An Abstract of Philosophy

...which promises more both
to the entertainment and
advantage of mankind …
Hume, ›Abstract‹

work on philosophy is actually closer to working on oneself.
On one's own understanding. On the way one sees things.
(And on what one demands of them.)
Wittgenstein ›Big Typescript‹

Contents

0. Philosophy: Method and central objects

Many products of intellectual endeavor call themselves ›philosophy‹ or ›philosophy of ...‹. Not all of them are philosophy according to the standard I am going to outline here.

For the conception I want to defend a question from Augustine's *Confessions* has got the status of a paradigm. As is well known, Augustine asked in book XI 14: „What, then, is ›time‹? When I am not asked, I know it. But when I should explain it to someone who asks me, I don't know it." (o.t.[1]) As persons, as speakers of a natural language, we all know what time is insofar, as we have mastered linguistic and other temporal determinations and are able, for instance, to make an appointment and act accordingly. We thereby show and have an implicit knowledge of what time is. But when asked for an explicit explanation of ›time‹, not only normal speakers tend to be at a loss.

Many philosophers, among them Kant and Wittgenstein[2], understand Augustine's question

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1 Own translation.

2 Kant:'Untersuchung über die Deutlichkeit der Grundsätze der natürlichen Theologie und der Moral' (1764, A 79-80;

as the paradigmatic formulation of a philosophical problem. They consequently see the task of philosophy as that of making explicit the implicit knowledge we have as persons and speakers of our language(s). Consequently philosophy's method is *reflective conceptual clarification – reflective*, because it presupposes language and understanding and is directed at the understanding we already have as persons an speakers of our language; *conceptual*, because concepts are the central units of our understanding; *clarification*, because the units of our understanding are unclear and deny surveyability without special efforts.

It can easily be seen that the task of philosophy builds on facts related to the process of our becoming persons. We acquire our first conceptual system in learning and being trained[3] in our mother-tongue. We come to use it as a matter of course long before reaching a position to reflect on what we are in command of. For explicit understanding of what we know implicitly we are always coming late. This I see as the objective situation in which people of a reflective bent may come to have the diversest reasons to philosophize – to attempt to gain a survey of our/their own understanding.

My exposition leans heaviliy on ideas and insights of Wittgenstein (LW). Since my reading of him is less than common, I give a short outline of it in advance. Philosophy owes to LW a method of doing philosophy, which was the only thing he claimed that he could teach.[4] The linguistic turn effected by the use of this method is built on substantial insights.

In Germany historians of philosophy are fond of presenting the teachings of great figures in German philosophical tradition as having proceeded from one fundamental insight. So Dieter Henrich ascribed to Fichte the fundamental insight that self-consciousness cannot basically be understood as reflection; and Jürgen Habermas ascribed to Hegel the insight that spirit is basically an intersubjective phenomenon. Fichte and Hegel were constructive metaphysicians. If it were admissible to ascribe one fundamental insight to a descriptive philosophy as LW's is, it would have to be the claim that *there is an internal relation between language and the world*[5] [coupled to an external relation between language and reality (Wirklichkeit)].

›World‹ in this claim is taken as containing everything possible to understand, because it makes sense (is meaningful), whereas ›reality‹ contains everything described in true propositions. This understanding presupposes the distinction, clarified for the first time,

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Wittgenstein: *Philosophical Investigations (PI)*, para. 89.

3 Wittgenstein for ›training‹ used as a translation back into German the expression ›Abrichtung‹, which in German normally is used only for animals (not in command of a propositional language). This caused much misunderstanding.

4 In the 10th lecture of Michaelmas term 1934, first paragraph (according to the notes of Margaret Macdonald and Alice Ambrose).

5 *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus (TLP)* 4.014.

between sense (understandability) and truth/falsehood (satisfiability/non-satisfiability for propositions used in the non-assertoric moods[6]). The distinction sense/truth ... leads to a priority of sense, for to be either true or false a proposition has to be meaningful in the first place. What does not make sense analytically cannot be understood, let alone be true or false. LW's method is built on this priority of sense over truth ..., for LW claimed that it consisted „essentially … in the transition from the question of *truth* to the question of *sense*"[7] (o.t.).

Connected to this fundamental distinction of sense/truth … are the reasons for the conception of the ›autonomy of grammar‹. It can be explained most easiliy with reference to the development of LW's philosophy. In TLP the logical analysis of each proposition of natural language, taken to be complex whatever its grammatical form may be, is said to lead to logically independent elementary propositions. These are said to be complexes of simple, unanalysable names, which depict states of affairs (Sachverhalte). The simple names are taken to have a double-aspect relation to simple objects. Seen as the relation from name to object, the relation is that of meaning (bedeuten); in the converse direction, names are said to represent (vertreten) the objects. From the numbering system of TLP there follows a priority of the 'realistic' representation of object by name over the 'idealistic' aspect of the name meaning the object.[8]

In PI this complex conception of names and objects is given up. The circular elucidations of names conceived of in TLP (3.263) would have to have been inner ostensive definitions (if LW had bothered to give any examples). The demonstration of such inner definitions being logically impossible (because idle) is the nub of the Private Language Argument (PI para. 258). Real names in our language, in spite of TLP's verdict, can be explained in real (exterior) ostensive definitions, which take the object pointed at as a paradigm, to which the name or expression thereby is calibrated. The autonomy of grammar results in the reflection that paradigms, though not words, nevertheless belong to language (as one of its instruments; PI para. 16). This makes language independent from any hypothesized deep structure of reality (objects & states of affairs) and its grammar autonomous:

„The connection of 'language and reality (world)' is made in the explanations of words, – which belong to Grammar (Sprachlehre), so that language becomes self-contained and autonomous."[9] (o.t.)

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6   I omit the parenthesed elucidation when writing about truth/falsehood in the following.

7   LW's *Nachlass*, MS 106 46 (the numbering is of von Wright's catalogue).

8   The reason for this is that in TLP a remark numbered with less numbers after the point precedes a remark with a number with more numbers after the point. 'representaion' is in TLP 3.22, 'meaning' in 3.203.

9   LW: *Philosophische Grammatik* IV.55. Kenny's translation into English has 'definition' instead of 'explanation of meaning', which is infelicitous for the transparency of the remark. The reasons for preferring 'world' to 'reality' as the

Based on this conception of ›autonomy of grammar‹ philosophy becomes reflection on sense (Sinnbetrachtung) – one could call it 'theory of sense', but then 'theory' would have to be taken in the Aristotelian sense with its optical connotations. *Sinnbetrachtung* results in clarifications of possibilities of understanding. These clarifications are – like all concept use according to LW – governed by interests, philosophically by the interests in claritiy and surveyabilitiy. (Cp. PI para. 570)

One central distinction usable in LW's method is between material and formal concepts. Material concepts are expressed in classifications of what is given immediately in perception and doing. Examples are colour words and verbs for activities and/or actions. Material concepts belong under concepts of higher order. Take a look at the following example. In the sequence – bonobos/chimpanzees/gorillas – anthropoid apes – apes – brutes – animals – individuals – entities – each of the later expressions after the first expresses something more general than the antecedent expression. But up to ›animal‹ the more general expressions express material concepts only. ›Animal‹ is the first expression with uses expressing a formal concept too, when it is used to demarcate the animate from the inanimate. Talk of ›individuals‹ and ›entities‹ belong to logic (in the philosophically relevant uses), they express formal concepts only, insofar as logical talk generally abstracts from material content. ›Entities‹ are the elements of the universe of discourse in predicate logic, they are referred to by an individual variable. But this variable has a prototype in normal language, the indefinite pronoun ›something‹. The corresponding noun to this variable is ›object‹ (Gegenstand).

In discussing the example it should have become obvious that (uses of) words expressing formal concepts, in being variables, belong to higher strata of language. In TLP formal concepts are explained with reference to ›object‹ (4.122 sqq.) and characterized by two marks: (1) they express variables, which (2) are already given with each of their instances. Therefore formal unlike material concepts cannot be empty. On the other hand, being already given with each of their instances, the explicit formation of formal concepts is optional. For instance, if one has expressions for artefacts like bed, table, chair, computer etc., one does not need ›object‹ in addition.

Formal concepts do not belong to formal languages only. There are many uses of words in normal language that are similar to the expressions formal concepts – one example is the use of expressions like ›Politics‹, ›Economy‹, ›Cultural affairs‹, ›Sports‹ as titles of the sections in the daily newspaper. Strictly formal concepts belong to formal languages. But because of the similarity to uses of words in normal language I shall call those expressing something

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internal relatum to language are explained in (5.) below.

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similar to formal concepts by this title too, as short for: Uses of words that are closely related to expressions for formal concepts in formal languages. Words expressing the fundamental concepts of common understanding therefore are taken to express 'formal concepts'. The central objects of philosophy are these fundamental concepts.

'Fundamental' (grundlegend) as demarcating these concepts may be misleading in some way, at least in German. To avoid misunderstanding, ›fundamental‹ should be taken as related to an end of reasoning. A reason is something that can be said for a claim or a way of doing. But even if one strictly holds to reasoning in the use of ›fundamental‹, there is need of an antidote to misunderstanding. It could be found in LW's picture of the house, whose ground is carried by everything erected upon it (because formal concepts are already given with their instances).[10] Indeed, LW's picture is even more apt in a variant: The whole building of common understanding is carried by the roof erected upon it. For the formal concepts, the central objects of reflective conceptual clarification, form the roof of that building. The fundamental insight philosophy is (in) the search of is directed to the formal concepts as structuring common understanding.

Finally, to justify this last element in the conception of philosophy I am about to outline, a word with respect to ›common understanding‹. This restriction of the task of philosophy as reflective conceptual clarification is to be understood historically. During its history all the other scientific disciplines have grown independent from philosophy. Because conceptual clarity is required for all intellectual endeavor, if it should have sensible results, the clarification of scientific concepts belong primarily to the sciences themselves. For philosophy there remains the independent task of clarifying the concepts that structure common understanding. These are presupposed also by the sciences. For whenever they reflect on and try to explain what one is *doing* in doing science, they are in need of the whole grammar of common understanding. Material particles (matter in motion) do not produce physics, persons do.

1. The concept of sense (Sinn)

As reflective clarification philosophy's first task is to clarify its own concept. Therefore this exposition started with an introduction on the concept of philosophy defended here. In its context it has been said that in clarifying concepts philosophy exposes possibilities of understanding. One one-word-expression for these possibilties is ›sense (Sinn)‹, which therefore is the object of this section.

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10 *On Certainty* para. 248

In German the basic meaning of ›Sinn‹ is what in English it means primarily in mathematics: ›direction‹ (›Richtung‹). When in English one says that something moves clockwise, in German one says ›im Uhrzeiger*sinn*‹ (literally „in the direction of the clock's hands"). Even in the basic meaning ›sense (Sinn)‹ is not an observation predicate, if one understands by this an expression for something that can be pointed at. It rather is an expression for something inferred from a movement one can observe. The use of ›sense (Sinn)‹ is justified only through inferences.

This is the more true of more developed uses of ›sense (Sinn)‹. A second group of uses belong to the category of capacity or ability. Talk of a ›sense of beauty‹, ›sense of humour‹, even of a ›sense of direction‹ testify to this. The five senses too are abilties (for the different modes of perception). One cannot point to abilities or capacities, one infers them as how-possible-explanations from what observed persons or animals do.

The third group of uses are more clearly on the way to the formal concept of sense. Non-linguistic actions and linguistic utterances make sense or do not make sense – they can be understood or not understood. As expressing the formal concept ›sense (Sinn)‹ means ›what can be understood‹. In its full generality this meaning is a philosophical innovation that came with Frege's distinction between ›sense‹ and ›reference‹ (›Sinn und Bedeutung‹) and its critique by LW.

Here a short historical digression might be useful. In German Frege's proposal implied a misuse of ›Bedeutung‹ as the entity an expression ›stands for‹, which was criticized by LW in his campaign against the Augustinian picture of language in PI. Frege, who besides Russell was the main influence on LW in TLP, was the first to develop a version of basic semantic categories. But he proceeded cumulatively in a piecemeal manner which led to tensions and even absurdities in the semantic framework. In ›Foundations of Mathematics‹ (1879) Frege formulated a version of the propositional context principle without any distinction between sense and reference. (Intr.; § 62) When he came to see the need for this distinction in 1892 (›On sense and reference‹), he developed it in a way that was apt to undermine the context principle by construing propositions as standing for peculiar objects too. He took his clue from the problem of informative identity-propositions (›The eveningstar is the morningstar‹) and therefore in a sense from the category of singular terms, which then was transposed to the proposition as a whole. Because of the misuse of ›Bedeutung‹ as that an expression ›stands for‹ and because a proposition is itself a – complex – expression, he needed a reference for the whole proposition too and believed to find it in its truth value. This leads to the absurd consequence that all true sentences have the same ›Bedeutung‹ (›reference‹), namely ›The

True‹, misconstrued as an object (because reference is reference to objects). This whole syndrome was criticized by LW already in TLP. He there stuck to the propostional context principle and proposed to reserve reference to words and sense to the whole proposition. (TLP 3.3) The point of this terminological regulation was to oppose the objectification of truth and falsity. (TLP 4.431) The Tractarian view was at least a start into a conception that has descriptive application without distorting natural understanding by populating the world with strange metaphysical entities like ›The True‹ and ›The False‹.[11] It finally led to the insight that the propositional context principle is meaningless, because something is a propositon only in language conceived as a ›game‹ according to rules.[12] The basic rules relate to words and their meaning, because the meaning of a word *is* what an explanation of its meaning explains. (PI para. 560) Descriptive words in language express concepts – possibilities of understanding something – and therefore ›sense‹, the object of philosophy's reflective clarification.

The insight into the internal relation of meaning and meaning-explanation with respect to words has far-reaching consequences. It is on the level of words already that the relation of language and the word (or reality, as LW misleadingly preferred to say) is constituted as an internal one. This is the foundation of the autonomy of grammar, as LW succinctly formulated: „The connection of ›language and reality‹ is made by the explanation of words, – which belong to grammar (›Sprachlehre‹, literally: the teaching of language). So language remains self-contained, autonomous." (o.t.)[13] This in combination with the basic distinction sense/truth … is LW's solution to the apparent problem of idealism vs. realism. Idealism thinks that reality is merely ›our represnentation‹, realism believes it radically independent from us. According to LW's conception idealism is right for sense and world, realism is right for truth and reality. The topic will be resumed in section (4.).

2. The concept of language

Because concepts are expressed objectively by (concept-)words, the universal medium of sense is language. More precisely: Language is the singular instance of the formal concept ›universal medium of expression and representation‹.[14] This elucidates from a comparison of

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11 In his later philosophy LW even anticipated the prosentential account of truth in Belnap and Brandom, when he took ›what you said is true‹, an anaphorical pro-sentence, as the standard context for the use of ›true‹; cp. *Philosophical Grammar* VI.79 b.
12 Ib. VI.84 e.
13 Ib. IV.55 c.
14 Remember: Mark of a formal concept is that it is given already with each of its instances, therefore even with a singular one. For a formal concept, because of this mark, cannot be empty. ›Language‹ is the paramount example for this: When one bothers at all to ask for the concept, then *in* language. For one can put questions only in language. (Cp. TLP 6.51 b.) – The expression ›universal medium‹ was coined by the logician Jean van Heijenoort in his essay ›Logic as language and logic as calculus‹ (*Synthese* vol. 17, 1967, 324-330; cp. Hintikka & Hintikka: *Investigating*

language with other media of expression and representation. If in these media – dance, theatre; painting, sculpture; architecture; photography, film; etc. – something is not understood immediately and therefore has to be explained, one has to make use of language to explain it. But if something linguistic is not understood immediately, language itself has to come up with an explanation. Language is the only *universal* medium of expression and representation, because it is, as far as possible at all, the only *self*-explaining medium. If felicitous, linguistic expression can be understood *per se*.

Language consists of sentences/propositions and their interrelations (systems of propositions; language-*games*). Sentences/propositions consist of words, are connections of words. The self-explaining character of language is connected already with the words, as LW's already cited principle of the internal relation between meaning and meaning-explanation states. (PI para. 560)

It can be best demonstrated with ostensive meaning-explanations of words for something given visually. In this form of meaning-explanation something given is taken as a paradigm of word-meaning in use of the form of words ›this –> is a / the …‹ coupled with a pointing gesture. The meaning of the word (think of a colour word defined in relation to a colour table) is thereby calibrated to the paradigm which is an element of reality used functionally.[15] If some misunderstanding arises concerning a word with such an explanation, then the paradigm itself can be used in a propositional context to remove it: ›But it does / does not look like this –>‹. The word then is replaced by its ostensive definition. This demonstrates the internal relation of language and reality, for the paradigm, although not a word, as usable in a propositional context evidently belongs to language – is one of the instruments of language. (Cp. PI para. 16.)

An internal relation is a relation that cannot *not* exist. It is necessary. Language as tied at bottom to ostensive explanations of words is because of their internal relation to their paradigms objectively directed already as the universal medium. That this depends centrally on language's potential for self-explanation LW stated in his also already cited résumé of his conception: „The connection of ›language and reality‹ is made by the explanation of words, – which belong to grammar (›Sprachlehre‹, literally: the teaching of language). So language remains self-contained, autonomous." (o.t.; PG IV.55 c)

Wittgenstein, Oxford 1986, Ch.1). But he did not relate it diagnostically to LW's conception of language and meaning-explanation.

15 The expression ›calibrate‹ is not LW's, but used by his interpretor David Pears. Cp. *The false Prison*, 2 vol., Oxford 1988/9, index sub ›calibration on objects‹ and ›agreement in judgements‹.

This kind of directedness in philosophy has been called ›intentionality‹. It is derived from the Latin verb *intendere* which has many related meanings. Two of them are of interest here: *to direct* (oneself) *to* and *to intend*. The Latin noun ›intentio‹ means *exertion*, *attentiveness*; *intention*; in, in the language of Law, *indictment*.

 Via the basic meaning *to direct to* intentionality is related to the conceptual field of ›sense‹, whose basic meaning also is direction. In the philosophical tradition of modern times intentionality was, continuing medieval uses, ascribed to consciousness or the mind. The ›of‹ in ›being conscious of‹ was taken to be the mark of intentionality. With LW's linguistic turn the primary bearer of intentionality is language as the medium of sense.

This seems to be paradox when seen against the background of *intention* as the meaning of *intentio*. Intentions belong to persons, their activities and actions and to language only insofar as it consists of activities and action. (Speaking a language is an activity. Using a proposition with one or the other force is an action.) The intentionality of language seems dependent on that of persons etc. For certainly humans did invent language.

But the seeming of paradox is misleading. Acting is behaviour *with a reason*. A reason is *what can be **said*** for an action or view. There is an internal relation between the concepts of activity/action and language which means: Acting in the full sense is something only persons, language using animals do. (Other animals and entities are movable or move themselves and produce effects in their environment, but these are not actions.) If therefore persons live with and in their language and language by its rules makes possible as well as restrains what they can will or do, it is by no means paradox to count language as the primary bearer of intentionality and the intentionality of persons as dependent on the command of language.

The use of intentional expression and representations should be understood as a basic form of ›modalization‹. The intentionality of propositions lies in their potential to be true or false, satisfied or non-satisfied. In the use of propositions humans have distanced their surrounding (their ecological niche) into a world as a space of possibilities, possible states of affairs, of which in each case the intended one must be chosen and all others (including the opposite one) excluded.

As a medium language relates to persons as it relates to the world. Reflective clarification at this point could continue with either of these concepts. Here I shall pursue the first possibility first.

3. The concept of a person

One becomes aware of the foundational status of the concept of a person, when one reflects

on a conspicuous difference of normal language from the formal notation of the predicate calculus. In it there is only one type of individual variable (variable name), viz. ›x‹. It is the formal counterpart to the indefinite pronoun ›something‹, which in normal language again corresponds to the noun ›object‹. But normal language contains another indefinite pronoun of equal status and importance, viz. ›someone‹, which corresponds to the noun ›person‹.

From implications of the predicate calculus Quine derived his tag: „To be is to be the value of a variable.“[16] Quine's dictum is disputable as a general explication of existence. For it turns existence completely into a general phenomenon, which goes against the intuition that singular existence (›x is‹) must be prior to existence with reference to the non-empty universe of discourse of a formal calculus.[17] Nevertheless I believe that Quine's tag can be transposed to the indefinite pronouns in normal language, because what we had reasons to form variables for certainly is taken to exist generally. It follows that the ontology of common sense is built on the dualism of ›object‹ and ›person‹. Logicians seem implicitly to acknowledge this when they take the formal individual variable to range over ›entities‹ – a formal category that deliberately lumps together objects and persons.

Not all uses of ›person‹ in normal parlance are *formal* ones. Rather, purely formal uses are very rare. The only example I can think of is the use of the expression as an indicator of countability (›so-and-so many *persons* were present‹). The *material* aspects of our common concept of a person have been explicated well in the discussion from Strawson's *Individuals* to Frankfurt's ›How is weakness of the will possible?‹ I resume its results as follows: *A person is a speaking, acting and essentially self-evaluating animal*.

The argument for the mark ›speaking‹ is as follows. Natural persons essentially bear their personal name by means of which they can be addressed (and referred to). The linguistic function of addressing someone would be without any point if it were not presupposed that the addressee could answer if he would. The capacity to answer have exclusively speaking, language using animals. Therefore a person is basically a speaking animal.

But the basic mark ›speaking‹ is even preceded by the mark ›acting‹. For the use of language is an activity of persons and the use of a proposition with one of the conventional forces (assertion; question; command; wish etc.) is an action. So as language using persons are also acting animals.

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16 Quine: *From a Logical Point of View* (1953), Harvard UP ²1961, 15.

17 In a moment I shall claim that for material uses of ›person‹ there is the implication that a person is the bearer of her (personal) name by means of which she can be addressed and referred to. The irreducibility of the phenomenon of being able to be addressed is a reason for belief in the priority of singular existence (for certainly addressing someone presupposes his existence).

From ›speaking‹, therefore ›acting‹ can be inferred ›self-evaluating‹. Someone who uses language seriously tries to do something right or wrong. His utterances are subject to normative evaluations. But a person is in complete command of her language not before she can criticize and correct her own utterances at least in cases of slip of tongue or empirical error. Therefore as speaking and acting animal a person essentially is a self-evaluating animal.

As ›acting‹ encompasses ›speaking‹, ›self-evaluating‹ encompasses both, because the potential for self-evaluation reaches far beyond singular utterances and actions. Here it has to remain a mere promissory note to say that the difficult question for a meaning of life is at bottom the question of evaluating ones own whole life.[18]

4. The concepts ›world‹ & ›reality‹

One important corollary of having the command of language is the ability to form concepts of totalities by means of the universal quantifier. The concepts of ›world‹ (›Welt‹) and ›reality‹ (›Wirklichkeit‹) are concepts of totalities. Or should it read: are concepts of one and the same totality?

There are uses of these words that call for an affirmative answer. But in view of this it is baffling that the first philosophical system completely based on the insights that led to the linguistic turn – LW's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* – uses and needs both expressions.[19]

It has been said in section (0.) that LW's central insight was that into the internal relation between language and reality. One of his concise formulations of this insight I have already cited twice: „The connection of ›language and reality‹ (›Sprache und Wirklichkeit‹) is made by the explanation of words, – which belong to grammar (›Sprachlehre‹, literally: the teaching of language). So language remains self-contained, autonomous." (o.t.; PG IV.55 c) That he used ›Wirklichkeit‹ (›reality‹) here is not an expression of terminological discipline, but has historical reasons in TLP, where the relation of ›world‹ und ›reality‹ poses a poblem too. (LW was no *anima naturaliter analytica*.) That some regimentation is badly needed here should be evident from the following quotations: „ 2.06 Das Bestehen und Nichtbestehen von Sachverhalten ist die Wirklichkeit." (Ogden's translation: „The existence and nonexistence of atomic facts is the reality.") Versus: „ 2.063 Die gesamte Wirklichkeit ist die Welt." (Ogden's translation: „The total reality is the world.") In German it is ›Sachverhalt‹, what Ogden (with

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18 I elaborated extensively on it in my German book ›*Das verstandene Leben*‹ (on www.emilange.de).
19 And additionaly even ›Realität‹ (5.5561; 5.64), which is the same word as ›reality‹, derived from the Latin *res* in medieval philosophy, there meaning the essentiality (*essentialitas*) of a *res* (matter, affair). I mainly lean on the German text and own translations of it. Although LW lived in Cambridge for long times, he almost exclusively wrote in German.

LW's approvement) translated by ›atomic fact‹. And the problem for understanding LW's conception is now this: How can the existence **and** nonexistence of *Sachverhalte* be the same as the world, which in TLP 1 (the first of the seven main propositions of TLP) is explained as the totality of facts = the totality of existent *Sachverhalte* alone? The total reality of 2.063 must contain only existent *Sachverhalte*, but reality in 2.06 is said to contain existent **and** nonexistent Sachverhalte. Can this be made consistent?

Yes, but only with the help of some reflective interpretation. In the ontology of TLP (1-2.063) LW already invests the insight that what is given to us must be expressed and represented in propositions to be objective (= intersubjectively controllable). And to propositions belongs the distinction between sense and truth/falsity. Sense is prior to the alternative truth or falsity, what makes no sense cannot be either true or false. The duality of ›world‹ and ›reality‹ is tied to the semantic distinction sense/truth ... And in the basic insight quoted for the third time at the beginning of the last paragraph, LW ties ›reality‹ (›Wirklichkeit‹) to ›sense‹. This is infelicitous with respect to German usage. ›Wirklichkeit‹ lexically also means ›what is effected in or by some process‹ and thereby alludes to empirical causal relations. But sense is a priori to everything empirical. Therefore I propose to reverse LW's classification and to tie the world to sense and reality to empirical truth/falsity. Then the world is to be defined as the totality of sense = of what can be (made) understood; reality as the totality of what is represented (representable) in true popositions. LW's central insight then is to be taken as the insight into the internal relation between language and – not *reality, but – the world.

5.The concepts of space & time

The examples I gave in section (0.; p.4), when I discussed the optionality of explicit formal concepts were spatial ones. An animal in its figure is basically a spatial item as well, but it has temporal aspects too (tied to having been born at some time and having to die at some unknown later time). The birth of an animal and its death are *events* (essentially temporal items), the life between these events is a *process* (the other main type of temporal item). The words ›event‹ and ›process‹ express in some of their uses formal concepts. We found that expressions for formal concepts, which logically are variables, in normal language correspond indefinite pronouns. What are the respective pronouns in the cases of space and time? Basically *›somewhere‹* for space. *›sometime‹* for time. But we can also characterize anything in space and time by further spatial or temporal specifications. Items in space (bodies) are so-an-so deep, wide or high, items in time cannot only be dated, but also clocked as so-an-so

long or short. So to ›somewhere‹ corresponds ›somehow dimensioned‹, to ›sometime‹ and ›when‹ with respect to events corresponds ›of (a) certain duration‹ with respect to processes.

The temporal duality of events and processes as a whole corresponds to spatial duality of bodies and masses. In both cases an item of first type is expressed with a word dividing reference and making what is referred to countable (indicated by the possibilty to use a grammatical article: the/a book etc.), the items of second type are not, because what is described as a mass (snow, water; trouble; etc.) needs the addition of a quantifying expression to form countable units (a drop/glass of water; a lot of trouble etc.)

These grammatical reminders should make the following explanations acceptable:

Space is methodologically what is describable by drawings and maps and measurable with scales and measuring rods; ontologically it is the possibilty of bodies and masses.

Time is methodologically what we divide (into months, weeks, days) with the help of calendars and measure with the help of clocks; ontologically it is the possibility of events and processes.

The duplicity of the respective explanations (methodological/ontological) corresponds to the duality of acting/perception or praxis/theory.

Talk of ›possibility‹ in the ontological explanations is justified already by space and time expressing formal concepts and these being variables. (A variable is the possibility to substitute one of its instances for it.) But this is bound up with the more fundamental ›modalization‹ which lies in the command and use of intentional expressions and representations generally, as was remarked at the end of section (2.).

There is a further aspect that is reflected in the modal formulations for the ontological explanations, namely that it is partly determined by our interest whether we treat something given as primarily requiring spatial or temporal determinations. LW remarked with full generality: „Concepts lead us to make investigations. They are the expression of our interest and direct our interest." (PI para. 570) With respect to spatial or temporal determinations of something given this can be illustrated as follows. Definite descriptions of events like „England's only victory in a football world championship 1966 *at Wembley*" can contain, as italicized at the end, spatial determinations, but they are not what interests us in the main. On the other hand, an artefact like a chair, a spatial object with the function to let one sit down, necessarily was produced by someone at some time and probably will lose its functionality at some later time, dependent on the durability of the materials used in its production. But its temporal aspects do not prevail, when we form the spatial sortal concept of a chair, they do not interest us primarily. For the chair's temporal aspects other possibilities of expression in

language do service, for instance finite forms of verbs like ›has been produced‹ or ›is broken‹.

6.The concepts of ›animated‹ (living) and ›inanimate‹ (not-living)

The title of this section could be less cumbersome ›The living and the dead‹, if one would not resrict ›dead‹ in its application to what has died and consequently lived before. One may be inclined not to do so because, as will be shown, our normal understanding is developed not from a ›view from nowhere‹[20], but strongly from ›our point of view‹. Already the basic distinction of ›person‹ and ›object‹ testifies to that. And the distinction to be elucidated in this section is necessary for us, because we are animals that have been born and shall die. From our point of view we and the other animals are alive, everything else is dead.

Identifying an indefinite pronoun corresponding to ›animal‹ is more complicated than in the cases treated up to now. It is ›someone‹ for male and female persons (in German this distinction is made explicitly: ›irgendeiner‹ for male, ›irgendeine‹ for female persons.) That we distinguish ourselves from everything else is indicated by the fact that for non-person animals the indefinite pronoun has to be coupled with a sortal concept, most geneally with ›animal‹ itself, more specifically with the name of the species (›some dog‹). And, of course, ›some‹ can be combined with sortal concepts for other animated and inanimate things too (›some bowl‹, ›some flower‹)

For what is animated generally with regard to definition the continuation of a process of metabolism is constituive. For animals and persons additionally the capacity to move itself or oneself (from one place in space to another).

How fundamental this distinction is elucidates from the fact that two different modes of understanding are tied to this distinction. Metaphorically they can be explicated by saying: the animated we understand ›from within‹, the inanimate we understand ›from outside‹.

Elucidating further the first branch of this bifurcation can proceed by the further determination that our understanding the animated is proceeding from the most complex to the ever simpler ›top down‹. For what it means to understand something ›from within‹ has its paradigm in the case of persons. Understanding persons proceeds from the presumption that they have an own perspective on their behaviour or activity. The central example is acting. Acting, doing something is behavour with a reason / from reasons. A reason is what can be *said* for a view or a way of proceeding. The most simple reason for an action is its intention –

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20 This is the title of the main work of Thomas Nagel. (Oxford UP 1986). – His by my lights thoroughly misleading philosophical conception was one of the motives that led me to try to do better (descriptively).

what the actor tries to accomplish. In cases of doubt we have (to be able) to *ask* persons for their reasons.

Verbs of action we also apply to animals – a fox wants *to catch* a mouse; the mouse tries *to escape* and *to hide* in a hole etc. But animals have no language (that we understand), we cannot ask them for their reasons and they do not answer. These human possibilities of evidence in understanding animals are substituted by a projected frame of reference containing suppositions about their basic needs and the concomittant possibilities of behaviour. Understanding anmimals therefore is functionally schematized and to this extent already partly ›from the outside‹.

We apply verbs of action also in the case of plants. The flower *directs* its bloom towards the sun and its roots to water in the ground etc. But here our understanding remains even more exterior and the invested frame of reference contains only suppositions about the plants prosperity and the continuation of its metabolism.

In contradistinction to all this we understand inanimate things completely ›from outside‹ in their lawful connections with other things and their reaction to our experimental interventions. But in the case of the inanimate there is the possibility of an understanding the complex from the simple ›bottom up‹.

7.The concepts of ›doing‹, ›activity‹ & ›action‹

The mode of understanding persons and the mode of understanding the inanimate could not be at a greater distance than they are. But in philosophical tradition the distance has been even exaggerated. This was due to a mistake which was a concomittant of one of Aristotle's greatest conceptual insights: the distinction between activities and actions. The mistake resulted from classifying living, being alive itself as an activity.

I take activity and action as the translation of Aristotle's *praxis* and *poiesis*. He observed that these sub-categories of doing are to be distinguished by different inferential relation between the tensed forms of verbs designating items in both categories.

In a nutshell he wrote in *Metaphysics* (1048 b 16 sqq.): „ .. one cannot at the same time be going and already having gone, building and having built. But one can be seeing and having seen already at the same time, thinking and having thought ...“. Aristotle's examples are infelicitous, because seeing as different from looking is rather an attitude and thinking rather a disposition, both are not activities. His example *building* for a *poiesis* moreover is imprecise. One can have built and be building at the same time – this is what architects do. But one cannot build *a specific house* and have built it already. And a stroller can be going still and

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having gone already, *but not to a specific place.*

Nevertheless the intended observation is both correct and important. It points out that activities and action belong with one another insofar as the action of building a specific house is embedded in the activity of buildung houses (the profession of archtitects). *Actions terminate in* final *results*, they are, what *events* are in the language of time; *activities* have *no specific results*, they are, what *processes* are in the language of time.

Now, ›living‹ is the *process* of life which for Aristotle was the reason to classify it as an activity too.[21] But this is descriptively misleading. Living does not consist of activies and actions only and is not the activity encompassing both, because to life belong too mere happenings that befall us. To what befalls us we can only try to *find an attitude*, it never can be turned into something we *do* (although idealist and existentialist writers want us to believe it). Life itself as beginning in birth and ending in death is insofar too what merely happens to us. Therefore it should not be classified as an activity itself, but as the encompassing presupposition of actions, activities and happenings that befall us (suffering and good luck) alike.

8. The concepts ›nature‹ & ›culture‹ (›art‹ / ›Kunst‹)

Nature and culture are the encompassing contexts in which persons lead their lives. In important uses, formal ones, we contrast ›nature‹ with ›culture/civilization‹ as well as with ›society‹ and ›history‹. In these contrasts ›nature‹ is given a negative pragmatic sense as what exists, maintains itself and develops without any essential contribution from us.

If ›nature‹ formally is to be understood in this sense, the mentioned contrasts are somewhat superficial. For they designate items which of course do not exist, are maintained and develop without our contribution; but they as well do not exclusively depend on it. They all are, with a felicitous formulation of Adam Ferguson, „the result of human action, but not of human design“.

As a complete contrast to ›nature‹ we need an expression for something which is completely of our doing. In elder discourses the term ›art‹ in the sense of Greek *technē* or Latin *ars* was used for this contrast. Works of art depend on the intentions of their producers or authors or patrons. Culture, society and history are not art, but result from intentional interventions and non-intentional developments as well.[22]

Nature in the sense elucidated is the most encompassing context of human activities and

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21 Aristoteles: *Politics* 1254 a 5-7
22 It was the accomplishment of LW's cousin, the market-radical economist and Nobel-prize winner F.A. von Hayek, to discern in these phenomena a category *sui generis*. (›*The Constitution of Liberty*‹.)

actions. In processes of labour they have to make their living from it. They thereby create the material basis for culture and civilization and essentially also means for the improvement of the conditions of labour, material techniques. These save labour and make possible higher cultural activities, among them ›art‹ in the narrower sense of ›the fine arts‹, products of expression without an utilitarian purpose.

In the process of labour therefore culture as a second encompassing context for human activities develops. It is a kind of ›second nature‹, an expression that already Cicero used for habits and conventions.[23]

9.The concepts ›convention‹, ›morals‹ & ›law‹

The essential self-consciousness of a person is to be one of all (persons). We are, live among others, among indefinitely many. We leads our lives in being active and in being object of many things that befall us. Among these not the smallest part are effects of activities and actions of others. This is the source of potential conflict and conventions, morals and laws constitute an order (orders) that are meant to avoid concflict or, if it is unavoidable, lead it according to rules.

Conventions, derived from Latin *convenire* – which means *come together*, agree on – are best instituted explicitly in the use of language. But because language itself is conventional in many respects, an explantion of ›convention‹ by ›(explicit) agreement‹ would be circular. It is to the credit of David Lewis' book *Convention*[24] to have removed this difficulty definitely. He showed that not all convention needs explicit agreement, but that it could result from convergent expectations of independent actors under suitable conditions of overlapping orders of preferences. He saw his sophisticated conception as an elaboration of David Hume's insight that convention is a *general sense of common interest* in recurring situations.

Convention may concern the most divergent topics and be followed in groups of all sizes. Of general and philosophical interest are those conventions that include all members of a society: morals and law. The have as their topic the interpersonal relations as such and have a general peace-keeping purpose. In their content they overlap therefore vastly, which is why the general concept of law in Kant is applicable to both: the totality of conditions under which the freedom of each is compatible with the freedom of all. By which traits then are they distinguished? Formally in the main by the form of the sanctions of their rules. Morals are sanctioned by moral sentiments[25]; shame in the 1st person; resentment towards the 2nd person;

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23 Cicero: *De finibus* V, 25, 74.
24 Harvard UP 1969.
25 This insight in discussion of late is due originally to Strawson: *Freedom and Resentment*. Many followed suit.

indignation at 3rd persons. Sanctions of the law by contrast are themselves of legal form, punishments in the broadest sense. Law essentially is what is enforced and requires enforcement agencies: police, courts, prisons etc. Therefore it generally exists effectively only within states.

Materially morals and laws both contain rules of non-impairment and non-injury, help in emergencies and trust in cooperation. The German philosopher Ernst Tugendhat called them ›the contractualist core of morals‹. Disciples of his have added the spheres of justice in its different senses, of truthfulness, special obligation in institutional contexts and/or personal relations. A special moral obligation is the obligation to obey the law.

I propose to understand a formal use of ›justice‹, given in the Latin *suum cuique*, as overarching morals and laws. This allows to see the administration of justice and justice of distribution(s) as belonging to the same wide context. It is needed, because legal sanctions and punishments are not simply distributable ›goods‹, rather ›bads‹.

If morals and the law intertwine in the ways adumbrated, a more differentiated view of the concept of morals is needed. Talk of a contractualist core of morals point to the way to do this. Agreed on rules can also be followed with purely self-interested reasons. The following of the rules aquires a specific moral quality if the reasons are the rules themselves and the fact that they are valid. This Kant intended with his distinction of ›out of duty‹ („aus Pflicht") and the mere ›according to duty‹ („pflichtgemäß"). Acting out of duty or from reverence for the law (Kant: „Achtung vorm Gesetz") is connected to the description that the rules are followed out of respect for other persons, who, because of the validity of the rules, have definite (claim-) rights. It is at the latest here that the concept of a person has to be enlarged to include the mark ›bearer of claims and rights‹.

With this motivational conception of what is moral the concept of the ›moral of a person‹ (as the totality of a person's principles for behaving oneself and for treating the others as persons) takes precedence over morals individuated by the content of its rules.

If following the rules of morals in this way intrinsically is what spefically is moral in the modern sense, the rules are followed as the law is obeyed, but without exterior sanctions. And even the inner sanctions of the rules by moral sentiments loose their weight, because the meta-purpose of the moral agent is his integrity: He wants so to act that his ways of acting are justifiable to everyone.[26]

If morals and law motivationally come that near to each other the question could rise: Why do we need besides morals the law any more? The law with its formal sanctions is needed as a

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26 This explanation of moral motivation is due to Thomas Scanlon: *What We Owe to Each Other*, Harvard UP [4]2000.

deficiency guarantee for important cases of violations of the rules. Persons are speaking and reason-giving, therefore rational animals. But they are rational only in a limited way in that they find themselves repeatedly in situations where they tend to prefer their short term interest over the long term reasonable and to the interests und rights of others. This is rationally unavoidable, because ›free-riding‹ in anonymous situations (when persons cannot communicate directly) is rational. If so, then infringements have to be sanctioned at least ex post in order to stabilize the rules and action contexts which are in the interest of everyone. The complete uncertainty without the law and legal sanctions would put individual persons under unbearable strain, which as mortal beings fearing death they rationally want to be free from.

10. The concepts ›society‹ & ›state‹

Societies and states are aggregations of persons. Persons have been explained as speaking, acting and essentially self-evaluating animals. If not characterized ontologically (as in the first proposition), but structurally, society and state are ways of coordinating people and their activities. They too are (higher) ›orders of doing‹ built upon conventions, morals and the law.

›Society‹ was the paradigm of Ferguson's formula of ›the result of human action, but not of human design‹. It was illustrated by the model of the market where each person seeks her own advantage and thereby produces unintended effects on others (for instance lowering other person's income through being able to sell more competitive products). This again is good for the rise of conflicts. In modern societies market imply contracts and therefore civil law. A society from this alone is in need of a legal frame guaranteed by the state and administration of justice. The state here is to be understood as legislator, ruler by law and enforcer of the law.

Ontologically consisting out of persons the state is the community of citizens subject to the same laws. Based on that is the state -›apparatus‹, parliament, government, courts and administrative bodies. Its enforcement-character is evident from the fact, that citizens are forced to pay taxes for the sustainance of the state.

Structurally this again is due to the limited rationality of indiviual actors. It is rational for each person, to try to evade tax-paying. Her individual contribution is minimal from the perspective of the state (how big it ever may be), but it often is a real sacrifice for the individual person herself. This structural disposition to ›free-riding‹ is counter-acted by the enforcement of tax-paying.

Macro-economic analysis based on the rational theory of games and decisions[27] teached us to distinguish between private and public goods. Public goods are defined by not being produced efficiently on private markets. That the basic public good is peace and lawful order was an insight already of Thomas Hobbes, the first theoretician of the modern state, in *De cive* and *Leviathan* (Ch. 17). He took seriously the proverb that the pious cannot live in peace if it doesn't please his evil neighbour. Seen from the point of view of individual persons the state is a collective self-binding mechanism against the threat of insufficient peacefulness of the individual person for herself. Other public goods are those of material infrastructure (streets, bridges, harbours etc.), services in education, health and culture; etc. (It is optional to a society which ›higher‹ goods to treat as public or private.)

In analogy to understanding the state as a collective self-binding mechanism the market-structure of society can be understood as collectively self-binding against the threat of insufficient productivesness of the individual person for herself. Of course, the individual model of self-binding is Ulysses in front of the sirens. He secures himself against becoming a victim of their beautiful singing.

Modern western societies are fond of seeing themselves as ›democracies‹. But the *demos* definitely is not ruling them. In fact their constitutions are mixed ones from democratic, aristoratic and monarchic elements. The democratic element essentially is the right to vote for and against representatives; the group from which the representatives are recruited tends to be an aristocracy (if only of influence and desert); and some of the rights of the representative souvereign are definitely of monarchic origin, for instance what is called ›executive clemency‹ in the US.

11. Résumé

Thomas Nagel in *The View from Nowhere* wanted to investigate „how to combine the perspective of a particular person inside the world with an objective view of that same world, the person and his viewpoint included." [28]

If the fore-going clarifications can convince then not only is Nagel's problem wrongly posed. For the putative ›view from nowhere‹ is only a metaphysical distortion of the idea of judgement and the impartiality implied in it, which turns the perspective from nowhere into a God's eye's view. But the idea of judgement only requires that a consentable judgement should me made by anyone judging under the same or sufficient similar conditions. Moreover

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27 Game-theory is the theory of interdependent decisions of several independent actors.
28 Op.cit., 3.

I hope to have shown that even under the idea of judgement our concepts incorporate ›our point of view‹ from the basic distinction between ›object‹ and ›person‹ onwards into all fundamental concepts of common understanding.

Philosophy as reflective conceptual clarification cannot but at least start with the conceptual system of normal language. It is bound by the idea of judgement but must not misconstrue it as a view from nowhere on pain of what the old called hybris, self-elevation, here of an intellectual sort.