Correspondence Platitude), the states of affairs depicted in them are nothing but "shadows of grammar". That is, they are mere reflections of how the minimalist platitudes, and in particular the Correspondence Platitude, work together to produce minimal truth[9]. The "best explanation test" is thus a useful device for distinguishing between minimalist and substantial facts because, Wright argues, a fact which is merely a "shadow of grammar" can not appear in the best explanation of a belief. According to Wright, this is so because facts only appear in the best explanation of beliefs when they constitute the *source* of those beliefs (but not when they are mere features of the grammatical shape of the beliefs, as minimalist facts are).

According to Wright, there are two main types of problem with Harman's test. Firstly, this test entails that, if we believe that all sciences will eventually reduce to physics, then we have to acept that only talk of the physical can be called realist. This rules out certain forms of realism which are otherwise widely believed to be very valuable (such as, for instance, certain kinds of realism about mathematics). Secondly, there is a serious problem with defining what is to count as the "best" explanation. Is such an explanation to include the immediate causes of an event, or only the ultimate ones? And, in the latter case, how can we know when to stop? How can we ever be sure that something really is the ultimate cause of an event? Because of this, Wright introduces an alternative test which, he argues, remains suitably close to Harman's, but circumvents these difficulties. This test involves examining the "width of the cosmological role" of the subject matter at hand. The "width" of a subject matter corresponds to the range of phenomena that this subject matter can help to explain. Thus, if a subject matter repeatedly features in the "good enough" explanations (as opposed to the "best" explanations) of a wide range of phenomena, then this subject matter has a wide cosmological role. To illustrate this, Wright gives the example of the "wetness of rocks". The wetness of

rocks can explain "cognitive effects" (i.e. my belief that this rock is wet), "precognitive-sensuous effects" (a pre-linguistic child's wonder at the rocks), "effects on us as physically interactive agents" (my slipping on the rocks), and "brute effects on inanimate organisms" (the amount of lichen on the rocks). The "wrongness of this action", on the other hand, can only feature in a much smaller range of explanations: it can only really feature in explanations of the first type[10]. Thus, the "wetness of this rock" possesses a wide cosmological role, whereas the "wrongness of this action" does not. According to Wright, this shows that, whilst substantive facts do feature in the discourse on the wetness of rocks, they do not feature in the discourse on the wrongness of actions.

I have to admit that I do not find this last criterion very useful. Wright's emphasis on the notion of ranges of *explanations* simply does not seem to be appropriate. It can indeed be argued that, in the context of Wittgenstein's later philosophy, the width of the range of explanations in which a term can enter is determined by the dictates of its language-game, rather than by the issue of whether the term represents a substantive fact or a mere shadow of grammar. Hence, a term which corresponds to a minimalist fact could, in principle, have a wider cosmological role than one representing a substantive fact. Wright seems indeed to have realized this difficulty, and tries to circumvent it by arguing that what is essential to the "width of cosmological role" criterion is not quite that the subject matter under scrutiny should feature in the explanation of a great variety of phenomena. He argues that what is important, rather, is that this subject matter should explain *more than that which is explained by those areas of discourse which tolerate only minimal truth.* This qualification is not helpful, however, and seems to beg the question, since it entails that we must already know which subject matters tolerate only minimal truth, in order to be able to make use of this criterion in order to check whether the subject matter at hand tolerates minimal truth only, or something more substantive. Because of this, I do not think that Wright's notion of the "width of the cosmological role" of a subject matter is suited to our enquiry.

I shall therefore have to determine whether Wittgenstein's views can accommodate a substantive notion of facts by using other means. We will see in the next chapter precisely how this can be done. At this stage, however, all that we can say is that it will be essential to establish that it is possible to draw a contrast, within Wittgenstein's later system, between those items which are facts *merely because* they are treated as such by the dictates of their language-games (and which are, therefore, what Wright would call mere "shadows of grammar"), and those items which are facts also in a further, more substantive sense.

4. Conclusion.

When trying to determine how an area of discourse fares with regard to the debate between realists and anti-realists, we must check whether the discourse exhibits realism in four main senses. Firstly, we must check whether truth diverges extensionally from superassertability. This can be done by looking at whether there can be recognition-transcendent truths within the area of discourse under scrutiny. Secondly, we must check whether truth grounds superassertability or vice-versa. This can be done by ascertaining whether a judgement constitutes the "best opinion" because it is true, or vice-versa. Thirdly, we must check whether the discourse can accommodate a substantive notion of representation. This is done by using the Cognitive Command criterion. Finally, we must check whether there is room for a substantive notion of facts within the area of discourse. In the next chapter, we will be examining these issues in the context of Wittgenstein's views on sensations, necessity, and ethics.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION: REALISM AND ANTI-REALISM REVISITED.

I shall now examine whether Wittgenstein's views on sensations, necessity and ethics exhibit realism or anti-realism in any of the four senses delineated in chapter 4[1]. Because the most interesting conclusions on this issue will emerge from contrasting Wittgenstein's treatment of these three areas of discourse, this chapter has been divided into four sections. Each of them compares how these language-games fare in relation to one of the four debates mentioned above. Section 1 focuses on the issue of substantive vs. minimalist facts, section 2 on the notion of Cognitive Command, section 3 on the Dummettian debate, and section 4 on the Euthyphro contrast. I will begin with the issue of factuality because it helps to clarify the other three discussions.

1. Substantive vs. minimalist facts.

As we saw in chapter 4, Wright's criterion for establishing whether a subject matter incorporates a substantive notion of facts (i.e. the "width of cosmological role") is not suited to our enquiry. Because of this, it is essential to adopt a different approach to this issue. Wright argues that a merely minimalist fact is one which is just a "shadow of grammar", as opposed to something more substantive. A merely minimalist fact is therefore one which is only a fact because it is treated as such by the language-game in question: it is only because the game functions internally as it does that this is considered to be a fact. Hence, a term designates a substantive fact if there is something outside or prior to language which justifies or accounts for the way we use this term, whereas it refers to a minimal fact if the way in which we use the term is exclusively determined by the internal workings of language. This can be put differently by saying that a language-game contains a substantive notion of facts if the use it makes of factual terms can be given a realist second-order description (as defined in the Introduction), whereas the

notion of facts it incorporates is minimalist if such a second-order description is not available. Note that both Wright's version of anti-realism about facts and Lovibond's internal realism share a minimal conception of facts. The fact that a discourse tolerates only minimal facts is not therefore necessarily the mark of anti-realism, as Wright would have it: it can also be the mark of internal realism. We will examine at the end of this section how these two positions can be distinguished.

Let us begin by looking at the discourse on sensations. Is there a fact of the matter as to whether I am currently in pain, rather than, say, having an itch? The reply to this question is relatively straightforward for Wittgenstein: yes, there is a fact of the matter, namely *my being in pain*[2]. But is this a minimalist or a substantive fact? In order to answer this question we need to determine what accounts for this being a fact. As we saw in chapter 1, sensations are not pre-linguistically fully formed particulars. Pain is a shadow of grammar, *in the sense that*, although we do, of course, experience certain things, these things are not pre-linguistically carved up into individual sensations (e.g. pain, itch, etc.). Hence, the fact that *my being in pain* is a fact of the matter is not to be explained by saying that it designates a substantive pain particular. *My being in pain* constitutes a fact *only because* this is the way our language-game works. And the same goes for third-personal ascriptions of pain. If we ask whether there is a fact of the matter as to whether someone else is in pain, the answer is: yes, namely the fact that this person says that he or she is in pain, and displays all the relevant pain behaviour. But if the behavioural evidence is considered to constitute a fact, this is not because it reveals the presence of some pre-linguistically fully-formed particular, which would otherwise remain hidden. Remember that Wittgenstein does not use criteria to uncover the presence of something that would otherwise remain inaccessible, but rather to delineate the *meaning* and use of the term under scrutiny. Behavioural evidence constitutes a fact only because this is how our language-game works, because its being so is part of the meaning of pain: it does

not, however, reveal the hidden presence of any substantive particulars. Sensation facts are therefore minimalist facts: they are facts only to the extent that their being so is one of the presuppositions of our discourse on sensations.

Compare this with what happens in the language-game of necessity. Is there a fact of the matter as to whether 2 + 2 = 4, for instance? Consider what Wittgenstein says on this issue in Remarks On The Foundations Of Mathematics (VII; 18):

«"To be practical, mathematics must tell facts" – But do these facts have to be the *mathematical* facts? [...] "Yes, but surely calculating must be founded on empirical facts!" Certainly. But what empirical facts are you now thinking of? The psychological and the physiological ones that make it possible, or those that make it a useful activity? The connexion with *the latter* consists in the fact that calculation is the picture of an experiment as it practically always turns out. From the former it gets its point, its physiognomy; but that is certainly not to say that the propositions of mathematics have the function of empirical propositions».

This passage suggests that, for Wittgenstein, "2 + 2 = 4" does express a certain type of facts, but not *mathematical* facts. There are no facts of logic or mathematics as there would be if logic and mathematics referred to Platonic realities. In other words, there are no pre-linguistically fully formed mathematical or logical entities constituting the facts of the matter as to whether 2 + 2 = 4. But necessary propositions do, nevertheless, express a different kind of facts, namely the facts of thought. It is a fact about thought that it cannot take place if the necessary propositions are rejected. A type of thinking based on the rejection of the necessary propositions is simply no thinking at all. Mathematical and logical necessity therefore express the facts of thought. But are these facts merely shadows of grammar, or is there something more substantive about them? They would be merely shadows of grammar if they were only the facts of thought *because* our language-games treated them as such. If this was the case, then,

presumably, another type of grammar would bring with it other, quite different, facts about thinking. If these were merely minimalist facts, other laws of thought would be a real possibility: different linguistic schemes would carry with them very different sets of laws, some of which could contradict our current ones. But this is impossible. We must remember that necessary propositions are necessary precisely because their rejection is unthinkable, as opposed to unintelligible *to us*. Rejecting a necessary statement makes it impossible for there to be thought at all. These propositions do not therefore represent the facts of thought *merely because* language ascribes this role to them; it is the nature of thought itself which determines their having such a role. Hence, necessary propositions express the *substantive*, as opposed to the merely minimalist, facts of thinking.

Ethics differs from both the language-game of sensations and that of necessity. Remember that, in the <u>Tractatus</u>, ethics is shown to be capable of providing a key to the symbolism of the world *precisely because* it is not about facts: "If there is any value that does have a value, it must lie outside the whole sphere of what happens and is the case" (6.41). Value cannot be found in the world because the world is merely made up of concatenations of objects, and it cannot be found in language or thought because these give only the representation of the world, not its sense. Ethics does not correspond to any facts, and there are no facts about ethics. In this area, there is only that which is ethical and that which is unethical. Ethics is transcendental; it transcends *both* the world and language. It involves adopting the religious attitude towards impressiveness, thereby regarding the world and language as a "miracle", rather than a "riddle". Hence, there can be neither substantive facts (i.e. facts that are facts because of the way a presumed pre-linguistically fully formed world is) nor minimalist facts (i.e. facts that are facts because of the way language works) about ethics.

We can therefore conclude that Wittgenstein's thinking clearly allows for the drawing of a contrast, not only between substantive and minimalist facts, but also

between the presence of facts and the complete absence (of either type) of facts in a subject matter. Facts about sensations are minimalist shadows of grammar. Our treating them as facts is to be explained in terms of the internal workings of language exclusively, and not in terms of something which is pre-linguistically fully formed, or otherwise prior to language. The facts about necessity are the substantive facts of thinking: it is the the laws of thought (which are prior to language) which account for these being facts, not the internal workings of language-games. Note that when I say that the laws of thought are prior to language, all that I mean is that language-games are not possible if thought is absent, and that thought cannot occur if the necessary laws of thinking are violated. Respect for the laws of thought is therefore a *condition* that language-games must meet if they are to be language-games at all. Finally, and in contrast to both the case of sensations and that of necessity, ethics cannot accommodate any notion of facts, whether substantive or minimalist, since this would run counter to the very essence of what ethics is, and would make it lose its point.

It is important to note, therefore, that Lovibond's account of Wittgenstein's position misrepresents it, in at least two crucial respects. Firstly, not all facts have the same (minimal) status for Wittgenstein: the facts of thinking are substantive. Secondly, Wittgenstein's thinking does not run counter to the traditional fact/value dichotomy. His views on ethics emphasise precisely the notion that there *is* something *other* than facts, something which is utterly distinct from them and at the same time more fundamental: value. Blackburn too makes a crucial mistake in interpreting Wittgenstein, since, for the latter, the best way to explain the status of framework propositions is not in terms of quasi-realist projections. That this is so is obvious in the case of necessary propositions: we do not use necessary statements in the way that we do *because* they correspond to our needs and interests (and we have therefore projected them onto language); we use them in this way because they give expression to the substantive facts of thought. This is also the case in the discourse on sensations, although less obviously so. Consider

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the notion of first-person authority which is constitutive of this language-game. How are we to account for it? Is this notion constitutive of the language-game because we have projected it onto it? I believe not. Wittgenstein never intimates that this feature is made to constitute the game *because* it is something which corresponds to our needs and interests, and which we have consequently projected onto the game. On the contrary, the emphasis is always put on the thought that this is constitutive of our language-game simply because this is how the game works. Hence, the internal realist second-order view of these framework propositions is much closer to Wittgenstein's conception than the quasi-realist one. These language-games work internally as they do simply because they do. There is nothing outside language (not even something like a projection) which justifies or accounts for the way in which these games function internally. There are, of course, certain conditions that must be met by the participants of the games for the games to be possible (e.g. certain biological similarities, or a certain "meeting of minds", but also, as we said above, the respect for the necessary laws of thought). But these conditions do not *account* for the fact that the games work internally *precisely as they do*, rather than in some other way. These conditions would have to hold whichever way the games worked internally, simply in order for them to be games at all (i.e. games that could possibly be played).

It might be objected at this point that since these language-games tolerate only a minimalist notion of facts, they should be simply portrayed as exhibiting anti-realism about facts, rather than internal realism. This point is made even the more convincing by the fact that the internal realist thesis appears to have been undermined, since it heavily relied on two notions which have now been discarded: the notion of a fact/value continuum (which has been rejected because Wittgenstein's ethics rests precisely on the distinction between fact and value), and the notion that all facts of the matter have the same, minimalist status (which has been undermined by the realisation that necessary propositions express *substantive* facts). But, in fact, this is not so; and this claim betrays a double

misunderstanding. Firstly, it is the sign of a misunderstanding as to what is the disitinguishing feature of internal realism. Secondly, it manifests a misunderstanding as to what distinguishes Wright's version of anti-realism about facts from internal realism. That the latter misunderstanding should occur is not totally surprising, since Wright himself gives the impression that minimalism about facts is always the mark of anti-realism. But this is not so. The notion of minimal facts is shared by both anti-realism and internal realism, but the two positions differ greatly. If what we want is to show that a discourse exhibits anti-realism, it is not therefore enough to simply establish that it can only tolerate minimal facts. We must also consider the issue of *why* it only tolerates such facts. For it is the account we give of why the facts of a given discourse are minimal which determines whether the discourse exhibits internal realism as opposed to anti-realism, or vice-versa. In other words, it is the kind of second-order description that each view gives of those language-games which incorporate only minimal facts which distinguishes the two positions. And the key distinguishing feature is not that the internal realist second-order description of a language-game X appeals to a fact/value continuum (in which X is to be placed), whereas the anti-realist one emphasises the notion of a fact/value dichotomy (and places X on the value side of it). Nor is it that the former considers all facts in all language-games to be minimal (and therefore regards facts about X as simply having the same status as all other facts), whereas the latter doesn't (arguing that facts about X are minimalist precisely because they lack the substantiveness that facts in other games have). The distinguishing feature of internal realism is, rather, the quietist thought that it *makes no sense* to talk of the metaphysical foundation of these language-games, because it is impossible to step out of these games in order to observe them from the outside. Hence, the second-order description of a game will denote internal realism if it rests on the assumption that no metaphysical, external view of the game *can* be adopted, and that *it is this feature* which forces the conclusion that the facts of this discourse are minimalist. It will denote anti-realism, on the other

hand, if it rests on the assumption that an external perspective *can* be adopted, and that it is from this external view of the game that we learn that facts are minimalist in this context. (Note that this is precisely what takes place in Blackburn's quasi-realist second-order account: we look at language from the "outside" and realise that it corresponds to our needs, interests, etc., and that we, from the "outside", have projected its constitutive features onto it.) Hence, even if a fact/value dichotomy is in place (i.e. even if certain games incorporate a notion of facts whereas others – e.g. the language-games of value – don't), *and* even if not all existing facts are minimalist (i.e. even if there is, amongst those language-games which *are* about facts and not value, a difference in status, whereby some contain a substantive notion of facts and others don't), there is still room for holding that *those language-games containing minimalist facts* exhibit internal realism, as opposed to anti-realism. We will be allowed to say this if it is the case that it is unintelligible to try to step out of *these* particular games, in order to acquire an external perspective on them. And this, it seems to me, is precisely what Wittgenstein wants to say about the language-game of sensations, for instance. Hence, even if we have discarded Lovibond's notion of a fact/value continuum, and her view that all facts have the same minimalist status, it is still possible to hold that the status of the framework propositions of certain, specific discourses (such as the discourse on sensations) is best described in internal realist terms, as opposed to anti-realist ones.

According to Wittgenstein, there are therefore *at least* three very different types of subject matter[3]. The first corresponds to the language-game of necessity. Necessary propositions do not describe mathematical and logical facts, but express the substantive facts of thinking, and *create the form* for all other facts (*in the sense of* laying down the context in which talk of other facts is possible). The second category is that of value, which includes ethics, aesthetics, and possibly also other kinds of value[4]. This subject matter tolerates no notion of facts, whether substantive or minimalist. It transcends both the world and language and can

therefore not be articulated in terms of either substantive or minimalist (i.e. linguistic) facts. The third category stands half-way between these two. Here facts are minimal in nature. That they are facts is fixed by the internal dictates of the language-games exclusively. However, since the notion of an external perspective is unintelligible here, the fact that these facts are minimalist does not imply that the discourse exhibits anti-realism, but rather it exhibits internal realism. In the context of these games, neither of the traditional notions of realism and anti-realism are applicable, because the notion of an external perspective is unintelligible. The only notion which *is* applicable is that of internal realism. There are, at least, two sub-categories of language-games under this heading. The first is that of the quasi-necessary or quasi-hard language-games (such as that of applied mathematics). The framework propositions of these games are such that their negation demarcates the boundaries of what *we* are *as yet* capable of thinking. These propositions could be replaced by others which we could come to find intelligible in time, provided that a real use was given to them. Until this is achieved, however, negating these propositions remains unintelligible *to us*. The second sub-category under this heading includes the framework propositions of the language-game of sensations, and also, for instance, the hinge propositions of On Certainty. The negation of these propositions is only unintelligible to us in the sense that, if we negated them, we would not be playing our games correctly. It is, however, possible to *conceive* of their negation: we can conceive, for instance, of suddenly discovering that the world has not existed for a long time. This is indeed a device that is often used in science-fiction and horror stories (e.g. the hero suddenly discovers that he has always been a brain in a vat floating alone in outer space). Note that the fact that the negation of the hinge propositions of On Certainty is intelligible to us does not undermine Wittgenstein's point against the sceptic. Wittgenstein's attack on scepticism does not rely on our not being able to *conceive* of the negation of hinge propositions. Rather, it is based on the thought that the sceptic has no room to manoeuvre: the sceptic talks as if there had to be

facts of the matter justifying the certainty we feel towards hinge propositions, and the strength of his argument relies on the idea that no such facts can be found. Wittgenstein's point is that the sceptic's argument is misconstrued from the start, since it makes no sense to talk of that which justifies or fails to justify these language-games. The certainty we feel towards the hinge propositions is not something that needs to or can be justified by extra-linguistic facts, but is instead *constitutive* of our way of life[5].

2. Cognitive Command.

Let us now look at the question of how Wittgenstein's views on sensations, necessity and ethics fare with regard to the Cognitive Command constraint. A discourse displays Cognitive Command if divergences of opinion are, a priori, to be accounted for by a cognitive shortcoming. In order for the Cognitive Command criterion to be applied adequately (i.e. in order for it to really fulfil its function of bringing out the realist or anti-realist nature of a discourse), three conditions must be met: firstly, there must be no vagueness in the statements under scrutiny; secondly, there must be no differences in the amount of evidence possessed by each of the disagreeing parties; and, thirdly, there must be no differences in each side's conception of the correct standards of acceptability. Before we apply this criterion to our three subject matters, it is essential to take notice of the last of these three conditions (i.e. lack of differences in the perceived standards of acceptability). This condition signals that Cognitive Command is intended to test whether the *internal* layout of a game (i.e. its internal workings), as opposed to the game viewed from the outside (i.e. in terms of what *justifies* the game from outside the game), exhibits realism. In other words, the debate about Cognitive Command differs from all other debates in that it works at the first-order level, as opposed to the second-order one: according to this debate, the realism of a discourse does not depend on the second-order account we give of it (i.e. on how and whether we

justify the game from outside the game) but on the first-order description of it (i.e. on how the game works internally). Indeed, the type of disagreements that we are asked to consider are disagreements between people who share one and the same language-game (i.e. who share the same standards of acceptability), as opposed to the disagreement that emerges between the participants of two different games. We are not, therefore, being asked to consider whether playing a language-game that is different from ours (i.e. playing an alien language-game) denotes a cognitive shortcoming on the behalf of either the alien players or us. Instead, we are being asked to examine whether a disagreement between two players of one and the same game constitutes, according to the internal rules of the game, a cognitive shortcoming[6].

Let us look at the sensation discourse first. This criterion cannot be used as a test for the realism of first-personal sensation statements, since the notion of my disagreeing with myself on whether I am experiencing a given sensation makes no sense. We will therefore concentrate on applying it to the language-game of third-personal ascriptions of sensations. What happens when two people (A and B) disagree as to whether a third party (C) is, say, in pain? Imagine, for instance, that C is someone known by both A and B to be truthful, and who rarely complains about anything. Imagine that he or she is claiming to be in pain, and displaying very manifest pain behaviour (e.g. screaming, crying, attempting to deaden the sensation, etc.). Both A and B have been examining C for the same amount of time, but, whereas A argues that C is in pain, B denies it. What would A's reaction be? A would certainly find B's statement utterly confusing, and would try to make sense of it. He or she would start, for instance, by making sure that B understands what "pain" means. If it turned out that B did not, after all, understand this term properly, then A would explain it to B, and the disagreement would end. But imagine that B really did understand perfectly well what "pain" meant and nevertheless insisted that C was not really in pain[7]. Since we are assuming that A and B share exactly the same amount of evidence (i.e. it is not the

case that B knows something about C that A does not know), we would have to conclude that there was something wrong with B: we would conclude that B's mind was not really functioning properly, that he had gone temporarily insane (maybe due to the shock of seeing C in such pain). In other words: we would conclude that this disagreement amounted to a cognitive shortcoming on B's behalf. In order to impress even further on our minds the idea that Cognitive Command is, a priori, a feature of the discourse on sensations, it is useful to compare this with what happens in the language-game of the comical. Here the situation would be very different. A disagreement as to whether a certain sketch was funny would not appear to be problematic in any sense, since it is constitutive of the language-game of the comical that different people have different senses of humour. Hence, disagreements as to whether something is funny differ from disagreements as to whether someone is in pain in that the former are not attributable to a cognitive shortcoming, whereas the latter are. The discourse on sensations therefore exhibits Cognitive Command and realism in this sense. The case of necessity is even clearer. Imagine that two people disagree as to whether $2 + 2 = 4$. Since $2 + 2 = 4$ is, by definition, one of the laws of thought, a failure to acknowledge that $2 + 2 = 4$ must indicate a failure in the person's thinking, and thus a cognitive shortcoming. Disagreements regarding necessity are, by definition, attributable to cognitive shortcomings, which means that the discourse on necessity exhibits Cognitive Command, and therefore realism in this sense[8]. Ethics, on the other hand, is the odd one out again. Imagine, for instance, that two people disagree as to whether the religious attitude is the correct moral outlook. What would this disagreement mark? I doubt that, for Wittgenstein, it would be the mark of a cognitive failure. It seems indeed that there can only be cognitive shortcoming in those areas of discourse where there can also be facts (whether in a minimal or in a substantive sense). This is so because a cognitive shortcoming denotes a failure to substantively grasp the (either substantive or minimalist) facts of the matter correctly. But, as we saw in the previous section, there are no facts about the

ethical: the ethical transcends both the world and language. Failing to grasp the ethical does not correspond to a failure in *grasping* facts of any kind. It corresponds, instead, to a failure in being ethical, a failure in adopting the ethically correct outlook. Therefore, if someone fails to acknowledge that the religious outlook is the correct ethical one, this person is not failing in thinking correctly, but rather failing in *looking at the world* ethically. A disagreement about ethics marks a failure in being ethical, but not a cognitive shortcoming.

3. The Dummettian debate.

A discourse exhibits realism in the Dummettian sense when it incorporates an evidentially unconstrained or evidence-transcendent notion of truth. The idea is that, when it does, truth and superassertability diverge extensionally, and realism is ensured. It is not difficult to see that, for Wittgenstein, the notion of evidentially unconstrained truth is not viable. As we saw in Chapter 1, his account of sensations makes use precisely of the thought that there cannot be talk of knowledge and truth in those contexts which do not tolerate talk of criteria and evidence. It is interesting to look at how our three subject matters fare with regard to this debate, however, because doing so will show that one of them (namely, that of ethics) actually by-passes the Dummettian debate completely: it does not even engage in it, making it impossible to qualify it as either realist or anti-realist in this third sense.

Our first task is to look at Wittgenstein's treatment of sensations. What does the term "truth" mean, when applied to sensation statements? As we saw above, truth cannot, in this context, mean correspondence to a substantive, pre-linguistically fully formed particular. Consider, however, what Wittgenstein says on this issue in <u>Philosophical Investigations</u> (II, xi, pp. 223):

"[...] the importance of a true confession does not reside in its being a correct and certain report of a process. It resides rather in the special consequences

which can be drawn from a confession whose truth is guaranteed by the special criteria of *truthfulness*."

In other words, when we say that an ascription of pain is true (whether it is the case of a self-ascription or that of an other-ascription of sensation) we do not mean that it designates an internal substantive fact (i.e. a hidden, pre-linguistically fully formed sensation particular). We mean, instead, that the ascription is truthful. There is no concept of truth distinct from that of truthfulness in the context of sensations. We must remember that the Cartesian notion of privacy makes no sense; sensations are only private in the sense that I may choose not to reveal them, or to lie about them. Hence, an ascription of sensation is not made true by the fact that it designates a private, Cartesian object, but rather, simply, by the fact that the person it refers to is being truthful (i.e. by the fact that he or she is not concealing or lying about his or her sensations). It is because it makes no sense to talk of inner criteria that the concept of truth, understood in terms of a correspondence to a private sensation object, makes no sense. Truth as truthfulness does make sense, however, because the language-game of sensations does incorporate criteria for the truthfulness of sensation ascriptions. It indeed belongs to the game that you can legitimately say that I am truly in pain, if I am exhibiting the appropriate behaviour, have been truthful about my sensations in the past, etc. It could be argued that these criteria are defeasible, in that I can pretend to be in pain when I am not. But to say this is to misunderstand the way in which Wittgenstein uses the term "criterion". For, as we saw above, the Wittgensteinian criteria are not meant to yield an absolutely secure knowledge; they are not meant to establish with certainty the presence of something which would otherwise remain hidden. Criteria are used by Wittgenstein to demarcate the meaning and use of terms. Hence, it is part of the meaning of sensation statements that I am allowed to say "It is true, X is in pain", when X displays the appropriate pain behaviour and I have no further grounds for suspecting X to be lying (e.g. I do not consider X to be a compulsive liar). Both the notions of non-Cartesian privacy, and of truth

as truthfulness belong to the language-game of sensations. Non-Cartesian privacy (namely, the notion that I can choose to conceal or lie about my sensations) is an essential part of our concept of the human mind. If it was denied, our conception of the human being would crumble. This is not, however, incompatible with the notion of truth as truthfulness: truth as truthfulness signifies that behavioural evidence is capable of guaranteeing the truth of a sensation statement, because there is nothing, in the Cartesian sense, that remains hidden when truthful sensation behaviour is displayed. Truth as truthfulness is a legitimate part of this language-game precisely because behavioural evidence is used here. If this concept of evidence, *understood in the non-Cartesian sense*, did not have a use, truth as truthfulness would not have a use either. Truth as truthfulness is not therefore evidence-transcendent, and Wittgenstein's views on sensations exhibit Dummettian anti-realism.

Let us consider now the case of necessity. In order to be able to establish whether the Dummettian debate can be applied to it, we must try to ascertain whether it makes sense to talk of truth and evidence in the context of necessary propositions. As we saw above, it is incorrect to talk of truth here, if this term is used to denote that necessary propositions correspond to substantive mathematical or logical facts, as Platonists would argue. However, it does make sense to talk of truth in this context *if we thereby mean* that necessary propositions are true in the sense of expressing the facts of thought. Necessary propositions are true in the sense that if they were rejected there would be no thought. Similarily, it is also possible to talk of evidence in this context: we know whether a proposition is necessary by testing whether thought would be possible if it was rejected. This test constitutes the evidence for the truth of necessary propositions[9]. The notions of truth and evidence do therefore have a use in this context, albeit in a roundabout sense. Thus, since Witgenstein is unsympathetic to Dummettian realism (i.e. he argues that there can only be truth in those contexts in which the notion of evidence is also applicable), and since the Dummettian debate *is* applicable to this

area of discourse (i.e. since both the notions of truth and evidence have a use in the context of necessity), we can therefore conclude that truth about necessity is not evidentially unconstrained, and that Wittgenstein's views on this issue exhibit Dummettian anti-realism.

The subject matter of ethics, on the other hand, bypasses this debate. Ethics transcends both the world and language, and does not therefore tolerate any notion of fact. Hence, there can be no truth about ethics if by truth we mean correspondence to the (either minimalist or substantive) facts. Since Wittgenstein does not at any stage intimate that an alternative concept of truth is available to this subject matter, we can therefore conclude that it makes no sense to talk of truth in this context. Furthermore, as there are no ethical facts, there can be notion of revealing the facts about ethics either, and thus no notion of evidence. Since neither the concept of truth nor that of evidence is applicable here, it is impossible to test whether truth is evidentially unconstrained, and therefore impossible for ethics to engage in the Dummettian debate. Note, moreover, that the very concept of superasertability does not have a place in this context. Ethics cannot be said to be superassertible, since, being transcendental, it involves no propositions that *could* be asserted. Ethics is shown, not said. It involves adopting a certain outlook towards language and the world, not playing language-games.

4. The Euthyphro contrast.

A discourse exhibits realism in this fourth and last sense if its concept of truth grounds that of superassertability, and it displays anti-realism if the opposite is the case. Since neither of the terms "truth" and "superassertability" have a place in the context of ethics, this debate also fails to apply to it. We will thus concentrate on the language-games of sensations and necessity instead. As we saw in the previous section, the concept of evidentially unconstrained or evidence-transcendent truth is not applicable to the language-games of sensations and necessity. Hence, truth and

superassertability coincide in extension in these areas of discourse. Our task now is to examine whether we ascribe truth to statements because they are superassertible or vice-versa. A statement is true because it is superassertible when the best opinion is constitutive of the truth of the statement. If we take this view, we are embracing projectivism about truth. A statement is superassertible because it is true, on the other hand, when the best opinion is responsive to truth. To claim this is to take a detectivistic view of truth. Note that the best opinion, according to Wright, is that which leads to superassertible judgements, and therefore that which is warranted by an ordinary, careful investigation, and which remains so warranted whatever new information might subsequently emerge.

Let us consider the case of sensations first. Here, the question is whether the best opinion about, say, someone's being in pain is consitutive of, or responsive to, truth (i.e. to the person's being in pain). The best opinion is the verdict informed by the person's disposition to self-ascribe pain, his or her situation, and his or her disposition to behave in ways that are, or are not, indicative of pain: it is the judgement that is formed after having considered all the relevant evidence (i.e. after having considered what has happened to the person, his or her bodily and linguistic behaviour, what we know about him or her as a person, etc.). Let us consider first the issue of whether the best opinion is constitutive of truth. Is person A in pain because we have considered all of the evidence and consequently formed the judgement that A is in pain? I believe not. For the language-game of sensations clearly allows for cases where all the evidence available points towards a certain verdict, and this verdict is nevertheless wrong. That this is possible indeed results from the fact that non-Cartesian privacy is a constitutive part of this discourse. The fact that an opinion is the best available one does not entail that it will be true: even if A is someone who has never concealed or lied about his or her sensations before, and even if the situation and all of A's bodily and linguistic behaviour are those appropriate to pain, still it could be the case that, just this once, A was, for some reason, not being truthful. Since the best opinion does not

always coincide with the truth, it cannot be considered to be constitutive of it. Does this mean that Wittgenstein adopts a detectivistic approach to truth about sensations? One must be very cautious with this issue. Note that it is unclear what it would mean to say that, for Wittgenstein, the best opinion (i.e. that formed after the examination of all the relevant evidence) "detects" or "responds to" the truth of the matter (i.e. A's being in pain). This can indeed *not* mean that, through the examination of the evidence available, we come to detect something which would have otherwise remained hidden from us (e.g. the presence of the Cartesian private sensation object). To say that this is the case is to fall in line with the understanding of the term "criterion" which is discarded by Wittgenstein. In other words, it is to regard criteria as tools to be used for uncovering something that would otherwise remain inaccessible to us. And this is not Wittgenstein's view. For Wittgenstein, to say that the behavioural evidence constitutes the criteria for other-ascriptions of sensation is not to say that other people's behaviour reveals the presence of something which is hidden inside their skulls. Instead, it is simply to say that it belongs to the meaning of sensations that we ascribe sensations to others on the basis of behavioural evidence. Hence, the best opinion is not the best one *because* it is that which detects or uncovers a truth that would otherwise remain hidden, but simply because this is how this language-game works. It is not so much that those judgements that are based on behavioural evidence detect anything, but rather that acting in a certain way (i.e. exhibiting pain behaviour) is part of what we call being in pain, and therefore part of the meaning of pain. Wittgenstein's views about the relationship between truth and superassertability do not therefore fall neatly under the headings of either detectivism or projectivism. We can thus conclude that his views cannot really be said to exhibit either realism or anti-realism in this sense. The choice here is not that between realism (i.e. detectivism about truth) or anti-realism (i.e. projectivism about truth). Wittgenstein's choice stands halfway between these two extremes. It is neither that a statement is superassertible because it is true, nor that it is true because it is

superassertible. Rather, a statement is both true and superassertible because this is what the internal workings of the language-game dictate. Compare this with what happens in the case of necessity. Necessary statements are true in that they express the substantive facts of thought (e.g. the fact that thought would be impossible if necessary pørpositions were rejected). That «"2 + 2 = 4" is true» does not depend *exclusively* on grammar, but is *also* determined by the substantive facts of the matter (i.e. by the substantive fact that thought would be impossible if "2 + 2 = 4" was false). In other words, the truth of necessary propositions depends *partly* on language (since «"2 + 2 = 4 is true» *is* a proposition and must therefore be expressed in language), but also *partly* on the substantive facts of thought. It is because their truth depends in part on language that truth and superassertability coincide extensionally in this area of discourse: that they must coincide in this way is a rule of language (i.e. it is a rule of language that there cannot be evidentially unconstrained truth), which necessary propositions must respect, if they are to be sayable. But the truth of these propositions is not accountable to language only: it is not *merely* the result of the internal shape of the logical and mathematical discourses. These propositions are true, not because they correspond to the minimalist, internal facts of some language-game, but because, without them, there would be no thought. Hence, in the case of necessity, it is possible to say that truth is prior to language, and therefore to the rules of language: it is because these propositions are true (i.e. because they correspond to the substantive facts of thought) that they are used in language, and that they must thereby respect the rules of language (in particular, the rule that a context can only tolerate a notion of truth if it can also tolerate the notions of warrant, evidence, and investigation which help to define superassertability). Thus, there is a real sense in which necessary propositions can be said to be superassertible *because* they are true.

5. Conclusion.

Wright's framework provides us with four senses in which we can understand the notions of realism and anti-realism, and thereby allows for the possibility of a discourse's exhibiting realism in one sense, anti-realism in another, and neither of the two in a further sense. This is exactly what has happened here. For Wittgenstein, the discourse on sensations exhibits internal realism about facts (since it only tolerates a minimalist notion of facts, but there is no external perspective from which to examine the game), realism in the sense that it displays Cognitive Command, Dummettian anti-realism, and neither realism nor anti-realism in the Euthyphro sense. The discourse on necessity, on the other hand, exhibits realism in all senses except for the Dummettian one: facts about necessity are the substantive facts of thought; disagreements are, by definition, attributable to a cognitive shortcoming; and there is a real sense in which truth can be said to be prior to superassertability. Finally, the subject matter of ethics exhibits anti-realism in the sense that it does not display Cognitive Command, and in the sense that there are no ethical facts (whether substantive or minimalist), but bypasses the other two debates: since there are no ethical facts, it is impossible in this context to make sense of the notions of both truth and superassertability which are used to draw the Dummettian and Euthyphro contrasts.

Hence, the way in which Wittgenstein's later philosophy fares with regard to the debate between realists and anti-realists very much varies from one language-game to another. From this perspective, and in contrast to Boghossian's line, it is therefore clear why Wittgenstein should have wanted to use, as the motto for the Investigations, the phrase from King Lear "I'll teach you differences".

FOOTNOTES.

Introduction.

1. I believe this is the most useful label for McDowell's position, although it is unclear that he would be happy with this term. See McDowell, J. "Wittgenstein on Rule-Following." Synthese. 58 (1984)

2. This is a somewhat controversial claim. However, for the sake of clarity, and since I cannot really embark on a serious discussion of this issue here, I will assume this to be the case.

3. Transcendental idealism and projectivism can be used to reach quietistic conclusions.

4. See Cavell, S. The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality and Tragedy. Oxford: Clarendon Press [etc.], 1979.

5. By "internal facts" I mean those items which are regarded as facts because their language-games treat them as such, rather than because they have the metaphysical status of facts.

6. See Boghossian, P. "The Rule-Following Considerations." Mind. 98 (1989). See also Boghossian, P. "The Status of Content." Philosophical Review. 98 (1989).

7. See Boghossian, P. "The Rule-Following Considerations." Mind. 98 (1989).

8. See Blackburn, S. Essays in Quasi-Realism. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993. See also Options for the World. Unpublished m.s.

9. For a more extensive discussion of this point, see Wright, C. Truth And Objectivity. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994.

Chapter 1: Wittgenstein and sensations.

1. Note, for instance, that "mind independence" can obviously not be a criterion

for realism about the mind.

2. See Kripke, S. "Identity and Necessity." Identity and Individuation. Ed. M.K. Munitz. New York: New York University Press. See also Kripke, S. "Naming and Necessity." The Nature of Mind. Ed. D.M. Rosenthal. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

3. Cf. Kripke, S. "Identity and Necessity". Identity and Individuation. Ed. M.K. Munitz. New York: New York University Press.

4. Cf. Wright, C. "Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy of Mind: Sensations, Privacy and Intention". Journal of Philosophy. LXXXVI (Nov. 1989).

5. See Lewis, I. "Psychophysical and Theoretical Identification." Australasian Journal of Philosophy. 50 (1972). See also Lewis, I. "Mad Pain and Martian Pain". The Nature of Mind. Ed. D.M. Rosenthal. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

6. Cf. Lewis, I. "Mad Pain and Martian Pain." The Nature of Mind. Ed. D.M. Rosenthal. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

7. See Budd, M. Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Psychology. London: Routledge, 1989.

8. See Wright, C. "Witgenstein's Later Philosophy of Mind: Sensations, Privacy and Intention." Journal of Philosophy. LXXXVI (Nov. 1989).

9. Unfortunately, Wright does not clarify what he means by this "cognitive mechanism". Clarifying this is however essential, especially since it seems to be far from obvious that it is really possible to make the type of second-order mistakes that Wright is referring to.

10. The following discussion draws heavily from McDowell's "One Strand of the Private Language Argument." Witgenstein in Focus = Im Brennpunkt. Eds. B. McGuinness, R. Haller. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1989.

11. Note, however, that there is a difficulty with this point: if sensations are not pre-linguistically carved up into particulars, is it really legitimate to ascribe pain to pre-linguistic children, animals, etc.? This problem is indeed acknowledged,

but not resolved, by McDowell.

12. See McDowell, J. "One Strand of the Private Language Argument". Witgenstein in Focus = Im Brennpunkt. Eds. B. McGuinness, R. Haller. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1989.

13. See Wright, C. "Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy of Mind: Sensations, Privacy and Intention". Journal of Philosophy. LXXXVI (Nov. 1989).

14. The following discussion draws heavily from Cavell, S. The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality and Tragedy. Oxford: Clarendon Press [etc.], 1979.

15. This point is made by Jane Heal. See Heal, J. Fact and Meaning: Quine and Wittgenstein on the Philosophy of Language. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989.

16. See further Budd, M. Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Psychology. London: Routledge, 1989.

Chapter 2: Wittgenstein and necessity.

1. See Dummett, M. "Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Mathematics." Truth and Other Enigmas. London: Duckworth, 1978.

2. Radical conventionalism is to be contrasted with modified conventionalism, according to which necessary statements belong to one of two categories: they are either direct registers of conventions, or registers of the more or less distant implications of these conventions. Thus, modified conventionalism holds that statements are regarded as necessary either because we have conventionally declared them to be unassailable, or because they are implied by those statements that have been declared to be unassailable in this way. One of the most crucial problems facing modified conventionalism is that it is unstable: it seems that whether a statement is a consequence of another can only be established by introducing a further convention to this effect, and, because of this, modified conventionalism simply collapses into radical conventionalism.

3. See Stroud, B. "Wittgenstein and Logical Necessity." <u>Philosophical Review</u>. 74 (Oct. 1965).

4. Assuming that this is an intelligible possibility. Unfortunately, I do not have time to discuss this issue here.

5. By "extra-linguistic mathematical reality" I mean a substantive, as opposed to a minimalist, reality that is independent from our linguistic and conceptual schemes.

6. See Cavell's discussion of the woodsellers in <u>The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality and Tragedy</u>. Oxford: Clarendon Press [etc.], 1979. See also Jane Heal's discussion of this point in <u>Fact and Meaning: Quine and Wittgenstein on the Philosophy of Language</u>. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989.

7. See Wright, C. <u>Wittgenstein on the Foundation of Mathematics</u>. New ed. Aldershot: Gregg Revivals, 1994.

8. It could be objected there are other ways in which this contrast could be drawn, but I believe that they would run into similar difficulties.

9. Note that there have been other attempts to draw a Witgensteinian "middle way". See, for instance, Heal's discussion in <u>Fact and Meaning: Quine and Wittgenstein on the Philosophy of Language</u>. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989. I believe, however, that Wright's is the most representative one.

10. Because of this, Wright argues that Dummett's first objection to radical conventionalism is powerless against a Wittgenstenian.

11. This tension is not explicitly acknowledged by Wright, but I feel that pointing it out helps to elucidate some of the problems that Wright goes on to try and resolve.

12. Unfortunately I cannot discuss Craig's argument in more detail here. See Craig, E. "Arithmetic and Fact." <u>Exercises in Analysis: Essays by Students of Casimir Lewy</u>. Ed. I. Hacking. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

13. See Putnam, H. <u>Experience and Mathematical Necessity</u>. Unpublished m.s.

14. There may be other cases in the history of pure mathematics where a necessary

axiom, theorem or postulate has apparently been negated intelligibly. I believe, however, that all of these cases can be explained in similar way.

Chapter 3: Ethics and the later Wittgenstein.

1. There have been various other attempts to derive an ethical position from Wittgenstein's later views on meaning *per se*. See Johnston, P. Wittgenstein and Moral Philosophy. London: Routledge, 1989. See also D.Z. Phillips, M.O. Mounce. Moral Practices. London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1969. I believe, however, that Lovibond's work is the most representative of this domain.

2. Note however that the first and last assumptions do not sit happily together. Lovibond does not seem to have noticed this.

3. The discussion that follows draws heavily from Zemach, E. "Wittgenstein's Philosophy of the Mystical." My World and Its Value. The Philosophy of Witgenstein. Ed. J.V. Canfield. 10 vols. New York: Garland Publishing, 1986.

4. I am again indebted for some of these clarifications on the Tractatus to Zemach, E. "Wittgenstein's philosophy of the Mystical". My World and Its Value. The Philosophy of Witgenstein. Ed. J.V. Canfield. 10 vols. New York: Garland Publishing, 1986.

Chapter 4: A framework for the debate between realists and anti-realists.

1. Deflationism, as defined by Wright, holds that, although truth is grammatically a predicate, it denotes no substantial quality of statements. Truth is merely a device of assertoric endorsment, of use when we wish to endorse a statement without referring to it in a way which specifies its content. Otherwise, truth is fully explained by the Disquotational Schema (i.e. "P" is true if and only if P), and registers no norm governing assertoric discourse distinct from warranted assertability.

2. There are two main reasons why Wright thinks that convergence of opinions is not an ideal criterion. Firstly, he argues, a too loose definition of convergence does not bring out realism, since even minimal truth demands some degree of convergence. Thus, for example, the fact that competent language users tend to agree in the truth or falsity of statements does not ensure realism. Secondly he argues that, even if we tighten up our definition of convergence, realism is not ensured. Wright asks us to imagine that we replace the above mentioned loose constraint by one demanding global convergence as follows: "statements are apt for substantive truth if and only if each of them will, in suitable circumstances, command convergence of opinions about the truth or falsity of the statement". The problem with using this as our criterion for establishing whether a discourse exhibits realism is that of settling what we mean here by "suitable circumstances". Certain types of circumstance can indeed result in a form of convergence of opinions which we would not call realistic. Imagine for example that our brains are manipulated so as to make us all systematically agree on whether something is funny. Although convergence of opinions would have suddenly been ensured, we would not because of this claim that the discourse on comedy had suddenly become realistic. Instead, we would simply say that something strange had happened with our brains. This suggests that what we are after, when trying to identify realism in this way, is not convergence *per se*. Convergence is not absolutely necessary to realism. What is required is rather that, if there is divergence, then this divergence should be accounted for in a specific way. And this is precisely what the Cognitive Command constraint can capture.

3. Such as lack of attention, distraction, etc...

4. Such as when the data are prejudicially amended, for example.

5. Disagreements must be attributable to these factors *a priori* because it is essential that the area of discourse under scrutiny is such that it *requires* divergences to be accounted for in this way. If it just *so happened* that

disagreements were explained in this way, then we would not be holding a feature that was *characteristic* of the discourse *per se*. That is, we would not be holding a suitable criterion for claiming that the area of disourse *per se* displays realism.

6. It is important to account for the possibility of vagueness here because otherwise our criterion would not have a sufficiently extensive use. This is so because, as Wright argues, even in the most objective areas of discourse and with the best cognitively functioning subjects there can be vagueness about a statement or about the relevant standards of assessment.

7. Specifically, Wright derives it from the following truism about representation:

"*Convergence/Representation Platitude*: If two devices both function to produce representations, then if conditions are suitable, and they function properly, they will produce divergent output if and only if presented with divergent input."

I believe that it is a mistake to link the issue of convergence/divergence to that of representation in this way. Wright indeed seems to take a causal view of convergence: there is a causal relation between the level of convergence of a discourse and that which the discourse represents. This impression is created by the way in which Wright talks of "devices" that "produce representations": he seems to ascribe to the term "representation" a meaning which is similar to that which the term is given when we talk of photographic cameras "giving representations" of the world. The problem is that this causal understanding of convergence does not apply to many discourses which do display Cognitive Command and ought to be regarded as exhibiting realism in this sense (see footnote 8 to Chapter 5). Unfortunately I cannot discuss this issue in depth here, but I did want to make the point that Cognitive Command constitutes a good enough criterion for the realism or anti-realism of a discourse, without it needing to be linked to the issue of representation.

8. To illustrate this point, Wright puts forward the example of someone who argues that the discourse on comedy displays Cognitive Command because

differences in opinion must show that someone has failed to grasp the truth, and that therefore a cognitive shortcoming has occurred. Wright explains that, in order to defend this argument, the person putting it forward would have to show either that comedy is an area of discourse where truth is evidence-transcendent or that it is an area where opinions are justified by intuition, neither of which are trivial claims. See further Wright, C.Truth and Objectivity. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994.

9. It is indeed indicative of this that understanding the senses of these minimally true sentences does not involve identifying any states of affairs as necessary and sufficient to the truth of the sentences.

10.Wright explains that although it may feature in an explanation of my disapproval, and thus in an indirect explanation of what I may do as a result of this disapproval, it can not feature *directly* in an explanation of the three last types of effect.

Chapter 5. Conclusion: Realism and anti-realism revisited.

1. Since I am taking Wright's plural approach to the debate between realists and anti-realists, I will obviously not be using the term "anti-realism" in the traditional Dummettian sense exclusively, but rather in Wright's four separate senses, only one of which is in accordance with the Dummettian understanding of the term.

2. The term "my" is not used here in the private linguist sense, but is simply used to reflect the way we speak of sensations in the ordinary context.

3. There may be other categories but our current enquiry only yields an insight into these three.

4. It could be argues that comedy (i.e. value judgements as to whether something is funny) could be included in this category. In order to reach a definitive conclusion on this matter, it would however be necessary to examine this issue

closer, something which unfortunately cannot be done in this thesis.

5. For further clarifications, see McGinn, M. Sense and Certainty: A Dissolution of Scepticism. Oxford: Balckwell, 1989.

6. Note that this is therefore the kind of criterion that would have been useful to Sabina Lovibond, since it can be used to contrast language-games by looking exclusively at the first-order features of linguistic practices.

7. It is highly controversial whether this is at all possible. For the sake of clarity, and since I cannot examine this issue in depth here, I shall assume that it is.

8. Note however that, because Wright links the issue of convergence to that of representation, when we say that the discourse on necessity exhibits Cognitive Command, we seem to be saying that there is a causal link between this discourse and that which it "represents". In other words, we seem to be saying that that which the discourse "represents" (i.e. the laws of thought) "causes" in some way the high level of convergence of the discourse, and the fact that disagreements have to be accounted for by a cognitive shortcoming. This is obviously not accurate. Necessary propositions do not "give a representation" of the facts of thought, in the way that a photographic camera would give a representation of the world. It is more accurate to say, rather, that necessary propositions *express* the facts of thought. I cannot discuss this point in depth here, but I believe that Wright has linked the issue of Cognitive Command to that of representation in a way which is both unsatisfactory and unnecessary. See footnote 7 of Chapter 4.

9. Note, however, that there may be difficulties at a given point in time, in distinguishing whether a given proposition is unthinkable or merely *as yet* unintelligible *to us*.

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