The "Mystical" Phenomenology of the "Life-World" in Wittgenstein's Tractatus

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Abstract

Scholars have often struggled with the notion of mysticism in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus-logico-philosophicus* (*TLP*). The paper develops a taxonomy of the multiple species of mysticism in *TLP* in order to show that its notion of the mystical actually has a complex hierarchial structure. A key notion in *TLP's* account is its neglected notion of the "life-world" (5.621), specifically, that realm in which the "mystical" "shows itself [*zeigt sich*]". A comparison is made with Heidegger's notion in *Being and Time* of the fundamental phenomena of phenomenology as that that sort of phenomena that "shows itself [*sich zeit*]." That is, *TLP's* notion of the mystical is at the same time a sketch the phenomenological structure of the "life-world". On this basis it is argued that *TLP's* account of linguistic meaning is parasitic on its notion of the "mystical" dimension of the "life-world", which has the consequence that one cannot separate the "safe" logical and scientific portion of *TLP* from its mysticism as Russell and the logical positivists tried to do. The "mysticism" and "phenomenology" must stay. Finally, the paper argues that *TLP* is not, as often thought, a proponent of Russell's method of analysis into "logical atoms" but actually presents a powerful critique of the analytical method.

Keywords: Wittgenstein, Tractatus, mysticism, phenomenology, life-world, holism

> The world [Die Welt] and life [Das Leben]
> are one [sind Eins][1]. (*Tractatus*, 5.621)

On the traditional interpretation Wittgenstein's *Tractatus-logico-philosophicus* (*TLP*) supports Russell's view that the resolution of philosophical problems can only be achieved by the "analysis" of propositions into their "logical atoms" (Russell 1961 & 1971; Griffin 1997)[2]. The only things that can be "said", i.e., the only "genuine propositions,"[3] are

contingent propositions about facts in the world. *TLP*'s (4.11) "scientistic" view that the totality of true genuine propositions coincides with the propositions of natural science is a corollary of this. All other purported "propositions [*Sätze*]," except for the "senseless [*sinnlos*]" logical propositions, are "mystical [*mystische*]" "nonsense [*Unsinnig*]" that cannot be "said [*sagt*]" (Preface, 3.24, 6.54, 7). What such "mystical" propositions try to say" can only be "shown [*zeigt*]" (4.1212). Since *TLP* understands the "mystical" quite broadly to include virtually everything traditionally of interest to philosophy, including ethics and aesthetics, metaphysics, cosmology, religion, God, and the "metaphysical Subject" (5.641), the better part of the whole history of philosophy is cast as "unsayable" "mystical" "nonsense," leaving only science and logic unscathed. This is the "proud" *TLP* that inspired the logically and scientifically minded "logical positivists" (Carnap 1969, § 183). In opposition to this, the present paper argues that though this traditional interpretation captures a superficial layer of *TLP's* views, the fundamental message of *TLP* is precisely the opposite. In fact, *TLP* is a profoundly *anti-analytical* work whose fundamental project is to sketch a phenomenological picture of the un-analyzable "holistic" nature of the "life-world" within which the "unsayable" "mystical" truth "shows itself" [*zeigt sich*]" (6.522).

§ I survey's *TLP's* multiple notions of the mystical and argues that the most basic of these is the notion of the ineffable, that which cannot be "said". § II first makes the crucial distinction between two different *TLP* notions of that which can only be "shown," namely that which is "shown [*zeigt*]" by propositional structures and that which "shows itself [*zeigt sich*]" independently of any propositional structures, and, second, develops a preliminary taxonomy of *TLP's* multiple notions of the mystical. § III argues that *TLP's* key "mystical" views are raised in connection with what *TLP* calls the "problems of life [*Problems des Lebens*]" (6.521-6.522). § IV explains *TLP's* key concept of the "life-world" as an indivisible "organic" whole within which the meaning of life ("*Sinn des Lebens*") "shows itself [*zeigt sich*]" (6.521). § V argues that *TLP's* notion of the meaning of genuine propositions is parasitic on the *prior* notion of the meaning of life ("*Sinn des Lebens*") that

"shows itself [*zeigt sich*]" in the "life-world". § VI argues that *TLP's* most basic aim is to show that although one can theoretically analyze meaningful language into a set of logically independent elementary propositions, *one thereby loses the rich holistic structure of the "life-world"* on which linguistic meaning depends.

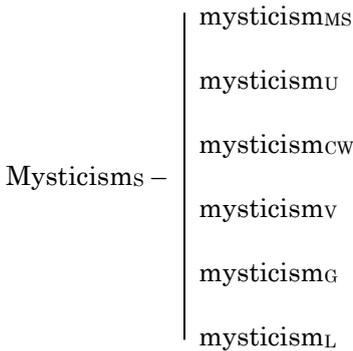## 1. Preliminary Survey of *Tractatus'* Mysticism

> The whole sense [*Sinn*] of the book might be summed up as follows: what can be said at all can be said [*sagt*] clearly, and what we cannot talk about, we must pass over in silence. *Tractatus* (Preface)

One of the difficulties understanding *TLP's* mysticism is that many different sorts of views have been called "mystical" over the ages, including the views that certain truths are ineffable, the view that there is hidden knowledge, the view that everything is One, the view that true Reality is transcendent, as well as various species of magic, occultism, and the like.

TLP contains numerous views that are reminiscent of certain views found in the mystical traditions but it is important to remember that these are reconceived in *TLP* in terms of its own unique *philosophical* program. The most basic species of mysticism in *TLP* (Preface, 6.522, 6.53, 7) is the view that there are *ineffable* things about which one must be silent. Call this "Silence mysticism" or mysticism$_S$! *TLP's* (5.63) view that I am my world" is a version of the view that everything is One. *TLP* also holds "mystical" views about ethical and aesthetic values (6.406, 6422), the cosmic whole (6.43, 6.44-6.45), the "metaphysical Subject" or "Philosophical self [*Ich*]" (5.633, 5.641), and God (6.432). Finally, the bulk of *TLP* is devoted to its own unique species of "mysticism", quite unlike anything found in traditional mysticism, concerning the logical form of language and the world, which includes *TLP's* "metaphysical" views about the structure of facts (Preface, 6.53-6.54). Call *TLP's* version of the view that everything is One "Unity mysticism" or "mysticism$_U$". Call *TLP's* views about values "Values mysticism" or "mysticism$_V$". Call *TLP's* views about the "metaphysical Subject" "metaphysical Subject

mysticism" or "mysticism$_{MS}$"! Call *TLP's* views about the cosmic-whole "cosmos mysticism" or "mysticism$_{CW}$"! Call *TLP's* views about God "God mysticism" or "mysticism$_{G}$"! Call *TLP's* views about the logical form of language and the world "logical mysticism" or "mysticism$_{L}$"! One could make additional distinctions but these are sufficient for the present purpose to produce this *preliminary* taxonomy of *TLP's* various species of "mysticism$_{S}$,

Fig. 1

$$\text{Mysticism}_S - \begin{cases} \text{mysticism}_{MS} \\ \text{mysticism}_{U} \\ \text{mysticism}_{CW} \\ \text{mysticism}_{V} \\ \text{mysticism}_{G} \\ \text{mysticism}_{L} \end{cases}$$

Note that there is no internal structure in this taxonomy of the different species of mysticism$_{S}$. Fig. 1 indicates only that *TLP*'s "silence mysticism" includes "unsayable claims about the "metaphysical Subject," the unity of the world, the cosmic whole, values, God, and the logical structure of language and the world". However, one must wonder if it is possible to arrange these species of the "unsayable" in a hierarchy where some are subsumed under others in an illuminating way. For example, might mystical$_{V}$ views be subsumed under mystical$_{G}$ views (or vice versa)? Further, it seems odd to classify *TLP's* logical mysticism$_{L}$ alongside its mystical$_{G}$, mysticism$_{V}$, mysticism$_{CW}$, and m ysticism$_{U}$ views. For, there is nothing quite like *TLP's* "logical mysticism$_{L}$" about *propositional symbols* in Taoism, Hinduism, Buddhism or Sufism. One might think that there are species of "logical mysticism" in the philosophical tradition, for example in Plato, but there is nothing in Plato about what is "shown [*zeigt*]" by the tautological or propositional symbols. *TLP's* mysticism is a specifically modern creation. It is one of the primary aims of the paper to show that

there is a highly illuminating *hierarchy* of priorities in *TLP's* conception of these species of mysticism$_S$, thereby enabling one to capture the *dependent* place of *TLP's* "logical mysticism$_L$" in its overall "mystical" scheme. Finally, since *TLP's* "mysticism$_{MS}$" about the "metaphysical Subject" is so hard to classify it is, for simplicity, shelved for the present time but it is reintroduced in § V when its proper place in the taxonomy becomes obvious.

2. Two Difference Species of the Mystical

> There are indeed things that cannot be put into words. They make themselves manifest [zeigt sich]. They are what is mystical. [All emphasis LW's]. *Tractatus* (6,522)

There is, *prima facia*, a conflict between the view in *TLP's* Preface, which seems to include *everything* that is "shown [*zeigt*]" within the mysticals, and the view in *TLP* (6.522), which explicitly limits the mysticals to that which "shows itself [*zeigt sich*]". That is, there is no suggestion whatsoever within *TLP* that anything about the "metaphysical Subject", God, values, or the cosmic whole is "shown [*zeigt*]" by the tautological or propositional symbols. That which is "shown" by the tautological or propositional symbols includes only relatively *mundane* sorts of things about the logical forms of propositions or facts. The propositional symbol "aRb" is supposed to "show [*zeigt*]" the state of affairs of a's being R to b but it shows nothing about values, God, the cosmic whole or the "*Sinn des Lebens*." One must, therefore, a distinguish sharply between that which is "shown [*zeigt*]" by propostional symbols and that which "shows itself [*zeigt sich*]" without the mediation of propositional symbols!

The present paper will, however, argue that, *in the final analysis*, that which is "shown [*zeigt*]" by propositional symbols *does* belong to the mysticals. That is, the paper will argue that the view of *TLP's* Preface is correct and the view in *TLP* (6.522) is too restrictive. However, it is extremely important to work this out carefully. For this neglected distinction between what is "shown [*zeigt*]" by propositional symbols and what "shows itself [*zeigt sich*]" *without the mediation of propositional*

symbols is needed to understand *TLP*'s "mysticism$_S$." Call that which is "shown" [*zeigt*] by propositional symbols the "mystical$_{ZPS}$". Call that which "shows itself [*zeigt sich*]" independently of propositional symbols, the "mystical$_{ZS}$"! The latter coincides with *TLP's* "logical mysticism$_L$". *T*hese distinctions require one to revise the earlier provisional taxonomy in Fig. 1. Leaving aside the "mysticism$_{MS}$" about the "metaphysical Subject" that has been temporarily shelved, this yields the following provisional bifurcated taxonomy,
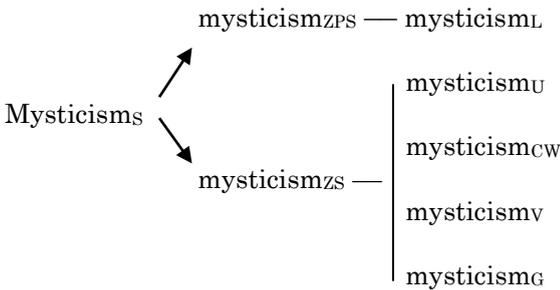
Fig. 2

Fig. 2, emphasizing the crucial distinction between that which is "shown [*zeigt*]" by the propositional symbols and that which "shows itself [*zeigt sich*]" independently of any propositional symbols, isolates *TLP's* unique "logical mysticism$_L$" on the top branch of this taxonomy and locates the more traditional "mystical$_S$" categories pertaining to values, the cosmic whole, the unity of things, and God on the lower branch of the tree. For convenience of reference, call the top branch of Fig. 2, beginning with the "mysticism$_{ZPS}$" node, "the linguistic branch" of the diagram and call the lower branch, beginning with the "mysticism$_{ZS}$" node, "the spiritual branch" of the diagram. Fig. 2 illustrates that *TLP's* "silence mysticism$_S$" divides into two very different species. The top "linguistic branch" of the diagram, that is, the mystical$_{ZPS}$, concerns that which is "shown [*zeigt*]" by propositional symbols. These are the "unsayable" "mystical$_L$" sentences about the "logical form of language and the world" that make up the vast bulk of *TLP*, e.g., sentences like "Objects are simple" (2.02) or "A state of affairs … is a combination of objects (things)" (2.01). The second species is mysticism$_{ZS}$ on the bottom "spiritual branch" of the diagram,

found mostly at the 5.6's, the 6.4's, focusing on mystical$_{ZS}$ categories like values, the cosmic whole, the unity of all things, and God, concerns that which "shows itself [*zeigt sich*]" without propositional symbols.

TLP's notion of that which "shows itself [*zeigt sich*]" parallels Heidegger's concept of the sort of phenomenon that constitute the proper subject matter of phenomenology, namely, "that which shows itself, the manifest [*das was sich zeigt*]." (*Being and Time*, § 7. A) Notice that Heidegger specifically identifies these fundamental phenomena, *not* with that which "shows [*zeigt*]" simpliciter (like the rash that shows on someone's skin thereby "indicating" the presence of disease without the actual viral cause of the disease "showing itself"), but, like *TLP*, with that which "shows itself [*sich zeigt*]".

The present paper will argue that in the final analysis Fig. 2 is wrong to split the mystical$_{ZPS}$ from the mystical$_{ZS}$. That is, the view in *TLP's* Preface is correct and the view at *TLP* (6.522) is too restrictive. Indeed, it is one of the main aims of the paper to replace the bifurcated notion of the mystical$_S$ in Fig 2 by uniting "the logical branch" with "the spiritual branch" in a single continuous straight line that displays all of the relevant priorities in *TLP's* conception of the mystical$_S$. Before one can do this, it is necessary to understand the centrality of the meaning of life ("*Sinn des Lebens*") in *TLP*'s "mysticism$_S$".

3. The "Problems of Life"

> The solution to the problem of life [Problems des Lebens] is seen in the vanishing of the problems. (Is this not the reason why those who have found after a long period of doubt that the sense of life [Sinn des Lebens] became clear to them have been unable to say what constituted this sense). *Tractatus* (6,521)

The "problems of life" have been the central concern of philosophy ever since Socrates brought philosophy from the heavens "down to earth" (Taylor, 1952, 138). *TLP* does not explain precisely what it means by "the problems of life" but the entire series of "mystical$_S$" passages from 6.4 to 7 concern that set of problems normally understood to fall under the general problem of *the meaning of life*. *TLP* (6.41) begins with the view

shared with many religious traditions that "The sense of the world [*Sinn der Welt*] must lie outside the world." *TLP* then proceeds to discuss values, the will, the holistic character of the world, happiness, death, doubt, God and, summing up, the "riddle of life [*Rätsels des Lebens*]" (6.432-6.521). That is, *TLP's* account the mystical$_S$ from 6.4 to 7 focuses on the multi-faceted "riddle of life".

Consider *TLP's* (6.43) and *NB's* (78, 81) discussion of the problem of the "happy [*glücklich*]" life as an illustrative case. Consider R! He has become a successful doctor. He has a wonderful spouse and children. He should be happy. However, his children are doing well enough but they are only philosophy professors, not the obscenely wealthy pop musicians he had wanted. R begins to feel that his life is meaningless. It all changes with a plane crash when R is certain he is going to die. After he survives his former dissatisfaction seems silly to him. The only thing that matters to him now is that he is reunited with his loved ones. The *facts* are the same as they were before the accident. R's children are still only philosophy professors, not wealthy pop musicians—but none of this any longer matters: "[The world] must, so to speak, wax and wane as a whole [*als Ganzes abnehmen oder zunehmen*]. The world of the happy man is a different one from the world of an unhappy man" (*TLP*, 6.43). *NB* (73) explains that this change is not by virtue of any change in the facts but rather "as if by accession [*Dazukommen*] or loss [*Wegfallen*] of meaning [*Sinnes*]". It is as if the world "as a whole [*als Ganzes*]" changes *while the facts remain the same*! Note that this implies that this world-whole has a meaning [*Sinn*] that is over and above the totality of the facts that comprise the world. *TLP's* "world" is obviously more than the mere sum of facts mentioned in *TLP* (1-1.13). For, after the crash, R sees the same facts but he sees the world-as-a-whole differently. If R is asked to explain what it is that constitutes his new sense of the meaning of life (*Sinn des Lebens*) after the crash, he is "unable to say." R can only say that before the crash he was blind, but that after the crash he is "happy" with his life *as a whole*. "Happiness" is not defined in terms of some factual state, e.g., the acquisition of a certain quantity of money or pleasure but in terms of the apprehension

of the meaning of life [*Sinn des Lebens*] and the meaning of the world [*Sinn der Welt*]. Borrowing Wittgenstein's language in his later *Philosophical Investigations* (para. 129), R has come to see what had been "always before [his] eyes" but which he had somehow managed not to see.

It is worth pointing out that *NB* employs some intriguing variants on *TLP's* notion of the "*Sinn des Lebens*." *NB* (72) refers to the "purpose of life [*Zweck des Lebens*]." *NB* (73) states that that person is "happy" who fulfills the "purpose of existence [*Zweck des Daseins*]." It is unclear whether *NB* identifies the "*Sinn des Lebens*", "*Zweck des Lebens*" and "*Zweck des Daseins*". Although *NB* does not clarify the precisely connection between meaning ("*Sinn*") and purpose ("*Zweck*"), it is likely that the "*Sinn des Lebens*," "*Zweck des Lebens*" and "*Zweck des Daseins*" are closely connected. Finally, *TLP* (6.41) refers to the "sense of the world [*Sinn der Welt*]" and *NB* (73) tacitly identifies the "*Sinn des Lebens*" with the "*Sinn der Welt*". Why should it not? Since "I am my world" (5.63) one would expect the "sense" of my life to be the same as the "sense" of my world. *NB* employs a variety of intriguing interrelated concepts that concern the sense or meaning or purpose of life, the world and "existence [*Dasein*]".

It is highly significant that all of *TLP's* various notions of the mystical from 6.4 to 7 revolve around the problems, broadly speaking, of life. That is, the "question" to which *TLP's* mysticisms is addressed is the "riddle of life [*Rätsels des Lebens*]" in *all* of its perplexing dimensions. This raises an intriguing possibility. Some scholars see Wittgenstein's "later philosophy," beginning with the *Philosophical Investigations*, as a kind of "life-philosophy (Gier, 1981, 69-71), but no one ever saw a "life-philosophy" in *TLP*. The present suggestion, developed in the following section, is that this hermeneutical theme is at the heart of *TLP's* "mysticisms" as well. These considerations suggest that the reason Wittgenstein felt that most people, starting with Russell and Carnap, misunderstood *TLP* is that they have tended to see the logical portion of *TLP*, which take up most of *TLP's* pages, as the core of the book when in fact the significance of the logical parts can only be properly appreciated against the background of *TLP's actual*

central focus, the attempt to clarify the "riddle of life [*Rätsels des Lebens*]."

4. The Tractatus Life-World

> Life … is that behind which we cannot go.
> (Dilthey, *Pattern in Meaning and History*, 73)

TLP's (5.621) claim that "the world and life are one [*sind Eins*]" seems paradoxical. It is a comment on *TLP* (5.62) where it is stated that "what the solipsist means is quite correct; only it cannot be said, but makes itself manifest [*zeigt sich*]". Thus, the unity of life and the world is one of the "mystical$_s$" things that "shows itself [*zeigt sich*]". Further, *TLP* (5.621) does *not* mean that the totality of facts is literally *identical* with life. It means that the world and life form some kind an inseparable unity—but what kind? Since, as *TLP* (5.621) says, this unity *is* life but also that it *is* the world one infers quite straightforwardly that this "self-showing" unity is the "life-world". But how must one understand this notion and what role does it play in *TLP*?

First, *TLP's* notions of the "life-world" cannot be understood psychologically or biologically. *NB* (77) states that "Physiological life is … not 'Life'. And neither is it psychological life. Life is the world" (*NB*, 77). Since one encounters facts within the world, that is, within the "life-world," *TLP's* "life-world" is in that sense *prior* to all possible contingent facts. Indeed, physiological and biological life is just more facts encountered within the "life-world." Thus, *TLP's* "life-world" is that *a priori* "self-showing" "world" only within which all possible facts and propositions can be encountered.
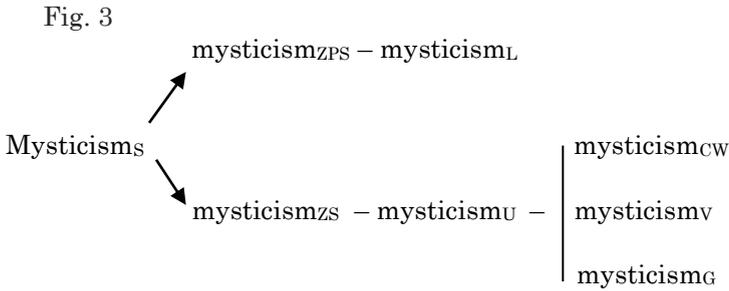
This does not contradict *TLP's* (5.634) claim that "There is no *a priori* order of things" because *TLP's* "life-world" is not a thing. The unity of life with the world is not the unity of two *things*, world and self, that are somehow yoked together. Rather, all of the possible orderings of things, all possible facts, are encountered *within* the "life-world." *TLP's* "life-world" is rather akin to Heidegger's (*Being and Time*, §'s 14, 28) phenomenological notion of the "world" as the "clearing" within which the various possible entities can be encountered.[4] Indeed,

Heidegger's (*Being and Time*, § 28) view that *Dasein* "is itself the clearing" within which other entities can disclose themselves is akin to *TLP's* view that "I am my world" (5.63). That is, *TLP* (5.63) means, at minimum, that "I am that clearing," that "world," within which the contingent facts and their component objects in the world can be encountered. Again, Heidegger (*Being and Time*, § 26) holds an analogous view: "*Dasein* too is 'world' ['*Welt*' *is auch Dasein*]".

The key point about *TLP's* "life-world", however, is that, as Dilthey states, "life is that behind which we cannot go." That is, things and facts presuppose the "life-world" within which they can be encountered but the "life-world" does not require some more basic "clearing" or "world" within which it can be encountered. Any threat of an infinite regress stops at the "life-world" because the "life-world" "shows itself [*zeigt sich*]". A thing or fact does *not* "show itself [*zeigt sich*]" because one can always "go behind" things and facts to the more primordial "life-world" that these *presuppose*. Thus, *TLP*'s "life-world" is that primordial *self-showing* clearing within which other things, *including propositions, facts and objects*, can be encountered.
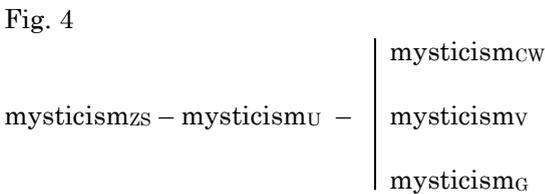
One can also infer that the meaning of life (*Sinn des Lebens*), the purpose of life (*Zweck des Lebens*), the meaning of the world (*Zweck des Welt*), and the purpose of existence (*Zweck des Dasein*) are "phenomenon" that can "show themselves [*zeigt sich*]" within the "life-world". The "life-world" is, so to speak, that "clearing" within which the meaning and purpose of life, the world, and existence can "show themselves [*zeigt sich*]". This means that one must revise the preliminary taxonomy of the mystical presented in Fig. 2 once again.

Recall that in the lower "spiritual branch" of the taxonomy given in Fig. 2, that which "shows itself [*zeigt sich*]" is divided into four species of mysticism$_{ZS}$, each on the same level: mysticism$_U$, mysticism$_{CW}$, mysticism$_V$, and mysticism$_G$. However, it is now clear that mysticism$_U$, which denotes the unity of life and the world (the "life-world"), is *prior* to the other 3 species of mysticism$_S$ on that "spiritual branch," yielding the following taxonomy,

Fig. 3

$$\text{mysticism}_{ZPS} - \text{mysticism}_L$$

$$\text{Mysticism}_S \qquad\qquad \begin{array}{|l} \text{mysticism}_{CW} \\[4pt] \text{mysticism}_{ZS} - \text{mysticism}_U - \begin{vmatrix} \text{mysticism}_{CW} \\ \text{mysticism}_V \\ \text{mysticism}_G \end{vmatrix} \end{array}$$

The lower "spiritual" branch in this taxonomy indicates that mysticism about the cosmic whole, mysticism about values, and mysticism about God all *presuppose* that which can only "show itself [*zeigt sich*]" in the "life-world". This does *not* mean that the "life-world" is ontologically prior to God, values or the cosmic whole which are referenced on the extreme right portion of the "spiritual branch". It only means that the "life-world" is prior to those other three species of mysticism *in the realm of the "self-showing"*. In ordinary terms, it just means that without the primordial clearing of the "life-world" nothing about God, values, or the cosmic whole could "show itself [*zeigt sich*]." The "life-world" is *the primordial "self-showing"* "clearing" within which phenomena like God, the cosmic whole, and values can "show themselves [*zeigt sich*]".

One wonders if it is possible to establish any additional priorities concerning the "life-world," the cosmic whole, values, and God on that "spiritual branch," reproduced here:

Fig. 4

$$\text{mysticism}_{ZS} - \text{mysticism}_U - \begin{vmatrix} \text{mysticism}_{CW} \\ \text{mysticism}_V \\ \text{mysticism}_G \end{vmatrix}$$

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Although *TLP's* remarks are very austere and do not give one much to go on, there are certain remarks in *NB* that provide hints about additional discernable priorities in these species of mysticism$_{ZS}$. Since *NB* sometimes diverges from *TLP*, this portion of the present account is somewhat speculative. In order to remain clear about this qualification, call these three nodes on the far right side of Fig. 3, concerning the cosmic whole, values and God, the "*Notebooks* nodes" of the "spiritual branch". It is, however, worth providing this account of the "*Notebooks* nodes" because it provides a plausible idea how the author of *TLP* might have refined Fig's. 3 and 4.

Recall first that there is a traditional story about these priorities told in certain religious traditions, namely that God shows itself in patterns in the cosmic whole and, accordingly, that to grasp the meaning, value or purpose of existence is to grasp how God shows itself in the cosmic whole. Indeed, *NB* (79), as translated by Anscombe, suggests precisely this picture,

> How things stand [*Wie sich alles verhält*], is God.
> God is, how things stand [*wie sich alles verhält*].

Since Anscombe's translation does not capture the notion of the "whole [*alles*]" in these sentences a more literal translation of these sentences is this,

> How the whole hangs together, is God.
> God is, how the whole hangs together.

Here *NB* states, in effect, that God consists in the way the cosmos *as a whole* holds together. Thus, although God may be ontologically prior to the cosmic whole, the way the cosmic whole holds together is prior in the realm of that which "shows itself [*zeigt sich*]" to God's "self-showing". If this is the case,

TLP's mysticism$_{CW}$ is prior in the realm of that which "shows itself" to the way God "shows itself" in the "life-world".

Further, assuming that the meaning of life ("*Sinn des Lebens*") is equivalent to the value of life, *NB* (73) also makes an explicit link between values and God,

> The meaning of life [*Sinn des Lebens*], i.e., the meaning of the world [*den Sinn der Welt*], we can call God [*wir Gott nennen*].

On this view, to apprehend the value (*Sinn*) of life and the value (*Sinn*) of the world *is* to apprehend God. This means that the "self-showing" of the value of life and the world is prior *in the realm of the self-showing* to the "self-showing" of God because the latter "shows itself [*zeigt sich*]" through the former. The value of life and the world "shows itself [*zeigt sich*]" and "we call" that "God." These passages in *NB* suggest that one can fill out priorities to obtain the following representation of the priorities amongst the "*Notebooks* nodes" in Fig's 3 and 4,

Fig. 5

mysticism$_U$ – mysticism$_{CW}$ – mysticism$_V$ – mysticism$_G$

Recall that *nothing* about ontological priorities has been stated or implied here. Fig. 5 only means that within the realm of that which "shows itself [*zeigt sich*]", it is the way the cosmic whole hangs together that "shows" the value of life and the world, which in turn "shows" the way God expresses its self in the "life-world". Plugging the set of priorities represented in Fig 4 into the relevant place on "the spiritual branch" in Fig. 3 yields the following taxonomy.

Fig. 6

Mysticism$_S$

mysticism$_{ZPS}$ – mysticism$_L$

mysticism$_{ZS}$ – mysticism$_U$ – mysticism$_{CW}$ – mysticism$_V$ – mysticism$_G$
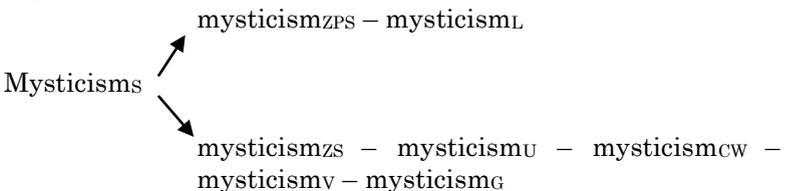
In order to reach the final taxonomy (of this paper) it remains only to unite the two different branches of mysticism$_S$ in Fig. 6, that is, to show how *TLP's* "logical mysticism"

concerning that which is shown [*zeigt*]" by the propositional symbols on the top "linguistic branch" of the tree is related to the traditional mystical$_{ZS}$ phenomena on the lower "spiritual branch" of the tree.

5. Linguistic Meaning Presupposes the "Meaning of Life" (Sinn des Lebens)

> A proposition shows [zeigt] its sense. A proposition shows [zeigt] how things stand if it is true. And it says that they do so stand (All emphasis LW's). *Tractatus* (4.022)

How does a proposition "show [*zeigt*]" its sense? How does it "show [*zeigt*]" how things stand if it is true? *TLP* (4.023) explains that it does this by means of its "internal properties [*internen Eigenschaftnen*]", that is, its own intrinsic structure. A proposition like "aRb" "shows [*zeigt*]" how things stand in the world if it is true by virtue of the fact that the way the names "a" and "b" are related in the propositional symbol *pictures* the way objects a and b are represented to be related in the world (*TLP*, 2.15, 2.161, 4.01, 4.06). Although this structural congruence between propositional symbol and facts in the world is "shown [*zeigt*] and cannot be "said," a logically and scientifically oriented philosopher like Carnap can be quite happy with *this* kind of "showing". For there is nothing that logically and scientifically minded philosophers like more than talk of structural congruence. In fact, most of *TLP's* "propositions [*Sätze*]", the ones 6.54 describes as "nonsense", concern what can be "shown [*zeigt*]" in this sense. And yet many scholars, correctly, classify these *TLP* "propositions" with the mystical$_S$ "propositions" about values, the cosmic whole and God discussed in the last lines in the book … but why? The two species of "mysticisms" are entirely different. What does the structure of a proposition like "aRb" have to do with *TLP's* mysticism$_S$ concerning the cosmic whole, values and God?

The short answer is that what is "shown [*zeigt*]" by the structure of a propositional symbol turns out to *presuppose* that which "shows itself [*zeigt sich*]" in the "life-world" without the mediation of any symbols. One can see this in the following way. If the "proposition" "aRb" "shows [*zeigt*]" the state of affairs of object a being in the relation R to object b by virtue of

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the fact that the names for these objects are related in a similar way in the propositional symbol then why does the propositional symbol represent that fact but that fact in the world not represent the propositional symbol? That is, if structural similarity between propositional symbol and state of affairs is the determining factor then why does not each represent the other? Why is the former "projected" (3.11) onto the latter but the latter is not projected onto the former?

TLP explains that the former pictures the latter, but not vice versa, because "we [*wir*] … think the sense" of the proposition (3.11) – the point being that we do not "think the sense" of the fact because facts don't have a "sense". But how does the thinking self-come into the picture?

> What brings the self into philosophy is that 'the world is my world' (5.641).

The "world" mentioned here is of course the "life-world" mentioned a few lines earlier at 5.621. But this means that the dependencies represented on the "linguistic branch" of Fig's 2, 3, and 6 must be subsumed under the "mysticism$_{MS}$" concerning the thinking Subject" that had earlier been shelved until its place in the taxonomy could be identified. That is, the "linguistic branch" of Fig's 2, 3, and 6 must be rewritten to represent the priority of the "metaphysical Subject",

Fig. 7

– mysticism$_{MS}$ – mysticism$_{ZPS}$ – mysticism$_{L}$

Call this "the revised linguistic branch" of the taxonomy! This "revised linguistic branch" in Fig. 7 illustrates that it is the thinking self ("metaphysical Subject") that transforms an inert structure into a meaningful proposition, which means that the "logical mysticism$_{L}$" concerning the propositional symbol must be subsumed under the mysticism$_{MS}$ concerning the "metaphysical Subject". But the "metaphysical Subject" is "one" with the "life-world" (*TLP*, 5.63), and it is already clear from Fig. 5 that the "life-world" has the following structure:

mysticism$_{U}$ – mysticism$_{CW}$ – mysticism$_{V}$ – mysticism$_{G}$

But if *TLP's* "logical mysticism" presupposes the "metaphysical Subject" to "think the sense of the proposition" and the "metaphysical Subject" is one with the "life-world", then *TLP's* "logical mysticism" presupposes the "life-world".[5] That is, the taxonomy in Fig. 7 must be subsumed under the one shown in Fig. 5, yielding the following more complete taxonomy,

Fig. 8

$mysticism_U$ – $mysticism_{CW}$ – $mysticism_V$ – $mysticism_G$ – $mysticism_{MS}$ – $mysticism_{ZPS}$ – $mysticism_L$

Since the taxonomy represented in Fig. 8 is already understood to be subsumed under the most basic "silence mysticism" in *TLP*, that yields the following final taxonomy of the present paper,

Fig. 9

$mysticism_S$ – $mysticism_{ZS}$ – $mysticism_U$ – $mysticism_{CW}$ – $mysticism_V$ – $mysticism_G$ – $mysticism_{MS}$ – $mysticism_{ZPS}$ – $mysticism_L$

The bifurcation of the taxonomies in Fig's 2, 3, and 6 is eliminated and replaced by a unitary non-bifurcated representation of *TLP's* $mysticism_S$ in which the dependences between *all* the various species of *TLP's* $mysticism_S$ is made explicit. What this final taxonomy in Fig. 9 shows is that all of the other species of mysticism on the tree are subsumed under the "silence $mysticism_S$" on the far left of the tree. The second node from the left on the branch shows that, as 6.522 states, it is characteristic of *all* of these species of "silence $mysticism_S$" that they concern that which "shows itself [*zeigt sich*]" – all of them (even, it turns out, the species involving what is "shown [*zeigt*]" by the propositional symbol on the far right of the "linguistic branch")! The third node from the left on the branch shows that the medium in which the "$mystical_S$" "shows itself [*zeigt sich*]" is the "life-world" referenced at *TLP* (5.621). The "life-world," the realm of the "self-showing," is thereby revealed to be a key concept in understanding *TLP's* $mysticism_S$. Given the austerity in Wittgenstein's presentation in *TLP* it is,

admittedly, hard to know what priorities *TLP* intended for the next three "*Notebooks* nodes" on the branch concerning the cosmic whole, values and God. The priorities represented in Fig. 5, that *TLP's* mysticism about God is parasitic on its mysticism about values, which, in turn is parasitic on its mysticism about the cosmic whole, are motivated by various remarks , mostly in *NB*, discussed in the preceding section. Someone else might cite reasons to represent these priorities differently, perhaps making mysticism about God more basic than its mysticism about values. That is fine. As the author of *TLP* (Preface) himself says, "May others come and do it better". For what is important here is only that however one orders the priorities amongst the three "*Notebooks* nodes" on the tree, *TLP* clearly holds that its "logical mysticism$_L$" concerning what is "shown [*zeigt*]" by propositional symbols at the far right of the "linguistic branch" is dependent on the prior 'self-showing" structure of the "life-world". That is, *TLP's* "logical mysticism" is parasitic on and presupposes its "spiritual" mysticism. In ordinary terms, a proposition can only "shows [*zeigt*] its sense" (4.022) within the spiritually meaningful "life-world." This is a massive development. For it means is that the capacity of a genuine proposition to "show [*zeigt*]" it's sense by virtue of its structure is dependent on *the meaning of life* (*Sinn des Lebens*) that "shows itself [*zeigt sich*]" in the "life-world." Indeed, how could it be otherwise than that the meaning of propositions (*Sinn des Satzes*) turns out to be a dependent aspect of the meaning of life (*Sinn des Lebens*).**[6]**

Fig. 8 is, at the same time, a representation of the general phenomenological structure of *TLP's* "life-world", that is, the basic schema for a phenomenology of what "shows itself [*zeigt sich*]" in the "life-world". This is because the "mystical$_S$" in *TLP* is so closely connected with the phenomenological structure of the "life-world." For, in *TLP's* "scientistic" picture, which countenances only logical and contingent scientific propositions, the phenomenology of that which "shows itself [*zeigt sich*]" in the "life-world" is banished to the "mystical$_S$" realm. Indeed, one might say that what *TLP* calls the "mystical" is really that aspect of phenomenology that falls outside the natural sciences – namely all of it.

One feature of *TLP's* phenomenology is that linguistic meaning (the "*Sinn des Sätze*) is not a free-standing phenomenon as, for example, Jerry Fodor, who never feels any need to locate human language in any "life-world", conceives it in *The Language of Thought*. *TLP*, by contrast, holds that, as Fig. 9 illustrates, the phenomenon of linguistic meaning only makes sense against a richly structured "life-world" that involves "mystical$_{ZS}$" phenomena such as the cosmic whole, values and even the self-expression of God! Thus, on *TLP's* view, a proper account of linguistic meaning cannot be reduced to the sort of account of the physical world or the physical or biological brain of the sort one finds in textbooks of "cognitive science". For *TLP*, language can only be properly understood, roughly speaking, as a *spiritual formation* whose nature is only given by providing a proper *phenomenology* of the mystical$_{ZS}$ dimension of human life.

6. The Disintegration of the Life-World

> Feeling the world as a limited whole [begrenztes Ganzes] …
> is the mystical. *Tractatus* (6.45)

As Garver (1994, 74) points out, there are few aspects of *TLP* more neglected that its holism about the world. Black (1970, 10) is a partial exception insofar as he mentions *TLP's* "'organic' view of the world's essence" and notes that this is in "striking contrast with the atomism [*TLP*] shares with Russell."[7] However, except for one other inconsequential remark later in the book (Black 1970, 267), he does not develop this theme at all. He instead refers the reader to Anscombe's (1971, 169) discussion of the view at *TLP* (6.45) that "feeling the world as a limited whole is the mystical". However, Anscombe there only says that one encounters the notion of the world as a limited whole in *TLP* (1.2) which states that "The world splits up into facts," for, she says, "it is only of a whole that we can say it splits up." However, a bag of stones could be "split up" into parts and there is *nothing* "organic" or "holistic" about that. In fact, *TLP* contains a far more philosophically interesting notion of the world-whole than that, indeed, a notion of the "organic"world whole that contradicts the standard view of *TLP*

as a seminal work in the "analytical" methods associated with Russell and the positivists.

It is generally believed that *TLP's* mysticism₅ only appears at the very end of the book. In fact, *TLP*'s mysticism₅ is anticipated at the very beginning of the book in the line that Anscombe treats so cavalierly.[8] Both Pears and McGuiness and Ogden translate *TLP* (1.2) as "The world divides [*zerfält*] into facts." However, this is a very conservative translation of "*zerfallen*." If one merely wants to say in German that something is "divided," "split up" or "cut up" into parts one would normally use some version of the words *teilen*, *schnitten* or *zerlegen*. Thus, the natural translation of "The cake divides into separate pieces" would be something like "*Der Kuchen teilt sich in einzelne Stücke*". Similarly, if one wishes to say that a living organism is literally cut into pieces it would be natural to render this in German as "*Ein lebender Organismus wird in Teile zerlegt*" or "*Ein lebender Organismus wird in Stückege schnitten.*" If however one wanted to say something quite different, that a living organism loses its organic wholeness through the processes of *decay* or *disintegration*, it would be natural to use the verb "*zerfallen*". That is, the word "*zerfallen*" is normally used when one wants to describe *the decomposition* of a organic *whole* into its parts – not mere "splitting" or cutting or dividing into parts. Indeed, Magnus (2001, 162-163) notes that Hegel uses the word "*zerfallen*" to describe the way art, when it loses its organic unity, disintegrates into parts that are "wholly indifferent to each other" (that is, into something like logically independent "atomic parts"). Thus, *TLP* (1.2) is better translated as "The world decays (or disintegrates) into facts" *on analogy with the way that an organic whole decays or decomposes into parts*. That far richer notion of *an organic whole decaying into parts* is the true root of the "organic view of the world's essence" Black mentions but fails to develop further.

Since *TLP* conceives of the world-whole as an organic unity, its claim at 1.2 that it "*zerfällt*" into its atomic or elementary parts means that in this analytical decomposition of the world into its elementary parts one loses something essential - the world's organic wholeness. Thus, when *TLP* (1.1) states that "The world is the totality [*Gesamtheit*] of facts, it is

not merely saying that the world is a bag of logically independent atomic facts that can be "split up" or "divided" by means of logical analysis. It is rather saying that the world as such is a kind of whole that *cannot* be logically analyzed in that way *without the loss of its essential organic wholeness*. That is, the fundamental message of *TLP*, implicit in its first few lines, is *anti-analytic*. *TLP* admits, of course, that one can "split up" the world up into a bunch of logically independent elementary facts, and, in the bulk of its logical pages, the longer part of *TLP*, it shows one how to do this. That is the correct part of the traditional interpretation of *TLP*. But *TLP's* whole point is that in doing this one loses the organic wholeness of the "life-world" within which only language makes sense"! When a logician (or a psychopath) tells one that one can cut up a dog into its completely logically independent elementary parts they are correct. One can do this. However, in doing so, one loses what makes the dog a living organic whole. One loses what makes it a dog (as opposed to a bag of atoms each of which can exist independent of the others)! This may please the dedicated logician (and the psychopath), but it does not please those who had wanted to understand the dog, the whole living dog, as such.

This is what Wittgenstein really means when he states in *TLP's* Preface that although he believes *TLP* provides "the final solutions of the problems" of philosophy, "the value of this work consists in that it shows how little is achieved when these problems are solved." For what *TLP* actually shows is that when one solves all the solvable problems of philosophy by means of the celebrated new methods of logical analysis one has not come a whit closer to solving the "riddle of life [*Rätsels des Lebens*]" that, from Socrates' time until the relatively recent discovery of seductive new logical *techniques*, had been thought to be the whole point of philosophizing. The new methods of logical analysis may work wonders in the "logic lab", but they are necessarily blind to the holistic structure of the "life-world". Indeed, the application of these techniques to the "life-world" and to the phenomenon of language that presupposes the "life-world" *disintegrates* both. *TLP* (1.2), properly understood, states that in the "logical analysis" of the "world" into its elementary parts one loses what makes it a "world" as such.

NOTES

[1] The view that the world and life are one [*sind Eins*]" is repeated in Wittgenstein's *Notebooks, 1914-16*(77). *Notebooks* (73) suggests the stronger view "that life *is* the world [*Daß das Leben die Welt ist*]."

[2] It is noteworthy that the word "atomic [*atomisch*]" is *never* mentioned in *TLP*. Indeed, even in *NB* the word "*atomische*" is only used once and not to refer to atomic propositions" but only to "atomic functions" or "concepts. Ogden's use of "atomic" to translate *TLP's* "*Sachverhalt*" (2.01) assimilates *TLP's* view to Russell's "logical atomism" and encourages seeing *TLP* in the reflected light of Russell's very different "analytical" program

[3] The paper follows McDonough's (1986, 10, 232-235) terminology of "genuine" contingent propositions here

[4] "What can be meant by describing 'the world' as a phenomena? It means to let us see what shows itself [*zeigt sich*] in 'entities' within the world." (*Being and Time*, § 14)

[5] Note that this does not mean that logic is somehow subjectivised by being made dependent on the "metaphysical Subject". That "p ≡ p" is a tautology is still settled by a truth table and has nothing to do with the "metaphysical Subject". The priorities and dependences represented in Fig. 9 only reflect their relative priorities in the region of the self-showing. See note 6 below!

[6] Note that one cannot infer from Fig. 7 that linguistic meaning is a *species* of religious or value or cosmic meaning (*Sinn*). One can only infer that linguistic meaning can only be "shown [*zeigt*]" against the background of the sort of richly structured "life-world," described in Fig. 7, that "shows itself [*zeigt sich*]". See note 5 above!

[7] See note 2 above!

[8] The reason Black, Anscombe and others gesture at *TLP's* notion of the world-whole without grasping its significance is that they simply cannot get their minds around the idea that *TLP* is *not* a seminal work in their own "analytical" tradition but rather that it defends the "mysticals" view that analytical and scientific methods simply cannot grasp the deep holistic truth that can only be provided by a phenomenology of the "life-world" .

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