On Being Resolute

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Suppose someone comes to you to ask for advice about pursuing a career in a university philosophy department. Maybe you will give them some idea of the teaching commitments and of expectations regarding research. Maybe you will warn about current under-funding. Maybe you will want to reassure them that the academic life is, nevertheless, still very agreeable. But really you should do nothing of the sort, not at least if you want to follow Wittgenstein. Rather your advice should be simply "Don't do that." There is something shameful about an academic life in philosophy. Better to become a gardener or to work in a factory making nuts and bolts.

Suppose though that what you are asked about is not a career in philosophy but rather about how to pursue the subject, perhaps by someone who already feels pursued by the subject. Then your tone will be different, and you will say, following Wittgenstein, "Go the bloody hard way!"

The strange English swear-word "bloody" had a curious fascination for Wittgenstein. It was in his letters to Gilbert Pattison, especially, that he indulged in a kind of jocularity, giving himself licence to use the word in eccentric and original ways, often signing off "Yours bloodily". My own early attempt to find out why, in some contexts, this word caused such dismay led to the explanation that it was a contraction of "By our Lady", and hence obviously blasphemous. But this etymology is now generally doubted. The force of the word derives possibly from natural human anxiety about the letting of blood and, more probably, from a fear of menstruation.

"Go the bloody hard way," "go the bloody rough way" – this is phrasing that Rush Rhees heard recurrently from Wittgenstein, and it is invoked prominently in writings of Cora Diamond and James Conant. It intimates a conception of philosophy that takes it to be inherently difficult, not to be amenable to formulaic responses, and to require a commitment such that its pursuit cannot be separated from the way one lives one's life as a whole. It underlines the sense of philosophy as not only a form of enquiry but a matter of the will, a testing of one's resolve. This, of course, provides an entrée to considering my title phrase: on being resolute. And obviously this is prompted by the prominence in Wittgenstein studies these past two decades or so of so-called "resolute readings".

I

"Resolute reading" has become the favoured term for that line of interpretation associated with the "new Wittgenstein," in which works by Diamond and Conant function as central points of reference. While the term originates in remarks by Thomas Rickett, it was first set in print in Warren Goldfarb's review article "Metaphysics and Nonsense: On Cora Diamond's *The Realistic Spirit*". The provenance of this thinking is explained elegantly by Alice Crary in her introduction to *The New Wittgenstein*, co-edited with Rupert Read and published in 2000. A significant line of interpretation of the later Wittgenstein, she explains, takes it that he sees the aim of philosophy as therapeutic, a term he himself provides. The more distinctive feature of resolute reading is its attributing of such an aim also to the

Tractatus, at least in some degree. Interpretation of this kind turns very much on the significance that is attached to the later sections of that work. So we find, for example,

> Philosophy aims at the logical clarification of thoughts.
> Philosophy is not a body of doctrine but an activity. (TLP 4.112.)

 – which might be taken as an early move in a series of propositions that reorient the reader in relation to the significance of the text's earlier pages: they are in tension with what this same text appears to have claimed ("the final solution of the problems", no less), but they align with the recognition, expressed in the concluding words of the Preface, of "how little is achieved when these problems are solved". The series extends through the statement that "Logic is not a body of doctrine, but a mirror-image of the world" (TLP 6.13), to the claim that "The sense of the world must lie outside the world" (TLP 6.41), and to the assertion that "So too it is impossible for there to be propositions in ethics. Propositions can express nothing that is higher." And, thus, almost finally to:

> My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognises 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. (TLP 6.54.)

Philosophy, then, is not a matter of developing doctrines or theories: it is an activity. And, finally, "what we cannot speak about" (TLP 7) does not refer to an ineffable X towards which silence might be an appropriate form of approach, but rather does not *refer* at all: it turns out attention back towards what we do in the words we use.

This is to find a degree of continuity in Wittgenstein's work that so-called "standard" interpretations deny. To express things in this way, however, is to fall short of what resolute reading is said to achieve. The new Wittgenstein takes issue not only, most provocatively, with the way that the *Tractatus* is commonly understood but also, more subtly, with standard readings of the *Investigations*. This also needs to be explained.

Standard readings claim that the *Investigations* turns on the picture theory of meaning advanced in the *Tractatus* with the doctrine of meaning-as-use: the meaning of a word is fixed not by an act that connects it with features of reality but by the part it plays in what we do – that is, its place in the language-game, its characteristic grammar. It is the grammar of the expression that determines the possibilities of its combination with other words and hence what we can do with it. Whether or not an utterance makes sense is determined by grammar. As Crary puts this:

> The most well-known version of this narrative runs as follows: in the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein advocates a *truth-conditional* theory of meaning which has the characteristic form of *realism*, and later on he embraces a theory of meaning as consisting in *assertibility-conditions* which has the characteristic features of *anti-realism* (Crary and Read 2000, p. 2).

Such an understanding of the *Investigations*, associated for instance with Michael Dummett, Saul Kripke, and David Pears, is itself sometimes taken to be therapeutic: it is intended to "cure" us of the ambition of providing a metaphysical explanation and to regularise our

thinking according to the rules of grammar. The avoidance of metaphysics is achieved by confining enquiry to consideration of assertibility conditions.

But such standard interpretations of the later philosophy, so the New Wittgensteinians claim, "*utterly fail to capture its therapeutic character*" (p. 3). They fail because in giving up the picture theory and the full-bloodied objectivity that it promised, they maintain the assumption that such objectivity depends upon features of reality that transcend thought and speech. Put differently, it depends upon an implicit stepping outside of language on our part even if that attempt results only in a sense of our failure so to do. Failure to achieve the external perspective, the stepping outside of language we took ourselves to need, results in a ceding of authority to obedience to the rules of language games. Hence, its anti-realism. The proponent of the new Wittgenstein will then take these realist and anti-realist interpretations as locked into the same metaphysical presuppositions and perhaps as, in some degree, depending upon one another.

Let us pause to acknowledge that the account thus far is likely to have sounded alarm-bells in the minds of some readers. Surely, it will be objected, too much is being rolled together here. The difference across the range of these "standard" readings is being obscured. What, in particular, of the place of more specifically Kantian readings? The orientation in a Kantian reading is idealist rather than realist: this opens prospects of finding continuity of a kind between the early and the later work but in a way differently articulated from that proposed by resolute readers. It is a live question for Kantian readers whether resolute readers betray a lack of attention to the varying accounts of Wittgenstein's early conception of philosophical method. It is not as if standard readers such as Peter Hacker ignore the tension between what the *Tractatus* claims to be "correct method" and what Wittgenstein himself does in this text. Furthermore, the several quotations gathered above are already redolent of a certain Kantianism, especially insofar as they hold to the clear distinction between statements of facts and philosophical propositions that are the outcome of some kind of transcendental reflection. As Hanne Appelqvist puts this:

> I cannot describe the form of language if that form is a necessary condition for language to make sense in the first place. Just as spatiality cannot be represented spatially but is displayed in spatial constructions, the form shared by language and reality is displayed in language and not expressible by it. (Appelqvist 2016, 704.)

She relates these remarks to Wittgenstein's "Propositions cannot express logical form; it is mirrored by them. . . Propositions show the logical form of reality" (TLP 4.121). There are important questions here, especially concerning the Kantian reader's claim that this distinction (that is, between the empirical and the logical/grammatical) is sustained in the later Wittgenstein.

For the proponents of the new Wittgenstein, in any case, such refinements do little to alter the problem. The alternative that they espouse is resolutely to turn away: they resist the truth-conditions approach and the warranted-assertability approach identified respectively in the early and the later work in standard interpretations, seeking to displace both with a perspective that is both realist and anti-metaphysical. The readings they seek often take the following paragraph from the *Investigations* as of signal importance:

> The great difficulty here is not to represent the matter as if there were something one *couldn't* do. As if there really were an object from which I derive its description, but I were unable to shew it to anyone.——And the best that I can propose is that we should yield to the temptation to use this picture, but then investigate how the *application* of the picture goes. (PI §374.)

Not to think there is something one cannot do: it is precisely thinking that there *is* that is the metaphysical impulse behind the standard reader's anti-realism. And this impulse can readily be allied to a tendency, fostered by a non-resolute reading of the *Tractatus*, to interpret that text as gesturing towards something ineffable but substantial. This would be to reveal not only what is alleged to be the latent mysticism in the work but also the impossibility, as we saw, of ethics' being put into words. In this light, the nonsensical and what cannot be said now seem to incorporate a plural range of significance for human beings, and the idea that some things cannot be said but can be shown works powerfully with this assumption. The mystical and the ethical, as well in fact as those meta-level propositions that do not provide a picture of the world but rather purport to describe *how* propositions picture the world, are all to be classed as non-sensical. Yet this is something resolute readers will staunchly oppose, sometimes under the rubric of "nonsense monism" or "nonsense austerity". On a resolute reading, an expression is nonsense where no use for it has been found, and in the light of this criterion there is no reason to differentiate what may seem verbal gestures towards some ineffable truth from gibberish. The cogency claimed for the lack of differentiation here will be misunderstood, so the argument goes, if it is thought in terms of *psychological* plausibility: the therapy intended is that we be released from the illusion that we mean something when in fact we mean nothing.[1]

Having sketched the principal tenets of each of the two sides to the argument, I want to refer briefly to three responses to the prominence of the debate in Wittgenstein studies. While it has thus far been necessary to consider the *Tractatus* in order to set the scene, in what follows my attention is focused predominantly on the *Investigations* and on the consequences of a resolute response to that work.

First, Genia Schönbaumsfeld's "A 'Resolute' Later Wittgenstein" expressly takes issue with Conant's "mono-Wittgensteinianism" as well as with the account of "nonsense austerity" offered in Stephen Mulhall's work. She provides a sharp analysis especially regarding nonsensicality, as well as a parting-shot against the suggestion that Wittgenstein thought that philosophical problems were "existential" or "personal" problems (Schönbaumsfeld 2010, 666). It is difficult to read this piece, however, as she might well agree, without some sense that the arguments are sometimes passing one another by, which in turn must be a plea for greater clarity. The note of exasperation in the article surely says as much. The possibility of a more existential or personal reading is both opened and ironised in the Kierkegaardian pastiche with which Conant frames his lengthy defence of "mild mono-Wittgensteinianism" (Conant 2007), and certainly the melodrama of existential engagement is stilled by the emphasis on the kicking away of the ladder as a matter requiring not once-and-for-all conversion but continual patience of thought. Whatever the provocations of ardent articulations of mono-Wittgensteinism, Conant ends his essay with the suggestion that the central motivation of resolute reading "*can* be to improve upon existing accounts of the discontinuity in Wittgenstein's philosophy" (Conant 2007, 111).

In "Why does resoluteness matter to philosophy?" Martin Gustafsson provides a brief survey of the debate. He draws attention to a key aspect of the positions developed by Conant and Diamond: "that any sign can have various intelligible uses, and that a sign can be given a new meaningful employment even without prior stipulation" (2012). Standard readers reject such a view on the grounds "(i) that to give a sign a new meaning is always already a

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[1] Of course, the alarm-bells may ring again for the Kantian reader, who will insist that logical form and the metaphysical subject are transcendental and not matters of *substance*. Yet it is not clear how far this disclaimer embraces what is intended in the phrase "whereof one cannot speak" (TLP 7).

linguistic affair, and (ii) that the possibility of linguistic innovation is therefore by necessity parasitic on the linguistic resources that are available before the innovation is made" (ibid. X.). But this reasoning, Gustafsson tries to show, rests on a false dichotomy. It presupposes the idea that

> linguistic innovation must be conceived *either* (1) as dependent on established usage in such a way that this established usage allows us to draw the limits of intelligible innovation *before* particular innovations have actually been made and put to use in concrete circumstances, *or* (2) as completely independent of established usage, in such a way that the intelligibility of an innovation might have nothing at all to do with how language has been used before, being the product instead of some mysterious, non-linguistic meaning-giving
> act of the speaker. (Ibid. X.)

We shall return to the question of innovation below. But Gustafsson is motivated also by a concern about the debate that may already have become apparent in what I have said so far. This is that the debate runs the risk of sounding like a local dispute and that, in consequence, it may be playing its part in confirming in the minds of at least some "lay" philosophers their sense of the marginal and perhaps somewhat esoteric appeal of Wittgenstein's work. In spite of these reservations, Gustafsson enters a qualified plea for resolute reading as offering the greatest potential to demonstrate Wittgenstein's wider significance and importance.

Hilary Putnam, himself a contributor to Crary and Read's *The New Wittgenstein*, is taken to be a friend to this position, especially in virtue of his interpretation of Wittgenstein's philosophy of mathematics, and his endorsement of a realist, non-metaphysical position. But Putnam also has expressed concern about the nature of the contemporary debate, worrying that it has come to seem somewhat self-involved and parochial, to the detriment of Wittgenstein's reception in the wider world of philosophy. If it is indeed the case that philosophy is to be understood as merely therapeutic, in the subjective sense of the term, and to some extent in defiance (or denial) of the history of philosophy with its more systematic concerns, then the view attributed to Wittgenstein does seem to run the risk of becoming irrelevant to people who take the subject up for its own sake. If Wittgensteinians now find themselves to be marginalised in that subject, to some extent they have themselves to blame.[2]

In the remainder of this paper I shall offer my own reflection on this position. I speak as someone who is institutionally marginalised from the philosophical mainstream but who is convinced of the wider significance of Wittgenstein's work.

II

> I constantly find new puzzles. (I've thought about this for years, constantly ploughed these fields.) I would not be justified in saying: "Let's talk no more about it."
> – Wittgenstein, *Whewell Court Lectures* (WCL, 196.)

The debate provoked by the new Wittgenstein has produced subtle and complex argument, and in some respects it has realised new standards of exegesis. Reference to the "*Tractatus* wars" (which, on the above account, must be taken to extend into the "*Investigations* wars") has, however, encouraged the impression that there must be two factions battling it out and that each holds a rival "position". In the reiteration of these ideas, shorthand expressions such

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[2] See, for example, Putnam's remarks when interviewed by Naoko Saito and myself (Saito and Standish, 2012).

as "nonsense austerity", "mono-Wittgensteinianism", "therapy" or "resolute reading" itself have advertised the differences with a boldness that belies the subtlety of the commitments embraced. The significance of this seems especially striking if one considers the alleged provenance of new readings – that is, the writings of Rush Rhees, Hide Ishiguro, and Stanley Cavell, none of whom can readily be understood well in terms of the holding of "positions". I take it that the holding of positions is perilously close to the advancing of theories or doctrines, and further that too strenuous a disavowal of metaphysics may bring problems beyond what one has bargained for.

One consequence of the hardening of views into positions is that the tensions within Wittgenstein's texts are obscured. Of course the tensions within the *Tractatus* are not ignored: indeed how to read the relation between the picture theory it apparently advances and the "framing sections", as well as a series of apparently self-undermining remarks, beginning somewhere in the 4s, is the nub of the question that divides resolute from standard readers. And they are generally sharply divided. The *Investigations*, by contrast, is amenable to less systematic a response, and here it is sometimes the case that the garnering of textual support for one position or the other fails to work with the dialogical tensions within paragraphs, tensions that are rendered most obviously by interactions with the interlocutor but also more subtly by shifts of tone, prompted often by variations in punctuation. These are tensions Wittgenstein works *with* rather than simply seeks to resolve. Sometimes, as we shall see, they arise not just between voices but from the extraordinary, even surreal nature of the examples that are used (a primitive builder tribe, a lion that speaks, a parrot with understanding, and a rose with no teeth) and from an overt straining of the language itself ("THIS is produced by a brain-process!" (PI §412), say, and "Milk me sugar" (PI § 498)). We considered earlier the central importance to resolute readings of the claim, PI §374, that "The great difficulty here is not to represent the matter as if there were something one *couldn't* do." Let us juxtapose this against the following, now familiar extract from remarks recorded by Friedrich Waismann – this one from 30 September 1929:

> To be sure I can imagine what Heidegger means by being and anxiety. Man feels the urge to run up against the limits of language. Think for example of the astonishment that anything at all exists. The astonishment can be expressed in the form of a question, and there is no answer whatsoever. Anything we might say is a priori bound to be mere nonsense. Nevertheless we do run up against the limits of language. Kierkegaard too saw that there is this running up against something and he referred to it in a fairly similar way (as running up against paradox). This running up against the limits of language is ethics. I think it is definitely important to put an end to all the claptrap about ethics – whether intuitive knowledge exists, whether values exist, whether the good is definable. In ethics we are always making the attempt to say something that cannot be said, something that does not and never will touch the essence of the matter. It is a priori certain that whatever definition of the good will be given – it will always be merely a misunderstanding to say that the essential thing, that what is really meant, corresponds to what is expressed (Moore). But the inclination, the running up against something, indicates something. St Augustine knew that already when he said: What, you swine, you want not to talk nonsense! Go ahead and talk nonsense, it does not matter (Waismann 1979, 68-69).

Are we to read this acknowledgement of the urge to run up against the limits of language, or Augustine's recognition of the need to talk nonsense, as simply opposed by PI §374? It is true that the latter was written a decade or so later, but then in 1947 we find Wittgenstein echoing Augustine's phrasing: "Don't *for heaven's sake*, be afraid of talking nonsense! But you must

pay attention to your nonsense" (CV, 56e). Is it perhaps that the urge to run up against the limits is the temptation, and the advice not to think that there is something you cannot do is the cure? Or is it the case that as human beings we need both? The issue here is how far things are to be resolved, and how far resoluteness is directed to this.

But how curious are the connections and connotations of "resolute" and its cognates! The noun "resolution" suggests clarity, perhaps the high resolution that might be thought to characterize a perspicuous representation, an *Übersicht*. To resolve difficulties can be simply to solve problems, even sometimes to resolve differences through compromise. So is philosophy then to seek solutions? If there are to be solutions, Wittgenstein tells us, they will come as the result not of new information or a new discovery, but rather of closer attention to our grammar. Sometimes the problem will be dissolved. Here again, however, we are faced with temptation:

> [Philosophical problems] are solved, rather, by looking into the workings of our language, and that in such a way as to make us recognize those workings: *in despite of* an urge to misunderstand them. The problems are solved, not by new information, but by arranging what we have always known. Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language. (PI §109.)

So with these urges to be resisted, temptation is foregrounded once again, and resoluteness becomes identified more directly with the idea of an unswerving will. To the contemporary Anglophone philosophical reader, however, a curious further echo may be apparent, which will take us back to Wittgenstein's acknowledgement of Heidegger's notion of anxiety: Heidegger's translators chose the term "resoluteness" for that supremely important virtue, *Entschlossenheit*, which is called for from Dasein in the face of its finitude. This is described precisely as a "*reticent self-projection upon one's ownmost Being-guilty, in which one is ready for anxiety*" (Heidegger 1962, H. 297). The calculated resonance in Heidegger's text of *Entschlossenheit* with *Erschlossenheit*, which translates as "disclosedness", points to a kind of realism that is perhaps not so far from the realistic spirit.

The darker note that is sounded here, regarding anxiety and finitude, leads to the main thrust of what I want to consider in the remainder of this paper, and this has three aspects. In the first place, I shall consider how the relation to the metaphysical is to be understood in Wittgenstein's later work. In the second, I ask how far contemporary articulations of the new Wittgenstein depart from the work that apparently inspired them, in respect of which I shall have most to say about Stanley Cavell. In the third, and with the main focus on the limits of language, I turn more directly to Heidegger.

Wittgenstein and metaphysics

Certainly, the later Wittgenstein is widely understood as anti-metaphysical. While it would be wrong simply to deny this, I wonder about the confidence with which it is asserted. The reason for concern has to do not only with how far such an understanding is accurate but with how therapeutic readings are to be understood. My sense is that there is a danger of being dismissive here, which the hardening of views into positions may encourage, as may uncritical, perhaps complacent adherence to PI §374 ("The great difficulty here is not to represent the matter as if there were something one *couldn't* do"). In any case, if one attends to what follows this opening sentence in the paragraph, one finds first a subjunctive picturing of the illusion this might imply ("As if there really were an object. . ."), followed by the proposal in response that "we should yield to the temptation to use this picture, but then investigate how the *application* of the picture goes" (PI § 374). The picture is not to be so

quickly or confidently excised. Consider then these remarks of Rush Rhees about Wittgenstein's views:

> From 1931 onwards, anyway, I do not think he was calling on his pupils to *renounce* metaphysics; no more than he would have called on any people to renounce magic. But he did want to bring them to see what metaphysics is, and in this way to free them from the special hold which it has on you when you feel that "this is the only way it *can* be". He would try to free anyone from the idea that magic is some sort of rival to science – either an inferior or a superior one. (Rhees 2006, 262–263.)[3]

One version of a therapeutic reading might run as follows: if we can stop running up against the limits of language, then we will no longer be burdened by the idea that there is something we cannot do.[4] And if one symptom within philosophy of running up against the limits of language is scepticism, it will follow that the dissolving of the sceptic's questions will figure as an important stage in the overcoming of the disease. Then, because we have been restored to the ordinary, because we have achieved peace, philosophy can come to an end. Our therapy will be complete, and metaphysics will truly be overcome.

It is worth attending to a much-quoted paragraph, selective reading of which has been taken to endorse such a therapeutic view:

> It is not our aim to refine or complete the system of rules for the use of our words in unheard-of ways.
> For the clarity we are aiming at is indeed *complete* clarity. But this simply means that the philosophical problems should *completely* disappear.
> The real discovery is the one that makes me capable of stopping doing philosophy when I want to. – The one that gives philosophy peace, so that it is no longer tormented by questions which bring *itself* into question.—Instead, we now demonstrate a method, by examples; and the series of examples can be broken off.— Problems are solved (difficulties eliminated), not a *single* problem.
> There is not *a* philosophical method, though there are indeed methods, like different therapies. (PI §133.)

The selective reading I have in mind accentuates the achieving of clarity and the complete disappearance of the problems, with philosophy achieving peace. It loses sight of the opening assertion that it is *not* our aim to complete the system of rules, just as it underplays other qualifiers in the lines that follow.[5] An over-zealous therapist might be drawn to such a view.

Plainly, however, as we saw above, such a therapy does not chime well with Rhees's claims. Wittgenstein releases his pupils from a debased kind of scientific thinking; and then this running up against the limits of language can be understood better, in the light, for

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[3] The *Appendix: On Wittgenstein* is adapted from a letter to M. O'C. Drury dated 7 November 1965.

[4] Once again, it might be said that, on the Kantian reading, the emphasis in the idea of limits is not the inability to do something (underscored by the resolute account) but rather on the recognition of the status of what lies at the limit, namely that it is not on a par with ordinary empirical statements.

[5] For further discussion of this paragraph, in conjunction with #89, see David Stern (2004, 130-131) and Cavell (1995, 1996), both of whom draw attention to the ways that sentences within the se paragraphs carry a degree of ambiguity: they point towards both "fighting the fantasy" and "granting it", in Cavell's phrase.

example, of his remarks about magic and religion. But what is at stake in his use of this term magic? This is clarified helpfully by the several examples he discusses in his "Remarks on Frazer's *Golden Bough*" (PO, 118–155). Frazer is condemned for the manner of his interpretation of the practices he observes in more "primitive" societies, where he mistakes something like a religious ritual – for example, a practice to mark the adoption of a child – for bad science: he has the lack of narrowness of vision that one expects to find in an English country parson.

The monological way of thinking of the anthropologist, in Wittgenstein's description, is an instance of the one-tracked thinking that Wittgenstein has in his sights elsewhere. A philosophical version of this vice, which is found in the sciences also, involves the idea that thinking involves addressing puzzles and that puzzles admit one solution. In his early setting the scene for the parable of the fly-bottle, Wittgenstein remarks of the fly: "The stronger the wish to get out, the harder it is for it to get out. (It is fascinated by one way of trying to get out.)" (WCL, 7). The puzzle for the philosopher provokes "one reaction – of looking for the solution". But, Wittgenstein responds, "If you wanted to let [the fly] out, you'd have to surround this (the glassy surface of the fly catcher) by something dark. As long as there is light there, the fly can never do it." (WCL, 196.) Pursuing the analogy further, he writes:

> If I am puzzled philosophically, I always darken that which seems to me light, and try frantically to think of something different. The point is you can't get out as long as you are fascinated. The only thing to do is to go to an example where nothing fascinates me. First of all, it is not at all clear that this will help every fly. What happens to work with me doesn't work with him (Professor Moore) – works with me now, and may not work with me tomorrow.
> There are always new ways to look at the matter. (WCL, 196.)

Wittgenstein lets the fly out of the fly-bottle, language is returned to the ordinary, philosophy achieves peace, but only for it all to start up again, and this continually so. When one reads that "it is not our aim to refine or complete the system of rules for the use of our words in unheard-of ways" (PI §133), it is wise to set the remark against the background of Wittgenstein's massive constructivist turn in relation to mathematics. It is this turn that in the end gives impetus to Wittgenstein's growing sense of what it is to know how to go on and to what "complete clarity" might be. This clarity is achieved by a shutting of the eyes that is offensive to what appears as the intellectual conscience but that gives voice to the human. *Meine Augen sind verschlossen. Ich bin entschlossen.* Intellectual limitedness is, then, to be displaced by a picture of human finitude. But this is a finitude that does not rest without inviting a contrast to itself.

Cavell and the threat of scepticism

A thoroughgoing therapeutic approach would not accord with the account of the *Investigations* offered by Cavell. What would it be like to live without the threat of scepticism? Cavell rejects the familiar idea that the *Investigations* provides a refutation of the sceptic. It is not exactly that this should be denied but rather that it misses the point. This is that Wittgenstein's treatment of scepticism demonstrates not an epistemological but an existential truth, and we might readily think of this as a manifestation of running up against the limits of language. Hence, Cavell draws attention to the restlessness in the text, which, he finds, articulates this aspect of the human condition. This he describes variously as the human being's failure to acknowledge what she ordinarily knows and as the human compulsion to call into question the conditions of its own existence. Why else would the *Investigations* go

on so long? Why else does Wittgenstein not solve the problem and leave well alone? There are methods, there are therapies, but there is no end to philosophy, nor to the restlessness of the human condition.

When the sceptic asks "But, if you are *certain*, isn't it that you are shutting your eyes in the face of doubt?" (PI, 224), Cavell phrases his response specifically in terms of a kind of resolve:

> The skeptic insinuates that there are possibilities to which the claim of certainty shuts its eyes; or: whose eyes the claim of certainty shuts. It is the voice, or an imitation of the voice, of intellectual conscience. Wittgenstein replies: "They are shut." It is the voice of human conscience. It is not generally conclusive, but it is more of an answer that it may appear to be. In the face of the skeptic's picture of intellectual limitedness, Wittgenstein proposes a picture of human finitude. (Then our real need is for an account of this finitude, especially of what it invites in contrast to itself.)
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> His eyes are shut; he has not shut them. The implication is that the insinuated doubt is not *his*. But how not? If the philosopher *makes* them his, pries the lids up with instruments of doubt, does he not come upon human eyes? – When I said that the voice of human conscience was not generally conclusive, I was leaving it open whether it was individually conclusive. It may be the expression of resolution, at least of confession. "They (my eyes) are shut" as a resolution, or confession, says that one can, for one's part, live in the face of doubt. – But doesn't everyone, everyday? – It is something different to live *without* doubt, without so to speak the threat of scepticism. To live in the face of doubt, eyes happily shut, would be to fall in love with the world (Cavell 1979, 431).

The juxtaposition of intellectual to human conscience is one move in resistance to the flight from the ordinary, a flight manifested here in part in our failure of acknowledgement of the other. Indeed, on the previous page Cavell says no less than that "The crucified human body is our best picture of the unacknowledged human soul" (Cavell 1979, 430). And in the Festschrift for Cora Diamond, in a piece relating to J.M. Coetzee's *Elizabeth Costello*, he more or less says that the wounded human body is a picture of the human soul – taking the woman's body, the body that must bleed, as the soul's better exemplification (Cavell 2007).

The seriousness inherent in these remarks – one might say, their sense of the tragic dimension to a human life and of the manifestation of this in human expressiveness – is something that Cavell finds to be painfully absent in much moral philosophy: both in its tendencies, even commitments, towards abstraction and in its professed investments, cautious and pinched as they often are, in ordinary language philosophy. In "Performative and Passionate Utterance", he writes:

> But if what I have been aiming at is indeed some fragment of a view of expression, of recognizing language as everywhere revealing desire . . . this is because the view is meant in service of something I want from moral theory, namely a systematic recognition of speech as confrontation, as demanding, as owed . . ., each instance of which directs, and risks, if not costs, blood (Cavell 2005, 187).

So then it must seem abrupt, to say the least, to turn from such poignant aphorism and to consider the prominence in *his* work of the idea of the ordinary, especially the ordinary to which Wittgenstein repeatedly returns. But Cavell differentiates between the "actual ordinary" and the "eventual ordinary". Think of the actual ordinary as what is there, the world into which we came as children, and with which for a time we enjoyed a kind of

animal intimacy, and later the world we mostly take for granted. But what we come to, as time progresses, is never quite the same as it was, and characteristically our experience is marked by patterns of separation and return. Return to the ordinary, including the return that is appealed to recurrently in the *Investigations*, is not something that can be simple. In a sense there can be no simple *return*, for what you return to will not be the same as what you left. The ordinary you return to will then be an ordinary encountered with a sense both of new possibility and of intimacy lost: natural or animal absorption gives way to a kind of exile, iconically figured as the exit from Eden; but exile is also the condition of imagination and opening to the new. On the epic scale, think of Ulysses or the Ancient Mariner, who return marked by the trauma of what has happened. Think also, more prosaically, of the way that we stay with the same relationships, though they cannot – and should not – stay the same. Think of the way that we stay with ourselves. On the small scale, think of the piecemeal steps that Wittgenstein takes in returning an expression to its home in the language-game. By implication and by extension, and in view of the very nature of the signs that human beings are, language cannot stay the same.

This breaching of our natural condition comes especially and inevitably with language, and hence with exposure to the rules that shape our society's practices. But following a rule does not rule out new departures from that rule, and in the learning of language this is so from a remarkably early stage. Gustafsson quotes Cavell's extended riff on the word "feed", where "feed the cat" connects with "feed the meter", and so to "feed in the film" and "feed his pride" (Cavell 1979, 181). In another example Cavell considers the young child learning the word "pumpkin", which must presumably be connected with "pumping" and perhaps with "Mr Popkin" who lives next door (Cavell 1979, 176–177). These are associations that depart from the word's apparent immediate use, indeed that extend beyond immediacy itself, opening the way most crucially for imagination. The child experiments with the words she acquires, sometimes meaningfully, sometimes aimlessly, and hits upon new associations and possibilities for the word. In fact, if we can accept that this generally is how words are, then the way we use them acquires a sharper edge of responsibility, for they will shape possibilities not only for ourselves but for our community too. If this is right, there is an exposure in our use of words, an opening onto vast possibilities of meaningfulness, but there is a poignancy in language's breaching of the immediate, of animal intimacy. The ordinary to which we return, this eventual ordinary, is an ordinary that is marked.

Around the middle of the period of sixteen years that it took Cavell to write *The Claim of Reason*, he produced a short book on *Walden*, Thoreau's experiment in writing and living. It is in response to that book's consideration of how we can bring it about that we live by our own determination that Cavell again speaks of resolve. We live by fate, Thoreau says, because we are "determined not to live by faith" (I, 15). We must learn to live well with the fact that we are looking for something we seem to have lost. *Walden* returns continually to questions of finding, trust, and interest, and of transformation, weighing their necessities, and adumbrating what we might think of as a realistic spirit. "What they come to", Cavell writes,

> is the learning of resolution. This is what will replace our determination, or commitment, to fate, to the absence of freedom. It is not a matter of doing something new, of determining a course of action and committing ourselves to it, as to jail (II, 5) or to an asylum. Resolution has to do with stillness and with settling (a "clearing", he sometimes calls it). The summary of the writer's learning this is told in his myth of winter, by what happens to him on the ice. It is there that he finds the bottom of the pond and it is in winter that the owls prophesy and the fox awaits his transformation. (Cavell 1982, 99.)

Why is this a matter of resolution? Resolution is, first of all, identified with freedom, understood as a replacement of fate: we are not born free, we are fated and thrown into particular circumstances; but we can place ourselves differently and, hence, gaining distance on fate, re-place it within our lives. And resolute action will depend not upon the *drama* of action so much as on a kind of withdrawal and, what might more fashionably now be called, centering. Resolution is found visually also in the crystalline clarity of the pond in winter, its "clearing" suggesting a kind of enlightenment, as well as anticipating the clearing between the trees made by the foresters that so drew Heidegger's attention.

Thoreau's building of his house in the woods might be seen as an enacted meditation on the building-dwelling-thinking that Heidegger a century later will thematise (Heidegger 1975/1954). Heidegger's coupling of, or rather his weakening of the boundaries between, these words – the title of his lecture, *Bauen Wohnen Denken*, has no punctuation – is intended to suggest what might, in a different idiom, be thought an internal relation between these concepts and activities. But it is more than that: to speak, to think, is a kind of *poiesis*, and hence it is – minimal though this will for the most part be – a kind of construction or building. What it constructs is the place wherein we dwell, and without dwelling, building would not make sense. And that place *becomes* a place, rather than, say, a space determined on a grid-lined map, through coordinates of human connection, where meaning is constituted out of a remembering and projection, the purposiveness characteristic of human practices. It is surely far from incidental in importance that the tribe that Wittgenstein asks the reader to imagine in the second paragraph of the *Investigations* is one whose members are builders; and it is of pointed significance that the progressive difficulty in imagining this has to do the absence of recognisably meaningful practices – that is, of those qualities of building, dwelling, and thinking that might ordinarily be taken for granted.

For all the coincidences between Thoreau's and Heidegger's themes and landscapes, however, their worlds are in the end set out of kilter: by a contrast between the eschatological drama of Dasein's being-towards-death and the different time-scheme of Thoreau's fox awaiting its transformation. The dispersal of the drama in the latter and its dispelling of heroic eschatology are found in the attention given to the seasonal sloughing of identity and the rhythms of diurnal and monthly change. Thoreau bathed every day in the pond, and it was, he testifies, a religious exercise. This dispersal or permeation is caught also in words of Martin Luther that Cavell takes as epigraph to *The Senses of Walden*:

> For all our life should be baptism, and the fulfilling of the sign, or the sacrament, of baptism; we have been set free from all else and wholly given over to baptism alone, that is, to death and resurrection. This glorious liberty of ours, and this understanding of baptism have been carried captive in our day.

Thoreau's vision of this fulfilling of the sign of baptism is nothing like the heroic destining of a person or a people, symbolised by the flow of the River Ister, as Heidegger, reading Hölderlin, finds this (Cavell 2005); it is rather a kind of instilling, symbolised by the stillness of Walden Pond and realized in the daily practice of washing and cleansing.

Instilling achieves a fidelity to the way things are, here, at this time, involving the observance of a daily regime that is, or can become, something other than dull mechanical routine. The vibrancy and validity of this are born not only of familiarity but also out of an acceptance of and receptivity to the strangeness in the familiar. In the end, however, and contrary to popular readings of Thoreau, it is not this particular place, Walden Pond, that is the heart of the matter: what is more important is the possibility, or perhaps the principle, of this combination of particular attachments (regimes of living attuned to them, acceptance of

their finitude, commitments drawn by experience) with a readiness for departure – before, as it were, they fossilise or perhaps come to be romanticised or to parody themselves. Moreover, as Cavell puts this in a late paper, the manner of Thoreau's leaving of Walden demonstrates

> what Freud calls the work of mourning, letting the past go, giving it up, giving it over, giving away the Walden it was time for him to leave, without nostalgia, without a disabling elegiacism. Nostalgia is the inability to open the past to the future, as if the strangers who will replace you will never find what you have found. Such a negative heritage would be a poor thing to leave to *Walden's* readers, whom its writer identifies, among many ways, precisely as strangers (Cavell 2005, 217-218).

Thinking of the *topos* of the everyday, in which the paradox of the strange in the familiar is played out, as a possible site of meeting of Heidegger not only with Thoreau but with Wittgenstein, Cavell writes that it is "a place from which it can be seen both why Heidegger finds authenticity to demand departure and why Wittgenstein finds sense or sanity to demand return" (Cavell 1988, 163). The strange finds its place in Heidegger's *Unheimlichkeit*, but the idea of the stranger is mostly alien to *Dasein's* being-with-others – a manner of being suggestive of something held in common or, in Emmanuel Levinas caustic remark, reminiscent of marching together. Cavell alludes also to a contrast between the journeying home or being homebound that exerts so strong a gravitational force in Heidegger's thought and the *sojourning* emphasised in Thoreau, where one is to live each day, everywhere and nowhere, as a task and an event (Cavell 2005, 229). Unlike the ideas of "mineness" and belonging that recur in Heidegger, there is here some sense of an essential immigrancy of the human, of an incoming or invention that depends upon reception, of something coming from outside. We return to ourselves as through a condition of estrangement, as though we have still to arrive at our words. Education, the education of grownups of which Cavell speaks (Cavell 1979, 125), requires our discovery of our immigrancy to ourselves.

Cavell has sometimes seen himself as working within the tear in philosophy that develops in the wake of Kant, and any comparison of Wittgenstein and Heidegger must perforce take up threads in the fabric of philosophy left hanging by this. My own discussion has focused on an English word, "resolute", in relation to two philosophers, both of whom wrote in German, and the problematics and possibilities of translation this exploits might be said also to be tangled amongst such threads. But where, in the end, does this connection take us? What does it show of the limits of language?

Where word breaks off: Heidegger and the limits of language

It is obvious that, insofar as Heidegger might be said to arrive at ways of thinking congruent with Wittgenstein's, the lineage and context of his thought is very different – untrammelled by the kind of discussion that burdens standard and resolute readers. Space prevents examination of that lineage or of the development of Heidegger's ideas, regarding the limits of language. But in their later form they are focused most explicitly and intensely in his discussions of German poetry, especially that of Hölderlin and of the early 20th century poets Rainer Maria Rilke, Georg Trakl, and Stefan George.[6] Let me move directly to a high point in these discussions, his consideration of George's poem *Das Wort* (1928).

The poem comprises seven two-line stanzas. The first three present the poet-narrator as a traveller returning to his country and bringing with him wonderful strange things. At the

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[6] It is an interesting coincidence that Trakl was one of the main beneficiaries of Wittgenstein's generosity when he gave away a substantial part of his fortune.

border the ancient norn, goddess of fate and surely figuring here as a source of poetic inspiration, retrieves names from her well and bestows them on these new things. In the second set of stanzas (stanzas 4 to 6), the pattern is repeated: the poet-narrator returns with "a prize so rich and frail", but on this occasion the norn is unable to find any suitable word. This lays the way for the final stanza where the poet renounces the expectation of naming established in the first part of the poem.

> *Das Wort*
>
> Wunder von ferne oder traum
> Bracht ich an meines landes saum
>
> Und harrte bis die graue norn
> Den namen fand in ihrem born –
>
> Drauf konnt ichs greifen dicht und stark
> Nun blüht und glänzt es durch die mark. . .
>
> Einst langt ich an nach guter fahrt
> Mit einem kleinod reich und zart
>
> Sie suchte lang und gab mir kund:
> "So schläft hier nichts auf tiefem grund"
>
> Worauf es meiner hand entrann
> Und nie mein land den schatz gewann. . .
>
> So lernt ich traurig den verzicht:
> Kein ding sei wo das wort gebricht.[7]

What is it that is being renounced (*versichten*)? In the first place, it may seem that this is an acknowledgement of the ineffable: there is a thing that the poet-narrator presents to the norn, and this turns out to be something she cannot name. The wistful tone of the poem pulls the reader towards this sense of mystery, hence reinforcing, contra Wittgenstein (PI §374), the idea that there is genuinely something one cannot do. But there is good reason to reject this interpretation: the last line states clearly that in the absence of language, no thing can be; and this absence is less ethereal than visceral (*das wort gebricht*) – the rupture of a breaking off or breaking down. A less hasty reading produces a second, more promising possibility: this is both to acknowledge a limit of language and the need to resist the urge to exceed that limit. This would not be to "police" language but to acknowledge the co-dependency of language and world. Such a reading requires elaboration, however, in two related respects, regarding what the poem says (and cannot say), and regarding the background to its saying.

The originary word

First, an indication of what it is that the norn cannot name is provided by the title of the poem. As Jussi Backman phrases this: "The treasure for which there is no word is the *word*

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[7] A variety of translations of the poem into English can be found at: http://billknottblog.blogspot.com/2013/12/das-wort.html. Accessed on 20 July 2019.

itself in its essence as language" (Backman 2011, 63-64). Developing this thought and drawing a parallel with Wittgenstein, he paraphrases: "the limits of the poet's country are the limits of his language" (ibid., 63). Herein lies a problem, I think, in that if the border the poet-narrator crosses is that of a country, then the task of the norn comes to seem more like translation. While that in itself would raise interesting questions, it is surely right to see the fabulous, quasi-mythical nature of the description as suggesting something different. Taking it as an allegory makes world rather than country the crucial reference point. This is the world as ordinarily understood, shaped by the range of ordinary human practice, and manifesting itself in the familiar ways. It is on this that the sciences depend and out of this that they are developed. Heidegger conceives of world as realised through the mutual appropriation of Dasein and things by way of language. The word that makes this possible cannot be captured in a name, and it cannot be grasped in a theory or given formal definition. "[T]he becoming speakable of things," as Backman succinctly expresses this, "is itself unspeakable" (ibid., 64). I take it that the sense of this unspeakability stands in some kind of parallel to the thought expressed by Appelqvist, as we saw earlier, that "I cannot describe the form of language if that form is a necessary condition for language to make sense in the first place" (Appelqvist 2016, 704). Unspeakability, however, does not rule out the possibility of an "indirect encounter with this essence by drawing our attention to the way discoursing takes place *from* and *on the basis of (von)* language" (Backman 2011, 65). This is not only what the poem attempts but what Heidegger, in some of his writings, aims to provide.

Backman speaks of a "resignation" in the poet-narrator's respons (in the last two lines), but he is careful to qualify the negative force that is felt in the poem and its translation. The way here is opened by judicious reference to Heidegger's development of the idea of *Gelassenheit* (letting-be, releasement), which suggests a kind of letting-go:

> "[R]eleasement" does not mean simply a passive submission to a higher, divine will; it is "beyond the distinction between activity and passivity".[8] Like the concept of "resolve" (*Entschlossenheit*) in *Being and Time*, "releasement" rather signifies a release from an exclusive concentration on things as present and a receptivity to their contextual background, which the later Heidegger calls *Gegen* or *Gegnet*, "region" or "country" – that against which (*contra*, *gegen*) things are encountered as present. (Ibid., 65.)[9]

If the poem helps in the acknowledgement of the background, an idea that will be developed further shortly, a stronger but more contentious point can also be pressed. This is that the breakdown of the word, according to Heidegger, occasions an awareness of the word *as event*, awareness that depends upon receptivity. Any idea of the essence of language must have nothing to do with imagining its essential properties or defining features: language is not to be theorised in that way. As Heidegger puts this, there can be no "philosophy of language". Yet, to open the way to this *experience* of language would itself be a matter of significance for philosophy, even, he contends, its new beginning (Heidegger 2004, 47). Preposterously perhaps but pressing this point further, Heidegger rephrases the last line of George's poem as: "An 'is' arises where the word breaks down." It is precisely at this limit of language that awareness of the event of language, its bringing of things into being, is potentially realised. And this is, to quote Backman further,

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[8] See Heidegger, "Conversation on a Country Path about Thinking", in Heidegger 1966/1959, 54-55.
[9] See Heidegger, "Conversation on a Country Path about Thinking", in Heidegger, *1966/1959*, 81.

a transition from metaphysics to another beginning – a transition that opens up a new experience of the "is", of Being itself in its full dimensionality. The new realm disclosed by the breakdown is the uncontrollable background dimension of meaningfulness on which we ultimately depend, even though the full extent of this dependency is yet to be elaborated in Western thought (Backman 2011, 66).

Words, in the becoming speakable of things, set limits that in their turn can be both limiting and enabling. Words by their very nature cut and divide. It may, on occasion, be a matter of pain that this is what they do. But how else should they define and make sense? The limits they embody are enabling where they open possibilities of thought or practice, pathways that extend in untold possibilities of projection. Words enable us to converse and think, but their limits can become limitations where they settle into habitual patterns, sometimes through the natural human acquiescence in inauthenticity, and sometimes through educational deficit or political repression. Such deficits and repressions are limitations of what the world can be. And no word can be without its background of context and support.

The background as context, earth, support

The background needs to be understood in two ways. First, the contextual background presents an aspect of what one cannot do: whatever is said or done depends upon a background, and this, insofar as it is to remain background, cannot be directly described. This background comprises the range of practices and circumstances against which our more consciously focused activity shows up. Plainly, the acknowledgement of the significance of the background is a key feature of Wittgenstein's later writings, as it is of Heidegger's philosophy, from the phenomenological elements of *Being and Time* to the foregrounding of language in the later lectures. It is also the case that the breakdown of a line of reasoning – the frustration of expression, and dead-ends and aporia in dialogue – may occasion an experience of that background, perhaps its direct exposure and, hence, its being made foreground. Acknowledgement of this necessary background (and recognising the limit on what can be said that it constitutes) weighs heavily against the impulse in philosophy towards metaphysics. The contexts that Wittgenstein draws attention to are piecemeal and various, much as the contexts referred to in the phenomenology of *Being and Time* are of ordinary human scale and as the deference to language in Heidegger's later lectures is diverse, and both can work to resist the insistence of the voice that says "This is how it must be." This is a discipline of thought that constitutes something like a renunciation.

But the background has a further dimension, which is more difficult to describe, and this is thematised more directly in Heidegger than in Wittgenstein. It can be seen in the light of what Heidegger calls "earth", a term that is brought into play with "world". The relationship is evoked, for example, in "The Origin of the Work of Art".[10] If world is realised through the *poiesis* of the word and the work of art, earth remains the support that neither word nor art can reach. The material support to the painting, for example, the paper or canvas or board, is not something that the work can depict, not without relying upon a further support - as in the material support of the painting that depicts, from behind the artist's back, the easel, the canvas, the palette, brush, and paint, the marks that have been made, and, still further away, the scene that is being depicted. The support, like the background referred to above, recedes as it is approached, refusing direct representation. The support extends into earth as what is already there, unnamed, before *poiesis* brings things into the world, and as

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[10] For a thoughtful recent discussion, see Stephen Mulhall (2018-2019).

what must remain in that way. Heidegger writes: "The earth appears openly cleared as itself only when it is perceived and preserved as that which is by nature undisclosable, that which shrinks from every disclosure and constantly keeps itself closed up" (Heidegger 1975, 47). Earth cannot be directly described, but it can in this way be acknowledged.

Whereas the contextual background is such that there could be a shift of focus, bringing forth one aspect and hiding another, in what might be thought of as a semantic shift, the background of support, the earth in Heidegger's terminology, cannot be brought into view.

Pictures and words: the grace of language

Wittgenstein's proposal that we yield to the temptation to use the *picture* – that "there is an object there from which I derive its description" and that I do this to "investigate how the *application* if the picture goes" (PI §374)) – needs to be related to the seriousness with which he came to take pictures and the compelling influence that they can have. This applies especially to religious pictures and their part in the kind of self-examination to which the human being is inclined. Stephen Reynolds (2013) finds a Lutheran aspect in this that he connects with the call of conscience in Heidegger. Neither philosopher believes that it is necessary first to establish the existence of God and then to decide whether to lead a religious life. For both, it is the way one lives one's life that comes first, and in both cases there is a sense of being called. Resoluteness now becomes something like a readiness for the call of conscience (in Heidegger) and for the way a picture commands (Wittgenstein). In both cases there is an eschewal or renunciation of any attempt to seek explanation for this in a transcendent being. Transcendence lies within the *possibilities* of the way of life, the affordances of which are words and pictures. Contrary to the heroically burdened image of authenticity, the picture of resoluteness that now emerges points to a kind of passivity, which is rightfully a receptivity. What was said above about *Gelassenheit* needs to be understood as relating to the nature of language itself. Words *give* in that they are not ultimately fixed in meaning but available for projection into further contexts. So, then, grace can be seen as a quality of language itself. It may be tempting to some to put this in terms of a contrast with the tendencies of science and technology towards fixing and controlling, But this would itself be a partial arresting and perhaps a perversion, at least a limitation, of science and technology themselves, which in turn depend upon this openness of thought to new possibilities. Thinking requires the receptiveness to allow new thoughts to come to mind.[11] And sometimes we shall be disturbed, cut and divided, by those thoughts.

Over interpretation

> "If you stand right fronting and face to face to a fact, you will see the sun glimmer on both its surfaces, as though it were a cimiter, and feel its sweet edge dividing you through the heart and marrow, and so yu will happily conclude your mortal career. Be it life or death, we crave only reality." – Thoreau, *Walden*

> "Be bloody, bold, and resolute" – *Macbeth*, IV.i.85[12]

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[11] For an interesting discussion, see Williams (2018).

[12] These are the words of the Second Apparition that the witches conjure for Macbeth: "Be bloody, bold, and resolute; laugh to scorn the power of man, for none of woman born shall harm Macbeth" (IV.i.85). It is the apparition of a bloody child, and what is conjured is a dream of immunity from the human condition.

In this discussion, I have been wary of broaching the many texts of Heidegger relevant to this book's main theme in view of the shifts of critical register that such disparate styles require, within and between Heidegger and Wittgenstein. I have moved the discussion from Wittgenstein to Heidegger by way of Cavell. Cavell was reading and teaching Heidegger in the 1960s at the same time as he was developing his creative, penetrating response to the *Investigations*. Thoreau, about whom Cavell wrote his "little book", *The Senses of Walden* (1972), in a six-week period in roughly the middle of the sixteen years that he was writing *The Claim of Reason* (1979), can reasonably be described as developing, as we saw, themes of building-dwelling-thinking *avant la lettre*. The route I have taken serves, I hope, to lay the way for this moment in Heidegger's late lectures (there where the danger of a "disabling elegiacism" is greatest[13]), this moment where he considers George's *Das Wort*, and to enable reasonable reception of its consideration of the limits of language.

As I acknowledge above, my own discussion has exploited the connotations of the English word, "resolute", in relation to philosophers who wrote in German. If this needs further apology, it is surely to the point that the preponderance of the debate to which my discussion relates has, in fact, been in English. Have I pressed the matter too far? Have I relied too much on the strength of a word and, hence, indulged in over-interpretation? In a wide-ranging survey of the literature, Silver Bronzo records early criticism to the effect that "resolute reading" has always been a problematic term because of its implicit moral connotations, connotations that hinder "a dispassionate adjudication of the debate", and the suggestion that it be replaced by "a more neutral expression", say "therapeutic reading" or "austere reading" (Bronzo 2012, 47). My own inclination has been rather towards the view that the discomfort caused by those moral connotations might be the means whereby the arguments might have most purchase. In the light of Wittgenstein's acknowledgements of the wider ethical dimensions that motivate his philosophy, it seems difficult and in fact wrong to resist connotations that this central term prompts.

Understanding of the limits of language in Wittgenstein and Heidegger is evident also in their respective (changing) styles of expression. The wariness of the encroachments of science and technology, the sense of cultural decline, and the suspicions of academic philosophy in its dominant incarnations that they shared inclined them to belief in attention to language as a source of recovery. Notwithstanding considerable differences in their approaches, there is in their work a common sense of language as giving something, providing something beyond what can be rationally calculated or fully anticipated: there is a grace to language that is revealed where there is receptiveness in the thinker.[14] Both philosophers were in certain respects culturally conservative in their taste, yet both were innovative in what they wrote. But when one compares the discursive density of *Being and Time* and the sometimes painfully nostalgic style of Heidegger's late lectures, not to mention his own poetising, with the austere stylistic modernism of the *Tractatus* and the remarkable dialogic experimentation of the *Investigations*, the contrast seems clear. Differences in temperament and sensibility are surely evident here, yet both philosophers are committed to

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[13] In "The Turning", much of Heidegger's discussion reiterates phrasing from Hölderlin's *Patmos* to say that there where the dangers of Enframing are greatest, the saving power grows. "Disabling elegiacism" is Cavell's expression, as we saw above.

[14] Anthony Rudd has commented on what he sees as a Romantic modernism in both Heidegger and Wittgenstein, associating this with the resistance to scientism that they undoubtedly shared, with the move towards a re-enchantment of the world, and with their stylistic innovations.

finding a means of expression that rises to the substance of what they have to say. This itself is a reflection of resolve.

I began by recalling the sense of humour in Wittgenstein, and of the deeper irony that can go with this, qualities that seem for the most part to have escaped Heidegger. Wittgenstein's fascination with the word "bloody" – his mischievous amusement over this English swear-word but also his use of it in affirming the need to go the bloody hard way (neither of which one can imagine in Heidegger's expression) – resounds with a seriousness about philosophy and a sense that it too can risk, if not cost, blood.[15]

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