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Logic and Value in Wittgenstein's Philosophy

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Abstract

In *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (TLP), Wittgenstein gave ethics the same semantic status as logic. This paper first investigates this claim from the perspective of Wittgenstein's lifelong semantic framework. This reveals that ethical sentences are meaningless expressions, which can only be used to ostensively point out conditions of meaningfulness. Secondly, the paper assesses the implications of this conclusion for understanding the seven cryptic remarks on value and ethics in TLP. Using the connection between will and value in TLP and will and sentence interpretation in *Philosophical Investigations*, it is suggested that Wittgenstein held lifelong views on value and ethics.

I. Introduction

The expression of value – our approval or disapproval of events within our lives – is probably the most essential aspect of everyday language use. Given that this praxis of language plays a central role in Wittgenstein's later writings, it is surprising how few of his philosophical remarks address the expression of value. Equally remarkable is the fact that the majority of commentaries on Wittgenstein's work arose within the domains of philosophy directed at understanding value – i.e., in the philosophy of ethics, aesthetics and particularly religion. Thus, despite Wittgenstein's near-silence on the value aspects of language and reality, many people have turned to his work for answers and clarity regarding this most intriguing and confusing aspect of life.

Because Wittgenstein rarely overtly investigated value expressions, it requires a far-reaching interpretation of his writings to clarify the status of such expressions in our life. Putting aside numerous subtle differences, there are roughly two angles from which scholars have given value

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expressions a place within Wittgenstein's later philosophy. The first approach is exemplified in a paper by Michael Hodges.[1] It amounts to considering expressions of value as just a subclass of ordinary linguistic utterances. Consequently, everything that Wittgenstein said about language in general also applies to value utterances. According to this view, one of the core remarks of *Philosophical Investigations* (PI) – PI 241 – can be read as saying that it is not human agreement that decides which ethical judgements are true or false, but rather that to be able to speak about ethical matters and opinions presupposes agreement in ethical judgements and thus in the form of life. This reading implies that ethical and value utterances, in general, belong to particular language-games, and their meaning is exhausted by the practical consequences within these games. While this interpretation is defendable within the later philosophy, it seems to deny value expressions the universality that people incline to ascribe to them. Moreover, its implications are at odds with Wittgenstein's early philosophy in which, as we will see, he placed value outside of the world that is expressible in language.

The second approach towards giving expressions of value a place within Wittgenstein's later philosophy repeatedly emerged within the philosophy of religion and starts from the fundamental distinction that Wittgenstein drew between empirical and grammatical sentences.[2] The former are intended to describe a possible state of affairs in reality, and they can be true or false. In contrast, the latter are not intended as descriptions of reality, but instead have a regulative function – they express how language must be used. Religious and ethical sentences are then attributed a similar regulative role. This view implies that one cannot regard ethical and religious sentences as hypotheses – nothing, in reality, can prove them right or wrong. This implication gives them a status similar to logical sentences, which are also descriptive of language use. Because of this, they cannot be used in conversation as regular utterances, and basically, there can be no ethical or religious talk.

Although the second approach has the unsatisfactory implication that there can be no ethical opinion or discussion, this view receives support from studies of Wittgenstein's early work.[3] Two statements in *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (TLP) directly support the thesis that expressions of value have a logical status. The first is that ethics, as well as logic, is

1. Michael Hodges (1995). Researchers like Deborah Orr (1995) and Faghfoury and Armour (1984) express similar views.

2. D.Z. Phillips (1976), W.D. Hudson (1981) and John Churchill (1998), among others, used this approach. See Gorazd (2015: 63 ff.) for a more systematic presentation of versions of this view.

3. See for instance Cohen (1990), Edwards (1982).

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called transcendental,[4] and the second is that, as a consequence of this, they are both said to be ineffable.[5] Following this suggestion, Siitonen investigated the possibility of construing ethical sentences as a class of logical sentences within the framework of TLP.[6] She concluded, however, that this could not be done. Doing so would require that ethical sentences be true from their logical structure alone. She rightly established that the non-accidental character of value expressions is different from the logical necessity of sentences such as "It is either raining or not raining."[7] These reasonable arguments notwithstanding, inspired by aspects of Wittgenstein's later work, and in particular, his remarks in *On Certainty* (OC), Christensen reached the opposite conclusion: that we must understand ethical sentences as ethical tautologies that express necessary or formal aspects of value without favouring any specific value content. In doing so, they reveal our ethical attitude towards the world.[8]

The contradictory results and interpretations presented above arise to some extent because of the scarceness of remarks on value in Wittgenstein's writings. In an attempt to resolve the confusion, the aim of the present paper is to re-examine the feasibility of equating expressions of value and ethics with logical sentences. Instead of making this attempt from within the framework of TLP, as Siitonen did, the present investigation takes place against the background of the general semantic framework that consistently runs through Wittgenstein's early and later writings.[9] Moreover, because Wittgenstein did not provide many clues on how he envisaged the status of ethical sentences,[10] this paper adopts an inverse strategy: instead of collecting direct evidence within Wittgenstein's writings of his views on the matter, it will more or less take the logical status of ethical sentences for granted and investigate whether this assumption somehow leads to a contradiction with his semantic

4. TLP 6.13 and 6.421.
5. TLP 4.121, 4.1212 and 6.421.
6. Siitonen (1984).
7. TLP 4.461.
8. See Christensen (2004: 126): "[Ethical sentences] work as ethical tautologies by showing the necessities structuring our ethical discourse [but do] not determine any actual ethical judgments or settle any actual moral disputes."
9. Stiers (2000).
10. In TLP only seven remarks are devoted to ethics. In addition to these, there is the Lecture on Ethics, which is less than ten pages long. In PI, there seems to be only one explicit comment on ethics, namely PI 77 (see discussion in Stern, 2013: 196 ff.). This comment, which is not used in the current paper, is made in the course of an investigation into the possibility of drawing clear definitions of concepts that, in their regular use, slightly differ in meaning across contexts. Wittgenstein warns against such clarifying definitions because what binds these varying meanings is family resemblance rather than a common defining feature. In PI 77, he extends this characteristic of family resemblance to ethical and aesthetical concepts.

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conceptions. This approach will first necessitate an assessment of their status based on the meaning criteria that are in operation in Wittgenstein's semantical framework. Secondly, the study will examine whether the semantic implications of their status are tenable in the light of how people use ethical sentences in communication. These two lines of investigation will constitute the first part of the paper. The second part of the paper looks at TLP and its cryptic remarks on ethics. This part will show that positioning ethical sentences within Wittgenstein's lifelong semantic framework helps make sense of these problematic remarks. Doing so contributes to achieving the second objective of this paper, which is to convince the reader of the continuity that exists between Wittgenstein's early and later philosophy concerning value and ethics.

II. The Semantic Framework

Before the start of the investigation, it is important to make clear what class of utterances will be the subject of inquiry. The present study follows Wittgenstein's demarcation of the subject matter for his *Lecture on Ethics* (LE). In the opening pages, he presents several descriptions of the subject of Ethics in order to clarify his topic. Thus, "Ethics is the enquiry into what is valuable, or, into what is really important, or I could have said Ethics is the enquiry into the meaning of life, or into what makes life worth living, or into the right way of living."[11] He points out that each of these phrases can be used in a relative sense, such as in "it is important not to catch cold," or "this is the right road." These are not expressions of value, but just conditional statements of facts. The expressions, however, can also be used in an absolute sense. Wittgenstein illustrates this difference through an example.

> Supposing that I could play tennis and one of you saw me playing and said "Well, you play pretty badly" and suppose I answered "I know, I'm playing badly but I don't want to play any better," all the other man could say would be "Ah then that's all right." But suppose I had told one of you a preposterous lie and he came up to me and said "You're behaving like a beast" and then I were to say "I know I behave badly, but then I don't want to behave any better," could he then say "Ah, then that's all right"? Certainly not; he would say "Well, you *ought* to want to behave better." Here you have an absolute judgment of value. . .[12]

11. LE: 5.
12. LE: 5, r. 27 – 36.

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This example is notable because – while Wittgenstein urges that absolute value cannot be expressed in language in the remainder of his lecture – it shows that there are nonetheless instances of language use that are directly related to absolute value. Such examples defy the claim, made by people attempting to frame these sentences as grammatical remarks, that ethical sentences can have no use. This point was well noticed by Rhees, in his commentary on LE: "[It] is a natural remark to make in the circumstances … not a distortion or misuse of language."[13] It is such utterances that will be the subject of investigation in the present paper.

Concrete examples of use for ethical utterances are additionally relevant because they provide context to the sentences under investigation. It is one of the basic stances of Wittgenstein's later work that a sentence has a definite meaning only in the context of the language-game in which it was uttered. The surest path towards philosophical confusion starts by isolating sentences from their natural context and studying them as if they had a universal meaning. Therefore, we will consider here one more example that was discussed by Wittgenstein (as recollected by Rhees in his commentary on LE[14]). It concerns the problem facing a man who has concluded that he must either leave his wife or abandon his work of cancer research:

> … He may reply, 'But what of suffering humanity? How can I abandon my research?' In saying this he may be making it easy for himself: he wants to carry on that work anyway… On the other hand it may not be this way. It may be that he has a deep love for her. And yet he may think that if he were to give up his work he would be no husband for her. That is his life… Here we may say that we have all the materials of a tragedy; and we could only say: 'Well, God help you.' … Someone might ask whether the treatment of such a question in Christian ethics is *right* or not. I want to say that this question does not make sense.[15]

It is clear from this report that, for Wittgenstein, investigating ethical problems had nothing to do with establishing the right form of conduct. Instead, his aim in LE was to get a clear view of what making such a genuinely ethical utterance amounts to semantically. Asking which ethical attitude is the right one makes no sense, because "we do not know… how it would be determined, what sort of criteria would be used, and so on."[16] "[S]uppose I say Christian ethics is the right one. Then I am making a judgment of value. It amounts to *adopting* Christian

13. Rhees (1965: 20, r. 12 – 14).
14. Rhees (1965: 22 ff.).
15. Rhees (1965: 22-23).
16. Rhees (1965: 23).

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ethics. It is not like saying that one of these physical theories must be the right one. The way in which some reality corresponds — or conflicts — with a physical theory has no counterpart here."[17] Rhees here reformulates one of the main points that Wittgenstein tried to make in LE, namely, that in a way, it makes no sense to ask whether the sentences uttered in these situations are true or not, or even whether the ethical attitude that they reflect is right or wrong. The utterances lie beyond the descriptive or hypothetical way of speaking about reality. This insight will be our lead in this first part of the paper, where we will try to give ethical sentences a logical status within the semantic framework of Wittgenstein's philosophy. We hope that this will provide a deeper understanding of the situation of uttering these ethical sentences in the above examples.

Ethical and logical sentences are meaningless

Wittgenstein used an experience of his own, which he expressed verbally as "I wonder at the existence of the world," to make clear that there is a problem with the semantic status of utterances of absolute value.

> It has a perfectly good and clear sense to say that I wonder at something being the case... In this sense, one can wonder at the existence of, say, a house when one sees it and has not visited it for a long time and has imagined that it had been pulled down in the meantime. But it is nonsense to say that I wonder at the existence of the world because I cannot imagine it not existing. I could, of course, wonder at the world round [*sic*] me being as it is... [F]or instance... I could wonder at the sky being blue as opposed to the case when it's clouded. But that's not what I mean. I am wondering at the sky being *whatever it is*.[18]

These observations illustrate a method of investigation that is characteristic of Wittgenstein's later philosophy: he contrasts the problematic sentence with similarly structured sentences – in this case of wondering whether something is the case or not – that do have a definite meaning. This confrontation sets the value utterance apart as deficient. Compared to ordinary uses of language, the meaning of such an expression is not clear at all. Based on such considerations, Wittgenstein concluded that these attempts to verbally express value experiences lead to nonsensical expressions because, somehow, they misuse language. It is not that we have "not yet found the correct expressions, but that their nonsensicality

17. Rhees (1965: 24).
18. LE: 8 r. 29 – p. 9 r. 9.

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was their very essence."[19] Consequently, "a certain characteristic misuse of our language runs through *all* ethical and religious expressions."[20]

It is important to understand why Wittgenstein thought that his attempt to express absolute value verbally resulted in nonsense. The reason is that one cannot imagine the world not to exist, i.e., it is impossible to conceive of what it would be like if the linguistic expression were not true. The argument that an utterance is nonsense because its negation cannot be imagined to be true touches the core of Wittgenstein's lifelong conception of meaningfulness.[21] According to this semantic view, a sentence[22] has to meet two fundamental requirements in order to be meaningful. The first is that every element in the sentence must have an unequivocal interpretation. If one of its elements is left without a definite meaning, the sentence as a whole cannot describe anything. We will come back to this requirement in the next paragraph. The second requirement, to which the argument above alludes, is that for a fully interpreted sentence to be meaningful, it must express a contingent fact. In TLP, Wittgenstein expressed his requirement as follows: "A thought contains the possibility of the situation of which it is the thought. What is thinkable is possible too."[23] Since being possible means that it may exist or may not exist, this thesis implies that any sentence that is true under all circumstances or cannot be true under any circumstances is not meaningful. This is the case for logical sentences, such as "It is either raining or not raining,"[24] or "Two colours can't be simultaneously present at the same place in the visual field."[25] These sentences are always true, owing to their logical structure. Therefore, they do not require a comparison with reality to establish their truth or falsity. They do not describe any state of affairs, but merely reflect some aspect of the way linguistic expressions are used. The second criterion for meaningfulness re-emerges in the later philosophy in what can be called the "negation technique."[26] When investigating a sentence whose meaning is unclear, Wittgenstein asks us to imagine the negation of the sentence to be the case. If this is impossible, then the original sentence, too, must have no

19. LE: 11, r. 34.
20. LE: 9.
21. See Stiers (2000)
22. In continuation of the terminology used in Stiers (2000), I use the term *sentence* (following the use of *Satz* in the original German versions of TLP, PI and OC), instead of the term *proposition*, to refer to linguistic constructions that belong to language. The term *proposition* refers to sentence content in the abstract, regardless of linguistic expression. For a particular use of a sentence I use the terms *statement* or *utterance*.
23. TLP 3.02.
24. See TLP 4.461.
25. See TLP 6.3751.
26. For instance, LE: 8 – 9, PI 251 and OC 4. See also Anscombe (1965: 151 – 152).

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clear meaning. In terms of TLP 3.02, the sentence does not depict a possible fact in reality.

Ethical and logical sentences are not nonsense

Does the LE suggestion that ethical sentences are not meaningful because they fail the negation criterion mean that they are nonsensical constructs? To answer this question, we have to consider the first, even more fundamental requirement for meaningfulness, namely that the sentence must have an unequivocal interpretation. In the picture theory of TLP, this means that all the elements of the sentence in its logically completely analysed form must be assigned an element of the pictured fact. This allocation of elements in the sentence to elements of facts – i.e., the sentence's interpretation – is part of the sentence and therefore fixed for every sentence.[27] If one part of a sentence is unallocated, the whole construction is nonsense.[28] The problem with this TLP requirement is that one needs the completely analysed form of the sentence to verify it. The existence of this form for every natural language sentence is only assured in principle in TLP, in order to ensure definite meaning. No practical method to find it is provided. In Wittgenstein's later philosophy, sentences can have different interpretations in different situations, and it is the context of use that renders the interpretation unequivocal. This context of use is the practice to which the sentence belongs – a way of doing things in which linguistic utterances have their specific role and hence an unambiguous meaning. Wittgenstein referred to such practices as language-games. He perceived them as the final justification for all whereabouts of meaning and the prerequisite for all considerations regarding empirical knowledge and truth or falsity of sentences. Whenever a sentence is considered outside of the practice of using it, its interpretation is no longer fixed, and the sentence becomes nonsense.

The switch from the abstract notion of the completely analysed sentence in TLP to the concrete examples of language-games as custodians of unequivocal interpretation allowed Wittgenstein in his later philosophy to concretely investigate a range of real philosophical utterances, and to show how they had become problematic, that is, devoid of meaning. By envisioning situations of use for the problematic sentence, or by comparing it with seemingly similar sentences with a clear context of use, their semantic status gradually became clear. In LE, Wittgenstein applied this approach to expressions of absolute value. The lecture was written around 1930, early in the second phase of Wittgenstein's

27. See TLP 3.1 – 3.13.
28. TLP 5.473, 5.4733.

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philosophical development. The method of analysis is already characteristic of this second period. The conclusion, however, that ethical sentences are nonsensical expressions born of the human tendency "*to go beyond* the world and that is to say beyond significant language,"[29] is still moulded on TLP doctrines.

On Certainty, on the other hand, contains Wittgenstein's philosophical remarks from the last 18 months of his life. In it, he investigated yet another class of problematic utterances of seemingly ordinary sentences. The example that triggered the OC remarks was G.E. Moore's well-known defence of realism against the sceptical doubt that we cannot be certain that external objects really exist.[30] His defence consisted of showing the existence of at least two of them by holding up his hands while saying: "Here is a hand," and "Here is another." Earlier, he had also presented a list of statements that he knew for certain to be true, such as that his body had already existed for some time and had never been far from the earth's surface.[31] These seemingly empirical sentences are also meaningless because they fail the negation technique. In the case of Moore's hand, for instance, it is unclear what would be the case if his stating "Here is a hand" while holding up his hand would be untrue. A valuable insight that emerges throughout the long series of remarks is that there are unique situations in which using these sentences does make sense.[32] These are the situations where there is a need to establish agreement in judgements[33] in order to lay down the prerequisites for engaging in a language-game. One example is teaching. If a teacher wants to show a pupil how to use the word "hand," they might raise their hand while saying, "This is a hand." Another situation where a need exists to establish agreement in judgements is when someone violates the rules of a (language) game. For example, when in a chess game one of the players makes a knight-type movement with his rook, the other player might hold up the piece while saying, "This is a rook." That is, the other player stops the game and shows how the pieces ought to be used. This situation is very similar to that of Moore defending realism by holding up his hands. It is a switching back to the voice of speaking during the teaching of the practice. When learning to speak, sentences are uttered by the teacher while referring to the conditions that make these words true. The teacher has no intention of conveying a state of affairs to the pupil but is merely showing the pupil how the words ought to be used.

29. LE: 11 (italics not added).
30. Moore (1939).
31. Moore (1925).
32. See Stiers (2000): 196 – 199, for a detailed discussion.
33. See PI 241.

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In such a situation, the question of whether what the teacher says is true or false, or whether they may be mistaken, does not arise. This is the *ostensive* mode of speaking.

Now, think back to Wittgenstein's example in LE of the tennis player who did not want to play better.[34] We would most likely accept his response as a mere expression of fact. Now suppose that Wittgenstein, when confronted for telling a preposterous lie, would similarly respond that he knows he behaved badly but did not want to behave any better. In such case, we would admonish him by saying, "you *ought* to want to behave better." The analogy of the circumstance of this utterance to Moore's insistence that his hands exist or to the chess player's holding up the rook is clear: it is an ostensive pointing out of the rules of the game. This demonstrates that ethical utterances do have a use and, thus, are part of the practice in which language has its place. Like logical sentences, they are not nonsensical because they have an unequivocal interpretation in the context of the language-game to which they belong.

Ethical and logical sentences have no use in *a language-game*

As was the case for logical sentences in TLP and empirical sentences with a logical role in OC, ethical sentences are not meaningful because they fail the negation technique. Hence, they can never be moves within a language-game. To use them in the language-game would be to destroy the game itself. The reason is that ethical sentences express our practical understanding of the rules that make up the game. By introducing such a sentence as a move within the game, it is as if that insight is a mere contingency – something that might, but also might not, be the case. Hence, a prerequisite for playing the language-game may no longer be fulfilled.

> But why *am* I so certain that this is my hand? Doesn't the whole language-game rest on this certainty?
>
> Or: isn't this 'certainty' (already) presupposed in the language-game? Namely by virtue of the fact that one is not playing the game, or is playing it wrong, if one does not recognize objects with certainty.[35]

Understanding where the certainty associated with these sentences comes from is essential to understanding the impact of presenting them as moves within the game. It is not that they are the foundation of the language-game – even though Wittgenstein described the logical role of these sentences in such terms.[36] It is because the insight they express is

34. LE: 5.
35. OC 446; see also OC 182, 370, 526.
36. E.g., OC 246, 401, 403, 411.

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of a fundamentally different nature than that expressed by sentences used as legitimate moves within the game. In Wittgenstein's later philosophy, the endpoint of explanation for matters of meaning is not these fundamental sentences or logic, but the practice itself. Our behaving and acting in the world form the ground of all meaning, and linguistic utterances only make sense as part of this practice. A practice comprises a meaningful whole of practical knowledge regarding how things are done. This practical knowledge reflects the formal aspect of the practice of the language-game. True and false statements are moves within a language-game. Making these moves relies on practical (logical) insight into the way language relates to reality, into conditions for truth and falsity, logical inferences, semantic relationships, and so on. This practical knowledge is a priori to the language-game: it is the ground for our way of using language, but is itself ungrounded. It is what we learned when we were thought to perform the practice of the language-game. Wittgenstein compared this teaching to the training of animals: nothing rational is involved. The non-rational character explains the certainty associated with such practical knowledge – the certainty of riding a bicycle; or: "I shall get burnt if I put my hand in the fire: that is certainty."[37]

That ethical sentences have a logical role in the language-game means that they, too, belong to the formal aspects of our practices of going about with reality. Consequently, ethical sentences get incorporated into the reference frame of our meaningful actions and behaviour when we are trained in these practices. They belong to the foundations of meaningfulness, but are themselves ungrounded, non-rational, not justifiable. They belong to the level of knowing how to do things. This makes them non-hypothetical. They cannot be deliberated because that would amount to being in a position to imagine what it would be like if they were untrue. Similarly, we cannot understand someone who does not subscribe to the truth of these ethical sentences. Communication through language presupposes an agreement in judgements, which is not a mere agreement in opinions but in the language itself, in the form of life.[38] So, confronted with someone who questions these insights, we have no other option than to stop the ongoing interaction and ostensively show how it is done, how the words have to be used: "You ought to want to behave better," "You have to stick with your wife." These are attempts at restoring the common ground on which meaningful communication is possible, at establishing agreement in judgements.

37. PI 474; see also PI 480.
38. PI 241.

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The implication of equating ethical with logical sentences

Placing ethical sentences at the same level as logical sentences seems problematic from the standpoint of truth, as Siitonen came to realize.[39] While logical sentences are true from their structure alone, that is, by logical necessity, this is certainly not the case for ethical sentences. Placing all these sentences with a logical role – tautologies, ethical sentences and specific empirical sentences – in a single logical category necessitated a change in the conception of logic itself. In TLP, Wittgenstein wanted to uncover the essential features that make a sentence into a meaningful description of reality. These insights into the essence of depiction allowed him to show, once and for all, that philosophical problems arise because of misuses of language. In this endeavour, "logic" referred to the a priori insights that pertained to and made possible this special relationship between a linguistic expression and reality. Although ethical sentences share with tautologies a feeling of inevitability that makes their negation unthinkable, they attempt to express something – absolute value – that was not revealed by the logical analysis of the universal principles of depiction. Consequently, they could not, at that time, be conceived as logical expressions.[40] There was no choice but to repudiate such attempts at expressing absolute value as nonsensical misuses of language.[41]

The situation was very different in his later philosophy. The investigation of concrete instances of philosophical confusion necessitated a more concrete or practical conception of the way everyday language use relates to reality, and this turned out to require a broadened conception of logic. The changed understanding of logic is most clearly present in the investigations of claims of certain knowledge in OC, such as Moore's claim that his hands exist. These claims, too, seemed to have a feel of necessity that, however, could not be derived from their structure alone – having the form of empirical sentences. However, because their truth is a fundamental, necessary part of the language-game, Wittgenstein attributed to them a logical role. So, here we have a category of sentences that, according to TLP semantics, were normal, meaningful sentences of language because their truth depends on verification with reality, but in OC were attributed a logical role. This means that in OC, in contrast to TLP, content had entered logic. Formal logic studies the dependency of truth on syntactic structure

39. Siitonen (1984).
40. See Siitonen (1984: 78), who made a similar point.
41. It is clear that Wittgenstein was nonetheless strongly inclined to lend a similar a priori status to ethics as he had created for logical insights (compare TLP 6.421 to 6.13 and 6.54). This is also suggested by his alluding in LE to logical necessity when trying to elucidate the concept of absolute value, for instance, "... I think ['the absolutely right road'] would be the road that which everybody on seeing it would, with logical necessity, have to go, or be ashamed for not going." (LE: 7, r. 22 ff.)

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alone – the content is irrelevant. Consequently, the discovered rules apply to all possible worlds, regardless of what is actually the case in these worlds. In contrast, the empirical sentences that Wittgenstein ascribed a logical status in OC seem to play a role similar to meaning postulates in formal semantics. These are additional axioms, added a priori to a formal logic, that specify how particular predicates of the formal language are related to one another. This narrows down the range of worlds that will satisfy a particular logical system to those worlds in which the elements depicted in the postulates are factually related in the way described by the postulates. All possible worlds in which the depicted elements are related in a different manner are excluded. Sentences with a logical role in the language-game can be seen as meaning postulates that narrow the range of possible worlds down to the world in which we actually live. Therefore, while ethical sentences fall outside of the realm of logical insights according to TLP semantics, the inability to doubt their truth lends them the status of meaning postulates that determine the world in which we can meaningfully live.

Subconclusion

The semantic characterization of ethical sentences given above provides a way out of the impasse encountered by Siitonen, when trying to equate ethical sentences with tautologies within the framework of TLP.[42] The necessary truth of ethical insights is different from the logical necessity associated with tautologies. The application of the negation criterion as a dissection knife for real-life philosophical problems created an opening to a broader conception of logic, which, in addition to the formal insights of logic, also encompassed semantic insights regarding relationships between our concepts of the world. In the broadened concept of logic, logical necessity is no longer confined to formal truth, but also applies to the non-rational semantic relations implanted by our meaningful practices of going about with reality.[43] Although the present study does not follow Christensen in calling ethical sentences tautologies, her conclusions from studying OC are in line with the present analysis based on the lifelong semantic framework behind Wittgenstein's philosophy.[44] In this sense, our analysis reconciles Siitonen and Christensen's opposing conclusions.

The above semantic characterization of ethical sentences also resolves the paradox that Wittgenstein expressed in LE, that on the one hand, we have

42. Siitonen (1984).
43. The idea that in TLP 'logic' already stands for the practical knowledge of how to do things with language, knowledge that can only be shown, was argued for at length by Edwards (1982: 53 – 54).
44. Christensen (2004).

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to admit to the possibility of experiences of absolute value and, on the other hand, must deny that these experiences are expressible in language. Although Wittgenstein had re-entered philosophy to resolve some of the problems and dissatisfactions with his earlier doctrines, he was still under the influence of the TLP when writing LE. In TLP, anything expressible in language is factual – that is, a contingent possibility – and therefore, if value were expressible in language, it would lose its non-accidental (absolute) character.[45] Here lies the origin of the feeling of dissatisfaction with the way Wittgenstein treated the ethical in TLP. While he gave the ethical its rightful place (i.e., practical, transcendental insights),[46] he had no way of acknowledging this in the picture theory of meaning. A more appropriate characterization of ethical sentences was made possible only by broadening his view of the function of language, from a tool for mere depiction to a toolbox with appliances fulfilling many different practical functions.[47] These functions are intrinsically intertwined with the practical knowledge of how things are done and how we ought to behave – that is, the conditions for meaningfulness. Linguistic expressions of these insights, such as for instance ethical sentences, have their use in admonishing violations of these insights.[48]

However, even in this conception of ethical sentences, it still holds that value cannot be expressed in language – that is, in the way that, for instance, the colour of an object can be expressed. By switching to the ostensive mode of speech, our utterances stop being descriptive. They no longer refer to states of affairs. Like logical sentences, they merely show their logical or formal insight, i.e., the way the words are to be used. Thus, ostensive utterances do not have an ethical content and cannot depict absolute value. They do not provide any new information. Just as the logical insight inherent in a tautology is *recognized* by someone who knows language, the ethical aspect in ostensively uttered ethical propositions is recognized by someone who already has these practical insights. Thus, ethics, as well as logic, is ineffable. Moreover, all "moral" discussions must be of the form of an ostensive collision between forms of life. This conclusion does not favour interpretations of Wittgenstein's later philosophy that adhere to ethical or moral language-games – that is, "common moral discussion."[49] Rather, our interpretation of the status of ethical utterances agrees more with the view that all ethical and religious utterances are in a sense "grammatical" remarks, regulative of the way we use language,[50] although the analyses in the next section will

45. TLP 6.41.
46. See 6.421, and the Notebooks 1914 – 1916, p. 77, remark 7: "Ethics does not treat of the world. Ethics must be a condition of the world, like logic."
47. See PI 11 and 23.
48. See PI 54.
49. Hodges (1995: 103).
50. E.g., Edwards (1982), Churchill (1998).

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make clear that the notion of "grammatical remark" does not fully cover the intensity of an ostensive utterance.

III. The Ethical Framework

To substantiate the claim that a consistent ethical framework exists behind Wittgenstein's writing in the two, seemingly discontinuous, periods of his philosophical work, it needs to be considered if and how the semantic interpretation of ethical sentences arrived at so far harmonizes with his cryptic remarks on ethics and value in *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Although the ethical character of TLP is now generally acknowledged, the part in TLP devoted to value-issues is surprisingly small. Only seven remarks explicitly address value and ethics, starting at TLP 6.4 and terminating with remark TLP 6.43. They are followed by another seven remarks stating their implications for the major themes that concern humankind, from death to eternal life and God, to the Mystery of life.[51] The next seven remarks[52] cover the theme of the necessary failure of the enterprise of the book and culminate in his famous final answer to all philosophical quarrels.[53]

Our starting point for analysis is the realization that despite their logical role in language-games, ethical sentences considerably differ from logical statements or tautologies. As was noted in Part 1, ethical sentences lack the inescapability that is characteristic of tautologies. The necessity of logical sentences is universal, as they hold true in all possible worlds. The sense of necessity surrounding empirical and ethical sentences with a logical status is less absolute. For one thing, not all people are bound by the same sentences. Some people believe that humans were created by God, whereas others hold it to be true that we evolved from inorganic material. Moreover, experience tells us that ethical and aesthetical viewpoints can change within a lifetime. In TLP, Wittgenstein discussed the possibility of a change in the limit of the world, even though he established that it is logic that sets this limit, and a change in (formal) logic is inconceivable. By permitting this possibility of change, Wittgenstein provides an opening for investigating the status of ethical sentences with a logical role in the TLP context.

Change

Remark TLP 6.43, the last of the seven remarks on ethics and value, is the only remark in TLP referring to the possibility of change, and our

51. TLP 6.431 – 6.45.
52. TLP 6.5–6.54.
53. TLP 7.

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primary interest, for now, is the characteristics of change that Wittgenstein envisioned in it.

> If the good or bad exercise of the will alters the world, it can alter only the limits of the world, not the facts—not what can be expressed by means of language.
>
> In short, the effect must be that it becomes a different world. It must, so to speak, wax or wane as a whole.
>
> The world of the happy person is a different one from that of the unhappy person.[54]

The remark is not easy to understand, and some aspects of its meaning will have to wait for an explanation. One thing stated clearly, however, is that the world can be subject to change. Wittgenstein puts forward three essential features of such a change. First, the change does not affect the world in itself; it does not alter the facts that make up the world. Second, it is the world as a whole that changes; it becomes a different world. Thirdly, such a change is brought about by the will. The last feature makes clear that a full understanding of what Wittgenstein means here requires a deeper understanding of the will. Nevertheless, before investigating the will, we first compare this envisioned change in the world with Wittgenstein's investigations in OC of empirical sentences with a logical role.

In OC, Wittgenstein recognized the possibility of change in the set of sentences with a logical role. They can noticeably differ between different individuals. For instance, in the dispute between Moore and the sceptics, which is a central theme of the first part of OC, Moore and the sceptics fundamentally disagree on what sentences can be sensibly uttered. Moreover, Wittgenstein acknowledges that the set of empirical sentences with a logical role changes over time:

> It might be imagined that some sentences of the form of empirical sentences were hardened and functioned as channels for such empirical sentences as were not hardened but fluid; and that this relation altered with time, in that fluid sentences hardened, and hard ones became fluid.[55]

In OC 95 and OC 97, Wittgenstein depicts the empirical sentences with a logical status as a sort of mythology to articulate their distinct role. Yet, at some moment in time, a mythology may become the subject of scientific questioning, while (or because) the mythological role is taken over by other empirical sentences, which then obtain a logical status.

To be able to compare this change with the change in the world acknowledged in TLP, a closer examination is needed of the

54. TLP 6.43 (translation modified).
55. OC 96 (translation modified); See also OC 95, OC 97 and OC 336.

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characteristics that Wittgenstein attributed to a change in empirical sentences with a logical role. Consider the following remark:

> ... Men have believed that they could make rain; why should not a king be brought up in the belief that the world began with him? And if Moore and this king were to meet and discuss, could Moore really prove his belief to be the right one? I do not say that Moore could not convert the king to his way of looking [*Anschauung*], but it would be a conversion of a special kind; the king would be brought to approach the world differently [*anders zu betrachten*]...[56]

The change brought about by Moore would not be like a conclusion reached by rational arguments and pointing out matters of fact. On the contrary, Wittgenstein chose the word "conversion" (or "persuasion" in OC 262) to underline the different nature and impact for the king. A persuasion to Moore's world view would not only change his *Anschauung* or "way of looking at" the world, but it would change his *Betrachtung* or "approach" to the world: his behaviour towards the world – his practices – would change.[57]

56. OC 92 (partial; translation modified).The translations in the English version are 'view' and 'way of looking at the world', respectively; but '*Anschauung*' might be better translated as 'beholding' or 'contemplating' the world, which is more conceptual; and '*Betrachtung*' as 'a way of approaching or dealing with (the contingent facts of) the world,' which has a more practical connotation.

57. Two other phenomena, discussed elsewhere by Wittgenstein, may be helpful here. The first is aesthetic reasoning. In one of his lectures, reported by G.E. Moore in *Wittgenstein's Lectures in 1930 – 33* (Moore, 1954), Wittgenstein explored the kind of reasoning used in discussions about aesthetical topics. Edwards used these remarks as a starting point and model for understanding Wittgenstein's new method of philosophy in his later work. He described the impact of an aesthetic argument as follows:"... a change in aesthetic contexts is a change in the person himself, a change in his individuating sensibilities; such an alteration is a change in the very way in which experience is appropriated. It alters some of the basic images and ideals that order our experience and give it a particular character and value. After the change many (perhaps all) things are experienced differently." (Edwards, 1982: 144)Edwards saw in this a metaphor for the change that Wittgenstein intended to bring about in his readers with his philosophy. However, the analogy with the change in world view discussed in the present paper is apparent.The second instructive passage is on 'dogma' in *Culture and Value*. Here again, a description is found of a kind of inevitable frame of convictions, independent of, but determining our experience of the world of mere facts."If certain graphic propositions for instance are laid down for human beings as dogmas governing thinking, namely in such a way that opinions are not thereby determined, but the *expression* of opinions is completely controlled, this will have a very strange effect. People will live under an absolute, palpable tyranny, yet without being able to say they are not free. I think the Catholic Church does something like this. For dogma is expressed in the form of an assertion & is unshakable, & at the same time any practical opinion can be made to accord with it..." (Culture and Value, p. 32, dated 1937)These passages show that the idea of a foundational frame of convictions, beyond verification but susceptible to change, was already present in Wittgenstein's work well before the remarks in OC near the end of his life. In both cases, these ideas were put forward when discussing topics closely related to value and ethics.

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To understand the ground-shaking impact of such a conversion, we have to recall the primacy of the notion of "agreement in judgements" in Wittgenstein's later philosophy.[58] Learning how to do things (e.g., learning to measure length, to play chess, to use language. . .) is learning to make judgements, and agreement in these judgements with the teacher is the criterion for having learned the skill. Therefore, acquiring a skill is acquiring a complex implicit network of judgements against which the skill is put to practice.

> We do not learn the practice of making empirical judgments by learning rules: we are taught *judgments* and their connexion [*sic*] with other judgments. *A totality* of judgments is made plausible to us.[59]
>
> But I did not get my world view by convincing myself of its correctness; nor do I have it because I am convinced of its correctness. No: it is the inherited background against which I distinguish between true and false.[60]

The world view is presented here as the background against which we act – the backbone that gives structure and form to our practices. Changing this backbone amounts to giving up old practices and learning and adopting new ones. This shift in practical knowledge is why Wittgenstein describes this change as a conversion of a special nature: the king would be led to approach the world differently.

The similarity between the role of this background, against which we distinguish between true and false, and the role of logic in TLP is apparent, and it seems reasonable to say that Wittgenstein thinks of it in this way.[61] It is equally evident, however, that Wittgenstein, in this last period of his work, still clearly distinguished between pure logic and empirical sentences with a logical role, and that he confined the envisioned change to the latter. Logic, as the crystallization of the formal structure of depiction of any and all possible facts, constitutes the absolute, unchangeable limit of thought and life. He elaborated on the metaphor of the river bed to make this clear:

> But if someone were to say "So logic too is an empirical science," he would be wrong. Yet this is right: the same sentence may get treated at one time as something to test by experience, at another as a rule of testing.[62]

58. PI 241—242.
59. OC 140.
60. OC 94 (translation modified); See also OC 95, OC 103, and OC 105.
61. See OC 136 – 137, OC 318 – 319, OC 436, OC 558 + OC 56.
62. OC 98 (translation modified).

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> And the bank of that river consists partly of hard rock, subject to no alteration or only to an imperceptible one, partly of sand, which now in one place now in another gets washed away, or deposited.[63]

The conversion to a different world view shows obvious similarity to the change in the limit of the world described in TLP 6.43. The first feature of change, namely that it does not affect the world in itself, i.e., the facts that make up the world, is preserved here. The people that figure in the OC remarks, such as Moore and the sceptics, live in the same factual world, while it is how this world is "looked upon and approached" that differs.

> . . . *Very* intelligent and well-educated people believe in the story of creation in the Bible, while others hold it as proven false, and the grounds of the latter are well known to the former.[64]

The second feature, namely that it is a change in the world as a whole, is also preserved. The King's conversion to Moore's world view will change the meaning or significance that the King attaches to the state of affairs in his everyday life – it will change the judgements that he agrees with, and his way of doing things. Therefore, the world he lives in will become a different one. It brings about a change in the prerequisites and boundaries for judgements of truth and falsity, which fundamentally changes the form of life.[65] The third characteristic of change in TLP was that it could only be brought about by the will. This feature is more difficult to reconcile with the OC remarks. At best, we can say that if the change in OC is a conversion to a different "viewing" of the world, the will should be construed as a way of looking at, of approaching the (factual) world as a whole. Some support for such a conception of the will is found in the fact that the metaphysical self in TLP is conceived metaphorically as the "seeing eye."[66] This metaphor brought Edwards to the view that in TLP the will (or value) takes the form of a *mode* of seeing:[67]

> The will, which is the bearer of good and evil, is thus the condition of the self, a way of looking at the world spread out before one; will, like

63. OC 99.
64. OC 336 (partial).
65. See OC 141 – 142.
66. See TLP 5.631 – 5.634.
67. Edwards (1982: 21 – 22). A somewhat similar view is presented in Christensen (2004) in her interpretation of ethics as an attitude, which is reminiscent of some remarks in the *Notebooks 1914 – 1916* (i.e., NB 86.11, NB 87.03) in which Wittgenstein considers the characterization of the will as an attitude towards the world (*der Wille ist eine Stellungnahme zur Welt*).

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> aesthetic contemplation, becomes a passive mode of vision, not an active principle of change.[68]

The next section explores the TLP statements regarding value and will in more detail, in order to come to a more thorough comparison of this third feature of a change in TLP and OC, and a better understanding of how the above discussion, which in OC focused on empirical judgements, might apply to expressions of value and ethics.

Will and value

The conception of value in the TLP remarks 6.4–6.43 follows from the fundamental contrast between facts as they appear in the analysis of language and facts as they are experienced in everyday life. The TLP analysis of language reveals a world in which everything happens and is the way it is by mere coincidence. This is because the analysis of language only reveals the principles of depiction. The constellation of elements depicted in an elementary sentence agrees with reality or not,[69] and this process of depicting leaves reality unaltered – that is, it does not interfere with what is and is not the case. Therefore, from the perspective of language, the facts depicted by elementary sentences are but "possible" facts,[70] and these possible facts are independent of one another.[71] From this perspective, all elementary sentences are equivalent (*gleichwertig*). This conclusion is the opening statement of the section on value and ethics.[72]

However, the world revealed by the analysis of language is not the world or reality as we experience it. On the contrary, it is felt that things in the world happen for a reason, and that some things that happen (or not) are more important than others. In the first elaboration of the opening statement,[73] Wittgenstein expresses this as the feeling that the state of affairs is not arbitrary. However, this experience of value attached to possible happenings receives no justification from the analysis of language. Nothing in the completely analysed sentence relates to this value, and consequently, nothing in the world could correspond to it. This implies that value cannot be thought of as an object or a quality – something in the world. It also implies that the value we experience in

68. Edwards (1982: 51).
69. In TLP, natural language sentences can in principle be logically analyzed into a completely analyzed form, consisting of elementary sentences combined by logical connectors (and, or, implies, etc.). The elementary sentences show their meaning, because they are a picture of the fact that they represent (4.022).
70. TLP 1.2, 1.21.
71. TLP 1.21, 2.06, 2.061.
72. I.e., TLP 6.4.
73. I.e., TLP 6.41.

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relation to a possible fact cannot be expressed in language. It cannot be inferred from the elements and how they relate within the sentence. That does not mean that we have to discard value. It means that whatever it is, value is beyond the reach of linguistic expression:

> The sense of the world must lie outside the world. In the world everything is as it is, and everything happens as it does happen: *in* it no value exists — and if it did exist, it would have no value.
>
> If there is any value that does have value, it must lie outside the whole sphere of what happens and is the case. For all that happens and is the case is accidental.
>
> What makes it non-accidental cannot lie *within* the world, since if it did it would itself be accidental.
>
> It must lie outside the world.[74]

The consequences of this conclusion for ethical sentences are harsh: there can be no ethical sentences.[75] Ethical sentences attempt to communicate something higher that is not expressible in language. Again, this does not eliminate ethics. Wittgenstein acknowledges the insights inherent in ethics, but accepts that these insights must pertain to how we relate to the world, i.e., they are transcendental.[76] This is the crucial point where ethics is placed at the level of logic. It means that, similar to logic, ethics reflects the form of our relationship to the world – the "how" instead of the "what."

The last three remarks stipulate the implications of this for ethical reward,[77] for a change in ethics,[78] and for the will.[79] We cannot, at this point, fully clarify these statements, but the last remark suggests a direction for the further clarification of the concept of value in TLP:

> It is not possible to speak of the will, as the bearer of the ethical.[80]

The characterization of the will as "the bearer of the ethical" suggests that the will is somehow responsible for the feeling of value and the status associated with ethical sentences. The will is discussed in TLP in the seven remarks that directly precede those on value.[81] These seven remarks constitute the last part of a larger section on logical necessity that revolves around the notion that only logical insights are necessarily true

74. TLP 6.41.
75. TLP 6.42. This not only holds for ethics but also for the fields of religion, philosophy, ethics, aesthetics, which all have to do with value (See TLP 6.431 – 6.45).
76. TLP 6.421.
77. TLP 6.422.
78. TLP 6.43 (discussed above).
79. TLP 6.423.
80. TLP 6.423 (partial; translation modified).
81. From TLP 6.37 to 6.375.

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while "...outside of logic everything is accidental."[82] This notion is further elaborated in the first of the seven remarks on the will by stating that there can be no compulsion, according to which something has to happen because something else has happened.[83] Such a compulsion can only take the form of logical necessity.[84] But logical necessity pertains only to what is possible in the world, not to what actually happens. Therefore, the idea that the happenings in the world are governed by the causal laws of nature has no more claims to truth than the notion that they are governed by God or by fate.[85] Such conceptions of the world assume a non-arbitrary relationship between happenings that falls outside the domain of contingent facts as revealed by language analysis. At this point, Wittgenstein introduces the will, stating that the world is independent of my will.[86] This claim of independence at this point in the argument makes it clear that, for Wittgenstein, such world views appealing to God, fate or science are tied up with the will: it is the independence of will and world that sets these world views apart from the world. Imagine the inverse of TLP 6.373 (and TLP 6.374) to be true. If the happenings in the world were dependent on my will, then my willing something would make it happen. In that case, the world would be a logical consequence of my will, and the contingency of the world would dissolve. We learn from this that what makes sentences in our experience non-equivalent and facts non-accidental must be the will. Hence, it can be concluded: (i) the will is what makes happenings non-accidental, and therefore, as stated in 6.41, the will itself is not accidental either (i.e., it is a priori, it lies outside the world); (ii) value as the expression of the non-accidental nature of possible facts is a manifestation of the will.

It may be helpful to bring all this together in a picture. Imagine that I am watching a sports game featuring my favourite team. My will dictates that my team wins, but the actual happenings in the game are independent of that will (if there were a logical connection between my will and the world, my team would necessarily win the game). Although independent of my will, the happenings and facts during the game are not indifferent to me. This is because all the events are coloured by my will – my willing charges them with value. This is not to say that they get something (a thing, a quality expressible in language) attached to

82. TLP 6.3 (partial; translation modified).
83. TLP 6.37.
84. TLP 6.37.
85. TLP 6.371, 6.372.
86. TLP 6.373.

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them. It merely means that the possible happenings are no longer equivalent.

The will is not just responsible for the feeling of non-equivalence of the happenings of the world, but also for a feeling of determination. As discussed above, in TLP 6.41 Wittgenstein associates value with the feeling that the states of affairs are not accidental or arbitrary: we feel that they are caused by and influence other happenings. In order words, they are given an explanation and a reason. So, in the same act, the will colours the happenings with value and with the belief that they are determined. This belief takes two forms. First, it is the belief that the events can be influenced (and the higher the value, the more we think that we should) – in the above example, for instance, by encouraging the players, by creating spy-heads, by intimidating the referee or even by donating money for equipment and training of the team. Second, it is the belief that whatever happens had to happen. When my team loses, I can call it fate, the laws of nature, punishment from God, or the influence of the stars...[87] In the *Notebooks 1914 – 1916* (NB), Wittgenstein went so far as to call it an *alien* will behind all that happens and is the case.[88]

Will and representation

The justification in the first part of the paper for giving ethical sentences a logical status was that they met the same requirements that were used by Wittgenstein in OC to lend some empirical sentences a logical status. These requirements relate to the truth status of the sentences. The discussion is, for instance, about Moore holding true other empirical sentences than the Catholics, in the fictitious dispute about the nature of consecrated wine.[89] Moreover, in applying the negation technique, Wittgenstein asks us to negate the truth of such sentences. This prominent role of truth is not upheld in the current, second part of this paper, which investigates the implications of the conclusions in part one for the remarks on ethics in TLP. So far, the discussion revolved only around value and will, almost without reference to truth. Therefore, the question arises how does this value aspect of ethical sentences connect with their truth- dependent logical status? Since value emanates from the will, answering this question will require a deeper understanding of the relationship between will, logic and world. As neither TLP nor OC elaborates on this topic, we will turn to the *Philosophical Investigations*. In a series of remarks at the end of Part I, Wittgenstein investigates the will

87. TLP 6.371, 6.372.
88. See NB 73.1 and 75.5.
89. OC 239; See also discussion in Stiers (2000: 213).

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accompanying an act.[90] In the opening remark,[91] he makes clear what is at stake: Is the will just another happing in the world of representation ("... der 'Wille' auch nur 'Vorstellung'")? This question is reminiscent of the explorations in the last part of TLP. Wittgenstein first focuses on simple physical acts[92] such as moving one's arm,[93] and he comes to the conclusion that the will to move an arm cannot be a separate happening in the world, in addition to the act itself and causing it (i.e., the explanation must come to an end).[94]

> When I raise my arm 'voluntarily' I do not use any instrument to bring the movement about. My wish is not such an instrument either.[95]
>
> "Willing, if it is not to be a sort of wishing, must be the action itself. It cannot be allowed to stop anywhere short of the action." If it is the action, then it is so in the ordinary sense of the word; so it is speaking, writing, walking, lifting a thing, imagining something. But it is also trying, attempting, making an effort,—to speak, to write, to lift a thing, to imagine something etc.[96]
>
> 616. When I raise my arm, I have *not* wished it might go up. The voluntary action excludes this wish. ...[97]

After PI 632, the explorations evolve towards language, with an analysis of the act "to mean something" (*meinen*) and to mean to point to someone using language – i.e., the will or intention to designate some person or thing. Again, Wittgenstein concludes that the will is not separate from the act: intending, meaning an object is an inextricable part of the act of saying something about it. The act of saying within the confinement of a language-game is the natural manifestation of the intention to mean a particular thing. The inseparability of the intent and the act is part of language-games and hence attains a logical status. This conclusion is confirmed by the application of the negation technique to these examples.[98]

The discussion in PI of meaning someone has an obvious analogy in the TLP view on the interpretation of the sentence. In TLP, the smallest

90. For a comparable analysis of the 'will to act' in the early phase of Wittgenstein's writing, see remarks 86.12 – 89.3 in the *Notebooks 1914 – 1916*.
91. PI 611.
92. A justification for seeing the will behind a physical movement as a manifestation of the metaphysical will, connected to Ethics in TLP, can, for instance, be found in the remarks 76.15 – 77.7 from the *Notebooks 1914 – 1916*. In these remarks, Wittgenstein explored the distinction between the will as the bearer of Good and Evil and the will that moves the human body, and suggests the same fundamental role of the will in both contexts.
93. PI 612-632.
94. See OC34, OC110 and the rule-following argument in PI 138 – 242.
95. PI 614.
96. PI 615.
97. PI 616 (partial).
98. PI 678, 679 and 681.

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unit of language is the elementary sentence together with its interpretation – i.e., the projection from the elements of the completely analysed sentence to the objects in the world is part of the sentence.[99] TLP 3.11 states that the projection method is the thinking of the sentence meaning – so, an act of depiction of which the will, i.e., the intention to point, is a part. We can rephrase this and say that the projection method, which connects the sentence to reality, is the intention or will to mean such and such with the sentence elements. This reveals how will and truth are related: the will is the *agent* or generator behind the process of representation, and therefore an *a priori* requisite for truth and falsity. In TLP, a (completely analysed) sentence is true[100] if the configuration of its elements corresponds to the configuration of the objects[101] that they represent,[102] and the linking of the elements to the objects, the projection,[103] is a willed act of "*meinen*" or "to mean." The will is, therefore, the force (the bow) that projects the sentence elements (the arrows) and their configuration into reality (the targets) to represent a possible state of affairs. Without this projection, the question of truth simply cannot arise. This is what we above called the first requirement for meaningfulness: every element in the sentence must have an unequivocal interpretation.[104]

The convergence of the sentence projection in TLP with to -mean-something in PI sheds light on the relationship between the will and the praxis of the language-game. The unequivocal linking of language to reality, which in TLP was guaranteed by including the projection in the sentence, was in the later philosophy ensured by the language-game.[105] Depicting, representing facts in the world, meaning someone or something... are part of the practical knowledge of how to do things with language. These practices provide the formal medium through which the will can reach out to the world. I know of the world only through my practices, and it is only within these practices that my will to do something can succeed. Acting in the world requires a practical understanding of the formal structure of the world. This understanding also entails a network of fundamental propositions that are judged to be true by those who share the practice. These propositions represent "*Bedingungen*" or conditions for meaningfulness. In the game of chess, for instance, knowledge of the rules and understanding of the game are the means through which the will to win or to compete can satisfy itself. This practical

99. See TLP 2.1513, 3.11 – 3.13 and discussion in Stiers (2000: 204).
100. TLP 2.223.
101. TLP 2.15, 3.21.
102. TLP 3.22.
103. TLP 3.12, 3.13.
104. See above, section 1.2.
105. See above, section 1.2.

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understanding lends sense to each act and gives meaning to each outcome. It dictates which moves are meaningful and which are not allowed, and therefore constitutes the conditions for meaning. It is the will to win, however, which lends value to the possible positions and moves on the board, and it is the will that drives the game, chooses the moves and, through the practical rules, meaningfully expresses itself in actions. In the NB Wittgenstein expresses this as "my will impregnates (*durchdringt*) the world."[106]

The connection between will and language-games allows crossing the bridge from the value of ethical sentences to their logical status inferred from the negation technique. For, violating the rules or insights that are part of our practices destroys the language-game and, therefore, the medium through which the will relates to reality. Trying to imagine that certain sentences, related to the form of our practices, are untrue, is trying to imagine what the world looks like beyond our practices, i.e., in itself – we cannot do this. And when we are confronted with someone denying these sentences, our reaction reveals the will behind these practices: such a violation invokes an ostensive defence of the conditions of meaningfulness. Our commitment is fuelled by the practical knowledge that these sentences constitute the boundary between sense and nonsense. If there is value conveyed by ostensively uttering such sentences, then it is not in the content of the sentences held up, but in the act of holding them up in admonition – in the fact that someone chooses to make this ostensive utterance. It should be clear that this is equally true for the person exclaiming, "You ought to want to behave better," as for Moore's saying, "Here is a hand" while holding up his hand for his audience. Regardless of whether the sentences are ethical, empirical postulates or tautologies, the practical importance or value conveyed by ostensively holding them up is that they express the conditions for our meaningful going about with reality.

Will and happiness

Now that we have tried to reconcile Wittgenstein's notions of value and will in TLP with the idea of a logical role for ethical sentences in language-games, we have to go back to the puzzling remarks on ethics and try to make sense of them. In TLP 6.422, Wittgenstein considers the issue of ethical reward and punishment: what happens if I behave unethically? The ethical consequences of behaving well or badly cannot be mere factual events in the contingent world – that is, gains and losses.

106. NB 73.1 (translation modified).

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Nonetheless, we feel that they must exist ("...something must be right about that question"[107]), and therefore, they must lie in the deed itself, Wittgenstein says. From the perspective of his later philosophy, ethical propositions belong to the backbone of practices. Therefore, the question of breaking an ethical law, in this later view, translates into asking what happens if we act against our practice. In the example of the chess game, when a player insists on making a knight's move with the rook, the game would collapse, the meaning inherent in that practice would vanish. Similarly, when we violate the practice of language-games, other people would no longer be able to interact meaningfully with us – our mutual understanding would be destroyed. Can these consequences of acting along or against the practice be the ethical consequences of the good or bad will? The remarks in the NB suggest a way in which they can. In some of these remarks Wittgenstein talks about an alien will or the will of the world: we are dependent on an alien will[108] – the will that rules what happens in the world,[109] or God,[110] or fate.[111] The change in will required to change the world from unhappy to happy appears to consist in the submitting of my will to the will of the world.

> In order to live happily I must be in agreement with the world. And that is what "being happy" *means*.[112]
>
> I am then, so to speak, in agreement with that alien will on which I appear dependent. That is to say: 'I am doing the will of God'.[113]

Since W. did not take over these ideas in TLP, it is not clear whether he still adhered to this view by the time he assembled the book. However, the notes are suggestive of the direction of his thoughts in this early phase, and show how ideas from the first philosophical phase could link up with concepts in his later work. Identifying the alien will with the will of God or fate aligns it with the notion of world views and the practices to which they belong. According to Wittgenstein's later view, we have grown into a world governed by God, fate, or scientific laws, and been trained in practices accordingly. This is the world as I found it.[114] Submitting my will to the will of this world amounts to acting according to its practices. It amounts to accepting the outcomes of my actions as valuable within this reference frame, even if they are not what

107. TLP 6.422 (partial; translation modified).
108. NB 74.11.
109. See NB 74.13, 74.15.
110. NB 74.12.
111. NB 74.13.
112. NB 75.4.
113. NB 75.5.
114. TLP 5.631.

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I had hoped for. According to the NB remarks, this is a happy world.[115] If I do not submit my will to the will of the world, it means that I choose to act in disagreement with the practices of the world I was born into; I do not accept the value that the outcomes of my actions have according to this world. We have seen that this questioning of the logical truths inherent in the practice destroys the practice and the meaning it implies. This struggle transforms my world from a happy to an unhappy one. Or, at least – as far as this is echoed in TLP – the world of the happy person is different from that of the unhappy person.[116]

Following the above interpretation, a view of ethics can be outlined behind Wittgenstein's lifelong writings. Acting according to the practice is a manifestation of "good" will. In contrast, breaking with a meaningful practice is a manifestation of "bad" will. The fundamental consequences of good or bad will are in the act itself: acting in accord with the practice preserves the significance and meaning inherent in the practice; acting against it leads to a loss of significance and meaning. This interpretation adds to our understanding of TLP remark 6.43, on the change in the limits of the world brought about by bad will. The change is not in the facts of the world, but in the significance or value attached to these facts. The bad will (*böses Wollen*) brings about a loss of value, in that a range of happenings and contingencies that had their place within the practice lose their meaning. They are no longer valued. With the destruction of practices and the significance that they generate, the world as a whole diminishes, or wanes.

IV. Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to re-investigate the tenability of giving ethical sentences a logical status within Wittgenstein's lifelong philosophy. The predicate "logical" is intrinsically related to Wittgenstein's semantic views, for which there is good reason to believe that they guided his thinking in both of his main philosophical periods.[117] In the first part of the paper, helped by Wittgenstein's own analysis of a set of empirical sentences with a logical role in OC, it was shown how ethical sentences could be given a logical status,[118] precisely because these OC analyses had expanded the concept of logic from purely formal logic to logic

115. NB 75.4.
116. TLP 6.43.
117. Stiers (2000).
118. A similar attempt to give ethical sentences a logical status inspired by the remarks in OC was undertaken by Christensen (2004, 2005).

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with meaning postulates. In this view, ethical sentences are not nonsense, as ill-formed sentences are (i.e., the first requirement of meaningfulness). Semantically, they express propositions, but these propositions belong to the skeleton that shapes our language-games and moulds our meaningful practices of interacting with the world. Therefore, they cannot be denied, because that would undermine the language-game, and we would lose our practice of meaningful interaction with the world. Such sentences can only be used as an ostensive defence of the practice: this is how it is done!

The investigations in the second part of the paper showed that this semantic characterization of ethical sentences helped to explain the sometimes cryptic remarks on ethics and value in TLP. The explanation relied on the concept of the will, which led the way towards integrating Wittgenstein's early and later philosophical writings. In TLP, the will was seen as the bearer of value, i.e., of the feeling that the happenings in the world are not accidental, and that they happen for a reason. Because this sense of necessity was not supported by the analyses of language, it placed the will and value outside of the representable world, without any further means to elucidate their role in language. Wittgenstein's analysis of "to mean something" in PI made it clear that he saw the will as the intention to mean this by saying that, i.e., the projection of the sentence to the world as envisioned in TLP. This PI analysis re-affirmed the TLP conclusion that this intention is an integral part of the meaningful use of a sentence and, therefore, a formal aspect of uttering something within a language-game. Lastly, the investigations in OC of the logical role that some empirical sentences play in our practices revealed the will in another way as the agent behind acting within language-games: a violation of the practice – any intention to bring them as mere contingencies within the game – invokes an ostensive defence of the conditions of meaningfulness. This defence reveals the status of necessity that clings to the practical insights: they constitute the necessary and sufficient conditions for the will to interact with the world. Their absolute character is responsible for the feeling that the world as we experience it through our practices is not arbitrary.

Concerning the ethical, the direct relationship between will and value in TLP allowed relating TLP ideas about value and ethics to Wittgenstein's later views on language-games and the practice of life. The awareness of value is the awareness that the world in which we live is not arbitrary. This value is threatened and wilfully defended when another person denies insights inherent in our world view, but it is destroyed when these insights are questioned from within the will. The "bad" will is the will that abandons these insights. Ethical reward is the corollary of living according to these insights and the meaningful form of life that

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they provide. Ethical punishment is the consequence of questioning these insights, leading to the destruction of the practice and the loss of meaning and value. The world in which we live becomes smaller, and this change is brought about by the will. A change does not have to be destructive, however. It can also be brought about by a conversion to a new world view. This is a dramatic change, as it requires learning new practices, a new approach to the world, and new ethical insights.

Having reached the end of this exposition, a note of caution is in order. It must be clear that what was presented above is an extrapolation based on only a small number of available remarks and notes from Wittgenstein on this subject matter. As discussed above, there are only seven remarks on value and ethics in TLP. But even more conspicuous is the absence of any overt reference to value in OC. Although it contains a large number of remarks, one should be aware that in none of them does Wittgenstein overtly address the issues of ethics or any other value domain. His focus is on elucidating the semantic status of a subset of sentences held to be true despite their empirical, descriptive structure. The investigation is of the conditions for the truth of these sentences, not their value. However, based on the conclusions drawn in the current paper, this question of their truth amounts to whether we value them enough – that is, whether they are essential for the will to reach out to, and interact with, the world. With regard to semantics, the remarks in OC and in TLP show sufficient similarity to substantiate the claim that Wittgenstein held a lifelong view on the semantic relationship between language and reality and the conditions for truth and meaning. In contrast, the scarce remarks on ethics and value do not allow a similarly strong claim about ethical sentences. I hope, however, to have conveyed the plausibility of my interpretation of the semantic status of ethical sentences – an interpretation that finds additional support in the context it provides for clarifying several remarks in the last part of TLP that are otherwise difficult to probe.

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