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<p style="text-align:center">'Elucidation' in the Tractatus</p>

In the preface of the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein writes, "The whole sense of the book might be summed up in the following words: what can be said at all can be said clearly, and what we cannot talk about we must pass over in silence."[1] However, the language in the *Tractatus* (the very argument for the limit of what can be said) does not belong to the realm of what can be said. If we accept the view of language argued for in the *Tractatus*, then we have to regard the propositions in the *Tractatus* as nonsensical. One might be tempted to think, with Cora Diamond or James Connat, that the whole thing is an illusion; both the ladder and where the ladder takes us are chimeras. Or, one might think, with Peter Hacker, that the propositions in the *Tractatus* are elucidatory nonsense. The former, austere or "resolute"[2] reading, points out the importance of the preface of the *Tractatus* and I agree with them on this. I do not think, however, that Wittgenstein's propositions are mere nonsense. He leads us to a paradoxical situation for logical reasons, and it seems to me that Wittgenstein is too earnest for us to take his propositions as mere nonsense. In the preface, he says that the text deals with the problems of philosophy and, even if it turns out that these problems disappear upon inspection, Wittgenstein's attitude toward this disappearance is a serious one. So I am more sympathetic to the latter view, the so-called standard reading, even if it doesn't provide us with a satisfactory way to understand the paradoxical situation.

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[1] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logic-Philosophicus*, trans. D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness (New York: Routledge, 2001), 3.

[2] James Connant and Cora Diamond, "On Reading the Tractatus Resolutely: Replay to Meredith Williams and Peter Sullivan," in *Wittgenstein's Lasting Significance*, ed. Max Kolbel and Bernhard Weiss (New York: Routledge, 2004), 46.

In this paper, I will discuss why Wittgenstein's 'propositions' are not propositions—why they don't belong to what can be said. A key to understanding this point lies in what Wittgenstein means by 'elucidation.' Before I begin my analysis of the text, I will present an analogy. In the *Tractatus*, I think Wittgenstein is drawing a circle so that he can mark the limit of what is circled. The activity of drawing the circle he calls 'elucidation.' What is circled is the world. There are two things: 1) the drawing activity and 2) the argument for the limit of the world. The former is a way to achieve the latter. All we have (what is presented to us, his reader) is the former 1), the elucidations. Once we understood his elucidations, however, what is left is the latter, 2). The circle drawn by elucidation is not an elucidation itself; it is the limit of the world. I will begin with Wittgenstein's first remark on elucidation.

In 3.263, Wittgenstein writes, "The meanings of primitive signs can be explained by means of elucidations. Elucidations are propositions that contain the primitive signs. So they can only be understood if the meanings of those signs are already known."[3] A number of questions follow from this passage: what are those primitive signs? are their meanings really known to us? One clue to the meaning of 'elucidation' is that we can (or we should be able to) proceed without providing a definition of a primitive sign; we should be able to follow his seven propositions in the Tractatus even if he doesn't provide definitions of what he calls primitive signs. These are the seven propositions in the Tractatus:

1. The world is all that is the case.
2. What is the case—a fact—is the existence of states of affairs.
3. A logical picture of facts is a thought.

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[3] Wittgenstein, 16.

4. A thought is a proposition with a sense.
5. A proposition is a truth-function of elementary propositions. (An elementary proposition is a truth-function of itself.)
6. The general form of a truth-function is [$\bar{p}$, $\bar{\xi}$, N($\bar{\xi}$)]. This is the general form of a proposition.
7. What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence.

The present discussion concerns with the first six propositions. Wittgenstein begins with the world and ends with the general form of a proposition. Wittgenstein marks the limit of what can be said through elucidations. However, I think the purpose of elucidations is not exactly to argue for the limit of what can be said. The purpose of elucidations is, I will argue, to show that the phrase "a proposition with a sense" is redundant; a proposition without a sense is not a proposition. My thesis is that, through his elucidations, Wittgenstein shows that there is a kind of identity between saying and showing. Wittgenstein shows a kind of identity between what is signifying and what is signified, and, in doing so, he shows the limit of what can be said. What plays the key role in his argument is the concept of a picture.

The first proposition is: "The world is all that is the case."[4] We don't know what the world is, but we know that it consists of cases. We don't know what a case is but we know that it is an element of the world. Furthermore, from the following remarks, we can infer that what is the case has some relation to facts. Wittgenstein says that "the world divides into facts"[5] and "the totality of facts determines what is the case, and also whatever is not the case."[6] We don't know the relation between facts and cases yet, but facts seem to be a broader concept. He writes, "Each item [fact] can be the case or not the

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[4] Ibid., 5. (1)
[5] Ibid., 5. (1.2)
[6] Ibid., 5. (1.12)

case while everything else remains the same."[7] A fact can be the case and cannot be the case. So what is the case is a particular kind of a fact, and the world consists of a particular kind of facts. In the second proposition (proposition #2), Wittgenstein assumes that what is the case is a fact.

The second proposition is: "What is the case—a fact—is the existence of states of affairs."[8] Since the world is all that is the case, the world consists of the existence of states of affairs. Wittgenstein writes, "the totality of existing states of affairs is the world"[9] Then, what is a state of affairs? A state of affairs is "a combination of objects"[10] We don't know what an object is but it seems that it is the smallest entity in the world. Wittgenstein tells us that "Objects make up the substance of the world. That is why they cannot be composite."[11] Objects are simple. We cannot break an object down into smaller parts. Objects are the smallest parts, whose combination makes a composite. In 2.0272, Wittgenstein says, "The configuration of objects produces states of affairs."[12] A configuration of objects produces a state of affairs (a fact, or a case).

We know that the basic unit of the world is not just any state of affairs, but an existing state of affairs. Then what does it mean to say that a state of affairs exists? It means that a particular configuration of objects exists. Objects do not disappear, but their relations do. Wittgenstein says, "Objects are what is unalterable and subsistent; their configuration is what is changing and unstable."[13] Whether a state of affairs (a particular

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7 Ibid., 5. (1.21)
8 Ibid., 5. (2)
9 Ibid., 9. (2.04)
10 Ibid., 5 (2.01)
11 Ibid., 7. (2.021)
12 Ibid., 8. (2.0272)
13 Ibid., 8. (2.0271)

configuration of objects) exists or not is a matter of contingency; it can either exist or not. To put it another way, it can either be the case or not be the case. If a state of affairs exists, it is the case and it is a particular kind of a fact. (In fact, facts can be complex. So, 'an atomic fact' is an accurate expression to use here, but at this stage of the text, Wittgenstein doesn't make a clear distinction between complex and atomic facts. Until we discuss how to construct a complex fact, by 'a fact' I mean an atomic fact, a state of affairs.) Wittgenstein writes, "The existence and non-existence of states of affairs is reality. (We also call the existence of states of affairs a positive fact, and their non-existence a negative fact.)"[14] He doesn't tell us what he means by "reality" but we can infer that reality encompasses the world because it is both the existence and non-existence of states of affairs. However, reality is bigger than the world only conceptually. In 2.063, we have: "The sum-total of reality is the world."[15] This means that the world is the sum total of existing and non-existing states of affairs, which leaves the sum-total of existing states of affairs. To go back to the proposition 1, we have, "The world is all that it is the case." And we know that what is the case is a fact. Now, according to the proposition 2, "What is the case—a fact—is the existence of states of affairs." Hence, the existence of states of affairs make up the world; "the totality of existing states of affairs is the world."[16] This is what we have so far. To this picture of the world, Wittgenstein adds a new term, 'a thought'.

In proposition 3, we have: "A logical picture of facts is a thought."[17] If a thought is a logical picture of a fact, then it is a logical picture of a state of affairs. If a thought is a

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[14] Ibid., 9. (2.06)
[15] Ibid., 9. (2.063)
[16] Ibid., 9. (2.04)
[17] Ibid., 12. (3)

logical picture of an existing state of affairs, then it is a logical picture of a constituent element of the world. Wittgenstein writes, "the totality of true thoughts is a picture of the world."[18] Some of Wittgenstein's expressions make us think that a thought is about the world, and hence the world is an object of thought. However, this is not exactly the case. A thought is not just a picture but a logical picture, and a logical picture exists not on canvas or paper but in a thought as a projection.

a thought

[a logical picture → a fact]

In a projection, we need both what is projecting (a method of projection) and what is projected. Both sides are necessary for there to be a projection. Wittgenstein is always concerned with both sides of the projection: the depicting and the depicted. The method by which we project facts to ourselves is a proposition, and what is projected is a fact, a state of affairs; a proposition is a means of depiction, and a fact, or a state of affairs, is the object of the depiction. (In fact, a proposition can be complex; however, since I restricted facts to atomic facts, I want to restrict propositions to elementary propositions until we arrive at a discussion of how to construct complex propositions. Wittgenstein is not always very clear about this distinction in the beginning of the *Tractatus*. He usually means a complex fact by 'a fact' and a complex proposition by 'a proposition.')

a thought

[a proposition → a state of affairs]

A proposition is a logical picture of a state of affairs; an elementary proposition depicts a

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18 Ibid., 12 (3.01)

state of affairs. We know that a state of affairs consists of objects in a determinate relation, for example, aRb—two objects a and b in a determinate relation R. Consider a picture in the ordinary sense of a state of affairs. Say that we have a picture in which a pipe is on a chair. In the painting, we see two objects depicted, a pipe and a chair, and we also see that the former is on top of the latter. When we see those two objects, we see at the same time their relation. Their relation, however, is not an object of depiction; we don't see an object 'on top of.' In a logical picture of a state of affairs, e.g., aRb, we see signs "a" and "b" that represent objects a and b but not their relation R. The relation R is not an object of depiction but rather a constitutive element of the picture. In a logical picture, two signs are in a determinate relation and their relation is a structural property or internal property. What I mean is that the spatial relation between two signs (just like the spatial relation between two objects in a picture) is the structure of a proposition in which the two signs "a" and "b" are names of objects a and b. The fact that the sign "a" and the sign "b" are in a certain relation in a proposition says that the object a and b are in a certain relation, aRb; "that 'a' stands to 'b' in a certain relation [in a proposition] says that aRb."[19]

A proposition is not a mere collection of names. Names are ordered in a particular way in a proposition and that's why a proposition can be articulate. (And it has to be articulate in order to depict a state of affairs.) Wittgenstein writes, "One name stands for one thing [object], another for another thing [object], and they are combined with one another. In this way the whole group—like a tableau vivant—represents a state of affairs."[20] If a connection between signs(names) and objects is not established, then a proposition cannot depict a state of affairs. As Wittgenstein remarks, "The possibility of

[19] Ibid., 14. (3.1432)
[20] Ibid., 26. (4.0311)

propositions is based on the principle that objects have signs as their representatives."[21] In a proposition, signs are names and names stand for objects. The relation between signs in a proposition mirrors the relation between objects in a state of affairs. Wittgenstein says: "Names are the simple symbols: I indicate them by single letters('x', 'y', 'z'). I write elementary propositions as functions of names, so that they have the form 'fx', 'φ(x,y)', etc. Or I indicate them by the letters 'p', 'q', 'r'."[22] Suppose that φ stands for a function fxy and we define the function as 'x is next to y'. The proposition fab says that the object a is next to the object b. One thing to note is that "f" is not part of the picture. In a usual picture, we don't see 'is next to' as an object of depiction. I said in the previous paragraph that the relation between signs is a structural property, not an object of depiction. One might think that the signs for logical function indicate the limit of Wittgenstein's analogy between propositions and pictures. A quick answer Wittgenstein would give us is that the sign for a function "f" is not part of a picture. Logic is not an object of depiction but a condition for the possibility of a picture; it is a framework for a picture, and therefore a projection, a thought. After we discuss the construction of complex propositions, we will see that logic is a condition for the world as well. Before we discuss how to construct complex propositions, let me clarify Wittgenstein's use of terms such as 'a propositional sign,' 'a proposition,' and 'a sense'.

A sign is a physical mark. A written letter is a sign and so is a musical note; a sign doesn't have to be visual but does have to be something perceptible. A propositional sign, however, is not a mere sign. It is a place for a sense. That is, a logical function is

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[21] Ibid., 26. (4.0312)
[22] Ibid., 36. (4.24)

already given to it and that means that it has acquired the status of a symbol.[23] A symbol is a sign to which a logical function is *given*, and hence, a propositional sign is a symbol. The phrase "a propositional sign" already indicates that it is a sign for a proposition; a sign becomes a symbol in the way it is used. However, a sign doesn't give itself a logical function. A propositional sign is a place for a sense because we regard it as a place for a sense. We give a sign the possibility of being an expression of a thought; the sign becomes a symbol in the realm of thoughts. Wittgenstein writes, "A propositional sign, applied and thought out, is a thought."[24]

Then what is a proposition? Wittgenstein writes: "I call the sign with which we express a thought a propositional sign. – And a proposition is a propositional sign in its projective relation to the world."[25] It seems that a proposition is in the position of a thought, since a thought is "A propositional sign, applied and thought out,"[26] and a propositional sign is in a projective relation to the world because it is applied and thought out. This is not, however, exactly the case. A proposition is not the same as a thought. A propositional sign in its projective relation to the world has the possibility to show what can be projected in it. Wittgenstein says:

> A proposition includes all that the projection includes, but not what is projected. Therefore, though what is projected is not itself included, its possibility is.
> A proposition, therefore, does not actually contain its sense, but does contain the possibility of expressing it.

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[23] Wittgenstein notes the importance of distinguishing signs from symbols. In ordinary language, we use the same sign for different purposes. For example, 'Green is green.' The same sign 'green' is used for a subject (a name) and also for a predicate (color green). In the Tractatus, Wittgenstein is trying to establish a symbol system whose syntax doesn't allow this ambiguous use of signs, using the same sign for different symbols, i.e. for different logical functions. In a conspicuous language, signs are classified in such a way that a proposition such as 'Green is green' cannot be constructed. In the logical syntax Wittgenstein is envisioning, there is no room for confusion or error.

[24] Wittgenstein, 22. (3.5)

[25] Ibid., 13. (3.12)

[26] Ibid., 22. (3.5)

("The content of a proposition' means the content of a proposition that has sense.)

A proposition contains the form, but not the content, of its sense.[27]

A proposition is not yet a thought, because it lacks what is projected. If what is projected is added to a proposition, it will complete the thought. A proposition with a sense is a thought, which is what Wittgenstein says in proposition 4; "A thought is a proposition with a sense."[28]

Now we have to ask: what is a sense? We know that a sense is what is projected. We also know that a proposition with a sense is a logical picture of a fact; sense is what is depicted by a proposition. Let's think about a typical naturalistic picture for a moment. When we see a picture, we see what is depicted without any explanation. The picture speaks for itself; it shows what it depicts; "What a picture represents is its sense."[29] Wittgenstein says:

A proposition is a picture of reality: for if I understand a proposition, I know the situation that it represents. And I understand the proposition without having had its sense explained to me.[30]

A proposition *shows* its sense.
A proposition *shows* how things stand if it is true. And it *says* that they do so stand.[31]

If we see a proposition, we see its sense, and its sense is how things stand if it is true; it shows what is the case if it is true. If a proposition is true, things stand as they are depicted in the proposition. If a proposition is false, things do not stand as they are depicted in the proposition. Wittgenstein says, "If an elementary proposition is true, the

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27 Ibid., 13. (3.13)
28 Ibid., 22. (4)
29 Ibid., 12. (2.221)
30 Ibid., 24. (4.021)
31 Ibid., 25. (4.022)

state of affairs exists: if an elementary proposition is false, the state of affairs does not exist."[32] Then, if a state of affairs doesn't exist—if an elementary proposition is false— does it still have a sense? The answer is 'yes.' A false proposition, as well as a true proposition, has a sense. When we see a picture, we know what is depicted without knowing if the depicted situation exists or not; "To understand a proposition means to know what is the case if it is true. (One can understand it, therefore, without knowing whether it is true.) It is understood by anyone who understands its constituents."[33]

Suppose that P is true and ~P is false. They both share the same sense p. Their difference is, in a sense, the direction they point. P says that P is the case, ~P says that ~P is the case. P asserts that the state of affairs it represents exists. ~P asserts that the state of affairs P represents does not exist; "Propositions represent the existence and non-existence of states of affairs."[34] A proposition not only depicts a state of affairs but also asserts that it is the case: "it *says* that they do so stand."[35] The difference between the sense of P and the sense of ~P lies at their different relation to the existence of the state of affairs P depicts. Wittgenstein says, "The sense of a proposition is its agreement and disagreement with possibilities of existence and non-existence of states of affairs."[36] The sense of P is its agreement with the possibility of the existence of the state of affairs it depicts. The sense of ~P is its agreement with the possibility of the non-existence of the state of affairs. To have a sense is to have the possibility of being true or false. Having a truth value is possible because a proposition represents a situation that can either exist or

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[32] Ibid., 37. (4.25)
[33] Ibid., 25. (4.024)
[34] Ibid., 29. (4.1)
[35] Ibid., 25. (4.022)
[36] Ibid., 36. (4.2)

not; "A proposition states something only in so far as it is a picture,"[37] and "A proposition can be true or false only in virtue of being a picture of reality."[38]

Proposition P asserts that P is the case, or P is true, and ~P asserts that ~P is the case, or ~P is true. We know this even if we don't know the truth value of the proposition. The sense of a proposition is independent of its truth value. However, the sense of a proposition is not independent from the possibility of being the case, or the possibility of the existence of the state of affairs it represents. The sense of P is more fundamental than ~P because ~P says that P is not the case. The sense of ~P depends on the sense of P; "in order to be able to say, ' "p" is true (or false)', I must have determined in what circumstances I call 'p' true, and in so doing I determine the sense of the proposition."[39] 4.063. The negation sign "~" cancels what P says. That is, the negation sign does not represent an object in a state of affairs; it is not part of a picture. The possibility of the existence of a state of affairs is more fundamental to the determination of the sense of a proposition because the sense of a proposition is "how things stand if it is true,"[40] not how things *do not* stand if it is true. The possibility of being true is a condition for the possibility of being false, not vice versa. The assertion of the existence of a state of affairs is more fundamental than the assertion of the non-existence of a state of affairs. That is why, "The simplest kind of proposition, an elementary proposition, asserts the existence of a state of affairs."[41] An elementary proposition does not assert the non-existence of a state of affairs; it argues for its truth.

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[37] Ibid., 26. (4.03)
[38] Ibid., 27. (4.06)
[39] Ibid., 28. (4.063)
[40] Ibid., 25. (4.022)
[41] Ibid., 36. (4.21)

From now on, by 'a proposition' I will mean a complex proposition. I will refer to an elementary proposition as 'an elementary proposition.' We know that the world consists of what is the case, and what is the case is represented by an elementary proposition. And we know that an elementary proposition not only depicts a state of affairs but also asserts that the state of affairs exists. Applying a logical operation to elementary propositions produces a proposition. Wittgenstein writes, in proposition 5.3, "All propositions are results of truth-operations on elementary propositions."[42] Suppose that p and q are elementary propositions. By applying a logical operation 'v' (or) to p and q, we produce a proposition p v q. P and q are the bases of the operation and 'p v q' is the result of the operation. A proposition is called 'a truth function.' Wittgenstein regards a proposition as a function; he writes, "Like Frege and Russell, I construe a proposition as a function of the expressions contained in it."[43] A proposition is not just a function but a truth function because its bases are truth arguments. For example, 'p v q' is a truth function and p and q are truth arguments. P and q are called 'truth arguments' because the truth value of p and q (e.g., a certain combination of them in a truth table) argues for the truth of 'p v q.' The operation 'v' is called 'the truth operation' because it yields a true proposition based on the truth arguments. (In this case, p and q are elementary propositions, hence each proposition argues for its truth.) Wittgenstein writes, "A truth operation is the way in which a truth-function is produced out of elementary propositions."[44] Suppose that p and q are propositions (complex propositions) and they produce another proposition 'p v q'; p and q are the bases of the operation 'v' and 'p v q'

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[42] Ibid., 52. (5.3)

[43] Ibid., 18. (3.318)

[44] Ibid., 52. (5.3). cf. 5.234 "Truth-functions of elementary propositions are results of operations with elementary propositions as bases. (These operations I call truth-operations.)"

is the result of the operation. The whole process produces a truth function, 'p v q'. Its truth value is determined by the relation between the truth arguments (elementary propositions) that produce the truth function of p and the truth arguments (elementary propositions) that produce the truth function of q. This is what is expressed in the fifth proposition; "A proposition is a truth-function of elementary propositions. (An elementary proposition is a truth function of itself.)."[45]

If all elementary propositions are given to us, and we have all possible logical operations at our disposal, then it is the same as if all the possible propositions were given to us. That is what is meant by proposition 6, "The general form of a truth-function is [$\overline{p}$, $\overline{\xi}$, N($\overline{\xi}$)]. This is the general form of a proposition."[46] The first sign stands for a set of elementary propositions. The second sign stands for a truth function. And the last one stands for the result of the operation (joint negation) on the truth function; it is a proposition that we get as a result of the operation. Joint negation is a logical operation whose successive application generates the results of all possible logical operations. For example, suppose that p and q are elementary propositions. By applying the joint negation, we get ~p and ~q. This is the first truth function (the first set). By applying the operation to this set, we get 'p or q' (the second set). Now (~p and ~q) and (p or q) are the members of the third set. By applying the operation to them, we get a contradiction, [~(~p and ~ q) and ~(p or q)]. These two, ~(~p and ~q) and ~(p or q) are the members of the fourth set. By applying the operation, we get a tautology, [~~(~p and ~q) or ~~(p or q)], which is, [(~p and ~q) or (p or q)].[47]

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[45] Ibid., 43. (5)
[46] Ibid., 70. (6)
[47] For a detailed discussion on this operation, please see Anscombe's book, *An Introduction to*

If a set of elementary propositions are given to us, we can generate propositions by using the form given in proposition 6. In fact, we can generate all possible propositions. In 4.51, Wittgenstein writes: "Suppose that I am given *all* elementary propositions: then I can simply ask what propositions I can construct out of them. And there I have *all* propositions, and *that* fixes their limits."[48] The general form of a proposition is the possibility all propositions share. The general form of a proposition allows us to construct all possible propositions. If we have all propositions, we reach the limit of language. The limit of language is also the limit of thought, because language is the means by which we express thoughts; the limit of the method of projection marks the limit of what is projected. The limit of thought (the limit of projection) is also the limit of the world, since the world is my projection of reality. Hence, "The limits of my language mean the limits of my world."[49]

When we discussed the form of elementary propositions, we noted that logical signs are not a name. Logic is a condition for the possibility of a picture, and therefore of a proposition. Language and reality share the same logic and that's why reality can be projected through a language into the world; "Logic pervades the world: the limits of the world are also its limits."[50] The grand premise of the *Tractatus* is that language mirrors reality. Our language must be a picture of reality; if it's not, it has no sense. If a proposition doesn't depict a state of affairs, it is not a proposition. There are, however, propositions that do not represent reality: tautologies and contradictions. Tautologies and contradictions are propositions, and yet, they do not depict a situation; they do not

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Wittgenstein's Tractatus, p. 132-7.
[48] Ibid., 43. (4.51)
[49] Ibid., 68. (5.6)
[50] Ibid., 68. (5.61)

represent reality. Wittgenstein calls them senseless.[51] For example, a proposition {[(if P then Q) and P] then Q} is a tautology and a proposition 'P and ~P' is a contradiction. The former is always true, the latter, always false. Their truth value doesn't depend on how things stand if they are true. Their truth value doesn't depend on objects (the meaning of names). We can substitute any signs (names) for the signs in a tautology or contradiction—it won't affect the truth value. In the example, P can be any proposition. It doesn't matter whether the state of affairs it depicts exists or not. A tautology and a contradiction can accommodate any object. With any name (with any combination of names) we can formulate a tautology or contradiction. This is the way in which they are connected to the world.

If a proposition is tautological, any state of affairs can be projected. If a proposition is contradictory, no state of affairs can be projected. That is why Wittgenstein says the following: "the logical product of elementary propositions can be neither a tautology nor a contradiction."[52] This is possible only if elementary propositions are independent of one another, which Wittgenstein holds in the *Tractatus*. We won't find p and ~p among the list of elementary propositions. This means that any base (p, q) of the operation (joint negation) cannot be a tautology or a contradiction. Later, in the essay *Some Remarks on Logical Form*, Wittgenstein modifies his position. He argues that some elementary propositions (called 'atomic propositions' in the essay) exclude other elementary propositions.[53] This, however, he emphasizes, doesn't mean that some elementary positions contradict one another. I won't discuss this issue here. I want to

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[51] Ibid., 41, (4.461, 4.4611)
[52] Ibid., 86. (6.3751)
[53] Ludwig Wittgenstein, "Some Remarks on Logical Form," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Supplementary Volumes, Vol. 9, Knowledge, Experience and Realism (1929): 168.

focus on how tautologies can illuminate 'elucidations.' A tautology is not a picture of reality. It doesn't tell us anything about the world. However, it shows something. It shows something without depending on names or objects. What it shows is its formal property, its being a tautology; it represents itself. Once its form is given, we can generate another tautology by substituting names. That is, we can produce tautologies without knowing the meanings of signs (names). With this in mind, let's go back to 'elucidation.'

The substitution of signs, I think, is the method of Wittgenstein's elucidations. Elucidations consist of the application of the identity sign "=". Wittgenstein notes that he uses the identity sign to indicate the identity between signs. He says:

> When I use two signs with one and the same meaning, I express this by putting the sign '=' between them.
> So 'a = b' means that the sign 'b' can be substituted for the sign 'a'.
>   (If I use an equation to introduce a new sign 'b', laying down that it shall serve as a substitute for a sign 'a' that is already known, then, like Russell, I write the equation –definition- in the form 'a = b' Def.' A definition is a rule dealing with signs.)[54]

> Expressions of the form 'a = b' are, therefore, mere representational devices. They state nothing about the meaning of the signs 'a' and 'b'.[55]

If an expression 'a = b' is given, we know that the sign 'b' can be substituted for the sign 'a' even if we don't know what they refer to. This representational device '=' is what explains Wittgenstein's elucidations; his elucidations are, as it were, a series of Russian dolls. In proposition 1, he says "The world is all that is the case," that is, 'The world = all that is the case.' Proposition 2 picks out 'the case'; "What is the case—a fact—is the existence of states of affairs." To put it another way, 'What is the case—a fact = the existence of states of affairs.' Proposition 3 picks out 'a fact'; "A logical picture of facts

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[54] Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, 36-7. (4.241)
[55] Ibid., 37. (4.242)

is a thought," that is, 'a logical picture of facts = a thought.' Proposition 4 picks out 'a thought'; "A thought is a proposition with a sense," that is, 'a thought = a proposition with a sense.' Through propositions 3 and 4, we get a new equation: 'a logical picture of facts = a proposition with a sense.' Proposition 5 picks out 'a proposition'; "A proposition is a truth-function of elementary propositions. (An elementary proposition is a truth-function of itself)," that is, 'a proposition = a truth-function of elementary propositions.' Proposition 6 gives us the general form of the truth-function; "The general form of a truth-function is … This is the general form of a proposition," that is, 'the general form of a truth function = [$\overline{p}$, $\overline{\xi}$, N($\overline{\xi}$)].'

In the beginning, we are given the world: the whole, therefore the limit, of what is projected. In the end, we are left with the general form of a truth-function, what is common to all propositions, i.e., the possibility of a proposition. To put it another way, we start with the limit of showing and end with the possibility saying. Saying comes into the picture because of its projective relation to showing. This connection is provided by propositions 3 and 4. There is, on the one hand, what is projected (showing) and, on the other, what is projecting (saying). It is as though they mirror each other. There is, however, more than symmetry between them; there is a kind of identity. If an object mirrored can go inside the mirror, then the object and what mirrors it will coincide. Saying is identical with showing if it can go into the realm of showing; they will be coincident. What I mean is that a proposition and its sense are identical in terms of a sign. A proposition "P" says that P and its sense is that P. If the proposition P is a logical picture of a fact, what it depicts is what it shows, which is "P". The proposition P shows

what it says.[56]

There is no thought without language. To say that language and thought mirror each other, however, might not be an accurate expression. What is mirrored in language and thought is reality. A thought is where reality is projected and language is the method of projection; language is like slide film and thought is the projected image of the film. Although they belong to different dimensions (saying and showing), they are identical in terms of signs. That's why what can be said can be said clearly.

What defines a proposition (what can be said) cannot be a proposition. That is why Wittgenstein cannot treat elucidations as propositions. His elucidations are not even tautologies;[57] they are essentially a demonstration of the method of substitution. He defines a rule for his use of the sign "=" and shows examples of the application of this rule. The reason we understand his propositions as nonsensical is that we accept his rule. We climbed up the ladder because we agreed to do so; we drew the circle. The irony is that the ladder shows itself and what it shows is independent of our will. In principle, we can either accept or reject the rule, but whether we do so or not, the ladder is there, and it is the condition for arriving where we do. Now we have to accept the situation where the ladder has taken us, because that's what follows necessarily from the ladder, from our first acceptance. In *Culture and Value*, Wittgenstein describes the situation readers of the *Tractatus* find themselves in.

> Nothing we do can be defended absolutely and finally. But only by reference to
> something else that is not questioned. I.e. no reason can be given why you should
> act (or should have acted) *like this*, except that by doing so you bring about such

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[56] Ibid., 41. (4.461) "Propositions show what they say."
[57] "Expressions like 'a = a', and those derived from them, are neither elementary propositions nor is there any other way in which they have sense." 4.243.

and such a situation, which again has to be an aim you *accept*.[58]

If we accept his elucidations, we have to accept that his elucidations are nonsensical. What does this acceptance give us? Wittgenstein's answer seems to be knowledge and freedom. The world is all that is the case; it is a totality of facts. As the totality of facts, the world itself is a fact. Does the world have a sense? Does it show a sense? If it does, the one who sees the sense of the world must be outside the world. The one who sees the world, it seems, is us, the reader of the Tractatus. Wittgenstein says that we will see the world aright:

> My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical, when he has used them—as steps—to climb up beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it.) He must transcend these propositions, and then he will see the world aright.[59]

The one who sees the world, I think, is what Wittgenstein means by 'what we cannot speak about' in proposition 7: "What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence."[60] I don't think he means the sense of a proposition or a logical sign. We can show them through what can be said. We don't have to pass over them in silence. I will therefore conclude this paper with some speculation about proposition 7—why Wittgenstein did not stop at proposition 6.

In a picture, a proposition as a picture, we see its sense. Even though the sense of a proposition cannot be said, we see it in the picture. What we don't see in the picture is the viewer; "nothing *in the visual field* allows you to infer that it is seen by an eye."[61]

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[58] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, trans. Peter Winch (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 16.
[59] Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, 89. (6.54)
[60] Ibid., 89. (7)
[61] Ibid., 69. (5.633)

The viewer of a painting cannot do anything about the painting. What he can do is to change his own attitude toward the painting; he can appreciate the painting. The viewer of the world, likewise, cannot change anything in the world. Wittgenstein calls, I think, the viewer of the world, the willing I or "the subject of ethical attributes."[62] The existence of a viewer of the world is not explicitly argued for, but it is presupposed. In *Notebooks*, Wittgenstein writes, "As the subject is not part of the world but a presupposition of its existence, so good and evil which are predicates of the subject, are not properties in the world."[63] I will comment on the subject in relation to 'good and evil' but here I want to focus on the fact that the subject is a condition for the world (as a viewer of a painting is a reason why there is a painting) and, at the same time, the subject is not in the world. The viewer of the world can see the world but cannot change how things are in the world; "The world is independent of my will."[64] Something's being the case or not is not a matter of logical necessity; it is in the realm of contingency. What is the case in the world can always not be the case, regardless of the viewer's will. The acceptance of his inability to affect how things are in the world, however, gives the viewer freedom, as well as a certain kind of power. It gives freedom because the willing I knows that there is an ontological lacuna between his will and its fulfillment in the world. Wittgenstein writes:

> The freedom of the will consists in the impossibility of knowing actions that still lie in the future. We could know them only if causality were an *inner* necessity like that of logical inference.—The connecxion between knowledge and what is known is that of logical necessity. ('A knows that p is the case', has no sense if p

[62] Ibid., 87. (6.423)
[63] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Notebooks: 1914~1916*, 2nd ed. ed. G. H. von Wright and G. E. M. Anscombe. trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 79.
[64] Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, 85. (6.373)

is a tautology.)[65]

According to this definition of knowledge, there can be no knowledge of how things will be in the future. We do not know how things will change in the world because it is simply not part of the domain of knowledge. Therefore, there is no reason to want to know what lies in the future unless one wants to know what is impossible to know. If one lives without any expectations about the future, one can live without fear and hope, and that is what Wittgenstein means by living in the present; "Whoever lives in the present lives without fear and hope."[66]

The acceptance of one's powerlessness in the world comes with freedom, in Wittgenstein's sense. However, this doesn't mean that the willing I only detaches itself from the world. Understanding the world correctly gives the viewer a certain kind of power. The viewer can change the way he orients himself toward the world and by doing so he can change the world altogether. This is possible because there is no value in the world. Wittgenstein writes:

> 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.[67]

Nothing in the world is good or bad, that is, nothing in the world makes the world good or bad. What can be good or bad is the will, and the way the willing I sees the world.

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[65] Ibid., 47. (5.1362)
[66] Wittgenstein, *Notebooks*, 76.
[67] Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, 86. (6.41)

One's attitude toward the world can be good or bad, or can make the world good or bad;

value does not come from the world, but from the willing I. Wittgenstein writes:

> If the good or bad exercise of the will does alter 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 an altogether different world. It must, so to speak, wax and wane as a whole.
> The world of the happy man is a different one from that of the unhappy man.[68]

As the totality of facts, the world cannot generate its own value. The value of the world

depends on the viewer, and this power of the viewer, I think, is what Wittgenstein implies

in his remarks on a figure in 5.5423. The world is like the drawing of a cube. As a totality

of facts, the world is there to be seen, and is powerless with respect to how it is to be seen.

In 5.5423, Wittgenstein writes:

> To perceive a complex means to perceive that its constituents are related to one another in such and such a way.
> This no doubt also explains why there are two possible ways of seeing the figure
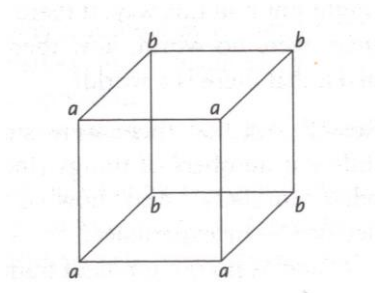
> as a cube; and all similar phenomena. For we really see two different facts.
> (If I look in the first place at the corners marked a and only glance at the b's, then the a's appear to be in front, vice versa).[69]

The world is like a painting whose constitutive elements are facts as are the dots or points

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[68] Ibid., 87. (6.43)
[69] Ibid., 65. (5.5423)

in the figure. Depending on the way we see a painting, we see a different painting; the painting becomes a different painting without changing how things are in it. When we see the duck-rabbit figure as a duck it is really a figure of a duck, when we see it as a rabbit, it is really a figure of a rabbit. Through the way one looks at the world, the world can be good or bad, happy or unhappy. If we see the world aright, we can live without fear and hope and, at the same time, we can live happily. That is why Wittgenstein thinks "The life of knowledge is the life that is happy in spite of the misery of the world."[70] If we live in the present, there is no problem of life: "The solution of the problem of life is to be seen in the disappearance of this problem."[71] If this is where the ladder leads us, we can understand why, in his letter to Ludwig von Ficker, Wittgenstein writes that the point of the *Tractatus* is ethical.[72]

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[70] Wittgenstein, Notebooks, 81.
[71] Ibid., 74.
[72] Cora Diamond, "Ethics, Imagination and the *Tractatus*," in *The New Wittgenstein*, ed. Alice Crary and Rupert Read (New York: Routledge, 2000), 152.

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